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In the Loop with the Lew-Port Board of Ed

Election date set, budget a work in progress

BY JODEE RIORDAN
Board of Education President

The Board of Education election and budget vote will take place on Tuesday, June 9. It will be conducted entirely by mail-in ballot. Per guidance from New York state, we will first send out a postcard outlining specifics of the budget, election and voter qualification to each household. Official ballots will be mailed the third week of May to each of the 20,000 registered voters in the district.

The budget edition of the district newsletter, The Link, will be delivered by early June and provide detail on the proposed budget, capital project, and biographies of each candidate. Ballots will include return postage and need to be received by 5 p.m. Tuesday, June 9.

Election: There are three seats for the Board of Education on the ballot: Two three-year terms and a one-year term (the remaining year of the term vacated by Natalie Beilein in 2019). Petitions for nomination must be submitted to the district clerk no later than 5 p.m. Monday, May 11.

Per executive order, nominating petitions do not require a minimum number of signatures. You may find the petition and information on our website, or contact Marisa Barile at 286-7266.

Budget Vote: As of now, we still do not have solid state aid numbers and are holding off adopting a budget until we do. We have crafted a balanced budget based on the numbers available, taking the hit of the "pandemic adjustment" (a loss of \$300,000) and anticipating further cuts in state aid. We are hopeful New York state will deliver the results of the first of three reassessment periods in the coming week, paired with a decision on support for the states by the federal government. The funding of education statewide is dependent on many factors, all out of our control.

In order to meet the state-imposed deadline, the Board of Education plans to adopt a budget on Tuesday, May 19, at our regular board meeting.

Closure: Per Gov. Cuomo, all schools will now remain closed for the remainder of the school year. In keeping with our "just the facts" look at the closure, an update on the essential services outlined by the governor per executive order 202.4, "the provision of school meals, childcare and distance

learning are considered essential services or function," here is an update from Superintendent Paul Casseri:

"Certainly, the movement to new learning has added new stress in all our lives. This notion of remote learning is easier said than done. The governor and Bill Gates should try it for a day before they announce a new age in education!"

"We know and recognize the new learning phase of our closure has also added significant stressors to our students and families. Principals and teachers have my complete support to modify and adjust student workloads so as not to burnout themselves and our students and families. We just need to get through this year as best as possible.

"Yes, we need to hold students accountable for this work, but we recognize it's just not consistent student to student and family to family. My philosophy is every student is moving forward into the 2020-21 school year and we'll pick up the pieces next year. We will do our very best to support learning to close out this year.

"As the chief academic officer of the school district, I ultimately decide if a child has met the NYS standard for a grade level or a subject. I can tell you I cannot see holding any child back given this crisis we are now facing. I'm just letting you all families know that, in my opinion, every student should have the opportunity to move forward and move on.

"We will do our best to keep your children focused and moving forward with this work. Yes, grades will be earned at the Secondary level and students will be rewarded for consistency and focus. We promise we will remain in contact with our families and modify and adjust the workload as we receive feedback from you and as we see it playing out with your children.

"We'll get through this together."

Low-Port 'Here to Help'

We are planning a new survey toward the middle/end of next week to get a gauge on how new learning is playing out in your homes and to check-in on the overall well-being of our families. It is very important that you communicate with us if have any questions or are feeling overwhelmed and need support. From your teachers, to our principals, to district administration, straight through to the Board of Education: We are all here to help.

Elections (cont.)

Continued from Page 5

which ballot access was not completed at the time of such suspension shall be conducted solely in accordance with the ballot access provisions applicable to the Sept. 15 election.

•Section 8-406 that is modified to the extent that any absentee ballot sent to a voter for a primary or special election to be held on June 23 shall be provided with a postage-paid return envelope.

As for school board elections:

•Sections 1804, 1906, 2002, 2022, 2601-a of the education law, to the extent necessary, to provide that the annual district meeting and election of every common, union free, central and central high school district and the annual

meeting of every city school district in a city having a population of less than 125,000 inhabitants was scheduled to be held on the third Tuesday of May is hereby adjourned and rescheduled until June 9, which shall be deemed the statewide uniform voting day.

•Sections 2018-a and 2018-b of the education law are hereby modified, only for the purpose of any election held on or before June 30, to require every eligible voter be sent an absentee ballot with a postage-paid return envelope.

In a press release, Cuomo's team said these decisions were made, "In an effort to keep New Yorkers safe during the COVID-19 pandemic."