

**BOARD OF EDUCATION  
OSSINING UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT  
Ossining, NY**

**Executive Session/Work Session/Special Meeting  
Claremont School Cafeteria**

**November 6, 2013  
Executive Session: 7:00 p.m.  
Work Session/Special Meeting: 7:30 p.m.**

**MINUTES**

**Present:** Mr. Bill Kress *President*; Dr. Kimberly Case, *Vice President*, Mr. Graig Galef, Ms. Dana Levenberg, Ms. Lisa Murray, Mr. Frank Schneckner, Mr. Steve Wardwell

**Others**

**Present:** Mr. Raymond Sanchez, *Superintendent of Schools*, Ms. Alita Zuber, *Assistant Superintendent for Business*, Dr. Angela White, *Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction*

**1. Call to Order – President**

Board President Bill Kress called the November 6, 2013 Special Meeting of the Board of Education to order at 7:03 p.m.

**2. Motion to Enter into Executive Session**

Frank Schneckner moved and Steve Wardwell seconded the motion to enter into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing a personnel matter.

***Motion carried: 7-0***

*No formal action was taken.*

**3. Motion to Reconvene the Special Meeting**

At 7:24 p.m. Steve Wardwell moved and Dana Levenberg seconded the motion to reconvene the Special Meeting of November 6, 2013.

***Motion carried: 7-0***

**4. Pledge of Allegiance**

Board Trustee Dana Levenberg led all those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**5. Work Session**

**5.1 Stop Underfunding Ossining: Unfreeze New York State Foundation Aid**

Superintendent of Schools Mr. Raymond Sanchez welcomed students, parents, staff, community members, concerned neighbors, and local officials. Tonight's introduction and panel discussion

was translated into Spanish. Mr. Sanchez provided an overview regarding Foundation Aid and stated that tonight's Board meeting will focus on the inequities in State education aid and how those inequities are affecting the Ossining School District and the community.

Mr. Sanchez and Assistant Superintendent for Business Ms. Alita Zuber used a PowerPoint presentation to illustrate the inequities in Foundation Aid. The Ossining School District is a diverse community and every child deserves a quality education. The Ossining School District is an award-winning District which was nationally recognized with having the #1 High School for Math and Science; has been recognized for three consecutive years as one of the best communities for Music Education; it is a District with scholar athletes, a dual language program and is a District that values early childhood education.

There are over 600 school districts in New York State and ninety-nine percent (99%) of them have seen a decrease in student enrollment. The Ossining School District has seen significant increases in enrollment and ranks third amongst eight (8) other school districts in the State that have experienced increases in student enrollment and are underfunded in Foundation Aid. The Ossining School District is the eighth (8<sup>th</sup>) lowest Foundation Aid funded District in the State of New York - there are only seven (7) other school districts that receive less Foundation Aid than the Ossining. While Ossining and those other seven districts are underfunded, there are school districts that are wealthier and have lower student enrollment that are receiving a larger portion of the Foundation Aid. The Foundation Aid is disproportionate.

In 2008, the New York State legislature adopted a formula for distributing State aid for education intended to support a "sound basic education" for all students. The formula, which was frozen in 2008, provides the Ossining School District with only 55% of the aid it should receive and it is having an adverse effect on our District. The Ossining School District is struggling to retain teachers, staff and quality programs that meet the needs of every student. The fiscal inequity which is taking place affects the budget and in some cases has rendered other school districts insolvent.

Mr. Sanchez encouraged everyone present to listen carefully to the information provided by the special guests on the panel who have come a long way to be here tonight to share their knowledge, expertise and ideas on how the Ossining community can come together to support this effort.

Mr. Sanchez thanked the members of the Budget Advisory Committee and Assistant Superintendent for Business Ms. Alita Zuber for all of their hard work in organizing this panel discussion and for bringing this very important topic to the attention of the community.

Ms. Alita Zuber introduced the following panelists:

Wendy Lecker, Senior Attorney  
CFE Project, Education Law Center

Billy Easton, Executive Director  
Alliance for Quality Education, Public Policy and Education Fund

Joe Rogers, Jr.  
Campaign for Educational Equity

Steve Golas, State Aid Analyst  
Questar III BOCES

Anthony Cashara  
School Aid Specialists

Michael Fox  
New York State School Boards Association

Each member of the panel shared information regarding the Foundation Aid formula and how districts across New York State are affected. The Foundation Aid formula is a complex formula which was supposed to help school districts provide a “sound basic quality education” to all students. They also brainstormed ideas as to how the District might approach its local and state legislators regarding this topic.

Ms. Zuber thanked the members of the panel at the conclusion of the discussion and opened the meeting up for questions from members of the Budget Advisory Committee.

Mr. Sanchez thanked Ms. Zuber and the panelists for joining the Board and the Ossining community to have a dialogue about this urgent need to unfreeze Foundation Aid.

Ms. Zuber announced that Monday, November 18, 2013 has been designated as “call-in day” wherein everyone is encouraged to call and email their local and state legislators asking them to unfreeze Foundation Aid and to provide the Ossining School District with the funding it is entitled to. Ms. Zuber also announced that several members of the administration as well as members of the Budget Advisory Committee will travel to Albany on Tuesday, November 19, 2013 to speak with state legislators.

