SWEET HOME CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
REGULAR BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 2025

MINUTES

A meeting of the Sweet Home Board of Education was held on Tuesday, February 11, 2025 at the Norman Vergils Community Center. President of the Board, Mrs. Battaglia, called the meeting to order at 6:34 pm.

Mrs. Battaglia led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

PRESENT: Danyelle Anthon**,** Amy Battaglia, Peter Bellanti, Marianne Jasen, Scott M. Johnson, Brian Laible, Dirk Rabenold, Mayesha Subaita (student ex-officio)

ABSENT:

Upon motion made by Mr. Bellanti, seconded by Mr. Johnson, the Board of Education accepted the roll as called.

The vote on the foregoing resolution was as follows:

Yes	7	No	0	Absent	0
Carried	X				

Also present: Michael V. Ginestre, Donald G. Feldmann, Toyia Wilson

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Upon motion made by Mr. Bellanti, seconded by Mr. Johnson, the following resolution was offered:

RESOLVED: That, the agenda set forth for the regular Board of Education meeting held Tuesday, February 11, 2025 is hereby adopted in its entirety.

The vote on the foregoing resolution was as follows:

Yes	7	No	0	Absent	0
Carried	X				

MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Upon motion made by Mr. Bellanti, seconded by Mr. Johnson, the following resolution was offered:

RESOLVED: That, the minutes of the Board of Education meeting held Tuesday, January 27, 2025 are hereby adopted in their entirety.

The vote on the foregoing resolution was as follows:

Yes	7	No	0	Absent	0
Carried	X				

COMMUNICATIONS

1. E1B Call for Nominations
2. Letter from Mary Busse
3. Letter from Dave Lowrey
4. Letter from Cam Hall
5. Letter from Mark Mecca
6. Mrs. Jasen heard from parents who enjoyed MusicFest and liked the venue.

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UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

A. Heritage Heights Lighthouse Recognition
The Board of Education recognized Heritage Heights Elementary School at the study session on Tuesday, February 4, 2025.

B. Smart Schools Investment Plan Update
Donald Feldmann, Assistant Superintendent of Finance & Plant Services gave an update of on the District's Smart Schools Investment Plan at the study session on Tuesday, February 4, 2025.

C. Superintendent update
Michael Ginestre, Superintendent of Schools, gave an update to the Board of Education at the study session on Tuesday, February 4, 2025.

D. Superintendent update
Michael Ginestre, Superintendent of Schools, gave an update to the Board of Education at the voting meeting on Tuesday, February 11, 2025.

OPEN SESSION – Agenda Topics - Policy 1510

Josh Korman – E. Maplemere Rd. – Have concerns about 6th through 12th graders riding the bus together. Acknowledge all the hard work that everyone put in, but I worry about my 6th grade daughter being on the same bus as 11th & 12th grade students. Understand the budget concerns, but please don't put them on the same bus.

NEW BUSINESS
Upon motion made by Mr. Bellanti, seconded by Mr. Johnson, the following resolution was offered for consent agenda on items A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, J and K.

A. Special Education

1. Class placements for 2024-2025 – 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 2024-2025 placements for students with disabilities be approved as recommended in a memorandum to Dr. Michael V. Ginestre, Superintendent of Schools, dated January 29, 2025.

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NEW BUSINESS-continued…

A. Special Education

2. Preschool class placements for 2024-2025 – 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 students 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 2024-2025 placements for preschool students with disabilities be approved as recommended in a memorandum to Dr. Michael V. Ginestre, Superintendent of Schools, dated January 29, 2025.

and be it further…

B. 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-Curricular Account Report as provided.

and be it further…

C. Internal Audit Report & Corrective Action Plan

RESOLVED: That the Board of Education approve the Internal Audit Report for 2023-2024 and the Corrective Action Plan in response to the Internal Auditor's Report as recommended by the District Audit Committee.

and be it further…

D. Revised Policy – Policy 1410 – Second Reading

Board of Education By-Law #1410 states that "Board of Education policy and rules and by-laws shall be adopted, amended and/or suspended…only when the addition, amendments or suspension is first introduced in writing and is subsequently moved and seconded at a public meeting at least 27 calendar days prior to the time when such adoption, amendment and/or suspension may be voted upon."

