

**SWEET HOME CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT  
OF AMHERST AND TONAWANDA**

**BOARD OF EDUCATION**

**STUDY SESSION**

**TUESDAY, MARCH 12, 2024  
6:30 PM**

A G E N D A

**I. A. CALL TO ORDER**

**B. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**C. ROLL CALL**

**II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

RESOLVED: That, the agenda set forth for the regular Board of Education meeting held Tuesday, March 19, 2024 is hereby adopted in its entirety.

**III. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

RESOLVED: That, the minutes of the voting meetings held Tuesday, February 6, 2024 and Tuesday, February 13, 2024 be waived and are hereby adopted in their entirety.

**IV. COMMUNICATIONS**

1. Harris Beach Legal Alerts.
2. Letter from Jesse Haug.

**V. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

**VI. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

**A. Boulevard Mall Update**

Brian Kulpa, Amherst Town Supervisor, and Dave Mingoia, Amherst IDA, will give an update to the Board of Education at the study session on Tuesday, March 12, 2024.

**B. Staffing & Superintendent Update**

Michael Ginestre, Superintendent of Schools, will give an update to the Board of Education at the study session on Tuesday, March 12, 2024.

**C. 24/25 Budget Update**

Donald Feldmann, Director of Finance & Plant Services, will give an update to the Board of Education at the voting meeting on Tuesday, March 19, 2024.

**D. Superintendent Update**

Michael Ginestre, Superintendent of Schools, will give an update to the Board of Education at the voting meeting on Tuesday, March 19, 2024.

**E. Upcoming Events**

March 8...	<b><i>DO: Staff Development Day, No School Pre-K – 12</i></b>
March 11...	HH: PTA Meeting, 6:30 pm
March 12...	DO: Athletic Council Meeting, 4:15 pm @ Supt. Office DO: BOE Study Session, 6:30 pm @ NVCC
March 14...	MM: McTeacher Night, 4:30 – 7:30 pm HH: STEM Evening, 5:30 – 7 pm HS: PTSA Meeting, 6:30 pm @ HS Library
March 15	HS: Musical, 7:30 pm @ HS Aud
March 16...	DO: Dollars for Scholars Craft Fair, 9 am – 3 pm @ HS HS: Musical, 7:30 pm @ HS Aud

**VI. SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT-continued...**

**E. Upcoming Events**

March 17...	HS: Musical, 2 pm @ HS Aud
March 18...	DO: DEI Committee Meeting, 4:15 pm @ NVCC
March 19...	DO: BOE Voting Meeting, 6:30 pm @ NVCC
March 20...	DO: Building Use Committee Meeting, 4:30 @ Supt. Office
March 21...	GL: McTeacher Night, 4:30 – 7:30 pm
March 27...	HH: Spring Concert, 6:30 pm
March 29 – April 8...	<b><i>DO: Spring Recess, No School Pr-K - 12</i></b>

**VII. OPEN SESSION: AGENDA TOPICS – Policy 1510**

**VIII. NEW BUSINESS**

**A. Rules for Use of Optical Scan Voting Machines**

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that at a meeting of the Board of Education of the Sweet Home Central School District the following rules were adopted:

Rules for use of Optical Scan Voting Machines and the Submission of Questions or Propositions to be Placed Thereon:

1. The form of ballot and the voting procedure shall conform substantially with the operational requirements of the optical scan voting machines to be used by the District, and with any requirements prescribed by the Election Law of the State of New York for use of optical scan voting machines applicable to school districts.
2. The optical scan voting machines shall be those supplied by the Erie County Board of Elections, but if voting machines are not available from that source, voting machines may be obtained from some other source satisfactory to the Board of Education.
3. For each optical scan voting machine used, two (2) qualified voters of the District shall be appointed by the Board of Education to act as Election Inspectors.
4. The Board of Education shall pay all expenses necessary or incidental to the use or rental, as the case may be, of optical scan voting machines, including but not limited to the operation, calibration, maintenance and securing thereof and the training of the Election Inspectors in the use thereof.
5. Immediately before any optical scan voting machine is used at meetings, elections or votes, annual, special or however otherwise denominated or designated, the Election Inspectors shall examine and calibrate it and see that the machine is, in all respects, in proper condition for use. The Election Inspectors shall also ensure that the configuration of the voting area provides for voter privacy.
6. Each optical scan voting machine shall remain locked against voting, and the paper ballots cast through the optical scan voting machine shall be secured and retained, for the period of thirty days following the meeting, election or vote at which same has been used and as much longer as may be necessary or advisable because of existing or threatened contest over the result of the meeting, election or vote, except as otherwise provided by the Education Law of the State of New York.

