

MINUTES OF THE BELLMORE-MERRICK CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING OCTOBER 6, 2021

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A regular meeting of the Bellmore-Merrick Central High School District Board of Education was held on Wednesday evening, October 6, 2021, in the Auditorium of the Administrative Offices at the Brookside Educational Center at 1260 Meadowbrook Road, North Merrick, New York.

The following members of the Board of Education were present:

Edward Corona, President
Nina Lanci, Vice President
Marion Blane
Melissa Cmar-Grote
Janet Goller
Dr. Nancy Kaplan
Tracey Miller
Gina Piskin

Also present:

Michael Harrington, Superintendent of Schools
Dr. Mara Bollettieri, Deputy Superintendent of Personnel
Mikaela Coni, Assistant Superintendent for Business
Scott Bersin, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment
Eric Arlin, Executive Director of Alternative Education
Emily Paluseo, Director of Special Education and Pupil Services
Eric Caballero, Director of Physical Education/Health Ed/Athletics/Driver Education
Cheryl Fontana, Director of Music/Fine and Performing Arts and Adult Education
Joseph Innaco, Director of Administrative & Instructional Technology and Data Protection/Security
Maura Kempton, Assistant Director of Special Education and Pupil Services
Jon Simpkins, Director of School Facilities and Operations
Tom Volpe, Supervisor of Transportation
Christopher Powers, School Attorney
Pattianne Guccione, District Clerk

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Corona at 6:28 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mr. Corona led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

On a **MOTION** by Dr. Kaplan, seconded by Ms. Miller and carried 8-0, the Board of Education moved into Executive Session to discuss pending litigation and a specific personnel issue.

On a **MOTION** by Ms. Piskin, seconded by Ms. Goller and carried 8-0, the Board of Education reconvened to Public Session at 8:01 p.m.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mr. Corona led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

On a **MOTION** Dr. Kaplan, seconded by Ms. Lanci and carried 8-0 the Board of Education approved the minutes from the September 1, 2021 meeting.

IV. TREASURER'S REPORT

On a **MOTION** by Dr. Kaplan, seconded by Ms. Miller and carried 8-0, the Board of Education approved the Treasurer's Report dated August 31, 2021.

V. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Mr. Harrington said that this has certainly been an incredible month in the Bellmore-Merrick CHSD. It is remarkable to think that we are already into the month of October and our first month of school is filled with highlights of student and staff achievements, some of which will be highlighted in tonight's presentations. He said tonight's agenda is a reflection of what an incredible school district this is. He said the District has National Merit Semifinalists, All-State Musicians, a Nationally Recognized High School and presentations from two extraordinary summer programs that represent the ways in which we go above and beyond for our students. In addition, he said the month of September has included two of three homecoming celebrations with Bon Fire, Dance, Pep Rallies, Piratefest and Football Games.

Mr. Harrington said that some of the other highlights this month were Kennedy High School unveiling its JFK Athletics Hall of Fame to honor various alumni for achievements in school sports history and Sophia LaSpina making history and receiving national attention for being the first female on Long Island to score a touchdown. Mr. Harrington also said that the district's AP Capstone program has been a great success for students. He said fifteen students received AP Capstone Diplomas and twenty-four students earned AP Seminar and Research certificates. Mr. Harrington congratulated all of the students, families and staff on the wonderful accomplishments.

A. **Presentations:**

National Merit Scholarship Semifinalist

Ms. Miller presented Eric Avellone of Calhoun High School with an Award of Honor certificate and said that Eric has set the bar to the highest level in all that he does, is brilliant and his potential is limitless. He is a top scholar, athlete and science researcher who has seamlessly mastered every realm of being a successful teenager.

Ms. Lanci presented Helena Fu of Mepham High School with an Award of Honor certificate and said that Helena has also been recognized as an AP Scholar with Distinction, an All-County artist and the Class of 2022 Valedictorian. Helena is among the first cohort of Bellmore-Merrick students to complete both the AP Capstone and Mandarin Curriculum and has excelled in the most challenging courses that we offer.

New York State School Music Association (NYSSMA) – All State

Ms. Goller explained that each year, young musicians throughout New York State receive the exciting notification that they have been selected to participate in the NYSSMA All-State Music Festival. This year the Bellmore-Merrick Music Department is proud to announce we have seven students selected as well as two alternates. Ms. Goller presented Award of Honor certificates to the following students on this accomplishment:

Bryce Gould Anderson	Calhoun High School
Jessica Blumberg	Kennedy High School
Melissa Blumberg	Kennedy High School
Gavin Chen	Kennedy High School
Massimo Marino	Kennedy High School
Victoria O'Shea	Mepham High School
Christopher Prainito	Kennedy High School

Extended School Year Program and Bridge Program

Mr. Arlin, Ms. Paluseo, Ms. Kempton, Ms. Johnson and Ms. Shapiro gave a presentation on the success of the Extended School Year Program (ESY). Ms. Shapiro explained how the Extended School Year Program has grown over the years. This summer program gives students the opportunity to do academics and practice socialization and life skills. Three ESY students spoke about their experience in the program, all saying how wonderful the experience has been for them. A video played for the audience, which highlighted the student experiences and success.

