



**NORTH BELLMORE UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT  
BOARD OF EDUCATION  
MINUTES – APRIL 8, 2021  
Via Zoom Video Conference**

Business Meeting	Martin Avenue School 2616 Martin Avenue, Bellmore, NY 11710	7:30 PM
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The Business meeting of the North Bellmore Union Free School District Board of Education was held on Thursday evening, April 8, 2021, via Zoom video conference.

The following members of the Board of Education were present:

- Rosemarie Corless, President
- Jo-Ann Erhard, Vice President
- Melissa Cmar-Grote
- Nina Lanci
- Christine Malloy

Also present:

- Marie Testa, Superintendent of Schools
- Carol Eskew, Deputy Superintendent
- Janet Pollitt, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction
- Jacqueline Rehak, Assistant Superintendent for Business
- Jason Fischetti, Executive Director of Technology, Data and Information Services
- Christopher Powers, District Counsel
- Jeanne Canavan, District Clerk

**CALL TO ORDER**                      The meeting was called to order at 6:30 PM. Motion was made by Mrs. Lanci, seconded by Mrs. Malloy to adjourn the public portion of the meeting and convene an executive session at 6:36 PM. Motion carried 5-0. The meeting reconvened at 7:55 PM.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**            Mrs. Corless led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

   Mrs. Malloy read the District’s mission statement.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**            Mrs. Lanci moved that the Board of Education approve the minutes of the Business meeting of March 11, 2021. Mrs. Erhard seconded and the motion was carried 5-0.

**CHANGE IN ORDER OF AGENDA**            Motion was made by Mrs. Lanci and seconded by Mrs. Erhard, to move agenda item No. 11. 1 forward. Motion carried 5-0.

**PERSONNEL REPORT**                      Motion was made by Mrs. Lanci to approve the personnel report dated April 8, 2021. Mrs. Cmar-Grote seconded and the motion was carried 5-0.

- A. Appointments
- B. Tenure Recommendations

- C. Leave Requests
- D. Resignation
- E. Termination

**SPECIAL PRESENTATION -  
TENURE**

Mrs. Testa congratulated Danielle Leone and Melissa Felson on receiving tenure this evening. Mrs. Testa praised the teachers for working hard for each child and for meeting the needs of every learner. Mrs. Signorelli, on behalf of the NBTA, Mr. Rosof and Mr. O'Brien also congratulated the Saw Mill teachers on their well-deserved tenure. Mrs. Corless, on behalf of the Board of Education congratulated the teachers and welcomed them to the North Bellmore family.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

A community member asked for a summary of the lawsuit mentioned in agenda item No. 16.4. Mrs. Testa stated that it has to do with an individual who has a toxic tort litigation involving 83 defendants, including corporate defendants, private companies and multiple school districts.

**CORRESPONDENCE**

Mrs. Corless advised that the Board received correspondence and it was discussed in Executive Session.

**TREASURER'S  
REPORT**

Mrs. Erhard moved that the Board of Education approve the Treasurer's report for the month ended February 28, 2021. Mrs. Cmar-Grote seconded and the motion was carried 5-0.

**HIGH SCHOOL REPORT**

Mrs. Lanci reported on last night's Board meeting at the Central High School District. The Board honored the Nassau County Girls Varsity Bowling Champions. Mrs. Lanci thanked the elementary districts for helping out with running the intramurals program. Discussion is taking place regarding the prom and graduations. The district is waiting for updated guidance on the new COVID regulations. There will be a budget presentation at the next special meeting of the Board on April 20. The next regular meeting/budget public hearing will be held on May 5.

**FINANCE**

The Board of Education acknowledged the review of the warrants that have been approved by the Claims Auditor for the month of March 2021.

**2021/2022 BUDGET**

Mrs. Lanci moved that the Board of Education authorize the North Bellmore School District to expend the sum in the General Fund Appropriation in the total amount of \$59,193,419 for the 2021/2022 school year. Mrs. Erhard seconded and the motion was carried 5-0.

**GRANT OF FUNDS  
AGREEMENT WITH THE TOH**

Motion was made by Mrs. Lanci that the Board of Education of the North Bellmore Union Free School District authorizes the Superintendent or her designee to sign the Grant of Funds Agreement with the Town of Hempstead on behalf of the School District and the Town of Hempstead Claim Form seeking reimbursement for COVID-19 related expenditures. Mrs. Cmar-Grote seconded and the motion was carried 5-0.

