

EAST ROCKAWAY UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT

East Rockaway, New York

Regular Meeting of the Board of Education

7:30 P.M., January 20, 2009 – East Rockaway Jr. /Sr. High School

Preceded by a Presentation on the Andrew J. Stern Memorial Essay Contest Winner, a Presentation on Co-Teaching/Inclusion and a Public Forum

Presentation of NYSSBA Developmental Credit Award to Neil Schloth

Present: Members of the Board of Education: Mary Boccuzzi, Marie Girace, Vicki Alspector, Neil Schloth, Superintendent, Dr. Roseanne Melucci; Director of Finance and Operations, Concetta Robinson; District Clerk, Denise Lobascio.

Absent: Linda Schmidt

MINUTES

1. The meeting was called to order at 8:30 pm and the Pledge of Allegiance was led by Neil Schloth.
2. Upon motion by Marie Girace, seconded by Neil Schloth the minutes of the December 17, 2008 Board of Education meeting were unanimously approved.
3. Acknowledged Receipt of Financial Reports - November 2008
4. Correspondence - None
5. Action Agenda

A. Personnel

Upon motion by Vicki Alspector, seconded by Neil Schloth, the following items # 1 – 5 were unanimously approved:

1. Upon the recommendation of the superintendent, accept the resignation of Nicole M. Bernor from the position of teacher assistant, effective December 23, 2008.
2. Upon the recommendation of the superintendent, accept, with regret, the resignation for the purpose of retirement of Helen T. McNally from her speech/language teacher position, effective July 1, 2009.
3. Upon the recommendation of the superintendent, approve the request of Michele Tritschler for a child rearing leave of absence from her part-time speech/language teacher position, effective April 20, 2009 through the end of the fall semester of the 2009-2010 school year.
4. Upon the recommendation of the superintendent, approve the request of Beth Brody for a child rearing leave of absence from her art teacher position, effective February 9, 2009 through May 15, 2009.
5. Upon the recommendation of the superintendent, approve the following temporary assignments at the hourly salary approved by the East Rockaway Board of Education:

ToniAnn Donald, substitute teacher, effective January 7, 2009

Consuelo da Costa, substitute teacher aide, effective January 21, 2009

Fallon Hearst, substitute teacher, effective January 30, 2009

6. Upon the recommendation of the superintendent, approve the continuation of the “emergency, conditional”

personnel appointments for the following individuals pending receipt of notification of their fingerprint clearance from the State of New York, Department of Education:

Andrea Faranda, substitute monitor

B. Other Items.

Upon motion by Marie Girace, seconded by Vicki Alspector, the following items #1 – 12 were unanimously approved:

1. Approve the request for proposal of services with Strategic Training and Research (STAR) Consultants for the 2008-2009 school year and authorize the Superintendent of Schools to execute the resulting service contract on behalf of the Board of Education.
2. Approve the request for proposal of services with Variety Child Learning Center for the 2008-2009 school year and authorize the Superintendent of Schools to execute the resulting service contract on behalf of the Board of Education.
3. Approve the request for proposal of services with Syosset Home Tutoring, Inc. for the 2008-2009 school year and authorize the Superintendent of Schools to execute the resulting service contract on behalf of the Board of Education.
4. Approve Change Order No.1, Bond Issue Related Capital Improvement Program – Phase III– Centre Avenue Elementary School, Hirsch & Co., LLC, and authorize the Superintendent of Schools and President of the Board of Education to execute the change order.
5. Approve Change Order No. 1, Bond Issue Related Capital Improvement Program – Phase III– Centre Avenue Elementary School, Connelly & Sons Plumbing, and authorize the Superintendent of Schools and President of the Board of Education to execute the change order.
6. Approve for purpose of disposal as obsolete the textbooks more specifically listed on the attached Textbook Removal Form.
7. Approve Doreen Johnson as custodian of the East Rockaway High School Petty Cash fund.
8. Approve the 2009-2010 school calendar.
9. Approve an increase in the limit of insurance of the district's Commercial Crime Policy, Computer Fraud/Wire Coverage and Employee Dishonesty Coverage to \$1,000,000.00 and authorize the Superintendent of Schools to execute authorization for the increased coverage.
10. Accept a donation from Cornell Cooperative Extension of Nassau County for the donation of a shade tree valued at \$200.
11. Declare two (2) Texas Instruments Omni 800, Model 880 DP dot matrix printers obsolete and donate the equipment to Nassau BOCES.
12. Approve the terms of the employment agreement with Concetta Robinson as Director of Finance and Operations, effective July 1, 2008 through June 30, 2009 and authorize the Superintendent of Schools to execute the memorandum on behalf of the Board of Education.

