



**NORTH BELLMORE UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT  
BOARD OF EDUCATION  
MINUTES – OCTOBER 10, 2024**

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Business Meeting	Martin Avenue School 2616 Martin Avenue, Bellmore, NY 11710	7:30 PM
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The Business meeting of the North Bellmore Union Free School District Board of Education was held on Thursday evening, October 10, 2024, in the All Purpose Room of the Martin Avenue School at 2616 Martin Avenue, North Bellmore, New York.

The following members of the Board of Education were present:

Nina Lanci, President  
Rosemarie Corless, Vice President  
Melissa Cmar-Grote  
Christopher Nardo

The following member of the Board of Education was absent (attended a Board related out-of-district meeting):

Christine Malloy

Also present:

Marie Testa, Superintendent of Schools  
Janet Pollitt, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction  
Jacqueline Rehak, Assistant Superintendent for Business  
Christopher Powers, District Counsel  
Laurice Gunnels, District Clerk

**CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 6:36 p.m. A motion was made by Mrs. Cmar-Grote, seconded by Mrs. Corless to move into an executive session. Motion was carried 4-0. The meeting reconvened at 7:50 p.m.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Mrs. Lanci led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**MISSION STATEMENT**

Mr. Nardo read the District’s Mission Statement.

**SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS:  
*Park Avenue Sixth Grade  
BOE Representatives***

Dr. Lynn Coyle, Principal of Park Avenue, happily greeted those in attendance and invited the BOE sixth grade representatives from Park up to the podium for their introduction and presentation.

- Joshua Eromon
- Harnoor Kaur
- Olivia Sparks
- Ben Terzulli

**Park Avenue Sixth Grade  
BOE Representatives  
(continued)**

The sixth-grade student representatives collectively shared with the BOE Park Avenue's "One Word Project" inspired by the district's core values whereby students chose a word as a focus of their intention for the school year. The student representatives individually shared their *one-word* goals, i.e. hardworking, kind, successful, and drive corresponding to school, friendships, and extracurriculars. The audience viewed photos of the decorative display board and one-word forms completed by faculty and students adorning the hallway at Park Avenue. The BOE sixth grade student representatives invited all attendees to participate in their project and distributed canvas boards for those present to contribute responses to be placed amongst those already on display. In closing they shared their love of their experiences over the years at Park Avenue extending gratitude and appreciation to the BOE, Mrs. Testa, and the Administrators.

Dr. Coyle congratulated the students on their hard work and presentation, and shared gratitude to the BOE for the invitation and experience this evening. Mrs. Testa expressed being truly "*inspired*" by the *One Word Project*, characterizing the selection of a word or goal as an intention that brings clarity and purpose to align and motivate actions to achieve it. Mrs. Testa congratulated the students, referring to them as "*masterpieces*," and addressed the importance of their individualized goals on future achievements. Certificates were presented to the students from the BOE.

**Nawrocki Smith -Audit  
Presentation: Fiscal School  
Year Ending June 30, 2024**

Mr. John Castles, Director of Nawrocki Smith, was in attendance this evening to present the results of the external audit of the district's financial statements for the fiscal school year ending June 30, 2024, conducted in accordance with U.S. generally accepted auditing standards, Government Auditing Standards as well as Uniform Guidance. He spoke to audit readiness with timely accurate closing of books and records, clean or unmodified opinions in all auditor's reports, and summarized the districtwide financial statements. No material weaknesses or significant deficiencies in internal control were noted. Mr. Castles commended the Business Office, specifically Mrs. Rehak and Mr. Newman, on their timely readiness, excellent cooperation and organization. No questions were posed by the BOE.

**Curriculum & Instruction/  
Assessment Update**

Mrs. Pollitt extended gratitude to the BOE for availing time this evening for a Curriculum & Instruction/Assessment update. Mrs. Pollitt, Ms. McNamara, and Mrs. Spithogiannis created a detailed power point presentation illustrating the development and growth in the North Bellmore learning environment. To start, Mrs. Pollitt spoke of the guiding principles for success in learning, emphasizing the continual research and constant assessment of methodologies, and highlighted topics to be discussed.

