

MINUTES OF THE BELLMORE-MERRICK CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT  
BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING SEPTEMBER 4, 2019

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A regular meeting of the Bellmore-Merrick Central High School District Board of Education was held on Wednesday evening, September 4, 2019, in the Board of Education Conference Room of the Administrative Offices at the Brookside School at 1260 Meadowbrook Road, North Merrick, New York.

The following members of the Board of Education were present:

Marion Blane, President  
Gina Piskin, Vice President  
Edward Corona  
John Ferrara  
Janet Goller  
Dr. Nancy Kaplan  
Nina Lanci  
Tracey Miller

Also present:

John DeTommaso, Superintendent of Schools  
Dr. Mara Bollettieri, Deputy Superintendent of Personnel  
Kate Freeman, Assistant Superintendent for Business  
Michael Harrington, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment  
Mikaela Coni, Administrative Assistant for Business  
Cheryl Fontana, Director of Music/Fine and Performing Arts and Adult Education  
Joseph Innaco, Director of Administrative & Instructional Technology and Data Protection/Security  
Emily Paluseo, Assistant Director of Special Education and Pupil Services  
Jon Simpkins, Director of School Facilities and Operations  
Tom Volpe, Supervisor of Transportation  
Ken Zisel, Brookside Assistant Principal  
Christopher Powers, School Attorney  
Pattianne Guccione, District Clerk

I. CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Blane, Board President called the meeting to order at 8:11 p.m.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

On a **MOTION** by Ms. Lanci, seconded by Ms. Miller and carried 8-0, the Board of Education approved the minutes from the August 7, 2019 meeting and the revised minutes from the June 5, 2019 meeting.

IV. TREASURER'S REPORT

On a **MOTION** by Dr. Kaplan, seconded by Ms. Miller and carried 8-0, the Board of Education approved the Treasurer's Report dated July 31, 2019.

V. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Opening Day of School

Mr. DeTommaso welcomed everyone and said that it was a great opening day to school. He thanked the entire staff for all of their efforts that go into the opening of school. He said that the students knew what to do and that everything went very smoothly. He thanked Jon Simpkins, custodians and maintenance for completing construction projects. He explained that over the past five years the District has spent over 80 million dollars on improvements in the buildings and facilities. Our

students get the benefit of top facilities. The bond that passed 7 years ago had an interest rate of 1.99% and we are now seeing the return on that investment as we get State Aid on the buildings, it was a tremendous investment. The energy performance contract saved the District money and our buildings are efficient. The Capital Reserves projects such as parking lots, tennis courts and classroom renovations do not affect the tax rate or budget. We are looking forward toward a wonderful school year and are excited about the new programs including the electrical program here at Brookside.

Mr. DeTommaso said that throughout the summer the community cupboard provided food bi-weekly for about 65 families. He thanked everyone for the donations, noting that many people wish to remain anonymous. He also thanked the volunteers that give their time to the Community Cupboard and said we take great pride in the Bellmores, Merricks and in the District for what has been accomplished with the Cupboard.

Mr. DeTommaso thanked the entire staff and talked about the first Staff Appreciation Day in Bellmore-Merrick CHSD last week. He explained that the entire staff of Bellmore-Merrick CHSD gathered for the first time for a fun event. The staff of about 900 people came together to focus on this year's theme, "Closer to Their Hearts". The theory behind the theme is to get closer to the kids, learn how they are feeling, thinking, and spend time getting to know them. He said this theme does not apply only to the teaching staff; it is for the entire staff, because at the end of the day it is all about kids. He stated that we pay attention to academics and we want them to improve but if we get to know the students and get closer to them then results will follow. Mr. DeTommaso also explained that Staff Appreciation Day was funded entirely by donations. Every group in the Bellmore-Merrick educational community contributed to the event. He said that the District donated two cases of water and six cases of seltzer but at the end of the day we had more water and soda than we donated, which was then sent to the schools. He said it was a fantastic day and he thanked everyone.

#### Curriculum Update

Mr. Harrington gave a presentation about the 2018-2019 school year. He said that last year was a tremendous year. Five years ago a plan was put in place to overhaul the curriculum in the middle schools. The redesign is now complete and we had great results. Eighth grade students went through two years of a brand new enriched curriculum resulting in 99.7% passing at Grand Avenue MS and 100% passing at Merrick Avenue MS in Earth Science and Algebra.

Mr. Harrington said this year there is a new Electrical Program. CHAMP and Broadcasting continue to grow in enrollment and an application process is necessary at this point which is a great indication of student interest. STEAM initiatives will be in each of our schools including Robotics Clubs and we are overhauling the computer science program. Other highlights of the 18-19 school year include MAP, Twilight and the Special Education Program. Our Special Education is renowned because of all of the transition programs. Bellmore-Merrick CHSD has begun planning the implementation of our new Prep Academy which is a post high school experience for students to learn new skills and receive transition services.

Mr. Harrington said last year's theme "Where Wellness Matters" was not just words, it was action. Bellmore-Merrick made mental health a top priority. Last year we added counselors and psychologists to give more access for the students. We opened the counseling centers after school and we partnered with Northwell Health. This partnership with Northwell Health gave our facilities access to in-district psychologists. Kids need these services and thankfully, we enhanced the services. We have 54 students receiving treatment through this program. Mr. Harrington thanked Dr. Bollettieri, Mr. Arlin, and Ms. Paluseo for the work they invested into the program.

Mr. Harrington also discussed the Safe Harmless policy. He explained that if a Regents exam result negatively affects a student's GPA then we do not include the exam in the final average. This was a bold move and now kids are performing better and having this in place gives them more opportunities in the college process. Mr. Harrington thanked the counselors and teachers for encouraging students to believe in themselves and to take chances. He also thanked the Board of Education, Administrators, Principals and staff and said it is going to be a great year.