Mrs. Lanci thanked Mrs. Rehak and the Business Office for all their effort securing these funds for the district.

**SUPERINTENDENT'S  
REPORT**

Mrs. Testa announced that the district will go forward with the Bellmore-Merrick Childcare Program in the 2021-22 school year. The registration information will be listed on the BMCCP website. The program will utilize the cafeteria and gymnasium and will offer a before and after school program. There will be a 6:00 PM dismissal only. Mrs. Testa thanked the Board for all their help with this decision.

The SCOPE Enrichment Program is returning this summer. Martin Avenue teacher, Ms. Falabella, will return as Director of the program again this year.

Parent Teacher conferences took place yesterday. Mrs. Testa thanked parents and teachers for their flexibility with zoom and teleconferences.

Mr. Russo and his team completed steam trap installations and it was done at a minimal cost. We will receive a rebate from PSEG between \$5,000 and \$7,000.

As required by the state, all single-occupancy restrooms in public places must be gender neutral. As such, our current signage was removed and gender neutral signage was installed on all single occupancy bathrooms in the district. The signage that we installed was not what we initially wanted to purchase because it was not going to be available in time to meet the state deadline. It is now available and we will be replacing the signage within two weeks. The signage will say All Gender restroom, also in Braille, with a pictogram of an outline of a male and a female. The ADA restroom will be the same with the addition of the dynamic wheelchair sign.

Mrs. Testa stated that she received a couple of emails lately regarding locking school gates. As recommended by Homeland Security, the gates are locked at dusk each day. They are opened Friday evening after the security guard leaves the property so that the community can have access to the school yard on the weekends. Entrance is always available, as the property is not totally fenced in or gated around the perimeter. In the last few weekends, at the advice of the police, we kept the gates locked in a couple of areas as a group of teens and young adults were wreaking havoc in Bellmore village and on the school grounds and have been disrespectful to families on the grounds. However, there will always be an entrance open on weekends.

In compliance with NYS Department of Health regulations, our environmental testing firm performed water testing in the schools. The district received an exceptional report and the results can be found on the website.

Mrs. Testa advised that new CDC guidelines have come out regarding social distancing and quarantining and travel, however, we are still awaiting the NYS regulations on health and safety.

We are in full swing with the Principal and Assistant Principal Search. We have received 112 resumes for the principal position and 260 resumes for the assistant principal position. Going forward, we will be inviting the Saw Mill Road and Park

**SUPERINTENDENT'S  
REPORT**

Avenue community to participate in a meet and greet committee meetings with the final candidates.

**BUSINESS DEPARTMENT  
2021/22  
Budget Presentation**

Mrs. Rehak reported that since last month's Board meeting, the proposed budget-to-budget increase has increased slightly to 1.99 percent from 1.9 percent. However, the tax levy is still at 1.54 percent. Mrs. Rehak turned the presentation over to Mrs. Testa who highlighted the district's current instructional programs and the district's long-term goals to improve and strengthen these programs. (See attached presentation.) Mrs. Rehak explained the propositions on the ballot. In summary, we are presenting a budget that is within the tax cap (increase of 1.54 percent). The budget-to-budget increase is 1.99 percent. Proposition Two is for funding the security vestibules through unappropriated fund balance \$(350,000) which is a one-time expenditure and there would be no increase to the tax levy. Proposition Three is to fund the Capital Reserve for the ceilings and pavement and there would be no increase to the tax levy.

Upcoming dates:

- April 19 - PTA Coordinating Council Meeting via zoom at 7:30 PM – Budget presentation
- May 10 – Board of Education Meeting – Budget Presentation at 7:30 PM via zoom
- May 18 - Budget Vote and Election of Annual Trustees at Newbridge Road School from 6 AM – 9 PM.

**CURRICULUM &  
INSTRUCTION REPORT**

Mrs. Pollitt provided the following updates:

**NYSED Testing:** We were formally notified today that the U.S. Department of Education did not approve New York's waiver request to forego state assessments this year. USDE had previously agreed to uncouple state assessments from ESSA accountability requirements, including the 95% participation rate. Therefore, any results from this year's administrations will be used solely as a measure of student learning. The Department will administer only Session 1 of the grades 3-6 assessments in Mathematics and ELA and only the written test component of the Grade 4 Science Tests (not the performance portion).

