

**MINUTES**  
**ROCKY POINT PUBLIC SCHOOLS**  
**BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING**  
**October 29, 2007**

**Mrs. Thalen called the meeting to order at 7:44 PM.**

Pledge of Allegiance

Present: Geraldine Thalen, President  
Joseph Sanseverino, Vice-President  
Edward Darcey, Trustee  
Michael Matera, Trustee  
Margaret Smith, Trustee  
Carla L. D'Ambrosio Ed. D., Superintendent of Schools  
Sherry J. Alessandro, Asst. Supt. for Human Resources/Administration  
Michael W. Ivanoff, Director of Finance and Operations  
Patricia Jones, District Clerk

Absent: None

**Mrs. Thalen opened the meeting to questions or comments from members of the audience.**

- On behalf of the PTA and in honor of School Board Members Recognition Week, Ms. Marianne Barber thanked the members of the Board of Education for their time and dedicated service to the community.
- Ms. Carolyn Reynen read aloud an open letter to the community that was written by Alice Costantini, dated September 25, 2007, in which Mrs. Costantini thanked the members of the community for their calls, well wishes, thoughts and prayers, during an extremely difficult time. Mrs. Costantini asked that if we see her children to "take the time to see if they are okay." She also asked that "her passion for all the children," in addition to her own, be remembered and respected by the residents of the Rocky Point School District. Mrs. Costantini died on October 6, 2007.
- Mrs. Thalen thanked Ms. Reynen for her efforts in reading this very emotional letter from Mrs. Costantini. Mrs. Thalen stated that the administrators and faculty of the Rocky Point UFSD were always wonderful to families in need and Mrs. Costantini's wishes, as stated in her letter, would be respectfully addressed and remembered.
- Ms. Denise Nagy stated that she had concerns regarding the Joseph A. Edgar cafeteria staff and the institution of a new policy of "No Talking" during lunch. Ms. Nagy advised that lunch aides were walking around with signs reinforcing this idea and that signs were also posted to this effect. Ms. Nagy asked that she receive a clear answer regarding this situation.

- Mrs. Thalen responded by saying that Ms. Nagy's letter to Carol Tvelia, principal of the Joseph A. Edgar School, was provided to the other members of the Board of Education today.
- Dr. D'Ambrosio responded by stating that Ms. Tvelia had met with parents concerning this issue and that changes have been made. Dr. D'Ambrosio advised that the "no talking" policy was in effect while the students were on the lunch line placing their lunch orders so that the cafeteria servers could clearly hear each student's lunch request and therefore ensure that the lunch line would move more quickly. Dr. D'Ambrosio added that the "no talking" policy also included the time during which the students line up for recess or return to their classrooms to allow for a safe and orderly dismissal.
- Ms. Nagy asked for information concerning the "traffic light" in the cafeteria. She specifically asked what made the traffic light turn "yellow."
- Dr. D'Ambrosio suggested that Ms. Nagy contact Carol Tvelia directly for specific answers to her concerns.
- Ms. Nagy responded by saying that she had met with Ms. Tvelia during the "principal's coffee hour" and was told that no one was sure as to how the traffic light, aka, noise sensor, operated. Ms. Nagy also stated that parents had witnessed lunch aides telling students "no talking" and that the students were nervous about this. Furthermore, Ms. Nagy stated that her questions were not being specifically addressed and she reiterated that she is concerned that there is a talking restriction during the lunch period. Ms. Nagy asked if parents could openly observe their children during the lunch period.
- Dr. D'Ambrosio stated that parent observation during the lunch period was not permissible as there were health and safety concerns that needed to be considered. Dr. D'Ambrosio advised Ms. Nagy to direct her questions and concerns to the building principal.
- Mrs. Thalen reminded everyone of the high ceilings in the JAE cafeteria and the probability that the ceilings contributed to the high noise level. She asked Mr. Mondello if there was anything that could be done to absorb the noise in the cafeteria.
- Mr. Mondello responded that acoustical panels might be hung on the walls and/or the ceiling itself to help curtail the noise in the cafeteria.
- Mrs. Thalen thanked Mr. Mondello for his input. Mrs. Thalen stated that she was concerned that administration would not allow parents into the building in order to observe the situation. Mrs. Thalen stated that this would be an opportunity for parents to witness, first hand, what is going on.
- Dr. D'Ambrosio responded by saying that the lunch period is considered to be a class, similar to other classes, and as such, parents are not permitted to view classes.
- Mrs. Diane Burke stated that she supports Mrs. Nagy and that she, too, witnessed "inappropriate behavior" exhibited by lunch monitors with the children. Mrs. Burke also stated that, in her opinion, this type of interaction between lunch monitors and students is unacceptable and inappropriate. For this reason, parents should have access to the lunchroom.