At the regular Board of Education meeting held on January 27, 2025 the Superintendent of Schools recommends the Board of Education accept the first reading of the following revised policies.

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NEW BUSINESS-continued…

D. Revised Policy – Policy 1410 – Second Reading

RESOLVED: That, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Board of Education approves the following revised policies as provided in the January 27, 2025 presentation.

a.	**5840 – Artificial Intelligence**
b.	**7470 – Student Voter Registration & Pre-Registration**
c.	**7480 – Student Government**
d.	**7530 – Child Abuse & Maltreatment**
e.	**7554 – Equal Educational Opportunities**
f.	**7555 – Educational Services for Married/Pregnant Students**

and be it further…

E. Revised Policy – Policy 1410 – First Reading

Board of Education By-Law #1410 states that "Board of Education policy and rules and by-laws shall be adopted, amended and/or suspended…only when the addition, amendments or suspension is first introduced in writing and is subsequently moved and seconded at a public meeting at least 27 calendar days prior to the time when such adoption, amendment and/or suspension may be voted upon."

At the regular Board of Education meeting held on February 11, 2025 the Superintendent of Schools recommended the Board of Education accept the first reading of the following revised policies.

RESOLVED: That, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Board of Education approves the following revised policies as provided in the February 11, 2025 presentation.

a.	**5661 – Wellness**
b.	**5681 – School Safety Plans**
c.	**5863 – Fire & Emergency Drills, Bomb Threats, & Bus Emergency Drills**
d.	**6213 – Incidental Teaching**
e.	**7220 – Graduation Options/Early Graduation/Accelerated Programs**
f.	**7223 – Advanced Coursework**
g.	**7224 – Virtual Instruction**

and be it further…

F. Smart Schools Preliminary Investment Plan

RESOLVED: That, the Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, will approve the Sweet Home Schools preliminary Smart Schools Investment Plan as presented.

and be it further…

DRAFT

NEW BUSINESS-continued…

G. Request for Proposal – Universal Pre-Kindergarten

WHEREAS, Chapter 436 of the Laws of 1997 provides for New York State's Universal Prekindergarten Program, and

WHEREAS, the Sweet Home Board of Education has approved the district's participation in the Universal Prekindergarten Program, and

WHEREAS, under the Universal Prekindergarten regulations require collaboration between the Sweet Home School District and private care agencies are a requirement for grant approval, now therefore be it

RESOLVED: That, the Sweet Home Central School district award the Request for Proposal for Universal Pre-Kindergarten to Eilmar Inc./Four Seasons Child Care Center. The Board of Education hereby authorizes the Superintendent of Schools to enter into a contractual agreement to collaborate on the Universal Pre-Kindergarten program for the 2025-2026 school year.

and be it further…

H. Overnight Field Trip Request – Policy 8460

RESOLVED: That, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Board of Education approves the following Overnight Field Trip Requests:

- Varsity Basketball – SUNY Binghamton, February 20-21, 2025 (Leader – Brandon Woods)

and be it further…

J. Grant of Easement to Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation and Verizon New York, Inc.

RESOLVED: That, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Board of Education approve the grant of easement to Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation and Verizon New York Inc. for the purpose and at the location as presented.

and be it further…

K. Dispose of Obsolete Property – Policy 5250

RESOLVED: That, the Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, authorize the district to participate in competitive bidding procedures for the disposal of obsolete property.

The vote on the foregoing resolution was as follows:

Yes	7	No	0	Absent	0
Carried	X				

DRAFT

NEW BUSINESS-continued…

Upon motion made by Mr. Bellanti, seconded by Mr. Johnson, the following resolution was offered:

I. Start/Stop Times for 2025/26

RESOLVED: That, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Board of Education approve the start/end times for the 2025-2026 school year as presented.

Discussion:

D. Rabenold – I would like to hear Mayesha's thoughts.

M. Subaita – This will affect my younger brother & sister, mostly the change at the MS. Some sleep may be lost, but it's a great way to boost extra-curricular participation. At the HS, some kids can't participate in after school activities due to a lack of after school buses. Will this help?

