

NORTH BELLMORE SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING

MAY 7, 2020

ACCURATE COURT REPORTING, INC

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1 NINA LANCI: Good evening, everyone. Please
2 rise. I'd like to call this meeting to order for the
3 Pledge of Allegiance.

4 (WHEREUPON, the Pledge of Allegiance was
5 recited.)

6 At this time, I would ask for a moment of
7 silence from the Board for the recent victims of the
8 COVID in our community. Thank you. Let's see.

9 Good evening, and welcome to our May 7, 2020
10 Board meeting. Thank you for joining us this evening.
11 On behalf of the Board of Education, I want to extend our
12 sincere thanks to the North Bellmore community, the North
13 Bellmore teachers, administrators, and the staff for all
14 your efforts in addressing the challenges of this
15 pandemic.

16 You have confronted the daily challenges with
17 determination and insight, ever focused on the ultimate
18 goal of providing a quality educational experience in a
19 unique and supportive environment. We commend you for
20 your words and your actions in these trying times. You
21 truly all are everyday heroes in the North Bellmore
22 community.

23 We are convening our Board meeting tonight

24 pursuant to the Executive Order 202.1 and extended by
25 Executives Order 202.14 and 202.18, wherein Governor
26 Cuomo has authorized alterative means for public
27 entities, such as the Board of Education, to conduct
28 public meetings.

29 We are conducting tonight's meeting via a Zoom
30 video conference. The meeting will be recorded, and the
31 transcript of the meeting will be available at a later
32 date.

33 Tonight's Board meeting will be somewhat
34 streamlined, and we will only be conducting critically
35 necessary business. Board policy 2350 identifies the
36 order of business for a regular Board meeting. Such
37 policy also identifies that the regular order of business
38 may be changed by an affirmative vote of the majority of
39 the Board.

40 I will entertain a motion at this time to
41 remove the public comments from tonight's meeting only.
42 Do I have a motion?

43 MELISSA CMAR-GROTE: Motion.

44 NINA LANCI: Do I have a second?

45 JO-ANN ERHARD: Second.

46 NINA LANCI: Any discussion? All in favor?

47 (WHEREUPON, there was a unanimous, affirmative
48 vote of the members present.)

49 NINA LANCI: Thank you. The order of business
50 for tonight's meeting will be changed accordingly. Thank
51 you, everyone.

52 At this time, we have our District's mission
53 statement. Mrs. Erhard, would you please be so kind to
54 read it to us?

55 JO-ANN ERHARD: Certainly.

56 NINA LANCI: Thank you.

57 JO-ANN ERHARD: Our mission is to inspire all
58 students to be confident, passionate learners with the
59 courage and skills to lead their lives (inaudible) to our
60 global community with creativity and compassion.

61 NINA LANCI: Thank you. And I'm surely (sic)
62 the community realizes we live by this mission statement,
63 the Board members, the administrators, the principals,
64 our support staff. We truly live up to this standard.
65 Thank you.

66 At this time, I will ask for an approval for
67 the Treasurer's Report.

68 JOHN FERRARA: Motion.

69 MELISSA CMAR-GROTE: Could I interrupt for a
70 second? I don't see --

71 JO-ANN ERHARD: I don't see Ro. That's what I
72 was just going to say.

73 MELISSA CMAR-GROTE: I don't see Mrs. Corless.

74 NINA LANCI: Could somebody reach out maybe on
75 the cell for Ro?

76 JO-ANN ERNARD: I got it.

77 NINA LANCI: Thank you.

78 MARIE TESTA: Mrs. Corless is attempting to
79 get

80 into the link now. There was a little bit of a --

81 NINA LANCI: Okay.

82 MARIE TESTA: -- challenge. So she should be
83 coming in now, Mr. Fischetti.

84 NINA LANCI: We'll just suspend the meeting.

85 MARIE TESTA: She'll be in in a couple moments
86 she said, so I think --

87 NINA LANCI: No problem. Thank you, everyone.
88 I just want to comment that several of the Board members,
89 including myself, we need support by the Generation X
90 students, because we're not professional Zoomers to get
91 into these. We're getting better.

92 MARIE TESTA: Right. And if you just make
93 sure

94 that you have your mute button on, that helps with the
95 public being able to hear us, so you just have to unclick
96 when you speak.

97 NINA LANCI: Ms. -- is Ro in? Okay. Nope.

98 MARIE TESTA: Mr. Fischetti, if you just send
99 the link to Mrs. Corless again, there seems to be
100 technical difficulties.

101 JASON FISCHETTI: Yep.

102 MARIE TESTA: So I think that we should
103 continue on.

104 NINA LANCI: Okay. At this time, the Board has
105 Item 5 to consider, the finance section. The Board of
106 Education acknowledges the review of the warrants that
107 have been approved by the claims auditor from March 16
108 through April 30, 2020.

109 Item 5.2, be it resolved that the Board of
110 Education approved the budgetary transfers dated May 7,
111 2020. Do I have a motion?

112 JOHN FERRARA: Motion.

113 NINA LANCI: Do I have a second?

114 MELISSA CMAR-GROTE: Second.

115 NINA LANCI: Do I have any discussion? All in
116 favor?

117 (WHEREUPON, there was a unanimous, affirmative
118 vote of the members present.)

119 NINA LANCI: At this time, Item 6 is our
120 Superintendent's Reports. Mrs. Testa. Thank you.

121 MARIE TESTA: Thank you, Mrs. Lanci.

122 I'm very happy to see you all. I just wish we
123 were in person, and I say the same thing to all our
124 community members, or parents, our families, our faculty
125 and staff, any students that are out there, too. We miss
126 you so very much, and we pray that you're all healthy and
127 safe. We want you to know that the Board of Education
128 here in North Bellmore and the administrative team are
129 here for all our community members. We are at work. We
130 are here. If there's anything you need, please contact
131 us. It's so important to us.

132 I'm going to just start off with a little happy
133 news. This week, I was -- is Teacher Appreciation Week,
134 and it was also Nurse's Day, National Nurse's Day. At
135 this time, I'd just really like to say thank you to those
136 groups, and the first time are our faculty. I hope there
137 are many of you watching because we have not been able to
138 see each other personally, but we're in touch daily with

139 the principals, with all our administrators, our amazing
140 faculty and staff.

141 I want to thank the North Bellmore faculty for
142 the flexibility, for the creativity, for the
143 intelligence, the compassion, and for turning education
144 around in a moment's time to a new education. And most
145 of all, I think at this time when we're distanced by a
146 screen and we have a screen in between us, we must
147 remember that the school is the centerpiece of a
148 community, and there's absolutely nothing, in my mind,
149 that can replace the connection that teachers have with
150 their students face-to-face, person-to-person in a
151 classroom.

152 I am extraordinarily proud of the work that our
153 faculty and our administrators are doing and our students
154 and our parents are doing, and I look forward to the day
155 when the best is yet to come. Although we don't know
156 what that's going to look like, remote learning or
157 learning in school, or both, I just don't want to forget
158 that face-to-face, connection-to-connection is how
159 children grow and learn and navigate the world.

160 So to all those teachers who are continuing

161 with that connection, to all the pictures that I've seen
162 of teachers dropping books off and surprising children,
163 to drawing chalk drawings on their own driveways, to
164 messages of support, and from teachers to families and
165 families back to us, thank you for the beautiful letters,
166 for sharing your children with us, and for becoming --
167 taking on a new role at home. I know how difficult that
168 is. We have administrators and teachers that have their
169 own family. So the fact that we've stood up as a
170 community is something that I respect and I appreciate.

171 So thank you to all the families for that, to
172 all our faculty, for all you do each and every day, and
173 for remembering that you're leading us out of this. You
174 are leading us in and out and together. To our nurses,
175 as always, you are our angels here, and we appreciate
176 you, and we will continue to rely on you as we look to
177 the future of what education will bring.

