

Governance

The Board remains extraordinarily deeply divided.

The vote to support the recommendations was unanimous but little else of consequence has been.

As was the case in the months during the assessment, there has been little discussion at Board meetings on the primary issues of concern except for school security.

Since mid-December, there has been one emergency meeting, one regularly scheduled meeting changed to a different day on short notice and significant actions taken at what would normally be a work session.

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advance notice or circulation.

The divisions within the Board /Superintendent were fought out publicly via Newsday and open letters to the staff and the community.

The Superintendent, Shimon Waronker, was placed on paid leave the day following a Board meeting on a 3-2 vote.

The Board appointed the Assistant Superintendent, Regina Armstrong, as Acting Superintendent on a 3-2 vote.

The contract with the New American Initiative (NAI) was terminated.

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u) o @ = o h notice. The High School principal who had been terminated at the end of the summer was rehired.

As requested in my report, the forensic audit firm provided the Board and the Superintendent with a preliminary report. A copy was forwarded to the Commissioner but the Board has yet to ask general counsel to follow up with the forensic auditing firm as outlined in the contract between the forensic auditors and the District.

With intensive assistance from key staff at NYSED and extraordinary efforts on the part of a couple of Hempstead staff, the Community Schools grant has just been submitted (five months after the start of the school year and seven months after the beginning of the fiscal year). A revised version of the grant application was filed with NYSED in the first week in January but this version was little different than what had been filed in mid-November. NYSED OSIR staff have provided oversight and guidance to assure that a complete grant proposal could be submitted without further delay.

The members of the Board of Education have agreed to the first training recommended in the report. This is scheduled for Monday January 29. It will be conducted by Tim Kremer, the Executive Director of the NYS School Boards Association.

In my assessment report, I attached a chart with the legal expenses from prior years of the two firms reappointed when the Board majority changed in November. My primary purpose was not to take those two firms to task because legal costs are driven primarily by how a district conducts its business and the decisions of the Board and the superintendent. My primary concern, instead, was and still is that the way in which the District conducts its affairs *often* results in extraordinary legal expenses. These are funds which could be used for the benefit of students. This is illustrated by the fact that the Board and Superintendent are now in court.

Facilities

There were several days of school lost due to frozen pipes and floods in the High School and one of the elementary schools. This was despite efforts to keep the buildings at full weekday temperatures during the night and over weekends.

The District has contracted, with unanimous Board approval, with the NYS School Facilities Managers Association to do a top to bottom assessment of t
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operations.

The District met with the architectural/engineering firm to request a draft five year capital plan by Friday January 26 for presentation to the Board and community at the February 15 meeting of the Board.

The District asked the same firm to develop a tentative Energy Performance contract by Friday January 26

Nassau BOCES is assisting the District in seeking an experienced school facilities manager to run the department on a short term basis if no one can be found on a long term basis

High School Instructional Program

A monitoring visit by the NYSED OSIR yielded many questions which could not be answered and serious concerns regarding the lack of plans to address the academic needs of a variety of student sub-groups. The District was asked to produce this data and these plans in the next quarterly report (the deadline for this report was later extended).

The same NYSED team returned the following week to offer assistance at your request. This was most helpful. (While present, the team noted deficiencies in the deployment and actions {or lack of actions} on the part of school security personnel.)

Analyses of grade 9 and 10, similar to the analyses of grades 12 and 11 have not been completed.

A complaint was filed with NYSED regarding students being dis-enrolled without following the prescribed steps. An internal investigation is underway.

I had recommended that the Superintendent seek Board approval in December for the alternative programs which were under consideration for implementation in the second semester. This was not done in December and it was not ready for January. The BOCES-District developed program for students with few credits or who have dropped out (or been dis-enrolled) is ready to start at the beginning of the second semester. A program for violent students is still being developed.

PreK-8

NYSED OSIR review of Middle School implementation of comprehensive school improvement plan was positive and constructive

Timeline and process for developing a new PreK-8 comprehensive school improvement plan being developed

Special Education

Implementation of Corrective Action Plan proceeding.

English Language Learners

Implementation of Corrective Action Plan proceeding.

Nutrition and Food Service

Will be addressed in the near future

Information Technology

With the assistance of the Nassau BOCES technology team, the Assistant Superintendent for Technology and District staff are moving rapidly to implement critical pieces of IT infrastructure,