

Board of Education Meeting (Wednesday, September 6, 2023)

A regular meeting of the Bellmore-Merrick Central High School District Board of Education was held on Wednesday evening, September 6, 2023, in the Board Conference Room of the Administrative Offices at the Brookside Educational Center at 1260 Meadowbrook Road, North Merrick, New York.

Board of Education Members Present:

Janet Goller, President

Nancy Kaplan, Vice President

Nina Lanci, Melissa Cmar-Grote, Marion Blane, Gina Piskin, Edward Corona, Megan C Ryan

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

Maura Kempton, Assistant Director of Special Education and Pupil Services

Emily Paluseo, 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

1. Opening

A. Call to Order at 6:49 p.m.

B. Pledge of Allegiance

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

C. Acting District Clerk

Motion to appoint Michael Harrington as the Acting District Clerk during Executive Session

Motion by Marion Blane, second by Melissa Cmar-Grote.

Final Resolution: Motion Approved

Yes: Nina Lanci, Nancy Kaplan, Melissa Cmar-Grote, Marion Blane, Janet Goller, Gina Piskin, Edward Corona, Megan C Ryan

D. Executive Session

Motion to convene into Executive Session at 6:50 p.m. to discuss BoardDocs, Superintendent's Conference Day, a late transportation request, building updates and a specific personnel issue.

Motion by Nina Lanci, second by Nancy Kaplan.

Final Resolution: Motion Approved

Yes: Nina Lanci, Nancy Kaplan, Melissa Cmar-Grote, Marion Blane, Janet Goller, Gina Piskin, Edward Corona, Megan C Ryan

E. Reconvene to Public Session

Motion to reconvene into Public Session at 7:30 p.m.

Motion by Marion Blane, second by Melissa Cmar-Grote.

Final Resolution: Motion Approved

Yes: Nina Lanci, Nancy Kaplan, Melissa Cmar-Grote, Marion Blane, Janet Goller, Gina Piskin, Edward Corona, Megan C Ryan

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

Ms. Goller asked for a moment of silence to honor Rick Coby, a September 11th First Responder and Firefighter that recently lost his battle with cancer.

Ms. Goller thanked Mr. Harrington and the entire staff for their hard work and dedication in preparing for the school year.

2. Approval of Minutes

A. Board of Education Meeting Minutes 8/2/23

Resolution: BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education approve the minutes from the August 2, 2023 Board of Education meeting.

Motion by Nina Lanci, second by Marion Blane.

Final Resolution: Motion Approved

Yes: Nina Lanci, Nancy Kaplan, Melissa Cmar-Grote, Marion Blane, Janet Goller, Gina Piskin, Edward Corona, Megan C Ryan

3. Approval of Treasurer's Report

A. Treasurer's Report

Resolution: BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education approve the Treasurer's Report dated July 31, 2023.

Motion by Nancy Kaplan, second by Melissa Cmar-Grote.

Final Resolution: Motion Approved

Yes: Nina Lanci, Nancy Kaplan, Melissa Cmar-Grote, Marion Blane, Janet Goller, Gina Piskin, Edward Corona, Megan C Ryan

4. Superintendent's Report

Mr. Harrington welcomed everyone and said that the buildings were filled with spirit, energy and excitement and we are off to a great start of the school year. He said last week we welcomed back our teachers at Superintendent's Conference day with an amazing performance from the Calhoun Rock Band which was a reminder of the programs and opportunities that our students are offered.

Mr. Harrington explained this year's theme of The Power of Yet which is based on a book, "The Magical Yet", which is about a magical creature that helps a child welcome challenge, take a new path, learn perseverance and persistence and changing our thoughts to I can't do that YET. Mr. Harrington said we will push further when talking to kids about making good choices and how they will help make this district even better. He thanked the Principals and Assistant Principals who worked very hard to make transitions smooth. He also thanked the Directors for working so hard this summer to ensure our buildings have everything they need.

