

MINUTES OF THE BELLMORE-MERRICK CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT  
BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING JANUARY 12, 2022

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A regular meeting of the Bellmore-Merrick Central High School District Board of Education was held on Wednesday evening, January 12, 2022, 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  
Melissa Cmar-Grote  
Janet Goller  
Gina Piskin

The following members of the Board of Education were not present:

Marion Blane  
Dr. Nancy Kaplan  
Tracey Miller

Also present:

Michael Harrington, Superintendent of Schools  
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 6:37 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

On a **MOTION** by Ms. Goller, seconded by Ms. Cmar-Grote and carried 5-0, the Board of Education moved to appoint Michael Harrington as the Acting District Clerk during Executive Session.

On a **MOTION** by Ms. Lanci, seconded by Ms. Cmar-Grote and carried 5-0, the Board of Education moved into Executive Session to discuss pending litigation and a specific personnel issue.

On a **MOTION** by Ms. Piskin, seconded by Ms. Cmar-Grote and carried 5-0, the Board of Education reconvened to Public Session at 8:00 p.m.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

Mr. Corona asked for a moment of silence to remember the victims of the fire in the Bronx.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

On a **MOTION** Ms. Lanci, seconded by Ms. Cmar-Grote and carried 5-0 the Board of Education approved the minutes from the December 1, 2021 meeting.

IV. TREASURER'S REPORT

On a **MOTION** by Ms. Piskin, seconded by Ms. Goller and carried 5-0, the Board of Education approved the Treasurer's Report dated November 30, 2021.

V. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Mr. Harrington welcomed everyone to the meeting and said that as anticipated, the District has experienced many challenges the last two weeks as a result of the post-holiday COVID-19 surge. He said that student and staff absences caused a great disruption to our classrooms but he is pleased to say that the situation is definitely improving. Mr. Harrington said is very proud of how everyone has come together during these challenging times and he has nothing but hope and appreciation as we move forward. Despite the challenges stemming from COVID-19 last month, he said that our students and staff continue to thrive. The district has showcased community service, has had six Advanced Science Research Scholars and hosted winter concerts and Poetry Out Loud competitions. Mr. Harrington said the District has had very successful athletics and Kennedy High School will host the Sprig Gardner wrestling competition. He mentioned that the MLK Day of Service will be on January 14<sup>th</sup> and said he is very proud of how the community comes together to help families in need.

Mr. Harrington discussed the Polar Express event that took place on December 4<sup>th</sup> – saying that it was 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. He also thanked all the students who donated their time and efforts last month to make the day special for families in need. Mr. Harrington recognized Luke Fischetti for his act of extraordinary service and said that Luke and his family represent the best of the best in Bellmore-Merrick.

A. Presentations

Polar Express

Ms. Lanci presented Luke Fischetti with an Award of Honor certificate and said that Luke is a caring and giving young man. When he heard about the Polar Express he used \$200 of his own money to make packages of baseball cards to give out at the event. When Luke went to the baseball card store, the owner heard what he was doing and decided to match Luke's contribution. Luke spent the entire day at the Polar Express Event giving out his packages and helping the community.

Robotics Demonstration

Mr. Harrington said that tonight's curriculum presentation is another reminder of how fortunate we are to be part of a school community where the Board of Education supports new opportunities for students. Over the last 7 years, Mr. Soel, our STEAM Director along with Ms. Caliendo and the other math and science chairs have transformed our STEAM program. He said he is forever grateful to our leadership team for the incredible success and new STEAM opportunities.

Mr. Soel thanked the administration and Board of Education for their support of STEAM. He said that the programs continuously grow and expand. He also thanked Mr. Innaco and the technology department for their support. Mr. Soel then gave a video presentation highlighting the robotics program. He explained how the teachers have trained and collaborated with other districts to make the program so successful, adding that the students have been learning leadership skills while building robotics skills. Students from the program talked about their wonderful experiences in the program. The students explained how they build and code the robots and gave a robotics demonstration to the audience.

Mr. Harrington thanked Mr. Soel, the teachers and the students for their presentation. He also mentioned the future dates.

B. Future Dates

January 13	Guidance Program for 11 <sup>th</sup> Grade
January 14	MLK Day of Service
January 17	Martin Luther King, Jr. Day – <b>Schools Closed</b>
January 25-28	Regents Exams – <b>High School Classes Cancelled</b>
February 2	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.”

There were no public comments made on agenda items.

VII. SUPERINTENDENT'S RECOMMENDATIONS

On a **MOTION** by Ms. Piskin, seconded by Ms. Goller and carried 5-0, the Board of Education approved items VII.A through VII.B.3.

A. Policies

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education approve the following policies for a second 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 \$363.04 from the Bellmore Presbyterian Church for the Community Cupboard.

2. BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education accept a donation of \$1,000.00 from the Bellmore Lions for the Community Cupboard in honor of Dr. Bollettieri's humanitarian acts.

3. BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education accept a donation of \$500.00 from the NYS Association Nassau Chapter for School Facilities Association for the Community Cupboard.

Mr. Corona thanked everyone for the donations.

On a **MOTION** by Ms. Lanci, seconded by Ms. Cmar-Grote and carried 5-0, the Board of Education approved items VII.C through VIII.L.

C. 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 following Special Education placements as recommended by the Committee on Special Education (CSE): 000010279, 000012021, 000012195, 000012342, 000012472, 000013325, 000013960, 000015502, 000513052, 000513090, 000513599, 050380002, 090570003, 093510000, 100119786, 101170000, 102350001, 110210003, 131261378, 131261430, 131261474, 131261480, 131261650, 131262143, 131262209, 131263708, 131264126, 171880001, 181910204, 181960003, 192010274, 201700005, 201700033, 201700040, 201800189, 202100190, 370002031 and 998011085.