D. Feldmann – We are hopeful we will have more buses at the end of the day.

D. Rabenold – Would a survey be helpful?

M. Subaita – People already had a chance to voice their opinion.

D. Rabenold – With a decision this big, the Board should be 100% in favor. The issue is about finding more drivers, what are we going to do going forward. I can't support having students walk, the focus should be on finding drivers. Heard there is legislation out there about school starting later. Spoke with parents at HH – some have concerns about MS & HS kids on the bus together, the cost of before school care, getting to work on time. Would it make sense to survey a broader group of people.

B. Laible – Were students involved in this process?

M. Subaita – Not sure if there are students on the Building Use Committee.

B. Laible – We talk about student voice, but were HS students involved? How can we say we are for student voice, but we didn't take them into account. Let's give it a month to get feedback. Nothing has changed due to the feedback we have gotten. Also how will the walking radius be determined?

D. Anthon – Love surveys so folks can weigh in. Many parents probably don't even know this is happening. It will sneak up on them when they get the postcard. For awareness if nothing else. We can identify folks concerns and provide support and explain how we will help.

A. Battaglia – will a survey reach more people than all the ways we have already sent out this info?

B. Laible – The Bee article had a .25 or .5 mile radius?

M. Ginestre – We are recommending a .25 mile radius.

D. Rabenold – What is the risk of delaying?

M. Jasen – I've heard from parents who want us to make a decision so they can make plans. To say we have not communicated is not fair. No answer will make everyone happy. No matter how we each vote we all have the best interests of kids at heart. We should all support the final vote even if we don't all agree. We appreciate the comments we have received, we take them to heart. We make sure everyone sees them. We are mindful of the cost of child care to families, there will be aides on every single bus and we will keep track of referrals from the bus.Mental health is important, and while sleep is a factor, so is building bonds through after school activity participation.

M. Ginestre – The committee will review data pertaining to the change.

D. Rabenold – A greater percentage against than for in the emails we have received.

M. Jasen – People will come if the issue is important enough to them, we have seen it before.

D. Rabenold – We represent the community, don't feel they are behind this. We have enough money In the budget and in reserves. If we can't hire bus drivers, find someone who will. And we are going to ask the community for a tax increase?

DRAFT

NEW BUSINESS-continued…

Mr. Rabenold made a motion to table item l, Mr. Laible seconded the motion.

The vote on the foregoing resolution was as follows:

Yes	3	No	4	Absent	0
Carried	No				

A vote proceeded on item l. Mr. Bellanti had previously made the motion for the vote, which was seconded by Mr. Johnson.

The vote on the foregoing resolution was as follows:

Yes	4	No	2 (Rabenold, Laible)	Absent	0
Carried	X	Abstain	1 (Anthon)		

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

M. Subaita – Thank you to the athletic dept & HS administration, the fitness center is now open 9th period. If all goes well, they may add lunch periods. Student gov't is honoring black history month with music in the morning and posters in the hallway. Working on a student run help desk, hope to have that going soon. HS is also hoping to recognize the top 10 students each quarter. Dr. Luchey is going around to classes talking about mental health and encouraging students to sign up and get certified online to be peer advocates.

M. Jasen – Went to Music Fest, National Honor Society induction. Also attended the budget study session, the MM PTA meeting, and earlier today the Safety Committee meeting. Our drills for the 1st half of the year are complete. We will soon have the Sandy Hook Promise tip line open. Mrs. Nowak & Mrs. Barillari developed a trauma/crisis plan which will become part of our safety plan. The water which was tested is now at the lab, but the threshold is lower.

D. Feldmann – Sandy Hook Promise tip line will take anonymous tips, and a team follows up. Teams are being trained now. Hope to roll out around spring break, we are one of just a few districts in the area that will have it. Water testing may require more mitigation due to the lower levels allowed. Town of Amherst has helped us out with rock salt.

