

Board of Education Meeting (Wednesday, October 4, 2023)

A regular meeting of the Bellmore-Merrick Central High School District Board of Education was held on Wednesday evening, October 4, 2023, in the Board Conference Room of the Administrative Offices at the Brookside Educational Center at 1260 Meadowbrook Road, North Merrick, New York.

Members present:

Nina Lanci, Nancy Kaplan, Melissa Cmar-Grote, Marion Blane, Janet Goller, Gina Piskin, Edward Corona, Megan C Ryan

Also Present:

Michael Harrington, Superintendent of Schools

Scott Bersin, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment

Mikaela Coni, Assistant Superintendent for Business

Eric Gomez, Assistant Superintendent for Personnel and Administration

Eric Arlin, Executive Director of Alternative Education

Eric Caballero, Director of Physical Education/Health Ed/Athletics/Driver 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

1. Opening

A. Meeting called to order at 6:43 p.m.

Ms. Goller led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

B. Acting District Clerk

Motion to appoint Michael Harrington as the Acting District Clerk during Executive Session.

Motion by Nina Lanci, second by Marion Blane.

Final Resolution: Motion Approved

Yes: Nina Lanci, Nancy Kaplan, Melissa Cmar-Grote, Marion Blane, Janet Goller, Gina Piskin, Edward Corona, Megan C Ryan

C. Executive Session

Motion to Convene into Executive Session to discuss a student incident, Board of Education school visits, late transportation requests, audit, policy and specific human resources items.

Motion by Nancy Kaplan, second by Melissa Cmar-Grote.

Final Resolution: Motion Approved

Yes: Nina Lanci, Nancy Kaplan, Melissa Cmar-Grote, Marion Blane, Janet Goller, Gina Piskin, Edward Corona, Megan C Ryan

D. Reconvene to Public Session

Motion to reconvene into Public Session at 7:34 p.m.

Motion by Megan C Ryan, second by Nancy Kaplan.

Final Resolution: Motion Approved

Yes: Nina Lanci, Nancy Kaplan, Melissa Cmar-Grote, Marion Blane, Janet Goller, Gina Piskin, Edward Corona, Megan C Ryan

E. Pledge of Allegiance

Ms. Goller led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Ms. Goller asked for a moment of silence to remember Gina Pellettiere and Beatrice Ferrari and the entire Farmingdale school district community, saying they are all in our thoughts and prayers and we will continue to do everything we can to support them.

2. Approval of Minutes

A. Board of Education Meeting Minutes 9/6/23

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education approve the minutes from the September 6, 2023 Board of Education meeting.

Motion by Gina Piskin, second by Nancy Kaplan.

Final Resolution: Motion Approved

Yes: Nina Lanci, Nancy Kaplan, Melissa Cmar-Grote, Marion Blane, Janet Goller, Gina Piskin, Edward Corona, Megan C Ryan

3. Approval of Treasurer's Report

A. Treasurer's Report

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education approve the Treasurer's Report dated August 31, 2023.

Motion by Nina Lanci, second by Marion Blane.

Final Resolution: Motion Approved

Yes: Nina Lanci, Nancy Kaplan, Melissa Cmar-Grote, Marion Blane, Janet Goller, Gina Piskin, Edward Corona, Megan C Ryan

4. Superintendent's Report

Mr. Harrington welcomed everyone to the meeting and discussed the racial incident that occurred during the Kennedy High School Girl's Junior Varsity volleyball game. He said there was a terrible incident where a Kennedy student said a racial comment towards players of the Elmont School District's team. He said that the game was immediately stopped and the student was removed however, the damage was already done. He said that he will be visiting the Elmont SD tomorrow to offer a formal apology and to discuss ways to build bridges between our communities. Mr. Harrington apologized to the Bellmore-Merrick community and said the actions of one person do not reflect the care and compassion of our district and all of the work that we do to build a culture of inclusivity and belonging. He said we will not tolerate acts of hate or ignorance and these actions result in significant consequences with a plan for restorative practices. Mr. Harrington said that we will continue to work on these lessons and that we will do whatever we need to do to make sure that this is a wonderful place.

