

NORTH BELLMORE UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF EDUCATION MINUTES – NOVEMBER 8, 2021

Business Meeting	Martin Avenue School	7:30 PM
	2616 Martin Avenue, Bellmore, NY 11710	

The Business meeting of the North Bellmore Union Free School District Board of Education was held on Monday evening, November 8, 2021, in the All Purpose Room of the Martin Avenue School at 2616 Martin Avenue, Bellmore, New York, and via livestream.

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
Janet Pollitt, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction
Jacqueline Rehak, Assistant Superintendent for Business
Jason Fischetti, Executive Director of Technology, Data and Information Services
Leyna Malone, Executive Director of Pupil Personnel Services and Special Education
Christopher Powers, District Counsel
Laurice Gunnels, District Clerk

CALL TO ORDER The meeting was called to order at 6:50 p.m. Motion was made by Mrs. Erhard

at 6:51 p.m., seconded by Mrs. Cmar-Grove to move into an executive session.

Motion was carried 5-0. The meeting reconvened at 7:52 p.m.

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

Mrs. Erhard 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 October 14, 2021. Mrs. Cmar-Grove seconded and the

motion was carried 5-0.

BOARD APPRECIATION MONTH

Mrs. Testa opened the November meeting in celebration of Board Appreciation. She expressed her gratitude to the Board on behalf of the Central Administrators and Administrators throughout the buildings for their endless dedication, always questioning and asking what can be done to help our students, promoting the understanding and interpretation of our policies, and for their time consuming efforts of hard work day and night.

Mrs. Testa proudly shared with the Board and the Community the historical date of October 14, 1907, when what once was a one room schoolhouse became a school district known today as the North Bellmore School District. Mrs. Testa shared a chronology of events going back as early as the 1890's, and expressed her gratitude to the existence of the School Board, even back then, for always challenging and inspiring the District to do better.

In further recognition of the Board, words illustrating appreciation, leadership, coordination, and determination were used to describe their role in the education of the children of North Bellmore by Ms. Brugge representing the North Bellmore Principals' Association, Ms. Pirozzi representing North Bellmore Teacher's Association, Ms. Murphy of the PTA Coordinating Counsel, and Ms. Rose Anne Lombardo representing the Paraprofessionals. A card was given to the Board from the Clerical Unit of the CSEA, and on behalf of the students of North Bellmore, Emma and Mikayla of Park Avenue School, gave the Board cards signed by the students Districtwide. Gifts cards were presented as honorary donations on the Board's behalf in support of students and families of the North Bellmore Community, and other sentiments in gratitude.

Mrs. Corless thanked everyone on behalf of the Board for their recognition and was especially grateful for the donations that were given on their behalf in support of the Community. And to the children, she thanked Emma and Mikayla for coming out this evening and happily expressed the Board's appreciation of seeing and hearing from the children firsthand.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

CORRESPONDENCE

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

TREASURER'S REPORT

Mrs. Lanci moved that the Board of Education approve the Treasurer's report for the month ended September 30, 2021. Mrs. Malloy seconded and the motion was carried 5-0.

BOARD COMMITTEE / HIGH SCHOOL REPORTS

Mrs. Lanci reported the Board met on Wednesday evening, November 3, at the High School and it was Board Appreciation night. Mr. Harrington spoke in recognition of the Board honoring the Lions that have serviced this Community for 72 years. The celebration included music and presentations of artwork. Mrs. Lanci happily shared that the student representatives were present from the High School District and expressed how wonderful it was to see the return of school spirit this year. In the normal course of business, Mrs. Lanci mentioned the Board

BOARD COMMITTEE / HIGH SCHOOL REPORTS (continued)

accepted the Audit Report, approved voting for 2022 (cost to be shared), and spoke of a generous donation made in honor of former Principal, Ms. Lorraine Poppe, by Mr. Lee Mandel of Intralogic Solutions, graduate of JFK, for a fence. She also added that the Board approved the expenditure for live streaming sport events enabling parents who cannot attend the ability to view certain games. Mrs. Lanci concluded her report with upcoming events in November, i.e., the Mepham/Kennedy Drama productions on November 18, 19, and 20, and the Middle School Parent/Teacher Conferences on November 23. The Board will meet again on December 1st.

