

MINUTES OF THE BELLMORE-MERRICK CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING NOVEMBER 4, 2020

Page 1

A regular meeting of the Bellmore-Merrick Central High School District Board of Education was held on Wednesday evening, November 4, 2020, in the Auditorium 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:

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

Also present:

John DeTommaso, Superintendent of Schools
Dr. Mara Bollettieri, Deputy Superintendent of Personnel
Mikaela Coni, 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 Administrative & Instructional Technology and Data Protection/Security
Emily Paluseo, 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 Board of Education met in Executive Session at 6:23 p.m. to discuss personnel matters, audit reports and intramural sports.

The meeting was called to order by Ms. Piskin, Board President at 8:18 p.m.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

On a **MOTION** Ms. Lanci seconded by Mr. Corona and carried 8-0 the Board of Education approved the minutes from the October 7, 2020 meeting.

IV. TREASURER'S REPORT

On a **MOTION** by Ms. Blane seconded by Ms. Goller and carried 8-0, the Board of Education approved the Treasurer's Report dated September 30, 2020.

V. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

A. **School Board Recognition**

Mr. DeTommaso welcomed everyone and said that the Central High School District always celebrates the School Board in November and we would normally honor the Board of Education with a big presentation, but this year we have to do things differently due to

COVID-19. He thanked the Board of Education for their partnership, leadership and guidance. Mr. DeTommaso said that he hopes that as things improve we can bring back the entertainment and honor them, as we normally would have.

Edward Weisband Distinguished Alumni Award for Public Service or Contribution to Public Affairs

Dr. David Goldberg – Social Studies Teacher at Calhoun

Mr. Corona congratulated Dr. Goldberg for receiving this prestigious award and thanked Dr. Goldberg for his passion and drive and for instilling in students a sense of service.

Mr. DeTommaso also congratulated Dr. Goldberg and mentioned that an Award of Honor Certificate will be presented to him.

Mr. DeTommaso said we have been back in school for almost three months and things continue to go well due to many factors. He thanked the entire staff for working hard every day and thanked the kids for doing an amazing job wearing masks and hand sanitizing. Mr. DeTommaso mentioned that although we have had and will continue to have cases, our contact tracing is outstanding and the Nassau County Health Department has said that it has made us a model district on how to contact trace. Mr. DeTommaso thanked the Nassau County Health Department, Dr. Eisenstein and Dr. Buckman for the work that they do and for being so helpful. He also commended the building administrators for all of their hard work. Mr. DeTommaso said that a State of the School and a State of the District email was sent home and we will continue to do so to keep families informed. He reminded everyone that while there does not seem to be large rates of infection from school due to the use of masks and barriers, he urged everyone to continue taking precautions when they are not in school. Mr. DeTommaso shared that he has been informed about parties taking place outside of school, and in the event that we would need to contact trace, it could spiral into hundreds of kids being quarantined. He again thanked the staff and students for doing a great job.

Mr. DeTommaso said that there are some wonderful things going on in the schools, such as an outdoor Shakespeare play at Kennedy High School, intramural sports, the kids cooking in the culinary program and BMB still broadcasting which all gives everyone a sense of normalcy. He said that we have started intramural sports and the Board of Education has just approved a second round of low risk intramural sports to begin on November 16th. Mr. DeTommaso mentioned that the District was asked to complete a survey from New York State Public High School Athletic Association (NYSPHSAA) - Section VIII to determine if we would support low/moderate sports to commence in January. He stressed that the District fully supports the return of sports and completed the survey stating such.

B. Future Dates

November 5	Middle School 6 th Grade Curriculum Orientation Night
November 11	Veteran's Day – Schools Closed
November 12	High School Parent-Teacher Conferences Afternoon/Evening – Half Day for High School Students
November 17	High School National Honor Society Induction
November 19	Middle School Parent-Teacher Conferences Afternoon/Evening – Half Day for Middle School Students
November 26-27	Thanksgiving Day Recess – Schools Closed
December 1	High School Parent Orientation
December 2	Board of Education Meeting

VI. PUBLIC COMMENTS – *Agenda Items Only*

Nicole Devlin a student at Calhoun High School asked if the District would push for sports with NYSPHSAA Section VIII.

Mr. DeTommaso said that the District has put pressure on NYSPHSAA Section VIII already by completing the survey. He added that as long as the infections rate continue to stay down, he hopes and believes that Sports will begin, but we have to wait for the decision to be made by the Governor.

Mr. Caballero assured the students that the District favors sports (and is pushing for it), but again, the decision will ultimately come from the Governor.

Dr. Kaplan asked if intramural sports takes place inside or outside and Mr. DeTommaso said that they take place outside.