178 As we begin my report to the president and to
179 the Board, I want to thank you as well for your support
180 as we navigate these challenging times. You can't
181 underestimate what it does when you have a community that
182 sees the mission as its guiding post, and I see that with
183 the faculty and staff and with your families and with our

184 Board. So I thank you for constantly holding that up as
185 a beacon for us and as a mark of excellence.

186 As we know, we're closed for the remainder of
187 the school year, but we look with hope to the future. As
188 we continue on our daily responsibilities here in North
189 Bellmore, I'd like to report that our continuity of
190 learning plan continues, and Mrs. Pollitt will speak to
191 that in our home learning plan in a little while. Our
192 meal program is also continuing. We serve lunch on
193 Mondays and Wednesdays. Any community member that is in
194 need of lunch, please come up to Martin Avenue School
195 between 11 and 1 p.m. We do -- we now are serving 220
196 meals daily. Thank you to Ms. Rehak, to Helena, who is
197 our director, and to the entire food service department.

198 We'd like to recognize now some very gracious
199 souls who have donated to the North Bellmore meal
200 program. Mrs. Lanci, thank you for leading our way.
201 Thank you to the Bellmore Lion's Club and to Mama Gina's
202 Pizza and Restaurant, who recently donated 80 gift
203 certificates for pizza, which we did give out to our
204 families, and they are very grateful, as are we. We just
205 learned moments ago that Mrs. Lanci spearheaded a grant
206 as well with the Brandel-Murphy Foundation, and we are

207 going to be the recipients of a \$2,500 grant that will go
208 toward our lunch program as well. So, Mrs. Lanci, thank
209 you for living by example and setting the example for us.

210 In addition to that, I'm really very grateful,
211 as is Ms. Rehak and our Board of Education. Mrs. Lanci
212 also has a relationship with the Temple Beth Ohr, which
213 is in Bellmore, and the rabbi there, Bernstein, Rabbi
214 Bernstein, and the president of the temple, Michael
215 Bigman, contacted us. Now, this is a temple in Bellmore
216 who heard we've gone from 70 lunches a day to 220, and
217 the temple donated over 80 prepackaged breakfasts and
218 lunch from Bagel Boss in Merrick to our families, and
219 today we received news that they are going to donate
220 again. So I think when we look at this pandemic and the
221 fact that we are separated, in many ways, there's more
222 connections forming, and as I always say, that invisible
223 thread is becoming stronger, so we thank the Lion's Club,
224 and we thank our Congregation Beth Ohr for the
225 outstanding and gracious donations.

226 We are moving forward with central registration
227 I thank Mr. Fischetti and Ms. Rehak were going to an
228 electronic registration service through E-School. We're
229 working on that currently. We are going to have forms

230 that can be filled out online and then be processed
231 accordingly. At this time, we do take appointments if
232 you call the District office. If you go on our website,
233 you'll find phone numbers. We will take registrations.
234 Our clerical staff is in, and they will process any
235 registration we have, but in the meantime, we are moving
236 toward a central registration process. During the
237 registration process you must get in your original
238 documents. So what we've been doing is if a parent comes
239 up to register, that parent would provide the document to
240 one of our assistants, and the assistants would bring the
241 document inside, take care of the registration, and bring
242 it back outside. And we appreciate that those who are
243 visiting us are wearing masks, because we are keeping
244 that social distancing.

245 As we move forward in the report, I wanted to
246 bring to your attention now, since the Governor's closure
247 and since the announcement that we're closing through the
248 end of the year, I thank the principals and the school
249 district to have been planning forward. We do have a
250 very good plan to honor our sixth graders. We're going to
251 honor them with a special Flipgrid production, which each
252 sixth grader will get to keep. The awards ceremony is a

253 treasured event here in North Bellmore schools, and one
254 of the only elementary schools that doesn't awards
255 ceremony in sixth grade. Each of the teachers of the
256 students that usually give out awards, our art teacher,
257 our music teacher, our phys ed teachers, and so forth,
258 along with our principals, will be taped, and they will
259 announce the name of every award, and I'm very pleased
260 that for our community members, our Republican Club, or
261 Lion's Club, and so forth, are still contributing all the
262 awards that they traditionally contribute, and I thank
263 our technology teachers for their support they're going
264 to give in that effort.

265 We're also -- the principals have also come up
266 with a wonderful idea to really try to bring a sense of
267 happiness and joy and to commemorate the graduation
268 ceremony. Although we cannot be present together in our
269 location and shake our graduates' hands and be there in
270 an interactive manner, the principals have created what
271 we're calling a sixth grade graduation parade. And I
272 also thank about 19 to 20 parents who joined us on Zoom
273 yesterday, sixth grade committee members, and together we
274 had a very good discussion on what could we do to make
275 this a memorable experience for the students. We did

276 choose to do it in early June. The reason for that is
277 because we don't know when the last day of school will
278 be. The Governor has not yet given us that information.
279 As you may know and recall, we did work over the spring
280 recess as part of the Governor's order, so we're looking
281 to see if the Governor is going to continue us working
282 until the end of June, or is the year going to end
283 earlier. There's contractual obligations there, and
284 we're looking for directive from the Governor.

285 So as to not have any of our sixth graders miss
286 out, we did put the event in early June so that we could
287 make sure that we had time to plan and that the children
288 had time to be celebrated. Part of the idea is that
289 we'll have faculty members, administrators, Board members
290 are invited, of course, with social distancing to be
291 present at -- outside of the schools as our graduates
292 come up and are recognized.

293 This week we sent out -- we're working on
294 return of materials. We're starting next week, I mean,
295 with library books. As you know, we have student
296 materials in our possession, and students have maybe
297 musical instruments or library books in their possession,
298 and we'd like to be able to give back to our students

299 what's theirs from their classrooms. So we're working
300 with the central administration team and the principals
301 to come up with a plan to, again with social distancing
302 in mind, for staggered scheduling where families could
303 come up and get the materials that belong to their
304 children, including sweatshirts and sneakers that we
305 have, and, of course, books and instructional resources.
306 We're starting with library books next week. The
307 children will keep the musical instruments for more time.
308 I'm loving on Twitter that I see the children playing
309 their musical instruments. I thank them for that and the
310 families for that. So we're working on those types of
311 schedules now.

312 We're also preparing for special education
313 summer school, which Ms. Eskew will address in a little
314 while, and those are some of the items tying up the end
315 of the school year that we're looking at. Of course,
316 we're also going to be looking at class placement and
317 teachers conversing with one another about class
318 placement. Mrs. Pollitt will address report cards and a
319 special report card guide she's been working on, so we're
320 really very excited about that.

321 In the beginning when I started, I did give out

322 a positive shout out to our parents and to our students.
323 I think -- again, when I think of what you've done and
324 how you're raising your children and working your
325 positions, I'm in awe of you, and I say the same thing to
326 my faculty and staff and to my central administrators and
327 to my Board members for doing the same thing. But to the
328 central administration staff, I just wanted to thank you,
329 too, for being there every moment of every day for the
330 children of North Bellmore. Thank you for what you've
331 done.

332 Mr. Fischetti, with what you've done with
333 technology has been extraordinary. Ms. Eskew, what
334 you've done as the right-hand person at the District and
335 what you're doing with special education and our
336 children's services and what your special education staff
337 has done has been nothing short of extraordinary. And
338 I'm going to use the word again with Mrs. Pollitt, Ms.
339 McNamara, with what you're doing in curriculum
340 instruction and what you've built together. I think that
341 whatever it's going to look like when we come out of it,
342 we're going to be stronger than before, and our children
343 will be the recipients and the beneficiaries, no matter
344 how difficult this time has been.

345 And also to Mr. Russo in buildings and grounds,
346 our custodial team has been working. We're going to our
347 next phase of our schedule with more custodians and
348 maintainers on site with social distancing. We're
349 working on cleaning steam traps, uni-vents, replacements
350 for LED lighting, painting in the different buildings,
351 landscaping and grounds work. We're also looking at --
352 we've also met and determined classroom locations, air
353 conditioning needs for next year, and the team has been
354 wonderful in supporting our food service program as well.

355 As we switch from the current time moving to
356 the future, we know that Governor Cuomo has been
357 addressing us daily and is scheduled again, we
358 understand, for May 15, where he is going to address us
359 and provide some information, we hope, and we understand
360 on State aid.

