

MINUTES OF THE BELLMORE-MERRICK CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT  
BOARD OF EDUCATION Regular Meeting September 25, 2013

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A regular meeting of the Bellmore-Merrick Central High School District Board of Education was held on Wednesday, September 25, 2013, in the auditorium at the Administrative Offices at the Brookside School at 1260 Meadowbrook Road, Merrick, New York 11566.

The following members of the Board of Education were present:

Susan Schwartz, President  
JoAnn DeLauter, Vice-President  
Marion Blane  
Janet Goller  
George Haile  
Dr. Nancy Kaplan  
Nina Lanci

The following Board of Education member was absent:

Dr. Matthew Kushner

Also present:

John DeTommaso, Superintendent of Schools  
Cynthia Strait Régal, Deputy Superintendent  
Dr. Mara Bollettieri, Assistant Superintendent of Personnel  
Caryn Blum, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum  
Eric Arlin, Director of Special Education and Pupil Personnel Services  
Joseph Innaco, Director of Instructional and Technology Services  
Saul Lerner, Director of Physical Education/Health/Athletics/Driver Education/Adult Ed  
Jon Simkins, Director of School Facilities and Operations  
Thomas Volpe, Transportation Supervisor/Health and Safety Coordinator  
Michelle Gagnon, Administrative Assistant I  
Christopher Powers, School Attorney  
Claire Neufeld, District Clerk

The meeting was called to order at 8:15 p.m. by Mrs. Schwartz. Mrs. Schwartz led everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**CALL TO ORDER**

Mrs. Lanci moved that the Board of Education approve the minutes from the August 21, 2013, September 11, 2013 and September 19, 2013 meetings. Mr. Haile seconded and the motion was carried 7-0.

**MINUTES**

Mrs. DeLauter moved that the Board of Education approve the Treasurer's Report, dated July 31, 2013. Mr. Haile seconded and the motion was carried 7-0.

**TREASURER'S  
REPORT**

Mr. DeTommaso welcomed everyone and stated every meeting has been filled with people and he appreciates everyone's passion and energy. Tonight we will recognize our truly wonderful and gifted students and also our newest members of the administrative team. He thanked everyone involved for a smooth opening day of school; the administrative teams working through the summer, teachers who came ready to teach and children who came ready to learn. He pointed out a new item entitled "Points of Pride" which lists the District's accomplishments and happenings is available and will be available each month.

**SUPERINTENDENT'S  
REPORT**

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**PRESENTATIONS**

Mr. DeTommaso announced we will begin tonight's presentations with recognizing our National Merit Scholarship semi-finalists.

**NATIONAL MERIT  
SCHOLARSHIP  
SEMI-FINALISTS**

Mr. Haile presented an Award of Honor certificate to Calhoun senior Max Mogel for having been selected as a National Merit Scholarship semi-finalist. Max is an AP Scholar with Distinction and a member of the Math, Science, Italian, and National Honor Societies. For his Advanced Science Research Project, he has worked alongside Dr. Xiu-Min Li this past summer at Mt. Sinai Hospital in her chemistry lab studying two experimental clinical trials of an herbal formula which will hopefully one day prevent anaphylactic reactions to food allergies. Having suffered from nut allergies from the age of five, Max has become a proud speaker and active member of FARE (Food Allergy Research and Education). Max is working to complete his Eagle Scout project. His strong organizational skills, responsible nature and optimistic attitude are an asset in everything that he does. On behalf of the Board of Education, Mr. Haile congratulated Max.

Dr. Kaplan presented an Award of Honor certificate to Kennedy senior Russell Miner for having been selected as a National Merit Scholarship semi-finalist. Russell is a math enthusiast and has been a member of Kennedy's math team for the past three years. The team has competed in the Nassau County Math Tournament and placed 14<sup>th</sup> in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade division and ninth in the 11<sup>th</sup> grade division. Russell received Honorable Mention in the Toshiba ExploraVision Science Competition, which is the world's largest K–12 science and technology competition, challenging students to work in teams and design innovative technologies that could exist in 20 years. Russell's extra-curricular activities include an interest in film and he plans on pursuing math as his major in college. Dr. Kaplan congratulated Russell on behalf of the Board of Education.

