

NORTH BELLMORE SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING

January, 2021
VIA ZOOM VIDEO CONFERENCING

ACCURATE COURT REPORTING SERVICE, INC.
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1 (Proceedings began in progress)

2 MRS. CORLESS: Everybody, I'd like to welcome
3 you to our first meeting of the year 2021. Happy New
4 Year. Thank you for joining us.

5 We're going to start off tonight with a public
6 hearing on our district-wide school emergency plan for
7 2021 that's being revised.

8 Mrs. Testa?

9 MRS. TESTA: Thank you, Mrs. Corless.

10 As, you know, it's required state law, state
11 education law that each school district have a district-
12 wide emergency school safety plan in the event of, God
13 forbid, an emergency.

14 We have this plan every year it's posted on our
15 website. There are two plans. There's one full plan
16 that is housed in the district office. There's another
17 plan for posting purposes.

18 We, as you would imagine -- we don't post the
19 whole plan on the website for -- for security reasons,
20 but we are required to put a posted plan on the website,
21 which it is there now from 2021.

22 However, what we're doing now is that we
23 recently met -- we have a district-wide safety plan
24 comprised of faculty staff and parents. We recently met
25 to look at the new regulations, so allow me to read to

1 you what's at play.

2 Effective April 1, 2021, Labor Law 27 amends
3 Labor Law 27 and adds a new provision to Education Law
4 2801A. And what this means is it requires public
5 employers to develop operation plans in the event of a
6 certain declared public emergency, health emergency.

7 The Education Law 2801A requires school
8 districts to develop plans consistent with the new Labor
9 Law requirement. The new law requires public employers
10 to prepare a plan for the continuation of operations in
11 the event that the governor declares a public health
12 emergency involving a communicable disease.

13 Educational institutions, therefore, must
14 prepare plans consistent with Labor Law section 27-C as
15 part of their school safety plan, pursuant to newly added
16 subsection of Education Law.

17 This means that our district-wide school safety
18 plan was in need of being revised and updated to reflect
19 these new requirements.

20 I'm pleased to say that our plan was updated.
21 We met with our Safety Plan Team yesterday, district-wide
22 safety team, yesterday, just to review our -- the changes
23 that were going to occur to the plan.

24 After we -- the Board has a copy of the plan
25 right now for review. It's a draft. It's going to be

1 placed on the district website and we'll be open for
2 comments this evening.

3 If anyone has comments this evening, the
4 public, you can use the chat feature, you can type in
5 your name, address, and if you have a question about the
6 district-wide safety plan, you can ask us this evening.
7 Or you can email directly to my email, which is
8 MTesta@northbellmoreschools.org and you can submit a
9 question if you have a question about the safety plan.

10 In general, what the district-wide safety plan
11 is, it has two sections. The new law requires the
12 pandemic section. And what that is, is that it goes
13 completely through what we're required to do as a school
14 district relative to a pandemic.

15 Unfortunately, and fortunately --
16 unfortunately, we're in the middle of a pandemic.
17 Fortunately, we worked together with our reopening team,
18 doctors and staff, students, too, families and the Board,
19 and we've implemented the plan that we just wrote. We're
20 required to write this plan but we had already
21 implemented it.

22 Part of it is how do you provide lunches? How
23 do you provide meals if you close? Who are essential
24 employees? We listed our essential employees. Now, we
25 know that all our employees are essential, but we were

1 required to put down those employees who, while they may
2 be able to work remotely, there will be times also that
3 they would need to come into the office to perform
4 certain functions.

5 So in the plan you'll see that there's a
6 listing on its essential employees. Their function and
7 the justification for what they do.

8 We also have protocols that have to be followed
9 to enable non-essential employees and contractors to
10 telecommunicate.

11 We have descriptions of how the employer will,
12 to the extent possible, scatter work shifts of essential
13 employees and contractors to reduce work place traffic
14 and public transportation over-crowding.

15 Fortunately, over the pandemic time, we were
16 able to implement many of these protocols and we've
17 already assessed and adjusted some of them.

18 For example, we had the cafeteria workers and
19 our custodians in on staggered schedules. We had
20 district office in on staggered schedules. We had, when
21 we were fully closed, our family lab home and they were
22 delivering remote instruction.

23 So as we came back, as the pandemic lifted a
24 bit and we came back to work, we implemented scattered
25 schedules as we returned, as we transitioned, so that's

1 all part of this plan.

2 We also have a full plan on how to secure PPE,
3 how we store PPE, how much PPE we need. How we would
4 implement testing if we had to close. How would we
5 implement COVID testing if we were put into a zone and we
6 had to COVID test?

7 Again, on the agenda this evening, there is a
8 piece about healthcare logic and also or logistic
9 healthcare logistics I believe it is, Jackie. I'm
10 looking at you because we looked at that name together,
11 and ATP, which are two companies that would come in if
12 you were ever designated into a zone and we had to
13 provide COVID testing. So that's some of our plan.

14 We have to have a plan on how we store the
15 equipment, how we prevent spread in the workplace, how we
16 implement disinfection and cleaning protocols. How we're
17 prepared with technology.

18 And for example, when we quarantine a class, or
19 different students are quarantined, individuals are
20 quarantined, how do we provide those students with a
21 learning environment? How do we transition over to
22 remote? What technology do they need? What resources do
23 they need?

24 And protocols for coordinating with the
25 localities to identify sites if any of our employees had

1 to stay over and do to a, due to the pandemic and we're
2 not able to return home.

3 So the district-wide safety plan not only
4 reviews fire emergency, lockdown, lockout drills --
5 hazardous waste materials, how to deal with that.

6 It has also now got this very expensive
7 pandemic piece that looks at how do you conduct contact
8 tracing? How do you clean your facility? How do you
9 store your PPE?

10 Are you ready if there is a pandemic and your
11 -- you have to close? Are you ready to shift on a second
12 notice to full remote work?

13 If you are not full remote, are you ready with
14 the list of essential employees and we are going to
15 implement staggering of work schedules?

16 So it's an all encompassing plan. The plan
17 will be on our website for 30 days for comments. We will
18 send out, probably what we'll create -- Mr. Fischetti is
19 a comment -- maybe email where individuals and public can
20 make comments there. For now, they can go to
21 MTesta@northbellmoreschools.org but tomorrow we send
22 something out with a dedicated place where they can send
23 emails.

24 So the plans stay up for the public comment.
25 The School Board would look at it this evening for

1 approval. After it's approved, it stays up for 30 days
2 for comment and then the plan would be adopted by
3 April 1st, at which time it's uploaded to the New York
4 State Repository Educational Repository. It goes to the
5 New York State Police and also to local police.

6 Please know, though that this plan, I'm very
7 pleased to say to the Board of Education that North
8 Bellmore did include a pandemic plan in the past.

9 So we had to just revise our plan to include
10 the seven -- seven new areas that the governor wanted
11 addressed. But our pandemic plan was in place and it
12 served us well during -- when we began in March with the
13 closure. I'd be glad to take any questions at this time.

14 Okay, I don't see any questions. Mr.
15 Fischetti, if any come in later, I would be glad to look
16 at that and I appreciate the Board taking -- you know
17 taking a look at that. And as I said, it will be up on
18 the website for the 30 days. And then after it's
19 approved, the approved plan will go up on the website.

20 MRS. CORLESS: Thank you, Mrs. Testa.

21 At this time, I would like to call to order the
22 January Board of Education Meeting. If everyone could
23 please stand for the pledge of allegiance.

24 "I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United
25 States of America and to the republic for which it

1 stands, one nation under God, indivisible with liberty
2 and justice for all." Thank you.

3 Before we do the mission statement I would just
4 like to say that soon we'll be taking public comments on
5 agenda items only.

6 So if you have a question, you can put it into
7 the chat box, but please include your name and address
8 for agenda items only. Later on, you'll have an
9 additional visitor section for any comments.