As a brief synopsis of the presentation this evening, Ms. McNamara began by delving into the importance behind "*the Science of reading*" placing emphasis on foundational skill development through phonemic awareness, phonics instruction, vocabulary, and comprehension. An overview of the growth and shifts in programs utilized districtwide was detailed, i.e. Foundations, decodable texts (Wilson Geodes, Flyleaf, Benchmark), and new for last year Heggerty (K-2). In furtherance, the importance of assessment and analyzation to gain insight into target skill areas requiring learning development were addressed. Ms. McNamara and Mrs.

**Curriculum & Instruction/  
Assessment Update  
(continued)**

Spithogiannis described the tools utilized for assessing student progress and the continual growth in this area from Fountas & Pinnell to Primary Literacy Benchmark, the continuation of iReady Reading and Math Diagnostics, and new for this year the implementation of Acadience Reading Benchmark Assessment K-6. The results are inputted into the Branching Minds platform, the Multi-Tier System of Supports (MTSS), utilized by teachers and/or service providers to track student needs and progress, and Data Review Meetings are conducted with the principal, classroom teachers, and support specialists to create, revise, and implement student support plans if necessary.

In closing, Mrs. Pollitt indicated a parent newsletter is currently being drafted of the changes discussed this evening and a detailed copy of this presentation will be available on the website for review. She again thanked the Board for the time allotted this evening and inquired if they had any questions.

Mrs. Cmar-Grote, with the understanding that Heggerty is utilized in Grades K-2, inquired what happens in Grades 3-6. In response Mrs. Pollitt confirmed Heggerty is utilized in K-2, but there is grammatical work Kindergarten through sixth grade too including Sarah Cordova's grammar units in reading and writing implemented last year. In furtherance, Ms. McNamara described Heggerty as one of the most foundational programs for primary grade levels and for students requiring further instruction in Grades 3-6, spoke of the utilization of one-on-one or small group instruction, support services through the reading and/or speech departments, and Bridge the Gap for students in Grades 2-8 if needed.

Mr. Nardo inquired how parents will be informed of the overall new assessment system including understanding the method of scoring. Mrs. Pollitt explained the information will be provided including the rationale of why we needed to make the change, what we chose and why, and how it will help the educator and the parents.

Mrs. Corless inquired whether parents will be able to see the first, middle, and end assessments to gauge their child's progress. Mrs. Pollitt explained assessments of this nature are not sent home, but are discussed at Parent/Teacher Conferences, and/or if an area of concern is noticed, a parent would be contacted if a child required additional support. She did indicate results may be provided upon parent request.

An additional question was posed by Mr. Nardo with respect to iReady analyzation of student performance which may or may not have been impacted by Covid and the production of those results. Mrs. Pollitt did indicate data such as this does exist and could be made available, but due to time constraints was not the primary focus this evening. In reiteration, Mrs. Testa stressed the goal this evening was to overview the scope of the changes based on the assessments and the shifts that were made particularly in the science of reading and expressed a more comprehensive dive into this can be done in the future if that is the Board's request.

Mrs. Corless inquired if the assessments were all computer-based testing. Mrs. Pollitt responded that the only test currently digital is iReady, and all other testing is paper, pencil, and/or oral.

***Curriculum & Instruction/  
Assessment Update  
(continued)***

Mrs. Pollitt thanked the BOE again for their time this evening, and let the Board know if more questions arise, to relay them through Mrs. Testa so they may be addressed. Mrs. Lanci expressed gratitude for the presentation and appreciation for the years and years of planning and implementation.

*Mrs. Lanci indicated Mrs. Malloy is not in attendance this evening as she is representing the BOE at an out-of-District board related meeting.*

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

ON A MOTION by Mrs. Corless, seconded by Mr. Nardo, and carried 4-0, the Board of Education approved the minutes of the Business meeting of September 12, 2024.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS  
(Agenda Items only)**

Guidelines to Public Comments:

Any person wishing to make comments or raise questions shall complete an information card. Questions are to be addressed to the Board President, not to individual board members. Personal attacks on individual board members, administrators and staff will not be tolerated and may be cause to adjourn the meeting. There will be no back and forth dialogue. Out of courtesy and fairness to the rest of the audience, it would be appreciated if each visitor would limit his/her remarks to not more than three minutes or ask only one question. Public discussion on matters relating to staff and students, at which their reputation, privacy, or rights to due process, or those of others could be in some way violated, is prohibited.

