

EAST ROCKAWAY UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT  
East Rockaway, New York  
Regular Meeting of the Board of Education  
7:00 P.M., November 22, 2016 – East Rockaway Jr. /Sr. High School  
Preceded by a *Gull* Presentation, Thinking Maps Presentation,  
and a Public Forum

MINUTES

Present: Members of the Board of Education: Patti Nicoletti, Keith Gamache, Neil R. Schloth, Kristin Ochtera, John Giannotti, Jr., Superintendent, Lisa J. Ruiz; Assistant Superintendent for Finance & Operations, Jacqueline A. Scio; Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction and Technology, John Piccarella, District Clerk, Vitina Fazi

1. The meeting was called to order by Patti Nicoletti at 7:05 p.m. and John Giannotti, Jr., led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Board President Patti Nicoletti turned the meeting over to the Superintendent. Ms. Ruiz welcomed everyone to tonight's meeting. She pointed out the emergency exits in the auditorium, as per New York State Law. Ms. Ruiz then introduced Mr. John Piccarella, who is extremely well versed in tonight's first presentation, Thinking Maps. Mr. Piccarella provided a comprehensive presentation about the use of Thinking Maps in the District. Questions were asked regarding the use of the Thinking Maps and Mr. Piccarella responded.

Mr. Piccarella then introduced Mr. Robert Kennedy, staff advisor for the District's student newspaper, *The East Rockaway Gull*. Mr. Kennedy explained the new updates to the newspaper, specifically, it being an interactive, on-line paper, as opposed to a print publication that was published a few times during the school year. This new technology allows the students to add updates as they happen and video segments; while at the same time leaving what has already been posted. Mr. Kennedy then introduced the *Gull's* student staff. Each student spoke about their position on the *Gull* and their positive experiences with the new format. Questions were asked and Mr. Kennedy responded.

Ms. Ruiz thanked Mr. Piccarella for all of this efforts and strong leadership in bringing Thinking Maps to the District. She also thanked Mr. Kennedy and the Gull staff for bringing our newspaper into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Although this is their second year with the new format, she was glad that we had an opportunity this school year to share it with the Board of Education and community.

At 7:44 p.m. the meeting was turned over to Ms. Nicoletti who continued with the agenda. Ms. Nicoletti reminded the audience that there will be an opportunity to ask questions at the end of the meeting as well as an opportunity to ask questions about tonight's agenda.

2. Upon motion made by Keith Gamache, and seconded by John Giannotti, Jr., the Minutes of October 25, 2016, were unanimously approved.
3. Acknowledge Receipt of Financial Reports – September 2016
4. Correspondence – One
5. Hearing of visitors on items in the Agenda - None
6. Action Agenda

Upon motion made by Neil Schloth, and seconded by John Giannotti, Jr., the following Items 1, 2, 3 (as corrected) and 4-6 were unanimously approved on a consent agenda.

A. Personnel

1. Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, accept the resignation of Angela Prisciandaro, teacher aide, effective November 20, 2016.
2. Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the request of Eileen Levine for an extension of her child rearing leave of absence, effective January 30, 2017, through June 30, 2017.
3. Upon the recommendation of the superintendent, approve the request of Christine Ericson for a maternity leave of absence, effective December 12, 2016, through June 30, 2017, in accordance with FMLA.
4. Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the revised East Rockaway High School Club Advisor Assignments for the 2016-2017 school year.
5. Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the appointment of Angela Prisciandaro to the position of Senior Typist Clerk (10 month), effective November 21, 2016, at the prorated Step B, annual salary set forth in the East Rockaway Secretaries Association Agreement for the 2016-2017 school year.

6. 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 2016-2017 school year:
  - a. Brenda Arum, substitute teacher, effective November 23, 2016
  - b. Stephen Raimondi, athletic supervisor (day/evening) effective November 23, 2016
  - c. Antoinette English, concert supervisor, effective November 23, 2016
  - d. Samantha Aizer, concert supervisor, effective November 23, 2016

B. Other Items

Upon motion made by John Giannotti, Jr., and seconded by Kristin Ochtera, the following Items 1 through 8 were unanimously approved on a consent agenda.