10 Mrs. Grote, would you be willing to read our
11 district mission statement please?

12 MRS. GROTE: Sure. "Our mission is to inspire
13 all students to be confident, passionate learners with
14 the courage and skills to lead their lives with
15 integrity, while contributing to our global community
16 with creativity and compassion."

17 MRS. CORLESS: Thank you very much.

18 At this time, we will have the first public
19 comment section on agenda items only. Let me just check
20 the box.

21 I don't see anything yet. I'll give it one
22 minute.

23 There will be a second question section, so
24 don't worry, if you have a question you could just put it
25 in and we'll answer it later.

1 Okay, I'm going to move on at this time because
2 I see no questions.

3 We do have some correspondence that we'll talk
4 about after the session.

5 Approval of the Treasurer's Report.

6 FEMALE: So moved.

7 FEMALE: Second.

8 MRS. CORLESS: All in favor?

9 FEMALE: Aye.

10 FEMALE: Aye.

11 MRS. CORLESS: Thank you.

12 Board, Committee report for high school. Mrs.
13 Lanci?

14 MRS. LANCI: Hi, good evening everyone.

15 We met last week, at the high school, on
16 January 6th. We adopted and accepted several donations to
17 the district. One of them was twelve Chromebooks and a
18 wheelchair.

19 We spoke about the implementation of 7th and 8th
20 grade the Chromebooks they're trying to bring into the
21 district next year to give to every student.

22 So we are increasing Chromebooks up at the
23 middle school, and hopefully, we'll be able to even
24 increase it further into the high school.

25 We do approve a PCR screening and testing

1 contract in the event that we have to initiate it. And
2 again, we are trying to keep the schools open.

3 But as Mrs. Testa alludes to, the contact
4 tracing is an enormous amount of work on the staff, the
5 principals and the district, especially if people call in
6 late in the evening and after nine, ten o'clock at night
7 when you're trying to contact trace, that puts a burden
8 on the administrative staff. So if you are, or you have
9 a positive, please call the district and courtesy the
10 others early to report it in the event that they have to
11 contact trace.

12 We will meet again on February 3rd at the high
13 school. January 26th we -- through the 29th -- we have
14 Regents Exams scheduled and Mid-terms.

15 And that's our report for this year. Thank
16 you, Mrs. Corless.

17 MRS. CORLESS: Thank you.

18 Next, finance 8.1 the Board of Education
19 acknowledges the review of the ones that have been
20 approved by the claim's order for the month of December,
21 2020.

22 Next, we're up to our superintendent's report,
23 Mrs. Testa?

24 MRS. TESTA: Thank you.

25 Thank you for that Mrs. Lanci, the report and

1 about the COVID update.

2 We are finding -- thank you to our faculty and
3 staff and our parents and community for really being so
4 communicative with us.

5 We know that there are times where you're
6 learning late, we appreciate that. We had very good
7 success. Thank you, Mr. Fischetti for setting this up --
8 a weekend email where you can go right on the website and
9 you can report a positive there.

10 Our administrators are checking that. Mr.
11 Fischetti checked that all weekend for us on the holiday
12 recess. That's been very helpful.

13 I thank our school nurses who are working so
14 hard with our principals and with the entire
15 administration team and our families for working
16 together. This has truly been a challenge. I know it
17 is. I -- every time we get a call for a positive, we hold
18 our breath.

19 The good news is that it is still not spreading
20 in the school. And yes, again, I can tell that from now
21 the hundreds of cases that I have personally contact
22 traced with my -- with my colleagues.

23 We are in a place here in North Bellmore where
24 we do have a very high number of individual quarantines,
25 faculty, staff and students who have been in contact with

1 someone outside and they're at close contact. So there's
2 many quarantines for that.

3 We have had class closures of course, because
4 of the -- the quarantining. We still -- there's about
5 around at thirty quarantines for class closures. That's
6 either whether a staff member is positive or a student is
7 positive.

8 Mrs. Pollitt (phonetic) and her team have
9 worked very hard, along with the principals and Mrs.
10 Mather (phonetic) to staff. The one area I'd like to
11 just talk about tonight; two very important things. One,
12 if you're sick, it's best to stay home, not come to work,
13 not come to school; look at the screener questions and
14 really pay attention to symptoms.

15 What I've learned over this time is we think
16 that there are no symptoms and then when we look back and
17 we say, "Oh, you know what? I was exhausted." Or, "My
18 child was exceptionally exhausted."

19 It's a hard thing though -- right -- because we
20 -- the COVID symptoms replicate everything else; the flu,
21 the colds. But I would say it's very good practice to
22 really -- if you're taking the child for a test -- this
23 isn't a mandate -- but if you're taking your child for a
24 test, it would be a good idea to stay home.

25 Or your faculty member is -- If you're just

1 going for a test -- to go for a test, that's one thing.
2 But if you're going for a test because you think there
3 could be a possibility -- you're probably intuitively
4 knowing, listening to that inner voice saying, "Okay,
5 it's okay." We'd rather have that than take the chance.

6 The Department of Health continues to work with
7 us but as I did say the last time we were together as a
8 Board, is that the real -- the burden of responsibility
9 is heavily upon the shoulders of the school district.

10 The Department of Health works right with us,
11 they're phenomenal. I can call there midnight, one a.m.,
12 two a.m. in the morning and I get our contact. She's an
13 incredible doctor and we've been very fortunate. But
14 still, the amount of contact tracing and the time does --
15 is incredibly -- pretty much takes up the whole days and
16 nights.

17 The good news is, we see that it's still not
18 spreading in the schools. We can't even see when a
19 couple of students get it, whether they're in the same
20 class, which has been very rare, by the way, very rare or
21 our staff members, it's coming from something that
22 occurred outside.

23 Some of the -- some of the areas that I'm
24 seeing that I can tell you about are watch out for the
25 carpools, watch out for five minutes in the car with the

1 mask down. Watch out for the -- you know, not sanitizing
2 the hands as much.

3 Faculty and staff, we're constantly talking
4 about, you know, the times when you need to be socially
5 distanced in the hallway. We're -- we're human beings,
6 we want that contact, but we have to step back.

7 We're the -- I'm incredibly proud of North
8 Bellmore. We've remained open, we were open full-time
9 right from the beginning. Our families and staff, who
10 have been incredible, and our faculty and staff has been
11 incredible keeping -- keeping individuals as safe as
12 possible.

13 So I really am, I'm really very proud. I'm
14 very grateful for the support that we received and the
15 understanding that we received.

16 Because as a parent, I totally understand what
17 it must be like to have to quarantine. And we've had
18 children and classes have to quarantine a couple of
19 times. So that is very difficult for people.

20 We're doing our best. I'm sure Mrs. Pollitt
21 will pick-up on this, but I just wanted to say that we do
22 have a substitute teacher shortage. But because of the
23 faculty and staff that we do have, we are utilizing
24 different talents from different professionals to help us
25 to cover classes. And we're working very hard to

1 continue to recruit, but there really is a state-wide
2 shortage.

3 So, we continue to try to do our best to
4 provide that consistency for our children, they're number
5 one. But it has been more difficult, as of late, with
6 the increased numbers, since Thanksgiving, quarantine not
7 only of staff but of subs as well.

8 And what we're finding is that there are
9 different -- there are substitute teachers are not
10 wanting to come. And also, there's a decline in the
11 number of teachers coming out of colleges and teachers in
12 colleges now and they don't have anywhere to go to do
13 their student teaching. So that's something else that
14 we're dealing with. But today, I know Mrs. Pollitt is
15 successful with Mrs. McNamara in interviewing some
16 candidates that are going to come on so that's very good
17 news.

18 We did have a change, as you know, in the
19 quarantine time. The quarantine time did change from
20 fourteen days to ten days. Very careful though,
21 everyone, anyone out there watching this, be very careful
22 when you get to that. Some say because it's not -- it's
23 a number, it's just a number, you can still have the
24 symptoms after that.