361 So I wanted to just turn our eyes to State aid
362 a little. Fortunately, we have our budget, and our
363 budget is adopted, so we're ready to go on that. Ms.
364 Rehak will speak to that in a little while. And at this
365 time, I just wanted to bring some attention to the Board
366 and the public so that they're aware that we're waiting
367 to find out what we're going to receive in State aid.

368 North Bellmore is due 14 million dollars in State aid.
369 Ten million of that is foundation aid, so total is 14
370 million.

371 A few months ago, Governor Cuomo mentioned that
372 schools may only get 50 percent of that aid. A couple
373 weeks ago, he mentioned that it could possibly be 20
374 percent. If the State aid comes at 20 percent, that
375 means our revenue will drop by approximately 2.8 percent
376 -- 2.8 million dollars, I'm sorry. If that 2.8 million
377 occurs and we receive that decrease, we'll have to come
378 back to the Board looking forward to the future on
379 different changes we made, look at what we have to do in
380 terms of programs and how would we continue to move
381 forward with a deficit such as this on a 57, approximate
382 57-million-dollar budget. So those are some of the types
383 of things we're waiting to hear, but we are very happy
384 that our budget is in place and that we can move forward,
385 but we are very concerned, as are all the county
386 districts and state districts, that there is going to be
387 this significant drop in aid.

388 One of the areas where I just want to bring the
389 Board's attention is the '21-'22 school year. Because of
390 the exorbitant expenses of the COVID-19 pandemic

391 statewide, we're predicting, and our business officials
392 are looking at this and predicting that our TRS and ERS
393 rates will go up significantly that year and along,
394 probably, with our health insurance. So right now, we're
395 trying to be as smart as possible strategically planning
396 for their future looking at our spending and looking at
397 where we can reduce spending while still providing
398 excellent programming of course.

399 So those are some of the areas that we're
400 really eager to hear about when the Governor comes back
401 to speak to us. The little bit of a challenge that's
402 coming to us now is that the Governor will come on May 15
403 and give us information, but he still has two times more
404 to come back and make changes to the budget that affects
405 the schools. So that's an unknown. Some of the experts
406 in the financial field are hoping that whatever we hear
407 on May 15 will be kind of the brunt of it, but we're
408 really not certain what will happen with the State and
409 what will happen when the Governor has an ability two
410 more times during the year, mid-year, to change that
411 budget. So that's something that we plan forward to, are
412 looking at, and, again, we're trying to be as financially
413 prudent.

414 But, again, with this being said, we will be
415 reporting out to you throughout the year, and regardless
416 of the budget, we may face -- we may be at a place where
417 we may face, along with other districts, mid-year
418 reductions. That's just really some of the writing that
419 could possibly be on the wall. So the suggestion is for
420 the Board that we may want to consider meeting, if we
421 want to have a special meeting before June, when our next
422 meeting is, once we hear some information from the
423 Governor that's something that the Board may want to
424 consider.

425 But the '20/'21 budget still includes the
426 continuity of our student academic programs, the
427 previously-stated deconsolidations and consolidation we
428 talked about; however, we'll just keep our eye on the
429 executive orders in this era of the pandemic as we're
430 looking at the delivery and manner in which we provide
431 services.

432 As we look ahead to September now, I really
433 wanted to touch base on this tonight because we're in the
434 now, but we're in the future at the same time. So we're
435 trying to deliver the best possible instruction now, and
436 by instruction, too, I mean -- and I know Mrs. Pollitt

437 will touch upon this -- all of the administrators and
438 Board, I know, are very concerned about the social and
439 emotional welfare of families, of teachers, and the
440 community at large because we know that this pandemic has
441 taken its toll on that, on families, and we know that
442 there's increases in depression and opioid use and
443 alcoholism, and so forth, and we are here for you. We
444 have a very, very talented strong social work department,
445 prevention department, psychology department, teachers,
446 administrators, and you just need to go on our website
447 and send me an email, send us an email, or give us a
448 call, and we will get back to you. That's so important
449 to us to be here for one another. No matter how small
450 you think a problem may be, it's not too small to us.

451 So as we -- as we transition from the now to
452 the future, we understand that schools are now tasked
453 with envisioning a reopening post COVID. When that final
454 phase is going to be, I don't know, and that's -- the
455 Governor will let us know as the numbers flatten and as
456 he thinks it's safe for us to move into the phase of
457 reopening. I do know that we will need to be prepared,
458 as soon as possible, with a plan for the future, whether
459 that future is September or not, and I am hoping that it

460 is. We have been told many times that it's not going to
461 look the same as it does now. I understand that. We
462 understand that. It has to do with the social
463 distancing. So while we will, in future meetings, go
464 further into depth with this, we don't have many times
465 that we're publicly in front of our community this way,
466 so I want to just take a little bit of time to tell you
467 what we're looking at now.

468 The matter continues to evolve, and while we
469 wait for executive orders from the Governor,
470 administrators across New York State and here in North
471 Bellmore are meeting to create schematics for what an
472 opening of a school district would look like on Long
473 Island. We're joining a task force. We're part of
474 larger communities of superintendents, of assistant
475 superintendents, business officials, special ed
476 directors, who are working together to kind of structure
477 this and to create a list of our essential questions.

478 The number one question that comes to mind when
479 we think about the future is, we have been told, although
480 we have not received directive from the New York State
481 Education Department as of yet, some of the CDC
482 guidelines and the Governor himself have suggested that

483 the six-foot social distancing rule will be in place for
484 school districts. What that means for us, it does mean a
485 re-envisioning of what it looks like to be in K through 6
486 elementary district in our classrooms. We are currently
487 looking at the square footage of the classrooms to the
488 Board members. Our classrooms range from 660 to 800
489 square feet, depending on the different schools. Some of
490 the classrooms would fit with the six-foot social
491 distancing, ten children maybe. You're looking at the
492 way that you're going to structure those rooms in terms
493 of furniture. The least amount of furniture, the more
494 room you have. So those are -- that's the number one
495 consideration, mathematically how many students do we
496 have in a school, how many faculty members, how many
497 staff members, and then how do we distance safely, six
498 feet, and provide the education that we're providing.

499 Some of the guidelines include looking at
500 groups of children in a homogeneous fashion, meaning that
501 those children stay together for the time period that
502 they're in school, whereas, then you are not bringing
503 class grade -- grade one you have two sections on grade
504 one. They do not come together. You keep the sections
505 separate. How does that look for special areas? There's

506 talk about special area teachers going into the
507 classroom, and there's conversations surrounding how do
508 children share art supplies, because everything has to be
509 cleaned. Disinfection is a quite -- a more lengthy
510 process, so that is something that you would do every so
511 often, 24 hours, in between using classrooms, you're
512 cleaning. Looking -- you're looking at personal
513 property. How do children come to school? What supplies
514 are they coming to school with? How are you labeling
515 those supplies? So the way we're delivering instruction
516 is changing. If you think about your speech classes,
517 your resource room, your reading, children from various
518 classrooms are grouped together to provide the best
519 instructions. Right now, they're talking about you want
520 to try to see about not doing that because you want to
521 keep the group together. So just on the instruction
522 piece alone and the structure on how you would deliver
523 instruction, that's one piece.

524 The other piece is that Board of Educations are
525 going to have a monumental task before them by looking at
526 all their current policies and revisiting those policies
527 in the era of this pandemic, and what does that mean for
528 all your policies. How are children going to walk in

529 your schools? Are there going to be hallways that are
530 going to be arrowed one direction, one direction, other
531 direction? What do your nurse's office looks like, how
532 big are they, how large are they, what's the square
533 footage, how many children can they service at once? How
534 are you going to bring children into the school and
535 faculty into the schools? Taking temperatures, what are
536 you using to take the temperature? What alternate
537 locations do you have for children or faculty members who
538 are sick? How are you breaking the children into the
539 smaller classes? How are you training on health and
540 safety? How are you using the bathrooms? How many
541 children are permitted to be in a bathroom at the same
542 time, and how are you cleaning the community bathrooms or
543 the individual bathrooms in the school? A child goes
544 into the individual bathroom in a classroom, they're
545 talking about that individual bathroom right after that.
546 How do you staff that? What does staffing look like? So
547 we're assessing staffing. We're looking at district
548 policies. We're looking at our -- the way the whole
549 nursing department is put together. How do we ensure
550 that there's not a spread of infection? What do our
551 control protocols look like? Are we staggering lunch

552 periods? The conversation now is that you can only bring
553 the number of students into a cafeteria with the six-foot
554 distancing school. Are there children eating in their
555 classrooms? If you're ordering lunch, how does that
556 lunch come to your classroom?

