

EAST ROCKAWAY UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT
East Rockaway, New York
Regular Meeting of the Board of Education
7:30 P.M., February 11, 2014 - East Rockaway Jr. /Sr. High School
Preceded by Recognition of the Robotics Team, a Presentation on Music Therapy
and a Public Forum

MINUTES

Present: Kristin Ochtera, President; Neil Schloth; Linda Schmidt; John Giannotti, Jr.; Lisa J. Ruiz, Superintendent; Dr. Joan Colvin, Director of Finance and Operations; Denise Lobascio, District Clerk; staff members and members of the community.

1. The meeting was called to order by Kristin Ochtera at 8:25 pm and the Pledge of Allegiance was led by Linda Schmidt.
2. Upon motion by Linda Schmidt, seconded by John Giannotti, the minutes of the January 14, 2014 Board of Education meeting were unanimously approved.
3. Acknowledged Receipt of Financial Reports – December 2013
4. Correspondence - One
5. Action Agenda

A. Personnel

1. Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, accept the following resignation(s):
 - a. Gina Hamsley, monitor, effective January 28, 2014
 - b. Anthony Pignataro, junior varsity baseball coach, effective January 21, 2014
 - c. Teresa Borodin-Rossi, food service worker, effective February 11, 2014
 - d. Lorraine Pieck, substitute food service worker, effective February 11, 2014
2. Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, accept the resignation of Vincent D'Amico as the Assistant Business Manager, as well as all other ancillary positions held by him, for the purpose of retirement, effective February 28, 2014.
3. Approve the appointment of Joan L. Colvin, part-time Interim Business Official to serve as the Medicaid Compliance Officer, effective February 17, 2014.
4. Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the appointment of Wendy Beauchesne to the position of leave replacement kindergarten teacher, effective November 13, 2013, through June 30, 2014, at the prorated MA, Step Entry annual

salary set forth in the East Rockaway Teachers Association Contract for the 2013-2014 school year.

5. Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the spring sports 2013-2014 coaching assignments as more fully set forth on the 2013-2014 Spring Coaching Schedule dated February 11, 2014.
6. Approve the appointment of Lorriane Pieck, to the position of food service worker effective February 12, 2014, at the Step 1 hourly salary set forth in the East Rockaway Food Service and Monitor Union contract for the 2013-2014 school year.
7. Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the following temporary assignments at the salary approved by the East Rockaway Board of Education on the Non-Contractual Salary Schedule for substitute workers for the 2013-2014 school year:
 - a. Teresa Borodin Rossi, substitute food service worker, effective February 12, 2014
 - b. Binafshah Hussan, substitute food service worker, effective February 12, 2014
 - c. Maria Rouzinou, substitute food service worker, effective February 12, 2014

B. Other Items

Upon motion by Linda Schmidt, seconded by John Giannotti, Jr. the following items #1-6 were unanimously approved:

1. Rescind Other Item No. 8 from the January 14, 2014 agenda and minutes.
2. Rescind Item No. 40 from the July 2, 2013, Board of Education meeting authorizing the Superintendent of Schools in the absence of the Director of Finance and Operations to serve as purchasing agent.
3. Authorize John Piccarella in the absence of the Director of Finance and Operations to serve as purchasing agent.
4. Accept a donation from the East Rockaway Education Foundation in the sum of Ten Thousand Two Hundred Dollars (\$10,200.00) for the following:
 - a. \$10,000.00 for the physical education, health and athletics department
 - b. \$200.00 for general purpose as the district deems appropriate
5. Approve the purchase of the following textbook:

Ross Fardo Masterson Towers; Robotics - Theory and Industrial Applications;

Goodheart-Wilcox, Tinley Park, Illinois 2011

6. Approve the terms and conditions of the following contracts for consultation services during the 2013-2014 school year and authorize the President of the Board of Education to execute the contracts on behalf of the Board of Education:
 - a. RCP Consultants for grant writing professional development services
 - b. BookSmart Accounting for accounting services
 - c. Shari Dorfman, for Dignity for All Students Act training
 - d. Ruth Rosenberg, for Dignity for All Students Act training