25 If you still have the symptoms after that then

1 it's not time yet to return. We want people to be well.
2 Our nurses are monitoring it but we have to have a self-
3 monitoring, too, and we're working with the Department of
4 Health to see how it is we can get some documentation on
5 when people are coming out of the quarantines.

6 The school is required also to monitor it. I
7 mean just the other day we called houses of people coming
8 back just to make sure and see how they're feeling. "Do
9 you have any symptoms?" And we really -- we really have
10 to watch that ten to fourteen day period.

11 The quarantine, isolation is over at ten days.
12 If you're isolated and positive and it's over, but you
13 have to watch your symptoms and the quarantines are open
14 at ten but be very careful between that ten and fourteen
15 time period. Take the extra -- take the extra time.

16 Working with the high school district, Mrs.
17 Lanci, as I said, we did have -- we do have a contract
18 with Health Care Logic and ATP protecting on site.

19 Right now, the governor really does not want to
20 call a zone because the spreading is not happening here.
21 And to put the testing on the schools is extraordinarily
22 difficult.

23 So, all these months we've just had Massapequa
24 and the other one I believe was -- I can't come up with
25 it now --

1 MRS. CORLESS: Great Neck.

2 MRS. TESTA: Great Neck. Was it Great Neck?

3 MRS. CORLESS: I'm not sure.

4 MRS. TESTA: That had to do with the testing.

5 A couple of them had to do with -- don't quote me on this
6 but, there haven't been any designated since. That's
7 because the governor's office is looking at this saying,
8 "What will that do for us at this point?"

9 I'm not saying that it couldn't happen but
10 right now, we've been told that if it was to happen, most
11 of the school district would have been in yellow already
12 or most of the zones.

13 We're not privy to the algorithms that go into
14 making this so we don't know, deciding this we don't know
15 when a zone call is going to come up but we will be
16 prepared if it does come up.

17 The good news is, is that the vaccine is here.
18 I'm looking at my biologist; looking at the nurse the
19 health professionals -- I'm sorry, the medical
20 professionals here on our Board, which we're very lucky
21 to have.

22 We're in 1B now so our educator our educators
23 are able to go for the vaccinations. We also have the
24 education workers, custodial, plus you know, all the
25 other staff members are permitted to go for that.

1 Thank you to Saint Francis Hospital who have
2 vaccinated me today. And a shout out to Diego Marca
3 (phonetic) and he's a physician assistant there. I was
4 -- I was so fortunate to be in such good care, so thank
5 you for that.

6 Welcome to -- we have a new NBTA Board that's
7 for the Board to know. I'll just mention JoAnn
8 Signorelli (phonetic) and Jen Eppiet (phonetic) our new
9 co-president. So we welcome them and we thank Lois Peck
10 for all the wonderful work you have done and continue to
11 do for the NBTA and also Jill Skelly who was first.
12 Pardon me, thank you to you both. It was a pleasure to
13 work with you all. Thank you again to Mr. Fischetti.

14 Everyone out there, please check our new
15 website, it's very family friendly. We have all our
16 documents up on here. We have anything you're looking
17 for. We're continuing to put videos of children up
18 there. So the joy of learning is continuing in North
19 Bellmore, please take a look.

20 Up there also, our new health protocols have
21 been updated again to reflect the ten-day quarantine. So
22 the Re-Opening plan is up there, the health protocols,
23 the district-wide safety plan. And we're working on the
24 '21-'22 calendar.

25 Board, I'll send it home to you in an email, a

1 couple of the drafts. Working with the components on it.
2 In particular, working with the Bellmore-Merrick Central
3 High School District to try to keep as close with them
4 because we share students. Thank you.

5 MRS. CORLESS: Thank you, Mrs. Testa. Sorry, I
6 couldn't get myself unmuted at that moment.

7 I would also like to thank all of the North
8 Bellmore community for putting safety first and following
9 our guidelines because we really have been very
10 successful at keeping schools open and we all appreciate
11 that. So thank you, and thank you for the report.

12 9.1. Be it resolved the Board of Education
13 approved the personnel report dated January 14, 2021.

14 FEMALE: Motion.

15 MRS. CORLESS: Second anyone?

16 FEMALE: I'll second it. I second it, Roe.

17 Thank you.

18 MRS. CORLESS: Thank you. All in favor?

19 FEMALE: Aye.

20 FEMALE: Aye.

21 MRS. CORLESS: Perfect, thank you.

22 9.2. Be it resolved the Board of Education the
23 Staff Development Report dated January 14, 2021.

24 FEMALE: So moved.

25 FEMALE: Second.

1 MRS. CORLESS: All in favor?

2 FEMALE: Aye.

3 FEMALE: Aye.

4 MRS. CORLESS: Okay, thank you.

5 Next we have our business update, Mrs. Rehak.

6 MS. REHAK: Yes, good evening.

7 MRS. CORLESS: Good evening.

8 MS. REHAK: So we are currently working on the
9 2021-22 budget. The budget preparation is well underway.
10 As I reported last month, the tax-based growth factor
11 came in and for North Bellmore it is 1.0018, compared to
12 last year's factor of 1.0064. So this is considerably
13 lower, which will have an effect on our overall tax
14 calculations.

15 In addition, since last month, we've now
16 received the allowable tax levy growth factor, which is
17 1.23 percent. This is the lowest factor we've seen in a
18 while, I think since 2016-17, which was extremely low, it
19 was .12 percent. In '17-'18 it was 1.26 percent, so
20 that's more similar to where we are now.

21 With the district's exclusions this would
22 generate about 1.3 to 1.5 percent of a tax levy increase.
23 This is preliminary. I'm still waiting for the state aid
24 budget and the BOCES aid for capital expenditures.

25 But I -- I don't foresee it swinging by much,

1 so that's probably where we're going to end up, somewhere
2 between 1.3 percent to 1.5 percent of a tax levy
3 increase.

4 Last year the allowable tax levy growth factor
5 was 1.1 percent. By law it's the lesser -- it's limited
6 to the lesser of two percent or the rate of inflation
7 based on CPI.

8 So since this is so low this year, the school
9 tax levy increase will be low. A 1.3 percent tax levy
10 increase is about \$535,000 for North Bellmore, which is
11 about 530,000 less in an increase from last year. So
12 it's about half of what it was last year. And last year
13 our tax levy increase was 2.71 percent.

14 So I'll keep the Board apprised as more
15 information comes in and we finalize and round out these
16 numbers within the budget.

17 We're still waiting on information from the
18 state regarding state aid for the current year. We hope
19 to receive that information by the end of the month as
20 January is another measurement period for the Department
21 of the Budget. But as of now, we're still looking at
22 state aid cuts of as much as twenty percent.

23 I understand the governor is hoping New York
24 State will receive from Federal aid to reduce this
25 burden. But as of right now, we just don't have an

1 answer for that.

2 So even with these cuts that we're seeing, the
3 district is still in good financial position. You know,
4 with the Board's approval the district has made many
5 changes in the current year to keep that financial having
6 been of the district where it was prior to the pandemic.

7 We made some difficult decisions at the start
8 of the year and have been extremely prudent in our
9 current spending. I have to thank the administration and
10 principals for acting accordingly and being creative.

11 We knew how difficult this year would be with
12 all the changes and requirements that were put upon us,
13 but we've made it work and I'm confident that we're going
14 to get through the financial challenges the next few
15 years will bring due to the decisions we have made.

16 Now it's the end of a year, so my department is
17 diligently working on year-end payroll reports and W2s.
18 This has brought some challenges as well as we have new
19 reporting related to COVID-19 sick pay.

20 There were a few different types of sick pay in
21 2020. There was federal sick leave, there was New York
22 State sick leave and there was the extended emergency
23 FMLA.