Mr. Harrington said that it was an incredible month filled with highlights of student and staff achievements. He said that the Niche ratings have been released with Bellmore-Merrick CHSD ranking 28th nationwide and 8th in New York State! He also said that we have learned about a special recognition which will be announced at a future Board of Education meeting but mentioned that we were just recognized by the College Board with Kennedy receiving Platinum Honor and Calhoun and Mepham receiving Gold Honor. He said that we excel because of our amazing students and teachers and we are very proud to be part of this district. Mr. Harrington said that tonight's agenda is a reflection of what an incredible district this is and he congratulated everyone being honored tonight.

A. Award of Honor Presentation - National Merit Semifinalists

Calhoun High School

Joseph Darcourt

Fiona Wong

Kennedy High School

Sara Maltempi

Avidan Moont

Cole Wasserman

Mepham High School

Matthew Keegan

Matt Yang

Dr. Kaplan presented the students with Award of Honor Certificates and said the National Merit Scholarship Program is an academic competition for recognition and scholarships that began in 1955. High school students enter the National Merit program by taking the Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying test. The semifinalists represent the highest scoring one percent of the students nationwide who took the PSAT. This year, about 95 percent of the 16,000 students that qualified as semifinalists are expected to attain finalist standing. Finalists will be notified in February 2024 and scholarship winners will be announced in the Spring of 2024. Congratulations to all!

B. Award of Honor Presentation - BuildOn Club - Mepham High School

Current Students:

Samantha Bataan

Paul D'Auria

Kyle Friedrich

Sophia Green

Matthew Keegan

Ellie Kertzner (Co-President of Mepham chapter)

Alex Luft

Jeremy Lazaar
Reese Ryan (Co-President of Mepham chapter)

Past students (Mepham alumni) who went to Senegal:

Adhith Jacob
Amritha Jacob
Anjali Jacob
Abigail Maiello
Damaris Rivas

Ms. Goller presented the students with Award of Honor certificates and said the BuildOn Club is a Service Learning Program where students empower villages in some of the world's economically poorest countries to take the lead in bringing education to their communities. In the past years, the BuildOn club raised funds to build new schools in Senegal (2019) and Nicaragua (2022). Recently, they raised enough funds (over \$50K) to build another new school in the small agricultural village of Gapp Diop, Senegal. Fourteen past and current Mepham students flew to Senegal for eight days. While there, they started to build the school alongside the community, stayed with host families, and participated in local traditions including dance ceremonies, a mock wedding, watched a wrestling competition, and dressing in local garb. Co-President, Ellie Kertzner said of the experience, "It was so much more than simply building a school. We worked alongside the community, shared, laughed and played with them. We gave their community the gift of education and opportunity, and they taught us so many important lessons in return. It was a rewarding, arduous, eye-opening and emotional experience."

C. Award of Honor Presentation - Voices for Truth and Humanity Essay Contest Winner, Nickolas Mascary - Calhoun High School

Nickolas Mascary was not present to accept his award of honor certificate but Ms. Piskin said congratulations to Calhoun senior Nickolas Mascary for his outstanding achievement in winning the "Voices for Truth and Humanity Essay Contest." This prestigious competition was established with the aim of providing high school students a platform to showcase their knowledge of the Holocaust, and their understanding of society's role in fighting hate and preventing future genocides. Participants were tasked with addressing the following thought-provoking prompts: *"What do you believe are the lessons societies should learn from the Holocaust, and how do you think those lessons are still relevant and applicable today? What might be some examples from history and today that can help us better understand these events? What inspired you to participate in this essay contest?"* Nick learned about the Holocaust and other genocides in a year-long course called *Voices of the Past*. In his essay, Nick wrote, "After witnessing acts of bias and prejudice in my surroundings, I assumed the role of President in my school's Racial Equity Club, creating opportunities for open forums and discussions about race and the holocaust. Meeting Holocaust survivors like Leo Ullman strengthened my resolve to educate others about the largest atrocity in history and work towards preventing another Holocaust." From a pool of entrants in Nassau County, three exceptional winners were chosen, each of whom received a well-deserved \$1000 award.

D. Award of Honor Presentation - Charlie Pennington, Custodian - Mepham High School

Ms. Lanci presented Charlie Pennington with an award of Honor certificate and said on Wednesday, August 8th Charlie Pennington, Head Custodian at Mepham High School, was directly responsible for extinguishing a fire in the Mepham kitchen. Mr. Pennington had been landscaping the grounds when a call came over the radio that the fire alarm was going off and smoke was pouring out of the kitchen area. Mr. Pennington relied upon his thirty plus years of training and service as a volunteer firefighter to quickly and safely eliminate the threat. Due to Mr. Pennington's quick thinking and selfless actions, no one was injured in the incident and there was no permanent damage to the building. This is just an example of the type of person he is, and the way in which he has dedicated himself to the Mepham community at large. Thank you, Mr. Pennington for your years of service and for always going above and beyond Mepham and the district.

