

MINUTES OF THE BELLMORE-MERRICK CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING DECEMBER 1, 2021

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A regular meeting of the Bellmore-Merrick Central High School District Board of Education was held on Wednesday evening, December 1, 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
Dr. Nancy Kaplan
Tracey Miller
Gina Piskin

The following member of the Board of Education was not present:

Janet Goller

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 Ms. Cmar-Grote, seconded by Ms. Lanci and carried 7-0, the Board of Education moved to appoint Michael Harrington as the Acting District Clerk during Executive Session.

On a **MOTION** by Ms. Blane, seconded by Ms. Lanci and carried 7-0, the Board of Education moved into Executive Session to discuss pending litigation and a specific personnel issue.

On a **MOTION** by Ms. Miller, seconded by Ms. Piskin and carried 7-0, the Board of Education reconvened to Public Session at 7:35 p.m.

Presentations

First Female Football Player in Long Island History to Score a Touchdown

Sofia LaSpina Mepham High School

Mr. Harrington welcomed everyone to the meeting and congratulated Sofia on her history-making touchdown. He said she has received national attention on her accomplishment and has become a role model for so many girls in sports.

Ms. Lanci presented Sofia LaSpina with an Award of Honor certificate and said that on September 18, 2021, Mepham junior, Sofia LaSpina caught a 4-yard touchdown pass to become the first female player in Long Island history to score a touchdown. The play became an instantaneous memorable moment for all in attendance watching in excitement as history was made. Sofia has been recognized by numerous media outlets and was honored as a Gatorade/New York Jets player of the week for her tremendous accomplishment.

Calhoun Boys Cross Country-Nassau County Champions

Matthew Belmonte	Joseph Bilardello	Daniel Chen
Joseph Ciniglio	Gavin Giordano	Michael Gunn
William Hughes	Logan Koenig	Aiden Kopelman
Liam McInerney	Daniel Pietraniello	Alexander Rosario
Logan Schaeffler	Peter John Schramm	John Schwab
Jonathan Sferratore	Matthew Siedlewicz	Ajay Singh
Jeremy Sirof	Zachary Sirof	Eray Yavuz
Kenan Yavuz	Mert Yolseven	

Mr. Harrington congratulated the Calhoun Boys Cross Country team and Coach Hendler. He said that coach... is an amazing educator and coach and has helped the finest athletes become amazing young men. Mr. Harrington read a thank you letter from a parent who's daughter attends Friends Academy High School and was attending the finals by herself with no other classmates from her school. The letter explained how the Calhoun team welcomed this girl and made her feel very comfortable.

Mr. Corona handed out Award of Honor certificates to each member of the Calhoun Boys Cross Country team and said that the team's four captains started discussing how to take the team to the next level and decided to do it step by step. The team was eager to complete their undefeated season with their 2nd consecutive County Championship and was the best overall team in Nassau County. All the planning and hard work came together.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

Mr. Corona requested a moment of silence for the lives lost at the Oxford High School shooting in Michigan.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

On a **MOTION** Ms. Piskin, seconded by Dr. Kaplan and carried 7-0 the Board of Education approved the minutes from the November 3, 2021 meeting.

IV. TREASURER'S REPORT

On a **MOTION** by Ms. Lanci, seconded by Ms. Miller and carried 7-0, the Board of Education approved the Treasurer's Report dated October 31, 2021.

V. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

A. Presentations

Mr. Harrington started by stating that he hopes everyone had a wonderful Thanksgiving and wished all those celebrating a very Happy Hanukkah. He said the last few weeks have been awe-inspiring as he has seen generosity, selflessness and giving back to our community like never before. He said Dr. Bollettieri and those involved in maintaining the Cupboard have worked tirelessly to make sure our families are taken care of through the holidays. He said our Prep Academy students, ambassadors, teacher and student volunteers have all pitched in to receive and organize countless donations that came in from all our schools and the community.