- Dr. D'Ambrosio responded that the concerns being expressed by certain parents were significant enough for the administration to look into them in a timely manner and she assured meeting attendees that the lunch aides were acting appropriately with the children. Dr. D'Ambrosio stated that it was possible that "one or two" aides may have exhibited inappropriate behavior at one time or another and such cases would be looked into by the administration on a case-by-case basis.
- Tommy Mayr, a student at JAE, advised that he had first-hand experience concerning this situation. He stated that the "traffic light" goes to yellow even if no one is talking and that the students are told to be quiet or go back to their tables.
- Mrs. Thalen assured Tommy Mayr that this situation would be addressed by the administration.
- Mrs. Burke asked about the "camera situation" from last month's meeting and whether or not the budget process had begun for next year. Mrs. Burke stated that she had spoken with Mr. Ivanoff and was told that we have a "spend it or lose it" policy. Mrs. Burke was not pleased with this answer and stated that if the district did not use the money budgeted for a specific item or area then the district should give it back to the taxpayers. Mrs. Burke suggested that the district might investigate the method of "budgeting by project."
- Mrs. Thalen thanked Mrs. Burke for her input and advised that same would be discussed during the budget process.
- RPHS senior, Lydia Belanich, asked if Mrs. Basileo would be approved as the CAP advisor. Ms. Belanich stated that Mrs. Basileo was a good teacher and a great asset to the program.
- Mrs. Thalen responded that Mrs. Basileo's appointment to this co-curricular position would be addressed later this evening.
- Mr. Lagnena congratulated Ken Krapf and Leah Larson for their recognition as teacher of the week and teacher of the month, respectively. Mr. Lagnena also acknowledged the members of the Board of Education for their contributions to the students of Rocky Point Schools and advised that \$250.00 was donated to local charities in their honor. Mr. Lagnena also advised that the RPTA approved the budgeting of \$2,500 for Challenge Day, a program which helps students and teachers to better understand one another and assists in preventing bullying.
- Mrs. Thalen thanked Mr. Lagnena for the recognition but reminded him that the members of the board asked that School Board Appreciation Week be ignored.
- A parent expressed her concerns that math AIS services would not be available until January 2008. She asked what would be available to students presently in need of extra help in math.
- Dr. D'Ambrosio responded that the new math textbook series had been implemented and that teachers would be responsible to provide help where needed. Dr. D'Ambrosio stated that math scores at JAE were "solid."
- The parent responded that she was paying for her child to be tutored and that there were too many distractions in the classrooms, i.e., discipline issues, needs of a non-English speaking student, etc., that took precedence in the classroom.

- Dr. D'Ambrosio stated that she would meet with Ms. Tvelia to assess the program.
- Patricia Scalone, president of the SRP Association, recognized the members of the Board of Education and its legacy of public service by donating \$500.00 to the Statue of Liberty Fund.
- Mrs. Thalen thanked Mrs. Scalone and expressed her sincere appreciation for the generous contribution on behalf of the Board of Education members.
- Mrs. Thalen asked if there were any more questions or concerns at the present time and if not there would be another opportunity for questions or comments from the community at the end of the meeting.

There were no further questions or comments.

### **SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

- Mr. William Caulfield, Rocky Point High School principal, introduced Mrs. Nicole Waldbauer and Mr. Christopher Brown for the purpose of presenting Certificates of Achievement for writing excellence to James Mayr and Christina McDonnell from the National Council of Teachers of English for 2007. Mr. Brown stated that the students were both outstanding writers and human beings and that he was honored to say that he was lucky enough to be their teacher. A certificate was presented to James Mayr. Christina McDonnell was unable to attend the evening's presentation. Mr. Caulfield also commended the Marching Band for its impressive performance at the annual *Newsday* Marching Band exhibition.