E. Future Dates

Mr. Harrington mentioned the future dates and said he looks forward to the return of student representatives and board appreciation at next month's meeting.

October 6	Emergency Preparedness Drill-Early Dismissal
October 7	Mepham Pirate Fest & Homecoming
October 9	Columbus Day - Schools Closed
October 12	Fall Guidance Program 9 th Grade
October 13	Calhoun On Tour Evening of Improv
October 17	High School World Language Honor Society Induction
October 24	High School Math Honor Society Inductions
October 27-28	Calhoun On-Tour Shakespeare Production
November 1	Board of Education Meeting

5. Public Comments-Agenda Items Only

A. Guidelines to Public Comments-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.

There were no public comments.

6. Superintendent's Recommendations

A. Policy No. 0100 - Non-Discrimination and Equal Opportunity (Revised)

Resolution: BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education accept the following policy for a second reading: Policy No. 0100-Non-Discrimination and Equal Opportunity (Revised)

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education approve by consent agenda items 6.A through 8.I.

Motion by Nancy Kaplan, second by Nina Lanci.

Final Resolution: Motion Approved

Yes: Nina Lanci, Nancy Kaplan, Melissa Cmar-Grote, Marion Blane, Janet Goller, Gina Piskin, Edward Corona, Megan C Ryan

B. Policy No. 0110.2 - Sexual Harassment in the Workplace (Revised)

Resolution: BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education accept the following policy for a second reading: Policy No. 0110.2 - Sexual Harassment in the Workplace (Revised)

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education approve by consent agenda items 6.A through 8.I.

Motion by Nancy Kaplan, second by Nina Lanci.

Final Resolution: Motion Approved

Yes: Nina Lanci, Nancy Kaplan, Melissa Cmar-Grote, Marion Blane, Janet Goller, Gina Piskin, Edward Corona, Megan C Ryan

C. Policy No. 0115 - Harassment, Bullying and Discrimination (Revised)

Resolution: BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education accept the following policy for a second reading: Policy No. 0115 - Harassment, Bullying and Discrimination (Revised)

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education approve by consent agenda items 6.A through 8.I.

Motion by Nancy Kaplan, second by Nina Lanci.

Final Resolution: Motion Approved

Yes: Nina Lanci, Nancy Kaplan, Melissa Cmar-Grote, Marion Blane, Janet Goller, Gina Piskin, Edward Corona, Megan C Ryan

D. Special Education Report

Resolution: BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education approve the following special education placements as recommended by the Committee on Special Education: 000010674 000011039 000012888 000013022 000013201 000013298 000512955 000513443 131261607 131262390 131264694 192010473 202300028 202300040 202300051 202300096 232411430

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education approve by consent agenda items 6.A through 8.I.

Motion by Nancy Kaplan, second by Nina Lanci.

Final Resolution: Motion Approved

Yes: Nina Lanci, Nancy Kaplan, Melissa Cmar-Grote, Marion Blane, Janet Goller, Gina Piskin, Edward Corona, Megan C Ryan

7. Human Resources Report

A. Human Resources Report 10/4/23

Resolution: BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education approves the Human Resources Report for October 4, 2023.

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education approve by consent agenda items 6.A through 8.I.

Motion by Nancy Kaplan, second by Nina Lanci.

Final Resolution: Motion Approved

Yes: Nina Lanci, Nancy Kaplan, Melissa Cmar-Grote, Marion Blane, Janet Goller, Gina Piskin, Edward Corona, Megan C Ryan

8. Business and Finance

A. Bills and Corresponding Warrant dated 10/4/23

The Board of Education reviewed the bills and corresponding warrant.

B. Budget Summary

The Board of Education reviewed the budget summary.

C. Indoor Worker/Student Occupied Space

Resolution: 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.

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education approve by consent agenda items 6.A through 8.I.

Motion by Nancy Kaplan, second by Nina Lanci.