**Consensus: 7-0**

**6. Audience Recognition – Agenda Items Only**

Audience members were invited to write down their questions on index cards and Ossining High School students collected the cards from audience members.

Ossining High School students directed questions from the audience to each member of the panel.

**7. Special Meeting: Business of the Board**

Dana Levenberg moved and Frank Schneckner seconded the motion to move resolutions 7.1. (*Resolution numbers changed from the original agenda due to the Executive Session which was held before the Special Meeting*).

**7.1 Resolution to Promote Equitable School Funding that Complies with New York State’s Constitutional Mandate and Every Student’s Right to a Sound, Basic and Quality Education Under State and Federal Law**

**Ossining Union Free School District  
Board of Education**

**Resolution to Promote Equitable School Funding that  
Complies with New York State's Constitutional Mandate and  
Every Student's Right to A Sound, Basic and Quality  
Education Under State and Federal Law**

**WHEREAS**, The Campaign for Fiscal Equity (CFE) undertook the mission to enforce the constitutional rights of all New York schoolchildren to a sound, basic and quality education;

**WHEREAS**, CFE filed a lawsuit claiming that New York State was underfunding New York City's public schools and thus denied its students their constitutional right to the opportunity for a sound, basic education;

**WHEREAS**, in 1995, the New York Court of Appeals ruled that CFE made a valid claim and remanded the case for trial;

**WHEREAS**, in 2003, the Court of Appeals upheld the ruling that the State's school funding system violated schoolchildren's constitutional right to a sound, basic education;

**WHEREAS**, in 2007 the Governor and Legislature recognized the constitutional obligation to all children in New York State and passed statewide funding reform;

**WHEREAS**, the law enacted a Foundation Aid Formula designed to ensure adequacy and equity in state school funding by establishing a relationship between state aid, the needs of students and a district's ability to raise revenue;

**WHEREAS**, The State froze Foundation Aid Formula at 2008 school aid levels;

**WHEREAS**, School Districts with decreasing enrollment and student needs have benefited from the freeze;

**WHEREAS**, in the first two years, the Legislature provided installments of the Foundation Aid Formula, however, in 2009, aid was frozen at 37.5% of the four year target and cut by \$2.7 billion in 2010 and 2011;

**WHEREAS**, the Governor and Legislature adopted a budget process that prevents full funding of the 2007 Foundation Aid Formula;

**WHEREAS**, the implementation of Foundation Aid is not adhering to the principles upon which it was designed;

**WHEREAS**, as a result of the current implementation of Foundation Aid, some school districts are receiving more than 100% of their aid and other districts are receiving funding levels well below an amount deemed adequate for the provision of a sound, basic education;

**WHEREAS**, the Ossining Union Free School District is receiving only 55% of its Foundation Aid; and is the eighth lowest Foundation Aid funded district in New York State;

**WHEREAS**, the Ossining Union Free School District has seen an increase in student enrollment since 2008 – ranking third among eight Districts in NYS that have experienced an INCREASE in student enrollment and have been underfunded in Foundation Aid;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Ossining Union Free School District calls on Governor Andrew Cuomo, Commissioner John King, the State legislature, and the Board of Regents to reexamine the current implementation of the Foundation Aid Formula. Also, the Ossining Union Free School District is requesting that Foundation Aid be unfrozen for School Districts seeing increases in enrollment and that are underfunded.

***Motion carried: 7-0***

**8. Special Meeting: Personnel Matters**

Steve Wardwell moved and Dana Levenberg seconded the motion to move resolutions 8.1 and 8.2.

**8.1 Resolution Regarding Professional Staff Termination**

I move that upon recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools the Board of Education approve the professional staff termination so noted.

| <i>Name</i>   | <i>Building</i> | <i>Category or Tenure Area</i> | <i>Current Hire Date</i> | <i>Effective Date</i> | <i>Current Appt. Status</i> | <i>Reason</i> |
|---------------|-----------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------|---------------|
| Diane Pacheco | Brookside       | K-6                            | 9/1/12                   | 12/6/13               | Probationary                | Termination   |

**8.2 Resolution Regarding Civil Service Staff Appointment**

I move that upon recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools the Board of Education approve the civil service staff appointment so noted.

| <i>Name</i> | <i>Appointment Type/Date</i> | <i>Job Title</i>  | <i>Building</i> | <i>Salary</i>        | <i>% Time</i> | <i>Effect. Date</i> | <i>Expir. Date</i> | <i>Fund Source</i> | <i>Staff Relation</i> |
|-------------|------------------------------|-------------------|-----------------|----------------------|---------------|---------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|
| Cynthia Fox | Probationary                 | Senior Bookkeeper | Central Office  | 50,000 (\$32,183.91) | 100%          | 11/7/13             | 11/6/14            | General            | None                  |

***Motion carried: 7-0***

**10. Audience Recognition**

None

**10. Adjournment**

At 10:00 p.m. Kimberly Case moved and Lisa Murray seconded the motion to adjourn the November 6, 2013 Special Meeting of the Board of Education.

***Motion carried: 7-0***

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Ileana Ortiz  
District Clerk