



**NORTH BELLMORE UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT  
BOARD OF EDUCATION  
MINUTES – FEBRUARY 13, 2025**

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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, February 13, 2025, in the All Purpose Room of the Martin Avenue School at 2616 Martin Avenue, North Bellmore, New York.

The following members of the Board of Education were present:

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

The following member of the Board of Education was absent:

Christopher Nardo

Also present:

- Marie Testa, Superintendent of Schools
- Janet Pollitt, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction
- Richard Cunningham, Interim Assistant Superintendent of Business
- Steven A. Goodstadt, District Counsel
- Laurice Gunnels, District Clerk

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| <b>CALL TO ORDER</b>   | The meeting was called to order at 6:34 p.m. A motion was made by Mrs. Cmar-Grote, seconded by Mrs. Malloy to move into an executive session. Motion was carried 4-0. The meeting reconvened at 7:41 p.m..   |
| <b>PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE</b>                                      | Mrs. Lanci led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.  |
| <b>MISSION STATEMENT</b>   | Mrs. Malloy read the District’s Mission Statement. Mrs. Lanci on behalf of the BOE extended bereavement sympathies to Mr. Nardo and his family.  |
| <b>SPECIAL PRESENTATION:<br/><i>Student Art Presentation</i></b> | Mrs. Testa welcomed the families and “amazing artists” present this evening, and focused everyone’s attention on the <i>spectacular</i> art display. She proudly shared the artwork will adorn the hallway of the Administrative Office and extended congratulations to the <i>amazing artists</i> with a celebratory round of applause. Mrs. Testa invited Mr. Rosof, Principal of Saw Mill Road School and Administrative Liaison for the Art Department, up to the podium to introduce the North Bellmore School District art teachers. |

**Student Art Presentation  
(continued)**

Mr. Rosof, drawing attention to the student artwork on display, called all to think about what it is to be an artist. He described art as an illustration of the child’s creative mind coming to life on paper in color. He, reiterating Mrs. Testa’s sentiments, explained the artwork will proudly be displayed in the Administrative Offices in celebration of the arts. Mr. Rosof introduced the North Bellmore School District Art Teachers and invited them to join him at the podium to introduce their students in celebration this evening.

- Ms. Jillian Bock
- Ms. Erica Farley
- Ms. Amy Lopez

The art teachers called the students onto the stage to receive a congratulatory certificate for their work.

<b><u>JGD</u></b>	<b><u>MARTIN</u></b>	<b><u>NEWBRIDGE</u></b>
Abigail Chan	Brian Bigler	Marion Chelsea DeJesus
Jasmine Ford	Adeline Hosemann	Mikayla Lawrence
Dylan Kearney	William Telese	Santino LiBassi
Alexander Racanelli	Layla Walz	Nayelis Rodriguez
<b><u>PARK</u></b>	<b><u>SAW MILL</u></b>	
Aidan Dodge	Michaela Barth	Ann McEntee
Sarah Fontanella	Dylan Coyne	Lucas Verity
Joseph Grotticelli	Yulissa Eyma	Felix Wang
Carol Marroquin	Ashley Guo	William Zhang
	Marley Haddigan	

**Girl Scout Gold Award:  
Claire Arnoff**

Mr. Yannucci, Principal of Martin Avenue School, extended gratitude to the BOE and Mrs. Testa for the opportunity to speak this evening regarding a former student from Martin Avenue, Class of 2020, Claire Arnoff. He shared that Claire is currently working on her Gold Award initiative, a Pen Pal Program, to foster relationships between students from other elementary school districts prior to coming together at the Middle School level, a project currently connecting the sixth-grade students at Martin Avenue with Shore Road. Mr. Yannucci spoke about being truly inspired by Claire’s demonstration of the district’s core values through her project and collaboration with former teachers, illustrating an overall strong school community. He proudly introduced Claire Arnoff, now a junior at Mephram High School, to present her project.

Claire Arnoff created and narrated a detailed power point presentation of her project. She proudly spoke of the Gold Award as the highest award achievable in Girl Scouts, one which she described is obtained by recognizing an issue and creating sustainable solution. Claire spoke to her inspiration behind the pen pal program to ease the transition and make friends by creating a line of communication between students in other schools/districts, i.e. sixth grade students from Martin Avenue and Shore Road. She detailed the methodology of her project step-by-step including scheduling meetings with administrators and buildings, obtaining approval,

***Girl Scout Gold Award:  
Claire Arnoff  
(continued)***

creating pen pals, etc., ending with the review and distribution of letters. She extended gratitude and appreciation to Mrs. Testa, Dr. Yannucci, Ms. Matthews, Mrs. Fischetti, the sixth-grade teachers at both Martin Avenue and Shore Road, Mr. Vogel, and her friends/family for their assistance.

