

MINUTES OF THE BELLMORE-MERRICK CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT  
BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING October 3, 2018

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A regular meeting of the Bellmore-Merrick Central High School District Board of Education was held on Wednesday evening, October 3, 2018, in the Board of Education Conference Room of the Administrative Offices at the Brookside School at 1260 Meadowbrook Road, North Merrick, New York.

The following members of the Board of Education were present:

Nina Lanci, President  
Wendy Gargiulo, Vice President  
Marion Blane  
Edward Corona  
John Ferrara  
Janet Goller  
Dr. Nancy Kaplan  
Gina Piskin

Also present:

John DeTommaso, Superintendent of Schools  
Dr. Mara Bollettieri, Deputy Superintendent of Personnel  
Kate Freeman, Assistant Superintendent for Business  
Michael Harrington, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment  
Eric Arlin, 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 Instructional and Technology Services  
Emily Paluseo, Assistant Director of Special Education and Pupil Services  
Jon Simpkins, Director of School Facilities and Operations  
Tom Volpe, Transportation Supervisor/Health and Safety Coordinator  
Christopher Powers, School Attorney  
Pattianne Guccione, District Clerk

**CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 8:05 p.m. Mrs. Lanci, Board of Education President, led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**MINUTES**

Ms. Gargiulo moved that the Board of Education approve the minutes from the September 5, 2018 meeting. Mr. Ferrara seconded and the motion was carried 7-1-0 with Ms. Blane abstaining.

**TREASURER'S REPORT**

Ms. Piskin moved that the Board of Education approve the Treasurer's Report, dated August 31, 2018. Ms. Gargiulo seconded and the motion was carried 8-0.

**SUPERINTENDENT'S  
REPORT**

Mr. DeTommaso began by welcoming the student representatives to the meeting. Tonight's first award is for Tyler Bissoondial, an 8<sup>th</sup> grade student at Grand Avenue Middle School.

**2018 NATIONAL BROADCOM  
MASTERS COMPETITION**

Dr. Kaplan presented an Award of Honor certificate to Tyler Bissoondial of for being selected as one of only thirty finalists nationwide at the 2018 National Broadcom Masters Competition for his project entitled “MicroRNA-156 Regulates Gametophyte to Sporophyte Development and Sensitivity to Salinity in *Ceratopteris Richardii*”. Tyler is a very well rounded and talented young man. Excelling in all of his academics ranging from orchestra to science research, Tyler puts forth his best effort in all that he does. He enjoys helping others and is the first student in the research club to become a mentor during his seventh grade year. Tyler has had the fortunate opportunity of doing research in a molecular biology laboratory with his father since the fourth grade. He has a sincere love and breadth of knowledge of science that transcends the average 8<sup>th</sup> grader. His hard work and dedication has awarded him a \$500 prize and he will be traveling to Washington DC later this month on an all-expense paid trip. Furthermore, Grand Avenue MS will be awarded \$1000 to be used for STEM activities. Dr. Kaplan congratulated Tyler on behalf of the Board.

**2018 NATIONAL MERIT  
SCHOLARSHIP  
SEMIFINALIST**

Ms. Lanci presented an Award of Honor certificate to John Berry for qualifying as a semi-finalist in the 2018 National Merit Scholarship Program. John is constantly looking to learn new things and improve upon his knowledge base. John is skilled and discerning in the areas of problem solving, critical thinking and analytical thought. An athlete as well as a scholar, John has run distance events as a member of both indoor and outdoor track for all four years of high school and has also played defense on the junior varsity and varsity soccer teams for each of those years. John has invested his time outside of school with the Boy Scouts and is currently working toward achieving Eagle Scout status. In addition to John’s challenging academic transcript, excellent standardized test scores, and generous community service, he earned acceptance into four Honor Societies. Ms. Lanci congratulated John on behalf of the Board.