557 So those are just some of the ideas that we're
558 looking at, the essential questions that we're looking at
559 as we wait for further guidance, but North Bellmore is
560 taking a lead. We have -- each one of our central
561 administrators are on different committees that are
562 working with different superintendents across the County
563 and the State so that when we do come to the table with
564 our ideas and we do invite ideas from our community, we
565 will be prepared for what it is we need to meet, but it
566 is a huge, monumental moment, and it is a huge task.
567 But, united, I'm sure that we will succeed, but I look
568 forward to getting more information not only from the
569 Governor but also from the New York State Education
570 Department.

571 Some of the school districts are talking about
572 hybrid models with different grade levels being in the
573 school while other grade levels are remote learning, and
574 then we're also looking at other models where some

575 districts are looking at different grade levels learning
576 a certain way, but we're really all in the infancy of
577 this as we allow these ideas to float and have further
578 discussion about them. So we're really going to keep on
579 top of that, and we'll keep giving that back to the Board
580 and bringing reports to the Board as we move forward.

581 But I think, number one, at the moment, Ms.
582 Eskew is working on continuing, and is Ms. Rehak and Mr.
583 Russo, on getting us more PPE, the personal protective
584 equipment. We also are looking ahead to the technology
585 -- to the one-to-one device units. We've come a long way
586 in technology. We've given out -- Mr. Fischetti, I'm
587 sure, will talk about this -- laptops and so forth to
588 families and to individual faculty members and/or
589 administrators set up remotely, but we are looking toward
590 how can we go further and make sure that we're ready in
591 the event that there is -- that we want to get to the
592 place of a one-to-one initiative, which is approximately
593 1.5 million dollars for us to get to that now. We're at
594 about a 1. -- 1 to 4 ratio at the moment with that.

595 So if there are any questions from the board
596 that would like to ask me now, I'd be more than happy to
597 answer them.

598 NINA LANCI: Have you received any guidelines
599 from the State, or just directives? He hasn't come up
600 with any guidelines, just the rules, correct?

601 MARIE TESTA: Yeah, just -- right. We haven't
602 received a written guideline, Mrs. Lanci. We've received
603 copies of guide -- CDC guidelines with social distancing.
604 We've done some research and received some guidelines from
605 other regions. For example, over this last week, the
606 central administrators and I were evaluating the Capital
607 Region BOCES, who put together a guideline, so I know that
608 our BOCES will, and I know we'll get more guidelines as we
609 go, and the superintendents in Nassau County have created
610 a re-entry committee, and we're working on different areas
611 of what re-entry would look like. What does transportation
612 look like? How are you transporting students safely? Is
613 social distancing applying to that? So we have different
614 functions that we're looking at, and as soon as we get
615 formalized guidelines, of course, then we will get together
616 with you with our administrative team, and I suggest that
617 we have a task force to do this as a District so that we
618 can work in unity with the different constituents to make
619 sure that we put together the best plan for our community
620 while being the most financially prudent as well and doing

621 the best for students, because right now in education I
622 think every challenge, there's a silver lining in every
623 challenge, right? That's how life works. You try to find
624 what's best from that and build a better product or deliver
625 a better education.

626 But there is a little concern on my mind. I
627 know we will build something amazing here in North
628 Bellmore, but the concern that I have right now is that
629 Governor Cuomo has partnered with Melinda and Bill Gates
630 to re-envision public education, and I won't go too much
631 into that, but that's a huge question mark for me and for
632 many of my colleagues who know the history before the
633 Gates' philosophy, which is high tech, lower connection
634 -- human connection, and we have K through 6 children
635 here. Some of the initiatives that they've taken --
636 undertaken with public education have not -- have not
637 succeeded or come to fruition of what they thought it
638 would be. So I hope for the best, but we will continue
639 to step up here in our administration team and join these
640 groups to have our voices heard, and the New York State
641 Council of School Superintendents, along with -- are
642 asking for their voice to be heard because politicians
643 have been brought together, billionaires have been
644 brought together to look at this, and we need to have our

645 brightest and most, you know, intelligent educators to
646 come to the table, too, to reimagine a K through 6
647 education for us.

648 NINA LINCI: Thank you Mrs. Testa.

649 MARIE TESTA: Thank you.

650 NINA LANCI: At this time, Item 6.1, be it
651 resolved that the Board of Education approve the
652 personnel report dated May 7, 2020 as contained in the
653 Agenda.

654 ROSEMARIE CORLESS: Motion.

655 JOHN FERRARA: Second.

656 NINA LANCI: All in favor?

657 WHEREUPON, there was a unanimous, affirmative
658 vote of the members present.)

659 NINA LANCI: Thank you. Item 7 on the Agenda,
660 our Business Department Report, Mrs. Rehak.

661 JACQUELINE REHAK: Hi. Good evening. Before
662 I

663 get to the budget vote and the election, I just wanted to
664 add to something Mrs. Testa said. We really are so
665 grateful for all the donations that we've received in
666 helping getting meals to the families in need. These
667 acts of kindness are amazing. It's amazing to see. And
668 -- so thank you to everyone.

669 Another one that we found out about today was
670 that 150 masks are going to be donated from the Promise
671 of Hope foundation to the kids that are participating in
672 our meal program. So thank you to them as well.

673 So to touch upon the budget, I just want to
674 remind everyone that the budget was adopted by the Board
675 last month in the amount of \$58,039,655. This is a
676 budget-to-budget increase of 1.05 percent, and it
677 includes a tax levy increase of 2.71 percent. As Mrs.
678 Testa mentioned, we're awaiting for more information from
679 the Governor on state aid to be able to provide more
680 direction to the District.

681 Last week, the Governor did provide Executive
682 Order 202.26, which detailed the requirements for the
683 annual budget vote and school board elections. I'd like
684 to go over some of those changes with you because it's
685 going to be drastically different than it's been in years
686 past.

687 The budget hearing, which was originally
688 scheduled for tonight will be rescheduled for June 1st.
689 This is to meet the 7 to 14-day requirement, and this is
690 in compliance with the new executive order. It will be
691 conducted during the District's monthly board meeting,

692 which will begin at 7:30 and held remotely through Zoom.
693 Residents can access the meeting the same way they access
694 this one, through the link on the district's website.

695 The annual budget vote, which was originally
696 May 19th, will now be rescheduled to June 9th and will be
697 conducted by absentee ballot only. Please know there's
698 no applications required for these ballots. All
699 qualified voters in the District will receive one. So a
700 qualified voter is defined as a citizen of the United
701 States at least 18 years of age, a resident within the
702 District for a period of 30 days prior to the date of the
703 election, and qualified to register for or vote at an
704 election in accordance with the provisions of the election
705 law. The absentee ballots will be mailed by the end of
706 the month to every qualified vote in the District.
707 The mailing will include a postage-paid return envelope.
708 This is very important because all ballots must be
709 received in the District office by 5 p.m. on June 9th,
710 which is the day of the vote, and they must be returned
711 in that envelope provided. The envelope includes an
712 attestation that must be signed by the qualified voter.
713 You cannot send it in any envelope. It must be returned
714 in the one provided, or it will not be counted. A

715 postcard detailing the date of the election and the date
716 of the budget hearing will be sent out to qualified
717 voters within the next two weeks, and it will reiterate
718 all this information that I'm providing to you no.

719 The annual six-day budget notice will be mailed
720 right after the June 1st budget hearing. In light of the
721 COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting closure of school
722 buildings, qualified voters can use the New York State
723 Department of Motor Vehicles electronic voter
724 registration application to register to vote or update
725 their information they have on file. Information -- more
726 information regarding this can be found on the New York
727 State DMV website. The District does not have control
728 over the Department of Motor Vehicle registration
729 application process or its timeline. So any qualified
730 voters who intend to register through the DMV should do
731 so as soon as possible. Any candidates interested in
732 running for the Board of Education must submit their
733 petitions by May 11th in order to be placed on the
734 ballot. In the recent executive order, the Governor has
735 eliminated any minimum threshold of signature required
736 for candidates.

