

**REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION**  
**November 4, 2024 – Beach Street Middle School**

PRESENT: Mr. Tussie, Mrs. Brown, Mr. Antonello, Mr. Bedell, Mrs. Kelly, Mrs. Marks, Mr. McCann

ABSENT: None

ADMINISTRATORS: Dr. Romanelli, Mrs. Pellati, Mr. Cameron

ABSENT: Mrs. Morrison

ATTORNEY: Mr. Vigliotta

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Meeting called to order at 7:30 p.m. followed by the Pledge.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. Tussie stated that today we honor the one-year anniversary of the tragic passing of Kyle Dilegame and his brother Matthew Kreamer. This tragedy has touched so many hearts in our community and a moment of silence was observed to remember these two young men and their families as we continue to support one another during the healing process.

Mr. Tussie acknowledged the West Islip High School students who are interested in becoming the Student Board of Education Representative and are observing tonight's board meeting.

Mr. Tussie congratulated the West Islip High School Girls Soccer Team on becoming the Suffolk County Champions and they will be competing for the Long Island Championship on Tuesday, November 5, 2024.

Student Representative Report:

Taylor Riley spoke about the successful fundraising throughout the month of October for Breast Cancer Awareness. Approximately \$500 will be donated to this Coalition. A few of the student representatives along with some Board of Education members took a tour of the high school and the students were very glad to take into consideration the critiques and praise. Mr. Tussie stated the students did a great job on the tour and how proud he was of them.

Krista Williams stated that the Student Government is looking forward to hosting their annual Holiday party for the Special Education students.

DISCUSSION

Regionalization

Dr. Romanelli shared a Power Point presentation from the September 2024 Board of Regents meeting regarding the regionalization plans in New York State. New York State is facing significant challenges within and across communities in preparing all students for college, career and civic readiness including student access to high-quality educational opportunities, fiscal constraints and new graduation measures initiative. Regionalization is being presented as an opportunity to provide equitable learning experiences for all students across New York State. Dr. Romanelli stated that regionalization is not supposed to be reorganization.

Dr. Romanelli shared that as a unified team, the Central Administration, the West Islip Association of School Administrators (WIASA), the West Islip Teachers Association (WITA), and the Board of Education, approved a letter to Assistant Commissioner David Frank addressing this matter. The concerns outlined in the letter are directly related to the recent emergency rulemaking initiated by the New York State Education Department (NYSED) on the development and implementation of regionalization plans for BOCES regions. While we recognize the importance of optimizing educational resources and opportunities, we believe that regionalization, as currently proposed, will not effectively achieve these goals. We have respectfully requested that NYSED

reconsider this rulemaking and to prioritize a process that values local control, stakeholder engagement, and community-specific needs.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion was made by Debbie Brown, seconded by Richard Antoniello, and carried when all Board members present voted in favor to approve the minutes of the October 22, 2024 Planning Session.

PERSONNEL

Motion was made by Debbie Brown, seconded by Richard Antoniello, and carried when all Board members present voted in favor to approve TEACHING: TENURE APPOINTMENT: Kelly O’Hara, Elementary, effective November 5, 2024.

Motion was made by Debbie Brown, seconded by Richard Antoniello, and carried when all Board members present voted in favor to approve TEACHING: TENURE APPOINTMENT: Kaitlin Palmieri, Psychologist, effective December 13, 2024.

Motion was made by Debbie Brown, seconded by Richard Antoniello, and carried when all Board members present voted in favor to approve TEACHING: PROBATIONARY APPOINTMENT: Melanie Rabin, Special Education, effective December 2, 2024 through December 1, 2028 (Beach; Step1A MA, replacing Amy Wheeler {reassigned}).