1. Adopt the East Rockaway UFSD Comprehensive District-Wide School Safety Plan for the 2016-2017 school year.
2. Approve the Enterprise Program Services Agreement between the East Rockaway UFSD and Lynbrook UFSD for Enterprise Program services for the 2015/2016, and 2016/2017 school years, and authorize the President of the Board of Education to execute the Agreement on behalf of the East Rockaway Board of Education.
3. Approve the Memorandum of Understanding between the Nassau County Police Department and the East Rockaway UFSD to participate in the Nassau County Alert Domain Awareness System (“ADAS”) and authorize the President of the East Rockaway Board of Education to execute the Memorandum of Understanding on behalf of the East Rockaway Board of Education.
4. Approve the following consultation services contract with Engtze Pan, accompanying pianist for concerts rehearsals and performances during the 2016-2017 school year and authorize the President of the East Rockaway Board of Education to execute the contracts on behalf of the East Rockaway Board of Education.
5. Approve the awards of the bids for transportation services to the following companies and authorize the Superintendent and President of the Board of Education to execute the resulting contract on behalf of the East Rockaway Board of Education:
  - a. First Student, Inc.  
Arch Bishop Molloy High School
  - b. Veterans Transportation Corp.  
SEAL Program, Great Neck
  - c. Veterans Transportation Corp.  
Village School, Great Neck

6. Approve the Special Education Services Contract with Hewlett Woodmere UFSD for special education services for one parentally placed student for the 2016–2017 school year and authorize the President of the Board of Education to execute the contract on behalf of the East Rockaway Board of Education.
7. Declare obsolete for the purpose of disposal, the following equipment:
  - a. Advance Rug Shampooer
  - b. Viper Wet-Vac
8. Accept the following donations:
  - a. A First Grade Curriculum Enhancement from the Rhame Avenue School PTA in the amount of \$400
  - b. A check in the amount of \$5,000 from The Whelan Foundation for the East Rockaway High School Skills and Achievement Art Class
  - c. Five packs of premium colored paper and 12 black leather Kindle Fire tablet covers donated to the second grade classes from the Rhame Avenue School PTA valued at \$151.11
  - d. Checks in the amount of \$135.02 (from Shoparoo), and \$4.98, from the Rhame Avenue School PTA, to cover the cost of AAA Safety Patrol Belts
  - e. Check in the amount of \$35 from the Rhame Avenue School PTA for the purchase of an Interactive Math Notebook Download for the second grade classrooms

C. Budget Transfers - None

D. Upon motion made by Keith Gamache, and seconded by Neil Schloth, the CSE Recommendations were unanimously approved.

E. Upon motion made by Kristin Ochtera, and seconded by John Giannotti, Jr., the CPSE Recommendations were unanimously approved.

## 7. Policy Matters

1. For Review
  - a. Policy 4321.4, 4321.4-R, Independent Educational Evaluations and Regulations

## 8. Good and Welfare

- a. Congratulations to Lexi Mendyk on her engagement to Nick Pietrantonio
- b. Condolences to John Piccarella and family on the passing of his father-in-law, Robert Malcomson
- c. Condolences to TJ DiPietro and family on the passing of her sister-in-law, Guisella Terranova

- d. Condolences to Dom Vulpis and family on the passing of his aunt, Jacqueline Metzler

## 9. Superintendent's Report

Ms. Ruiz spoke about the safety concern on Monday, November 21, 2016. She said that the notification was not received timely which created a stressful day for everyone. She hopes to work with the Council of School Superintendents and the police department towards improving communication. This has been an ongoing topic with many superintendents and a meeting is planned with the Nassau County Police Department Inspector. On Monday, the POPP officer met with her and staff first thing in the morning. We will continue to work as closely as we can with the police department to enhance and improve communications.

Tonight the Board passed a resolution with the Nassau County Police Department to participate in the Nassau County Alert Domain Awareness System ("ADAS"). In the event of a serious emergency situation, the police department will have access to our cameras which can provide a more effective response in the case of a heightened need. In keeping with safety measures, the blue strobe lights and panic buttons will become active shortly. We will communicate with the community as more information becomes available.