Ms. Hollings, Principal of Calhoun High School discussed the opening of school and said there was great energy. She said the 9th graders were smiling and looking forward to starting in the building. She said we have great things coming up, such as homecoming and On-Tour productions and that it is going to be a great year.

Mr. Arlin, Executive Director of Alternative Education said that we welcomed 50 students in the Meadowbrook Alternative Program this year and 24 students in Prep Academy. He said he is excited about the opening of the expanded Electrical Program for 11th and 12th grade cohorts and that there are about 50 students in the program. He said it was a great opening and he is looking forward to great things.

Ms. Dunn, Principal of Merrick Avenue Middle School said there was fantastic spirit. She said the 7th graders were nervous but orientation helped ease some of their nerves. She said she loves the message of YET and our culture of "Ramily", and she will ensure our kids feel that. She said over 500 students are looking to participate in sports this year. She thanked the staff for all of their work over the summer and said she is looking forward to a great year.

Mr. Owenburg, Principal of Kennedy High School said Kennedy has alot of "Kennergy"! He said student and teachers were recharged over the summer and we saw great spirit on the first day. He mentioned how the seniors come in full of spirit with their cars decorated and it was nice to see that spirit trickle down to the freshman. He said they are getting ready for fun events like homecoming and they are off to a great start.

Mr. DeMartinis, Principal of Mephram High School said it has been a great start to the school year. He said 9th graders jumped in right away and that teacher, counselors and staff all helped with lockers and giving the students directions to their classrooms. He said the students did the morning announcements and it was so nice to see kids growing into their senior year. He said Senior Sunrise is on Friday and students will enjoy bagels and watching the sunrise together. He said next week counselors will meet with 9th graders and will be reintroducing themselves to the 10th and 11th grade students. He mentioned that there was a small fire in the building last week and thanked Mr. Simpkins for all of his hard work getting everything ready for opening day.

Mr. Conte, Principal of Grand Avenue Middle School said 7th graders were nervous about their lockers and where their classrooms were but within a few periods of the day we already saw teachers having connecting conversations with kids. He said that humanities lessons will start next week, adding that is is an incredible time to connect with kids and they will include conversations about September 11th. He mentioned some of the projects that took place over the summer and thanked everyone for their support and he is looking forward to a great year.

A. Curriculum, Instruction and Data Presentation - 2022/2023 Academic Year In Review

Mr. Bersin gave a PowerPoint presentation on 2022/2023 Academic Year in Review and said last year was a great year and that we saw growth in our educational programs. He discussed AP exams and how we look at the participation rate relative to Nassau County and explained that students are participating more than the average across Nassau County. He said the district's educational programs have grown and we see that growth in our specialty programs. He said kids are being encouraged to do more and we are seeing tremendous academic success. He explained that in every regents course we were well over the county and State averages. Regarding AP exams, the district had a great passing rate but we are more interested in getting more kids into the programs. We have seen lots of areas of strength, growth in statistics and we are seeing enrollment increasing as kids take more challenging classes. He said that we had a graduation rate of 98% and that 82% of students received an Advanced Regents Diploma.

Mr. Soel explained that the Physics C - Mechanics AP exam has a low participation rate because this is a college level, combined physics exam which allows students the opportunity to sit for the exam without taking the course. He said we are one of maybe 7 school districts that even offer this to our students.

The Board of Education had some questions and Mr. Bersin explained that the information presented tonight does not include dual enrollment college courses that are being taken by students at any given point. He further explained the summer programs and how the graduation rate has increased. When asked about equity and access to AP exams, Mr. Harrington explained that for students who can't afford AP exams the district has funding for them.