Mr. Corona presented and Award of Honor certificate to Kyle Ednie for qualifying as a semi-finalist in the 2018 National Merit Scholarship Program. Kyle is a humble, bright and resilient student. Kyle adds invaluable insight and an infectious enthusiasm to every classroom he enters. He is rising to the demands of three Advance Placement courses, two college-level courses, and a fourth laboratory science in physics. He will be graduating in June as a Gilder Lehrmann Scholar, successfully completing a sequence of courses that promotes the love and learning of American History. He has been inducted into three honor societies and serves as the Treasurer of Mephram’s Science Club. On behalf of the board, Mr. Corona congratulated Kyle.

Dr. Kaplan presented an Award of Honor certificate to James Hayes for qualifying as a semi-finalist in the 2018 National Merit Scholarship Program. James Hayes is an intelligent, thoughtful and respectful young man who exhibits a true love for learning across all disciplines. He could not be more enthusiastic about his Advance Science Research project in which he is creating a 3D printing mechanism that will remove contaminants from waste water. He looks forward to submitting this impressive project to the Regeneron competition this fall. He has been the Vice President of Science Club for the last two years, and is a member of the Key Club. Dr. Kaplan congratulated James on behalf of the Board.

**2018 NATIONAL HISPANIC  
MERIT SCHOLARSHIP  
SEMIFINALIST**

Ms. Piskin presented an Award of Honor certificate to Gabriela Daza for qualifying as a semi-finalist in the 2018 National Hispanic Merit Scholarship Program. Gabriela represents the height and rigor that Bellmore-Merrick has to offer by earning the titles of: President of the Class of 2019, Class of 2019 Salutatorian, Varsity Kickline Captain and St. John's University "Women in Science". She is in all honors, advanced and six Advanced Placement courses while studying two world languages, Spanish and French. She runs spring track, competes with the Mathematics team, is a peer tutor and serves the community with the Leo's Club and World of Difference. She pours her whole heart into everything she does and is a true role model for younger students to emulate. Ms. Piskin extended congratulations to Gabriela on behalf of the Board.

Ms. Goller spoke about Sidra Naheed, a 2018 National Merit Scholarship Semi-Finalist who was not present to accept her Award of Honor certificate. Sidra has always been motivated by scholarship and service. She is an industrious worker in the classroom and a generous leader in her school community. She has an all Advance Placement schedule and is the President of the Key Club and HOPE (Helping Our Planet Earth) club. She revamped the HOPE website and made recycling efforts more efficient throughout the building. She has won awards in the annual Spanish National Exams and taken the AMC Mathematics Competition Exams each year of high school. Ms. Goller and the Board extended their congratulations to Sidra.

Mr. DeTommaso stated that seventeen students received National Merit Commendation. Those students were: Julia Caponi and Nicole Farina from Mephram High School; Bridget Carroll, Thomas Gianuzzi, Sanya Huda, Edward Lada, Faith Maldonado, Michael Piacquadio and Allison Trabold from Calhoun High School and David Beigelman, Justin Cacciatore, Kevin Ivers, Jason Lehrfeld, Jake Levine, Jacob Schweitzer, Whitney Sussman and Megan Zhou from John F. Kennedy High School.

**NYS SCHOOL MUSIC  
ASSOCIATION (NYSSMA) –  
ALL STATE**

Ms. Gargiulo announced that four students have been selected to participate in the New York State School Music Association (NYSSMA) All State Music Festival. The All-State Performance Ensemble are honors groups comprised of the top students from music departments across the state.

Ms. Gargiulo presented an Award of Honor certificate to Maria Fazio for being selected for the All-State Treble Chorus. This is Maria's second selection to All-State. She is a member of the select Concert Choir and TriM Music Honor Society and was a three-year member of Crescendo.

Ms. Gargiulo presented an Award of Honor certificate to Adam Gokcan for being selected for the All-State Symphonic Band. Adam was also accepted as an All-State musician in his junior year. He has been a regular All-County musician over the past six years, frequently playing alto sax in the jazz ensemble. He is a member of the Calhoun Wind Ensemble and Jazz Band.