Mrs. DeLauter presented an Award of Honor certificate to Mepham senior Brian Keohane for having been selected as a National Merit Scholarship semi-finalist. Brian is one of the most successful students to pass through the halls of Mepham High School. His passion for science is evident in his successes as a member of the Science Olympiad Team. Last year, Brian was the winner of the 2013 Long Island Physics Olympics and was named US National Chemistry Olympiad National Finalist. It comes as no surprise that Brian has earned induction to virtually every honor society. Not only a leader in the classroom, he promotes a supportive educational environment and is a volunteer tutor for his classmates through the Peer Tutors program and makes presentations at the elementary schools with Athletes Helping Athletes. Brian is a three season varsity athlete on the track, cross country, and basketball teams. This year he is captain of both the track and cross country teams. He has also participated in several unique Mepham events including "So You Think You Can Dance?" and the Mr. Mepham pageant competition. Brian has devoted countless hours to service throughout the school and community and his sense of loyalty and compassion is limitless. On behalf of the Board of Education, Mrs. DeLauter congratulated Brian.

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Mrs. Lanci presented an Award of Honor certificate to Mepham senior Aaron Goldstein for having been selected as a National Merit Scholarship semi-finalist. Aaron has challenged himself with the most rigorous courses available to him. Aaron has been inducted into the Science, Spanish, English, Mathematics, and National Honor Societies and is an Advanced Placement (AP) Scholar with Distinction. He is a member of the Peer Tutoring Program and tutors underclassman in a variety of subject areas. Aaron's further dedication to his studies is evidenced by his participation in the prestigious Science Research Program. He has spent the past two summers working at the Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center in the Immunology Program. As part of his internship, he actively developed and conducted oncology research and presented his progress to the research team. Aaron also shares his passion for science by acting as a mentor for middle school students. As part of the Student Network of Cooperative Science, he meets with students every Friday afternoon assisting them in developing science research projects. In addition, he has also participated in the US National Chemistry Olympiad Competition. Aaron has not only sought out academic activities, but always finds ways to give back to his school and community. He is an active participant of organizations such as SADD, and Mepham's literary magazine "Fragments." His contributions to the school and community are truly limitless. He is an active member of the Peer Leadership program who has played an instrumental role in fundraising for Challenge Day and implementing "Pay it Forward Day." Mrs. Lanci congratulated Aaron on behalf of the Board of Education.

**NATIONAL MERIT  
SCHOLARSHIP  
SEMI-FINALISTS**

Mr. DeTommaso stated we will now recognize two students who achieved national recognition for their accomplishments.

Mr. Haile presented an Award of Honor certificate to Calhoun senior Lauren Lamonssoff for having been chosen by the National Association of Music Educators (NAfME) for the 2013 All National Honors Choir. Lauren will perform in Nashville, TN in late October, under the baton of award-winning composer and conductor, Rollo Dilworth. She has studied vocal music for eight years and was selected for All-County Chorus five times, once for All-County Vocal Jazz Ensemble. Last year, Lauren was selected as a NYSSMA All-State vocalist in the Women's Choir. She was also selected into the NAfME All-Eastern Honors Ensemble Mixed Choir in Hartford, CT, under the baton of world-renowned composer and conductor Z. Randall Stroepe. Lauren has also been chosen to perform under the baton of Eric Whitacre, Grammy-award winning composer and inventor of the world-famous Virtual Choir, of which she is a proud member, and will be performing at Avery Fisher Hall at Lincoln Center in March of 2014. Lauren is a member of the On-Tour Company, the Calhoun Choral Program and the Robe Management Committee for the Calhoun Concert Choir. Currently an apprentice, Lauren expects to receive full membership in Calhoun's chapter of the Tri-M International Music Honor Society in January. Lauren's goal is to become an orthodontist and currently works with Dr. David Sukoff in Merrick. She also enjoys studying her third foreign language, Italian and assists in tutoring ninth graders. On behalf of the Board, Mr. Haile congratulated Lauren.

