

EAST ROCKAWAY UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT
East Rockaway, New York
Regular Meeting of the Board of Education
7:30 P.M., January 17, 2012 – East Rockaway Jr./Sr. High School
Preceded by a Mathematics Presentation and a Public Forum

MINUTES

Present: Neil Schloth, President; Michaelene Abbott-Cooper, Vice President; Linda Schmidt, Patti Nicoletti, Kristen Ochtera, Roseanne Melucci, Superintendent of Schools; Marcy Tannenbaum, Director of Finance and Operations; Denise Lobascio; District Clerk, staff and members of the community.

1. The meeting was called to order by Neil Schloth at 8:05 pm and the Pledge of Allegiance was led by Linda Schmidt.
2. Upon motion by Patti Nicoletti, seconded by Kristin Ochtera the minutes of the December 13, 2011 and January 10, 2012 meetings were unanimously approved.
3. Acknowledged Receipt of Financial Reports from November, 2011.
4. Correspondence – One
5. Action Agenda

A. Personnel

Upon motion by Kristin Ochtera, seconded by Linda Schmidt the following items #1-3 were unanimously approved:

1. Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, accept the following resignation:
 - a. Stennett McCarthy, part-time bus driver, effective January 4, 2012.
2. Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, accept, with regret, the resignation of Cindy Singer, for the purpose of retirement, from her secondary assistant principal position, effective June 30, 2012.
3. Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the following temporary assignments at the salary established by the East Rockaway Board of Education:
 - a. William Petry, part-time bus driver, effective January 18, 2012.

4. 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:

None

B. Other Items

Upon motion by Linda Schmidt, seconded by Michaelene Abbott-Cooper the following items #1-10 were unanimously approved:

1. Approve the 2012-2013 school district calendar.
2. Accept the Corrective Action Plan as addressing the recommendations of R.S. Abrams, LLP regarding the External Audit for the fiscal year 2010-2011.
3. Approve the contract with Harriet Palmer for consultant and training services for accounts payable and authorize the President of the Board of Education to execute the contract on behalf of the Board of Education.
4. Accept a donation of two copies of the book, Pearl Harbor by Tamara L. Britton, valued at \$23.08 each from the American Legion Post 958.
5. Accept a donation from Kelly Perdomo of a 16GB Sony S Series Tablet valued at \$554.96 for the Centre Avenue Dr. Richard J. Meagher Library.
6. Approve the contract with Dr. Michael Dutkowsky for consultant services as the facilitator of the Elementary Reorganization Study – Community Reaction Meetings and authorize the President of the Board of Education to execute the contract on behalf of the East Rockaway Board of Education.
7. Approve the contract with BB SilentPartner, LLC, for a transportation study and authorize the President of the Board of Education to execute the contract on behalf of the East Rockaway Board of Education.
8. Approve the contract with the Coalition Against Child Abuse and Neglect for staff training for the 2011-2012 school year and authorize the President of the Board of Education to execute the contract on behalf of the Board of Education.
9. Approve the tuition agreement with Seaford UFSD for instructional, special education and related services for one (1) student for the 2011-2012 school year and authorize the President of the Board of Education to execute the contract on

behalf of the East Rockaway Board of Education.

10. Approve the contract with Christina Lalama for pianist accompaniment services for the period January 6, 2012, through June 21, 2012, and authorize the President of the Board of Education to execute the contract on behalf of the East Rockaway Board of Education.

C. Budget Transfers

1. Upon motion by Kristin Ochtera, seconded by Linda Schmidt the following budget transfers were unanimously approved:
 - a. Transaction No. 12-0007
 - b. Transaction No. 12-0008

D. Upon motion by Patti Nicoletti, seconded by Michaelene Abbott-Cooper the CSE recommendations were unanimously approved.

E. Approval of CPSE Recommendations - None

6. Policy Matters:

1. Upon motion by Linda Schmidt, seconded by Michaelene Abbott-Cooper the following policy was unanimously adopted:
 - a. 4850-E, Animals in the Schools, Notification to Parents
2. Policies for Review:
 - a. 1230, Public Participation at Board Meetings
 - b. 1741, Home Schooled Students
 - c. 2120, School Board Elections

7. Superintendent's Report.

Congratulations to Mrs. Singer on her retirement. We thank her for her many years of service to the children of East Rockaway.

I would like to remind everyone about the community forum that will take place on Thursday so that the consultant may present the findings of the reorganization study to the Board of Education. There will be three follow-up meetings for the community's reaction to the report. The flyer is posted on our website and meeting dates are also listed outside of each of the buildings. Last month I mentioned that the third meeting would be at the Senior Center. The Board felt that the space was too small and we did not want to turn anyone away so the third meeting will be at the HS Auditorium.

Here's what's happening in our schools.