24 Certain benefits are exempt from the employer
25 portion of social security tax. So my department is

1 currently working on calculating this for the quarterly
2 form 941 and to get credit for this. We expect it to
3 amount to roughly \$5,000 less in the employer portion of
4 payroll taxes.

5 In addition, there's a new code on form W2 for
6 federal sick leave. The IRS requires us to report any
7 federal sick leave wages paid to an employee and/or any
8 extended emergency FMLA wages paid to an employee.

9 So my office is currently working on this as
10 well. Employees may see this reported in box 14 on their
11 W2s should this apply to them. It is an informational
12 box only. Any taxable wages are included in box one, as
13 always. But if you get your W2 and have questions on
14 this, feel free to reach out to my office and we can
15 provide you information.

16 I also want to provide an update on the Cares
17 Act Funding. Earlier in the fiscal year we applied for
18 Cares Act Funding through SED.

19 If you remember, this was about \$67,000. This
20 was money -- this money was reduced from our state aid
21 and then they said we needed to apply for -- for the
22 67,000 through a separate application and apply for it as
23 a reimbursement for various PPE and re-opening costs.

24 In the end, it ended up being a wash because it
25 reduced our state aid. So we lost state aid and we

1 applied for it as a reimbursement for some of our PPE.

2 Later we learned that there may be additional
3 funds available from the Town of Hempstead. They
4 received Cares money as well and they were going to apply
5 some of this to the schools. So I submitted an
6 application for North Bellmore, again for various
7 reopening costs and PPE. That was in October.

8 In December, the Town of Hempstead informed us
9 that they were not going to accept any of these
10 applications. Rather, they determined they would give
11 school districts a maximum of 150,000 on a reimbursement
12 basis for PPE.

13 They asked for new applications with copies of
14 purchase orders, invoices, canceled checks et cetera. So
15 we submitted our new application and all the required
16 documentation on Monday, December 21st.

17 I was notified today and told that our
18 application was approved, so I'm happy to report that and
19 you will see a resolution on the agenda tonight to
20 approve this agreement with the Town of Hempstead.

21 So with the Board's approval of this
22 resolution, I will submit a claim for these funds next
23 week and hopefully, we will receive them shortly
24 thereafter.

25 We also had our annual financial risk

1 assessment audit conducted this month. This audit is
2 designed to assess the risk in the district's financial
3 reporting process and to identify internal controls that
4 mitigate those risks.

5 The field work of the auditor was conducted
6 during the first week of January, right after the
7 December recess. And I expect to get a preliminary
8 report sometime in February or March.

9 Once I receive the report, I will schedule an
10 Audit Committee meeting for it to be reviewed and then
11 presented to the Board for acceptance. Our annual
12 internal audit is scheduled to begin the week of
13 February 22nd. This audit is a deeper dive into the
14 internal controls of a specific function within the
15 district. The purpose is to evaluate the internal
16 controls of that function to prevent errors, detect fraud
17 and ensure financial reporting is accurate and that the
18 district assets are safeguarded.

19 Last year, Central Registration was audited and
20 in 2019-20 school lunch was audited. We do not have the
21 area being audited in the current year as of yet, but we
22 will keep you updated once we have it.

23 The annual asset reporting was finalized prior
24 to the break and the report is available on the district
25 website if anyone should want to see it.

1 All our asset reporting and New York State
2 Transparency reporting will always be available on our
3 district website located under Departments under the
4 Business Department.

5 We also have kindergarten registration for
6 2021-22 school year and that is well underway. We
7 currently have 124 kindergarten students fully registered
8 and we have appointments set up between now and the end
9 of January for another 95 students.

10 This year, kindergarten registration is by
11 appointment only. I have to give a huge thank you to
12 Larise Gunold (phonetic). She has been overseeing each
13 registration and is doing an amazing job. By the end of
14 the month, we will have 219 students registered by the
15 end of January, which I think sets a record for
16 kindergarten registration being done ahead of time. So
17 I'm really, really happy and excited about that.

18 There's also an additional 62 pre-registered
19 students in our system. So if they were all to come in
20 and register, we have not heard from them yet but we will
21 follow-up with them. But if they were to come in and
22 register as well, we have a potential total of 281
23 students.

24 In the current year, we have 269 students in
25 kindergarten so it's looking like the enrollment for

1 kindergarten will increase slightly from the current year
2 and we're going to keep a close eye on these numbers and
3 adjust the '21-'22 proposed budget accordingly should it
4 have an effect on that.

5 So we'll definitely keep you updated on the
6 progress of that. And that is my report for the night.

7 MRS. CORLESS: Thank you very much. I
8 appreciate your report.

9 Next we'll have a curriculum instruction update
10 from Mrs. Pollitt.

11 MRS. POLLITT: Yes, good evening everyone, nice
12 to see you all and Happy New Year.

13 I'll start off with just a general instruction
14 update. I'll just begin by saying how proud I am of our
15 teachers and our students both virtual and in person. It
16 really continues to amaze me how they've acclimated to
17 the new school environment and how they've risen to the
18 unique challenges of our current circumstances.

19 The administrators and I see innovative
20 teaching and a continued passion for teaching and
21 learning. You know, you can see smiling eyes behind the
22 face of those face masks and it's so great to witness our
23 learning community thrive during these difficult times.

24 In December, we welcomed back a number of
25 students to our in-person classrooms as well as welcome

1 learners into our virtual classrooms. Our teachers did a
2 fantastic job in terms of transitioning the students.
3 They communicated with one another to make sure it was
4 seamless and I thank them for their collaboration.

5 I also applaud our teachers and our students
6 for the ways in which they've seamlessly transitioned our
7 students who are individually quarantined, in and out of
8 our virtual classes.

9 Mrs. Testa mentioned that earlier. We do have
10 a number of students who choose to participate in one of
11 our virtual classes when they are out at home quarantine.
12 Many parents do select that option. At any given point
13 throughout the year, we have about twelve students spread
14 among those fifteen virtual classes that are individually
15 quarantined. But what Mrs. Testa mentioned, after the
16 holidays, particularly after the New Year, we saw an
17 increase in that.

18 So since we've returned from, you know, the
19 holiday break, we've had well over twenty students in
20 those virtual classes due to individual quarantines. But
21 we know our kids are resilient, we've always known that
22 but right now, this has proven in leaps and bounds as a
23 wave.

24 I'd also just be remiss if I didn't recognize
25 all the tremendous work that the principals are doing in

1 their respective schools as well as Mrs. McNamara who is
2 leading our virtual school because it is just that.

3 I'm overall just so proud of our community and
4 also to the parents because it's been -- we're almost at
5 the halfway mark of the school year and it's really been
6 a collaborative effort, so I'm just so proud of the
7 community that we serve.

8 I'm just going to speak a bit now about the
9 third trimester because even though it seems as if we
10 just entered the second trimester, the notification for
11 parents to request a change for the third trimester is
12 only a month away.

13 Towards the end of next week, I will be sending
14 all families the third trimester learning model and temp
15 form. The deadline for parents to request a change to
16 their child's mode of learning for the third trimester is
17 Sunday, February 14th.

18 This will afford us the time necessary to
19 properly plan for the class placements. The third
20 trimester begins March 19th and ends the last day of
21 school, which is scheduled for June 25th.

22 Next, I'll just give you a universal pre-k
23 update. This year as you -- as you know, we instituted a
24 digital application, which is posted under the What's New
25 section of the district's home page.

1 If families don't have internet access, they
2 may pick up a paper-based application at any school or at
3 the district office. All applications are due by Friday,
4 March 12th. And to date, we've received 105 applications.

5 As always, the program will only occur if state
6 funding is provided. Given the current withholdings that
7 we are experiencing, we're really unsure about the grant
8 funding for next year.

