

MINUTES OF THE NORTH BELLMORE UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING December 13, 2011

The regular meeting of the North Bellmore Union Free School District Board of Education was held on Thursday evening, December 13, 2011, in the All Purpose Room of the Martin Avenue at 2616 Martin Avenue, Bellmore, New York.

The following members of the Board of Education were present:

Grace Cramsie, President
JoAnn DeLauter, Vice President
Rosemarie Corless
John Ferrara
Joseph Perrone

Also present:

Arnold M. Goldstein, Superintendent of Schools
Carol Eskew, Deputy Superintendent
Marilyn Johnson, Assistant Superintendent
Gary Pardo, Director of Technology
Frank Russo, Director of Facilities
Carol Melnick, District Counsel
Jeanne Canavan, Board Secretary

- CALL TO ORDER** The meeting was called to order at 8:12 p.m. by Board of Education President, Grace Cramsie. Mrs. Cramsie led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance. Mrs. Corless then read the District's Mission Statement.
- APPROVAL OF MINUTES** Mr. Ferrara moved that the Board of Education approve the Minutes from the regular meeting of the Board of November 17, 2011 and the Minutes from the special meeting of the Board of Education of December 6, 2011. Mrs. DeLauter seconded, and the motion was carried 5-0.
- VISITORS** None.
- CORRESPONDENCE** Mrs. Cramsie advised that a lot of correspondence was received.
- TREASURER'S REPORT** Mrs. DeLauter moved that the Board of Education approve the Treasurer's report for the month ended October 31, 2011. Mrs. Corless seconded and the motion and was carried 5-0.
- HIGH SCHOOL REPORT** Mr. Perrone advised that the students reported on various fundraising activities in each of the high schools. The High School Board honored of the girls swim team. Donations were accepted. Mr. Perrone stated that due to the new tax cap restrictions, the district will need to cut \$1.7 million from the 2012 -13 budget. The high school graduation ceremonies will be held at the NYCB Theater at Westbury again this year and will take place on June 24, 2012.

FINANCE

The Board of Education acknowledged the review of the warrants that have been approved by the Internal Auditor.

Mr. Ferrara moved that the Board of Education approve the Budgetary Transfers dated December 13, 2011. Mrs. Corless seconded and the motion was carried 5-0.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Mr. Goldstein reported that he is very proud of the students as they find new ways carry out the district's mission, "*contributing to our global community with creativity and compassion.*" The students have been participating in many ways of helping those who are less fortunate including toy drives, coat drives, food drives and sending holiday greetings to men and women in the service. Mr. Goldstein also reported that Martin Avenue had a fundraiser for the Guardian Brain Foundation in memory of Erin Getzler, "Butterflies for Erin." This is one of many things that Erin's 6th grade classmates have done in memory of Erin, who will not be able to join them at graduation this year. Mr. Goldstein wished everyone a happy and healthy new year.

PERSONNEL REPORT

Mrs. DeLauter moved that the Board of Education approve the following Personnel Report dated December 13, 2011. Mr. Perrone seconded and the motion was carried 5-0.

A.1 Personnel Report

December 13, 2011

Certified Personnel: Upon recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, be it resolved that the following persons be appointed as teachers in North Bellmore Union Free School District as indicated below. All assignments are at the discretion of the district. Leave replacements are paid on a per diem basis.

<u>Appointments:</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Step</u>	<u>Rate</u>	<u>Eff. Date</u>	<u>Prob.F</u>
6.1 Fotinos, Maria	Sub. Teacher		\$95/day	12/09/2012	
6.2 Meiselas, Christine	Lv. Repl. Special Ed. Teacher	95% of 1M	\$292.21/day	12/14/2011-3/16/2012	
6.3 Pittelli, Janice	Sub. Speech Teacher		\$95/day	2/13/2012	

Homebound Tutoring (Services not to exceed 5 hours per week)

6.4 Hannaberry, Debra	Teacher K-6		\$52.28/hour	11/15/2011-06/30/2012	
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Family Medical Leave of Absence:

6.5 Mittler, Michelle	Teacher K-6			12/14/2011-3/16/2012	
6.6 Devine, Marianne	Teacher K-6	(Change of end date)		11/01/2011-12/9/2011	

Classified Personnel: Upon recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, be it resolved that the following persons be appointed in North Bellmore Union Free School District as indicated below. All assignments are at the discretion of the district.

<u>Appointment:</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Rate</u>	<u>Eff. Date</u>
6.7 Pelant, Grace	Account Clerk	\$38,745/yr	12/19/2011

Resignations:

6.8 Bonacchi, Catherine	Monitor PT		10/26/2011
6.9 Cohen, Cheryl	Account Clerk		12/12/2011

Addendum

December 13, 2011

Certified Personnel: Upon recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, be it resolved that the following persons be appointed as teachers in North Bellmore Union Free School District as indicated below. All assignments are at the discretion of the district. Leave replacements are paid on a per diem basis.

