



Jericho School News

VOLUME 41, NUMBER 3

November 2004

Jericho School District Hosts Financial Forum For Community Residents

Over the past several months, the financing of public schools has been an issue of much debate. Community residents and staff members are expressing concerns about the impact of Roslyn, public funding, failed budget votes, contingency budgets, increasing tax rates, state audits and Nassau County reassessments.

In order to increase dialogue with the community, the Jericho School District recently hosted a public finance forum entitled "Funding

Strategies for a District of Excellence." This workshop was held on Tuesday evening, October 12, in the middle school library. The purpose of this meeting was to review the current financial status of the school district, and to gain the assistance of members of the school

community as the Board of Education and District Administration set a course for our future. "Our community has a keen interest in the well-being of our schools," emphasized Jericho Superintendent of Schools Hank Grishman. "Given the many challenges facing our district, it is critical that our residents have a compre-

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**-Hank Grishman
Superintendent of Schools**

hensive understanding of the many factors that impact our budget. We are anxious to receive assistance and input from community members as we begin our budget development process for the 2005-2006 school year."

More than seventy-five residents, representing a cross-section of the community, attended the three-hour forum. Attendees included parents of current

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Arlene Kuchcicki is one of seventy-five community residents who attended the forum and provided valuable input about their vision for the district's future.

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Breakout groups reflect and discuss the information presented, as well as react to the data and request additional information.

Jericho Superintendent Serves as Panelist in State Comptroller's Teleconference on Improving Controls for School District Finances

State Comptroller Alan Hevesi recently proposed a series of new financial controls on school districts following scandals in the Roslyn and William Floyd districts. A Five Point Plan, parts of which need to be approved by the legislature, was presented to the public in Albany on Tuesday, October 26. Recommendations include enhancing effectiveness of external audits, requiring school district audit committees, requiring a competitive RFP process to select auditors, mandating an internal audit function within each school district, and requiring training for all newly elected school board members on their financial oversight responsibilities. Hevesi prepared the proposals with input from several school associations, local authorities, accountants and state education officials.

Following the announcement of the proposed Five Point Plan, Jericho Superintendent of Schools Hank Grishman represented the NYS Council of School Superintendents in the State Comptroller's
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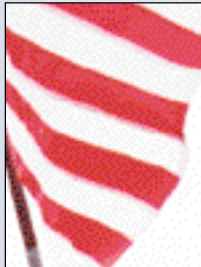
Present at State Comptroller's teleconference, "Using Accountability to Build Public Trust," are (from left) Alan G. Hevesi, Comptroller for the State of New York, invited guest Harriet Copel, Oyster Bay School District Assistant Superintendent, panelists Hank Grishman, Jericho School District Superintendent and Howard S. Weitzman, Nassau County Comptroller, Richard P. Mills, President of the University and Commissioner of Education for the State of New York, and invited guest Ronald Friedman, Great Neck School District Superintendent.

Assemblyman Sidikman Secures \$100,000 Grant for Jericho Schools



Superintendent of Schools Hank Grishman (second from right) and Board of Education members (from left) Toni Meliambro, Barbara Krieger, Hilari Cohen, Ira Checkla and Joseph Lorintz, present New York State Assemblyman David Sidikman with a plaque to thank him for looking after the children of our district. Assemblyman Sidikman secured a special legislative grant in the amount of \$100,000 for a capital improvement project. "Assemblyman Sidikman has always been a friend to Jericho," commented Mr. Grishman. "We sincerely appreciate the financial support as we begin the challenge of developing a budget for the coming year."

Jericho 2004 Homecoming Highlights



Community Financial Forum

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Jericho students, "empty-nesters" in the community, and local civic leaders. "The Board of Education and District Administration need to partner with our community to provide any and all information about our school budget so that everyone can feel comfortable when they step into the polling booth to vote," explained School Board President Hilari Cohen. "These financial forums are the perfect opportunity for all constituents to have their questions answered. In this way, we can continue to provide the quality education that makes us a leader nationwide."

Superintendent of Schools Hank Grishman and Assistant Superintendent for Business Affairs Joan Colvin detailed information about revenue

permitted under current statute, changes that may potentially impact revenues, a five-year history of expenditures, and trends for the future. Assistant Superintendent for Educational Operations and Human Resources Ben Ciuffo outlined the enrollment growth that has substantially impacted district finances from 1995 to the present time. He also looked at enrollment projections through the year 2009. Grishman and Colvin then explained the impact that enrollment growth has had on district finances over the past nine years. They also projected the financial impact of continued growth on future budgets. Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction Anna Hunderfund overviewed our educational program, which highlighted both outstanding student achievement and the components of our comprehensive, "balanced" education that is available to all students in Jericho.

After the initial presentation, six breakout groups had an opportunity to reflect and discuss the information presented, as well as react to the data and request additional information. Residents were encouraged to share opinions of their vision for the future and make suggestions to assist the district in accomplishing the desired goals. The meeting reconvened and facilitators shared feedback from each group.