Ms. Gargiulo presented and Award of Honor certificate to Adriana Guarascio for being selected to the All-State String Orchestra. Adriana has earned the distinction of being selected for the All-State Orchestra for the past two years. She is first chair of the viola section and President of Mephams' Orchestra. She plays with the Jazz Band and Pit Orchestra and has challenged herself by enrolling in the Wind Ensemble this year playing the bassoon. Adriana is also in the All-County Orchestra and the Long Island String Festival Association Orchestra.

Ms. Gargiulo presented an Award of Honor certificate to Jeffrey Langer for being selected to the All-State Wind Ensemble. Jeffrey plays oboe in the Wind Ensemble and is a member of the Concert Choir and Skull and Bones Drama Club. He plays at the Manhattan School of Music Pre-College and New York Youth Symphony. This year he is currently mentoring two freshman oboe players to help keep the oboe culture at Mephams alive and vibrant.

Ms. Gargiulo congratulated all of the students for being selected to the All-State Music Association on behalf of the Board.

**NYS SCHOOL MUSIC  
ASSOCIATION (NYSSMA) –  
ALL NATIONAL**

Ms. Gargiulo presented an Award of Honor certificate to Benjamin Shaposhnikov for being selected to the All-National Symphony Orchestra where he will perform with other talented students from across the United States at the All-National Honors Ensembles

Concert at Disney's Coronado Springs Resort in Orlando, FL in November. Ben has pursued a strong college prep program and excelled while also working tirelessly on his extraordinary musical talent as a trumpet player. He is trained in classical and jazz genres and has been part of the distinguished Julliard Pre-College Program for three years. Ms. Gargiulo congratulated Ben on behalf of the Board.

Mr. DeTommaso congratulated all of the students on their tremendous achievements and amazing talent. He is very proud of the kids, their teachers for bringing it out of the students and the parents and guardians for encouraging and supporting the students with their dreams and goals. He expressed gratitude and congratulated everyone involved.

## **STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES**

Mathew Alexander from Meadowbrook Alternative Learning Program (MAP) thanked the faculty for the considering him for the position of Student Representative. He said that back to school was a success and that there are fourteen new students this year. He said that students at MAP are getting ready to start college applications. MAP students did a variety of things in honor of the United Nations World Peace Day. Back to school night for parents was a success. Students at MAP took a field trip to Jones Beach last week and had a great time. They will be going to Project Care this week and will work on individual and team growth.

Gabriela Daza from Mepham High School said she is proud to be the Student Representative this year and is looking forward to a busy and exciting year. Students at Mepham honored the victims of 9/11 with a moment of silence this year. They had their Homecoming and Pep Rally. She thanked everyone who attended the event and congratulated the homecoming queen. Mepham won the School Spirit Showdown with over 32,000 votes. She reminded everyone to fly a flag in honor of a friend or family member at the annual field of honor at Mepham. She congratulated the students for qualifying for the NYSSMA, the National Merit Semi-Finalists and Anthony Novello for his selection of finalist for the 2018 USA Football Heart of a Giant award. She congratulated the Valedictorian and said she has been selected Salutatorian. Students at Mepham are looking forward the year ahead.

Johnathan Mashal from John F. Kennedy High School congratulated the Valedictorian and Salutatorian. He congratulated the National Merit Scholarship and Commended students. JFK already has undergone changes this year with a new library and turf tennis courts. Students have been giving back to the community by participating in the Bridges Back to School Picnic. They also have been raising funds for cancer research, hurricane relief and UNICEF through various

events. Spirit week and homecoming will be starting October 9 ending with Pep Rally on October 12. Students are looking forward to a lot of exciting things in the year ahead.