Ms. Dunn discussed the Advisory Program for the middle schools, a program that was created so students feel as if they have at least one trusted adult that they connect with in the district. These types of programs improve emotional and mental health in students. She explained that most class sizes have about 26 students and the Advisory Program will have small groups at least once per month for each student. She explained that during these sessions they will be talking to the kids about being good students and good community members. She said that teachers are excited to have these smaller classes and to teach these lessons, they are really looking forward to the program. Mr. Conte explained that this program offers an opportunity to dig in and discuss topics that get to the history of why bad behaviors start and he hopes this program will give students an opportunity to stop certain bad behaviors and will look at different ways to discipline our kids in hopes of turning the tables for them. Ms. Dunn explained that we want to be more mindful of students to have at least one adult they connect with and that this is not typical curriculum writing. She said four lessons have been written at this point. The first session included discussions about where you are in life and the second lessons focuses on "The Magical Yet". She said that they are mindful about what should be taught at home and what is taught in school and these lessons are about community and belonging and similar types of things that may come up such as hate speech. Mr. Conte added that each lesson plan has two adults present in the room as a fail safe to ensure that things don't go astray.

In response to questions from the Board of Education about restorative justice, Mr. Bersin said that there will be a more restorative type practice and that curriculum has been written so that we aren't just dealing with consequences of actions.

Mr. Bersin ended by saying we are looking forward to more great things, that it is a real honor to be in this district and that we will have our kids meet their goals.

B. Future Dates

Mr. Harrington mentioned the future dates and said he is looking forward to a great school year.

September 21	High School Back to School Night
September 22	Calhoun Pep Rally & Homecoming
September 23	Calhoun Coltfest and Homecoming
September 25	Yom Kippur-Schools Closed
September 28	Middle School Back to School Night
September 29	Kennedy Prep Rally
September 30	Kennedy Homecoming
October 4	District College Fair & Financial Aid Night and Board of Education Meeting

5. Public Comments-Agenda Items Only

A. Guidelines to Public Comments-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.

6. Superintendent's Recommendations

A. Policy No. 6645 - Capital Assets Accounting (Revised)

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

Policy No. 6645-Capital Assets Accounting (Revised)

Motion by Nancy Kaplan, second by Nina Lanci.

Final Resolution: Motion Approved

Yes: Nina Lanci, Nancy Kaplan, Melissa Cmar-Grote, Marion Blane, Janet Goller, Gina Piskin, Edward Corona, Megan C Ryan

B. Policy No. 0100 - Non-Discrimination and Equal Opportunity (Revised)

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

Policy No. 0100-Non-Discrimination and Equal Opportunity (Revised)

Motion by Nancy Kaplan, second by Nina Lanci.

Final Resolution: Motion Approved

Yes: Nina Lanci, Nancy Kaplan, Melissa Cmar-Grote, Marion Blane, Janet Goller, Gina Piskin, Edward Corona, Megan C Ryan

C. Policy No. 0110.2 - Sexual Harassment in the Workplace (Revised)

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

Policy No. 0110.2 - Sexual Harassment in the Workplace (Revised)

Motion by Nancy Kaplan, second by Nina Lanci.

Final Resolution: Motion Approved

Yes: Nina Lanci, Nancy Kaplan, Melissa Cmar-Grote, Marion Blane, Janet Goller, Gina Piskin, Edward Corona, Megan C Ryan

D. Policy No. 0115 - Harassment, Bullying and Discrimination (Revised)

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

Policy No. 0115 - Harassment, Bullying and Discrimination (Revised)

Motion by Nancy Kaplan, second by Nina Lanci.

Final Resolution: Motion Approved

Yes: Nina Lanci, Nancy Kaplan, Melissa Cmar-Grote, Marion Blane, Janet Goller, Gina Piskin, Edward Corona, Megan C Ryan

E. Donation from Mephram Sports Boosters

Resolution: BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education accept a donation of \$8,525.65 from the Mephram Sports Boosters to be used for windscreens around the Mephram High School athletic fields.

Motion by Nancy Kaplan, second by Nina Lanci.

Final Resolution: Motion Approved

Yes: Nina Lanci, Nancy Kaplan, Melissa Cmar-Grote, Marion Blane, Janet Goller, Gina Piskin, Edward Corona, Megan C Ryan

F. Special Education Vendor List 23/24 (Revised)

Resolution: BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education approve the revised Special Education Vendor List for the 2023/2024 school year.