737 The District business office has been working

738 diligently to get all the envelopes, ballots, postcards,
739 et cetera ordered in a timely manner to provide voters
740 the time to complete the ballot and return it to the
741 district office by the deadline. We hope that the
742 community supports our District and the budget. We are
743 so proud of the accomplishments we have made and will
744 continue with our mission and core values in mind.

745 In addition, I want to remind our community
746 that we have placed a capital reserve proposition on the
747 ballot this year. It is to establish a capital reserve
748 in the amount of \$10,000,000 to fund over ten years. I
749 want to remind everyone there's no related increase in
750 the tax rate for this proposition, as it's funded by
751 unappropriated fund balance to the extent it is available
752 of each fiscal year over the next ten years. If it's not
753 there, it won't be funded.

754 This reserve is to do some very much-needed
755 capital projects including pavement and ceiling
756 replacements. It was recommended to the District to make
757 these improvements about five years ago, when we had our
758 last building condition survey done. These projects are
759 needed, and we hope the community supports our efforts to
760 accomplish this.

761 We understand including these projects in the
762 budget or by asking for voter-approved bond would create
763 a large financial burden on our taxpayers. That is why
764 we felt the best way to get this done was by way of a
765 capital reserve as opposed to a tax increase. So we
766 really hope that the community is behind this and
767 supports this proposition along with our budget.

768 Mrs. Testa, do you have anything you want to
769 say about the parent vote?

770 MARIE TESTA: Yes. Thank you very much, Mrs.
771 Rehak. I would just ask the parents to please come out
772 and vote. We need you to vote. We respect whatever way
773 it is you're going to vote, but at this critical time in
774 where we are in the history of this ballot position where
775 we're having to mail to 20,000 with the prepaid postage.
776 We really need out community of parents to come out in
777 full force for the vote, and we're doing to be talking
778 about that a little bit more. Again, whether it's
779 positive or a negative vote, a yes or a no, we're looking
780 for those people who really know what we stand for in
781 education and are part of the school community to come
782 out and vote.

783 We -- there's concern across the State that

784 there is going to be budgets that fail because so many
785 more people are going to be voting, and there are people
786 that are not as in tune with what's occurring in the
787 schools, and that's a challenge for us because if we were
788 to go on a contingency budget, then we would really be
789 looking at accessing and program changes because we would
790 not be able to fund that budget without the budget that
791 we have up now. So it's just an opportunity for us to
792 work together. Any questions that anyone has on the
793 budget, I know we did -- we don't have question and
794 answers available here, but if you have any questions,
795 please email them to my office, to Ms. Rehak, and we will
796 get back to you and answer any questions that have to do
797 with budget, and any other questions that have to do with
798 the District in general.

799 I do see that there may be a question or two on
800 the chat feature, and we're not able answer the public
801 comments via the Zoom this evening, but we will get back
802 to you. So if you leave us an email there, I'll get back,
803 or if you email us tomorrow, we will.

804 So I just would look to our leaders in our
805 community and our parents to please come out and vote.

806 NINA LANCI: At this time, we have Curriculum

807 Instruction. Mrs. Pollitt?

808 JANET POLLITT: Hi. Yes.

809 NINA LANCI: Good evening.

810 JANET POLLITT: Good evening. First, I'll
811 begin with an update regarding distance learning. I'd
812 like to extend a sincere thanks to our teachers,
813 students, and families for their hard work during
814 distance learning. The Seesaw platform has been
815 successful in terms of connecting teachers and students
816 and providing digital forum for collaboration and
817 engagement. Teachers and students have been
818 communicating in written form, by sharing videos, voice
819 messages, documents, and other digital resources.
820 Additionally, they have been meeting via live video
821 conference for both academic and social/emotional
822 purposes.

823 In terms of professional development, as a
824 result of the current circumstances, our already-thriving
825 professional learning community has flourished even more.
826 Our teachers have been engaging in a number of virtual
827 sessions, both in the use of various technology platforms
828 and in best practices for implementing curriculum in a
829 distance learning model.

830 Our instructional coaches, our technology
831 teachers, and other teacher across the District have all
832 been stepping up and delivering workshops via video
833 conference, as well as producing prerecorded video
834 tutorials. We are so proud of the collaboration that has
835 been taking place by all departments, grade levels,
836 building teams all across the District.

837 Next, I'm happy to share the following update
838 regarding Parent University. As you may know, May is
839 Mental Health Awareness Month. Now, perhaps more than
840 ever, self-care and positive mental wellness is critical.
841 With this in mind, the District has organized the
842 following Parent University workshops. We have Parenting
843 through Crisis that's happening on May 13th at 7 p.m.
844 That'll be presented by Laura Campbell, director of the
845 Long Island Crisis Center. Next, we have Coping with the
846 Stressors and Unknowns of the New Normal that will take
847 place on the 21st at 7 p.m., and that is by David
848 Hymowitz, who is the director over at the Mental Health
849 Association of Nassau County. Both sessions will be
850 delivered via video conference. Parents simply need to
851 fill out an online registration form, and then they will
852 receive an email containing the login information to join

853 the video conference. We also have arranged mental
854 health-based workshops offerings for our faculty and
855 staff. I thank you very much to Mrs. McNamara for
856 coordinating a lot of the professional development
857 opportunities.

858 I'd now like to share just a little bit of
859 information regarding assessment and report cards. We
860 know that our remote instruction, while substantive, does
861 not replicate the learning the occurs in the traditional
862 classroom. Therefore, it was necessary to reconsider the
863 ways in which we assess our students.

864 During remote learning, teachers have been
865 conducting formative assessment and providing feedback so
866 that students are aware of their progress and understand
867 that their efforts are recognized. There are currently
868 too many factors; student family health, equity concerns,
869 et cetera, to accurately report mastery of standards at
870 the elementary level. It is for these reasons that we
871 will not use the typical 1 to 4 grading system on the
872 third trimester report card. The important feedback
873 regarding learning will come in the form of narrative
874 comments.

875 Ms. McNamara and I are in the final stage of

876 publishing a guidance document for teachers that will be
877 distributed next week in preparation of the report cards
878 opening. We are also developing a parent guide that will
879 be shared at the end of the month in anticipation of the
880 report cards posting in June. We want the teachers,
881 obviously, to understand the directing -- the directions
882 for the completion of the report cards, and for parents
883 to understand how the progress will be reported.

884 And, finally, I'd just like to address
885 kindergarten screening. Our kindergarten screening and
886 orientations that usually occur in the spring have been
887 postponed. We anticipate screening our students in the
888 fall, and we will keep the board and community apprised
889 of any plans.

890 So those are my updates for now, unless you
891 have any other questions.

892 NINA LANCI: Any questions from the Board?
893 Okay. Seeing none, okay, we will continue. Thank you,
894 Mrs. Pollitt.

895 JANET POLLITT: You're welcome.

896 NINA LANCI: Thank you and your staff, and your
897 -- everyone. You're doing a wonderful job with your
898 teachers.

899 JANET POLLITT: Thank you so much.

900 NINA LANCI: Just be safe and healthy. Our
901 next item on the agenda is technology. Mr. Fischetti,
902 you've been very busy.

903 JASON FISCHETTI: Very busy, yes. So, needless
904 to say, when you send 3,000 people home, families,
905 teachers, students, trying to support that is always
906 difficult. So I'm really happy to say that the team that
907 we have in place, starting with the technology teachers,
908 they're literally responding to anywhere between five and
909 700 emails a week. Emails coming and going from
910 families, from teachers, from students requesting access
911 to things that they didn't have before, keeping accounts
912 updated, troubleshooting issues from people's home WiFi
913 situation to things in Seesaw and their providing P.D.
914 sessions on an ongoing basis to all of our staff at a
915 beginner, and intermediate, and an advanced level so
916 teachers can chime in and jump in on the different
917 sessions that address exactly what they're looking for,
918 whether it be Office 365, or Seesaw, or Flipgrid. So
919 they've been very busy, and there's no way we'd be able
920 to do this without them. They're really a huge help, a

921 huge help to all the teachers and families that are at
922 home.