FINANCE

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

The Superintendent of Schools recommends approval of all resolutions included in 11.1 through 16.4.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Mrs. Testa began by sharing with the Board details regarding the New York State Education survey issued to all Districts across the state focusing on vaccination sites. Mrs. Testa described the questions and answers. The scope of the questions related to the intent of the District to hold vaccination clinics in buildings, the existence of vaccination clinics within the District outside of the schools, and the enumeration of those sites. In summary, based on survey answers provide by the District, Mrs. Testa indicated it was recommended to the state that the schools within North Bellmore should not be used as vaccination sites as there are an abundance of locations including pharmacies and doctors' offices for utilization of this purpose.

Moving on, Mrs. Testa was excited to draw the Board and Community's attention to the new Technology Lab and Library Media rooms located in each school building throughout the District. A slide presentation was created and viewed to illustrate the new furniture and equipment. In narration of the presentation, Mrs. Testa reported the rooms are bright and colorful, designed with multi flexible seating and table options allowing students and teachers the ability to create different formations to accommodate both individual and team type settings conducive for learning.

Mrs. Corless questioned Mrs. Testa regarding the children's overall reaction to the rooms. Mrs. Testa was happy to say the children were very excited with the new labs especially the multi-functioning aspects of the room. She indicated this is a new and evolving next generation standard, and moving forward the District will continue to look at the learning environment through this lens to increase cognitive success. Mrs. Corless expressed her gratitude on behalf of the Board for all the time, effort, and hard work of those who came in on the weekend for the furniture set-up and distribution, and sharing photos with them.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT (continued)

Mrs. Testa moved forward with an update on Safety & Security. There was a lockout today in response to police activity in Merrick and explained that both she and Mrs. Pollitt were contacted by Homeland Security. It was determined that North Bellmore and the component Districts through communication with all would go into lockout as a precautionary measure. Once lockout was lifted, Mrs. Testa indicated she met with the entire Administrative team to review the lockout event, and informed the Board that the District was in full compliance with the Safety Plan.

Mrs. Corless indicated to Mrs. Testa there was confusion today on social media with respect to lockout versus lockdown. Mrs. Testa explained that a lockout is when the threat is outside the building, the keyword being out, and business proceeds normally inside. Lockdown, Mrs. Testa further stated, is when the threat is inside the building, those inside hide, and all doors within the building are locked until emergency personnel arrive. In either of these emergency type situations, Mrs. Testa indicated there are pre-programmed messages that are sent out to alert the Community and the blue strobe light outside the buildings are activated to warn those approaching of the situation.

PERSONNEL REPORT

Motion was made by Mrs. Lanci to approve the Personnel Report dated November 8, 2021. Mrs. Cmar-Grove seconded and the motion was carried 5-0.

- A. Appointments
- B. Leave Requests
- C. Resignation
- D. Termination

STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Motion was made by Mrs. Lanci to approve the Staff Development Report dated November 8, 2021. Mrs. Malloy seconded and the motion was carried 5-0.

BUSINESS REPORT

Mrs. Rehak began her report by providing the following updates:

- The annual audited financials were uploaded to the NYS Education Department and a copy was placed on the North Bellmore website in the Business Department section.
- The ARPA Grant application was reviewed by the State and additional documentation was requested. The State divided this part of the grant into a separate application which just became available requesting details regarding the amount of learning loss, and the reserves for summer and afterschool. Resubmission of this application is pending shortly.
- The Business Office is compiling information for the 2022/23 budget and is currently working on the budget calendar which will be submitted soon for approval.

BUSINESS REPORT (continued)

 Kindergarten Registration for the 2022-2023 school year will begin on Monday, November 15. Appointments are already being scheduled.
 There are currently 203 pre-registered students. Kindergarten enrollment updates will be provided to the Board.