**VIII. NEW BUSINESS-continued...**

**A. Rules for Use of Optical Scan Voting Machines**

7. Any proposition to be voted upon, when presented other than by the Board of Education, must be set forth in such manner as to conform to the requirements of the Education Law of the State of New York, and must be presented in a petition bearing the signatures of twenty-five (25) qualified voters, or 5% of the number of qualified voters voting in the previous annual vote - whichever is greater, of the School District (except where the number of signatures is specified in said Education Law in which case the provisions of the Education Law shall apply) and filed with the Board of Education not less than sixty (60) days before the meeting, election or vote, unless otherwise prescribed by law.

8. Any question or proposition to be presented by the Board of Education must be set forth in a resolution adopted at a meeting of the Board not less than fourteen (14) days prior to the meeting, election or vote, except as to a question or proposition required by law to be stated in the published notice of the meeting, election or vote, in which event such resolution must be adopted at a meeting of the Board not less than fifty (50) days before the meeting, election or vote, except that the fifty (50) day time limitation shall not apply to a special meetings called under the provisions of Section 2007 subdivision 3, paragraph a. of the Education Law of the State of New York.

9. In the event that any question or proposition to be voted upon is too lengthy to be placed upon the ballot to be used in conjunction with the optical scan voting machines, an abstract of such question or proposition shall be placed thereon in such form as may be prescribed by the Board of Education of the District, concisely stating the purpose and effect and setting forth and indicating generally and briefly the subject matter of the question or proposition. Wherever the question is excessively lengthy as above described, a sufficient number of copies thereof shall be available at the voting place in order that each voter may be furnished with a copy thereof before voting.

10. Except as may be otherwise required by law, the District Clerk shall have sole discretion in determining when optical scan voting machines shall be used. Paper ballots may be used if so determined by the District Clerk, including under circumstances where optical scan voting machines are unavailable or not operational, in which case the use of paper ballots shall be consistent with applicable legal requirements, as well as consistent with these Rules to the extent practicable as determined by the District Clerk.

**B. Annual Public Hearing and District Vote – Policy 1610**

RESOLVED: THAT NOTICE OF A PUBLIC HEARING AND DISTRICT VOTE OF THE SWEET HOME CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT OF AMHERST AND TONAWANDA, NEW YORK, BE GIVEN AS FOLLOWS:

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the annual meeting and election of the Sweet Home Central School District, Erie County, New York, will be held on Tuesday, May 21, 2024 from 7:00 am (EDST) to 9:00 pm (EDST) at the Norman Vergils Community Center, located at the north end of the high school behind the District Office for the purpose of electing one member of the Board of Education, voting on the budget of the District for the 2024-25 fiscal year, and voting on any other proposition(s) authorized by law and the rules of the Board to be voted on at such time.

TAKE FURTHER NOTICE, that the election of members of the Board shall be held to fill one (1) at-large position on the Board. The candidate receiving the highest vote total shall be elected to a five-year term (commencing July 1, 2024 and ending on June 30, 2029.)

TAKE FURTHER NOTICE, that voting at the Annual Vote shall consist of the Board election, voting on the following propositions, and voting on any other propositions authorized by law and the rules of the Board to be voted on at such time:

**VIII. NEW BUSINESS-continued...**

**B. Annual Public Hearing and District Vote – Policy 1610**

**PROPOSITION NO. 1 (2024-25 BUDGET)**

RESOLVED, that the basic budget for the Sweet Home Central School District of Amherst and Tonawanda (“the District”) for the fiscal year commencing July 1, 2024 and ending June 30, 2025, as presented by the Board of Education, is hereby approved and adopted, and the required funds therefor are hereby appropriated and the necessary real property taxes required shall be raised by a tax on the taxable property in the District to be levied and collected as required by law.