C. Budget Transfers

1. Upon the recommendation of the superintendent, the Board of Education approves the following budget transfer: Transaction No. NONE

Upon motion by Neil Schloth, seconded by Marie Girace, the following items #D & E were unanimously approved:

- D. Approval of CSE Recommendations
- E. Approval of CPSE Recommendations

6. Policy Matters:

Upon motion by Marie Girace, seconded by Neil Schloth, and passed unanimously the Board:

1. Approved the adoption of the following policy:

- a. 6.73A Graduation Requirements
- b. 6.73A-R Graduation Regulations
- c. 6.73B Grading Systems
- d. 6.73B-R Grading Systems Regulations

7. Superintendent's Report

Last week we administered the NYS ELA assessment to students in grades 3, 4, and 5. This week students in grades 6, 7, and 8 will be taking the exam. The math academies are beginning this month in preparation for the NYS Mathematics assessment, which will be administered in March.

On our reading list this month students at Rhame are reading: *Shiloh*, *Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing*, *Pedro's Journal*, and *The Outsiders*. Students at Centre Avenue are reading: *Because of Winn Dixie* and *Bridge to Terebithia*. At the secondary school students are reading *Of Mice and Men*, *The Great Gatsby*, *The Things They Carried*, *Song of Solomon*, excerpts from *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*. I encourage you to read along with your child and take advantage of the opportunity to foster a love of literature.

Last week was our middle school science fair. I was happy to see so many parents in attendance to support the teaching of science. We have a long list of winners (read list).

Earlier this year Mr. Cangemi told you about the new Trout in the classroom program. We now have over 500 vital fish, including a two-headed trout. We did not expect so many of them would survive and we are now trying to give them away as the tank is not large enough.

Also in science, this year we started a new partnership with the Tanglewood preserve. Our own CSI East Rockaway. As part of the final exam for our semester course, Forensic Science, our students went to Tanglewood to participate in a mock crime scene investigation. This is a very unique experience for our students. I thank Mr. Cangemi and Mr. Fortgang for putting this together.

You may have seen the orange Did You Know? Card, which is also posted on our website, where Mr. Cangemi highlighted the hand held technology with the Texas Instruments Navigator. We have purchased additional units and they are being used successfully in our upper level high school math classes.

School activities for the Inauguration included assemblies and discussions regarding this historic event.

The Girls Volleyball team was honored by the Village last week.

East Rockaway was featured in the 2009 Creative Therapy Store Calendar. Matthew Barbaro, formerly of Rhame Avenue and currently a 7th grade student at the Jr/Sr High has his art work displayed for the month of June. Cassidy Kurz, currently a 6th grade student at Centre Avenue received an Honorable Mention on the cover of the calendar, and Ms. Sullivan, our elementary school social worker, is featured in October with her

description of the boomerang program to teach the Golden Rule. Thank you to Ms. Sullivan for getting the students involved in this project.

Twenty-four of our student musicians were selected to the All County festival and performed at the Tilles Center at CW Post this month. They were also honored at the East Rockaway Village Board meeting on 1/12 and I want to thank Mr. Fortgang and the music teachers for attending the presentation.

Just a reminder that our district musical, *Oliver*, will be held on February 6, 7, and 8. Please note that the matinee performance has been moved to Sunday at 2:00.

Mrs. Strugatz, elementary technology teacher, applied for and was awarded Picturing America, a free education resource of the National Endowment for the Humanities, distributed in cooperation with the American Library Association. This program brings masterpieces of American Art into the classroom. These materials include forty images mounted on twenty double-sided laminated posters for display and classroom use and a teacher's resource book.

I received a letter from the Sound View Inn, who hosted some of our players from the Boy's basketball team. The letter praised the behavior of our students and called them, "polite, respectful, and well behaved throughout their stay."

Our SEL words of the month are: Grade 6, Rhame Avenue --Loyalty and Empathy, Centre Avenue Envious, MS words—stress, compassion, loathe, and addiction.

I am pleased to let you know that through the efforts of Ms. Singer, Assistant Principal at the Jr/Sr High, East Rockaway will be featured in a state education document on Social Emotional Learning. Last year we were visited by state representatives who met with Ms. Singer and some of our teachers. Our middle school program will be featured as part of the examples section of work that is in place in schools. The document is expected out late winter or early spring. Thank you Ms. Singer.

New Smartboards were installed at Rhame, Centre Avenue and the High School. Also in facilities we are still working with the architect to come up with a solution for draining water from the perimeter of the back fields at the HS.