The forum yielded extremely productive input from members of the community. "I think this was a very important meeting and it enlightened people about what the budget is

all about," stated retired Jericho teacher and community member Bob Hoffman. "I'm a little disappointed that more people were not here. I hope the district will consider holding these meetings again at times when more senior citizens could participate. I think that anyone who understands what the Jericho School District produces in terms of kids would overwhelmingly vote for any budget that was presented."

Resident Howard Teig

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-Bob Hoffman

*Retired Jericho Teacher
and Community Member*

of disseminating different points of view to the people who showed up," commented Mr. Teig. "It was good to hear school officials provide even more information than you would normally hear when budgetary discussions take place."

Lenore Sylvan, Chairperson of the Jericho-Syosset-Woodbury Childcare Partnership and a Jericho "empty-nester," was equally pleased with the meeting. "There is an intense desire to incorporate the people, the

community in with the school and to explain the value of our district," said Ms. Sylvan. "Residents have a responsibility of supporting it and also continuing to make it better."

After an overwhelmingly positive response from program attendees, it was suggested that the forum be repeated during the day to provide an additional opportunity for other residents to participate and provide valuable input. "As an elected official, I feel that it is critical for the school board to accurately represent the residents of the district," commented Board Vice President Barbara Krieger. "The financial workshop was an excellent opportunity for us to hear how voters perceive our district's finances. I especially appreciated the suggestions residents offered for future exploration in terms of both program and financing. We had a wonderful turnout at the meeting and I hope we'll continue to see this strong involvement throughout our series of financial and budget workshops."

The financial forum was repeated during the day in mid November. Individuals interested in attending future workshops should contact the Office of the Superintendent at 203-3600, ext. 3201.



Jericho Director of Educational Technology Mark Steinberger (R) facilitates a group, which includes community residents Bob Hoffman and Alisha Reiben.



Sandra Powell (L) moderates the program with panelists (from left) Howard S. Weitzman, Nassau County Comptroller, Anne M. Byrne, President, NYS School Boards Association, Hank Grishman, Jericho School District Superintendent, Michael M. Abbott, Director of Educational Audits, New York State Department of Education, and Laura L. Rodolakis, Associate Examiner, Office of the State Comptroller.

Improving Controls for School District Finances

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teleconference. This conference, "Using Accountability to Build Public Trust," was aired at 43 teleconference sites throughout New York State. The presentation will also be used as a training video for school board members and district administrators. The program was co-sponsored by the Office of the State Comptroller and the NYS Department of Education in cooperation with the NYS School Boards Association and the NYS Council of School Superintendents.

Alan Hevesi, Comptroller for the State of New York, and Richard P. Mills, President of the University and Commissioner of Education for the State of New York, outlined specifics related to the Five Point Plan and answered questions from the audience during the first segment of the program.

Panelists for the second segment of the program included Hank Grishman, Jericho School District Superintendent, Howard Weitzman, Nassau County Comptroller, Anne Byrne, President, NYS School Boards Association, Michael Abbott,

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-Hank Grishman
Superintendent of Schools

Director of Educational Audits, NYS Department of Education, and Laura Rodolakis, Associate Examiner, Office of the State Comptroller. The team provided detailed information about building public confidence, ethics, oversight responsibili-

ties, monitoring controls, setting the tone at the top, red flags for fraud, lessons learned and what NYS is doing to help. Mr. Grishman expressed gratitude for the collaborative efforts by all of the groups involved. "The information presented this evening represents a serious, concerted effort by the Office of the State Comptroller, the NYS Department of Education, NYS School Boards Association and the NYS Council of School Superintendents to solve the challenges of maintaining fiscal fitness in our schools," said Grishman. "The vast majority of district administrators and board members are honest, hardworking people who want to focus on the task of providing high quality educational programs for students. Additional training and safeguards will help us to rebuild the public trust."

Jericho Schools Welcome New Curriculum Associate for Science & Technology



Frank DiMartino has recently joined the Jericho School District administrative staff as the new Curriculum Associate for Science and Technology. Mr. DiMartino comes to Jericho from the Patchogue-Medford School District where he had been employed since 1985 in increasingly responsible administrative positions. Most recently, he served as Patchogue-Medford's Director of Science and Mathematics Education. Mr. DiMartino is also an adjunct associate professor in the Graduate Education Department at Dowling College. "We are very pleased to welcome Mr. DiMartino to Jericho," said Superintendent of Schools Hank Grishman. "His extensive and diversified experience in science, math and technology will definitely be an asset to our educational program."

Jericho Union Free School District

Jericho, New York 11753

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Joseph H. Lorintz
Toni Meliambro

Superintendent of Schools

Henry L. Grishman

Newsletter Editor

Mary Marks



Dates to Remember

Board of Education Meeting

Thursday, November 18th
Cantiague Elementary School
7:30 PM

Schools Closed

Thursday, November 25th
& Friday, November 26th

Board of Education Meeting

Thursday, December 16th
Middle School Library
7:30 PM

Schools Closed

Friday, December 24th
through Friday, December 31st

Schools Reopen

Monday, January 3rd

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