Mrs. Thalen thanked Mrs. Waldbauer and Mr. Brown for their outstanding efforts on behalf of their students and extended her congratulations to both James and Christina for their achievements.

- Joseph Tanen Centamore, Ed.D, announced that this was the first chance he had to update parents on Middle School happenings since school began. Dr. Centamore thanked former RPHS graduate, Tracy Connor, for her outstanding performance in the "Bully Project." Dr. Centamore also thanked the PTA for sponsoring pictures and the Book Fair. He reminded all that Astronomy Night, due to its popularity, will be scheduled again. In addition, the Fall Dance will be held on November 16, 2007. Dr. Centamore also mentioned the "Save 4 College" program which promotes four-year college planning. He concluded his report by wishing everyone a "Happy Thanksgiving" holiday.
- Mrs. Carol Tvelia, principal, Joseph A. Edgar School, congratulated Mr. Krapf and Ms. Larson on their respective achievements. Mrs. Tvelia reminded all about the Halloween character dress-up scheduled for October 31<sup>st</sup>, 2007. This dress-up would be in honor of book characters the students read about. Mrs. Tvelia thanked the PTA for the Parents as Reading Partners program. She also reported that the

Late Bird Reading Program would begin on October 30<sup>th</sup> and that the annual Salute to Veterans would be held on November 9<sup>th</sup>, 2007.

- Scott O'Brien, principal of the Frank J. Carasiti Elementary School, reported that the school got off to a great start this year. Mr. O'Brien commented that the new Pre-K program was a significant addition to the overall education program at FJC and that it provided up to 36 students at FJC with a free prekindergarten experience thanks to funding from a grant. Mr. O'Brien advised that the school theme this year is "FJC Travels Cross Country." The students are learning what it is like to live in different states of the US via video, children's books, presentations, songs and skits. Mr. O'Brien announced that the first graders were looking forward to picking their very own pumpkins on the back fields of FJC on October 30<sup>th</sup>. He extended his thanks to the members of the PTA for their contributions which help to make programs such as this available to the children. In addition, Mr. O'Brien extended an invitation to see the FJC students and staff dressed as characters from their favorite fairy tales, nursery rhymes and books at the annual Harvest Day Parade which would begin at 10:00 AM on the track of the high school. Mr. O'Brien thanked the High School Marching Band and the administration for their supporting and participating in this event. Lastly, Mr. O'Brien announced that Mrs. Barbara Kjaerbye will be the interim assistant principal during Dr. Courtney Herbert's leave of absence and that Mrs. Kjaerbye brings with her a wealth of experience and knowledge of primary education and mentoring of teachers.
- Dr. D'Ambrosio announced that the Rocky Point UFSD had a confirmed case of MRSA. She acknowledged that a letter was sent home to all parents detailing the proactive measures being taken with regard to this situation, specifically, that the district was following all guidelines to help prevent the spread of germs and MRSA. Dr. D'Ambrosio referred everyone to the homepage of the Rocky Point Schools website for up-to-the minute information regarding this topical issue.

Upon Dr. D'Ambrosio's announcement concerning the confirmed case of MRSA, Ms. Ritzmann, a parent in the audience, asked if Purell disinfectant soap pumps would be made available outside of each classroom. Dr. D'Ambrosio responded that the district was looking into "wipes." Ms. Ritzmann asked if parents could provide wipes for the children to use. Dr. D'Ambrosio thanked Ms. Ritzmann for the idea but advised that the district must check with its attorney regarding concerns with individual students' possible allergic reactions, etc. in utilizing such products. Dr. D'Ambrosio assured all present that she is checking with all sources for guidance and recommendations concerning this health issue. At this point, Mrs. Farley, a parent of a cheerleader, questioned if the cheerleading mats were being cleaned and/or disinfected. Dr. D'Ambrosio said that she would look into this matter.

There were no further questions or comments.