VII. SUPERINTENDENT’S RECOMMENDATIONS

On a **MOTION** by Ms. Lanci seconded by Ms. Blane and carried 8-0, the Board of Education approved by a consent agenda items VII.A through VII.C.2.

A. Policy

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education accept the following policy for a first reading:

Policy No. 6742 - Procurement: Uniform Grant Guidance for Federal Awards (New)

B. 2021-2022 School Budget Process

1. Budget Calendar

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education approve the 2021-2022 Budget Calendar.

2. Date of Budget Vote

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education approve the Bellmore-Merrick Central High School District Annual Budget Vote for the 2021-2022 School Year be held on Tuesday, May 18, 2021.

3. Registration and Voting Costs

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education approve the Bellmore-Merrick Central High School District sharing budget voter registration and voting costs with each component district when the budget vote for the Central High School District and the component districts are held on the same day.

4. BOCES Budget Vote/Trustee Election – Tuesday, April 20, 2021

5. Annual Public Hearing – Wednesday, May 5, 2021

C. Special Education

1. BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education approve the revised Special Education vendors for School Year 2020-2021.

2. BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education approve the following Special Education placements as recommended by the Committee on Special Education (CSE): 000012210, 000512130, 000512404, 000514076, 081900002, 131264473, 201700032, 201700156, 201900148, 202000063, 202000067, 202111082, 370001431, 370002031 and 999011197.

Ms. Piskin changed the order of the agenda and moved the Personnel Report to the end of the meeting.

IX. BUSINESS AND FINANCE

On a **MOTION** by Ms. Goller, seconded by Dr. Kaplan and carried 8-0, the Board of Education approved by a consent agenda items IX.A through IX.F.

A. Bills and Corresponding Warrants – November 4, 2020

The Board of Education reviewed the Summary of Bills and the corresponding warrants.

B. Bids

The Board of Education approved the bids as stated in the agenda.

C. Budget Summary – October 31, 2020

The Board of Education reviewed the Budget Summary

D. Audit Report

1. BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education accept the Audit Report of Cullen and Danowski, LLP, including the accountant's opinion, financial statements and management letters, for the school year ended June 30, 2020.
2. BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education approve the Corrective Action Plan for the Annual External Audit for the School Year 2019-2020.

E. Memorandum of Agreement

1. BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education of the Bellmore-Merrick Central High School District hereby approves and ratifies the attached Memorandum of Agreement dated this 17th day of October 2020 by and between the negotiation representatives of the Civil Service Employees Association, Inc., Local 1000, AFSCME, AFL-CIO – Nassau Educational Local 865 Unit III – Custodial/Cafeteria and the negotiation representatives of the Bellmore-Merrick Central High School District.
2. BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education of the Bellmore-Merrick Central High School District hereby approves and ratifies the attached Memorandum of Agreement dated this 4th day of November 2020 by and between the negotiation representatives of the Bellmore-Merrick United Secondary Teachers, Inc. and the negotiating representatives of the Bellmore-Merrick Central High School District.

F. Lease Agreement Addendum TLC at Brookside, Inc.

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education approve a five (5) year lease agreement extension with TLC at Brookside, Inc. for rental of 7,768 square feet of the Brookside Administration Building for the period of November 1, 2020 to October 31, 2025.

X. OLD/NEW BUSINESS

There was no old or new business.

XI. CORRESPONDENCE

Ms. Piskin stated the Board of Education did receive correspondence.

XII. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Tara Casimano asked about lockers or jacket storage and the availability of the gymnasium as the winter approaches.

Mr. DeTommaso said that the administrative team has been in discussion regarding storing jackets and are working on a solution but he does not believe that lockers will become available to students. He explained that lockers would slow the movement in the hallways and that becomes a concern in contact tracing. With regard to the gym and gym activities, in the next few weeks the District will look further into how the school gyms are being used. He believes that there will be more use of the Brookside gymnasium going into the winter months.

VIII. PERSONNEL REPORT – November 4, 2020

Mr. DeTommaso announced that after thirty-three years of service, he will retire at the end of the school year. He said that this was a difficult decision because he loves Bellmore-Merrick and he puts his heart and soul in this District but he feels it is the right time to retire for him and his family. He thanked the Board of Education for their support and guidance. He also thanked the entire staff, adding that we have an incredible group of people here in this district, and they also put their heart and soul in everything. He also thanked the wonderful community. Mr. DeTommaso said that Bellmore-Merrick has been his home away from home. He met his wife here, had his kids here and suffered the loss of his father while he was here. He said that he puts 24 hours a day, 7 days a week into this position and his family has sacrificed either on vacation while taking calls or being up in the middle of the night. He said that his wife Heather is his best friend and an amazing teacher, and she has supported him every day. He said his kids have also always supported him. He said to his wife Heather, that they “have had quiet the journey together over the past thirty-three years...I couldn’t have done it without you, thank you and I love you.”