**NATIONAL ASSOC.  
OF MUSIC  
EDUCATORS  
(NAfME)**

**NATIONAL ASSOC.  
OF MUSIC  
EDUCATORS  
(NAfME)  
(Continued)**

Mrs. Schwartz presented an Award of Honor certificate to Mepham senior Alana DeGregorio for having been chosen by the National Association of Music Educators ((NAfME) for the 2013 All National Honors Choir. Alana is one of only 37 New York State singers to be selected and will be performing at the Opryland Resort Hotel in Nashville, TN in late October. Alana has performed with New York State School Music Association (NYSSMA) All-County, NYSSMA All-State, the Mepham Vocal Jazz Choir, and the Mepham “Skull and Bones” Drama Program. In addition, she has performed as first flutist with the Metropolitan Youth Orchestra of New York and danced with the M & T Dance Unlimited Performance Company. She has been a four year member of Mepham’s Kick line team competing in both Long Island Regional and National Championships. Not only is Alana an accomplished musician, she is a member of the National, Spanish, Tri-M Music, and Thespian Honor Societies and has devoted many hours to community service activities such as baking for the homeless, SADD Walk, AARP performances, nursing home performances and the Bellmore Street Fair. Mrs. Schwartz congratulated Alana on behalf of the Board of Education.

Mr. DeTommaso added he wanted to congratulate the music teachers, Mr. Sardo and Mr. Mitchell, also.

**2013-2014 NATIONAL  
HISPANIC  
SCHOLARS  
RECOGNITION  
PROGRAM**

Dr. Kaplan presented an Award of Honor certificate to Mepham senior David Kormos for having been chosen as a scholar in the 2013-2014 National Hispanic Scholars Recognition Program. The Program was established in 1983 to identify outstanding Hispanic/Latino students. This year, approximately 5,300 Hispanic/Latino students are being recognized nationwide from a pool of over 259,000 who took the 2012 PSAT/NMSQT/PAA. Students with GPAs of 3.5 or higher are designated as Scholars. David has maintained an overall GPA above 95 for the past three years and has consistently chosen an academic program of rigor including Advanced Placement (AP) and honors classes; Physics and Chemistry are two of his favorite subjects. He is a member of the National, English, Science, Spanish, and Thespian Honor Societies. David transferred from Holy Trinity High School after completing his sophomore year, to take advantage of the Project Lead the Way engineering program offered by the District. David’s post high school plans are to study engineering at a competitive college/university next fall. On behalf of the Board of Education, Dr. Kaplan congratulated David.

**FUTURE EVENTS**

Mr. DeTommaso reviewed some important dates. This Friday is Kennedy’s homecoming activities. High school Back to School night is October 3, 2013. The Special Board of Education meeting will be held on October 7, 2013. Emergency Preparedness Day is October 11, 2013. The next regular Board of Education meeting is October 16, 2013 and Coltfest, Calhoun’s homecoming, is October 19, 2013. Mr. DeTommaso stated he attended Mepham’s homecoming game last Friday night and it was a pleasure.

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Mrs. Schwartz stated the Board will take comments on the Bond issue at the second Public Comments section after tonight's presentation. One other item is not agenda related and will be held for the second Public Comments section. This first session is for Agenda Items Only.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

The Board accepted revised Policy No. 1900 – Parental Involvement for a first reading.

**POLICY**

Mrs. Lanci moved that the Board of Education approve the following resolutions:

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education accept a Grant-in-Aid in the amount of \$96,000, arranged by Senator Fuschillo, for the Mephram Bleacher Restoration project, and increase appropriations accordingly, and that the Board of Education, on behalf of TEMPO Group, accept a Grant-in-Aid of \$20,000 and increase the appropriations budget accordingly, so that these monies can be transferred to TEMPO.

**GRANTS-IN-AID**

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education accept a donation of \$3,500 from the Helen Matchett DeMario Foundation, Inc. to Mephram HS for the purchase of equipment for Dr. David Kommor's Advanced Placement (AP) Biology curriculum and increase the appropriations budget by this amount.