Motion by Nancy Kaplan, second by Nina Lanci.

Final Resolution: Motion Approved

Yes: Nina Lanci, Nancy Kaplan, Melissa Cmar-Grote, Marion Blane, Janet Goller, Gina Piskin, Edward Corona, Megan C Ryan

G. Special Education Report

Resolution: BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education approve the following special education placements as recommended by the Committee on Special Education: 000010670, 000013792, 000014595, 000015138, 000015786, 000512629, 101750002, 131261154, 131261979, 131262213, 131262857, 131263682, 131264628, 192010789, 202200046, 202300051, 202300054, 202300061, 222310466 and 370002031.

Motion by Nancy Kaplan, second by Nina Lanci.

Final Resolution: Motion Approved

Yes: Nina Lanci, Nancy Kaplan, Melissa Cmar-Grote, Marion Blane, Janet Goller, Gina Piskin, Edward Corona, Megan C Ryan

7. Personnel Report

A. Personnel Report 9/6/23

Resolution: BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education approves the Personnel Report for September 6, 2023.

A. Resignations

B. Appointments

C. Recommendation for Permanent Employment

D. Salary Reclassification

E. Leave Requests

F. Rescind Leave

G. Assigned Services-Non-Athletics

H. Assigned Services-Athletics-Cancellations

I. Assigned Services-Athletics

Motion by Nancy Kaplan, second by Nina Lanci.

Final Resolution: Motion Approved

Yes: Nina Lanci, Nancy Kaplan, Melissa Cmar-Grote, Marion Blane, Janet Goller, Gina Piskin, Edward Corona, Megan C Ryan

8. Business and Finance

A. Bills and Corresponding Warrant dated 9/6/23

The Board of Education reviewed the bills and corresponding warrant.

B. Bids

Resolution: BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education approve the bids as stated.

Motion by Nancy Kaplan, second by Nina Lanci.

Final Resolution: Motion Approved

Yes: Nina Lanci, Nancy Kaplan, Melissa Cmar-Grote, Marion Blane, Janet Goller, Gina Piskin, Edward Corona, Megan C Ryan

C. Budget Summary dated 8/31/23

The Board of Education reviewed the budget summary.

D. Health and Welfare Services Agreement

Resolution: BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education hereby authorizes the President of the Board of Education and the Superintendent of Schools to execute contracts to provide health and welfare services to specific students who reside in the Bellmore-Merrick CHSD and attend a non-public school in one of the following school districts for the 2023-2024 School Year: Lawrence School District.

Motion by Nancy Kaplan, second by Nina Lanci.

Final Resolution: Motion Approved

Yes: Nina Lanci, Nancy Kaplan, Melissa Cmar-Grote, Marion Blane, Janet Goller, Gina Piskin, Edward Corona, Megan C Ryan

E. Undue Burden Independent Evaluator Hardship Waiver

Resolution: WHEREAS, the Bellmore-Merrick Central High School District has an approved Annual Professional Performance Review ("APPR") Plan in place, effective for the 2023-2024 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 August 30, 2023 submission of the Undue Burden Independent Evaluator Hardship Waiver application to the State Education Department.

Motion by Nancy Kaplan, second by Nina Lanci.

Final Resolution: Motion Approved

Yes: Nina Lanci, Nancy Kaplan, Melissa Cmar-Grote, Marion Blane, Janet Goller, Gina Piskin, Edward Corona, Megan C Ryan

F. Budget Transfers

Resolution: BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education of the Bellmore-Merrick CHSD approve the following budget transfers to cover 2022-2023 school year expenses:

From: A2250.490-00-0000 (BOCES Special Ed) \$83,000.00

To: A2250.150-09-0000 (Special Ed-Prep Academy) \$83,000.00

To cover costs for year-end salary clean up.