At Centre Avenue, students across all grade levels are participating in activities to celebrate the life and accomplishments of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Kindergarten, for example is reading books, "Ruby Bridges" and "We Are All Alike, We Are All Different" The children made self portrait posters to show how we are alike and different. Posters are displayed in the hallway for all to enjoy. Grade 2 is reading non fictional text depicting Dr. King's life using the document camera and putting the book up on the Smartboard. Students are creating a timeline of his life, depicting the important dates that impacted our nation, and writing reports about how Dr. King changed our nation. Grade five has created a classroom school newsroom where students play the roles of reporters. Learning stations involving writing, reading, and grammar are incorporated into the newsroom.

In other news from Centre Avenue School, the 5th and 6th graders participated in the National Geographic Geography Bee. After a week of classroom bees, Centre Avenue held its School wide Bee on January 6th. 6th grader Scott Buzzolani was declared the championship round winner. Scott took a 70 question test in the principal's office and we will hear in March if he will be going on to the State level. If Scott qualifies, he has a chance to compete for a \$25,000 college scholarship. Good luck Scott!

From Rhame Avenue School, Grade 2 students read a class book on Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. They wrote about ways they could "Let kindness Ring!" in their school and home environment and illustrated their ideas.

Grade 3 students are working on an ELA unit featuring fairy tales. It also includes variations from other countries.

Students in grade 4 from Rhame and Centre participated in a technology/ELA project that has become known as the monster exchange where students create a monster and then write the steps for their creation. Another student has to follow the steps to create the same monster and then the students come together to compare both drawings.

Some of the novels the students at Rhame are reading include: Grade 1 – *Magic Tree House* by Mary Pope Osbourne; Grade 2- *How to Eat Fried Worms* by Rockwell; Grade 3- *Shiloh* by Phyllis Reynolds Naylor and *Lost and Found* by Andrew Clements.

From the high school:
Regents Academies, in preparation for January Regents make-ups, are underway.

English and Social Studies classes are all focused on critical reading and writing to prepare for upcoming midterm examinations that mimic the State and AP assessments that students will take later in the year.

This year's Middle School Science Fair was a tremendous success. Students utilized college-level programs, such as EBSCO, to find articles in support of their hypothesis. This year's science projects included more of an emphasis on research. The winners are as follows:

7th grade Life Science: 1st place Kayla Cimkowski; 2nd place Katherine Del Valle; 3rd place James Fusco

7th grade Life Science Accelerated: 1st place Declan Louw; 2nd place Diana Locateta; 3rd place Kim McGearly

8th grade Physical Science: 1st place Ryan Machovec (*and the Spelman Award*); 2nd place Michael Howard; 3rd place Erica Acampora

8th grade Earth Science Accelerated: 1st place Sabrina Gonzalez; 2nd place Alison Bashford; 3rd place Jake Caracciolo

Also from the science department, next month, our AP Biology students will attend the Dolan DNA Center at Cold Spring Harbor to conduct a lab on genetic engineering. On January 19th, students in Forensic Science will visit the Center for Science Teaching and Learning at Tanglewood. They will participate in completing their field portion of the final exam. The 10th grade Living Environment teachers are in the process of organizing a visit to the Bodies Exhibit at South Street Seaport.

To better prepare our students for May's AP exams and June's Regents exams, the format of the midterm has been changed. Students will now be given three hours to complete all Regents and AP level midterms so that the format will mimic both the time and question distribution of the AP and State assessments.

Last week Mr. DeTommaso, Mr. Pajer and Ms. Sievers attended the East Rockaway Chamber of Commerce meeting to talk about the Senior Seminar Program and to establish a richer network with businesses in the community.

The Technology Department is preparing for the January 18th Curriculum Fair at which it will be displaying some of the robots from the Robotics class and other displays from elective courses.

The Technology Department will be hosting the *Nassau Technology Educators Association* meeting on February 8th at which various teachers throughout the County will be sharing information regarding Robotics and STEM Curriculum (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics). They will be hosting a Robotics workshop for high school and middle school students.

The Guidance Department reports that the college acceptances are coming in and a bulletin board (outside the Home and Careers room) shows the names of colleges that have accepted our seniors. The number of colleges will continue to grow as the year progresses and we are very proud of this senior class.

The grade 11 students have all completed a college search and now have active accounts in the Naviance program. We have many more activities planned for the juniors as they continue the college exploration process, including our evening program for students and parents which is scheduled for January 23rd.

In Athletics, the East Rockaway Basketball teams took on a community project by sponsoring a family from St. Raymond for Christmas. The students went on a shopping spree, wrapped all presents and delivered them to the rectory on December 15. By far, it was the highlight of the season because all are winners in this one!

Josh Warner and Kerrienne Vulpis were selected by their physical education teachers to represent East Rockaway as Nassau Zone Physical Education Students of the Year.

The Varsity Volleyball team was honored by Village Hall on January 9th for winning the Nassau County Class "C" championship.