**DONATION**

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education approve the appointment of Erin Lindsey as a Dignity for All Students Act coordinator in Merrick Avenue MS.

**DIGNITY FOR ALL STUDENTS ACT COORDINATORS**

WHEREAS, §30-2.9 of the Rules of the Board of Regents requires certification of lead evaluators for purposes of conducting evaluations of teachers and principals in accordance with the requirements under §3012-c of the Education Law, respecting Annual Professional Performance Reviews; and

**ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REVIEW LEAD EVALUATORS**

WHEREAS, the individuals named below have successfully completed a training course that meets the requirements prescribed in §30-2.9(b) of the Rules of the Board of Regents; therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Cooperative Educational Services of Nassau County certifies the following individuals as 2013-2014 lead evaluators:

Susan Ellinghaus

John Gibilaro

Jon LaRochester

Mr. Haile seconded and the motion was carried 7-0.

Mrs. DeLauter moved that the Board of Education approve the Superintendent of Schools' Personnel Report, dated September 25, 2013, as stated in the agenda. Mr. Haile seconded and the motion was carried 7-0.

**PERSONNEL**

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**PERSONNEL**

Mr. DeTommaso introduced the following new administrators and gave a brief educational and professional background for each person.

John Gibilaro	Assistant Principal at Merrick Avenue Middle School
Joseph Innaco	Director of Instructional and Technology Services
Sally Maya	District-wide Chairperson – Secondary English
Jon LaRochester	Assistant Principal at Kennedy High School
Jon Simpkins	Director of School Facilities and Operations

Mr. DeTommaso welcomed each new staff member to Bellmore-Merrick.

**SUMMARY OF BILLS**

The Board of Education reviewed the Summary of Bills, dated September 11, 2013, and the corresponding warrants.

**BIDS**

Dr. Kaplan moved that the Board of Education approve the bids as stated in the agenda. Mrs. Blane seconded and the motion was carried 7-0.

**BUDGET SUMMARY**

The Board of Education reviewed the Budget Summary Report.

Dr. Kaplan moved the following resolutions:

**BUDGET TRANSFER**

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education approve a transfer of \$82,056 from A1620 490 00 8600 to A2630 490 08 0000 to conform with the BOCES assigned billing code for the BoTie project.

**OBSOLETE/SURPLUS PROPERTY**

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education declare obsolete and approve the disposal of a four-door reach-in refrigerator located in Brookside, Room 40, Bar Code Number 1711, inasmuch as it is not energy efficient and the cost of repair exceeds its value.

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education declare obsolete and approve the disposal of five TV's (001142, 001201, 000746, 000775 and 22995) and one VCR (000900) at Grand Avenue Middle School inasmuch as they are no longer compatible with current technology.

**CONSULTANTS**

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education approve the hiring of a consultant, Hope for Youth, to provide case management and services from 9/1/13 through 6/30/14 at a cost not to exceed \$13,604 and funded by Title I.

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education approve the hiring of a consultant, Platinum Athletics, to provide cheerleading choreography for Mepham High School's Cheerleading team from 9/22/13 through 9/24/13 at a cost not to exceed \$1,700 funded by Mepham's G.O. (General Organization) account.

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BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education approve the designation of the Bellmore Herald Life, the Merrick Herald Life and Newsday as the official District newspapers only for the purposes of the Bellmore-Merrick Central High School District's proposed Bond Referendum's legal notice publication requirements.

**PROPOSED BOND  
REFERENDUM**

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education of the Bellmore Merrick Central High School District accept the Environmental Conservation Law report prepared by Enviroscience Consultants, Inc. determining that the capital improvement projects in the proposed 2013 Bond Referendum are Type II actions under SEQRA regulations. These actions represent routine activities of educational institutions that do not have significant adverse effects on the environment in accordance with 6 NYCRR 617.5(c)(8).

**NEW YORK STATE  
ENVIRONMENTAL  
QUALITY REVIEW  
ACT (SEQRA)**

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education of the Bellmore-Merrick Central High School District rescind its resolution of June 17, 2013 in which the Board of Education approved the use of \$150,000 from the Workers' Compensation Reserve in support of 2012-13 Workers' Compensation expenses.