**PROPOSITION NO. 2**

TAKE FURTHER NOTICE, that a Public Hearing of the inhabitants of the Sweet Home Central School District of Amherst and Tonawanda, qualified to vote at School Meetings of said District will be held at the Sweet Home High School, 1901 Sweet Home Road, in said school district on Tuesday, May 7, 2024 at 7:00 p.m. (EDST), for the purpose of discussion on the expenditure of funds and the budgeting thereof for the year 2024–2025.

TAKE FURTHER NOTICE, that applications for absentee ballots may be obtained from the Office of the School District Clerk, 1901 Sweet Home Road, Amherst, New York or on the District website at [www.sweethomeschools.org](http://www.sweethomeschools.org). A list of persons to whom absentee ballots have been issued will be available in the Office of the School District Clerk on each of the five days prior to the election during regular office hours Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Completed applications for absentee ballots must be received by the School District Clerk’s Office on or before May 13, 2024 if the absentee ballot is to be mailed to the voter for completion. Applications may be filed on or before May 20, 2024 if the absentee ballot is to be picked up by the voter at the District Clerk’s Office. Completed absentee ballots must be received by the District Clerk’s Office by 5:00 p.m. on the day of the vote.

TAKE FURTHER NOTICE, that military voters who are qualified voters of the School District may apply for a military ballot by requesting an application from the District Clerk or via the District website, [www.sweethomeschools.org](http://www.sweethomeschools.org). For a military voter to be issued a military ballot, the District Clerk must have received a valid ballot application no later than 5:00 pm on April 25, 2024. In a request for a military ballot application or ballot, the military voter may indicate their preference for receiving the application or ballot by mail, facsimile transmission or electronic mail.

TAKE FURTHER NOTICE, that the petitions nominating candidates for the office of member of the Board of Education must be filed with the Clerk of the District between the hours of 8:00 a.m. (EDST) and 4:00 p.m. (EDST) no later than Monday, April 22, 2024. Each petition shall be signed by at least twenty-five (25) qualified voters of the District, or 2% of the number of qualified voters voting in the 2023 annual vote - whichever is greater, and shall state the name and residence of the candidate, and shall state the residence of each signer.

TAKE FURTHER NOTICE that optical scan voting machines will be used to record the votes on the Board election, the budget, and the other proposition(s) presented, pursuant to the District’s Rules for the Use of Voting Machines and the Submission of Questions of Propositions to be Placed Thereon. Printed copies of the Rules are available at the Office of the District Clerk located at 1901 Sweet Home Road, Amherst, New York.

TAKE FURTHER NOTICE, that copies of the Budget for the school year 2024 – 2025 will be available to any taxpayer of the District from May 7, 2024 until and including the date of the election, excluding Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays, at any school of the district between the hours of 8:00 a.m. (EDST) and 3:30 p.m. (EDST).

TAKE FURTHER NOTICE, that the Board of Education meetings in May will be held on May 7, 2024 and May 14, 2024.

**VIII. NEW BUSINESS-continued...**

**B. Annual Public Hearing and District Vote – Policy 1610**

For publication during the weeks of: April 3, 2024, April 17, 2024, May 1, 2024, and May 15, 2024.

**C. Special Education**

**1. Class placements for 2023-2024 – Policy 7613**

WHEREAS, Public Law 94-142, the Individuals with Disabilities Act, and Chapter 853, Laws of 1976 (New York State Education Act), requires Board of Education approval for all placements of students with disabilities, and

WHEREAS, the District Committee on Special Education has reviewed all placements, and

WHEREAS, all parents have approved said special education class placements, now therefore be it

RESOLVED: That, the 2023-2024 placements for students with disabilities be approved as recommended in a memorandum to Michael V. Ginestre, Superintendent of Schools, dated March 6, 2024.

