

Statement on Behalf of the Sayville Board of Education

August 18, 2021

Dear Parents and Staff present this evening,

I wanted to take a moment before tonight's meeting begins to read a statement on behalf of the Board of Education. Often we may not respond during the public comment period of our meetings, but we do listen to what members of the community say. Many times during this school year, I have asked the Board secretary to clarify comments made during the public comment period, to make sure the Board understands what residents have said.

As a Board of Education we recognize certain fundamental freedoms that are essential to a democratic nation. Among them is the freedom of speech. These freedoms are not without restrictions. We are a country of rules and laws while still allowing these freedoms to prosper.

With that said, the Board of Education encourages anyone who participates in public session to demonstrate civility as they address the Board and community.

Therefore, we believe it is critical to reinforce certain undisputed truths

1. We as a Board sympathize with the community regarding the pandemic and understand the impact it has had on our everyday lives
2. We must continue to stay the course on the direction of the district. There has been much progress made associated with COVID 19 since the beginning of the school year
3. We must continue to incorporate NYS guidance and CDC recommendations into our opening plans
4. As part of the oath when a person becomes a school board member – each board member swears to uphold the constitution of the United States and the constitution of the State of New York to the best of our ability

We must remember that the purpose of all of this is the safety, health and welfare of our children and the district's faculty and staff.

Both the Superintendent and the School Board have been actively involved in furthering the community's interests in Albany. To that end, we belong to organizations that have offices in Albany. These organizations lobby for our district along with other districts for effective change in regulations that have an impact on our schools. These efforts have included currently and in the past: social distancing and masking, quarantining, vaccinations in the schools, funding, and many other state mandates and executive orders.

On a separate note, I would like to take this time to share with the public some information, derived from statute, state education law, the Open Meetings Law, and NYSSBA, as to the structure of a

School Board meeting. Many of you who have been attending school board meetings in the past may have heard me speak to this.

1. Board of Education meetings are meetings that are held in the public view, giving the public the opportunity to watch and listen to the proceedings of the Board.
2. In these meetings, the District updates the Board on matters pertaining to the school district
3. In these meetings, the Board may be required to take action on matters related to the operations of the school district.
4. Under Board policy 1230, the Board permits the public a comment period under certain guidelines.

With that in mind, I offer a brief word on the parameters of the public comment period. Thus, as a simple reminder, these include as follows:

1. Thirty minutes have been set aside for comments and questions by the public before the agenda is moved
2. The Board reserves the right to limit public participation in a given case, or to extend the maximum comment period if it deems necessary
3. Questions and comments by the public are limited to three minutes per person
4. Speakers must identify themselves or the group they represent and conduct themselves in a civil manner and direct their comments to the Board
5. The Board will not permit discussion involving individual district personnel, students or community members

I would like to close by thanking each and every one of you on behalf of the Board of Education for your attendance and participation and most of all your commitment to Sayville Public Schools, its mission and its students.

Board of Education President John Verdone