923 Speaking of that, with everybody at home, we
924 determined that we needed to increase the size of our
925 bandwidth into North Bellmore schools, so working with
926 Ms. Rehak, we contacted BOCES, and we doubled our
927 bandwidth. We used to have a 200 meg connection, which
928 was okay, but we were starting to be at capacity, and we
929 started to see the email freeze up, the email get backed
930 up and then fail, and it took a little while for it to
931 get going again. One of the things is all of the
932 teachers using email to contact their parents and their
933 students, as it -- that all has to run through the
934 District. So we did up our capacity on bandwidth from
935 200 to 400. It's about a \$700 increase per month, but
936 that's on a \$32,000 yearly expense. So doubling your
937 speed doesn't double your price, but with all the iPads
938 that are out there, our systems are pushing updates to
939 those iPads constantly, and that was another thing that
940 we were running into an issue with, all that data
941 traveling over the bowtie network.

942 And we, this week, capped off at about 126

943 devices that we've loaned out to families. We've been
944 loaning out the laptops that we have upon request. Some
945 of the devices we give out have cameras, which are very
946 helpful, some of them do not. Right now, a few families
947 came in and swapped out a laptop that they were
948 previously given for one with a camera, and we do still
949 have them available for families that need them. It
950 takes us a day or two to prep it, and all of those
951 devices are being picked up at -- in the Martin Avenue
952 lobby on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. So, yep, it's
953 been very busy, but it's been successful, I think.

954 NINA LANCI: Thank you again. Any questions
955 from the Board for Mr. Fischetti and the staff?

956 JO-ANN ERHARD: No. Just thank you for the
957 good job.

958 JOHN FERRARA: Thank you.

959 NINA LANCI: It's hard because we even know
960 ourselves that the internet sometimes in the
961 neighborhoods just seems to get a little slow, I think
962 with everybody working from home.

963 JASON FISCHETTI: Definitely.

964 MARIE TESTA: Yes. That's been challenging

965 with everyone working from home, and I think of all the
966 -- you know, all the parents working from home with their
967 children working from home, and how do they do that?
968 Bandwidth alone --

969 JASON FISCHETTI: Yep.

970 MARIE TESTA: -- plus taking care of that.
971 And

972 the Board of Education, I just wanted to bring forth a
973 point. There was a question that came to us that I'd
974 like to answer now before we go to the next report.
975 There was a question about pay for the Board members, so
976 I just wanted to share with the public that the Board
977 positions are voluntary positions. There are no pay with
978 the Board positions.

979 In addition, there is a belief, which I
980 completely understand, and I see, and I meant to cover in
981 my report, about the fact that there will be a surplus of
982 funds for school districts when we come through this.
983 That's actually not accurate because we are still paying
984 all the members of our school district, including
985 parttime members as part of the Governor's order, so we
986 are still paying the same salaries. We were incurring

987 more expenses in terms of what we are going to be
988 required to do when children return.

989 We did have -- we will have a slight savings,
990 of course, on the bit of heating that was March, and the
991 electricity, but the costs that we're having on the other
992 side outweighs what that surplus is, and the decrease in
993 the revenue for the state aid will leave us in a
994 challenged position, although, we worked very hard to
995 present this budget and to fund our reserve, so we're
996 proud of that. But that piece about the surplus, which
997 has been talked about in circles, I appreciate that
998 question, but I just wanted to address that.

999 And there were other questions that came as
1000 part of that chat, so if that parent or community member
1001 would please email me tomorrow, I'd be glad to give a
1002 complete response. Thank you for that, Mrs. Lanci.

1003 NINA LANCI: Thank you, Mrs. Testa, again.

1004 Special education, Mrs. Eskew.

1005 CAROL ESKEW: Hi, everyone.

1006 First, I just want to say that while each of us
1007 gives a separate report, in reality, everything that each
1008 of us does is really with each other; with the assistance
1009 of each other, with input from each other, because

1010 everything that we do affects all of the children in the
1011 District, and the families, and so I just wanted to make
1012 a point of saying that because particularly for the
1013 students with whom I have the pleasure of working, what
1014 Mrs. Pollitt does in terms of instruction and
1015 professional development, and what Mr. Fischetti does in
1016 terms of assistive technology and technology for all, the
1017 students with whom I work would not be able to accomplish
1018 a lot of the things that they are able to accomplish
1019 without the support of the coaches, with Mrs. McNamara,
1020 with Mrs. -- I'm sorry, Mrs. Pollitt, and Mr. Fischetti,
1021 and so I just wanted to give a shout out and to let
1022 everyone know that none of us is standing alone in the
1023 work that we do.

1024 And having said that, I just wanted to mention
1025 that we are working on the special education summer
1026 school plan. We have not heard, as Mrs. Testa said, from
1027 Governor Cuomo regarding whether or not summer schools
1028 were going to open, but we also have to wait to hear from
1029 the federal government, who needs to provide us with
1030 guidance regarding any impact on the eligibility of
1031 students, special education students attending a summer
1032 school, and also what services and levels of instruction

1033 might be required. We're presently proceeding under the
1034 assumption that summer school for the special education
1035 students will happen, that it will be provided remotely
1036 as opposed to on site, and we have moved forward with
1037 collecting all of the applications of teachers, of
1038 special education teachers, of service providers, and
1039 also of the staff that will work in the summer school
1040 program.

1041 The coordinators of the program are in the
1042 process of placing the students into instructional groups
1043 so that Chapter 408 meetings can be held with each of the
1044 teachers and service providers who will be working with
1045 children over the summer. The Chapter 408 meetings are a
1046 requirement that the special education -- of the special
1047 education regulations, and what it says, basically, in
1048 summary, is that anyone who's going to work with a
1049 special education child has to know what that child's IEP
1050 says, be familiar with what that child's needs are, so
1051 that on day one, they are able to meet that child's
1052 needs, that child's needs in their classes.

1053 The -- we are also planning for the reopening
1054 of school, as Mrs. Testa mentioned. The administrative
1055 team has been planning for the reopening of the school in

1056 the fall by making decisions about where special
1057 education classes are going to be located, and
1058 information about the location of the special education
1059 programs will be shared with parents toward the end of
1060 the school year, as is typically done.

1061 We are, Mrs. Testa and I, meeting tomorrow with
1062 the school nurses because, as Mrs. Testa mentioned
1063 earlier, there is a lot of reliance that will be placed
1064 on the school nurses. So to -- a couple of days ago, I
1065 sent out an email to everyone inviting them to a Zoom
1066 meeting and also asking them to get together to discuss
1067 what kind of PPE and what kinds of -- they will be in
1068 need of, what they're thinking about in terms of their
1069 own personal safety, the safety of the teachers, and the
1070 safety of the students.

1071 And also, we're in the process of transitioning
1072 the records for sixth grade students who are moving up to
1073 the Bellmore-Merrick Central High School District. So
1074 they -- the nurses need to close down their offices, pack
1075 up all those records, and send them over to the Central
1076 High School District. There are many topics with the
1077 nurses that have to be discussed.

1078 We're not sure, with the COVID virus situation,

1079 doctors' offices have not been open for face-to-face
1080 treatment. They have been doing remote visitations with
1081 family members who need to see a doctor, but we have
1082 questions about how is this going to impact the rules and
1083 regulations governing students having immunizations that
1084 they may have been up to date with, but in the particular
1085 grade that they're in at this coming school year, they're
1086 required to have different immunizations or additional
1087 immunizations. And also, what about the children who
1088 will need to have their immunizations completed in order
1089 to be in school in the first place? So that's a serious
1090 and multi-faceted conversation that we will have to be
1091 having, and we definitely need information and guidance
1092 about that. Some students are also required to have, in
1093 certain grades, annual physicals, and so we're also -- we
1094 don't know how that is going to play out because that
1095 also requires a face-to-face visit with a pediatrician,
1096 for example.