From: A2250.490-00-0000 (BOCES Special Ed) \$175,359.00

To: A2250.400-08-4300 (Special Ed Related Svcs) \$175,359.00

To cover costs for Special Ed Related Services.

From: A2250.490-00-0000 (BOCES-Special Ed) \$84,920.00

To: A2250.413-00-0000 (Contractual-South Oaks) \$84,920.00

To cover costs for Special Ed Related Services.

Motion by Nancy Kaplan, second by Nina Lanci.

Final Resolution: Motion Approved

Yes: Nina Lanci, Nancy Kaplan, Melissa Cmar-Grote, Marion Blane, Janet Goller, Gina Piskin, Edward Corona, Megan C Ryan

G. Obsolete/Surplus Equipment/Property - Textbooks

Resolution: BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education declare obsolete and approve the disposal of 270 Buen Viaje 2 World Language textbooks at Calhoun High School.

Motion by Nancy Kaplan, second by Nina Lanci.

Final Resolution: Motion Approved

Yes: Nina Lanci, Nancy Kaplan, Melissa Cmar-Grote, Marion Blane, Janet Goller, Gina Piskin, Edward Corona, Megan C Ryan

H. Obsolete/Surplus Equipment/Property - Fax Machine

Resolution: BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education declare obsolete and approve the disposal of a Brother Intellifax 2820 fax machine (serial #V61325D2N371222) located in the Nurse's Office at Kennedy High School.

Motion by Nancy Kaplan, second by Nina Lanci.

Final Resolution: Motion Approved

Yes: Nina Lanci, Nancy Kaplan, Melissa Cmar-Grote, Marion Blane, Janet Goller, Gina Piskin, Edward Corona, Megan C Ryan

I. Utica University Student Internship Agreement

Resolution: BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education approve an agreement with Utica University to provide a Student Teacher Experience in terms of related instruction for students enrolled in Utica University Educational Programs.

Motion by Nancy Kaplan, second by Nina Lanci.

Final Resolution: Motion Approved

Yes: Nina Lanci, Nancy Kaplan, Melissa Cmar-Grote, Marion Blane, Janet Goller, Gina Piskin, Edward Corona, Megan C Ryan

J. Office of Civil Rights Accessibility Standards Agreement

Resolution: BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education approve an agreement with the Office of Civil Rights for the District to update its website to ensure that programs, services, and activities communicated or facilitated online are accessible to people with disabilities.

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

Motion by Nancy Kaplan, second by Nina Lanci.

Final Resolution: Motion Approved

Yes: Nina Lanci, Nancy Kaplan, Melissa Cmar-Grote, Marion Blane, Janet Goller, Gina Piskin, Edward Corona, Megan C Ryan

K. Surf for All Contract

Resolution: BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education approve an agreement with Surf for All Corporation, to provide Surf Therapy Services from September 1, 2023 through June 30, 2024 at a cost of \$49.00 student for each session.

Motion by Nancy Kaplan, second by Nina Lanci.

Final Resolution: Motion Approved

Yes: Nina Lanci, Nancy Kaplan, Melissa Cmar-Grote, Marion Blane, Janet Goller, Gina Piskin, Edward Corona, Megan C Ryan

9. Old/New Business

No old or new business was discussed.

10. Correspondence

A. Correspondence

The Board of Education did not receive mailed correspondence and received two emails between July 29, 2023 and August 31, 2023.

11. Public Comments

A. Guidelines to Public Comments

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.

12. Potential Executive Session

A. The Board of Education did not enter into Executive Session

13. Adjournment

A. Motion to Adjourn

Motion to Adjourn at 8:25 p.m.

Motion by Gina Piskin, second by Nina Lanci.

Final Resolution: Motion Approved

Yes: Nina Lanci, Nancy Kaplan, Melissa Cmar-Grote, Marion Blane, Janet Goller, Gina Piskin, Edward Corona, Megan C Ryan

Submitted by Pattianne Guccione, District Clerk