**2. Preschool class placements for 2023-2024 – Policy 7614**

WHEREAS, Public Law 94-142, the Individuals with Disabilities Act, as amended by P.L. 99-457, New York State Compliance, Chapter 243 of the Laws of 1989, requires Board of Education approval for all placements of preschool student with disabilities, and

WHEREAS, the District Committee on Preschool Special Education has reviewed all placements, and

WHEREAS, all parents have approved said preschool special education placements, now therefore be it

RESOLVED: That, the 2023-2024 placements for preschool students with disabilities be approved as recommended in a memorandum to Michael V. Ginestre, Superintendent of Schools, dated March 6, 2024.

**D. Monthly Financial Reports – Policy 2140**

RESOLVED: That, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Board of Education accept the Investment Schedule, the Treasurer's Report, the Budget Appropriation Status Report, the Revenue Budget Status report, the Budget Transfer Report, and the Extra-Classroom Activity Report as provided.

**E. Bids – Policy 5410**

**1. Handicapped Transportation Bid (ARC)**

RESOLVED: That, the Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, enter into a transportation contract with ... for the remainder of the 2023-24 school year for a total cost of \$... (\$... per day).

**VIII. NEW BUSINESS-continued...**

**E. Bids – Policy 5410**

**2. Office Supplies Bid**

RESOLVED: That, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Board of Education award the Office Supplies Bid #2024-2025-4 to the following vendors at the unit price offered per item specified for a total bid of **\$54,748.22**.

Cascade School Supplies	\$4,670.84
Eaton Office Supply	\$8,271.64
National Art & School Supplies	\$10,069.82
Pyramid School Products	\$5,038.13
Quill	\$12,153.70
WB Mason	\$14,544.09
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$54,748.22</b>

**3. Commercial Printing School Calendar**

RESOLVED: That, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Board of Education award the commercial printing school calendar bid #2024-25-13 to **Data-Mation Printing & Graphics** in the amount of **\$12,155.00**.

**4. Commercial Printing – Sweet Home Source Magazine**

RESOLVED: That, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Board of Education award the commercial printing “Sweet Home Source Magazine bid #2024-25-15 to **Data-Motion Printing & Graphics** for a total bid of **\$16,084.00**.

**5. Commercial Printing Envelopes and Forms, Specialty Paper & Other**

RESOLVED: That, the Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, award the commercial printing envelopes and forms bid #2024-25-14 to the following vendors at the unit price offered per item specified for a total bid of **\$11,485.20**.

Orffeo Printing & Publishing	\$8,915.00
RMF Printing	\$2,238.20
Zenger Group	\$692.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$11,485.20</b>

**6. Ford E-450 Cutaway Van**

RESOLVED: That, the Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, award the Ford E-450 Cutaway Van bid #2024-25-23 to **C. Basil Ford** for a total price of **\$67,071.00**.

**7. Ford E-450 SD Commercial Cutaway Vans**

RESOLVED: That, the Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, award the Ford E-450 SD Commercial Cutaway Vans bid #2024-25-24 to **C. Basil Ford** for a total price of **\$138,192.00**.

**VIII. NEW BUSINESS-continued...**

**F. Participation in Social Media Litigation**

WHEREAS, this Board of Education is aware that for many years interactive technologies have been made available to the public to facilitate the creation and sharing of content, ideas, interests and other forms of expression through virtual communities and networks; and

WHEREAS, this Board has also come to learn that over time social media platforms can become addictive, particularly among our youth; and

WHEREAS, this Board has become aware that certain Big Tech companies have intentionally created addictive platforms specifically designed to hook student audiences by designing algorithms to maximize company revenues by increasing usage without regard to the harm suffered by students as a result of such usage; and

WHEREAS, these tech products, designed to hook young users into compulsive use, have taken a heavy toll on today's youth, whereby they face unprecedented levels of severe mental health issues like anxiety, depression, eating disorders and suicidal ideation, and with so many students in turmoil, schools have had to divert crucial resources to help them; and