Mrs. Rehak continued by reporting on the status of the Security Vestibules. She informed the Board that the bid opening was held on Monday, October 25th, and based on discussions and review of the bids with John Grillo, the Architect, the District submitted a contract for Board approval today with Preferred Construction, the lowest bidder (\$290K). Mrs. Rehak indicated this contract is for Saw Mill and Dinkelmeyer only. She explained that these buildings require the most reconfiguration including concrete work, electrical, fire alarms, relocation of cameras, etc. The other three buildings already have existing entrance vestibules and the scope of the work is on a smaller scale. Therefore, Mrs. Rehak indicated the District's utilization of established State/BOCES contracts for these building renovations would yield a cost savings based on the bids submitted.

In closing, Mrs. Rehak informed the Board the County will be initiating the Nassau County School Bus Stop Arm Safety program to enforce the unlawful passing of a stopped school bus. Mrs. Rehak stated the program Nassau County is proposing to be administered is a county-wide program similar to that already implemented in Suffolk County. This program would entail installation of stop arm cameras on school buses serving the districts that opt in and would be of no cost to those districts as the revenues from the violations would cover it. Further, Mrs. Rehak added the District has been in contact with Guardian in reference to the camera installation and they would allow it if their districts chose to opt in, but she is still waiting to hear from other contracted bus companies utilized by North Bellmore. Mrs. Rehak indicated to the Board that the District is currently still receiving information, but based on the timeliness of this program, this may be an agreement raised to them as early as December or January.

CURRICULUM & INSTRUCTION REPORT

Mrs. Pollitt began her report with the following:

On Thursday, October 28, NYSED released NYS Assessment Data from Spring of 2021, and the analyzation is now available. In summary of the statistical data released, she explained that 4 out of 10 enrolled students statewide participated, and reminded in North Bellmore the refusal rate was 54 percent for ELA and 60 percent for Math. With only 40 percent of the results available, it was indicated the Department rendered that the state assessments are not representative of the state's population and the data should not be compared statewide or by statewide subgroup, and/or cannot be compared to prior year results due to the modification of the test coupled with the population of participating students is not reflective of those fully remote who were not required to partake in the assessments. Mrs. Pollitt did disclose that NYSED indicated the test will return to the normal format in spring of 2022.

CURRICULUM & INSTRUCTION REPORT (continued)

- The individualized NYS Assessments scores were mailed this past weekend to the parents directly and indicated if you do not receive them to please contact your building principal.
- On November 4, NYSED issued the School Accountability Rating survey.
 The survey will be distributed via e-mail to Community members,
 parents, and teachers if you wish to participate.
- The Mental Health & Wellness Committee met today and the agenda included discussions regarding the opening of school, the results of the Social and Emotional Needs Survey, and discussion of information obtained by Mrs. Pollitt during the monthly meeting of the Nassau County Mental Health Consortium. With the overall focus concentrated on the mental health and well-being of faculty/staff and student transition, she did indicate that while some students have shown great resilience others are still struggling. Mrs. Pollitt expressed her gratitude to the support staff who are working closely with the classroom teachers and students in furtherance of this transition.
- Parent University will once again partner with Nassau BOCES as part of the Nassau County Parent EDU, and Mrs. Pollitt indicated it will be posted this week. In addition, she shared from her meeting with the Nassau County Mental Health Consortium, a free resource by the Cook Center For Human Connection (parentguidance.org.) containing self-paced mental health courses for families.

Mrs. Pollitt was excited to share the three grant-funded full time reading teachers will be starting tomorrow and expressed her gratitude to Mrs. Fisher for her expedience in posting those positions. She disclosed to the Board that since the start of school in September eight part time reading teachers have moved on whether it be to grant funded positions or full time elsewhere. Mrs. Pollitt shared that Mrs. Fisher continues to work diligently to fill all positions so that the Reading Department is fully staffed.