Ms. Donnelly and Ms. Romtito gave a presentation on the Bridge Program with Ms. Donnelly explaining that the program has just finished its fifth year. She said that the Bridge Program is offered to rising 9th grade students who failed two or more courses in the 8th grade. She said that the program coordinates with the middle school success policy and offers instruction and general life skills. The program also gives students an opportunity to do a project on something they are passionate about, making summer school a more positive experience.

Mr. Harrington thanked the teachers, administrators and the Board of Education for the great success and support of these programs.

National Blue Ribbon School – Calhoun High School

Ms. Hollings explained the process of how Calhoun High School became a National Blue Ribbon School. She said the NYS Education Department sent an award application and Ms. Hollings had to explain what make this such a wonderful place. She said what makes Calhoun High School so special is the curriculum and what we do to prepare kids for college and career, our arts, special education department and our English as a New Language program. Ms. Hollings shared what we do to support our teachers and how we focus on serving the needs of our students and families.

After a Calhoun High School highlight video played for the audience, Mr. Corona presented an Award of Honor certificate to Ms. Hollings.

Mr. Harrington congratulated all of the students, staff and families and mentioned the future dates.

B. Future Events

October 7	Fall Guidance Program
October 8	Emergency Preparedness Drills – Early Dismissal Calhoun On-Tour Improv Night
October 11	Columbus Day – Schools Closed
October 19	High School Math Honor Society Inductions
October 27	High School World Language Honor Society Induction
October 29-30	Calhoun On-Tour Shakespeare Production
November 2	Election Day – No School for Students Superintendent’s Conference Day
November 3	Board of Education Meeting

VI. PUBLIC COMMENTS – *Agenda Items Only*

Mr. Corona stated the Board of Education encourages public participation on school related matters at Board meetings. To allow for public participation, a period not to exceed 30 minutes shall be set aside during each Board meeting. Any person wishing to make comments or raise questions shall complete an information card. Questions are to be addressed to the Board President, not to individual board members. Personal attacks on individual board members, administrators and staff will not be tolerated and may be cause to adjourn the meeting. There will be no back and forth dialogue. Out of courtesy and fairness to the rest of the audience, it would be appreciated if each visitor would limit his/her remarks to not more than three minutes or ask only one question. Public discussion on matters relating to staff and students, by which their reputation, privacy, or rights to due process, or those of others could be in some way violated, is prohibited.

On a **MOTION** by Ms. Lanci, seconded by Ms. Goller and carried 8-0, the Board of Education approved item VII.A.

VII. SUPERINTENDENT’S RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Donation

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education accept a donation of 850 student planners with a value of \$2,405.50, from the Merrick Avenue PTA for the students to use at Merrick Avenue Middle School for the 2021-2022 school year.

Mr. Corona thanked the Merrick Avenue PTA for their continued support.

On a **MOTION** by Dr. Kaplan, seconded by Ms. Goller and carried 8-0, the Board of Education approved items VII.B through VIII.I.

B. BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education approve the revised Special Education vendors for School Year 2021-2022.

C. Special Education

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education approve the following recommendations for placement made by the Committee on Special Education: 000011657, 000012255, 000012423, 000012827, 000014059, 000512572, 000512667, 073130000, 131261695, 131263707, 201700005, 201700181, 202000031, 202100051, 202100052, 202100120, 202100121, 202100124, 202111082, 370001798 and 370002031.

VIII. PERSONNEL REPORT – October 6, 2021

- A. Termination
- B. Resignations
- C. Appointments
- D. Salary Reclassification
- E. Recommendation for Continued Employment
- F. Assigned Services – Athletics – Cancellation
- G. Assigned Services – Athletics
- H. Assigned Services – Non-Athletics – Cancellation
- I. Assigned Services – Non-Athletics

Mr. Harrington congratulated Dr. Bollettieri on the announcement of her retirement at the end of January, 2022. He said that Dr. Bollettieri has made a huge difference in everyone's lives. She has lead the Personnel Department with care, compassion, and heart. Dr. Bollettieri started the Community Cupboard and the One Voice, One Message Ambassador's program, she is what service leadership is all about. Mr. Harrington wished her the best in her retirement.

Mr. Corona speaking on behalf of the Board of Education congratulated Dr. Bollettieri on her retirement, wishing her the best.

Dr. Bollettieri thanked everyone for their well wishes and said it has been a blessing to work for this wonderful community.

IX. BUSINESS

A. Bills and Corresponding Warrant – October 6, 2021

The Board of Education reviewed the bills and corresponding warrant.

B. Bids

On a **MOTION** by Dr. Kaplan, seconded by Ms. Miller and carried 8-0, the Board of Education approved the bids as stated in the agenda

C. Budget Summary – September 30, 2021

The Board of Education reviewed the budget summary.

On a **MOTION** by Dr. Kaplan, seconded by Ms. Lanci and carried 8-0, the Board of Education approved items IX.D through IX.I.