There were no public comments relating to agenda items only.

**CORRESPONDENCE**

Mrs. Lanci advised that the Board received correspondence.

**TREASURER'S  
REPORT**

ON A MOTION by Mrs. Corless, seconded by Mr. Nardo, and carried 4-0, the Board of Education approved the Treasurer's report for the month ended August 31, 2024.

**BOARD COMMITTEE / HIGH  
SCHOOL REPORTS**

Mrs. Corless said the BMCHSD met the evening prior. She shared there was an introduction of the new BOE student representatives to be present at every meeting to report on their respective schools, and amongst them on behalf of Mepham HS is Jake Classie, former North Bellmore/Newbridge Road School graduate. Mrs. Corless spoke of the NICHE report which utilizes test scores, graduation rate, college readiness, etc. to rank school districts, and proudly shared the BMCHSD ranked 71 amongst over ten thousand schools nationwide, and 13<sup>th</sup> out of almost 600 schools in NYS. Continuing in celebration, she was excited to report three BMCHSD students were selected to the NYSSMA All State competition, and two students, one from Kennedy and one from Callahan, were selected as National Merit Semi Finalists. The next meeting will be held on November 6.

**FINANCE**

The Board of Education acknowledges the review of the warrants that have been approved by the Claims Auditor for the month of September 2024.

**SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT**

Mrs. Testa reiterated that correspondence was received and addressed with the BOE for their consideration.

- A holiday request for 2025/26 to add Eid al-Adha and to continue Eid al-fitr which was added previously. For this consideration a calendar was given to the BOE for their review.
- A food request was received to add pizzeria pizza and Halah food. Potential options are being investigated.

In furtherance of the above, Mrs. Testa spoke to the need for potential work sessions with the BOE to discuss these matters as well as a separate session for an update on Capital Projects and possible options with respect to the potential air conditioning legislation proposed by Governor Hochel. She did request the BOE to check their calendars and submit dates for future availability if necessary.

Mrs. Testa extended her gratitude to the principals, teachers, and parents who participated in Back-to-School night, and particularly to the PTA/PTA Coordinating Council and teachers, for their continued support of pediatric and breast cancer awareness in Going Gold held on September 27, and Go Pink Day, tomorrow, October 11. Mrs. Testa reminded tomorrow is emergency preparedness day with a scheduled dismissal at 2:45 p.m.

In closing, Mrs. Testa was excited to share that all schools will be conducting parades in celebration of Halloween this year, and to keep in mind the kickoff of the annual candy drive in support of the Lions Club/Polar Express.

**CONSENT AGENDA**  
*(Item Nos. 11.1 to 11.2)*

ON A MOTION made by Mrs. Cmar-Grote, seconded by Mrs. Corless, and carried 4-0, the Board of Education approves Item Nos. 11.1 through 11.2.

**PERSONNEL REPORT**

11.1 BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education approve the Personnel Report dated October 10, 2024 (on file at District Office.)

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

**STAFF DEVELOPMENT**

11.2 BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education approve the Staff Development Report dated October 10, 2024 (on file at District Office.)

**BUSINESS DEPARTMENT REPORT**

There was no independent Business Department Report presented this evening. See *Special Presentations* for the report from Nawrocki Smith with respect to the audit conducted on fiscal school year ending June 30, 2024.

**SPECIAL EDUCATION CPSE/CSE REPORTS**

ON A MOTION by Mrs. Cmar-Grote, seconded by Mrs. Corless, and carried 4-0, the Board of Education approves the CPSE and CSE reports dated September 30, 2024 (on file at District Office).

**CONSENT AGENDA**  
*(Item Nos. 14.1 to 14.12)*

ON A MOTION made by Mrs. Cmar-Grote, seconded by Mrs. Corless, and carried 4-0, the Board of Education approves Item Nos. 14.1 to 14.12.