VIII. PERSONNEL REPORT – January 5, 2022

A. Resignations

B. Appointments

C. Volunteers

D. Salary Reclassification

E. Recommendation for Continued Employment

F. Recommendation for Permanent Employment

G. Leave Requests

H. Assigned Services – Non-Athletics – Cancellation

I. Assigned Services – Non-Athletics

- J. Assigned Services – Athletics – Cancellations
- K. Assigned Services – Athletics – Winter
- L. Assigned Services – Athletics – Winter II

IX. BUSINESS

- A. Bills and Corresponding Warrant – January 5, 2022  
The Board of Education reviewed the bills and corresponding warrant.
- B. Bids  
On a **MOTION** by Ms. Piskin, seconded by Ms. Goller and carried 5-0, the Board of Education approved the bids as stated in the agenda.
- C. Budget Summary – December 31, 2021  
The Board of Education reviewed the budget summary.

On a **MOTION** by Ms. Lanci, seconded by Ms. Piskin and carried 5-0, the Board of Education approved items IX.D through IX.F.

- D. Obsolete/Surplus Equipment
  - 1. WHEREAS, the Bellmore-Merrick Central High School District has identified two tractors as obsolete and no longer needed to fulfill the District's aims and goals; and  
  
WHEREAS, Policy 6900, Disposal of District Property, authorizes and directs the Superintendent of Schools or their designee to dispose of the District's property by offering it for sale to local municipalities; and  
  
WHEREAS, the North Bellmore Union Free School District has conveyed an interest to the administration of the Bellmore-Merrick Central High School District to purchase the above-referenced tractors in exchange for their trailer; and  
  
WHEREAS, the Bellmore-Merrick Central High School District has conveyed an interest to the administration of the North Bellmore Union Free School District to purchase their trailer in exchange for the above-referenced tractors;  
  
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Education of the Bellmore-Merrick Central High School District hereby finds that the above-referenced tractors are obsolete upon the determination by the Board of Education of the Bellmore-Merrick Central High School District that their tractors are obsolete; and  
  
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board of Education of the Bellmore-Merrick Central High School District hereby directs the disposal and sale of the above-referenced obsolete tractors to the North Bellmore Union Free School District in exchange for the specified trailer contingent upon North Bellmore Union Free School District approving a resolution regarding the trailer referenced above.
  - 2. BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education declare obsolete and approval the disposal of numerous district-wide iMacs, iPads, Chromebooks, Laptops, Projectors, Desktops and Interactive Flat Panels.

- E. New York State Cosmetology Examinations Rental Agreement  
BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education approve an agreement with New York State Department of State, for the use of Calhoun High School facility for the administration of the New York State cosmetology examinations from January 1, 2022 to December 31, 2022.
- F. Corrective Action Plan  
BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education approve the Corrective Action Plan of the 2020-21 Overtime Audit performed by the Internal Auditor, Questar III.

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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Richard Soleymanzadeh discussed the mental damage on kids by government over reach. He urged the District to cast a vote regarding mask wearing.

Jill Kehoe discussed the use of masks and said there is strong direct evidence that mask wearing is effective at reducing the spread of COVID-19.

Alexis Farber said she appreciates the efforts of the Board of Education. She discussed masks and said the masks have helped her family stay COVID-19 free.

Tara Casimano said that the Board of Education didn't listen to the community at the prior meeting when discussing Dr. Kaplan's training. She also asked about our Medical Director, Mr. Marino saying that the District needs to be more transparent.

Angie Katsamanis thanked the Board of Education for keeping our schools open. She discussed masks and vaccine requirements and is against them, she feels that this is a family choice. She also discussed discrimination with kids that are not vaccinated and are excluded from activities.

Mr. Corona stated that the District does not discriminate and does not separate kids based on vaccines.

Eleana Gerasimou, a student, discussed her perspective on wearing masks in school. She said that she gets dizzy and finds school more stressful because of the masks. She said she comes to school to learn academics, not how to wear a mask.

Kimberly Boyette discussed COVID-19 and the impact of mask wearing on our kids.

Chad Laveglia discussed COVID-19 and the recent executive order. He said that the mandate from the Governor's office has no authority.

Jennifer Felsberg discussed mask mandates and feels that some teachers are overzealous in correcting kids on proper mask wearing.

Rob Rellins discussed mask mandates and feels that masks should not be on young kids. He asked the District to stand against the Governor.

Barbara Schwartz said she knows that any decision that the District makes will be difficult but wants everyone to know that her kids are happy, they are playing sports and doing activities and thinks the staff is doing a great job.

Michelle Carlin discussed COVID-19 and wants the District to continue with a mask mandate.

Pam Pascalli questioned the updated information on quarantine/isolation and said the new guidance doesn't mention those that who had COVID-19 and now have natural immunity.

Chris Mitkish thanked the Board of Education and asked the District to consider recording or live-streaming the Board of Education meetings. She also said the school has an obligation to keep all students safe.

Mr. Corona thanked everyone for their comments and said we are all members of the same community and we will follow the advice of counsel.

Mr. Powers explained that there is currently a mandate that requires everyone entering a school facility to wear a mask. The mask mandate was unsuccessfully challenged in court and the recent executive order signed by the Nassau County Executive does not have the authority to lift the mask mandate. Mr. Powers further explained that defiance of the Governor's order will result in a loss of state aid and that we must answer to the Governor, the Commissioner of Education and the Board of Regents.

XIII. POTENTIAL EXECUTIVE SESSION

The Board of Education did not enter into executive session.

XIV. ADJOURNMENT

On a **MOTION** by Ms. Piskin, seconded by Ms. Goller and carried 5-0, the Board of Education meeting adjourned at 9:33 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Pattianne Guccione  
District Clerk