*In order to be granted tenure a classroom teacher or building principal shall have received composite or overall annual professional performance review ratings pursuant to Education Law § 3012-d of either effective or highly effective in at least three of the four preceding years and if a classroom teacher or building principal receives an ineffective composite or overall rating in the final year of the probationary period he or she shall not be eligible for tenure at that time.*

Motion was made by Debbie Brown, seconded by Richard Antoniello, and carried when all Board members present voted in favor to approve the following personnel consent agenda items CL-1, CL-2 and Other as listed below:

CIVIL SERVICE

**CL-1**

RESIGNATION

Alexander Ruffini, Paraprofessional  
Effective November 9, 2024  
(Paul J. Bellew)

Ashley Tagliaferri, Part-Time Food Service Worker  
Effective November 11, 2024  
(Udall)

John Vasquez, Guard  
Effective October 25, 2024  
(Districtwide)

**CL-2**

SUBSTITUTE CUSTODIAN (\$16/hr)

Alba Cipriano, effective November 5, 2024

**OTHER**

**PERMANENT SUBSTITUTE TEACHER** (\$150 per diem)

Gianna Covello, effective November 4, 2024 – June 27, 2025  
Giavanna Dushaj, effective December 2, 2024 – June 27, 2025  
Diana Gifford, effective November 5, 2024 – June 27, 2025

**SUBSTITUTE TEACHER** (\$130 per diem)

David Flores, effective November 5, 2024, *student teacher*  
Matthew Frouws, effective October 29, 2024, leave step substitute (\$305.13 per diem)

**CLUBS/ADVISORS 2024-2025**

**BEACH STREET MIDDLE SCHOOL**

Art Club Grade 6, Richard Santeramo  
Art Club Grades 7 & 8, Richard Santeramo  
Chess Club, Christopher Scharf  
Costume Director, Justin DeMaio and Shane O'Neill (shared)  
Director – Beach Chamber Orchestra, Vincent Melia  
Director – Beach Jazz Ensemble, Stephen Smith  
Drama Director, Justin DeMaio and Shane O'Neill  
eSports, John Lavery and Christopher Scharf  
Helping Hands, Jamie Doherty  
Homework Club All Grades, Theresa Robertson  
Improv & Acting Games Club, Jesse Fawess  
Interior Visionaries, Jessie Fawess and Jaquelyn Vaysman (shared)  
Junior Chef Club, Alessia Tocco  
Leading Lions Club, Carly Aponte  
Makerspace Club, Denise Lamattina  
Mathletes Grade 7, Christopher Salerno  
Mathletes Grade 8, Jeannine Conaghan  
Musical Director, Justin DeMaio  
National Junior Honor Society, Theresa Robertson and Christopher Scharf (shared)  
Newspaper, Jesse Fawess  
Peer Tutoring Grade 7, Andrea Miller  
Peer Tutoring Grade 8, Siobhan Kelly  
Photography, Robyn Southard  
Prove Me Wrong Debate Club, Siobhan Kelly and Andrea Miller (shared)  
School Store, John Lavery and Christopher Salerno (shared)  
Science Olympiad, Andrea Miller and Ashley Pope  
Set Director, Shane O'Neill  
SMILE, Kathleen Slayback  
Spirit Club, Theresa Robertson  
Strategic Games & Activities Club, John Kennedy  
Student Council, Wendy Loddigs and Tara Probert  
Swift Fan Club, Jamie Doherty  
Technology Club, Ashley Pope  
Yearbook, Theresa Robertson

**OTHER,**  
continued

**CLUBS/ADVISORS 2024-2025, continued**

**MANETUCK**

Safety Patrol Club, Greg Schmalenberger

**SWIM PROGRAM AND SWIM TEAMS 2024-2025**

**Lifeguards**

Benjamin Caiati

**EARLY WINTER 2024-2025 MIDDLE SCHOOL COACHES**

**CHEERLEADING**

Genna Johnson, Volunteer Beach Coach

**CURRICULUM REPORT**

Dr. Romanelli spoke about Superintendent's Conference Day that is being held on Tuesday, November 5, 2024. Mr. Jin Kim, who is one of the leading school safety experts in the country, will be the keynote speaker. There will also be numerous breakout sessions for the staff lead by in-house staff. It will be a meaningful day for the staff.

Dr. Romanelli reported on the first meeting of The Anxious Generation book talk. Topics discussed included screen time, electronic devices, social media, and different issues that youth are facing today and how we can support them. The next meeting will be held at the West Islip High School Library on January 2, 2025 at 7:00 pm.

**REPORT OF COMMITTEES**

**Audit Committee:** Christina Marks reported on the meeting that was held on 10/10/2024. Items reviewed included the audited financial statements and corrective action plan for year ending June 30, 2024 that were presented by the District's auditing firm, R.S. Abrams & Co., LLP.