D. Indoor Worker/Student Occupied Space

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education re-affirm the practice of maintaining heat in all indoor worker/student occupied spaces, excluding processing spaces (freezers and coolers) and gymnasiums, at 68° Fahrenheit from October 15th through April 15th, and 65° Fahrenheit from September 15th through October 14th and April 16th through May 31st.

E. Corrective Action Plan

1. BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education approve the Corrective Action Plan of the 2020-21 Internal Control Risk Assessment performed by the Internal Auditor, Questar III.
2. BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education approve the Corrective Action Plan of the 2020-21 Audit of the Claims Audit Process performed by the Internal Auditor, Questar III.

F. Snack Vending

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education approve an extension to a vending contract with Dover Gourmet Corporation Vending for the 2021-2022 school year for the provision of vending services in the District via the BOCES contract. The District will receive a commission on total sales; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Food Services Director is the District's authorized representative as concerns this agreement.

G. Obsolete Equipment/Property

1. BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education declare obsolete and approve the disposal of seven sewing machines that are outdated and no longer in use in room number 37 of the Brookside Educational Center.
2. BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education declare obsolete and approve the disposal of one broken red chair and one treadmill in Merrick Avenue Middle School.
3. BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education declare obsolete and approve the disposal of three office desk in the main office of Merrick Avenue Middle School.

H. PCR COVID-19 Testing Agreement

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education hereby approve an agreement with ATC Testing and Screening Services, LLC to provide COVID-19 swab testing for the 2021-2022 school year.

I. Settlement Agreement

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education authorizes the District to enter into an agreement resolving a contemplated due process complaint for the term of September 1, 2021 through June 30, 2022, subject to the terms and conditions of a mutually acceptable written agreement, and further authorizes the President of the Board of Education to execute said agreement on behalf of the Board of Education.

X. OLD/NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Corona said the Board of Education had been asked about live streaming sports events and associated costs. Mr. Caballero explained that prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the District had partnered with Pixellot to allow us to live stream our sporting events so that families that are not able to attend the game can still feel connected. He explained that cameras were installed at no cost in the gymnasium and field at each high school. Mr. Caballero explained that currently, there is a fee to whoever watches the event but if the District were to cover all costs to live stream the annual fee for the District would be approximately \$15,000.

Mr. Corona, Dr. Kaplan and Ms. Goller all expressed that they feel that this is a great opportunity and a small cost to incur for our families. Ms. Lanci asked about the quality of the cameras and Mr. Caballero said the video quality was good. Ms. Miller asked how families access viewing the sporting event, Mr. Caballero explained that the Principals send out an email with a link. Dr. Kaplan and Mr. Corona asked about adding cameras to other fields and Mr. Caballero said he would look into it.

XI. CORRESPONDENCE

Mr. Corona stated the Board of Education did not receive correspondence.

XII. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Kellie Shuart asked about the Federal CARES Act Funding and wanted to know how the District spent the money. She also thanked Mr. Harrington for his previous conversation with her and asked to Board of Education to listen to the parents about their opposition to vaccine mandates.

Ms. Coni explained that the District did receive Federal CARES Act funding of which 90% was used to offset Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) costs such as cleaning supplies, masks, barriers etc. and the remaining money will be used to offset learning loss.

Stephany Margaronis is against vaccine mandates and asked if the District will comply with the mandates.

Mr. Powers explained that the District is required to comply with all mandates, including those imposed by the NYS Department of Health (DOH).

Michael Demetriou is against a vaccine mandate. He handed in a petition against COVID-19 testing and vaccinations and asked about the ATC agreement.

Mr. Harrington explained that as per the DOH mandate, all staff are required to provide proof of COVID-19 testing. ATC assists our staff with that testing which is also available to families if needed.

Richard Soleymanzadeh thanked Mr. Harrington for calling him about his concern with a book in the Mephram High School library and the open communication. He feels that every child deserves a safe and welcoming environment. He hopes that any new book screening process protects everyone. He also feels that topics of sexuality should be discussed at home, not in school.

James Shields discussed a Scholastic News homework project that was given to his 12 year old which included anti-police content. He was against this reading and wanted to know if the Board of Education was aware of and approved the content.

Mr. Corona said the District would look into it.

Jared Selvin is concerned about the current events and asked if the Board of Education views the parents in the auditorium as concerned parents or “Domestic Terrorists”.

Dr. Kaplan said that when she looks at the parents in the auditorium she sees people she cares about, her neighbors and her friends.

Rania Elbaz said she is proud of the Bellmore-Merrick CHSD and all that has been accomplished. She is proud that our kids are in school safely for in-person learning, proud of those that are volunteering their time and proud to be having sports, she can't ask for anything more.

XIII. POTENTIAL EXECUTIVE SESSION

The Board of Education did not enter into executive session.

XIV. ADJOURNMENT

On a **MOTION** by Dr. Kaplan, seconded by Ms. Miller and carried 8-0, the Board of Education meeting adjourned at 9:47 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Pattianne Guccione
District Clerk