

Board of Education Meeting (Wednesday, January 3, 2024)

A regular meeting of the Bellmore-Merrick Central High School District Board of Education was held on Wednesday evening, January 3, 2024, in the Board Conference Room of the Administrative Offices at the Brookside Educational Center at 1260 Meadowbrook Road, North Merrick, New York.

Members present:

Nina Lanci, Nancy Kaplan, Melissa Cmar-Grote, Marion Blane, Janet Goller, Gina Piskin

Members not present:

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
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
Christopher Powers, School Attorney
Pattianne Guccione, District Clerk

1. Opening

A. Call to order at 6:55 p.m.

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

B. Acting District Clerk

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

Motion by Nina Lanci, second by Melissa Cmar-Grote.

Final Resolution: Motion Approved

Yes: Nina Lanci, Nancy Kaplan, Melissa Cmar-Grote, Marion Blane, Janet Goller, Gina Piskin

C. Executive Session

Motion to Convene into Executive Session at 6:55 p.m. to discuss the 2024-2025 school calendar, the new 9th grade STEAM Elective, litigation and to talk to previous students.

Motion by Melissa Cmar-Grote, second by Gina Piskin.

Final Resolution: Motion Approved

Yes: Nina Lanci, Nancy Kaplan, Melissa Cmar-Grote, Marion Blane, Janet Goller, Gina Piskin

D. Reconvene to Public Session

Motion to reconvene into Public Session at 7:32 p.m.

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

E. Pledge of Allegiance

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

2. Approval of Minutes

A. Board of Education Meeting Minutes 12/6/23

Resolution: BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education approve the minutes from the December 6, 2023 Board of Education meeting.

Motion by Nina Lanci, second by Melissa Cmar-Grote.

Final Resolution: Motion Approved

Yes: Nina Lanci, Nancy Kaplan, Melissa Cmar-Grote, Janet Goller, Gina Piskin

Abstain: Marion Blane

3. Approval of Treasurer's Report

Resolution: BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education approve the Treasurer's Report dated November 30, 2023.

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

4. Superintendent's Report

Ms. Goller welcomed everyone to the meeting and congratulated Ms. Blane on the birth of her granddaughter. She also thanked Ms. Lanci and the Bellmore Lions for their incredible Polar Express event that benefited so many families. Ms. Goller said that while the Board of Education was in Executive Session they met with two former students to discuss their transition to college. She thanked those students and said they were very complimentary about the administration and teachers and made some suggestions that we will consider.

Mr. Harrington said he hopes everyone had a wonderful holiday season. He welcomed back Ms. Dunn and congratulated her on the birth of her daughter. He said we had a wonderful month in December and mentioned some wonderful events such as our concerts and art expos. He said that Kennedy High School was acknowledged as a STEAM School of Honor, the Calhoun Boys Football team received the New York State Public High School Athletic Association Fall 2023 Community Service Challenge, and that we had a wonderful Sprig Gardner tournament. He said one of the greatest highlights in December was the Polar Express event organized by Ms. Lanci and the Bellmore Lions Club. He said the event was incredible, with so many students and staff volunteering, it is a true reflection of what this community is all about.

A. Award of Honor Presentation - Calhoun Boys Volleyball Nassau County Champions

Robert Bello

Lucas Beltre

Alex Bloch

James Bowman

Jake Condela

Noah Diamant

Harley Finkelstein

Will Hutchinson

Aleksandar Ignjatovic

Max Jose

Zahi Rahman

Mark Restivo

Lucas Rogers

Sam Saldarelli

Evan Schneir

Ian Yegidis

Mr. Harrington congratulated the team and said that these students showed perseverance and grit when winning the championship. He said that winning the championship is a memory they will always have and that it is even more special that they are playing with their friends.

Ms. Goller presented each student with an Award of Honor certificate and said the boy's volleyball team did not have the regular season they were hoping for. After losing many seniors, a lot of new players had to come in and play varsity for the first time. The regular season didn't see many wins but the boys continued to play hard and get better every day. They knew that if they worked hard and gave it all they had, it would pay off in the end. Once playoffs started, the boys hit their groove. They beat Bethpage in three in the first round to advance to play Roslyn, who they beat in five after losing to them twice in the regular season. They then defeated South Side in the final four and went on the County championship versus Jericho, who also beat the Colts twice in the regular season. The Colts took the first two sets before giving up the next two to Jericho. In the 5th set, the Colts were down to their last point losing 14-10 when they fought back for every single point and ended up winning 18-16 to become County Champions! Congratulations Boys!!