In closing, Mrs. Pollitt reported on the continuing ongoing work with MTSS, Multi Tear System of Support. She, Ms. McNamara, and Mr. DeBlaso presented to the classroom teachers the screening process which addresses academic and behavioral challenges with support inside the classroom. MTSS partnered with an RTI (response to intervention) will address the academic and behavioral needs inside the classroom before moving to outside support. With that being said, Mrs. Pollitt was excited to share the District is in the final phase of the interview process for an RTI coordinator, also a grant funded position, who will assist and work in partnership in the District to streamline this process. In furtherance of this work, she added the entire Administrative team will attend the virtual MTSS Summit hosted by Branch of Minds on December 8.

TECHNOLOGY REPORT

Mrs. Corless informed the audience that a separate Technology Report would not be given this evening as the presentation of the new Library Media and Computer Labs was covered in detail by Mrs. Testa. Mrs. Corless expressed her appreciation and gratitude on behalf of the Board to Mr. Fischetti.

SPECIAL EDUCATION REPORT

Mrs. Malone began her report by speaking to the confidential nature of the Special Education Department and the numerous teams assisting these families in the District including the Early Intervention team (EIT), Committees on Special Education, RTI, and those at the building level. This month she reported meeting with the building level teams to ensure and review practices in support of the Special Education students including the importance of collaboratively working with parents during the CSE process. She stressed that partnership between her teams and parents are key to creating a well-rounded view of the student and their needs.

Mrs. Malone updated the Board on the following:

- The first SEPTA meeting was held on October 25, focusing on managing anxiety in children.
- The next SEPTA meeting is Monday, November 15th. Mr. Arlin of the BMCHSD will be presenting on programs offered within the High School District and is open to families of children of all ages.
- The Welcome to Middle School Meeting will be held January 4, at 6:30 p.m. at Brookside. This meeting is open to parents of 6th Grade students only and the focus will be the transition process of IEP and 504 students.

Mrs. Malone reported she is continuing to work in collaboration with Mrs. Testa to review Special Education practices. She reminded the Board that last month the Special Educators focused on progress monitoring. This month the focus is goal writing and the importance of setting ambitious yet obtainable annual goals for every student. Mrs. Malone indicated work has begun collaboratively on this in preparation for the annual reviews.

Mrs. Malone shared with the Board that she has received inquiries from parents regarding AIS Services for classified students. She clarified that while AIS Services, Academic Intervention Services, are general education services, classified students are eligible per District guidelines. Mrs. Malone further explained that North Bellmore utilizes multi assessment measures for entry into AIS including a review of data available and classroom performance by the teacher, building principal, and service providers on what supports a child needs regardless of classification.

Lastly, Mrs. Malone reported the hiring process has begun for two social workers and one guidance counselor through the CRRSA grant funds. She indicated the first round of interviews has been completed and the second round via zoom is in planning. Mrs. Malone thanked Mrs. Fisher for her continued coordination and assistance in this hiring process.

CPSE/CSE REPORTS

Mrs. Lanci moved that the Board of Education approve the CPSE and CSE reports dated November 4, 2021. Mrs. Malloy seconded and the motion was carried 5-0.

CONSENT AGENDA

Motion was made by Mrs. Erhard, seconded by Mrs. Cmar-Grote, and carried 5-0 for the following consent agenda items: Nos. 16.1 - 16.4.

NEW BUSINESS CONTRACTS

16.1 **BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Board of Education approve the following contracts for the 2021-22 school year:

- -Brookville Center for Children's Services, Inc.
- -The Center for Developmental Disabilities, Inc.
- -Dilly Dally South Shore, LLC (d/b/a South Shore)
- -Extraordinary Pediatrics, PC (Related Services)
- -Extraordinary Pediatrics, PC (Skilled Nursing)
- -The Hagedorn Little Village School
- -Hebrew Academy for Special Children, Inc.
- -Kids First Evaluation & Advocacy Center, Inc.
- -More Than A Gym, Pediatric Therapy & Play Gym
- -Variety Child Learning Center
- -Zycron Industries

DONATION

16.2 **BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Board of Education accept a donation from Mr. and Mrs. Anthony Milohnic of a check in the amount of \$1,000 to be used to purchase reading material for our reading program as well as enhance our classroom library collections at the Park Avenue School.

