

MINUTES OF THE BELLMORE-MERRICK CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING MARCH 1, 2023

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A regular meeting of the Bellmore-Merrick Central High School District Board of Education was held on Wednesday evening, March 1, 2023, in the Board of Education Conference Room 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:

Nina Lanci, President
Marion Blane
Melissa Cmar-Grote
Edward Corona
Dr. Nancy Kaplan
Tracey Miller

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

Janet Goller, Vice President
Gina Piskin

Also present:

Michael Harrington, Superintendent of Schools
Scott Bersin, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment
Mikaela Coni, Assistant Superintendent for Business
Eric Gomez, Assistant Superintendent for Personnel and Administration
Eric Arlin, Executive Director of Alternative Education
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
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

Ms. Lanci called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

On a **MOTION** By Ms. Blane, seconded by Ms. Miller and carried 6-0, the Board of Education moved to appoint Michael Harrington as the Acting District Clerk during Executive Session.

On a **MOTION** by Dr. Kaplan, seconded by Ms. Blane and carried 6-0, the Board of Education moved into Executive Session to discuss a specific personnel matter and the school budget.

On a **MOTION** by Ms. Cmar-Grote, seconded by Ms. Miller and carried 6-0, the Board of Education reconvened to Public Session at 7:33 p.m.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Ms. Lanci led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance and asked for a moment of silence for those that have been impacted by the Turkey/Syria earthquake, the shooting at Michigan State University, to recognize the one year anniversary of the invasion of Ukraine and for the family of Art McQuillan, a retired Assistant Principal of Mepham High School who recently passed.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

On a **MOTION** by Dr. Kaplan, seconded by Ms. Blane and carried 6-0 the Board of Education approved the minutes from the February 1, 2023 meeting.

IV. TREASURER'S REPORT

On a **MOTION** by Ms. Piskin, seconded by Dr. Kaplan and carried 6-0, the Board of Education approved the Treasurer's Report dated January 31, 2023.

V. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

A. Presentations

Mr. Harrington welcomed everyone to the meeting and said our thoughts go out to the families affected by the earthquake in Turkey/Syria, the shooting at Michigan State University and those that have been impacted by the invasion of Ukraine. He offered his condolences to the family of Art McQuillan, a retired Assistant Principal of Mepham High School who recently passed away, saying he was a great person and he will be sorely missed.

Mr. Harrington said last Monday the District was appalled to find a swastika in one of the Mepham locker rooms. He said these actions and symbols are not tolerated in this District. He said this is a reminder that we need to do more and promised that the District will find ways to build on our culture of kindness, care and inclusivity.

Mr. Harrington said the winter athletics had a tremendous season with many teams and students making it into championship matches. He congratulated all of our coaches and Mr. Caballero on the success of the season. He congratulated the three wrestling champions and said he is in awe of what they have accomplished.

NYS Champion Girls Wrestling

Ms. Miller presented Yianna Foufas from Mepham High School with an Award of Honor certificate and said Yianna began training in the combat sport, Brazilian Jiu Jitsu at the age of eight. She joined the Grand Avenue wrestling team in 7th grade and never looked back. Yianna is a NYS Folkstyle Champion, NYS Freestyle Champion, NYWAY State Champion, Long Island Champion, Fargo Qualifier, Eastern States Champion and now a NYSPHSAA State Champion and Yianna will tell you, she is only getting started.

At the NYSHSAA State Championship, Yianna knew she would compete against the #10 ranked wrestler in the nation in a highly anticipated finals matchup. After previously wrestling this same girl two weeks earlier and winning off of what some would call a "controversial win", Yianna was given the chance to write the script of their second match the way she wanted it. With 16 seconds left in the final period of the match, Yianna scored a reversal and earned herself a State Championship by a score of 2-0. She is now recognized on a national level and while for some this may seem like a daunting task or challenge, she remains on the same mission, to be the best version of herself.

Off the mat, Yianna attends the Long Island High School for the Arts. Her artistic abilities and skills in drawing compete with how talented she is as a wrestler, and that is saying a lot. Comparatively between art and wrestling, she pays attention to every last detail never leaving a stone unturned. We all look forward to what the future holds for her

Long Island Champion Girls Wrestling

Ms. Cmar-Grote presented Talia Robles of Mepham High School with an Award of Honor certificate and said one word to describe Talia is GRIT! Talia has been wrestling for Mepham for the last three years and has never made an excuse, she just works harder. Talia is what you would call a “coach’s dream”. She is the first person in the wrestling room, follows her strict nutritional plan and constantly seeks new ways to train. She is someone the team can always count on to do the right thing and sets an example for the underclassmen. It’s her fearless mindset that separates her from the rest.