Upon motion by John Giannotti, Jr., seconded by Neil Schloth, the following resolution was Unanimously approved:

7. WHEREAS, our nations and New York State's future well-being relies on a high-quality public education system that prepares all students for college, careers, citizenship and lifelong learning, and strengthens that nation's social and economic well-being; and

WHEREAS, our nation's school systems have been spending excessive amounts of time, money and energy on high-stakes standardized testing, in which student performance on standardized tests is used to make major decisions affecting individual students, educators and schools; and

WHEREAS, the overreliance on high-stakes standardized testing in state and federal accountability systems is undermining educational quality and equity in U.S. public schools by hampering educators' efforts to focus on the broad range of learning experiences and promote the innovation, creativity, problem-solving, collaboration, communication, critical thinking and deep subject-matter knowledge that will allow students to thrive in a democracy and an increasingly global society and economy; and

WHEREAS, it is widely recognized that standardized testing is an inadequate and often unreliable measure of both student learning and educator effectiveness; and

WHEREAS, the over-emphasis on standardized testing has caused considerable collateral damage in too many schools, including narrowing the curriculum, teaching to the test, reducing love of learning, pushing students out of school, driving excellent teachers out of the profession, and undermining school climate; and

WHEREAS, high-stakes standardized testing has negative effects for students from all backgrounds, and especially for low income students, English language learners, and those with disabilities; and

WHEREAS, Race to the Top funding does not adequately address significant costs associated with the implementation of the new APPR and Common Core Learning Standards, such as hiring professionals to ensure local assessments at grades 4-8 are valid, or

other test construction and implementation costs; and

WHEREAS, that the East Rockaway School District calls on Governor Cuomo, Commissioner King, the state Legislature, and the Board of Regents to reexamine public school accountability systems in this state, including the Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) and to develop a system based on multiple forms of assessment which does not require extensive standardized testing, more accurately reflects the broad range of student learning, and is used to support students and improve schools; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the East Rockaway School District calls on the U.S. Congress and Administration to overhaul the Elementary and Secondary Educational Act (currently known as the “No Child Left Behind Act”), reduce the testing mandates, promote multiple forms of evidence of student learning and school quality in accountability, and not mandate any fixed role for the use of student test scores in evaluating educators.

8. Upon motion by Linda Schmidt, seconded by Neil Schloth, the following resolution was unanimously approved:

BE IT RESOLVED that Carol Hernandez be appointed to serve as a member of the Board of Registration for the annual District Election to be held on May 20, 2014; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board of Education authorizes Carol Hernandez, a member of the board of registration, to be available for the purpose of registering qualified voters of the District during kindergarten registration periods.

C. Budget Transfers

Upon motion by John Giannotti, Jr., seconded by Linda Schmidt, the following budget transfer was unanimously approved:

- a. Transaction No. 14-0006

- D. Upon motion by Neil Schloth, seconded by Linda Schmidt, the CSE Recommendations were unanimously approved.

- E. Upon motion by John Giannotti, Jr., seconded by Linda Schmidt, the CPSE Recommendations were unanimously approved.