1097 As far as CSE MEIT. meetings, most of the
1098 parents in the districts whose children have IEPs and 504
1099 plans are aware that the psychologists and special ed
1100 teams at the various buildings have been holding those
1101 meetings throughout the year. There are some challenges

1102 to the process in that for initial evaluations, we're not
1103 able to conduct them because they require face-to-face
1104 contact with the child, and so we are using information
1105 from the teacher records that we have about how the child
1106 is doing in the class, relying on parental input to make
1107 decisions where we can, and where we are unable to make
1108 decisions, working with parents to come to some kind of
1109 agreement about deferring the actual evaluation. We did
1110 get some relief from the federal government in the sense
1111 that we were told that we do not have to count toward the
1112 60-day requirement for completing initial evaluations if
1113 the school is closed due to COVID virus, so that was
1114 really the one piece of relief that special education had
1115 available to them.

1116 As far as reevaluations, the same situation
1117 arises. If that reevaluation of the student requires a
1118 face-to-face evaluation, it is being deferred until the
1119 reopening of school. As far as the special education
1120 providers are concerned, they are making every effort to
1121 provide IEP services as they're written on the IEPs and
1122 to make up services that are missed. As Mrs. Testa
1123 mentioned earlier, they are keeping copious records of
1124 services provided in this to facilitate both the

1125 calculation of regression during this period of remote
1126 learning that may occur, and also to calculate the need
1127 for makeup services. And at some point, we will begin to
1128 try to make up services that were missed. And we do
1129 understand that parents of special education children are
1130 very concerned about these matters, and we are concerned
1131 about them as well, and we are doing our best right now,
1132 under the circumstances, but we will certainly take all
1133 of this into consideration moving forward.

1134 Due to the number of special education students
1135 who have access to technology as part of their IEPs,
1136 those children, their families, and the teachers are
1137 fairly adept at using the technology that we have, some
1138 of it that we have been using to provide instruction and
1139 services. It's also true that for some of our students,
1140 technology itself, even though they need it and rely on
1141 it for instruction, presents its own barrier to the
1142 child's ability to access instruction, and remote
1143 learning has presented significant challenges for those
1144 students. And I am pleased to say that our staff has,
1145 you know, tried to rise to the occasion and find ways to
1146 mitigate the impact that that has on the child getting
1147 the services, but I do want to say that, to the parents

1148 out there who -- many of whom, as Mrs. Testa said, are
1149 our own faculty and staff who area home with young
1150 children, they are parenting, feeding, cooking, bathing,
1151 managing their children in the home, they're working from
1152 home, they are helping their children with their online
1153 learning, and they're also teaching and providing
1154 services to their own students in their classes if they
1155 are a teacher. We definitely understand the challenge
1156 that this presents.

1157 I've had the occasional Zoom meeting where a
1158 parent is trying to have a conversation with us, and
1159 their children fly in on them. So we understand the
1160 challenge that this is presenting to everyone, and we
1161 really are doing our best, and we will continue to do so.

1162 And, finally, I just want to reiterate what
1163 Mrs. Rehak said about all the wonderful people, the
1164 Lion's Club, the Mama Gina's Pizza, the temple that
1165 helped with our food services, I have to be honest with
1166 you, these things -- I think I've cried more over things
1167 I see on TV and these stories that I hear about the
1168 kindness of people who are trying to help us and to help
1169 families that are in need at this time, and there are

1170 many, so I also wanted to extend my appreciation and
1171 thanks for that.

1172 MARIE TESTA: Yeah. I agree with you, Carol.
1173 I've seen the most beautiful things from families, from
1174 teachers, the love and the kindness, and the best in
1175 humanity throughout this, and the donations that we've
1176 received.

1177 I did not address something in my
1178 Superintendent's Report, Mrs. Lanci, but one of the areas
1179 that we're working on is trying -- and I did address it in
1180 an email I sent on 3/26, and it was called -- I talked
1181 about connections and invisible threads, and I'm so
1182 extraordinarily proud of our teachers for the love and the
1183 connection because when we started, there were predictions
1184 that opioid use would go up, that sexual abuse would go
1185 up, that alcoholism, that family disputes and so forth
1186 would go up, and all the mental health professionals and
1187 all the different seminars Mrs. Pollitt finds for us all
1188 talked about connect with the children, connect with the
1189 children, connect with the children, and try to scaffold
1190 in a learning plan that does not put too much burden right
1191 away on families because children are routinized

1192 individuals. They're used to this routine, and now they
1193 go somewhere else.

1194 Some of our children who Mrs. Eskew was talking
1195 about, and we're talking to those families, our special
1196 ed staff has been phenomenal because that's a connection
1197 right there with your children. We have prop therapy,
1198 which we can't conduct visually. I mean, you know, video
1199 conferencing. We have parents emailing us, telling us
1200 that please help, I have three children at home, I can't
1201 have three different Zoom conference times. Can you do
1202 things with small group instruction. There's some chat
1203 now about can you have more live instruction. I think we
1204 have talked about sending out a survey to our families to
1205 ask how everything is going, and especially looking
1206 forward, what is it that we can do to help because we
1207 have families at all different places now. We've talked
1208 and worked with our teachers, and they worked with each
1209 other to know which siblings are in what classes, and
1210 what are we asking this one class to do, and when are we
1211 scheduling conferences, and when are children -- we're
1212 delivering speech, and reading, and resource room, and
1213 AIS mathematics has started. Is it too much, is it not
1214 enough? Where can we be? What are we learning? Give us

1215 information. What's great for one family might not be
1216 for another family, so we're trying to find and get that
1217 balance and strike that balance. So I appreciate all the
1218 emails that we're receiving, all the phone calls that
1219 we've received, and I think we'll come out with a survey.
1220 We've been talking about that, Mrs. Pollitt and the team,
1221 about that.

1222 I think that's kind of important as we go
1223 forward to see, you know, where our families are. But I
1224 do know that I -- and I say it again, that the more we
1225 can connect through different social media outlets, and
1226 the more that we can, you know, write that old-fashioned
1227 letter or deliver that surprise gift, and I look at the
1228 NBTA, and I'm -- and at the moment, I'm speaking about
1229 the faculty because I've watched them in masks deliver
1230 things to homes. I've seen the beautiful letters that
1231 children have written, and that -- and how the parents
1232 are supporting that, and just in that alone, you see the
1233 craving for human attention and connection and love, and
1234 we have certain role models in our life, and those of us
1235 who are fortunate enough to have a really great teacher
1236 will remember that teacher, or a really great student or
1237 family, remember that.

1238 And I have got to go back to that because I'm
1239 reading an article from The Business Insider that says --
1240 by Governor Cuomo is quoted, "The old model of everybody
1241 goes and sits in a classroom and the teacher is in front
1242 of that classroom and teaches that class, and you do that
1243 all across the city, all across the state, all these
1244 buildings, all these physical classrooms, why with all
1245 the technology you have?" I am a number one supporter,
1246 right, Mr. Fischetti, of technology and the right use of
1247 that, but I also want to protect the human connection
1248 that we have with one another, and I believe that nothing
1249 replaces a great teacher with a group of students done
1250 well. And I think if we can find in North Bellmore to
1251 work on whatever model that's going to look like, that we
1252 have to remember that about our teachers, that I see it
1253 with my own students, my own children in college now
1254 where every single class is online, is virtual, and while
1255 there's a balance and I believe in it, there's different
1256 learning styles that do not learn this way, you know.
1257 Not everybody learns in that manner, and the sharing of
1258 thoughts is not as fluid as it is in a classroom so while
1259 I'm open-minded and ready to go, and we are, I hope that

1260 together North Bellmore and with our survey, we can
1261 strike a balance that serves everyone the best.