This season she placed first at Copiague’s Queen of the Mat, 1st place at the Frank Giampaolo Tournament, 4th place at the Eastern States Classic, and is now a Long Island Champion in the most competitive weight class on Long Island! Talia’s breakout season ended with the biggest win of her career against a NYWAY State Champion and college commit who has beaten her in the past. Talia proves that with perseverance and hard work, anything is possible. We look forward to what the future holds for her.

NYS All-State Girls Wrestling

Dr. Kaplan presented Gabriella Schechtman of Kennedy High School with an Award of Honor certificate and said Gabriella has distinguished herself as an extremely reliable student-athlete whose enthusiasm and hard work is greatly admired. Gabby takes pride in everything she does, no matter how small the task. She is relentless in her pursuit of excellence and being the best she can be.

When Gabby was a freshman, she became the first female wrestler to compete and win matches on our team at Kennedy. She never misses practice and is one of our hardest workers. This past summer, Gabby lifted weights, attended tournaments and local clubs to try to improve. She placed 2nd in the NYS Freestyle championships, which earned her a spot on the National team to represent New York at the Nationals in Fargo, North Dakota. The 22-23 season has been a breakout season for Gabby. She placed 2nd at the Copiague Tournament, 2nd in the Long Island Championships, and in the Inaugural NYS Championships she placed 5th earning All-State Honors.

Because of women like Gabby, women’s wrestling is on the verge of officially becoming a recognized high school sport in New York State. She has also earned her place in Kennedy wrestling history!

Curriculum and Instruction - School Counseling and College Planning

Mr. Bersin explained that there have been many changes in school counseling and college planning since the health crisis. He welcomed Ms. Amato and Mr. Pisano to give a PowerPoint presentation regarding new trends in college planning.

Ms. Amato said that college applications are on the rise. She explained that rise in college applications is due to the new common application, which allows students to apply to twenty different colleges from one application. She further explained that trends have shown a decrease in admissions due to rise in applications, which gives colleges a much larger selection of students to choose from. She said that overall, colleges still look primarily at a student’s transcript and essay when making admission selections.

Mr. Pisano discussed the rising costs of tuition and explained that improved facilities is a major factor for the tuition increase. He stressed the importance of finding a college that best suits the individual. He said that families should have real conversations about what best fits the student academically, socially and financially.

Ms. Amato discussed the importance of a student's digital footprint and its effect on college acceptance. She explained that colleges watch social media posts and want to see that a student has a sincere interest in their school when making admission decisions. She suggested that students follow the college/university on social media, open all emails from that school and be sure to follow all social media rules when making posts on any social media platform. Ms. Amato said there will be a college and career planning night on March 9th and students should speak to their counselors for advice.

Ms. Lanci asked if the district addresses students about their social media posts. Ms. Amato said that at the beginning of every school year counselors go into every class and stress the importance of being careful on social media and the impact of their digital footprint. Mr. Harrington said these conversations start in 7th grade.

Student Representatives

Jordan Nelson from the Meadowbrook Alternative Program/Prep Academy and Electrical Training Program said students enjoyed the Brookside Day of Bonding event in the gymnasium with all of the different agencies in the Brookside facility. Students also celebrated P.S. I Love You Day by creating a wall with messages of encouragement and wearing purple. He said that each marking period Prep Academy students work with agencies from the Office of People With Developmental Disabilities as they transition from high school to adulthood and they are having a great time. Students are looking forward to the upcoming spring semester and re-building their garden in the courtyard.

Rachel Oppenheim from Kennedy High School said last month was packed with fun events like the Rock, Paper, Scissors tournament and the Jam the Gym event. She said that Class Night is tomorrow and they are currently hosting Penny Wars. She congratulated various students in wrestling, the Robotics and Science Olympiads, Junior Science and Humanities Symposium and Varsity Cheer. She said in honor of Black History Month, students decorated doors to show achievements made by Black Americans.

Sophia Tripiccione from Calhoun High School said it was a busy month and students celebrated P.S. I Love You Day to recognize mental health and suicide awareness. They also had their Challenge Day and preparations are taking place for Class Night. She congratulated various students in track and on the girls track team, the Virtual Enterprise team and the Art program for their accomplishments.

Peter Mayo filled in for Lily Yopez from Mephram High School and said the MephAcapella students participated in the Sing Strong competition, Mephram held their annual Mr. Mephram event and students from the Mephram Chamber Orchestra performed for senior citizens with the Kennedy Chamber Orchestra. The ACES Club visited the elementary schools to teach students about the dangers of drugs. He congratulated the Cheer team, Kickline team, Bellmore-Merrick Bulldogs, BMB Program, girls and boys wrestling teams and the track team on their accomplishments. He said that students are looking forward to the Robbies 5K Run, the Skull and Bones performance of Grease and Mephram's biggest event, St. Baldricks.