6. Policy Matters

1. Upon motion by Linda Schmidt, seconded by Neil Schloth the following policies were unanimously adopted:
 - a. 5205, Eligibility
 - b. 1900, Parental Involvement
2. For Review
 - a. 5100, Attendance
7. Good and Welfare
 - a. Condolences to Cesar Gil and the family of John Bishop, beloved art teacher, who passed on January 16, 2014
 - b. Condolences Karin Leary on the passing of her uncle, Gerard Lagasse, and her grandmother, Genevieve Pollock
 - c. Condolences to Lisa Ruiz, on the passing of her uncle, Peter Turner
 - d. Condolences to Dominick Vulpis on the passing of his cousin, Jeanine Rinn
 - e. Congratulations to Casey Meaney, teaching assistant at Centre Avenue, on her engagement to Jonathan Wise
 - f. Congratulations to Keri Gang, teaching assistant at Centre Avenue, on her engagement to Kevin Clarke
8. Superintendent's Report
From our Elementary Schools:
 - Our grades 5 and 6 students district wide will receive puberty training from Mr. Vulpis and the health staff. Students will gain valuable knowledge about social, emotional and physical growth through these lessons. On Monday evening, we held our parent puberty meeting.
 - Kindergarten teachers presented their Interim reports to Kindergarten parents explaining what their children have learned so far in school and what their learning will look like in the second semester on January 30th.
 - The Jump Rope for Heart and Hoops for Heart fundraisers for the American Heart Association are currently taking place and conclude on Friday, February 14th. The Healthy Action Team is hosting a "Show Your Heart Some Love by Exercising" day to celebrate Valentine's Day in a healthy way. Centre Avenue will participate in Jump for Heart, K-3 and Hoops for Heart grades 4-6 in its Physical Education classes next week.
 - All County Music Concerts will take place this month at the Tilles Center at CW Post College in Brookville, NY. Lauren Cronin, Michelle Landerer, and Kelly Peknic from Rhame Avenue have been selected to participate in the chorus.

- The Hempstead Town Clerk, Mrs. Ahmad, read to the second grade classes at Rhame Avenue. and she discussed her job and the responsibilities that go along with it. The students wrote her friendly letters thanking her for her visit.
- This month all Rhame art classes will be participating in the "wrinkled heart" project. As a way in which to visually teach children about the power of our words and how to develop empathy, students will be asked to share some of the hurtful things that they may have said to others, had said to them or have overheard from TV, movies or conversations of others. Simultaneously, they will each put a crease or wrinkle in large paper heart. After the heart is crumpled ball, Students will then need to share an opposite thought to the hurtful words- a positive statement of kindness, encouragement or a compliment- something healing. They will then watch as each wrinkle is unfolded with each positive thought. Student discussion will then center around the heart's appearing to be resilient, but then it's inability to get rid of the "wrinkles". The hurt of someone's words may be forever lasting.
- This month the Rhame Ave. Character Education Action Team is organizing "Fill Your Heart with Kindness Day." This will take place on February 14th. Students will try to fill as many buckets as possible on this day.
- Centre Avenues Grade 6 student Christopher Lazaro won the championship round for the National Geographic Geography Bee. Chris took a 100 question test in the principal's office for a chance to compete in Washington DC for a \$50,000 college scholarship. Good luck Chris!
- Centre Avenue Social worker Maureen Schutta presented 6th Grade students with training on Autism and its effects on school children last Friday.
- Grade 2 students at Centre Avenue are working on their first draft of persuasive writing about persuading someone to attend Centre Avenue School.
- Assemblyman Brian Curran will visit Centre Avenue Elementary School this Thursday to promote the Valentines for Veterans program and bring awareness to the great sacrifices that Veterans make to keep our country free and safe.
- The Rhame Avenue PTA held its annual Talent Show on Friday evening, January 31st. Eighty-seven children from grades 3-6 showcased their talents from dancing and singing to magic acts, performing to a packed house. A good time was had by all!
- 150 Rhame Avenue K-6 students participated in the National PTA Reflections program. This year's theme was "Believe, Dream, and Inspire" and students were able to submit entries in art, photography, writing, dance and music. Rhame Avenue PTA submitted (14) 1st and 2nd place entries to compete at the Nassau County level. The PTA is proud of all our participants!

Jr. Sr. High School

- On Monday February 5th, 2014, our sixth grade teachers became 7th graders for the day with our middle school students. Sixth grade teachers from Centre and Rhame experienced the 7th grade through the eyes of our students. Each teacher was paired with a student buddy for the day. The teachers shadowed the students through their school day from class to class. This professional development activity is designed to assist in creating a successful transition from elementary into the middle school years. After the school day ended, our teachers were able to meet, reflect, and provided feedback to administrators regarding this transitional period for students.
- The Chorus is working on putting together a video to enter the New York Lottery's New York Sings contest, "Thank You for Being a Friend". Our school could win \$10,000, \$5,000 or \$2,500 for music education.