B. Curriculum, Instruction and Data Presentation - STEAM Research 9

Mr. Harrington thanked the students, parents and teachers for their commitment and focus on this type of education.

Mr. Bersin said that STEAM has been making headway for the students' future and thanked everyone for their support of the programs.

Mr. Soel, Ms. Bizewski, Dr. Caliendo, Dr. Giaraffa, Mr. Prince and several students gave a presentation on the STEAM Computer Science and Research elective. This course will engage students in a wide variety of introductory topics in the areas of digital literacy, coding, digital citizenship, cyber safety, engineering design, robotics, artificial intelligence, science research, and statistics. The overarching goal of the course is to enrich the math and science programs with fun problems and challenges that foster critical thinking, problem solving, teamwork, communication, creativity, innovation and technical skills. This course is offered to all ninth grade students, whose schedule permits, and will provide a foundation for future success in math, science, computer science and engineering electives. These elective pathways are suggested in STEAM courses, however, students may move between pathways upon their interests. There are currently 481 students in 9th grade taking this elective with 17 Math and Science Educators teaching STEAM. With so many students being exposed to STEAM, the hope is that they continue to get great foundational skills that they will need to be successful in this world.

Students Cori Haiden and Eva Cohen from Kennedy High School, Samantha Smolin and Maddie Santos from Mepham High School, Frank Marzella and Brook Thatcher from Calhoun High School and Tazbid Ajhor, Gabrielle Schlechter, Kohana Bloom, Aiden Dela Cruz, Asher Chang, Aneesa Soto, Delylah Vincente and Leah Weerth from STEAM Research all discussed their personal experiences in the programs and what they have learned with many students saying they enjoy coding and working in groups with other students.

C. Future Dates

January 4 Calhoun Tri-M Music Honor Society Induction
January 11 Guidance Program for 11th Grade
January 12 MLK Day of Service
January 15 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day – Schools Closed
January 16 Mepham Tri-M Music Honor Society Induction
January 17 Kennedy Tri-M Music Honor Society Induction
January 19 Mepham Winter Ball
January 20 Calhoun On Tour Winter Show
January 26 Calhoun On Tour Winter Show
January 27 Calhoun On Tour Winter Show
February 7 Board of Education Meeting

Mr. Harrington mentioned the future dates and said he looks forward to the MLK Day of Service which demonstrates the heart of this district.

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.

There were no public comments on agenda items.

6. Superintendent's Recommendations

A. Policy No. 5150 - School Admissions and Residency (Revised)

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

Policy No. 5150 - School Admissions and Residency (Revised)

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education approve by consent agenda items 6.A through 8.I.

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

B. Policy No. 8130.2 - Workplace Violence Prevention (New)

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

Policy No. 8130.2 - Workplace Violence Prevention (New)

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education approve by consent agenda items 6.A through 8.I.

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

C. Donation - Community Cupboard

Resolution: BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education accept a donation of \$100.00 to the Community Cupboard from the Edom family in honor of Dr. Wiener, an AP English teacher at Calhoun High School.

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education approve by consent agenda items 6.A through 8.I.

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

Ms. Goller thanked the Edom family for their donation.

D. 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: 000010259 000010641 000011039 000011333 000011687 000011702 000012073 000012693 000012713 000013243 000013249 000013372 000014123 000512751 000513325 000514425 000514512 000514581 000515030 090570001 110260004 131261226 131261243 131262066 131262383 131262558 131262798 131263250 131263317 131264674 181910061 181910070 181910153 201800240 202200175 202300138 212210941 212211000 232411488 370001721 370002031 370002065 and 998450002.

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education approve by consent agenda items 6.A through 8.I.

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

7. Human Resources Report

A. Human Resources Report 1/3/24

Resolution: BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education approves the Human Resources Report for January 3, 2024.

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education approve by consent agenda items 6.A through 8.I.