9 So, Jackie and I will provide to give you
10 updates as we receive them from the state. And you know,
11 Jackie mentioned Larise, I'm going to mention her here
12 today because she's going to be an integral part of the
13 Universal Pre-K registration when that occurs in April.

14 I'm going to mention a bit about the Prevention
15 Department. I met this afternoon with JoAnn Signorelli
16 and the entire prevention Department of Prevention
17 Professionals and just, you know, while we were meeting,
18 some words that really came to mind were passion,
19 loyalty, comradery; collegiality.

20 As we were discussing, we realized that this
21 group has been collectively working in North Bellmore for
22 over a hundred years. Our one professional works in
23 North Bellmore for over thirty years. And it's just
24 great because there's a history there and they're
25 constantly innovating their instruction.

1 So we did talk about the new instruction that
2 they have been implementing during our health and
3 wellness block and I'm happy to report that that is going
4 well.

5 It's brand new to us this year and you know,
6 when you think about it, their work is really among the
7 most crucial; teaching our students how to care for
8 themselves and others and that's really paramount because
9 you know, we're striving to, you know, provide a
10 wonderful education for our students, but also to turn
11 out some really great human beings.

12 So while they've experienced -- you know,
13 they're experienced professionals, they have been
14 transforming their work, too, learning new curriculum
15 across all grade levels. One thing that I will mention
16 about the Prevention Department and what they'll be
17 implementing soon is fire safety.

18 You know, in the past when the fire department
19 brings a safe house on to the ground, and that's a
20 wonderful experience for our students, unfortunately,
21 given this time, we aren't able to do that.

22 So I thank Matt Brennan, the fire inspector of
23 the North Bellmore Fire Department -- because they put
24 together for us a wonderful video tutorial reenacting the
25 whole safe house lesson, it's fabulous.

1 So we're going to be implementing that during
2 our health and wellness blocks that we ensure that the
3 fire safety curriculum is still taught.

4 Just a brief update about APPR. I spoke to the
5 Board a couple of months ago that we were going to the
6 state for a revision to our plan given the times.

7 So I do want to share that our variance was
8 approved by the New York State Education Department. So
9 as we reviewed a couple of months ago, it does change the
10 amount of components, the type of evidence that the
11 principals and observers are looking for. Shorten the
12 duration of time but also gave the teachers the
13 opportunity to choose whether they would like to be
14 observed virtually you know, or in person. But we still
15 have a very strong APPR plan and I'm proud of the work of
16 the committee, so thank you for everyone who participated
17 in that.

18 Just another update about -- well, the Policy
19 Committee -- we just selected our date. So I look
20 forward to meeting with the board members, who are part
21 of that team, on Wednesday, January 27th. So we're proud
22 of all the work that goes on in the Board of Education.
23 Thank you for your support along the way.

24 MRS. CORLESS: Thank you so much Mrs. Pollitt.

25 Next, we have technology update, Mr. Fischetti.

1 MR. FISCHETTI: Good evening everyone. I'm
2 going to start by reporting on safety and security. So
3 our current IntraLogic system is about seven years old.
4 We have some cameras that are ten years old. They were
5 in place before we even went into this process.

6 Basically, we're at the point where we need to
7 upgrade our servers and storage for the video. We have
8 six cameras we're building we need to change out. They
9 will not be compatible with the server-based software but
10 the benefits of having the server will -- it'll remove
11 all of the DVRs we have in each building where we
12 currently record and access all the video.

13 Everything will be available on the Cloud. We
14 can watch live video and playback from anywhere with an
15 internet connection. So we can keep an eye on the
16 grounds nights and weekends much more easily without
17 having to come in to the district if something were to
18 occur.

19 So basically, I did a walk-through today with
20 Intra-Logic. They did a final walk-through actually to
21 determine the cabling costs and the replacement costs of
22 the cameras. Some of them are internal, some of them are
23 exterior. It's six per building that we need to change.

24 We anticipate the cost of the cameras and the
25 cabling to be around 40,000 and the server itself, which

1 will give us access to the software and the playback,
2 that's around 24,000.

3 But the really good news about this is that
4 between multiple grants, it's not going to be at any cost
5 to the district. So between something called Schedule N
6 that Miss Rehak filled in to the budget for 35,000 and
7 another 42 that we have on Smart Bond.

8 If you recall, we put that into Smart Bond
9 years ago knowing that we were going to get to this
10 point. We'll be paying for it all on grants. So we hope
11 to have the cameras installed and the new server, before
12 the summer, all up and running.

13 The second thing is, we're always hearing about
14 disaster avoidance and disaster recovery and it's
15 something that the auditors constantly ask about. You
16 may recall that for the past couple of years you've been
17 hearing me talk about multiple back-up systems.

18 Those back-ups all provide disaster recovery.
19 So if something were to happen, we have plenty of back-
20 ups all over the place that we can rely on to back-up our
21 data, recover the data. But currently, with everything
22 running at a Saw Mill, it's always suggested that we do
23 something in terms of disaster avoidance.

24 So, on Smart Bond we purchased a system called
25 the Data Core. You may recall me talking about that.

1 And now that we have that Data Core in place, we can put
2 a secondary network out of Martin Avenue that if there
3 were a failure, some kind of catastrophic failure at Saw
4 Mill, the network at Martin would take over
5 instantaneously.

6 There would be no loss of internet, no loss of
7 phones, no loss of email; no loss of files. That cost us
8 about 400,000 on Smart Bond and we did it and it's up and
9 running and it's great but now we have the ability to add
10 a third cluster they call it.

11 There are two at Saw Mill, we can add a third
12 at Martin, and it will allow us to have a completely
13 redundant network should Saw Mill, God forbid, have a
14 catastrophic failure. Nothing would change. It would be
15 seamless to all the users in the district. So, normally,
16 a disaster avoidance infrastructure would run about
17 750,000.

18 But that Data Core that we put in on Smart
19 Bond, with another 60 to 80,000 we can have a complete
20 secondary network running at Martin Avenue should we ever
21 need it.

22 Plus, it provides another location for back-up.
23 Having everything out of Saw Mill is fine, but if we have
24 a problem at Saw Mill, it's good to have the whole back-
25 up available. And the iPads and instruction have been a

1 huge hit. Everywhere I go I hear how great they are. I
2 don't have specific feedback.

3 I'm going to be sending out a survey to all the
4 teachers that are using them on a daily basis just to
5 gage the needs of the teachers if they're having any
6 trouble. Generally, we hear if there's any trouble they
7 seem to be working seamlessly.

8 And of course, with the virtual situation being
9 able to take home is just another bonus. So I'll be
10 sending out a survey to gather more detailed feedback and
11 see what we can do to improve it before we expand it.
12 That's my report.

13 MRS. CORLESS: Thank you very much.

14 MR. FISCHETTI: Sure.

15 MRS. CORLESS: It's great to hear that we're
16 going to get cameras on grant. That's a great thing.

17 MR. FISCHETTI: Yes.

18 MRS. CORLESS: It's good to increase security,
19 so thank you.

20 MR. FISCHETTI: Yeah.

21 MRS. CORLESS: Okay, Special Education. Mrs.
22 Eskew couldn't be here today but Mrs. Testa, you're going
23 to give us an update.

24 MRS. TESTA: Yes, thank you, Mrs. Corless.

25 Just to tag onto the security, just always ever mindful

1 that we still are waiting for our security grant money to
2 come through.

3 It's been held up in a state due to COVID. We
4 do have the approval, as you know, from our architectural
5 drawings that are up at the state for all the security
6 vestibules at every one of the schools.

7 And we also have a grant for fencing district-
8 wide. So we're waiting patiently for that to come in.
9 We can't spend that money on it now because we wouldn't
10 be reimbursed for it so we're still waiting for those
11 grants to come in.