Approximately 62 percent of grade 3-6 students opted out of the assessments.

Virtual students taking the test in-person: 27 students (out of 148 virtual 3-6 students) 73 refusing. Still waiting to hear from 43 families.

If any parents still wish to submit a refusal form, please do so as soon as possible.

The administrative team is finalizing the dates and protocols for the assessments and will share that information with families and staff in the coming days.

**CURRICULUM &  
INSTRUCTION REPORT**

**Virtual Language Enrichment Experience for 6<sup>th</sup> Graders:** All four cohorts are up and running: 2 Spanish (65), French (25), Italian (25) & Mandarin (26). Next year, we are planning multiple offerings for each language throughout the year and they will be open to fifth and sixth graders.

**May Superintendent's Conference Day:** We are planning the first ever virtual spring edcamp-style conference on May 13. The Professional Development Committee feedback informed the revised layout. We will be trying micro and macro sessions this year. They are zoom based. Teachers will choose from a digital catalogue with access links. Most workshop offerings will be facilitated by our own talented staff.

**Committee Updates:** Mental Health & Wellness and Policy Committees will meet next week.

**TECHNOLOGY REPORT**

Mr. Fischetti gave the following updates:

iPads, carts and cases have arrived and we are prepping all of the devices to be distributed to all grade 2 classes. We are a few weeks away from having these new devices in the hands of the students. In preparation for this we piloted a set of iPads in two second grade classes.

Mr. Fischetti reported that he recently observed a great collaborative lesson in which sixth graders taught second graders how to use the Book Creator app through one-on-one zoom breakout rooms on 1:1 iPads. The lesson was very well done. It was amazing to watch the sixth grader take on the teaching role. The second graders were so capable and engaged and were able to participate and work closely with a buddy in this socially-distanced climate.

We also observed second graders in another class doing online research, taking notes from online resources. (The story can also be seen on the North Bellmore website.)

Purposeful, high level learning opportunities has always been our goal of introducing iPads into instruction, never technology for the sake of technology.

Mr. Fischetti added that he also met with the High School District to learn a little more about the coding offerings that begin in seventh grade so that we can build a coding program that will best prepare the kids for middle school. Now that we have 1:1 devices, we plan to build a scaffolded coding program that will begin with our youngest students.

**Safety and security:** Yesterday, Mr. Fischetti met with a Homeland Security officer and toured the buildings and met with teams in each building that have access to our emergency response systems. While we don't share the details of these systems, he was very impressed with the building leaders and teams. A follow up

**TECHNOLOGY REPORT**

walkthrough is being planned where Homeland Security will survey the exterior grounds of the buildings and make suggestions for fencing, egress, and overall potential security enhancements for our exterior grounds, while still keeping it an open campus for the public.

One suggestion was made that we start adding additional interior cameras in the hallways that would allow authorities to follow on video an individual throughout a building and have eyes on all areas. Coincidentally, over the last break, Mr. Fischetti conducted a walkthrough in all buildings with representatives from ILS to plan for the install of interior cameras in all hallways and public areas in each building and we are waiting on a quote for this. This will be a summer project and the cost will be mostly covered by a grant.

Mrs. Corless asked if Homeland Security gives us a written report when they are finished. Mr. Fischetti stated that, if they do a walk through, they will give us a written report by building of what they see as a potential danger for the students.

**SPECIAL EDUCATION REPORT**

Ms. Eskew gave the following updates:

At this time of year the special education team is busy holding with Annual, Triennial meeting with parents.

NYSED requires a physical exam for new entrants and students in grades K, 1, 3, and 5. Parents can request to have the district provide physicals, if necessary. The state extended the deadline until April 2. In-person students who need a physical will go to their respective school to complete the physicals. We are working with the nurses and principals to schedule a centralized process for conducting physicals on-site for virtual students. Ms. Eskew stated that she is in the process of calling parents to remind them of the deadline and ask them to submit evidence of their child's physical or an appointment will be set up for the child to have a physical in the school district.