REIMBURSEMENT OF SERVICES

16.3 **BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Board of Education hereby authorizes the District to reimburse the parents of a child made known to the District for their expenses associated with provision of Wilson Reading service at a rate of \$67 per 40 minute session for 10 sessions based upon the submission of invoices and proof of payment.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECT: 2020 Security Vestibule

Installation

16.4 WHEREAS, North Bellmore Union Free School District (the "School District") requested sealed bids for the capital improvement project entitled "2020 Security Vestibule Installation" at Saw Mill Road Elementary School and John G. Dinkelmeyer Elementary School, SED Nos. 28-02-04-02-0-005-032 and 28-02-04-04-0-006-029, respectively ("Contract No. 1");

WHEREAS, the School District received and opened bid proposals for the provision of labor and materials for Contract No. 1; and

WHEREAS, the School District's Architect, John A. Grillo Architect P.C., reviewed and evaluated said bid; and

WHEREAS, based upon the aforesaid review and evaluation of the submitted bid proposals, the District Administration recommends that the Board of Education award Contract No. 1 to Preferred Construction, Inc. ("Preferred") as the lowest responsible bidder; and

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECT: 2020 Security Vestibule Installation (continued)

WHEREAS, the Board of Education has determined that the best interests of the School District are promoted by award of Contract No. 1 to Preferred.

NOW THEREFORE, BE FURTHER IT RESOLVED that upon the recommendation of the District Administration, the Board of Education awards Contract No. 1 to Preferred Construction, Inc. in the sum of \$290,000.00. (See attached.)

BOARD COMMENTS/ QUESTIONS

Mrs. Malloy raised a question referring to the usage of the MTSS and RTI evaluation system with regard to special education and general education students, i.e., is RTI going to focus on what students need more in AIS, is it going to be conjoined, or is AIS going to be considered a separate entity from the RTI. Mrs. Pollitt responded and thanked Mrs. Malloy for the question. She indicated AIS and RTI are both general education services and RTI is really the process in response to intervention. The purpose of RTI is to provide support as early as possible to prevent or determine if a student has a learning disability. Mrs. Pollitt explained some children will ultimately go toward the special education realm; however, if certain strategies or interventions are put in place in a general education setting prior, it might prevent some cases and she indicated there have been students who successfully remained in general education. Students in both general education and special education are afforded the same AIS services through the general education lens.

Mrs. Testa expressed her gratitude to the families who donated their leftover Halloween candy which will be disbursed to the Bellmore Lions Club and the Bellmore Merrick Community Cupboard and indicated flyers soon will be going out with respect to the winter accessory donations. Mrs. Erhard added by expressing appreciation to all for the contribution of food and supplies to the Bellmore-Merrick High School Community cupboard. The cupboard she explained supplies food biweekly in support of 45 Bellmore families and they have already received between 80 and 90 requests for Thanksgiving packages. Mrs. Erhard especially thanked the Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, and Brownies for their donations and was grateful for all their efforts holding their drives.

OLD BUSINESS

None.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Ms. LaSpina (Natta Boulevard) — Mask Mandates. Ms. LaSpina addressed the Board and made a statement in reference to the mask mandate for the children in school. She handed the Board what she indicated to be 60 opt-out mask forms signed by her and other community members of the District. Mrs. Corless and Mrs. Testa both thanked her.

Ms. Holmes (Logue Street) – In light of the traffic issues at pick-up and drop-off, has the Board considered offering universal busing to alleviate the problem? Mrs. Corless responded that universal busing would have to be a topic voted upon by the community. She did indicate there was a referendum in the past for it and the community voted no.

PUBLIC COMMENTS (continued)

The meeting was disrupted by an outburst towards the Board by a male member of the audience regarding the manner in which the Board addressed Ms. LaSpina's statement and in doing so voiced his opinion using inappropriate and disrespectful language. Mrs. Testa addressed him on his failure to follow the Code of Conduct and he continued to voice his objections. Mr. Powers then interjected and addressed his inappropriate behavior and usage of inappropriate language. Mr. Powers reiterated the protocols and requirements that govern the BOE meeting.