Music Department is also gearing up for "Music in our Schools Month"

- We are planning on inviting our 5th and 6th grade music students to the High School to rehearse and have lunch with our HS performing groups.
- A group of 20 students will be working with 4th grade students from River East Elementary School in NYC on a Rhythm and Rap unit. Our students will travel to River East, write a Rap about the environment. In April, the River East students will be coming to our school to perform their raps with our students in our recording studio.
- ERHS hosted a Robotics Tournament on Saturday, February 1st, the first-ever high school tournament on Long Island. Thirteen teams joined ERHS for a day-long series of competitions. Jericho emerged victorious, with ERHS finishing in the middle of the pack. We hope to establish this tournament as an annual tradition for years to come. Thank you again to our teachers, Mr. Cimorelli and Mr. Howard.
- The 8th grade ELA team is looking forward to instructing its new novel, *The Hunger Games*, after February Break. This should be an exciting unit for all students.
- The High School Musical, *Little Shop of Horrors*, was held this past weekend. On a personal note, I was amazed and delighted by the skills and talents of our student performers, musicians, stage hands and faculty. Kudos to Ms. Murano, Mr. Schloen, Mr. Ezell, Ms. Peterson, Mr. Gerken, Ms. Collins, Mr. Ceglie, and choreographer, Shari Berman. It was a simply wondrous performance. Congratulations to all – I am truly astounded by the amount of talent we have in our small district.
- On the February 6, Superintendent's Conference half-day, all faculty and staff participated in training for the Dignity for All Students Act (DASA). Keynote speakers from Child Abuse Prevention Services (CAPS) presented the essential components of the law and discussed building a school climate that protects all students from bullying, harassment, and discrimination. At East Rockaway High School the presentation was followed by interdisciplinary grade-level meetings in which teachers created ways to integrate DASA

principles across the curriculum. At Centre Avenue School the presentation to all of our elementary faculty and staff was followed by a workshop led by two teachers from the Merrick Schools that included many curriculum ideas and resources for DASA implementation.

- Each year, more than 30% of East Rockaway High School graduates plan to attend Nassau Community College. In an effort to assist students in the transition process and to ensure that they are college ready, the ERHS Guidance Department has implemented strategies to assist the many students who plan to begin their college experience at Nassau Community College.
 - On November 6, 2013, we held an onsite admissions day. An admission officer from Nassau Community College spent the day at East Rockaway High School. Seniors were invited to attend an information session presented by a representative from the college on the admission process, academic programs and financial aid. Following this group presentation, the representative met with students individually and students presented their completed application, discussed his/her intended educational and career plans, and was accepted to Nassau Community College on the spot.
 - **Placement Test Field Trip:** On January 31, 2014, twenty-six (26) members of the ERHS Class of 2014 visited Nassau Community College and were administered the placement test. These accepted students received their test results on the spot and were advised if they needed to enroll in remedial coursework. Due to this early testing and individual advisement, these students are eligible to register for classes before many of their peers, and they can begin to plan their college program this spring. ERHS counselors also provided additional direction and explanation, and students were able to enjoy lunch in the Nassau Community College food court while observing the campus environment. Thank you to Ms. Hecht and Ms. Spiteri for their efforts in supporting our students in this area. We are confident that these efforts will increase our students' success as they enter college.

I would like to ask Ms. Colvin to speak about the property tax exemptions for veterans and certain other property owners based upon military service.

Dr. Colvin informed the general public that the district would conduct a Veteran's Exemption Public Hearing on March 4, 2104 at 7:00 pm. Dr. Colvin also responded to questions asked by community members.

I would now like to ask Mr. Piccarella to speak about the recent changes enacted by the NYS Regents with regard to the Common Core Learning Standards and assessment requirements.

