

**Synopsis of
Westfield Board of Education Meeting on June 25, 2019
By Superintendent Margaret Dolan**

The Board unanimously approved the appointment of Mary Asfendis as principal of Westfield High School, effective August 1, 2019. Mrs. Asfendis, who currently is the principal of Roosevelt Intermediate School, has a broad and deep educational background and understands the academic and social-emotional needs of the high school student. This is an appointment we take very seriously. Mrs. Asfendis emerged as the clear choice from a pool of qualified candidates.

In remarks at the Board meeting, Mrs. Asfendis said: "In my formative years of teaching, Westfield Public Schools cemented my philosophy of education, showed me the value of school and community and pushed me to be the best professional I could be. Fast forward twenty years later and I am so proud to represent this district which has given me so much."

Mrs. Asfendis will fill the position held by Dr. Derrick Nelson, who died in April after suffering complications while undergoing a stem cell donation procedure. "While I am so grateful for this opportunity and the promise it brings, it comes at the end of a very difficult year for our community," Mrs. Asfendis said. "We lost a friend, colleague and leader. I was fortunate to have worked alongside Derrick and to have been his friend as we both became principals. While we will always remember Derrick, I am grateful for the honor and privilege of helping Westfield High School move forward."

Board President Peggy Oster noted the family members, friends, and colleagues who attended the meeting to support Mrs. Asfendis, saying their presence indicates the respect she holds in the school community. "While the past year has been hard, we look forward to your leadership," Mrs. Oster said.

FACILITIES

Facilities Committee Chair Gretchan Ohlig noted a Finance agenda item to approve and award a \$9,500 contract to the district's architectural firm to study the feasibility of installing security vestibules at the entrances of all ten of our schools. Ms. Ohlig stated that, while the June 13 incident at Tamaques was specific to after school hours, this review of school entrances is part of a larger conversation about school security. Ms. Ohlig suggested that, if voters approve a March 2020 bond referendum to make structural changes to two schools to begin implementing full day kindergarten, it would make sense to include constructing entrance vestibules at our schools, if it is determined that the vestibules are warranted. Business Administrator Dana Sullivan stated that the architectural review of possible security vestibules is expected to be completed by the end of the summer. The Board approved the contract to review school entrances. Facilities Committee member Brendan Galligan noted that entrance vestibules had been included in past discussions of district security. Mrs. Oster thanked the Facilities Committee for its work and reiterated the Board's commitment to reviewing district security protocols to ensure the safety of Westfield schools.

POLICIES

The Board affirmed my decision on one HIB incident.

Based on a new State requirement, I provided a short presentation on the [2017-2018 District and School Self-Assessment Report for Determining Grades under the Anti-Bullying Bill of](#)

[Rights Act](#). Part of the Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights requires that there is a team at each school that reviews all aspects of Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying (HIB). Each team must complete a self assessment of the school's performance in providing programs to help students understand the meaning of harassment, intimidation and bullying, training on HIB policies for staff, appropriate and related curriculum, special training for HIB investigators, following procedures as required by law, and proper notification to the public. Seventy-eight is the maximum highest score, with our schools doing well in the 70-74 range during the 2017-2018 school year. The school ratings are not the same from year to year because each team self assessment is supposed to reflect on what the school can do better the following year.

CURRICULUM, INSTRUCTION AND PROGRAMS

The Board approved a voluntary intern candidates for the 2019-2020 school year.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The next meeting of the Board of Education will be on Tuesday, August 27 at 7:30 p.m. at 302 Elm Street. The complete agenda of the meeting will be available on Friday, August 23 under the Board tab on the district website and in the Business Office at 302 Elm Street.

Have a wonderful summer.

Margaret Dolan, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

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