**NEW BUSINESS:  
CONTRACTS**

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

- Barry & Florence Friedberg, JCC
- Brookville Center for Children’s Services, Inc.
- Cam Held Enterprises, Inc. DBA Just Kids Early Childhood Learning Center
- Kids First Evaluation & Advocacy Center, Inc.
- Variety Child Learning Center

**DONATIONS**

14.2 BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education accept a donation from the Holmes family of six 12-inch patio planter mums for decoration at Martin Avenue School. Approximate value: \$100.00.

14.3 BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education accept a donation from the Newbridge Road School PTA of a refrigerator to be placed in the teachers’ lounge in recognition of Teacher Appreciation Week. Approximate value: \$500.00.

**TRANSPORTATION**

14.4 BE IT RESOLVED, moved that the Board of Education approve new transportation contracts awarded to the lowest bidder from the BMCHSD Transportation Consortium Bid of 05/01/24 for the 2024/2025 school year with:

- We Transport, Inc.
- First Student, Inc.

**2023-24 NAWROCKI  
SMITH/AUDIT REPORT**

14.5 BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, accept the Audit Report for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2024, as presented by Nawrocki Smith, LLP, Certified Public Accountants.

**2023-24 INTERNAL AUDIT  
RISK ASSESSMENT  
CORRECTIVE ACTION PLAN**

14.6 BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education hereby accepts the 2023-24 Internal Audit Risk Assessment Corrective Action Plan.

**2023-24 PURCHASING  
& ACCOUNTS PAYABLE  
INTERNAL AUDIT  
CORRECTIVE ACTION PLAN**

14.7 BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education hereby accepts the 2023-24 Purchasing & Accounts Payable Internal Audit Corrective Action Plan.

**NASSAU BOCES  
TRANSPORTATION  
CONTRACTS**

14.8 BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education approve the 2024-25 Transportation Contracts for transportation with Nassau BOCES.

**NBTA MEMORANDUM OF  
AGREEMENT**

14.9 BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education hereby approves an MOA with the North Bellmore Teachers Association on behalf of the Classroom Music Teachers dated October 10, 2024 (on file at District Office).

**EMPLOYMENT AGREEMENTS**

14.10 BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education approve a Memorandum of Terms and Conditions between North Bellmore Union Free School District and the following employees effective July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2028 (on file at District Office):

- Janet Pollitt, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction
- Jacqueline Rehak, Assistant Superintendent for Business
- Denise Fisher, Executive Director of Personnel
- Leyna Malone, Executive. Director of Pupil Personnel Services and Special Education
- Jason Fischetti, Executive Director of Technology, Data and Information Services
- Tillie McNamara, Director of Educational Programs and Staff Development
- Richard Russo, Director of School Facilities

**BMCHSD TRANSPORTATION PIGGYBACK CONTRACT**

14.11 BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education approve that the North Bellmore School District enter into a piggyback contract for the 2024/2025 school year with the Bellmore Merrick CHSD and First Student, Inc. for the transport of a student to an out of district non-public school. This would result in a cost savings to the North Bellmore School District, as the original contracted cost is substantially lower than new contracts that have bid out to schools of similar distance.

**NEW BUSINESS CONTRACTS**

14.12 BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education approve the following contracts for the 2024/2025 school year (on file at District Office):

- The Distinctive Educators Institute, Inc.
- Amanda McCarthy
- Mind Prep Tutoring, LLC
- Sensory Stars Pediatric Therapy

**OLD BUSINESS**

No old business was discussed.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**Guidelines to Public Comments:

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There were no public comments.

**POTENTIAL EXECUTIVE SESSION**

ON A MOTION by Mrs. Corless, seconded by Mrs. Cmar-Grote, and carried 4-0, the Board of Education entered Executive Session at 9:45 p.m. to discuss personnel matters.

**ADJOURNMENT**

ON A MOTION by Mrs. Cmar-Grote seconded by Mrs. Corless, and carried 4-0, the meeting was adjourned at 10:30 p.m. The next business meeting will be held on Thursday, November 14, 2024.

Respectfully submitted,

Laurice Gunnels  
District Clerk