<u>Appointments:</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Step</u>	<u>Rate</u>	<u>Eff. Date</u>	<u>Prob.Per.</u>
6.10 Gandley, Karen	Sub Teacher		\$95/day	1/03/2012	
6.11 Levitan, Daniel	Sub Teacher		\$95/day	12/14/2011	

STAFF DEVELOPMENT REPORT

Mr. Ferrara moved that the Board of Education approve the Staff Development report dated December 13, 2011. Mrs. Corless seconded and the motion was carried 5-0.

BUSINESS UPDATE BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS

Ms. Cincotta was absent so there was no report. Mr. Russo reported that the district is preparing for fire safety inspections. Asphalt repair continues throughout the schools.

CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

None.

SPECIAL EDUCATION CPSE/CSE

Mrs. DeLauter moved that the Board of Education approve the CPSE and CSE reports dated December 8, 2011. Mrs. Corless seconded and the motion was carried 5-0.

NEW BUSINESS EXCESS OF EQUIPMENT

Mrs. DeLauter moved that the Board of Education excess a piano at Newbridge Road School that is beyond repair, ID #000323. Mrs. Corless seconded and the motion was carried 5-0.

CONTRACTS

Mr. Ferrara moved that the Board of Education approve the following contracts:

- Seaford UFSD (Health & Welfare)
- Seaford UFSD (DOR/DOL)

Mrs. DeLauter seconded and the motion was carried 5-0.

PROPOSITION TO MODIFY TRANSPORTATION ELIGIBILITY

Mr. Ferrara moved that the Board of Education approve the following resolution: **BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED** that pursuant to the recommendation of the Committee on Exploring Educational Options (CEEEO) the Board of Education shall submit the following proposition to the District's voters: Shall the Board of Education be authorized to amend the School District's current policy for transporting school students in grades kindergarten (k) through sixth (6) from the current one-half mile for all k-3 students and one mile for 4-6 students to 2 miles for all students attending District schools as well as for eligible district students attending private and parochial schools, effective at the beginning of the 2012-2013 school year, thereby reducing the proposed 2012-2013 school district budget in the approximate amount of \$350,000.00 and levy the necessary tax therefor.

Mrs. DeLauter seconded and the motion was carried 5-0.

SCHOOL CLOSING

Mrs. Corless moved that the Board of Education approve the following resolution:

BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED that pursuant to the Board of Education's authority, the Board approves the recommendation of the advisory Committee on Exploring Educational Options (CEEEO) to close a building, specifically, the Jacob Gunther Elementary School, effective at the close of the workday on June 30, 2012;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Superintendent of Schools in cooperation with the Board of Education, is authorized to develop and execute a plan to consolidate the North Bellmore Elementary Schools in a manner designed to result in an equitable distribution of students, and a cost savings to the District that will better serve the North Bellmore School District.

Mr. Ferrara seconded and the motion was carried 5-0.

Mr. Perrone asked for reassurance that the closing would be handled in a very proper fashion and that every child is taken into account. Mr. Goldstein advised that planning will start tomorrow with students and staff and every step will be taken to ensure that the transition of students and staff goes smoothly as possible in the most sensitive way possible.

OLD BUSINESS

None.

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Mr. Mattei (Linstead La.) stated that the district will save \$900,000 by closing Gunther School and asked where the other \$1.8 million is coming from. Mrs. Cramsie explained that the decision to close a school is a two-fold issue: underutilization of the buildings and financial constraints, and one does not supersede the other.

Mrs. Hellerer (Meadow Court) asked what happens when the district doesn't come up with the money needed and why the community wasn't informed last year that the buildings were underutilized. Mrs. DeLauter advised that the district will have to make additional cuts and explained that no one wants to hurt children. Mrs. Cramsie stated that the enrollment has been going down for some years; however, with the imposition of the 2% tax cap, reductions in State Aid and escalating costs, keeping a school open that is not being utilized to capacity, would be fiscally irresponsible.

Mrs. Matorana (Sherman Ave.) said that six months was not enough time to make the decision to close a school and the district should use the money in the budget to keep Gunther open. Mrs. Cramsie stated that it was a very difficult decision for the Board to make--not a fast decision.

Mr. Liebowitz (Cedar Rd.) said that the Committee was only give three options and they all included closing a building. He said that other options should be explored including using the money in the budget to keep Gunther open. Mr. Liebowitz stated that it was a rushed decision and the Board does not

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understand the impact it will have on the Gunther community. Mrs. Cramsie stated that the Board has taken everything under consideration to try and keep the building open and emphasized that the Board is not in the business of hurting children.