### Achievement

Students at Centre Avenue School are now in the second month of writing their narratives. The level of rigor in writing has increased with careful consideration for each step of the writing process. Some grades have made their narratives interdisciplinary through incorporating their writing into Science or Social Studies content areas. Within the next few weeks, students in all grades will publish their final drafts and celebrate their writing pieces.

Students at Rhame Avenue School in Grades 3-5 are thrilled to be a part of our new STEAM program as they have recently begun their first unit of study in "Coding." The problem solving and higher order thinking skills that our students have been using to reach new levels has been incredible to watch. We are confident that this opportunity will lead to greater academic success for our students as they push their thinking to new heights.

Teachers at Rhame Avenue have implemented Achieve 3000 with new expectations for the school year and have recently met with our District's Implementation Specialist to customize our approach ever more as we move into our second year with this program. Achieve 3000 is a software based supplemental reading program that provides a differentiated approach for students to use when reading Informational Text. This year, our focus is to Increase Academic Vocabulary and enhance the writing skills of our students in alignment with our District's goals to increase student achievement in a number of focus areas.

Thirty-four students district-wide have been accepted for the Nassau Music Educators All-County and PEAK Festivals.

Andrew Schwarzman will be attending the All-State Music Festival the first week of December representing East Rockaway in the Orchestra.

Varsity Boys Football made the conference playoffs to be eliminated by Carle Place.

Varsity Girls Volleyball made the State Championship in Glens Falls.

Six Cross-Country athletes competed in the Section 8, Class D State Championships, joining a field of over 200 participants. They are: Kristi Ackerina, Mairead Connor, Valencia Poorajah, Adam Fulgencio, Kevin Howard and Justin Sandoval.

### Opportunity

Fifth and sixth grade students in Student Council helped to organize a school wide food drive during the holiday season. Students in each grade brought in nonperishable food items to donate. All donations will be sent to Island Harvest for distribution to families who are less fortunate. Another important service project the students in Student Council worked on was assembling care kits for children in hospitals through the Little Saint Nick Foundation. These care kits consist of gift bags with toys, along with get well cards. Teaching the students to give back to the community is an important lesson in being global citizens.

The Rhame Avenue K-Kids Club hosted a school wide food drive for Island Harvest to help benefit Long Island families in need. K-Kid members, Catherine Slade, Isbella Cicero, Grace Muller, Ava LoVolpe, Parent Volunteer Mrs. Slade and Faculty Advisor Ms. Lugo dropped off 240 pounds of donated food to the Island Harvest food pantry in Uniondale.

Our 8th grade and College Portfolio students attended a trip to the Heckscher Museum of Art to help prepare them for the Long Island's Best Young Artist Contest.

The auditions have been completed for Shrek and rehearsals have begun. The show opens on February 3, 2017, at 7:30 p.m.

Students were able to visit Marist College as part of a continuing effort to expose students to the college admissions process through campus visits.

Four teachers attended the Annual Long Island Council for Social Studies conference on October 21, 2016. They brought back a plethora of materials and recent NYS updates to share with the department.

### Innovation

Students in Grades 4-6 are busy learning how to be responsible researchers with online resources

during their library periods with Mrs. Schoen. Fourth grade students are learning how to find information by identifying keywords and using them to answer questions using the World Book Online database. They are using Google Forms to identify keywords, find the answers, and cite the evidence in World Book Online. Fifth grade students are learning how to search for information and then evaluate those sources to determine the most credible websites. Sixth grade students are almost done creating Museum Boxes for the second grade students to use as research for their projects later in the year. Museum boxes are virtual cubes that use visual, text, and web resources to present information.

Students in Grades 5 and 6 have been working on creative new ways to showcase their learning in class and at home using their tablets as part of our District's 1:1 Initiative. Teachers have been attending workshops provided by Nassau BOCES and Nassau TRACT that have been focused around leveraging technology to increase student achievement. Mrs. Schoen, our Library-Media Specialist across both buildings, has been working to provide professional development opportunities for our teachers as well, and their collective efforts are shining in the classrooms as our students are taking their innovative abilities to new heights!

We have secured a \$5,000.00 grant from the Whelan Foundation to help support our Skills and Achievement Art Class. Thank you to Mr. Schloen for his efforts that helped to secure these funds.

