

# PRESS RELEASE

## FLORAL PARK-BELLEROSE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING – January 11, 2024

The Regular Meeting of the Board of Education of the Floral Park-Bellerose Elementary School District was conducted at the John Lewis Childs School and via teleconference on Thursday, January 11, 2024 at 7:00 p.m. Minutes of the December 11, 2023 Regular Meeting, Treasurer’s Report, Health Report, Cafeteria Report and Schedule of Disbursements were approved or accepted as submitted.

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by the following JLCS students: Clare Catterson, Gabriel Cheng, Madison Coke, Sagar Doshi, Gurmurat Kaur, Jack Kelleher, Tess McCarthy, Justin Neisha, Sebastian Perez, Reagan Redmond, Aoife Smith, and Natalie Solis.

The above listed students conducted a presentation on the JLCS school store. This was led by teacher, Janice Hyland.

Assistant Superintendent of Business, Linda Macias, presented an overview of the budget development for the 2024-25 school year, with a focus on transportation and personnel.

### **Interim Superintendent:**

Interim Superintendent Ruiz reported that due to the new construction taking place at Belmont Park, there has been a spike in mice sightings at the Floral Park-Bellerose School, particularly in the kitchen area. She addressed some incorrect information being circulated that there are rats at the school. She assured the public that the rodents were mice, not rats. She remarked that this is not a welcome situation, but it is something that both schools have had to deal with from time to time due to the large field spaces and the proximity to both Belmont and the railroad tracks. Anytime there is increased construction activity in those locations, the district may experience an uptick in unwelcome visitors. The Department of Health visited the district last week for an unannounced inspection to address a complaint they received regarding an alleged rodent infestation. During the visit, the Department of Health indicated that the district is doing “everything correctly” and they thanked the school for their efforts in mitigating this issue. Interim Ruiz stated that there were no public health hazards found and she thanked the Food Service Manager, Mrs. Crenshaw, for taking all appropriate measures. There was some weather stripping found that needed to be replaced, which is in the process of being addressed.

Interim Superintendent gave an update on the district's four goals:

### **Goal #1 Fostering Culture and Communication:**

#### *Parent University*

Interim Superintendent Ruiz is excited to announce a series of upcoming Parent University workshops designed to enhance the engagement and support of the school community. Dr. Caryl Oris will lead a session focusing on social skills and play tailored specifically for Pre-K and Kindergarten families on January 30th at 6:00 p.m. in the FPBS library, with in-person and remote options. All families are invited to participate. Additionally, the schedule for the upcoming Parent Universities is as follows:

- February 12, 2024 - Technology Toolbox for Families
- March 19, 2024 - Let’s Talk About Building Resiliency in your Child
- May 2, 2024 - Let’s Talk About Stress and Anxiety

### **Goal #2 Opportunity and Success for All:**

The district is preparing for PreK registration which will begin on or about February 2<sup>nd</sup>. As the program is funded through the State and a Federal Universal PreKindergarten Grant, and although the district hopes to accommodate all who register, the district may need to hold a lottery in the event that it exceeds the allowable funding which is 156 students. This year, the district was able to accommodate all students who were interested in the PreK program and were able to partner with Kiddie Academy to support a class of FPBS students who attend there. Interim Superintendent Ruiz recently provided a presentation for both schools' faculties sharing the full results of the Student Experience Survey and the Faculty S.W.O.T. (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) Analysis conducted earlier this year related to the strategic planning process. The survey revealed that the schools had very high-level results on the student survey with an overwhelming majority of students reporting that they feel safe, accepted, valued, and cared for, and feel emotionally engaged through the strong relationships they have with teachers and peers. Interim Superintendent Ruiz stated that she is proud of the administrators, teachers, and staff for the work they do to create a positive learning culture and climate in both schools.

#### Goal #3 Exploration and Innovation:

The first series of sessions for the SCOPE After School Enrichment Program concluded before the holiday break. The students were deeply engaged in learning as they participated in lessons focusing on physics along with engineering.

#### *Saturday Enrichment Academy*

This past Saturday, the Saturday Enrichment Academy commenced. Over 150 students are participating in this exciting and engaging experience. Incorporating student choice into the program, students have had the opportunity to select and participate in courses such as Team Sports and Fitness, Silly Science Safari, Short Circuit Robotics and Engineering, and Cool Cooking just to name a few.

#### *Tech Tools*

Ms. Patwell, Director of Curriculum & Instructional Technology, has been preparing an informative presentation titled "Looking into our Technology Toolbox." This presentation is scheduled for a Parent University on February 12<sup>th</sup> and is designed to provide an overview of the instructional technology apps and programs available to students. The presentation categorizes these tools into personalized learning tools, engagement and participation enhancers, assessment tools, supplemental resources, and content creation platforms.