Mrs. Lanci spoke about the importance of community and lifelong friendships, and extended gratitude to Claire for recognizing the significance of communication to ease the transition into middle school.

***Girl Scout Gold Award:  
Holly DeGiglio***

Mrs. Brugge, extending gratitude to North Bellmore teachers and families, spoke with pride of the educational experience in the district which establishes a foundation for students to grow, face challenges and opportunities, and create leaders of tomorrow as evidenced by the former students present this evening. Mrs. Brugge proudly introduced Holly DeGiglio, another former Martin Avenue student currently a junior at Mephram High School, seeking her Gold Award and striving to make a difference in this community.

Holly presented and narrated an illustrative power point presentation on her Gold Award initiative, Anxiety Calming Project. She explained her desire for this project began when it was observed that students were sitting in the nurse's office during assemblies and/or other events due to the loud atmosphere and shared her solution of utilizing noise-canceling headphones to address this. Moving on, Holly shared knowledge nationwide of the number of children who experience anxiety which she indicated is sometimes unnoticed, became her motivation. She detailed her project step-by-step describing in detail meeting with administrators, fundraising her project, ordering supplies, purchasing headphones/making stands, creating calming bins, writing/illustrating a book centered on the subject of a student experiencing a bad day and how to overcome it, and conducting awareness presentations at the local girl scout troops and public library. Holly indicated at the end of her project she will be donating 20 calming bins and 14 headphones to the North Bellmore School District. She extended her appreciation to everyone who assisted her in this project including Superintendent, Mrs. Testa, Principal, Mrs. Brugge, Mrs. Pekoff, to all who mentored her, and sent a special thanks to her family and friends for their enormous support.

Mrs. Testa spoke to the Gold Award, the highest award in girl scouts, and shared only 5.4 percent nationally achieve that honor which speaks volumes to the integrity, kindness, and drive of those recipients. She congratulated Claire and Holly on this prestigious honor, and extended gratitude for choosing the North Bellmore community, finding a need to help the children, taking the initiative, and researching and pursuing your goals, all illustrating genuine leadership qualities in alignment with the district's mission.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

ON A MOTION to approve the minutes of the Business meeting of January 9, 2025, Mrs. Lanci, Mrs. Cmar-Grote, Mrs. Malloy, voted in favor, and Mrs. Corless abstained as she was not present for the January 9, 2025, meeting. The Motion passed with three votes in favor and one abstention.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**  
(*Agenda Items only*)

Guidelines to Public Comments:

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, at 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 relating to agenda items only.

**CORRESPONDENCE**

Mrs. Lanci advised that the Board received correspondence.

**TREASURER'S  
REPORT**

ON A MOTION made by Mrs. Cmar-Grote, seconded by Mrs. Malloy, and carried 4-0, the Board of Education approved the Treasurer's report for the month ended December 31, 2024 (on file at District Office).

**BOARD COMMITTEE / HIGH  
SCHOOL REPORTS**

Mrs. Corless reported the BMCHSD met last week. In celebration of students, several awards were presented. The BOE honored from Kennedy High School, Zara Selvin, All Eastern Treble Chorus, and five Regeneron Semi-Finalists, Mark Prainito, Jayden Simon, Joleen Chau, Gabby Elliot, and Mason Tso, and Calhoun received recognition for the Calhoun Connection, a program that builds inclusion through sports, recognizing those students who won the Holiday Hero Challenge. Mrs. Corless shared the Technology Department hosted an AI Presentation focusing on what it is, the overall risks, how it can be used to benefit education, etc., and indicated it is on the website for viewing. The next meeting is scheduled for March 5.

**FINANCE**

The Board of Education acknowledges the review of the warrants that have been approved by the Claims Auditor for the month of January 2025 (on file at District Office).

**CHANGE IN AGENDA  
Item No. 11.1**

Mrs. Lanci requested Item No. 11.1 be moved up on the agenda preceding the Superintendent's Report. No objection was heard.

**PERSONNEL REPORT**

11.1 ON A MOTION made by Mrs. Cmar-Grote, seconded by Mrs. Corless, and carried 4-0, the Board of Education approved the Personnel Report dated February 13, 2025 (on file at District Office).