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

8. Business and Finance

A. Bills and Corresponding Warrant

The Board of Education reviewed the bills and corresponding warrant dated 1/3/24.

B. Bids

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

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education approve by consent agenda items 6.A through 8.I.

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

C. Budget Summary

The Board of Education reviewed the budget summary dated 12/31/23.

D. NYS Cosmetology Examinations Rental Agreement

Resolution: 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, 2024 to December 31, 2024.

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education approve by consent agenda items 6.A through 8.I.

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

E. CSEA Employee Benefit Fund - Dental/Vision Plan - Custodial/Cafeteria

Resolution: BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education approve an agreement between the District and the Civil Service Employees' Association (CSEA) Employee Benefit Fund to provide members of the Custodial/Cafeteria Unit (Unit 3) with the option to select a dental and/or vision plan funded by the CSEA while employed by the District.

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education approve by consent agenda items 6.A through 8.I.

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

F. CSEA Employee Benefit Fund - Dental/Vision Plan - Clerical

Resolution: BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education approve an agreement between the District and the Civil Service Employees' Association (CSEA) Employee Benefit Fund to provide members of the Clerical Unit (Unit 4) with the option to select a dental and/or vision plan funded by the CSEA while employed by the District.

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education approve by consent agenda items 6.A through 8.I.

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

G. Settlement Agreement

Resolution: WHEREAS, a Complaint (the "Complaint") with the New York State Supreme Court, County of Nassau against the Bellmore Merrick Central High School District (the "District") under index number 900350/2021 was filed on or about August 12, 2021; and

WHEREAS, the District denied the allegations and interposed an Answer to the Complaint asserting various affirmative defenses; and

WHEREAS, the District continues to deny the allegations asserted in the Complaint; and

WHEREAS, the District wishes to avoid the burden, expense, and the inherent uncertainty of further litigation; and

WHEREAS, the parties have agreed to settle the existing claims set forth in the above-mentioned Complaint, pursuant to the terms and conditions of a Release and Settlement Agreement;

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education of the Bellmore-Merrick Central High School District hereby authorizes a settlement in connection with the within matter under the terms set forth in a Release and Settlement Agreement which has been reviewed by the Board in Executive Session; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board President is authorized to execute the agreement on behalf of the Board.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board of Education hereby authorizes the School District's attorneys of record to execute any and all other documents necessary to effectuate said settlement and/or discontinue of the action.

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education approve by consent agenda items 6.A through 8.I.

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

H. DJ Masters Academy Agreement

Resolution: BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education approve an agreement with DJ Masters Academy, to provide Music Therapy Services from December 1, 2023 through June 30, 2024 at a cost of \$70.00 per student for each session (subject to attorney review and approval).

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education approve by consent agenda items 6.A through 8.I.

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

I. 2024-2025 Fire Inspection Report

Resolution: BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education accept the Fire Marshalls' 2024-2025 Inspection Reports.

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education approve by consent agenda items 6.A through 8.I.

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

9. Old/New Business

No old or new business was discussed.

10. Correspondence

A. Correspondence

The Board of Education did not receive mailed correspondence but received three emails between December 2, 2023 and December 22, 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.

Ms. Lanci thanked the students, staff and the community for their support with the Polar Express event. She said the event was a huge success with over 180 families benefiting from the event and that next year they hope to expand since it will be their 10th anniversary.

Mr. Caballero congratulated Coach Degaetano and Coach Barros from Kennedy High School for being inducted into the National Wrestling Hall of Fame.

Jay W. asked if there were any student issues regarding the war between Israel and Hamas. Mr. Harrington explained that a few student incidents were handled at the building level. He said that these are tough times and that the teachers and staff have been prepared to deal with any issues. He said our thoughts are with all of the families affected by the war in the Middle East.

12. Potential Executive Session

A. Motion to enter into Executive Session

The Board of Education did not enter into Executive Session.

13. Adjournment

A. Motion to Adjourn at 8:15 p.m.

Motion by Nancy Kaplan, second by Gina Piskin.

Final Resolution: Motion Approved

Yes: Nina Lanci, Nancy Kaplan, Melissa Cmar-Grote, Marion Blane, Janet Goller, Gina Piskin

Submitted by Pattianne Guccione, District Clerk