Mr. Harrington explained that 90 families received Thanksgiving baskets filled with food, treats and gift cards. He said that as soon as the Thanksgiving food drive came to an end, preparations began to help and assist Ms. Lanci and the Bellmore Lions as we look forward to their annual Polar Express, which will be hosted at Brookside this Saturday, December 4th. He said it is an extraordinary event that serves as a reminder of the power of giving back and what the holidays should be about. He thanked Ms. Lanci and the Bellmore Lions for modeling selfless service for the rest of the community.

Mr. Harrington said that this has certainly been an incredible month in the district. He congratulated Mr. Caballero and said that earlier tonight, we honored Sophia LaSpina and the Calhoun Boys Cross Country. He said that we also had so many teams in playoffs this season: volleyball, Mephram cross-country, football and soccer. He said he wants this year to be filled with all of the experiences that were missed last year.

Mr. Harrington mentioned the wonderful drama productions taking place and said that the 9th grade orientations and specialty program information nights will take place this week. He also mentioned the Calhoun Art Expo and congratulated Ms. Federici for being named NYS Art Educator of the year.

New York State Art Educator of the Year

Lisa Federici

Ms. Cmar-Grote presented Ms. Federici with an Award of Honor Certificate and said she received this award for her dedication, leadership and service in the field of Art Education. She said that Ms. Federici has been an art teacher here since 2008 and her commitment to our students, her colleagues and the community are truly valued.

Mr. Harrington congratulated Ms. Federici. He thanked Ms. Fontana and mentioned that our art teachers are so talented and they have displayed their artwork in the hallways of the Brookside Educational Center.

Student Representatives

Julie Moehringer of Calhoun High School said that November was a month of giving and the Calhoun Community donated \$3,000.00 for the Community Cupboard. She congratulated the Cross Country team on their accomplishment of becoming the Nassau County Champions. She also congratulated the boys and girls volleyball teams for placing 2nd in the County. She said Calhoun is looking forward to winter concerts, On-Tour's Holiday Improv, their annual door decorating and more amazing athletics. She wished everyone a happy holiday season.

Amanda Montalbano of Meadowbrook Alternative Program (MAP) and Prep Academy said MAP continues to welcome more students and it is great to see everyone coming together. She said MAP and Prep Academy students helped the Community Cupboard with the Thanksgiving baskets and students will be collecting get-well items for their annual MLK Day of Service. She said students will be visiting Theatre 3 in Port Jefferson to see “A Christmas Carol” and thanked the Community Parent Center. She congratulated the students who have made Honor Roll and wished everyone a happy holiday season and happy new year.

Nicole Rosen of Kennedy High School said students held their annual Thanksgiving Food Drive and raised almost \$7,000.00 for the Community Cupboard. Students used the money they raised to purchase items and gift cards for the families that use the Community Cupboard. She said that students also held a civic fair, alumni day and participated in the Veterans Stand Down where they donated and helped package canned goods and toiletries for homeless and at risk veterans. She also said students are currently planning their buddy program and TED talks and wished everyone a happy holidays.

Anthony Scotto of Mepham High School said Mepham continued to be a busy place in November as students participated in many events and recognized students and staff members for various accomplishments. He said the Mepham LEO Club and Kickline raised over a \$1,000.00 for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society through donations. Students also participated in the Light the Night event to raise awareness and support all those affected by cancer. He said students set up their Flag Field of Honor in recognition of all Veterans who have served our country and the proceeds will be donated to Tuesday’s Children. He also said that the students hosted their first Fall Festival, a blood drive, Alumni Day and celebrated National French Week. He wished everyone happy holidays.

Senior Experience

Mr. Harrington explained the Senior Experience program and said it is celebrating its 20th anniversary in our district. He said the program is available to students in three of our High Schools and explained how it is an incredible opportunity for students to get real life experience and learn life lessons.