News from the Arts: Each of our three schools received a \$200.00 Michael's gift Certificate, as a result of a class action suit. The cards will be used to purchase art supplies. Sixteen students from our district performed at the Tilles Center for Performing Arts at C.W. Post College this past weekend. They were all chosen to perform in the All-County Concerts sponsored by the Nassau Music Educators Association. As a Past-President of this association, Mr. Fortgang was invited to be a guest conductor of the National Anthem at the Saturday afternoon concert.

The SEDL words of the month are:

Centre: Rebellious and Loyalty

Rhame: Empathy and Optimism

7th grade words: Devastated, Communicate, and Anxiety

8th grade words: Indivisible and Jubilant

Also under the heading of SEDL, to celebrate Super Bowl Sunday and show those less fortunate that we care, the Rhame Avenue Student Council will sponsor: "The Rhame Avenue Souper Bowl". A collection of soup cans will take place from 1/12 – 2/3. All cans will be donated to Long Island Cares, Inc. Students from the National Junior Honor Society donated and wrapped over 200 presents this past holiday season. The presents were, once again, donated to the residents of the Andres Children's Center.

As I've mentioned in previous reports, each administrator is required to be out of the district for a minimum of ten days of training to meet the requirements of the new APPR legislation. BOCES has posted the next three days for training for administrators. Our administrative team has completed three days of the mandated ten. The next three will take place within the next two months and then we will wait for further instructions regarding the last four.

Keeping up with our facilities, Centre Avenue School has enhanced the safety of the playground and dismissal area with a new gate and six foot fencing at the entrance of the school driveway.

We have upgraded our telephone system. If you call the school you might be surprised not to hear Mr. Fortgang's voice on the recording. A new phone system has been installed. At the moment, the phone numbers will remain the same as for the old system. I want to thank Mrs. Tannenbaum and her staff for all of their hard work in making this happen. This was a cooperative project with BOCES, known as the BOTIE initiative, which will link all of the school districts through internet connections. We expect that there will be a savings on telephone costs as a result of this partnership.

In other news, Centre Avenue Kindergarten teacher Linda Grace applied for and received a \$246 Teacher grant from NEFCU to fund her Lucky Lady Bugs project. Students will get to observe the live cycle of a lady bug and set the Lady Bugs free into our Kinder-garden by the playground. Last week was the first BAC meeting where we presented the reality of the new tax cap legislation. Information from the meeting is available on the website at the Budget Information link. The next meeting will be on February 2nd. Although the Board adopted next year's calendar, the State Education Department is still working out the details of the schedule for Regents

exams in 2013. Depending upon what they decide this could change everyone's calendars for next year. As you are aware regarding assessment dates and scheduling, SED has not been timely with information to the schools and therefore we do not know when to expect the information. SED's lack of timely information has affected this year's calendar with respect to the half days. We are still trying to determine the best use of those two half days for scoring and/or professional development. Recently I called Senator Skelos' office to see if there was any grant money that would be available to us. I was told that there was some but it was not definite as to how much. I will continue to communicate with the Senator about additional bullet grants as well as state aid.

There is no follow-up from the previous meeting.

That concludes my report.

8. Privilege of the Floor

- Grants
- Reorganization
- Special Education

9. Board Member Comments

Linda Schmidt – Thank you Mr. Piccarella and Mr. Cangemi. Thank you all for coming. Congratulations Mrs. Singer on your retirement.

Kristin Ochtera – Best wishes to Mrs. Singer in her retirement. Mr. Piccarella and Mr. Cangemi, your presentation reminds us of the challenges that lie ahead. You said the teachers are facing the new expectations with enthusiasm and I want to thank all of you for that. With that outlook, we will rise to the occasion.

Patti Nicoletti – Thank you Mr. Piccarella and Mr. Cangemi for your presentation. Thank you also to the American Legion Post 958 and Mrs. Perdomo for your donations. Thank you and congratulations to Mrs. Singer.

Michaelene Abbott-Cooper – Thank you teachers, thank you for the donations and the grant information can be found in the Business Office. On Thursday the Board will be asking a lot of questions, I hope you will be there to hear what we ask and the answers.

Neil Schloth – Thank you Mr. Piccarella and Mr. Cangemi. It is a tremendous undertaking to take all of this information and apply it to our kids. Congratulations and best wishes to Mrs. Singer on your future retirement. Thank you for your many years of dedicated service to our School District.

Besides Thursday's meeting, we will be having three more meetings to discuss the reorganization:

January 31 at Rhame Ave.

February 1st at Centre Ave.

February 6th at the High School.

Please make every effort to attend one of these. The actual report will be available on line after the meeting on January 19th.

Thank you for coming.

10. Upon motion by Michaelene Abbott-Cooper, seconded by Linda Schmidt and unanimously approved, the meeting adjourned at 8:36 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Denise Lobascio
District Clerk