**WORKERS  
COMPENSATION**

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education approve a venue license agreement with Live Nation Worldwide, Inc. for the use of the NYCB Theatre at Westbury on June 29, 2014 at a cost not to exceed \$20,480; and

**GRADUATION  
VENUE LICENSE  
AGREEMENT**

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board of Education authorize the Superintendent of Schools to sign this agreement.

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education approve the Bellmore Lions and Kiwanis Clubs' use of the Jerusalem Avenue school for their annual Strawberry Festival from 5/28/14 through 6/2/14 and agree to have the \$500 required bond waived inasmuch as Blue Sky Shows (the carnival operator), Bellmore Lions and Kiwanis all have liability insurance.

**WAIVER OF BOND**

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education approve an extension to a vending contract with Quick Snacks Vending for the 2013-2014 school year for the provision of vending services in the District via the BOCES contract. The District will receive a commission of 47.25% on total sales; and

**2013-2014 FOOD  
VENDING CONTRACT**

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

Mrs. Blane seconded and the motion was carried 7-0.

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**SECURITY**

Mrs. Lanci moved that the Board of Education increase the 2013-14 budget by \$300,000 to provide for security measures that were not anticipated in preparation of the appropriations budget. Unassigned fund balance will be used as the source of funding. Mrs. DeLauter seconded and the motion was carried 7-0.

Mr. DeTommaso stated the Board of Education and Bellmore-Merrick Central High School District administrators are happy to announce that the District can begin Phase 1 of needed security updates and improvements this year. Changes will be seen within the next few months.

**CORRESPONDENCE**

There was none.

**PROPOSED BOND  
PRESENTATION**

Mr. DeTommaso began the presentation stating this is the fourth presentation given at the Board of Education meetings. He stated our buildings are aging and basic infrastructure in all buildings is in desperate need of replacement or upgrade. It's no longer possible to fund repairs through the annual operating budget to band-aid these old systems. The proposed capital project addresses three critical areas: efficient buildings, improved resources and smart financing. Roger Smith, Behrendt, Burton and Smith (BBS) Architects & Engineers, outlined the project specifics to the audience. Mr. DeTommaso stated the bond will spread the costs of the project out over many years thereby reducing the annual cost impact. Furthermore, 53.9% of the project's total cost may be funded through NYS building aid. It is anticipated that NYS building aid will fund 26.894 million dollars of the 49,896 million dollars total cost, a 53.9% savings. Legislator David Denenberg has further reduced the cost with a \$250,000 Nassau County grant. This bond will cost the average household \$104 a year or \$8.67 a month. The Board of Education will vote to adopt a resolution to present this bond issue to the District at the Special Board of Education meeting scheduled for October 7, 2013. The anticipated date of the vote is December 2, 2013. Mr. DeTommaso stated we want to reinvest in our kids, families and communities to make a difference in lives.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Linda Palmieri asked the Board of Education to provide in-district classes for students with Asperger's Syndrome rather than sending students to BOCES' programs.

Mr. DeTommaso stated he would look into this but added the District has a tremendous program at Calhoun.

Eddie Lampert asked how to get absentee ballots and how to purchase the bonds.

Mrs. Schwartz advised that information will be provided at a future date and that the bonds must be purchased through a broker.



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**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Wendy Maddalena thanked the Mephram HS staff and added she supports the bond, specifically for turf fields. She feels our fields present a safety issue and that real education does not stop at the classroom door.

Ross Tarrini also supports the bond and synthetic turf fields. He feels the only way to control costs is through a bond.

Rod Kovel feels synthetic turf is a poor choice and that the fields only need to be maintained and questioned who on the Board has done due diligence.

Mr. DeTommaso stated everyone has a fair chance to speak and this is the opportunity, as a community, to discuss the issue.

Mr. Kovel was advised that research on turf fields has been done.

Ted Tanenbaum stated the proposed bond issue is becoming a referendum on synthetic turf fields. He feels the fields won't last the 15 years of the bond and urged the Board to reconsider.

Kevin Boyer stated he is for the bond and wanted to know if we are doing enough to meet the District's future needs.