S. Johnson – Electric buses will be arriving on 3/11, first responder training will be on 3/6.

B. Laible – Attended the MS musical, daughter was in the production crew. Did a great job, gave gifts to teachers and adults who helped out. MS PTA is preparing for activity night. Went to WR Sweetheart dance. Attended the Athletic Committee – there was feedback about old uniforms and new ones will be coming.

D. Rabenold - Attended the budget hearing, spoke about what I saw and heard in DC, much in flux but there is hope. Attended the HH PTA meeting – many concerned about the bus situation. BLT and PTA working together to raise funds for lighthouse shirts.

P. Bellanti – Attended Music Fest. During the Athletic Council meeting, we discussed the capital project, submissions for the new Panther, how to increase participation in new sports and the baseball meat raffle. Will be attending a "disconnected" forum about cell phones. Will be in Albany march 3-4 to meet with legislators.

M. Ginestre – NYS gave us the green light today for additions at GL/MM/HH. Will get max aid on those additions and can move on to the next phase of planning with our architects. Approved much sooner than anticipated, and the Office of Facilities Planning was very helpful. Will present to BOE in March or April with updated scope of the project.

OPEN SESSION - Policy 1510

Called

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PERSONNEL

Upon motion made by Mr. Bellanti, seconded by Mr. Johnson, the following resolution was offered for consent agenda on personnel items I A & B and II A & B.

I. Teaching and Administrative

A. Regular

2. Appointments

c. Encumbered

RESOLVED: That, the *encumbered appointment* in the **TEACHING AND ADMINISTRATIVE SECTION OF THE PERSONNEL MEMORANDUM NO. 734 dated February 11, 2025** be approved as recommended by the Superintendent of Schools.

Kelly Gardner		

g. Leave of Absence

RESOLVED: That, the *leave of absence* in the **TEACHING AND ADMINISTRATIVE SECTION OF THE PERSONNEL MEMORANDUM NO. 734 dated February 11, 2025** be approved as recommended by the Superintendent of Schools.

Elizabeth Matisz	Kathleen May	

h. Reinstatement from Leave

RESOLVED: That, the *reinstatement from leave* in the **TEACHING AND ADMINISTRATIVE SECTION OF THE PERSONNEL MEMORANDUM NO. 734 dated February 11, 2025** be approved as recommended by the Superintendent of Schools.

Diana Calandra	Kathleen May	

i. Salary Adjustments

See Salary Adjustments- In-service Credits Memo dated February 11, 2025
See Salary Adjustments- Graduate Credits Memo dated February 5, 2025

j. Co-Curricular Activities

j. Co-Curricular Activities, High School, 2024-2025 school year

RESOLVED: That, the *co-curricular activities, high school,* in the **TEACHING AND ADMINISTRATIVE SECTION OF THE PERSONNEL MEMORANDUM NO. 734 dated February 11, 2025** be approved as recommended by the Superintendent of Schools.

Julia Guppenberger	Jeremy Vicario	Jeremy Vicario

B. Substitutes

2. Appointments

b. Substitute teachers for 2024-2025 school year

RESOLVED: That, the *substitutes* in the TEACHING AND ADMINISTRATIVE SECTION OF THE PERSONNEL MEMORANDUM NO. 734 dated February 11, 2025 be approved as recommended by the Superintendent of Schools.

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PERSONNEL-continued…

I. Teaching and Administrative

B. Substitutes

2. Appointments

c. Student teachers for 2024-2025 school year

RESOLVED: That, the *student teachers* in the TEACHING AND ADMINISTRATIVE SECTION OF THE PERSONNEL MEMORANDUM NO. 734 dated February 11, 2025 be approved as recommended by the Superintendent of Schools.

II. Service

A. Regular

1. Discontinuance

a. Retirement

RESOLVED: That, the *retirement* in the **SERVICE SECTION OF THE PERSONNEL MEMORANDUM NO. 734 dated February 11, 2025** be approved as recommended by the Superintendent of Schools.

Eric Mergenhagen		

b. Resignation

RESOLVED: That, the *resignation* in the **SERVICE SECTION OF THE PERSONNEL MEMORANDUM NO. 734 dated February 11, 2025** be approved as recommended by the Superintendent of Schools.