Juliana Tirino from Calhoun High School congratulated the students recognized this evening and the Valedictorian and Salutatorian. She said that freshmen orientation went smoothly and it was full of excitement. They had a moment of silence for victims of 9/11 and collected toiletries for veterans. She said Gae Polisner, author of the summer reading book "The Memory of Things" visited the school. The Coltfest, Pep Rally and Homecoming was great with a big turnout and full of spirit. Challenge Day has had good feedback and it is great way to connect with students. The grand opening of the Counseling and Wellness Center was today and all of the appointments have been filled.

Mr. DeTommaso congratulated the Student Representatives on a job well done. He said that security upgrade over the years have been important but we are also working on mental health and are doing everything we can to secure our schools. We are opening our Counseling and Wellness Centers. They have extended hours to accommodate parents and students to discuss classes and any issues, including mental health issues. He said we are living in difficult times and emphasized that our district will never put anyone in harm's way. We work closely with the Nassau County Police Department and would never jeopardize safety. If you get an email from the Principal of any of our schools and it states that there was a non-credible threat, please be assured that it is non-credible and that we would never put the kids and staff in harm's way. He suggested to review the future dates and the exciting things coming up. Lastly, he recommends that everyone attend the plays and school events.

## **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

There were none on agenda items only.

Ms. Kaplan moved that the Board of Education accept the following resolution:

## **POLICY**

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education approve the following policies:

Policy No. 0110-Sexual Harassment (revised) (2<sup>nd</sup> reading)

Policy No. 0115-Bullying and Harassment (revised) (2<sup>nd</sup> reading)

Policy No. 1400-Public Complaints (2<sup>nd</sup> reading)

Policy No. 2340-Notice of Meetings (revised) (2<sup>nd</sup> reading)

Policy No. 4311.1-Display of the Flag (revised) (2<sup>nd</sup> reading)

Policy No. 5425-Automated External Defibrillator (revised) (1<sup>st</sup> reading)

Ms. Gargiulo seconded and the motion was carried 8-0.

Ms. Goller moved that the Board of Education accept the following resolution:

**DONATION**

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education accept the following donations for Kennedy High School with a value of \$14,439.85 from the JFK Alumni Association.

Ms. Blane seconded and the motion was carried 8-0.

Ms. Lanci thanked Dr. Morganstein and the Alumni Association.

Ms. Piskin moved that the Board of Education accept the following resolutions:

**SPECIAL EDUCATION**

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education approve the following recommendations for placement made by the Committee on Special Education: 000015657, 000511357, 000512573, 041630001, 043490001, 060720006, 062440005, 081930002, 090560014, 201700005, 201700156, 201700207, 201800049, 201800050, 201800110, 201800157, 370001247, 370001318, 992450044, 992450250, 999011288

**PERSONNEL**

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education approve the Superintendent of Schools' Personnel Report, dated October 3, 2018 as stated in the agenda.

Mr. Ferrara seconded and the motion was carried 8-0.

**BILLS**

The Board of Education reviewed the Summary of Bills, dated October 5, 2018, and the corresponding warrants.

**BUDGET SUMMARY**

The Board of Education reviewed the Budget Summary, dated September 30, 2018.

Dr. Kaplan moved that the Board of Education approve the following resolutions:

**BUDGET TRANSFER**

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education of the Bellmore-Merrick CHSD approve a budget transfer of up to \$100,000 for the 2017-2018 school year:

From: A2250 472 (Special Ed Tuition) \$100,000

To: A9901 950 (Inter-fund Transfer to Special Aid Fund) \$100,000

To cover Summer Special Ed Extended Program

**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 15<sup>th</sup> through April 15<sup>th</sup>, and 65°

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Fahrenheit from September 15<sup>th</sup> through October 14<sup>th</sup> and April 16<sup>th</sup> through May 31<sup>st</sup>.

