

Orange County School Boards Association

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MINUTES: DELEGATES' MEETING NOVEMBER 4, 2020 VIRTUAL

In Attendance: Bill Boss, Ed Estrada, Bill Hecht, Jean Pavek (OU-BOCES), Sandy Nagler, John Pasichnyk (Chester), Larry Berger (Cornwall/OU-BOCES), John Redman (Florida, NYSSBA Area 9), Robert Scheuermann (Florida), Martha Bogart (Goshen/OU-BOCES), Mathew Buckley, Susan Selser (Greenwood Lake), Faith Aprilante, Andrea Tejador (Highland Falls), Karen Brooks (Marlboro), John Williams (Middletown), Joseph Flaherty (Minisink Valley), Staci McCleary, Bhargav Vyas (Monroe-Woodbury), Kristin Graessle (Pine Bush), Linda Van Horn (Port Jervis), Meg Vaught (Tuxedo), Art Fitzgerald, Sarah Messing (Valley Central), Dave Eaton, Keith Parsons (Warwick Valley/OU-BOCES), Robin White (Washingtonville), Karyn Meier (OCSBA). **Guests:** Brett Carruthers, VP & Director of Risk Management for NYSIR (New York Schools Insurance Reciprocal)

- Call to Order** President Joe Flaherty called the meeting to order at 7:04 PM and led all in the Pledge of Allegiance. Our guest was welcomed and OCSBA attendees were introduced.
- Secretary's Report** Secretary Robin White asked for a motion to approve minutes from 10/7/20, which was m/s/c.
- President's Report** President Flaherty noted that we will have two guests at our December 2nd meeting: Robbie Greene who is the MHSSC Executive Director, and Brian Fessler, NYSSBA's Director of Governmental Relations, who will lead a discussion on legislative issues and the state financial/budgetary outlook for education in the next school year.
- Presentation: Cybersecurity Risk Management** Brett Carruthers from NYSIR presented information on managing cybersecurity risk for school districts. He noted the difference between managing risk from within your physical educational setting versus moving into a remote world and managing security when you are working outside your physical system. His discussion centered on having solid Board policy which is well communicated and monitored. In addition to a Data Protection Officer, he reviewed the extreme importance of access protocols, and following those protocols without fail or exceptions. He reviewed the need for districts to conduct risk assessments and complete a vulnerability analysis which can then be used to help plan for different types of cyber emergencies. He discussed more specific details of cybersecurity planning such as using website address restrictions, providing clear instructions to faculty for getting permission to use specific websites, and employing continual staff training – early and often.
- Executive Director's Report** Exec. Director Karyn Meier noted that she emailed everyone a written report that Robin White provided regarding her attendance at NYSSBA's Commissioner Roundtable. She thanked members who were voting delegates at NYSSBA's business meeting and who participated in OCSBA's Voting Delegate meeting to review last minute news regarding resolutions. She shared information about SED's Regional Stakeholder Meetings to gather input on substantially equivalent instruction for nonpublic school students.
- OU-BOCES Report** COO Bill Hecht reported that in his superintendents' meeting conversation centered on dealing with the ongoing effects of the pandemic such as contact tracing, COVID testing of students, and the financial stresses that our districts are facing, the withholding of state aid, and the need for federal stimulus monies. He reported that he'll be meeting with Interim Commissioner Rosa and Regent Wills when they tour a local school district. He did note that BOCES held their conference day remotely which focused on equity in instruction and was a very positive event. Likewise, he noted that the Superintendents' United Together Against Racism Task Force is meeting to look at data with regard to equity and programming and hiring.

**NYSSBA Resolution
Review**

Bill Boss gave a brief review of passed and failed NYSSBA Resolutions and recognized our voting delegates who contributed to the pre-vote debate for several different resolutions. Joe Flaherty commended NYSSBA on being able to retain most of the traditional meeting's format while conducting the meeting virtually.

**OCSBA 2021 Legislative
Platform**

Regarding OCSBA's 2021 Legislative Platform, members were asked to give thought to issues that they would like addressed. Bill Boss recommended gathering information from districts regarding unanticipated costs resulting from the pandemic, how districts had to shift monies around, and what budgetary areas may have been stressed due to these added needs and requirements.

**Delegates
Comments/Concerns**

Delegates continued conversations about the well-being of our school districts as the pandemic continues. Each district present gave a brief overview of their main concerns or general comments:

- The elephant in the room is State Aid – districts need the money.
- Several districts noted that they had COVID 19 positive cases crop up which required temporarily closing school buildings.
- There were some questions regarding how the Dept of Health does contact tracing, combined with districts' responsibility to maintain the well-being and safety of students and staff.
- It was noted that students from several local districts were known to gather in large, unmasked groups over Halloween, resulting in the temporary closing of some school buildings. In some instances, parental judgement was questionable.
- There is difficulty in handling parental frustration in managing changing guidelines regarding travel, quarantining, etc., resulting in more confusion than clarity.
- Greenwood Lake had a productive COVID workshop among their board members to further detail how to respond to a variety of pandemic issues should they arise, such as closing a classroom or building, how to conduct COVID tests, or handle employee furloughs if need be.
- It was interesting to hear whether a district has students sometimes move from classroom to classroom, or if a district has teachers move instead.
- Everyone is experiencing long days, and much more work than the normal school schedule, and good people are working very hard to persevere.

Adjournment

President Flaherty thanked all for attending. Motion to adjourn was m/s/c at 9:12 PM.