**Building & Grounds Committee:** Peter McCann reported on the meeting that was held on 10/22/2024. Items reviewed included smooth transition from cooling to heating with the new A/C split units; District office security vestibule construction estimated completion date of February 2025; permit requirement for the usage of the school gyms during the winter months for sports/clubs; High School pool renovation is still on schedule; IT Department offices were moved to the High School.

**Health & Wellness Alliance:** Grace Kelly reported on the meeting that was held on 11/4/2024. Items reviewed included financial report; Glow Run at the High school on 11/6/24; third annual Gingerbread decorating party will be held at 6:00 p.m. on 12/18/24 at West Islip High School; formation of the Health & Wellness Senior Scholarship Application Committee; this year funds totaling \$1,562 were raised for the West Islip Breast Cancer Coalition and with a total over the years of \$47,585.

The Mental Health & Wellness sub-committee Zoom meeting was held on 10/15/2024. Items reviewed included the focus on screen time and mental health, cell phone use and social media. All families received the first newsletter with helpful information on the topic and how the District is supporting cell phone use with the new cell phone policy.

Safety Committee: Quinn Bedell reported on the meeting that was held on 11/4/2024. Items reviewed included security technology updates regarding keyless locks; security camera maintenance; sports play-off season and security traveling with teams; communication from teachers and students including security to aid where needed with problems or issues; window stoppers will be re-installed on first floor windows; adding signage throughout the District regarding no admittance on school property during school hours.

Special Education Committee: Debbie Brown reported on the meeting that was held on 11/4/2024. Items reviewed included IEP, CSE and CPSE recommendations from respective committees and will be approved at this evening's meeting. Mrs. Brown stated that the Special Education Department continues to work hard with our students and families to support their learning and program needs; professional development has been provided for teachers on the ICT models; life skills class held a Halloween dance where peers joined them including the unified football partners. The Special Education Department will model some of our ICT programs for district representatives from Bayport-Blue Point Schools. Crisis Intervention Training is in progress in the District. The SEPTA silent dance will be held from 6:00 p.m.-8:00 p.m. on 11/15/24 at Udall Road Middle School gymnasium.

Education Committee: Richard Antonello reported on the meeting that was held on 11/4/2024. Items reviewed included Mastery Learning and Equitable Grading Practices; Superintendent's Conference Day professional development programs; 2025-2026 Pre-K discussion; Elementary Literacy Program pilot called Fish Tank was completed.

Finance Committee: Christina Marks reported on the meeting that was held on 11/4/2024. Items reviewed included treasurer's report; school district funds and extracurricular for September; payroll summary for September; financial statements for September; internal claims audit report for October; system manager audit trail for October; payroll certifications for weeks of 10/16/2024 and 10/30/2024; review of warrants; review of board agenda finance items which included approval of budget transfers. Mrs. Marks stated that the District's internal auditors Cullen & Danowski are on site this week working on the annual risk assessment. The District issued a \$20 million tax anticipation note, as it does each year. The sale will take place on 11/5/2024, with closing on 11/14/2024. The results will be announced at the December's Finance Committee meeting.

Policy Committee: Anthony Tussie reported on the meeting that was held on 11/4/2024. Items reviewed included Board of Education's self-evaluation tool, which will give the Board Trustees an opportunity to self-evaluate the following categories: Leadership, Communication, Parent & Community Participation, Planning and Setting Goals, Decision Making, Resource Allocation, Evaluation of the Superintendent, Working with the Superintendent, Expectations for Board Member Conduct, Board Operations, Board Meeting Effectiveness and Board Development & Accountability. The Board of Education trustees will review the questions in these categories to provide a rating of outstanding, good, needs improvement, poor, or do not know annually. This tool is intended to help the Trustees reflect on their year, and improve their operation the following year.