Mrs. Schwartz stated this bond includes new and innovative ideas.

Mr. DeTommaso advised details of the bond will be posted on the District website.

Mr. Haile feels this bond is taking the District beyond its future needs.

Nancy Coletto wants to see an itemization of Phase 1 of the Security updates posted on the District's website and wanted to be assured that all items in the proposed bond will happen.

Mr. Smith stated contingency money is included in each project estimate. A monthly report is generated for each item being done.

Mrs. Schwartz stated the Board expects all item within the bond to be accomplished and hopes to accomplish some items on the "B" list.

Lisa Rattoballi wanted to clarify that HVAC work at Jerusalem Avenue and Brookside schools was not included in the bond and asked if new science labs for MAP students at Brookside is included. She also asked what was the useful life of synthetic turf fields with the entire community using these fields.

Mr. Smith advised today's synthetic turf fields have a guarantee of 12-13 years.

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**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Ms. Rattoballi added she'd like Syntax to send packages to the entire community promoting the bond.

Mr. DeTommaso stated this bond referendum is a facilities project.

Steven Kozlowski passed on his turn to question the Board of Education.

Howard Finger asked what the cost per family will be and how an "average family" defined. He also asked that since the synthetic turf fields seems to be a key issue, could the Board present turf fields as a separate bond.

Mrs. Schwartz stated turf fields could be a separate bond.

Dr. Kaplan stated she feels it is critical to keep the turf fields in this bond.

Teri Resca asked if the anticipated 26,894 million dollars in NYS aid is definite and was advised it may vary depending upon the state's review and evaluation of the individual projects. She stated the Wantagh school district's field cost more than what was estimated and added Bellmore-Merrick will need more security to protect these turf fields. She stated she does not believe the associated costs of turf fields that the Board is presenting is accurate.

Ed Schwartz stated the *Merrick Herald Life* reports 7.1 million dollars will be used to renovate administrative offices at Brookside.

Mr. DeTommaso stated this is incorrect. There is only minimal work at Brookside included in the bond. The majority of the work to be done at Brookside will be covered in an Energy Performance Contract (EPC).

Mr. Calamusa stated Mr. DeTommaso has changed this District in his three months here and wanted to repeat that all the students use the District's fields.

Caren Kabak urged the Board to impress on everyone that turf fields is only a little part of the bond.

Bob Pizzamente stated the most important thing about the bond is not turf fields and that the District cannot function without these improvements. He stated the lion's share is to improve the infrastructure.

Gillian Atkinson congratulated Mr. DeTommaso and questioned if the field improvements will include Jerusalem Avenue and Brookside in the future. She was also advised the projects will be completed in a three to four year period.

Mr. Smith answered some additional questions.

He advised work would be done over the summer and, where possible, throughout the school year, day and night. Work will always be in progress.

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Mr. DeTommaso advised this work would not interfere with the instructional day.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Mr. Smith stated his fee is built into the bond and based on a percentage of the project's cost.

Mr. DeTommaso stated we have done our due diligence and believe in this project. Everyone here respects the opinions of the community. He stated there is no more important work that we do and knows we are asking the community to make a sacrifice. He thanked everyone for their opinion and they will be considered.

There was none.

**OLD/NEW BUSINESS**

On a motion by Mrs. DeLauter, seconded by Dr. Kaplan and carried 7-0, the Board of Education entered into Executive Session to discuss personnel and student matters at 10:18 p.m.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

On a motion by Mrs. Lanci, seconded by Mrs. Blane and carried 7-0, the Board of Education reconvened at 11:28 p.m.

**PUBLIC SESSION**

Dr. Kaplan moved that the Board of Education authorize its President to enter into an Agreement resolving an impartial hearing on behalf of a District special education student. Mr. Haile seconded and the motion was carried 7-0.

**SETTLEMENT AN AGREEMENT**

On a motion by Mrs. DeLauter, seconded by Dr. Kaplan, and carried 7-0, the meeting was adjourned at 11:30 p.m.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Respectfully submitted,

Claire Neufeld  
District Clerk