Final Resolution: Motion Approved

Yes: Nina Lanci, Nancy Kaplan, Melissa Cmar-Grote, Marion Blane, Janet Goller, Gina Piskin, Edward Corona, Megan C Ryan

D. Health and Welfare Services Agreement - Lawrence SD

Resolution: BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education hereby authorizes the President of the Board of Education and the Superintendent of Schools to execute contracts to provide health and welfare services to specific students who reside in the Bellmore-Merrick CHSD and attend a non-public school in one of the following school districts for the 2022-2023 School Year: Lawrence School District.

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education approve by consent agenda items 6.A through 8.I.

Motion by Nancy Kaplan, second by Nina Lanci.

Final Resolution: Motion Approved

Yes: Nina Lanci, Nancy Kaplan, Melissa Cmar-Grote, Marion Blane, Janet Goller, Gina Piskin, Edward Corona, Megan C Ryan

E. Obsolete Equipment - Desk

Resolution: BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education declare obsolete and approve the disposal of a teacher's desk at Merrick Avenue Middle School.

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education approve by consent agenda items 6.A through 8.I.

Motion by Nancy Kaplan, second by Nina Lanci.

Final Resolution: Motion Approved

Yes: Nina Lanci, Nancy Kaplan, Melissa Cmar-Grote, Marion Blane, Janet Goller, Gina Piskin, Edward Corona, Megan C Ryan

F. Architectural Services-BBS Architects

Resolution: BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education approve an agreement with BBS Architects, Landscape Architects, & Engineers P.C. to provide architectural services for a period of one (1) year commencing July 1, 2023 and ending June 30, 2024 and authorize its President to execute said agreement on behalf of the Board.

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education approve by consent agenda items 6.A through 8.I.

Motion by Nancy Kaplan, second by Nina Lanci.

Final Resolution: Motion Approved

Yes: Nina Lanci, Nancy Kaplan, Melissa Cmar-Grote, Marion Blane, Janet Goller, Gina Piskin, Edward Corona, Megan C Ryan

G. Capital Asset & Property Insurance Reporting-CBIZ Valuation Group

Resolution: BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education approve an agreement with CBIZ Valuation Group, LLC for capital asset and property insurance reporting services for fiscal year ending 6/30/23 at an annual cost of \$4,050 and authorize the Assistant Superintendent of Business to sign the agreement.

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education approve by consent agenda items 6.A through 8.I.

Motion by Nancy Kaplan, second by Nina Lanci.

Final Resolution: Motion Approved

Yes: Nina Lanci, Nancy Kaplan, Melissa Cmar-Grote, Marion Blane, Janet Goller, Gina Piskin, Edward Corona, Megan C Ryan

H. Special Counsel - Quatela Chimeri PLLC

Resolution: BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education appoint Quatel Chimeri PLLC, as Special Counsel concerning the Bellmore-Merrick Central High School District's lease of real property to Nassau BOCES.

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education approve by consent agenda items 6.A through 8.I.

Motion by Nancy Kaplan, second by Nina Lanci.

Final Resolution: Motion Approved

Yes: Nina Lanci, Nancy Kaplan, Melissa Cmar-Grote, Marion Blane, Janet Goller, Gina Piskin, Edward Corona, Megan C Ryan

I. Ice Arena Agreement - National Rink Management

Resolution: BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education approve an amendment to the September 2008 National Rink Management Corp. agreement.

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education approve by consent agenda items 6.A through 8.I.

Motion by Nancy Kaplan, second by Nina Lanci.

Final Resolution: Motion Approved

Yes: Nina Lanci, Nancy Kaplan, Melissa Cmar-Grote, Marion Blane, Janet Goller, Gina Piskin, Edward Corona, Megan C Ryan

9. Old/New Business

Ms. Goller congratulated Dr. Joe Famularo, Superintendent of Bellmore School District on being named the 2024 NYS Superintendent of the Year adding that everyone is very proud of him.

10. Correspondence

A. Correspondence

Ms. Goller said The Board of Education did not receive mailed correspondence but received one email between September 1, 2023 and September 30, 2023.

11. Public Comments

A. Guidelines to Public Comments-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.

There were no public comments.

12. Potential Executive Session

A. The Board of Education did not enter into Executive Session.

13. Adjournment

A. Motion to Adjourn

Motion to adjourn at 8:04 p.m.

Motion by Megan C Ryan, second by Melissa Cmar-Grote.

Final Resolution: Motion Approved

Yes: Nina Lanci, Nancy Kaplan, Melissa Cmar-Grote, Marion Blane, Janet Goller, Gina Piskin, Edward Corona, Megan C Ryan