Mr. Harrington introduced Ms. Einbinder and Ms. Serpe who gave a power point presentation on the program. They explained that the program has a unique structure with a humanities-based curriculum to create a very meaningful experience. The program allows students to intern in various workplace settings, which offers them insight into future career choices. They said some of the benefits from the program are that students gain workplace skills, acquire knowledge of how the real world works, explore a possible career path and obtain a different experience from school all while learning more about themselves.

Mr. Harrington thanked Ms. Einbinder, Ms. Serpe and the teachers for giving our kids a real life experience. He thanked the Board of Education for their support in giving all of our students what they need to be successful.

Mr. Harrington mentioned the future dates and wished everyone a happy and healthy season. He also thanked everyone for the children, which make Bellmore-Merrick everything that it is.

B.	<u>Future Dates</u>	
	December 2	High School Parent Orientation
	December 3	Calhoun Art Expo
	December 7	Middle School Concert I
	December 8	Calhoun & Kennedy Concert
	December 9	Sprig Gardner Tournament @ Calhoun Mephram ASR Parent Info Night
	December 10	Sprig Gardner Tournament @ Kennedy Calhoun On Tour Holiday Improv
	December 11	Sprig Gardner Tournament @ Mephram
	December 13	Kennedy ASR Parent Info Night
	December 14	Calhoun & Mephram Poetry Out Loud
	December 15	Calhoun & Kennedy Concert II
	December 16	Middle School Concert II
	December 21	Mephram Concert II
	December 24 – 31	Holiday Recess – Schools Closed
	January 5	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.

Having said that, please note that the Board is here to listen. The public comment period is not designed to be a discussion. Accordingly, please do not expect the Board to respond to your concerns and questions tonight. This is because we take your concerns and questions seriously and want to have sufficient time to process and research issues, if need be. We will, however, respond to your questions and concerns at a future meeting, or have the proper staff member get back to you at the appropriate time.

I also want to point out that under state and federal privacy laws we are unable to entertain any comments or questions about school personnel. Please know, however, that we take personnel concerns very seriously. On these matters, we would ask you to go through the appropriate administrative channels.”

Chris Mitkish asked how the minutes for the Board of Education meetings are recorded and asked if the district would consider video recording or live streaming the meetings.

VII. SUPERINTENDENT'S RECOMMENDATIONS

On a **MOTION** by Ms. Piskin, seconded by Ms. Miller and carried 7-0, the Board of Education approved items VII.A through VII.B.3.

A. Policies

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

Policy No. 0101 – Gender Neutral Single-Occupancy Bathrooms (New)

Policy No. 1120 – School District Records (Revised)

Policy No. 2342 – Agenda Preparation and Dissemination (Revised)

B. Donations

1. BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education accept a donation of \$500.00 from Tamie Kranis for the Community Cupboard.

2. BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education accept a donation of \$100.00 from Theresa Molloy for the Community Cupboard.

3. BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education accept a donation of \$3,000.00 from Calhoun High School staff and community for the Community Cupboard.

Mr. Corona thanked everyone for the donations.

On a **MOTION** by Dr. Kaplan, seconded by Ms. Lanci and carried 7-0, the Board of Education approved items VII.C through VIII.H.

C. Adult Education

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education approve the recommended new Adult Education courses for the Spring, 2021 semester.

D. Special Education

1. BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education approve the revised Special Education vendors list for the 2021-2022 school year.

2. BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education approve the recommendations of the Committee on Special Education (CSE) for the following cases: 000010653, 000011657, 000011702, 000012103, 000012423, 000012938, 000013059, 000013099, 000014041, 000014059, 000512756, 000513190, 000513619, 000514910, 060590004, 063210001, 070780002, 070940019, 071700001, 090910003, 091740000, 092890000, 102020004, 110280005, 131261112, 131261240, 131261315, 131261366, 131261367, 131261404, 131261414, 131261496, 131261560, 131261585, 131261695, 131262143, 131262157, 131262411, 131263295, 131263708, 131263820, 201600167, 201800141, 202100051, 202100124, 202100170, 202100177 and 370002068.