Every two years our physical education teachers and nurses are required to be recertified in the area of CPR and AED and will expire this year on 8/28/21. We are in process of securing a trainer for either the May Professional Development Day or August Superintendent's Conference days. At that time we will try to incorporate the global network training that facilities staff, personnel and nurses are required to take. Those courses are available to take on line.

Our BOCES Letter of Intent (LOI) was completed today which provides evidence about expenditures for BOCES programs and services.

We continue to work on summer school staffing. We are in the process of identifying the students who will be attending the summer program. The psychologists will meet to set up class placements, paraprofessional assignments, to schedule 408 meetings for bus drivers and also to summer teachers to provide copies of IEPs for the students on their caseload. A letter will be sent home to

<b>SPECIAL EDUCATION REPORT</b>	parents regarding arrival and dismissal procedures this year. We are planning for the summer program to be in person as it was last year.
<b>CPSE/CSE REPORTS</b>	Mrs. Lanci moved that the Board of Education approve the CPSE and CSE reports dated April 1, 2021. Mrs. Erhard seconded and the motion was carried 5-0.
<b>CONSENT AGENDA</b>	Motion was made by Mrs. Cmar-Grote, seconded by Mrs. Erhard and carried 5-0 for the following consent agenda items: Nos. 16.1 – 16.5.
<b>NEW BUSINESS CONTRACTS</b>	<p>16.1 <b>BE IT RESOLVED</b>, that the Board of Education approve the following contracts for the 2020-21 school year:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Caring Hands Home Care, Inc.</li> <li>-Theresa Mariano Doyle (Teacher Center Services)</li> <li>-Merrick Community Nursery (UPK)</li> <li>-Merrick Woods Country Day (UPK)</li> <li>-Seneca Consulting Group</li> <li>-Wee Friends Nursery School (UPK)</li> <li>-Wee Friends Too Nursery (UPK)</li> </ul>
<b>ELECTION INSPECTORS</b>	<p>16.2 <b>BE IT RESOLVED</b>, that the Board of Education appoints the following election inspectors for the 2021 Annual Budget Vote and School Election:</p> <p>District Employees- Michael J. Bevilacqua, Christine Kropp, Carol Sena, Roseann Moskowitz, Kim Cavanagh, Dianne Agoglia, Mary Grace Roach, Kim Boschert, Anne Barbera, Laurice Gunnels, Lisa Danz, Carol Leroux, Monica Gargano, Jacklyn Laddomada at their current hourly rates</p> <p>Non-district employees - Justine Barbera-Brazas – hourly rate of \$14.50</p>
<b>INTER-MUNICIPAL COOPERATIVE TRANSPORTATION AGREEMENT</b>	<p>16.3 WHEREAS, a number of public school districts in Nassau County wish to jointly solicit proposals, together with the Nassau Board of Cooperative Educational Services (“BOCES”) for pupil transportation services for the 2021-22 school year (and any renewal period) in accordance with the applicable provisions of General Municipal Law;</p> <p>WHEREAS, the public school districts and the BOCES have agreed to form a Cooperative (the “Cooperative”) for this purpose;</p> <p>WHEREAS, the North Bellmore School District is desirous of participating in the Cooperative for joint solicitation of proposals for pupil transportation services as authorized by General Municipal Law, Section 119-0 in accordance with the terms and conditions of the Inter-Municipal Cooperative Transportation Agreement attached hereto;</p> <p><b>NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED</b>, that the Board of Education authorizes the School District to participate in the Cooperative; and</p> <p><b>BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED</b>, that the Board of Education hereby approves the Inter-Municipal Cooperative Transportation Agreement (Recitals) attached hereto and authorizes the Board President to execute the Agreement on behalf of the Board of Education.</p>

**SPECIAL COUNSEL  
APPOINTMENT**

**16.4 BE IT RESOLVED** that the Board of Education hereby authorizes the Board President to execute an Engagement Letter with Lewis Brisbois, LLP, subject to final review by Ingerman Smith, LLP, wherein Lewis Brisbois is appointed as Special Counsel to the North Bellmore Union Free District ("School District") at the rate of \$225 per hour for the purpose of representing and defending the School District in connection with a lawsuit captioned as *Dominic Baldi v. ABB, Inc.*, New York County Index No. 190217/2020; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Board of Education hereby authorizes the Board President to execute a Disclosure and Consent Agreement with Ingerman Smith, L.L.P. agreeing to joint representation as to counsel and guidance of the School District with other school districts named in the lawsuit in the form attached hereto on behalf of the Board of Education; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Board of Education hereby authorizes the Board President to execute a Consent to Joint Representation with Lewis Brisbois, LLP agreeing to joint representation in the defense of the School District with other school districts named in the lawsuit, subject to final review by Ingerman Smith, LLP.