Ms. Piskin thanked Mr. DeTommaso for his passion and dedication. She said when he came here the District was already at a good level but he had a vision and he got it done. She said that the District is better because he was at the helm and we are the ones that got “the golden ticket” when he became Superintendent.

Ms. Lanci said that Mr. DeTommaso has the most compassion for kids. She remembered a story from his father about getting all of the toothpaste out and said we have gotten everything a lot out of Mr. DeTommaso. She said that she knows he works 24/7, and that it was our fortune that he came back here to finish out his career.

Ms. Goller remembered when the Board of Education interviewed Mr. DeTommaso and how thrilled she was that he was a candidate. She said it has been a privilege working with him. She said that she is sorry to see him go but said he is leaving a legacy and has made a difference in the lives of children. She has seen many changes over the years and it is because of Mr. DeTommaso’s love and commitment to the children.

Dr. Kaplan remembered asking Mr. DeTommaso one question during his interview, will you address mediocrity when you see it? She said there is nothing mediocre in this District because Mr. DeTommaso is simply outstanding.

Ms. Piskin said that the Board is delighted to announce that we did not have to look far for our next Superintendent of Schools. It is with great enthusiasm and complete confidence that we are appointing Mr. Michael Harrington to the position of Superintendent of Schools, effective July 1, 2021.

Ms. Piskin said that Mr. Harrington started his career as a Social Studies teacher for the Island Trees School District. He joined the Bellmore-Merrick Central High School District as an Assistant Principal at Sanford H. Calhoun High School and was later selected as Principal of Wellington C. Mepham High School. During this time, Mr. Harrington showed extraordinary leadership in all areas of school administration, including instructional oversight, personnel management, budget administration and fostering a strong school and community culture. Under his leadership, Mepham High School was highly successful in supporting student engagement and academic success. In 2017, Mr. Harrington was appointed to serve in the District's central office as Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment. During this time, Mr. Harrington has been intricately involved with every district-wide decision made in the district. He has proven he possesses the knowledge and ability to lead our District as we seek to provide the very best academic, co-curricular, extra-curricular and student wellness experience for all our students.

Ms. Piskin further said that Mr. Harrington is universally respected in the Long Island educational community where he has built a reputation for being a strong academic leader who is responsive to the many demands of a high achieving district. His knowledge of the Bellmore-Merrick Central High School District makes him uniquely qualified and he has been invaluable as he has created strong relationships with the component districts of our educational community. In his role as Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment, Mr. Harrington has gained a deep understanding of the diverse learning needs of every child within our community. Mr. Harrington has demonstrated this understanding as he has continued to refine our instructional program at all levels, and has provided necessary enhancements and supports to meet the needs of every child, and through his planning he has shown how a district can continue to meet the needs of every family and child under difficult circumstances.

Ms. Piskin said that the Board of Education looks forward to working with Mr. Harrington as our new Superintendent of Schools effective July 1, 2021 and are confident his impact will be extraordinary for the Bellmore-Merrick educational community.

On a **MOTION** by Ms. Lanci, seconded by Ms. Goller and carried 8-0, the Board of Education approved the following resolutions:

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education hereby appoints Michael Harrington as Superintendent of Schools effective July 1, 2021, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the President of the Board of Education is herewith authorized on behalf of the Board of Education to execute and Employment Agreement between the District and Michael Harrington, which Agreement has been reviewed and is herewith approved by the Board of Education.

Mr. Harrington said he is overwhelmed with gratitude and he promises to continue the ongoing partnership with the Board of Education, administration, staff and parents to continue on the path to excellence. He thanked his wife Michelle and his children Kelly and TJ for their support. He congratulated and thanked Mr. DeTommaso. He said that he believes that it is not about what a person says, it is about what they do that defines you. He said that Mr. DeTommaso has been a Superintendent of action for the past eight years and has brought the District into a golden age with his heart, passion and love. He wished Mr. DeTommaso a happy and healthy retirement and thanked him for his motivation and inspiration.

On a **MOTION** by Ms. Blane, seconded by Mr. Corona and carried 8-0, the Board of Education approved the Personnel Report dated November 4, 2020, items VIII.A through VII.I.

VIII. PERSONNEL REPORT – November 4, 2020

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

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. Blane and carried 8-0, the Board of Education meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Pattianne Guccione
District Clerk