Mrs. Forte (Norwood Ave.) said that the Board needs to look into other alternatives, such as tightening the budget, before a decision is made to close a school. Mr. Goldstein explained that the district has been making cuts to the budget each year to meet the budget requirements. Last year, \$3,000,000 in the fund balance was returned to the taxpayers by adding it to the revenue side of the budget in order to keep the tax levy down. Mr. Goldstein explained that it would be irresponsible to deplete the fund balance, leaving nothing for the future, in order to keep the building open. Mr. Goldstein added that the district is trying to do its best to maintain the quality of instruction, class size and the level of services we currently have. Mrs. Forte asked what happens if money is found. Mr. Goldstein said that we expect a two percent increase in State Aid; however, it will not solve the long term problem. Mr. Goldstein stated that the Board has taken the decision very seriously--the buildings are underutilized and we need to use our resources more efficiently. All districts in Long Island and the country are facing the same problem. Mr. Goldstein added that it would be irresponsible to ignore the problem and hope that it will get better next year. He noted that we are doing the best we can to try and meet the needs of the children and we can't maintain the quality of education and level of services we currently have and just do business as usual. Mr. Goldstein responded that some of the plans for dealing with the shortfall in the budget include cutting staff, tightening the budget, closing a school, using reserves to return to the taxpayers and rent a building to get revenue.

Mr. Brogan (Mark Dr.) asked if the Board thought it was fair to the Gunther community to take away busing and close a school. Mrs. Cramsie stated that the Board did not take away busing. The Board authorized a proposition that will go to the public for a vote to change the mileage requirements for busing—not eliminate it. Mr. Brogan asked if a survey was sent to the public whether or not to close a building. Mrs. Cramsie said that a survey was not sent, but a committee was formed of community members to evaluate the options and recommend a course of action for consideration.

Mrs. DiPrima (Evelyn Ave.) stated that the only reason the community put busing on the table, was so that all six buildings stay open.

Ms. Tara asked if anyone figured out what it would cost the taxpayers if they voted to override the 2% tax cap. She also asked why the taxpayers will be asked to vote on busing, but not on whether or not to close a school or exceed the tax levy limit. Mrs. Cramsie stated that State law requires a public vote to change transportation policies. Mrs. Cramsie added that the Board does not feel it would be fiscally responsible to override the tax cap.

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Mr. McCormack (Lafayette St.) said that he was greatly disappointed in the Board's reliance on Dr. Fowler's report and asked if the Board was surprised by the huge miscalculation in busing expenses with regard to the Princeton Plan. He asked the Board if they are concerned about other things that may have been overlooked in his report. Mrs. Cramsie stated that Dr. Fowler was not assigned to do determine busing expenses. Mr. Goldstein said that he didn't expect it would be as complicated as it was to determine and the costs and they were much higher than expected. Mrs. Corless added that bus costs were not available at the first CEEO meeting and said that the community did not want the Princeton Plan so other options were not explored.

Mrs. Hellerer asked if the Board felt comfortable that after making the cuts they won't be in the same financial position next year and questioned the amount in the reserve funds. Mr. Goldstein explained that the district's long range plan includes tightening the budget, releasing reserves, and negotiating more favorable contracts--all of which will allow the district to try and preserve the quality of education for the children.

Mrs. Scrivano (Sherman Ave.) asked if the community will have a say in who the building can be leased to. Mrs. Cramsie said that the public will not have a say, but the Board will hear the community's concerns. Mrs. Cramsie stated that the district has been approached by some preschool programs interested in leasing space. Mrs. Scrivano asked about the money returned to the public. Mrs. Cramsie said that for the past two years, \$3,000,000 was taken from the fund balance and rolled over as revenue for the following year and the money was returned to the taxpayers to help keep the tax rate down.

Mr. Mattie (Lindstead La.) asked who is the secret society of people who want to close a school. Mrs. Cramsie stated there is no secret society, but there are some people who cannot afford to pay higher taxes and are in agreement with the committee's decision.

Mr. Ferrara spoke about his experience this year on the Board and stated that the Board's number one priority is to get the best possible education for the children in the district, and the Board's decision to close a school was made with this in mind.

Ms. Kabak (Simms Ave.) said that many committee members received threatening phone calls and letters because of the committee's recommendation to close Gunther, however, she stated that there was never a time that the committee wanted to close a school.

Mrs. Goedel (Martin Ave.) said the issues of closing a school and the transportation policy has been coming up for many years in her experience on the PTA Council and there are a lot of people in the community who agree with the decision.