The Board of Education reviewed the Facilities Development Policy (Series-7000) recommendations from Human Resources and Buildings & Grounds and will seek additional input from NYSSBA and Legal Counsel. The Support Services (Series 8000) review recommendations based on crosswalk of current manual and upon review of Series 8000, it is recommended to focus on the required and essential policies suggested in the 8000 series. Additional conversation was had about maintaining our current policy manual in its current form while making all necessary updates based on New York State, education department, regulations, and laws governing the school board and its operation. In addition, Mr. Cameron will continue to work with NYSSBA, Legal Counsel, and the West Islip BOE to update our new policy manual. Once complete, a recommendation will be made to have two readings of the policy manual and adoption once the new policy manual is complete.

#### FINANCIAL MATTERS:

Motion was made by Debbie Brown, seconded by Richard Antonello, and carried when all Board members present voted in favor to approve 2024-2025 General Fund budget transfers 4454-4455.

PRESIDENT’S REPORT:

Motion was made by Debbie Brown, seconded by Richard Antonello, and carried when all Board members present voted in favor to approve resolution re: the Board of Education approves the recommendations of the Special Education Committee of students as listed in the District’s backup and authorizes the District to arrange for appropriate services.

Resolution

*Be it resolved, that the Board of Education of the West Islip UFSD approves the recommendations of the Special Education Committee of students as listed in the District’s backup and authorizes the District to arrange for appropriate services.*

SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT:

Dr. Romanelli stated that West Islip School District will be hosting the Department of Homeland Security’s Cyber Security and Infrastructure Security Agency also known as CISA for a 4-hour tabletop exercise. The goal of the exercise is to access our ability to protect against and detect a cyber-incident, examining policies, plans and procedures that we have in regards to response and resources; explore our internal and external communications along with information sharing procedures during a cyber-incident and discuss our organizational resilience through risk management backup procedures, recover and restoration capabilities during a cyber-incident. It is an opportunity for the District to see how our pre-plans hold up in a mock incident and afterwards the CISA experts prepare a strength and areas of improvement recommendation report. West Islip UFSD is looking forward to this event and has invited representatives from the BOCES Data Privacy Service to attend.

Dr. Romanelli congratulated all the Fall Athletic teams this season. West Islip UFSD received the New York State Public High School Athletic Association School Distinction Award, which is a great honor and we are very proud to be recognized as a school distinction which 100% of the district’s Varsity Sports Teams must earn scholar athlete team recognition, which means that there is a team average of 90 or higher. West Islip is only one of twenty-two New York State School District’s that offer over thirty annual varsity sports to receive this prestigious honor. Congratulations to the student athletes, families, coaches, teachers and our entire West Islip District and staff on this incredible award.

The following residents wished to speak during “Invitation to the Public”:

William Tarpey - Mr. Tarpey spoke about student education and how is the Board of Education innovating assessment methods used to evaluate student learning beyond standardized testing in order to better capture critical thinking, creativity and other essential 21st century skills. Mr. Tussie stated that the Education Committee has been having these discussions for years regarding implementing new ways of assessing students. Dr. Romanelli stated that there is movement in New York State where there are multiple ways for students to demonstrate Mastery of Learning standards and the District has done a lot of work trying to incorporate more of a project based type of assessment for students to showcase their learning in different ways.

Peter McCann – Mr. McCann stated that the Board of Education Student Representative is a good idea.

Noah Butler – Mr. Butler inquired how the student representative would benefit the Board of Education and the student body. Mr. Tussie stated that this is an opportunity to represent themselves and the entire student population.

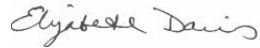
Motion was made by Debbie Brown, seconded by Grace Kelly, and carried when all Board members present voted in favor to adjourn to Executive Session at 6:54 p.m. for the purpose of discussing personnel, negotiations, and/or litigation.

Meeting reconvened at 7:10 p.m. on motion by Grace Kelly, seconded by Debbie Brown, and carried when all Board members present voted in favor.

Motion was made by Debbie Brown, seconded by Richard Antonello, and carried when all Board members present voted in favor to adjourn to a second Executive Session at 8:28 p.m. for the purpose of discussing personnel, negotiations, and/or litigation.

Meeting reconvened at 8:46 p.m. on motion by Debbie Brown, seconded by Richard Antonello, and carried when all Board members present voted in favor.

Respectfully submitted,



Elizabeth Davis  
District Clerk

All correspondence, reports or related materials referred to in these minutes are on file in the District Office.