Yesterday, February 10, the New York State Board of Regents put forward for adoption some "Adjustments to Common Core Implementation." The Governor had a strong negative reaction and some legislators had a strong positive reaction, both of which were exaggerated in the press. Many of the proposals had already been in place. The recommended adjustments are as follows:

- Advocate for the National Governors' Association to convene participating states to periodically review and update the common core learning standards
- Advocate for the Governor and State Legislature to allocate \$525 million over three years for a Core Instructional Development Fund for professional development and parent engagement
- Extend the phase-in for common core-aligned Regents examinations required for graduation so that the Class of 2022 (our current 4th grade) is the first to be required to pass English and Math Regents exams at college-ready levels. (75 in English, 80 in Math)
- Issue guidance that doesn't require or encourage districts to use 3-8 assessments in making decisions about promotion or placement of students
- Advocate for the Governor and State Legislature to allocate \$8.4 million to eliminate stand-alone, multiple-choice field-test questions and to publish more versions of each test so that the field-test questions can be embedded and so that more test items can be released publicly
- Advocate for a Federal ESEA Waiver to allow students who have severe disabilities but who do not qualify for NYSAA to be tested at their instructional level not their chronological age
- Advocate for a Federal ESEA Waiver to allow ELLs to be assessed by the NYSESLAT in their first two years, instead of current practice which is only in their first year
- Advocate for the Governor and the Legislature to allocate \$10 million to develop Native Language Arts tests for Spanish-speaking ELLs
- Clarify that Level 2 on NYS 3-8 assessments in ELA and Math be redefined as "On Track for Regents exam passing for graduation," until the required passing score is raised to college and career-ready levels beginning with the class of 2022 (applies to students currently in grades 5-12 and a passing score of 65)
- Extend the AIS hold-harmless provision to 2013-14 and 2014-15 so that students scoring Level 2 above the cut-point equivalent for the pre-common core exams will not be required to receive AIS
- Expedite review of APPR plans in which changes eliminate unnecessary testing
- Eliminate traditional standardized testing as an APPR option for locally-selected measures in grades K-2.
(Not clear which assessments will be disallowed)
- Establish a 1% cap on time used for locally-selected standardized testing used for APPR

- Allow school-wide measures for APPR purposes for teachers of Science 6-7 and Social Studies 6-8
- Provide that teachers who are rated ineffective because of their students' performance on Common Core State Assessments can appeal their rating on that basis
(Due to pressure from the Governor this item was retracted 2/11/14.)
- Develop additional curriculum materials that support differentiated instruction in the Common Core Learning Standards for students with disabilities and ELLs
- Develop an online tool for educators state-wide to share curriculum resources such as adaptation of The NYS Common Core Curriculum Modules
- Issue CSE guidelines to ensure that IEPs address challenges related to mastery of Common Core Learning Standards by students with disabilities
- Continue collaboration with the Commissioner's Advisory Panel for Special Education to develop guiding questions for parents to ask about how their students are being supported in mastering Common Core Learning Standards

9. Privilege of the Floor

- Testing
- Veteran's Exemption
- Thank you to the refreshing new board and Mrs. Ruiz

10. Board Member Comments

Kristin Ochtera – I would like to acknowledge John Giannotti, Jr. for completing NYSSBA's 150 leadership credits! Congratulations! These credits make for a better board member.

John Giannotti, Jr. – Thank you for coming. See you next month.

Linda Schmidt – Thank you for coming. See you next month.

Neil Schloth – There are a lot of good things that have turned sad. We need to bring it to the attention of those who can make a difference. Please send letters to Commissioner King. We are stuck in the middle so we all need to advocate. Thank you.

Kristin Ochtera – Thank you for tonight's presentations. I appreciate your comments tonight and would like to point out that the Music Therapy program that was presented was the result of a dialogue that started with a parental concern. It is an example of the good work that comes from productive conversations and community support. So a special Thank you, Dr. LoVerde, for your efforts for our children and our community. The ALPSS program for struggling students, the Malloy partnership, bringing our special needs students back from other districts are all examples of the successful programs you have championed.

11. Upon motion by Neil Schloth, seconded by John Giannotti, Jr. and unanimously passed, the meeting was adjourned at 10:05 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Denise Lobascio
District Clerk