

Board of Education President's Report

Matt Cellura

May 16, 2018

Good evening and thank you for attending tonight's meeting. I would like to start tonight by saying thank you. Thank you to the residents of our District who came out and supported our renewal levy last Tuesday. Thank you to the countless volunteers who worked with the Blue Ribbon Committee for months garnering support and spreading the word about our District and the importance of this renewal. Thank you to Mr. Walt Hoffman, Mr. Jamey DeFabio, and Mr. Seth Rodin for chairing the Blue Ribbon Committee and leading another successful campaign. Thank you to my colleagues for your unification and public support of this levy and what we do, as well as the countless hours spent behind the scenes in discussions with residents and voters to properly inform them of our finances and operations. Thank you to Superintendent Powers for your tireless efforts once again. Your dedication to this District and its success is unmatched and does not go unrecognized.

Fourteen days ago, my colleagues and I voted on a resolution to bypass our normal Board Policy and authorize the Superintendent, Treasurer, and Business Manager to expend up to \$125,000 to ensure that our 8th grade students' Washington DC field trip would still continue as planned and as they were expecting. When Superintendent Powers contacted me a few hours prior to our meeting that evening to inform me of the news that she had found out regarding the nonpayment of monies to various vendors involved with this trip by Discovery Tours, my answer to her was simply, "we need to send the kids." It was a sentiment that I am glad to say, not surprisingly, was shared by all of my colleagues as well. While this Board can take credit for realizing the importance of this unique situation and making the authorization, our decision was the easy part. Without the work of Superintendent Powers, Business Manager Chad Welker, HR Director Belinda McKinney, RBC Principal Jim Ries, Mrs. Debbie D'Agostino, Mrs. Minyan Willis, Mr. Ed Lipnos, and our many teacher chaperones who served as tour guides, our authorization would have done nothing. These folks worked tirelessly from Thursday morning until the busses left Tuesday to ensure that our rooms were reserved and paid for, the busses were scheduled,

our itinerary was revised and set, that food vouchers were secured for those on the trip. Phone call after phone call, one issue led to another, and there are enough stories to fill a book one day, but these individuals and our staff worked through it all, even to the point of being minutes away from driving down to DC to hand deliver a check for the hotel rooms after a Post Office mix up. They could have given up at any minute, they could have told us it was too much to do in too little of time, but they didn't. They did what they do every single day, they put the students of this District first, and they do what is right and best for these students. While this situation was unique, the effort was not. This trip showed a behind the curtain view of what goes on every day in our District, and highlighted the amazing dedication and work ethic of our Administrators, Teachers, and Staff, and if I can find a positive out of the mishandling of this trip by Discovery Tours, it is that our entire community got to see behind the curtain and got to witness firsthand the behind the scenes things that often go unnoticed and unrecognized. I truly believe we have the finest and most dedicated people working here in this District. As we recognize those who are retiring tonight, I want to thank you for your many years of service to this District and more importantly its students. For those who will be receiving new or continuing contracts this evening, I thank you for your past service and look forward to seeing the great things you will continue to bring and do for our students.

That concludes my report. Thank you.