## **MINUTES**

Upon a motion made by Joseph Sanseverino and seconded by Michael Matera, the following resolution was offered:

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Minutes of the following Board of Education meetings be accepted as presented: **Regular Meeting, September 24, 2007, Special Meeting, October 9, 2007 and Audit Committee Meeting, October 23, 2007.**

All in favor – Motion carried 5-0

## **TREASURER'S REPORTS**

Upon a motion made by Michael Matera and seconded by Margaret Smith, the following resolution was offered:

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Board of Education accepts the Treasurer's Reports for the months of June, July and August 2007 as presented.

All in favor – Motion carried 5-0

## **EXTRA-CLASSROOM ACTIVITY ACCOUNT TREASURER REPORT**

Upon a motion made by Margaret Smith and seconded by Edward Darcey, the following resolution was offered:

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Board of Education accepts the Extra-Classroom Activity Treasurer Report for the months of June, July and August 2007 as presented.

All in favor – Motion carried 5-0

## **FINANCIAL REPORTS**

Upon a motion made by Edward Darcey and seconded by Joseph Sanseverino, the following resolution was offered:

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Board of Education accepts the Financial Reports for the months of June, July and August 2007 as presented.

All in favor – Motion carried 5-0

## **APPOINTMENT OF CLAIMS AUDITOR**

Upon a motion made by Joseph Sanseverino and seconded by Michael Matera, the following resolution was offered:

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Board of Education appoints the firm of John F. Dennehy, CPA, as Claims Auditor for the period November 1, 2007 through June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2008.

Discussion ensued. Mrs. Thalen inquired about the process that was used in appointing the firm of John F. Dennehy as the claims auditor. Mr. Matera responded that the Audit Committee conducted the interviews and it was the unanimous decision of the committee to select the firm of John F. Dennehy, CPA.

Mrs. Thalen thanked Mr. Matera and the members of the Audit Committee for their input in the selection process. There was no further discussion.

All in favor – Motion carried 5-0

### **2007-2008 TAX LEVY**

Upon a motion made by Michael Matera and seconded by Margaret Smith, the following resolution was offered:

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the tax levy of \$36,583,839 for the 2007-2008 school year be approved

Discussion ensued. Mrs. Thalen asked Mr. Ivanoff for the percentage of the increase over last year. Mr. Ivanoff responded that the increase was originally projected to be 5.69 %; however, the Town of Brookhaven assessed the RPUFSD value to be \$120,000 less than originally anticipated. As such, the increase will be 6.4% over last year. Mrs. Thalen thanked Mr. Ivanoff for the information. No further discussion ensued.

All in favor – Motion carried 5-0

### **REVISED CODE OF CONDUCT**

Upon a motion made by Margaret Smith and seconded by Edward Darcey, the following resolution was offered:

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Board of Education accepts the Revised Code of Conduct, as presented.

Discussion ensued. Mrs. Thalen asked if the Code of Conduct was currently available on the district website. Mrs. Farley, a parent and member of the audience, offered that only a “summary” was currently available on the website. Mrs. Thalen stated that the entire document would be available on the website, as soon as possible. There was no further discussion.

All in favor – Motion carried 5-0

### **RESOLUTION TO AUTHORIZE APPROVED PERSONNEL TO INITIATE REFERRALS TO THE COMMITTEE ON SPECIAL EDUCATION**

Upon a motion made by Edward Darcey and seconded by Joseph Sanseverino, the following resolution was offered:

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, in accordance with Chapter 378 of the Laws of 2007, as amended, the Board of Education hereby authorizes the Superintendent of Schools, the Director of Special Education, and all Building Principals, to initiate referrals to the Committee on Special Education on behalf of school personnel.

Discussion ensued. Mrs. Thalen asked why a resolution was necessary for the purpose of initiating referrals to the Committee on Special Education. Mrs. Manitta, the director of special education, explained that in accordance with the amendments of Chapter 378 of

the Laws of 2007, only certain individuals may sign-off on referrals on the behalf of school personnel.