#### Goal #4 Maximizing Resources:

Interim Superintendent Ruiz reported that the budget process is well underway. She thanked Mrs. Macias, Assistant Superintendent for Business, for leading the budget development process and stated that all information will be posted on the school website.

#### **High School:**

Sewanhaka Central High School District Board of Education Trustee Peltonen was pleased to report that Mrs. Calabrese officially began her role as Principal of Floral Park Memorial High School on December 22<sup>nd</sup>. Her experience and administrative expertise facilitated a smooth transition for students, families, and staff. In addition, Mr. Michael Farina has been selected as the Assistant Principal at Floral Park Memorial High School, filling the vacancy created by Mrs. Calabrese's appointment. Mr. Farina began his appointment on January 2<sup>nd</sup>. He brings with him 18 years of experience in the District. Trustee Peltonen stated that all administrative positions are filled with a robust and cohesive leadership team. At the December 19<sup>th</sup> Board of Education meeting, the specifications for the Superintendent of Schools position were adopted by the Board. Advertising for this position will continue through January, with interviews scheduled for the next two months. It is anticipated that a slate of 4-6 candidates will be presented to the Board at the February 27<sup>th</sup> meeting. Interviews will be conducted in March, with a final selection in April. This timeline aligns with the plan outlined by Interim Superintendent Dr. Dolan upon accepting the position in July of 2023. The Counseling Center will be hosting a presentation at this month's District Parent University, featuring workshops on stress, social media,

parent-teen communication, and organizational skills. Trustee Peltonen stated that this event will be held on January 18<sup>th</sup> at Floral Park Memorial High School from 5-7 p.m. and is aimed at providing valuable insights to parents. Trustee Peltonen congratulated the varsity track team as they did exceptionally well at their recent meet, with thirteen athletes earning All-Conference recognition in their respective events. The boys' team secured second place overall, while the girls' team achieved fourth place overall. On January 6<sup>th</sup>, the Floral Park Florettes participated in their first Long Island dance team competition, showcasing impressive kickline/pom routines. Trustee Peltonen acknowledged the team for placing first in their pom routine. In addition, Trustee Peltonen was pleased to share the musical talents within the district. Fifteen students have been selected for All County ensembles and three students have been selected for The Long Island Strings Festival Association. Trustee Peltonen stated that their achievements highlight the dedication and skills of all the musicians. Floral Park Memorial High School will host the 6<sup>th</sup> Grade articulation program, "Knight of the Knights," on Wednesday, January 17<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 p.m. in the school auditorium. Please note the corrected time is 6:00 p.m. The District Music Festival will be held on Thursday, February 1<sup>st</sup> at Floral Park Memorial High School starting at 7:30 p.m. The event will honor former Superintendent of Schools, Dr. James Grossane. The next Board of Education for the Sewanhaka Central High School District will be held on January 23<sup>rd</sup> at 8 p.m. at Elmont Memorial High School.

**Budget Advisory Committee:**

The next meeting for this committee will be held on January 25, 2024.

**Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Committee:**

The next meeting for this committee will be held on March 27, 2024.

**Policy Committee:**

A meeting will be scheduled to review policies.

**Safety Committee Meeting:**

The next meeting for this committee will be held on February 14, 2024.

**Strategic Planning Committee:**

The next meeting for this committee will be held on January 18, 2024.

**Technology Committee:**

The next meeting for this committee will be held on March 13, 2024.

**Wellness Committee:**

The next meeting for this committee will be held on March 7, 2024.

**Board:**

No reports.

**Board acceptance or approval was granted for the following:**

***Educational Programs:*** Committee on Preschool Special Education reports; Committee on Special Education reports; Subcommittee on Special Education reports; Section 504 Committee reports; Consultation Agreement with Dr. Kimberly Williams and School Life Plus report.

**Personnel:** Appointments of Assistant to Treasurer, Title IX Coordinator and Civil Rights Compliance Officer – Dr. Peter Rufa; Memorandum of Agreements with Aides and Assistants’ Unit and Teachers’ Association and Certified and Non-Certified Personnel reports.

**Business:** Side Letter Agreement to Teachers’ Association; 403(b) Plan Amendment; All Pro Painting Settlement Agreement; 2024 Standard Mileage Rate; FPBS 2022-23 Capital Project Payments to Architect, Architect and Asphalt; FPBS & JLCS 2022-23 Capital Project Change Orders for Early Childhood Playground; JLCS 2022-23 Capital Project Payment for Asphalt; Disposal of Equipment and Budget Transfers.

Dates:

Workshop Meeting - Thursday, January 25, 2024 at 7:00 p.m.  
Floral Park-Bellerose School Library

Regular Meeting - Monday, February 5, 2024 at 8:00 p.m.  
John Lewis Childs School Auditorium

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