- A. Appointments
- B. Leave Requests
- C. Change of Status
- D. Resignations
- E. Termination

**SUPERINTENDENT'S  
REPORT**

Mrs. Testa congratulated Mrs. Malone on her new position at Eastern Suffolk BOCES and spoke of her ten-year journey here at North Bellmore from Assistant Principal of Saw Mill Road School to Executive Director of Pupil Personnel Services and Special Education. She proudly shared Mrs. Malone's steadfast loyalty to the BOE and the school district, her continual support of faculty and staff, and most importantly her dedication to the children she served. Mrs. Testa extended gratitude both personally and professionally to Mrs. Malone and wished her continual success on her new journey.

With respect to the next Director of Special Education of North Bellmore, Mrs. Testa spoke to the ongoing search for a new Director indicating the position has been posted on OLAS. She shared interviews in the meantime were conducted for an *Interim* Director while the process continues and announced the appointment of Mr. Howard Bernstein. Mrs. Testa spoke about Mr. Bernstein's vast experience in both education and administration and discussed his role as an interim while the district narrows their search for a permanent Director.

Moving on, Mrs. Testa shared the district is busy working on the budget and in preparation are analyzing class sections, enrollment, spacing, programs (including scheduling and the number of special area teachers), capital projects, etc. The following are highlights she provided with respect to the status of Capital Projects:

- Installation of ceiling and lighting in Saw Mill Road and Park Avenue schools second floor hallways will be conducted in April. She indicated the classrooms will be done over the summer along with the pavement and asphalt work at those buildings. Newbridge Road School is still pending approval.
- Electrical panel upgrade will begin in preparation for the installation of individual air conditioning units.

Mrs. Lanci on behalf of the BOE offered gratitude to Mrs. Malone for the North Bellmore families and students she touched during her time here and wished her good luck on her new journey.

**STAFF DEVELOPMENT**

11.2 ON A MOTION made by Mrs. Cmar-Grote, seconded by Mrs. Malloy, and carried 4-0, the Board of Education approved the Staff Development Report dated February 13, 2025 (on file at District Office).

**BUSINESS DEPARTMENT  
REPORT**

Mr. Cunningham, reiterating Mrs. Testa's report, indicated the draft of the budget continues to be refined and invited everyone to the Budget Workshop to be held on Thursday, March 6, at 7:30 p.m. in the Park Avenue School cafeteria. He said there was a scheduling conflict at the Martin Avenue School for that evening and stressed the importance of noting the new location.

Mr. Cunningham shared important budget-related calendar dates:

- April 10: Martin Avenue School / Board of Education adoption of the proposed budget.

**BUSINESS DEPARTMENT  
REPORT  
(continued)**

- May 8: Martin Avenue School / Annual Budget Hearing whereby the proposed budget approved by the BOE will be outlined.
- May 20: Newbridge Road School / Annual Budget Vote and Trustee Election.

Moving on, Mr. Cunningham reminded all of the transportation registration deadline for private and parochial schools of April 1, and indicated the application is available on the website. He spoke to the continual onflow of parents applying for the UPK Program and/or registering their children for kindergarten for the upcoming 2025/26 school year.

In closing, Mr. Cunningham extended gratitude to the custodians and maintainers on their diligent efforts and scheduling flexibility to keep our schools safe for students and staff during this winter season.

**SPECIAL EDUCATION  
CPSE/CSE REPORTS**

13.1 ON A MOTION made by Mrs. Corless, seconded by Mrs. Cmar-Grote, and carried 4-0, the Board of Education approved the CPSE and CSE reports dated February 6, 2025 (on file at District Office).

**CONSENT AGENDA  
(Item Nos. 14.1 to 14.5)**

ON A MOTION made by Mrs. Cmar-Grote, seconded by Mrs. Corless, and carried 4-0, the Board of Education approved Item Nos. 14.1 through 14.5.

**NEW BUSINESS  
CONTRACTS**

14.1 BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education approve the following contracts for the 2024/25 school year (on file at District Office):

- Eldor Contracting Corporation (Construction Summer 2025)
- Hi-Lume Corporation (Construction Summer 2025)
- Metro Paving, LLC (Construction Summer 2025)
- RENU Contracting and Restoration (Construction Summer 2025)
- Serene Home Nursing Agency (Related Services)
- Serene Home Nursing Agency (Skilled Nursing)
- SUNY Potsdam

**DONATION**

14.2 BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education accept a donation from Box Tops for Education of a check in the amount of \$74.80 to be used to purchase recess equipment at Saw Mill Road School.