All in favor – Motion carried 5-0

### **COMMITTEES ON SPECIAL EDUCATION/PRESCHOOL SPECIAL EDUCATION RECOMMENDATIONS**

Upon a motion made by Joseph Sanseverino and seconded by Michael Matera, the following resolution was offered:

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Board of Education votes to arrange for appropriate services pursuant to the recommendations of Schedule 10-29-07-A and Schedule 10-29-07- B.

All in favor – Motion carried 5-0

### **PERSONNEL**

Upon a motion made by Michael Matera and seconded by Margaret Smith, the following resolution was offered:

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Board of Education accepts the attached Personnel changes.

All in favor – Motion carried 5-0

At this time, Mrs. Thalen offered her congratulations to Barbara Kjaerbye for her appointment to the position of interim assistant principal at the Frank J. Carasiti Elementary School. Mrs. Thalen also congratulated Mr. Michael Ivanoff upon the granting of his tenure. Mrs. Thalen announced that Mr. Ivanoff had withstood the challenges of his position as director of finance and operations and that he was a man who continuously exhibited “the highest degree of integrity.”

Mrs. Thalen announced that there was an “open item” from last month’s meeting, i.e., the purchase of the Skyhawk camera and requested Mr. Ivanoff to report his findings concerning this purchase. Mr. Ivanoff reported that the camera, a 35’ telescoping mast mobile camera, was purchased through the athletic department for the sum of \$4,306.00. In addition, a 35’ tripod was purchased for the sum of \$2,182.00. Because this camera is mobile, no installation fees were incurred. Mrs. Thalen thanked Mr. Ivanoff for his update concerning this item.

### **Mrs. Thalen asked if there were any additional questions or comments before the board moved to Executive Session.**

- A parent expressed her concerns regarding the 8<sup>th</sup> grade math extra-help program. She stated that she pays a private tutor to assist her son because during the school sponsored extra-help sessions, only homework assignments are covered.
- Dr. D’Ambrosio responded that the purpose of the extra-help sessions was to address student concerns, not merely to assist with homework assignments.

- Mrs. Nagy asked about an asbestos abatement program she recently read about in one of the local newspapers. Dr. D’Ambrosio invited Mrs. Nagy to phone her in the morning in order to discuss her specific questions.
- Mary Beth DiPrima announced that she was concerned that the district would spend money on a camera for football games when academic extra-help programs are needed.
- Dr. D’Ambrosio responded that extra-help is offered on a weekly basis to those students interested.
- Mrs. DiPrima stated that during these sessions, the entire class attends and as a result, there are many distractions.
- Dr. D’Ambrosio advised Mrs. DiPrima that all student achievement would be monitored and addressed.
- James Mayr commented that seniors from the National Honor Society were available to tutor students. He suggested that anyone interested contact Mrs. Jennifer Engellau. Mrs. Engellau reported that tutors are available for tutoring on Tuesdays, after school, and invited interested parents to contact either Mrs. Engellau directly or their child’s guidance counselor for further information.
- Ms. Susan Collesides questioned which sports were utilizing the Skyhawk camera.
- Dr. D’Ambrosio advised that the camera was available for any and all sports and that it was up to the individual coach of any team to make use of the camera.
- Mrs. Barber stated that the extra-help program at the Frank J. Carasiti Elementary School was excellent and that parents are always welcomed into this building.

There were no further questions or comments.

### **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

At 9:07 PM, a motion was made by Margaret Smith and seconded by Edward Darcey to go into Executive Session to discuss particular personnel matters.

All in favor – Motion carried 5-0

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia Jones  
District Clerk

The Board returned to Open Session at 10:30 PM.

**RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE TERMS OF THE SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT IN RESOLUTION OF A SECTION 75 PROCEEDING**

Upon a motion made by Joseph Sanseverino and seconded by Michael Matera, the following resolution was offered:

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Board of Education approves the Settlement Agreement between the Rocky Point Union Free School District and a person made known to the Board of Education in resolution of a Section 75 proceeding.

All in favor –Motion carried 5-0

**ADJOURNMENT**

At 10:40 PM a motion was made by Margaret Smith and seconded by Edward Darcey for the Board of Education to adjourn the meeting.

All in favor – Motion carried 5-0

Respectfully submitted,

Carla L. D'Ambrosio, Ed.D.  
Superintendent of Schools