WHEREAS, on May 23, 2023, the U.S. Surgeon General issued a public advisory that social media could have a profound risk of harm on the health of children and adolescents; and

WHEREAS, the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and the Children's Hospital Association have all declared child and adolescent mental health a national emergency; and

WHEREAS, this School District and other School Districts around the country have had to hire additional counselors, develop resources and train staff to handle the burgeoning number of students succumbing to what best can be described as a youth mental health crisis; and

WHEREAS, a number of other school districts have filed or will be filing legal claims in the Northern District of California against a number of social media companies, such as TikTok, Snapchat, YouTube, Google and their parent companies, seeking restitution for expenses incurred and the funds necessary to provide ongoing student support and changes to the platforms to make them less addictive;

NOW, THEREFORE, this Board of Education hereby authorizes the following:

1. That this School District file and join claims in the Multi-District Litigation pending in the Northern District of California to recoup damages against students and the District inflicted by social media companies;

2. That this Board appoint the following law firms to represent the District's interests in this matter;

- a. The Frantz Group ALPC (San Diego, California); and
- b. Hodgson Russ LLP (Buffalo, New York)

3. That the Superintendent of Schools and Administrative Staff of the District be and hereby are directed to cooperate with the appointed attorneys to gather the necessary data and take other required actions needed to assist the law firms in representing the foregoing interests of the District; and

**VIII. NEW BUSINESS-continued...**

**F. Participation in Social Media Litigation**

4. This District will expend no resources or funds for its participation in this litigation, other than the personnel time necessary to gather the data needed to participate in this litigation.

**G. Maplemere Temporary Classroom Lease Renewal**

RESOLVED: That, the Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, and **pending SED approval**, approve the renewal agreement as presented with **Vesta Modular** for the temporary Maplemere classrooms. The 24-month lease cost is **\$... (\$... per month)**.

**IX. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS**

**X. OPEN SESSION – Policy 1510**

**XI. PERSONNEL**

**I. Teaching and Administrative**

**A. Regular**

**1. Discontinuance**

**a. Retirement**

RESOLVED: That, the *retirement*, in the **TEACHING AND ADMINISTRATIVE SECTION OF THE PERSONNEL MEMORANDUM NO. 720 dated March 19, 2024** be approved as recommended by the Superintendent of Schools.

Edwin Hawkins	Christina Mack	Kelli Brooks Bogacz
Suzanne Rizzo	Pamela Hornung	Karen Bassano
Paula Adams	Andrea Jarvis	Shari Seefeldt
John Seiler	Daniel Murphy	Wenda Moran
Salvatore Glorioso	Margaret Connolly	Mia Banks

**2. Appointments**

**a. Tenure**

RESOLVED: That, the *tenure appointment* in the **TEACHING AND ADMINISTRATIVE SECTION OF THE PERSONNEL MEMORANDUM NO. 720 dated March 19, 2024** be approved as recommended by the Superintendent of Schools.

Antonio Perry		
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**e. Continuing Activities**

**Building Improvement Team, High School, 2023-2024**

RESOLVED: That, *PLC, High School*, in the **TEACHING AND ADMINISTRATIVE SECTION OF THE PERSONNEL MEMORANDUM NO. 720 dated March 19, 2024** be approved as recommended by the Superintendent of Schools.

Rebecca Harmon (chg.)	Cassandra Solis	
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**A G E N D A**

**XI. PERSONNEL-continued...**

**I. Teaching and Administrative**

**A. Regular**

**2. Appointments**

**e. Continuing Activities**

**PLC, High School, 2023-2024**

RESOLVED: That, *PLC, High School*, in the **TEACHING AND ADMINISTRATIVE SECTION OF THE PERSONNEL MEMORANDUM NO. 720 dated March 19, 2024** be approved as recommended by the Superintendent of Schools.

Thaddeus Geraci		
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**g. Leave of Absence**

RESOLVED: That, the *leave of absence* in the **TEACHING AND ADMINISTRATIVE SECTION OF THE PERSONNEL MEMORANDUM NO. 720 dated March 19, 2024** be approved as recommended by the Superintendent of Schools.