1262 I appreciate you giving me opportunity just to
1263 say that again. Thank you.

1264 NINA LANCI: I know, Mrs. Testa, and the
1265 community should know that you share with the Board the
1266 emails, the videos. I know a parent wrote a beautiful
1267 email the other day saying thank you to one of our
1268 principals that brought a very (inaudible) to a child
1269 that needed a special vest that was very important to
1270 that child's well-being and behavioral patterns, and they
1271 went out of the way, and they were so touched that that
1272 principal delivered that to that house. We've seen music
1273 videos. I mean, art that -- art on another level. The
1274 parades, the pictures, the birthdays, the snacks by the
1275 NBTA that were given. They are going over and above, and
1276 you know what? You live in this community, you work in
1277 this community, and they care about this community. They
1278 may have an address somewhere else, but their roots are
1279 in this community, and not to go unnoticed, I forget the
1280 Community Cupboard, and I know Mrs. Erhard --

1281 MARIE TESTA: Yes.

1282 NINA LANCI: -- and the PTA and the parents are

1283 delivering carloads of donated new items for the
1284 community, and I know that people are encouraged to go up
1285 to the Community Cupboard, and it's available for them.
1286 It's a simple application, so, you know, it's no need
1287 that we should be able to serve our community in whatever
1288 way it is.

1289 MARIE TESTA: Yeah. Thank you, Mrs. Erhard,
1290 too, for that. I mean, that's been incredible. We have
1291 -- Mr. Ditomaso (phonetic) and I and the -- have been
1292 talking about that, and I want to give a shout out, too,
1293 to my colleagues, Mr. Ditomaso, Dr. Famularo, Dr.
1294 (Inaudible) and Dr. (Inaudible) who work all together
1295 with us and assist all our assistance together as one
1296 Bellmore-Merrick as best as we can. We have different
1297 communities, but we have the same value of students first
1298 and families first, and we're just so incredibly proud of
1299 how everyone works together, and I know that there's
1300 things that we could do better, and we look at that. I
1301 mean, we assess, we assist, we adjust as best we can, but
1302 there's an incredible of people that love kids and when
1303 you talk to children and you ask them what their memories
1304 are, it all goes back to the connection they have with
1305 people. And I think -- I just don't want to lose that.

1306 I want to be always on the cutting edge, but I want to
1307 make sure that we remember that we -- we're here, and
1308 we're all working together to feed the community, to
1309 support the community, to provide access to things that
1310 some people don't have access to. It's very -- it's been
1311 eye-opening to see -- go from 70 lunches to 200 and how
1312 many, Ms. Rehak?

1313 JACQUELINE REHAK: 220.

1314 MARIE TESTA: 220 lunches because our families
1315 are losing positions. Our families are losing jobs, so
1316 we're working very hard here to look at that as well.
1317 Please know that, our community, we are aware of this.

1318 NINA LANCI: And they're feeding 400 -- last
1319 night we were told there's 400 at the high school,
1320 lunches a day being served. MARIE TESTA: Yes. NINA
1321 LANCI: So -- for the community members. So --

1322 JO-ANN ERHARD: Nina, if you don't mind, can I
1323 read the list of the current needs and the change --

1324 NINA LANCI: Go ahead.

1325 JO-ANN ERHARD: Okay. Over the last -- every
1326 two weeks, they sort and distribute food, and probably
1327 the last list, I probably had 40 items we were asking the

1328 community members for. We're down to about 17 items that
1329 the community covered needs.

1330 I posted it on Facebook, but I'll give it to
1331 everyone. You can drop off at Brookside Monday to
1332 Friday, 9 to 12 at the main entrance, and their current
1333 needs are salad dressing, feminine hygiene items,
1334 shampoo, conditioner, body wash, shaving cream, Vienna
1335 sausage, corned beef hash, icing for like baking item,
1336 icing, sugar, flour, paper towels, toilet paper, tissues,
1337 dish soap, cleaning supplies, and canned fruit or fruit
1338 in cups. Those are our current needs.

1339 NINA LANCI: Thank you.

1340 JO-ANN ERHARD: I got that list as of today.

1341 MARIE TESTA: Mrs. Erhard, if you send us that
1342 list, I'm sure Mr. Fischetti could put it up on our
1343 website, and we can update it as you go along.

1344 JO-ANN ERHARD: No problem. I'll email it to
1345 him.

1346 MARIE TESTA: Okay.

1347 JO-ANN ERHARD: Thank you.

1348 NINA LANCI: Thank you.

1349 JO-ANN ERHARD: Thank you for the time.

1350 JACQUELINE REHAK: Jo-Ann, if you send it to
1351 me

1352 as well because a lot of people reach directly out to me
1353 looking to help, so I'll have it available then.

1354 JO-ANN ERHARD: No problem. Thank you.

1355 NINA LANCI: Thank you. At this time, Item
1356 10.1, be it resolved that the Board of Education approved
1357 the CPSE and CSE reports dated April 30, 2020.

1358 JOHN FERRARA: Motion.

1359 JO-ANN ERHARD: Second.

1360 ROSEMARIE CORLESS: Second.

1361 NINA LANCI: Any discussion? All in favor?

1362 (WHEREUPON, there was a unanimous, affirmative
1363 vote of the members present.)

1364 NINA LANCI: Item 11. We're up to New
1365 Business. I'd like a consent agenda for Items 11.1
1366 through 11.2 as contained in the Agenda.

1367 MELISSA CMAR-GROTE: Motion.

1368 ROSEMARIE CORLESS: Second.

1369 NINA LANCI: All in favor?

1370 (WHEREUPON, there was a unanimous, affirmative
1371 vote of the members present.)

1372 NINA LANCI: Item 11.3, be it resolved that the
1373 Board of Education approve a memo, an MOA by and between
1374 the North Bellmore Union Free School District and the
1375 North Bellmore Teachers Association regarding a 2019 to

1376 2020 retirement incentive.

1377 JOHN FERRARA: Motion.

1378 ROSEMARIE CORLESS: Second.

1379 NINA LANCI: Any discussion? All in favor?

1380 (WHEREUPON, there was a unanimous, affirmative
1381 vote of the members present.)

1382 NINA LANCI: Do we have any other items for a
1383 late exec session, personnel items, or are we good?

1384 MARIE TESTA: No. We're good, Mrs. Lanci.

1385 NINA LANCI: The only other thing I'd like to
1386 say is Happy Mother's Day.

1387 JOHN FERRARA: Happy Mother's Day.

1388 NINA LANCI: To all the mothers out there and
1389 everyone. This is definitely probably one of the most
1390 trying times in any mother's life and all the families,
1391 and try to enjoy the day, and remember we're here for
1392 you, and please reach out to anyone in the District, and
1393 we will be back on June 1st for our next meeting and a
1394 budget meeting and if there's any questions, please reach
1395 out to Mrs. Testa or anyone in the District, and we will
1396 get back to you.

1397 At this time, I entertain a motion to adjourn
1398 the meeting.

1399 ROSEMARIE CORLESS: Motion.

1400 MARIE TESTA: Second.

1401 NINA LANCI: All in favor?

1402 (WHEREUPON, there was a unanimous, affirmative
1403 vote of the members present.)

1404 NINA LANCI: Thank you, everyone. Be safe and
1405 be healthy.

1406 MR. POWERS: Thank you.

1407 JO-ANN ERHARD: Thank you.

1408 JOHN FERRARA: Happy Mother's Day, everybody.

1409 MAIRE TESTA: Happy Mother's Day.

1410 JACQUELINE REHAK: Happy Mother's Day.

1411 CAROL ESKEW: Happy Mother's Day.

1412 ROSEMARIE CORLESS: Same to you, everybody.

1413 Happy Mother's Day.

1414 JOHN FERRARA: Good night, everybody.

1415 MARIE TESTA: And to all the special ladies --
1416 all the special ladies out there who are not mothers and
1417 have special children in their lives. Here's to you.

1418 CAROL ESKEW: And all the dads who act like
1419 moms because they're single parents.

1420 MARIE TESTA: Yeah. Exactly.

1421 (PROCEEDING CONCLUDED)

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CERTIFICATE

I, Mary Ellen Beaulieu, certify the foregoing transcript of proceedings held on May 7, 2020, in the matter of North Bellmore School District, Board of Education Meeting commenced via video conference, was prepared using the required electronic equipment and is a true and accurate record of the proceedings.

Signature:  _____

Date: June 30, 2020

Agency: Accurate Court Reporting, Inc.

6 Frances Lane

Port Jefferson, New York 11777