Last year I told you about Ms. Donlon, one of our elementary reading teachers, who published a book. This year we have another author on staff. Ms. Tina Smith, school psychologist at Rhame Avenue published a book called; *You Are the Boss of Your Worry*. This book is geared for students ages 6-12.

Rhame Avenue students will be participating in a Valentines for Vets program. Students will be writing cards to veterans with messages of gratitude to the men and women who have served this nation.

Also going on around the district: Lorraine Donlon, Centre Avenue Reading teacher, received a \$250 grant from NEFCU for her Reading at Home program, aka RAH, RAH, RAH Fran Kohn, Centre Avenue Kindergarten teacher, received a \$700 Grant from Target for her field trip to the Museum of Natural History. Speaking of Ms. Kohn, she taught a workshop in the annual How to Make Math County Conference on Friday, January 9th at Molloy College. Ms. Kohn presents on using picture story books to teach math concepts. The HS It's Academic team participated in Quiz Bowl #3 against Valley Stream North HS. The varsity team won and the JV team almost won if not for two questions. The HS Mock Trial students are preparing their case. They will represent ERHS as the plaintiffs in the case in court on February 4th. The Math-A-Thon fundraiser for St. Jude's Children's Hospital will be underway soon. The High School thanks the Alumni Association for donating money to help fund the display cases in the science corridor.

As you know we were audited by the state last year. It was a very time consuming process but the good news is that it was a good report. We have worked to implement the recommendations offered, short of hiring additional staff in the business office. On December 30th there was a tiny little paragraph in Newsday, attached to another article that talked about our audit. I would like to go over that paragraph as it does not give the entire picture...

We are underway preparing for the 2009-2010 budget. We are doing what we can to keep the expenditures down for next year. As many of you know it's not just the expenditures that determine the tax increase. It is no secret that every school district in NY will have a decrease in state aid, which impacts the revenue side of the budget equation. The Governor has proposed a reduction of \$440,000 for East Rockaway. In addition, last year we received a large amount of building aid from the bond projects and past construction/facilities projects in the district. The first draft of the estimated state aid showed that we are not getting as much for next year. We are hoping the second draft is better. The first draft did not include aid for all of our students with special needs so we are expecting some additional funding. We are also checking on our building projects to make sure SED has accounted for all of them in the proposed state aid numbers. Also on the revenue side the district will receive less interest income this year as a result of the economy. However, we will do what we can on the expenditure side to deliver a sound budget for 2009-2010.

At the last meeting a community member asked about scaffolding at CA during the summer. We have found out that there are OSHA requirements that were met with this project. It was not required to safeguard the area any more than it was (i.e. fence or plywood). If we tell the contractor the means and methods then we become just as liable if there is a violation under OSHA.

That concludes my report.

8. Privilege of the Floor

One community member asked about the phones not working at Rhame Avenue.

Another community member reported that the Education Foundation has a meeting on Monday and are planning a function in April.

8. Board Member Comments

- **Neil Schloth** – Good job to all the winners of the Andrew Stern Memorial Essay contest.

Marie Girace – Essay winners, you are keeping alive the memory of our loss and history current. You will remember this thirty years from now. Most of you did not know of JFK but history keeps this memory alive. Thank you to the inclusion group. I went to the Science Fair and watched a child do a presentation. I didn't understand it and the child explained it to me and it made sense. The level of intelligence of our students amazes me. Thank you for coming.

Vicki Alspecter – On this historic day in our country, I would like to take a moment to reflect on a few things. A long time ago, I read a comment by a civil rights leader who made a point that he was disappointed by the fact that so many minority children were sacrificing the free public education that their ancestors fought and literally died for.

Just recently, someone asked a current civil rights leader about reparations and his answer was basically, "The only reparations we need is an excellent education for all people."

Today we watched history being made when the first African-American president took office. He represents the best of charm and yes, he rode the subways and had student loans.

One of the reasons I ran for school board in 1993 was because I believe that education is the single greatest gift you can give someone. My personal family history constantly reminded me that knowledge is the one thing that we can never be taken away from you.

Today is a hopeful day for America. A new day dawns. Pride in the collective goodness of our people reigns.

To quote someone in the crowd today:

"We are all going in the same direction and we are going there together!"

Mary Boccuzzi – Thank you to the students for reading their winning essays. If any of you decided you may one day want to be president just from what you read this evening, I think you would do a great job. I would also like to thank Dr. LoVerde and Mr. Piccarella for their presentation on inclusion philosophy. Most kids learn better

when they are in the same group as everyone else. Congratulations to Neil on racking up those credits. Thank you all for staying.

9. Adjournment – Upon motion by Marie Girace, seconded by Vicki Alspector and unanimously approved, the meeting was adjourned at 9:15 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Denise Lobascio
District Clerk