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Ms. Wilderman (Sterling St.) asked when parents will be informed about which school their child will attend. Mr. Goldstein said that students will be reassigned in mid-January. Approximately 80 students will go to Gunther and 130 students will go to Saw Mill Road. A meeting will be set up with the PTA in January to begin the process of working with Gunther parents to plan the transition. A *Student Advisory Committee* with 4th and 5th graders will be set up so the students can express their ideas and concerns. A *Parent Advisory Committee* will also be set up to focus on the needs of the children and help them cope with the change. Mr. Goldstein emphasized that every step will be taken to ensure that the transition of students and staff goes as smooth as possible. Mr. Goldstein said that this has been a very difficult situation for everyone and urged the community to put aside their differences, move forward, and focus on working together to do what is in the best interest of children.

Ms. Barnao (Sacco Pl.) also asked why it wasn't put up for a vote to close a school.

Mrs. Barnao (Sacco Pl.) said to put off closing Gunther for another year and stated that it's more than just closing a school to the community.

Mr. Berkowitz (Virginia Ave.) said to put the busing referendum on hold for year and wait and see how it works out after Gunther is closed.

Mrs. Lanci (Oak Ct.) commented on her experience working with her club and the North Bellmore community and said even though the community doesn't always agree on things, they always rally around each other, join together and help each other out.

Mr. Amara (Columbus Ave.) said the Board voted too quickly to close a building and asked if the decision was unanimous. Mrs. Cramsie said it was. Mr. Amara asked when the actual budget will be available. Mrs. Cramsie advised that two public budget workshops will be held in March and the budget will be adopted at the April 19 Board meeting. The budget will be voted on by the public in May.

Mr. Raia (Virginia Ave.) referred to a document in his hand that showed a fund balance of \$10 million and asked why the district does not use \$1million to keep Gunther open next year. Mr. Goldstein said he could not comment on a document he didn't have in front of him. Mr. Goldstein explained that reserve funds can be used, but there are rules for its use and is limited. Mr. Raia asked why the district doesn't wait for one year to see what happens with the budget. Mrs. Cramsie stated that we've waited a number of years for the economy to improve and it has not. Mr. Raia asked why the district would consider closing a school with high test scores and delivers a good product and stated that Gunther should not be closed.

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Mr. Liebowitz also suggested that there is money to keep Gunther open if we use the reserve funds. Mr. Goldstein reported that the reserve fund includes the State recommended allotment and they are to be used for specific purposes. We have built up the funds and they will be released to supplement the budget over the next few years as we tighten the budget. Mr. Goldstein added that if we deplete all the savings, it will put the district in a bad financial position. It is a short term fix to a long term problem.

Mr. Mattei asked how long the buildings have been underutilized. Mrs. Cramsie stated that enrollment has been declining since 2002.

Ms. Gandolfi (Taft St.) asked why we didn't close a building five years ago and if we will be having the same discussion next year. Mrs. Cramsie said this situation was brought on because of the tax cap. Mrs. Cramsie said that the Board never wanted to close a building.

ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by Mrs. DeLauter, seconded by Mrs. Corless and carried 5-0, the meeting was adjourned at 10:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeanne Canavan, Board Secretary

Toni A. Cincotta, District Clerk

NORTH BELLMORE UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT
 BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING December 13, 2011

BOE Meeting Date: 12/14/11

Prepared By: R. Bazarewski

Approved By: T. Cincotta

Fund	Warrant #	Original Amount	Amount Approved	Amount Disapproved	Check Number(s)	NOTES
A	23	\$284,159.70	\$284,159.70	\$0.00		
A	24	\$1,500.00	\$1,500.00	\$0.00		
A	25	Payroll				
A	26	\$745,358.86	\$745,358.86	\$0.00		
A	27	\$120.00	\$120.00	\$0.00		

TOTAL **\$1,031,138.56** **\$1,031,138.56** **\$0.00**

D	9	\$29,920.58	\$29,920.58	\$0.00		
D	10	\$32,728.99	\$32,728.99	\$0.00		
D				\$0.00		

TOTAL **\$62,649.57** **\$62,649.57** **\$0.00**

F	9	\$113,971.29	\$113,971.29	\$0.00		
F	10	\$88,975.59	\$88,975.59	\$0.00		

TOTAL **\$202,946.88** **\$202,946.88** **\$0.00**

T	18	\$23,192.54	\$23,192.54	\$0.00		
T	19	\$352,861.44	\$352,861.44	\$0.00		
T	20	\$410,065.43	\$410,065.43	\$0.00		
T	21	\$353,784.10	\$353,784.10			
T						
T				\$0.00		

TOTAL **\$1,139,903.51** **\$1,139,903.51** **\$0.00**

H	8	\$743.88	\$743.88	\$0.00		
H	9	\$118,635.75	\$118,635.75	\$0.00		
H				\$0.00		

TOTAL **\$119,379.63** **\$119,379.63** **\$0.00**