**UNDUE BURDEN INDEPENDENT  
EVALUATOR HARDSHIP  
WAIVER**

WHEREAS, the Bellmore-Merrick Central High School District has an approved Annual Professional Performance Review ("APPR") Plan in place, effective for the 2018-2019 school year;

WHEREAS, the District has submitted an Undue Burden Independent Evaluator Hardship Waiver application to the State Education Department since compliance with the independent evaluator requirement would create an undue burden on the District;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education hereby approves and ratifies the District's October 3, 2018 submission of the Undue Burden Independent Evaluator Hardship Waiver application to the State Education Department;

**CORRECTIVE ACTION PLAN**

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education approve the Corrective Action Plan for the Internal Control Risk Assessment for the school year 2017-18.

**OBSOLETE SURPLUS  
PROPERTY**

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education approve the disposal of a 2000 GMC Utility Truck bearing VIN# 1GDJC34R6YG470625

**CONSULTANTS**

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education approve the hiring of a consultant, Perry Zirkel, to provide professional development on 10/31/2018 at a cost of \$3600.00, funded by the Curriculum Office.

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education approve the hiring of a consultant, The Love Group, to provide professional development on 11/6/2018 at a cost of \$5000.00, funded by the Curriculum Office.

**CONSTRUCTION CHANGE  
ORDER**

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education approve the following Flooring, Tennis Court & Parking Lot Reconstruction Change Orders at John F. Kennedy High School, SED No. 28-02-53-07-0-007-041: Change Order No. 3 in the add amount of \$6,650.00 for Graci Paving Associates, Inc., the Site Work Contract.

Ms. Gargiulo seconded and the motion was carried 8-0.

**CORRESPONDENCE**

Ms. Lanci said we did receive Board correspondence.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Robert Weshler from a community basketball league said that his organization was not made aware of the new facility use fee that is now being imposed for use of the Bellmore-Merrick CHSD facilities until after they registered over 500 children. His organization was not able to adjust their registration fee accordingly and will have a budget shortfall this year. He requests that the fees be implemented next year instead.

Mr. DeTommaso said we will look into the fees we are charging but we need security to be present at all events that take place in the district including Saturdays and Sundays.

Hali Herman stated that she received many emails and social media posts regarding a non-credible threat but she did not panic. She expressed gratitude to the Board of Education, Mr. DeTommaso and Ms. Hollings for ensuring everyone's safety. She appreciated the communications and shared the correct information with many people which helped quell the panic.

Donna Verapen said she is requesting two Eid holidays to be added the school calendar. In Queens, Eid holidays are acknowledged but in Bellmore-Merrick they are not which makes her choose between education and religious observance for her child.

Sabana Oza is requesting Eid holidays and handed in a supporting petition with approximately 100 signatures.

Lisa Katz said that the Wifi in Merrick Avenue Middle School does not work well and wants to know what can be done.

Mr. Innaco said that all new modems with access points in each classroom were installed throughout the entire district. He believes it's a logon issue, not a network issue. Mr. DeTommaso said the district will investigate.

Ms. Lanci said that last evening the Board had the opportunity to tour the new library at JFK and it is gorgeous, better than "Starbucks". The school looks good and the new Counseling and Wellness Center is great. The whole atmosphere has changed and it is very welcoming. The security went through the proper protocol. She said the Board was very impressed and thanked the entire staff. They will be visiting the remaining schools soon.

Ms. Gargiulo said in response to Ms. Herman's comments about the non-credible threat, that it is much more productive for parents to email or contact the Principal of the school rather than listen to social media. The rumor-mill was at an all-time high and to please in the future go directly to the source for the correct information.

**OLD/NEW BUSINESS**

There was none.

**ADJOURNMENT**

On a motion by Dr. Kaplan, seconded by Mr. Ferrara and carried 8-0, the Board of Education meeting was adjourned at 9:08 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Pattianne Guccione  
District Clerk

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<sup>i</sup> Original minutes stated that Mr. Weshler was from the Bellmore-Merrick Basketball League.