12 And also in the registration area, I just want
13 to tag on that when -- when Mrs. Rehak mentioned that I
14 think it was 192 were registered that's fully registered
15 with every piece of paper possible. So that's really
16 great. We're going to be in terrific shape as we move
17 forward.

18 On behalf of Ms. Eskew, again, I'd just like to
19 thank our school nurses for the job they're doing with
20 interfacing with the Department of Health, with the
21 families, with the faculty staff and also with our
22 students of course, and our principals' excellent job
23 with the Department of Health.

24 They work with me daily everyday on the
25 Department of Health website. I update all the

1 information about the positive cases, any recommendations
2 we've made to individuals to go to see a health-care
3 professional.

4 I do it by school, it pops up on our -- you can
5 access it from our website. It's the Department of
6 Health dashboard, it will give you a complete look at
7 what's occurring in our district.

8 And again, I do send that every night, Jean
9 Katavan (phonetic) Mimi Fernandez and the nurses all
10 provide information for me for that report, so I'm
11 pleased to have that available.

12 Our nurses will be attending P.D professional
13 development with our district doctor, Dr. Marino, and
14 updates on COVID and so forth, on January 28th. Carol
15 Eskew is overseeing that. Ms. Eskew and her team are
16 also working on annual reviews at this time. Carol has
17 been interviewing staff for paraprofessionals as well and
18 doing a lot of private work that has to do with
19 individual families.

20 But we're also -- Carol just -- and her team --
21 just finished the budget for Ms. Rehak to provide that to
22 her as did all our departments. So we are in that
23 budgeting area as well.

24 Our - the -- we are starting already to look
25 ahead with budgeting and also with classes. As Ms. Rehak

1 said with kindergarten, but at this time of the year now
2 we start to look and project and analyze our class
3 sections, our enrollment.

4 And of course, I'll just add at this point,
5 Mrs. Corless, because it's so important to say that we
6 continue to wait to see what's going to happen with these
7 vaccinations and what regulations we're still going to
8 have to abide by as we plan for the '21-'22 school year.

9 MRS. CORLESS: Yes, that will be interesting.
10 Thank you. We appreciate it.

11 13.1. Be it resolved the Board of Education
12 approved the CPSE and the CSE report dated January 7,
13 2021.

14 FEMALE: Motion.

15 FEMALE: Second.

16 MRS. CORLESS: All in favor?

17 FEMALE: Aye.

18 FEMALE: Aye.

19 MRS. CORLESS: Before we move on to new
20 business, I just want to remind the public that we will
21 be having another question session. So if you have a
22 question, send it in with your name and address, please.

23 Next we'll move on to new business. I would
24 like to do a consent agenda for the items 14.1 to 14.11.

25 FEMALE: So moved.

1 FEMALE: Second.

2 MRS. CORLESS: All in favor -- Any questions
3 first? Okay, all in favor?

4 FEMALE: Aye.

5 FEMALE: Aye.

6 MRS. CORLESS: Great. I'd like to point out in
7 those resolutions, we do have some donations from the
8 Dinkelmeyer PTA of 4,000 -- 400, I'm sorry, excuse me,
9 seat cushions for outdoor learning, which are valued at
10 over \$2000 and also the magnetic words for the stair-
11 riser projects valued at \$340. So thank you very much
12 Dinkelmeyer PTA.

13 Also, as Mrs. Rehak mentioned, there's the
14 grant for the Town of Hempstead Cares Act to help pay for
15 some of our PPE. Have we had any problem with PPE?
16 Getting it or we have plenty, right?

17 FEMALE: No, we're good.

18 MRS. CORLESS: That's great, thank you. Okay.
19 Next we have no old business to discuss, so public
20 comments. Mrs. Testa, do you want us to read them to you
21 or how do you want to do it?

22 MRS. TESTA: And I know that Mrs. Grote has --
23 has a comment or a question.

24 MRS. GROTE: Thank you. Do we have information
25 on the five year buildings and grounds study? Do we have

1 a date for that or...

2 MRS. CORLESS: Let me just -- Hold on. Oh, I
3 am [inaudible].

4 MRS. GROTE: We're -- that is coming up very
5 shortly because our -- our last study, we just pretty
6 much coming up on that fifth year. I see Ms. Rehak
7 nodding, too, and we were looking with that not yet
8 meeting with our architect but that is coming up.

9 I believe that it's coming up in July, if I'm
10 -- I'm pretty positive it's between July and September,
11 but I'll look into the -- the exact date for you.

12 MRS. CORLESS: Thank you.

13 MRS. GROTE: You're welcome.

14 MRS. CORLESS: Any other questions on the Board
15 before we go to questions from the public?

16 Okay. All right. I'm going to click on this
17 question and answer. Here we go. Okay. Okay, thank you
18 for the questions.

19 Mr. -- Mr. Plock (phonetic) Park Avenue School.
20 Is there a specific number of students or staff testing
21 positive that would necessitate a school closure?

22 That's a very good question. I've been asked
23 that question before, Mr. Plock (phonetic).

24 Actually, there's not a specific number but
25 there is a plan and the conversation with the Department

1 of Health. There's many variables we look at. So it's
2 dependent on how wide-spread the positive would be or the
3 affects of the positive.

4 It also has to do with do we have the right
5 number of staff members to safely staff the school? So
6 we have to look at both of those. There's not a magic
7 number. It's more that we're looking at what is the
8 spread? Where are we now? Where is the spread occurring
9 from? Emanating from?

10 Is it affecting any of their classes? And if
11 so, do we need to -- do we need to close the school that
12 day? It's a pretty lengthy conversation, it's something
13 that we've talked about before with the Department of
14 Health. And what they have talked to us about is right
15 now, we're not seeing that wide-spread.

16 We are -- I do note, tonight, that I got more
17 information while we were speaking about a positive,
18 which is [inaudible] but we're still at relatively very
19 low numbers for the number of adults and students we
20 have.

21 But we would not hesitate to close if we
22 thought that there was any risk of anyone's safety. So
23 we analyzed that completely with the Department of
24 Health.

25 In fact, when there are students that are

1 positive, or faculty or staff that are positive, we also
2 look at absentee rates and to see, is there a trend in
3 any of the absentee rates? Are we seeing any high levels
4 of absenteeism, which we've really been very fortunate
5 with.

6 So, what I could say to you is there's not a
7 number, but it is certainly always in our minds when
8 we're looking and evaluating what's occurring in each of
9 the schools.

10 Let's see. Deidre Reddington? (Phonetic) Is
11 there a plan to restore programs that were paused in late
12 August? Specifically, school libraries in Spanish for
13 grades five and six? And Mrs. Reddington, the address is
14 in the chat.

15 Thank you, Mrs. Reddington. Actually, the
16 Board of Education and the Central Administration team
17 are, as you may have heard, this is our budget season and
18 we're looking at all our programs as we promised when we
19 made those decisions last year.

20 We're going to be evaluating every program
21 again and we're going to be looking at what the needs are
22 of the district and we're also going to be looking at
23 what the COVID requirements are. And I know that this
24 Board has looked, in the past, and said, "We're looking
25 to restore as much as possible given where we are

1 budgetarily.”

2 So what is happening now is what you heard Ms.
3 Rehak talking about. As we go on in the next few weeks,
4 please come to the meetings because we're going to be
5 talking about budgeting programming. But at this point
6 yet, it's too early yet. We have not made those
7 decisions or had those particular conversations yet.

8 Although, this evening, we did say that those
9 are coming next. So those are what are going to be
10 coming up in the next couple of weeks; all of those
11 conversations. Thank you for asking that question.

12 Donna Fiore (phonetic). I understand that
13 there is a substitute teacher shortage but why can't a
14 teacher who is home in quarantine and not sick virtually
15 teach a class? Since the quarantine time is fairly long,
16 it would also help with consistency for students.

17 Thank you for that question, Mrs. Fiore. I'm
18 going to give you -- try to give you as much a
19 comprehensive picture of this as I can.