Anh Nguyen	Richard Baldwin	James Merlino
Anastasia Samsi	Jessica Clayson-Galvin	Justin Fisher

2. Appointment

a. Regular

RESOLVED: That, the *regular appointment* in the **SERVICE SECTION OF THE PERSONNEL MEMORANDUM NO. 734 dated February 11, 2025** be approved as recommended by the Superintendent of Schools.

Roda Ndayikunda	Shareffa Marjana	Jashawn Marin
Rana Alnuaimi	Macy Wilson	Anh Nguyen
Carmela King		

f. Leave of Absence

RESOLVED: That, the *leave of absence* in the **SERVICE SECTION OF THE PERSONNEL MEMORANDUM NO. 734 dated February 11, 2025** be approved as recommended by the Superintendent of Schools.

Iris Ofray Rivera (chg.)	Pamela Becker	

g. Reinstatement from Leave

RESOLVED: That, the *reinstatement from leave* in the **SERVICE SECTION OF THE PERSONNEL MEMORANDUM NO. 734 dated February 11, 2025** be approved as recommended by the Superintendent of Schools.

Lisa Schmitt	Stacy Williams	

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PERSONNEL-continued…

II. Service

B. Substitutes

2. Per Diem Substitutes

RESOLVED: That, the *per diem substitutes* **in the SERVICE SECTION OF THE PERSONNEL MEMORANDUM NO. 734 dated February 11, 2025 be approved as recommended by the Superintendent of Schools.**

The vote on the foregoing resolution was as follows:

Yes	7	No	0	Absent	0
Carried	X				

Upon motion made by Mr. Bellanti, seconded by Mr. Johnson, the following resolution was offered for consent agenda on personnel items I C.

I. Teaching and Administrative

C. Interscholastic Activities

1. Interscholastic Activities, High School, (SPRING) 2024-2025

RESOLVED: That, the *interscholastic activities appointments, High School, Spring* **in the TEACHING AND ADMINISTRATIVE SECTION OF THE PERSONNEL MEMORANDUM NO. 734 dated February 11, 2025** be approved as recommended by the Superintendent of Schools.

Jon Campolo	Michael Mettler	Kevin Schleicher
Cory Mitchum	Luke Rehbaum	Alex Gauld
Joseph Bennett	Jane Woloss	Keegan Woloss
Kelsey Chubb	Samantha Herrmann	Crystal Carlson
Rayna Davis-Tubin	Patricia Miranda	Brian Koziol
Steven Becker	Lari MacPeek	David Radlich
Donald Lilly	Kelly Gardner	Tomarris Bell
Morris Fried	Heidi Jones	Jeremy Murphy
Chris Monaco	Jerell Thompson	Zachary Garland
Tom Caruana	Peter Bellanti	Neil McLoughlin
Kylie Prizel	Evan Lysek	Tylor John
Gavin Janas	Cole Miliron	Erik Wright
Xavier Laboy	Mike Petrina	Matthew Culp
Brandon Schmitt		

The vote on the foregoing resolution was as follows:

Yes	6	No	0	Absent	0
Carried	X	Abstain	1 (Bellanti)		

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ADJOURN TO EXECUTIVE SESSION

Upon motion made by Mr. Bellanti, seconded by Mr. Johnson, the meeting was adjourned to executive session at 7:40 pm for matters related to contract negotiations.

The vote on the foregoing resolution was as follows:

Yes	7	No	0	Absent	0
Carried	X				

Upon motion made by Mr. Bellanti, seconded by Mr. Johnson, the following resolution was offered to come out of executive session at 8:12 pm.

The vote on the foregoing resolution was as follows:

Yes	7	No	0	Absent	0
Carried	X				

ADJOURNMENT

Upon motion made by Mr. Bellanti, seconded by Mr. Johnson, the meeting was adjourned at 8:13 pm.

The vote on the foregoing resolution was as follows:

Yes	7	No	0	Absent	0
Carried	X				

Sherry A. McNamara
Secretary, Board of Education
District Clerk
Sweet Home Central School District

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