Mary Jane Siffringer	Lynn Kawa	Amy Cress
Kendra Herbold	Richard Lowe	Richard Lowe
Rebecca Mansell		

**h. Reinstatement from leave**

RESOLVED: That, the *reinstatement from leave* in the **TEACHING AND ADMINISTRATIVE SECTION OF THE PERSONNEL MEMORANDUM NO. 720 dated March 19, 2024** be approved as recommended by the Superintendent of Schools.

Lauren Gelz	Melinda DiBernardo	Melissa Erikson
Michael Prince	Amy Cress	

**j. Co-Curricular Activities**

**j. Co-Curricular Activities, High School, 2023-2024 school year**

RESOLVED: That, the *co-curricular activities, high school*, in the **TEACHING AND ADMINISTRATIVE SECTION OF THE PERSONNEL MEMORANDUM NO. 720 dated March 19, 2024** be approved as recommended by the Superintendent of Schools.

Thaddeus Geraci		
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**j. Co-Curricular Activities, Elementary, 2023-2024 school year**

RESOLVED: That, the *co-curricular activities, elementary*, in the **TEACHING AND ADMINISTRATIVE SECTION OF THE PERSONNEL MEMORANDUM NO. 720 dated March 19, 2024** be approved as recommended by the Superintendent of Schools.

Deborah Zehler		
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**XI. PERSONNEL-continued...**

**B. Substitutes**

**2. Appointment**

**a. Long Term Substitutes**

RESOLVED: That, the *long term substitutes* in the **TEACHING AND ADMINISTRATIVE SECTION OF THE PERSONNEL MEMORANDUM NO. 720 dated March 19, 2024** be approved as recommended by the Superintendent of Schools.

Gail Graesser	Arika Notaro	Justin Gorrell
Kylie Prizel		

**II. Service**

**A. Regular**

**1. Discontinuance**

**a. Retirement**

RESOLVED: That, the *retirement* in the **SERVICE SECTION OF THE PERSONNEL MEMORANDUM NO. 720 dated March 19, 2024** be approved as recommended by the Superintendent of Schools.

Barbara Baer		
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**b. Resignation**

RESOLVED: That, the *resignation* in the **SERVICE SECTION OF THE PERSONNEL MEMORANDUM NO. 720 dated March 19, 2024** be approved as recommended by the Superintendent of Schools.

Jessie Clayson-Galvin	James McGee	Jonathan Michalski
Melissa Ewing	Matthew D'Apollo	

**c. Termination**

RESOLVED: That, the *termination* in the **SERVICE SECTION OF THE PERSONNEL MEMORANDUM NO. 720 dated March 19, 2024** be approved as recommended by the Superintendent of Schools.

Carlo Gonzales		
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**2. Appointments**

**a. Regular**

RESOLVED: That, the *regular appointment* in the **SERVICE SECTION OF THE PERSONNEL MEMORANDUM NO. 720 dated March 19, 2024** be approved as recommended by the Superintendent of Schools.

Michael Hanes	James McGee	Douglas Zavodny
Jonathan Michalski		

**f. Leave of Absence**

RESOLVED: That, the *leave of absence* in the **SERVICE SECTION OF THE PERSONNEL MEMORANDUM NO. 720 dated March 19, 2024** be approved as recommended by the Superintendent of Schools.

Arika Notaro	Gail Graesser	
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A G E N D A

**XI. PERSONNEL-continued...**

**II. Service**

**A. Regular**

**2. Appointments**

**g. Reinstatement from Leave**

RESOLVED: That, the *reinstatement from leave* in the **SERVICE SECTION OF THE PERSONNEL MEMORANDUM NO. 720 dated March 19, 2024** be approved as recommended by the Superintendent of Schools.

Gary Cox		
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**XII. ADJOURNMENT TO VOTING MEETING**

**XIII. ITEMS OF INFORMATION**

- a. Calendar of Events dated March 8, 2024.
- b. Claims Auditor's Report, December 2023.
- c. Claims Auditor's Report, January 2024.