20 Right now, we have to have someone in the
21 classroom to supervise the students who are in the
22 classroom so that if a teacher was at home and if the
23 teacher was to Zoom in to teach that class, you still
24 need an adult in the classroom, and really there is no
25 replacement for the teacher in the classroom. And at

1 elementary level, most districts are not doing that at
2 elementary level.

3 We don't have that set up right now in our
4 protocol. What we have set up in our protocol now -- and
5 I know that it's very challenging -- is that we're
6 working with trying to utilize the subs that we do have,
7 or utilize the professional faculty that we have, who
8 have been very flexible in changing schedules, in helping
9 us out, outside of their domain, and working in the
10 classrooms. We have very talented, multi-certified
11 individuals.

12 What we have done with Mrs. Pollitt and Mrs.
13 McNamara is those teachers who were out on quarantine who
14 are well. So if they're out on quarantine because they
15 were at close contact but they're well enough to teach,
16 then we would have them doing some Zooming in with the
17 remote learners let's say who required a substitute. But
18 only if they were well and only if they're not caring for
19 students or children -- I'm sorry -- or family members
20 who are ill.

21 So we don't have it set up right now in North
22 Bellmore where they're streaming into the classes that
23 where the teacher is at home. But we've done our best to
24 provide the sub-coverage as best as possible.

25 Again, the filming into the classroom requires

1 that you have that coverage in the classroom, and right
2 now, we do have amazing paraprofessionals but they're
3 assigned to classes or students, and there is also a
4 shortage of paraprofessionals and lunch monitors and
5 kindergarten monitors as well, although we are staffed.

6 So it's just that for a full day of teaching
7 that we really -- North Bellmore does not really, at this
8 time, believe that a full day of streaming into a
9 classroom is appropriate in middle school and high
10 school.

11 I've talked to my superintendent friends at the
12 middle school and high school level where they're having
13 success for that. But elementary school is quite
14 different. So we have staffed the classes, we have
15 teachers in them. I just feel sometimes we're having a
16 little challenge with consistency in some areas when
17 there are teachers quarantined for some time where there
18 may be a couple of different teachers. But we try to
19 avoid that as much as possible. Also, we also need to
20 assign teachers to other classes at times.

21 So we -- we have developed quite an extensive
22 planning process. Mrs. Pollitt has taken the lead on
23 this and we met last week again and we worked with our
24 teachers.

25 So what I can tell you is, if a teacher is out

1 on quarantine and the teacher is well and the teacher is
2 able to work, our North Bellmore teachers have been
3 stepping up and working from home when they are -- when
4 they are able to do it.

5 And within the framework that we have, and
6 we'll continue to try to tweak this as we go along, but
7 the belief here in North Bellmore right now is that we
8 wouldn't be at the place of recommending that we're
9 filming into the classrooms.

10 I know that the Board and we have talked about
11 this where we're Zooming in and we're just not confident
12 that at the elementary level that that's what's
13 appropriate for our little ones in those classes all day.
14 And also, honestly for the -- for the level of the
15 teaching that the teachers can do -- but we continue to
16 keep our minds open as we assess and adjust as we go
17 along.

18 Oh, thank you Mrs. Fiore; Mrs. Fiore who just
19 included her address.

20 I do have a question here, let me see. Oh, I
21 see your name. Mrs. Nyko (phonetic) yes, okay. Is the
22 Board considering alternatives to last year's graduation
23 ceremonies for all schools to make it a better experience
24 for students and families?

25 So the Board does not plan the graduation

1 experiences. What happens is our building level
2 principals plan them along with the central
3 administration team, with the teachers in the schools.

4 And yes, last year's was very challenging
5 although, I had a tremendous amount of positive feedback
6 from families and parents, and some of our Board members
7 were actually -- I'm looking at Mrs. Erhard -- were
8 actually at the graduation ceremony.

9 So I felt that we -- we did it as best as we
10 could, given the circumstances, while keeping everyone
11 safe and sound, Mrs. Nyko, but I do share your desire to
12 get back to our -- to our graduation, our traditional
13 graduation.

14 And that really is going to wait to be seen in
15 terms of what the governor and where he tells us and
16 where we are in terms of our -- this COVID pandemic.
17 But, as always, the principals here in North Bellmore
18 continue to excel.

19 In fact, you may have noticed that there's --
20 any remote learners out there -- that the principals came
21 up with a program called Chat and Chew, where they're
22 going to be visiting all our remote learners and eating
23 lunch with them at specific times over the next few weeks
24 so that they have the experience of a connection with
25 their principal.

1 So I bring that up because the principals are
2 very reflective professionals as our essential
3 administration and our teachers. And every time we
4 implement something, we always step back and look at it.

5 So we'll continue to look at the graduations,
6 and I can assure you that we'll do our best to provide a
7 positive experience for our, for our students.

8 And if there was any individual questions, you
9 could always just go to that principal if you have
10 specific ideas that you'd like to share or questions that
11 you have.

12 Mr. Plock is asking Mrs. Rehak, it's -- "What
13 impact, if any, does the cost of COVID related expenses
14 impact the district budget? Are all related expenses
15 being covered?"

16 This is an excellent question. Are all related
17 expenses being covered at the State and local branch or
18 emergency funds, if any?"

19 MS. REHAK: Yeah, the answer to that question
20 is -- is no. Many of those funds we talked about a lot
21 at the beginning of the year and leading into the
22 reopening, we were looking at well over two million in
23 reopening class.

24 And as you can see, I mentioned that the Cares
25 Act Funding we received was about 67,000 and they reduced

1 our state aid in order to give us that 67,000. And then
2 we just applied for \$150,000 from the Town of Hempstead.

3 So you can see it's very little coming from
4 grant funds in order to cover over two million in -- in
5 reopening costs.

6 And in addition, to all of that state aid, you
7 know, it's still questionable whether or not we'll have
8 twenty percent cuts in the state aid.

9 So that led to a lot of the nine difficult
10 decisions we had to make at the beginning of the year to
11 reopen the schools and a lot of those decisions were
12 driven by what we were allowed to do and not allowed to
13 do given the pandemic and social distancing requirements
14 and everything else.

15 So, in answering your question, it had a lot of
16 affect on the budget and it's something we'll continue to
17 look at for next fiscal year. Although a lot of those
18 expenses you can look at as possibly one-time expenses.

19 We're still waiting to see what will be
20 recurring because we don't know what's to come yet with
21 the pandemic requirements that will still be put on the
22 school districts or not. And so we're still waiting to
23 see what we find out about that.

24 So we're creating a budget with an open mind
25 knowing that we may have more COVID related costs that do

1 have an effect on the overall budget.

2 MRS. CORLESS: Thank you, Mrs. Rehak.

3 Mrs. Pollen (phonetic), thank you for your
4 question. Is it possible to explain the benefits of TIFA
5 as a platform compared to using Google classroom as our
6 children will be using Google classroom in middle school
7 and students in South Bellmore are already familiar with
8 it?

9 Mrs. Pollitt, would you like to weigh in on
10 that question or...

11 MRS. POLLITT: Sure.

12 MRS. CORLESS: Mr. Fischetti, also, I know
13 you're -- you both, it's a combination.

14 MRS. POLLITT: Well, when we first, you know,
15 last year started to take a look at the platforms that we
16 had and we're -- you know, we do have Microsoft Office,
17 you know, 360 and we're looking at some things that we
18 already have in the district. But when we had to take a
19 look at what we would implement for the pandemic, we
20 weighed all the different options. We felt at the time,
21 and we still do, that Seesaw is an extremely user
22 friendly system for K through six and that's why we want
23 to pick something to sustain the children over the years
24 with us.

25 A big factor, and Mr. Fischetti can build on

1 this if he wishes, but was that we don't have Google
2 addresses for, you know, each of the different students.
3 That's something that we were looking into.