VI. PUBLIC COMMENTS – *Agenda Items Only*

There were no public comments on agenda items.

VII. SUPERINTENDENT'S RECOMMENDATIONS

On a **MOTION** by Ms. Lanci seconded by Mr. Ferrara and passed 8-0, the Board of Education approved the following motion:

A. Donation

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education accept a donation of \$96.75 from the Bellmore-Merrick Council of PTAs towards the Community Cupboard.

On a **MOTION** by Ms. Piskin, seconded by Dr. Kaplan and carried 8-0, the Board of Education approved by a consent agenda items VII.B through IX.D.

B. Policy

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

Policy No. 4526 – Computer Network and Internet Acceptable Use

Policy No. 4526.1 – Internet Use

Policy No. 4526.2 – Bring Your Own Device/Mobile Learning Device

C. BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education approve the revised Special Education vendors for School Year 2019-2020.

D. Special Education

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education approve the following Committee on Special Education recommended placements: 000011666, 000012072, 000012545, 000513103, 070940016, 082970000, 090910002, 131263328, 181911122, 201600057, 201700008, 201900002, 370001072, 370001081, 370001244, 999010194.

VIII. PERSONNEL REPORT dated September 4, 2019

- A. Terminations
- B. Resignations
- C. Appointments
- D. Recommendation for Continued Employment
- E. Salary Reclassification
- F. Cancellation
- G. Rescind
- H. Assigned Services – Non-Athletics -Cancellation
- I. Assigned Services –Non-Athletics
- J. Assigned Services – Athletics – Cancellations
- K. Assigned Services – Athletics

IX. BUSINESS AND FINANCE

A. Bills and Corresponding Warrant dated September 4, 2019

The Board of Education reviewed the Summary of Bills and the corresponding warrant.

B. Bids

The Board of Education approved the bids as stated in the agenda.

C. Budget Summary dated August 31, 2019

The Board of Education reviewed the Budget Summary.

D. Construction Change Orders

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education approve the following Sit & Interior Reconstruction Change Orders at S. H. Calhoun High School, SED No. 28-02-53-07-0-004-053:

1. Change Order No. 1 in the add amount of \$16,795.00 for Pioneer Landscaping & Asphalt Paving Inc., the Site Work Contract.
2. Change Order No. 2 in the add amount of \$29,554.00 for Pioneer Landscaping & Asphalt Paving Inc., the Site Work Contract.
3. Change Order No. 3 in the add amount of \$15,995.00 for Pioneer Landscaping & Asphalt Paving Inc., the Site Work Contract.
4. Change Order No. 2 in the add amount of \$9,500.00 for RZ & AL, Inc., the Interior Reconstruction Contract.

On a MOTION by Ms. Lanci seconded by Mr. Ferrara and passed 8-0, the Board of Education approved the following motion:

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education of the Bellmore-Merrick Central High School District hereby authorizes an appeal of the Decision of the Impartial Hearing Officer in Case No. 523075; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board of Education hereby authorizes School District counsel, Ingerman Smith, L.L.P., to proceed as necessary to take and pursue such appeal on behalf of the School District.

X. MOTION TO CONVENE PUBLIC HEARING – ADDENDUM TO SCHOOL SAFETY PLANS

On a MOTION by Ms. Miller seconded by Ms. Piskin and passed 8-0, the Board of Education moved to convene to the Public Hearing for the addendum to the School Safety Plans.

Mr. DeTommaso explained that the District's School Safety Plans were adopted last month and a new item was added as required.

XI. CORRESPONDENCE

Ms. Blane said we did receive correspondence.

XII. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Aya Elsayed requested that EID holidays be added to the school calendar. She said we need to get to know more about kids and other students do not know about her holiday.

Aisha Umar requested that EID holidays be added as an official holiday to the school calendar. She said that her child is struggling to connect with their faith because her child fears that the work will pile up if she takes off from school to celebrate the holiday, so she chooses school over the holiday.

Mr. DeTommaso explained that since EID is an official Day of Religious Observance (DRO), new material and quizzes are prohibited on that day and all other DROs. He said there has been a lot of focus on this with the entire staff.

Rania Elbaz requested that EID holidays be added to the school calendar. She said that her son would be attending a Board of Education meeting to address the Board. She thanked the North Merrick School District for adding EID to their calendar.

Ms. Blane said the Board of Education appreciates everyone's presence and that the calendar will be worked on in December.

Laura Asch talked about school security and feels that if we hire former Law Enforcement Officers then they should be allowed to carry loaded concealed weapons. She also suggested that the Board of Education explore drug-sniffing dogs be utilized in the schools.

Mr. DeTommaso explained how over the years the Board of Education has discussed security measures. To enhance security we have vestibules, pass cards and security personnel at every door. He added that 99% of our security personnel are former Law Enforcement Officers and that a person is not able to get into a building without passing someone. He said security is something that we are continually looking at and discussing.

XIII. OLD/NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Piskin announced that today was Dr. Kaplan's birthday. Everyone wished Dr. Kaplan a Happy Birthday and Ms. Piskin thanked her for her dedication.

XIV. POTENTIAL EXECUTIVE SESSION

On a **MOTION** by Ms. Lanci, seconded by Dr. Kaplan and carried 8-0, the Board of Education entered into executive session at 8:59 p.m.

XV. ADJOURNMENT

On a **MOTION** by Dr. Kaplan, seconded by Mr. Ferrara and carried 8-0, the Board of Education meeting adjourned at 9:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Pattianne Guccione  
District Clerk