Mr. Harrington thanked the students for their presentation. He discussed the upcoming plays in each school and mentioned the future dates.

B. Future Dates

March 2	Calhoun and Kennedy Class Night
March 8	Kennedy Winter Letter Ceremony
March 9	District College Planning Night
	Kennedy Art Honor Society Induction
March 13	Founder's Day Dinner
March 14	High School Social Studies Honor Society Induction
March 21	Kennedy and Mepham Science Honor Society Induction
March 22	St. Baldrick's @ Mepham
March 23-24	Middle School Musical
March 25	Calhoun On Tour Musical
March 31	Mepham and Kennedy Musical
	Calhoun On Tour Musical
April 1	Mepham and Kennedy Musical
	Calhoun On Tour Musical
April 3	Board of Education Meeting

VI. PUBLIC COMMENTS – *Agenda Items Only*

Ms. Lanci 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.

There were no public comments.

On a **MOTION** by Dr. Kaplan, seconded by Ms. Miller and carried 6-0, the Board of Education approved by consent agenda items VII.A through IX.H.

VII. SUPERINTENDENT'S RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Registration and Voting Information

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education approve the 2023 Registration and Voting Information.

B. Policy

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education approve the following policy for a second reading:

Policy No. 6800 - Payroll Procedures (Revised)

C. Donation

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education accept a donation of a pitching machine valued at \$1500.00 from the Calhoun Sports Boosters to support the softball program at Calhoun High School.

D. Special Education

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education approve the following Special Education placements as recommended by the Committee on Special Education: 000012888, 000013059, 000512125, 000513158, 000513619, 101170000, 103480000, 181910227, 201700008, 201800160, 201900160, 202110620 and 370001322

VIII. PERSONNEL REPORT – March 1, 2023

- A. Resignations
- B. Appointments
- C. Recommendation for Permanent Employment
- D. Recommendation for Continued Employment
- E. Leave Requests
- F. Assigned Services – Non-Athletics – Cancellation
- G. Assigned Services – Non-Athletics
- H. Assigned Services – Athletics – Cancellation
- I. Assigned Services – Athletics – Winter
- J. Assigned Services – Athletics – Intramurals
- K. Assigned Services – Athletics – Spring

IX. BUSINESS AND FINANCE

A. Bills and Corresponding Warrant – March 1, 2023 - Information Only

B. Bids

C. Budget Summary - February 28, 2023 - Information Only

D. Recycle Services – eWorks Electronic Services Inc.

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education approve the use of eWorks Electronic Services Inc. to provide recycling of the District's computer hardware and related devices.

E. District Reserves Plan

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education approves the District Reserves Plan as of March, 2023 and authorizes the publication on the District's website.

F. Inter-Municipal COOP Agreement-BOCES of Nassau County-Special Education Services

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education of the Bellmore-Merrick Central High School District authorizes and approves the Inter-Municipal Agreement with Nassau BOCES to permit Nassau BOCES to conduct an RFP for Academic Tutoring Services, Related Services and Skilled Nurse Staffing Services on behalf of the School District;

AND, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board of Education authorizes the Board President or their designee to sign this Agreement and any document necessary to facilitate same.

G. Rescind Obsolete Equipment

WHEREAS, on February 1, 2023, the Board of Education approved agenda item IX.E.2, a resolution to declare obsolete and approve the disposal of a 2003 GMC Savanna Cargo Van used at Grand Avenue Middle School; and

WHEREAS, it has been determined that the 2003 GMC Savanna Cargo Van, bearing VIN # 1GTGG25U631114133, can be utilized by the Transportation Department;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education rescind the aforementioned resolution.

H. Acclaimed Mobile Health – Heartpath Cardiovascular Services PLLC

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education of the Bellmore-Merrick Central High School District authorizes and approves the agreement with Heartpath Cardiovascular Services, PLLC, to provide echocardiogram and EKG screenings and other on-site tests via their Acclaimed Mobile Health Mobile Health Van through June 30, 2023.

X. OLD/NEW BUSINESS

No old or new business was discussed.

XI. CORRESPONDENCE

The Board of Education received three pieces of mailed correspondence and two emails between January 27, 2023 and February 17, 2023.

XII. PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

XIII. POTENTIAL EXECUTIVE SESSION

The Board of Education did not enter into Executive Session.

XIV. ADJOURNMENT

On a **MOTION** by Ms. Blane, seconded by Ms. Cmar-Grote and carried 6-0, the Board of Education meeting adjourned at 8:22 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Pattianne Guccione
District Clerk