VIII. PERSONNEL REPORT – December 1, 2021

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

IX. BUSINESS

A. Bills and Corresponding Warrant – December 1, 2021

The Board of Education reviewed the bills and corresponding warrant.

B. Bids

On a **MOTION** by Ms. Lanci, seconded by Dr. Kaplan and carried 7-0, the Board of Education approved the bids as stated in the agenda.

C. Budget Summary – November 30, 2021

The Board of Education reviewed the budget summary.

On a **MOTION** by Ms. Piskin, seconded by Ms. Miller and carried 7-0, the Board of Education approved items IX.D through IX.F.

D. 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 2021-2022 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 22, 2021 submission of the Undue Burden Independent Evaluator Hardship Waiver application to the State Education Department.

E. Obsolete/Surplus Equipment

BE IT RESOLVED, that that Board of Education declare obsolete and approve the disposal of approximately 1,650 textbooks that are no longer in use at Grand Avenue Middle School.

Mr. Corona stated that a 211 Waiver Resolution was added to tonight's agenda and will be labeled item IX.F.

On a **MOTION** by Ms. Piskin, seconded by Ms. Miller and carried 7-0, the Board of Education approved item IX.F.

IX. F. 211 Waiver Resolution

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education of the Bellmore-Merrick Central High School District appoints David Seinfeld to the position of Interim Assistant Superintendent for Personnel for the period of January 31, 2022 through June 30, 2022, subject to his ability to obtain a waiver pursuant to section 211 of the New York State Retirement and Social Security Law.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board of Education of the Bellmore-Merrick Central High School District, as the appointing authority for employees of the School District, hereby designates the Deputy Superintendent of Schools to complete and execute any documentation required by New York State in furtherance of the submission of a waiver pursuant to Section 211 of the New York State Retirement and Social Security Law for Mr. Seinfeld.

X. OLD/NEW BUSINESS

No old or new business was discussed.

XI. CORRESPONDENCE

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

XII. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mr. Corona stated:

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Having said that, please note that the Board is here to listen. The public comment period is not designed to be a discussion. Accordingly, please do not expect the Board to respond to your concerns and questions tonight. This is because we take your concerns and questions seriously and want to have sufficient time to process and research issues, if need be. We will, however, respond to your questions and concerns at a future meeting, or have the proper staff member get back to you at the appropriate time.

I also want to point out that under state and federal privacy laws we are unable to entertain any comments or questions about school personnel. Please know, however, that we take personnel concerns very seriously. On these matters, we would ask you to go through the appropriate administrative channels."

Kellie Shuart discussed school safety, lockdown drills and fire drills. She wants to know how often the policies are reviewed and feels that the unannounced drills are stressful for students because they do not know if it is a drill or an actual threat.

Mr. Harrington said that in light of the school shooting in Michigan he wanted to assure everyone that there is a lot of focus put on safety, followed by mental health, especially after the prior school shootings in the country. Mr. Harrington assured everyone that almost all security personnel have law enforcement background. He also explained that every year the district reviews and submits its safety plans to NYS. He said that the district has a liaison in Homeland Security who advises us and we have determined that unannounced drills help everyone to be better prepared.

Linda Wilk thanked the Board of Education, administration and faculty for their support of the Senior Experience Program. She said three of her children went through the program and all of them had an amazing experience.

Kimberly Boyette is against a vaccine mandate. She handed in a list of proposed bills that are in congress and asked the Board of Education to stand up and fight against a mandatory vaccine for students to attend school.

Eric Shaw is against a mandate on masks and vaccines for students to attend school. He feels the district should fight against the mandates.

Chris Mitkish feels that the district should require anyone that is peacefully protesting on school owned property to provide proof of insurance. She said everyone else that gathers on school property (such as the PTA and its vendors), are required to provide proof of insurance and protesters should be required to have insurance as well.

Mr. Corona thanked everyone for their comments.

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 7-0, the Board of Education meeting adjourned at 9:09 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Pattianne Guccione
District Clerk