**2025/26 SCHOOL  
CALENDAR**

14.3 BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education adopt the 2025-26 school calendar (on file at District Office and available on the website).

**2023/24 CAPITAL  
IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM**

14.4 WHEREAS, the North Bellmore Union Free School District (the "School District") requested sealed bids for the project entitled 2023/2024 Capital Improvement Program at Martin Avenue Elementary School, Newbridge Road Elementary School, Park Avenue Elementary School and Saw Mill Road Elementary School, (the "Projects"); and

WHEREAS, the District received and opened bid proposals for the provision of labor and materials for Contract 3 Electrical Reconstruction; and

**2023/24 CAPITAL  
IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM  
(continued)**

WHEREAS, the School District's Architect reviewed and evaluated said bid proposals; and

WHEREAS, based upon said review and evaluation of the submitted bid proposals by the Architect, the District Administration recommends that the Board of Education award Contract 3 Electrical Reconstruction to Cooper Power and Lighting Corp. as the lowest responsible bidder; and

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that upon the recommendation of the District Administration, the Board of Education awards Contract 3 Electrical Reconstruction in the amount of \$263,750.00 for Contract 3 Electrical Reconstruction to Cooper Power and Lighting Corp. (on file at District Office).

**EMPLOYMENT AGREEMENT**

14.5 BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education approve an employment agreement between the Board of Education of the North Bellmore Union Free School District and Howard Bernstein, for the services as the District's Interim Director of Special Education and Student Support Services from 2/24/25-6/30/25 (on file at District Office).

**OLD BUSINESS**

No old business was discussed.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

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1. Ms. Staudt– *I'm here as a concerned parent advocating for more reading teachers at Martin Avenue and for services to be provided with fidelity.*

Ms. Ozechowski - *This year our school district started with insufficient reading educators (specifically full time Orton-Gillingham certified providers). What is being done to ensure this won't happen again in September?*

Mrs. Lanci reviewed the questions and based on the nature of Ms. Staudt and Ms. Ozechowski's concerns asked Mrs. Pollitt to respond. Mrs. Pollitt thanked the parents for their inquiry, read the questions and seeing the similarity of the issue addressed their concerns simultaneously. Mrs. Pollitt discussed the Orton Gillingham certification process, and indicated Martin began with one fully certified teacher in addition to other teachers who had completed the pre-requisite training in preparation for it. Also, Mrs. Pollitt did share that the reading staff was rearranged districtwide moving more teachers to Martin Avenue for support, and caseloads were adjusted based upon the mid-year Data Review Meetings and guidelines established. In furtherance, Mrs. Pollitt spoke of letters being sent home addressing reading services, frequency, etc., and indicated if there are still questions to contact Dr. Yannucci and/or the Curriculum Office.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**  
**(continued)**

2. *Two students from Martin Avenue, Grade 3, re. Class sizes.*

The students individually addressed the Board of Education and the District Administrators and collectively spoke to their current class-size and requested that the Board decrease the size by increasing the number of classes moving into fourth grade citing reasons including a potential new law in NYC Public Schools regarding overall class sizes, more individualized attention by their teachers, manageable small group instruction, increasing enrichment, etc.

Mrs. Lanci spoke to the confidence displayed by the students this evening, indicated that correspondence has been received regarding this which is under review, and stressed everything herein will be taken into consideration. In furtherance, Mrs. Testa reiterated Mrs. Lanci's sentiments recognizing how difficult it is to speak in front of a group of people (even for adults). Mrs. Testa spoke to knowledge of the research regarding class sizes and described the complexity surrounding the ongoing process of determining classroom sections including overall school/grade level enrollment, the number of classrooms districtwide, services that a student may require, the number of mainstreaming students, compiling information regarding new and potential registrants from Central Registration, etc.

**POTENTIAL EXECUTIVE**  
**SESSION**

The BOE did not adjourn into Executive Session.

**ADJOURNMENT**

ON A MOTION made by Mrs. Malloy, seconded by Mrs. Corless, and carried 4-0, the meeting was adjourned at 8:50 p.m. The next business meeting will be held on Thursday, March 13, 2025.

Respectfully submitted,

Laurice Gunnels  
District Clerk