**DONATION**

**16.5 BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Board of Education accept a donation from the DiTusa Family of a Tea Rose Cast Aluminum Tree Bench to replace a damaged bench that was removed from the Gina DiTusa Memorial Tree in front of John G. Dinkelmeyer School (approximate value \$900.00).

**OLD BUSINESS**

None.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

1. Is there any potential for relaxing the mask wearing requirement next year?  
Mrs. Testa stated that we are waiting patiently for the NYS regulations to come out so we know what the schools are being asked to do regarding social distancing and mask wearing.
2. Why was the decision made to increase the line for technology teachers as it appears to be the same amount being saved on the pause of the library program?  
Mrs. Rehak stated that the line is not for technology teachers. It is to finalize the 1:1 iPad initiative and get iPads for students in grades K-1. We saw during the pandemic how much these devices are needed for the students, and we felt is very important to finish in the next fiscal year.
3. Another question regarding Library was raised in terms of imparting information of literacy to all students.

Mrs. Pollitt shared that she was very proud of the classroom teachers over the years as we have built our reading and writing programs. The research portion is imbedded within our non-fiction units of study within our

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

writing workshop. Teachers are doing a phenomenal job with the research piece using databases and district subscriptions—digital and paper-based resources. Mrs. Pollitt stated that the district’s literacy and core instruction has been elevated and that she is confident that the students are getting the skills within the core curriculum.

4. If parents already filled out the survey, do they still need to send a letter?

Mrs. Pollitt stated that it was not necessary.

5. What are the safety protocols in place for the SCOPE Summer Enrichment Program this summer?

Mrs. Testa said that she spoke with a representative from SCOPE and they will follow our lead in terms of mirroring our expectations for health and safety protocols that we have in the district. SCOPE will work with Program Director, Mrs. Falabella, and Ms. Testa as well.

6. If a student is eligible to receive summer services, such as speech, reading, occupational and physical therapy, but not the extended school year program, will those services be provided in-person or via zoom?

Ms. Eskew encouraged the parents to speak with the providers who are currently servicing their child to make sure whatever choice they make works best for their child. We will work with parents to deliver in-person or virtual itinerant services on an individualized basis.

7. Comment: Congratulations to the teachers on receiving tenure!

8. Comment: Thank you to the Board of Education for bringing back the Bellmore-Merrick Childcare Program.

9. Is school still closed the Friday before Memorial Day?

Mrs. Testa advised that, as of right now, school will be in session on May 28 and June 1 for snow make-up days.

10. Several questions were brought up on subjects addressed earlier in the meeting, such as gender neutral restroom signs, mask wearing, and steps to returning to normalcy in the schools.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Mrs. Testa reiterated that the district is awaiting to learn new regulations and is looking forward to bringing back as many programs as we can and return to as many in-person school events in the upcoming year.

11. Will more reading teachers be added next year?
12. Mrs. Pollitt stated that we plan on the same amount of reading teachers as this year. As always, if the need arises, the Board will reconsider adding more staff, depending on the need.
13. Mrs. Erhard asked if next year's language program will have multiple session levels.

Mrs. Pollitt shared that the subcommittee is considering offering multiple opportunities at different days and times of the week to accommodate different families' schedules. We are also considering adding different levels, for instance Spanish 1 and Spanish 2. Once we have more information, we will share it with the families.

14. Mrs. Corless stated she was very impressed with the many language classes we offer, especially Mandarin. Mrs. Pollitt added that we currently have 2 cohorts of Spanish consisting of 65 students, 25 students in French, 30 in Italian and 26 students in Mandarin.

Mrs. Corless announced that the next special Board of Education meeting will be held on April 20 to hold a BOCES budget and trustee vote. The next regular Board of Education meeting will take place on May 10.

**ADJOURNMENT**

On a motion by Mrs. Lanci, seconded by Mrs. Erhard, and carried 5-0, the Board of Education meeting was adjourned at 10:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeanne Canavan  
District Clerk