

CPC Chair Report for January 8, 2015

We start off 2015 with some sad news. School Board Vice President James Robins passed away on Sunday. Dr. Robins was a dedicated board member and the CPC board will send condolences to his family.

The new year will bring us a new Commissioner of Education as John King is leaving to work as an aide to U.S. Education Secretary Arne Duncan. It will be interesting to see who gets tapped to fill the vacancy. In a recent analysis of state education Dan Janison of Newsday wrote of the "Clash of education agendas". He lists the various forces having an impact on our local education and it is important we keep them in mind: federal officials pushing uniform standards through the Common Core curriculum; well-funded private groups expanding charter schools; teachers unions defending their domains; parents, students and teachers struggling to adjust to mandated changes; the educational-industrial complex nurturing private testing companies. It's difficult to keep track of what is going on but we must in order to maintain some local control of our children's education.

CSH has representatives for a parent advocacy group of north shore schools. Of particular interest to this group is ways to inform, engage and empower our communities to advocate for their schools. I would like to step up our involvement this year so we can participate at the state level more effectively.

There were two school board meetings since we last met, November 18 and December 9. At the November meeting it was announced that The Cold Spring Harbor Educational Foundation donated \$84,288.36 for the purpose of expanding the use of technology in the classroom. Dr. Wilansky gave an overview of our state report card. While CSH fared better than most schools, she expressed that there was room for improvement and continued curriculum changes and professional development are taking place to address those needs. In December our financial audit was reviewed. We will have a welcome reduction in pension costs.

The next School Board meeting is Tuesday, January 13 at 8pm. Next school year's calendar will be approved. Spoiler alert: It looks like we will be heading back to school before Labor Day in September due to the complex way the holidays fall.

At our meeting with Dr. Wilansky and Dr. Bernhard we discussed the following:

- The fact finding report on the teacher contract negotiations should be received by the end of January.
- The Guidance Director search is over and it's a boy! Dr. W describes him as a dynamic counselor from Syosset schools.
- Light Sail, an electronic, interactive reading program is coming soon. More on this later.
- Dr. W. will begin her book chats soon hoping to create a mix of attendees from all the four schools so different perspectives will be presented.

Parent issues we discussed were team practice during school breaks and sexting by students. There is no easy way out of either problem and the CPC welcomes your input.

We will be having Ms. Parent and Mr. Homer come to our next CPC meeting February 5 to address the health curriculum and cyber safety.

Here is to a healthy, positive 2015!

Submitted by Beth Packert