4 We don't have Chromebooks that are Google
5 driven. So we just saw, overall, the benefits of Seesaw
6 being the best for our K-6 learners.

7 Now that's not to say that we're not always
8 researching and investigating and taking a look at
9 different programs that we might morph into over the
10 years, even if it is for just upper grade students.

11 So I appreciate the question, but please know
12 that a lot of research went into it. So, for now, we are
13 utilizing, you know, Seesaw as [inaudible] platform and
14 then Zoom for the -- you know, for the synchronism.

15 I know in my report, I mentioned that also, but
16 our students and our teachers have been doing a fabulous
17 job, and I'm not just talking about those who are in the
18 virtual, sole virtual classes, but like Mrs. Testa
19 mentioned earlier, we've had thirty-one classes since
20 October. We had none in September, but thirty-one
21 classes we've had to quarantine because of thirty-one
22 instances. It's actually twenty-eight classes because
23 three of those classes are on their second class
24 quarantine.

25 And the way that the students are able to

1 seamlessly transition in writing to the remote learning,
2 it's just a testament to the teachers and the
3 professional development that they've been receiving and
4 researching on their own.

5 But we always, you know, want to have some
6 feedback. So appearance -- Mrs. Pollen yourself, or any
7 others want to give us feedback as to maybe students are
8 struggling or not utilizing Seesaw to its capacity or you
9 know, other suggestions, definitely send over.

10 Thanks for planting the seed and you know, as
11 always, we're going to continue to -- to build on what we
12 already have.

13 MRS. TESTA: And I can -- I know that I can
14 speak right now about the benefits. I would -- I would
15 be able to -- I can look and I've been -- I know the
16 benefits of Seesaw but I really couldn't -- Mrs. Pollen,
17 you compare it to Google Classroom -- for you now, to
18 give you exactly what -- what's better or what's not, I
19 -- I can look into it.

20 I can tell you though that I've spoken to the
21 superintendent and the assistant superintendent over in
22 the high school district and we've talked about this
23 because I shared that we were going to Seesaw and some of
24 the other districts were looking at that. They had
25 already been in Google classroom.

1 So we just recently gave all our third through
2 sixth graders these iPads. So we were already driven in
3 a different direction and had already implemented and
4 used finances in our plan in a different direction.

5 So to switch, that really wouldn't have been
6 financially prudent, and when we looked at and compared
7 it, we did see that our children would get a very good
8 education the Seesaw platform.

9 And I have checked to make sure that our
10 children are transitioning well. And I'm told by the
11 middle school it's like seamless, right to the platform
12 for the -- for Google classroom.

13 But thank you for that and you can be sure I'm
14 going to look and see what different -- what the
15 differences really are altogether, but thank you for the
16 question.

17 MR. FISCHETTI: Just one thing, Ms. Testa to
18 add, one of the real benefits is that Seesaw allows us to
19 allow for multiple co-teachers and the ability to change
20 those co-teachers.

21 So you can add a resource teacher, add a speech
22 teacher, transfer a teacher, make those changes on the
23 fly without having to link and unlink Google accounts,
24 which is a much bigger deal. Especially in the
25 elementary level where you want to quickly allow a

1 service provider access to one student or an entire
2 class.

3 So that was really one of the benefits of See
4 Saw that we liked. Especially when we had to close
5 quickly and have something ready to go with, without a
6 lot of time for training. And the interface for the
7 administrative side is very simple and it allows us to
8 make any changes on the fly that we need to make
9 immediate.

10 MRS. TESTA: Yeah, I've actually had those
11 conversations with some of my colleagues and the
12 components about Seesaw because we talked about it at a
13 time, and as I said, we were fortunate enough to be able
14 to step into that and take it then.

15 So we actually, we need -- we need a little
16 time but we meet formally once a month but we're on the
17 phone every day. But this was something that we all
18 looked at together. Some districts went with it, some
19 went with what they had already. So, I appreciate it,
20 Jason.

21 MR. FISCHETTI: Mmh-hmm.

22 MRS. TESTA: And we have a question from Marie
23 Krill. Redmond Road. Will the virtual students ever
24 have an opportunity -- this is another question -- ever
25 have an opportunity to have live, special area classes?

1 It's also challenging to complete special area
2 assignments through Seesaw at times, especially for
3 younger students.

4 A lot of instruction or time allotted in the
5 school day could help with that task. That's exactly
6 true, I agree with you. If we could get -- if we could
7 get all the number of classes we have live, that would be
8 -- that would be a goal. But the staffing at this time,
9 may be impossible to do that.

10 We are talking with Mrs. Pollett and with the
11 principal, the administration team right now, Mrs. Krill,
12 about how we can scaffold in live experiences for the
13 special education -- I'm sorry, for the special areas.

14 I know for sure that the -- the people that are
15 doing the virtual uploading for us, our special area
16 teachers are working so hard and miss the students as
17 much as the students miss them. But we're trying to
18 figure out how we can get some live opportunity for those
19 children.

20 We actually had some conversations, Mrs.
21 Pollitt, Mrs. McNamara and I, last week, with some
22 parents who were expressing just what you were expressing
23 as well. So we're looking to see that and the longer
24 that this goes on, we realize just how much the -- you
25 know, the remote experience, while very good, does, you

1 know, limit you in your ability to interface with other
2 professionals. I don't know if there's anything else to
3 add to that, Mrs. Pollitt, that I didn't touch upon?

4 MRS. POLLITT: No, you answered that and I
5 would just add that the focus of the 90 minutes
6 [inaudible] at the end of this month or a special area
7 teacher will be just that.

8 I'm trying to [inaudible] working on their
9 Seesaw lessons but also planning times where they can --
10 I like the way you put it -- deliver some virtual
11 experiences.

12 It's not going to be a systematic schedule of
13 who I'm teaching but we are going to look to have our
14 teachers -- especially our [inaudible] -- post some
15 virtual live sessions with the virtual students.

16 So, information come out on that as soon as we
17 have it and I think that, you know, what you said also
18 Mrs. Testa with the staffing piece of it. We realize
19 that the teachers who are delivering the Seesaw lessons,
20 the asynchronous for the virtual students.

21 Also our in-person teachers who are teaching
22 in-person as well, not that we have separate stand-alone
23 special area teachers. So it's -- it's a balancing act
24 that we're -- we're looking into to avail them during the
25 day while they do have, you know, see during the day how

1 we can schedule some live sessions. So I -- I do
2 appreciate the question and know that it's on the list
3 and it's actually being looked at closely in a week or
4 so, in about January.

5 MRS. TESTA: Thank you. Thank you, Mrs.
6 Pollitt.

7 Did I get through all the questions I -- I saw,
8 I think?

9 MRS. CORLESS: I think you did.

10 MR. FISCHETTI: Yeah, you got them all.

11 MRS. TESTA: Thank you. Thank you to all the
12 families that sent in questions to us, we appreciate
13 that.

14 MRS. CORLESS: Okay, thank you.

15 So since we're finished with our question
16 session, we have no executive session, so we can adjourn.

17 I'd like to thank everyone for attending our
18 meeting. Our next meeting will be February 11th.
19 Everybody please stay safe.

20 FEMALE: We need a Motion to Adjourn, Roe.

21 MRS. CORLESS: Yes, oh, sorry, Motion to
22 Adjourn.

23 FEMALE: So moved.

24 FEMALE: Second.

25 MRS. CORLESS: All in favor?

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FEMALE: Aye.

FEMALE: Aye.

MRS. CORLESS: Okay, thank you again, everyone.
We'll see you next time.

MR. FISCHETTI: Thank you, goodnight.

MRS. CORLESS: Goodnight.

MRS. TESTA: Goodnight.

FEMALE: Goodnight. Happy New Year.

FEMALE: Yeah, Happy --

(WHEREUPON, this audio was concluded.)