Ms. Goedel (Martin Avenue) – Has the District or Superintendent's Association sent any letters to the State Department and/or Governor Hochul seeking for a change in the mask mandate? Mrs. Testa responded that no letters have been sent out to this Governor yet, but with the Board's consent we can certainly discuss this. As far as letters regarding the mask mandate directly from the Superintendent's Association, Mrs. Testa said she can look into this further but at this point her response would be no.

Ms. D'Ambrosio (Decatur Avenue) – How can we ensure that we don't get a vaccine site at our schools? Mrs. Testa responded there are numerous places outside of the schools in this area where vaccinations can take place and she reiterated the response by the District in the State survey regarding vaccinations sites.

Ms. Zawrotniak (Genevieve Court) – Are Board meetings recorded? If not, why not? If yes can they be posted on the website? Other Districts record and post the Board meetings. Mr. Powers in addressing the Board indicated that during the pandemic when the meetings were remote they were required to video record and post. Now that the mandate has been lifted it's discretionary by the Board at this point. Mrs. Corless in response then indicated we will not be posting video recordings, but we have added live streaming now as an option per the request of the community.

Ms. Pascalli (Briggs Street) - Do you have any updates on foreign language? Were students polled at Grand to see what they think? Is there a plan to bring it back? Mrs. Testa in response thanked Ms. Pascalli for the inquiry and further shared that both she and Mrs. Pollitt have heard from several other parents regarding their concerns and desires with respect to this topic. Mrs. Testa stated she in conversation with Mr. Harrington of the BMCHSD addressed the multi-language choices offered through the virtual platform in addition to parent's concern of a possible disadvantage that our students maybe experiencing in language in comparison to our cohort communities. She expressed that Mr. Harrington indicated he appreciated the offering of the four languages as there is a large influx in just Spanish at their level and was looking for more diversity. She was happy to say that he further stated that the North Bellmore students based on feedback from his teachers are performing at comparable levels with the children in the other communities. With that in mind and the concerns she's heard, Mrs. Testa assured that foreign language options will be looked at very closely in the future when the District begins to work on the budget.

PUBLIC COMMENTS (continued)

Ms. Pascalli (Briggs Street) – Is the Board willing to write to our County legislators requesting local control in order to not have to comply with government mandates? Mrs. Corless responded that the County has not given us mandates, the State has, and requested further clarification on the question. Ms. Pascalli expressed that she understood that, but Legislators and Senators have to fight with us in order to get local control back, and we need to fight and work together to stop the mandates for the children. Mrs. Corless thanked Ms. Pascalli for the suggestion and indicated that she would take it under consideration.

Ms. Pascalli (Briggs Street) - You responded to the NYS Public School Vaccination Survey by stating that the District has no plans to offer vaccinations in school. Will your decision be overruled due to the American Rescue Plan Act? Mrs. Rehak in response to this inquire stated that the American Rescue Plan Act is from the Federal Government. These mandates are coming from our State Government and the State Department of Health; therefore, the State mandates are not tied into the American Rescue Plan Act. She explained the only criteria the American Rescue Plan Act asks of us is to continually update our reopening plan and keep it posted on the District website.

Ms. Pascalli (Briggs Street) – Has the Board members been threatened with legal action by NYSED to comply with DOH mandates? Mrs. Testa responded there are definitely penalties that would be bestowed upon the District including but not limited to school closures and monetary fines. Mrs. Testa thanked Ms. Pascalli for her questions and reiterated that the Board hears the parents and will continue to act in the best interest of the children to the best that their ability allows.

ADJOURNMENT

Mrs. Corless closed by wishing all a Happy Thanksgiving and expressing her outreach of gratitude on behalf of the Board to the students, administrators, faculty, staff, parents, and to the Community of North Bellmore.

On a motion by Mrs. Lanci, seconded by Mrs. Cmar-Grote, and carried 5-0, the Board of Education meeting was adjourned at 9:33 p.m. The next meeting will be held on Thursday, December 9, 2021.

Respectfully submitted,

Laurice Gunnels
District Clerk