We have submitted a student-produced video to NAMM Foundation (National Association Music Merchants) entitled "What Makes Music Education Great in My District."

Our second group of Thinking Maps trainers have been undergoing training in New York City. They have also been working with the company on Year 2 of implementation. Students continue to learn more about the maps and apply them to their learning.

### Connection

Centre Avenue School celebrated Visitors' Day in honor of American Education Week on November 16, 2016. Parents and family members visited their child's classroom to listen in on a lesson and in some cases, participate in the lesson. The purpose of this day is to allow parents and family members to capture a glimpse of their child's school day. As a kick-off to fostering a positive school culture in the building, many teachers shared the first of several character education books during this session. The Juice Box Bully is a book about making positive choices and being an up stander. In the coming months, other character education books will be shared and discussed with all Centre Avenue School students.

Superintendent's Conference day was chock-full of professional learning across the district and both elementary schools joined forces to continue their work around Thinking Maps, Vocabulary Acquisition, writing and review of the newly revised Common Core Learning Standards. Our teachers in Grades K-2 and 3-5 were able to connect throughout the day as we were divided into cohorts that each had their own facilitators for the day's work. Bringing the teachers from both

schools together was a powerful way to connect the work we have been doing and share best practices at Centre and Rhame Avenue Schools.

Thank you to Ms. Sanders, the High School Student Council, and all who donated to this year's Blood Drive. In all, 32 pints were donated!

The first annual Empty Bowls fundraiser was held on November 17, 2016. The event raised \$712. Funds raised are going to Island Harvest.

Mr. Spero attended an AVID District Director training in Tampa, Florida where he met over 30 other directors from across the country, visited two showcase schools, and continued to learn more about the program. Pam Liebring, the Program Manager, also came to work with Mr. Pajer, Mr. Spero and Ms. DiPietro to support the program's implementation.

During the month of October and November, the Social Studies Department incorporated civic education in celebration of the Presidential Election of 2016. It culminated in a school wide vote on Monday, November 7, 2016, organized by Social Studies teacher, Mr. Poland.

Eight students from Mrs. Rebeca Rodriguez Spanish classes participated in the State Senator's Todd Kaminsky's office scholarship initiative "Hispanic Heritage Essay Contest", sponsored by Optimum. Looking forward to seeing the results!

Language teacher, Mr. Frank Cuttitta, organized a successful Thanksgiving Day Pie sale fundraiser. Part of the proceeds will go towards sponsoring a child in Mexico.

English as a New Language Teacher, Mrs. Melinda Best, created a new collegial circle that will focus on effective strategies for ENL within our district. All staff members have been invited to participate

Ms. Ruiz wished everyone a wonderful Thanksgiving Day with their families.

10. Privilege of the Floor - none

11. Board Member Comments

John Giannotti, Jr.: Mr. Giannotti, Jr. thanked Mr. Piccarella for an informative presentation on Thinking Maps. He also thanked the staff and students of The East Rockaway Gull for updating the school newspaper with the on-line interactive technology. He thanked Mrs. Lalama for taking the fourth grade students to the PEAK Festival at Molloy College this past weekend. The children attended workshops during the day and a concert was held at the end of the day. He wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving.

Neil Schloth: Mr. Schloth informed the audience that school board members, including himself,



were able to attend the NYSSBA Conference in Buffalo recently. He received information which might benefit our school district such as alternative energy sources and different teaching methods. He found the information enlightening and hopes to pursue what he learned with the district. He thanked Ms. Ruiz and the administration for the safety procedures that were put in place on Monday. He said the District is making strides in safety precautions and is impressed with the safety drill that took place and for working quickly to create a protocol for safety. He wished everyone a happy Thanksgiving Day and a good beginning to the approaching holiday season.

Keith Gamache: Mr. Gamache said that while in college, he had a work-study job in a book store designing the window displays. One book in particular, *Savage Inequalities*, changed his life. He showed the audience a copy of his book which was signed by the author, Jonathan Kozol. As the struggle continues, he is thankful to be in a community that supports public schools and having a Superintendent, staff and faculty which supports this as well. He is committed to equality and providing equitable opportunities to all our students.

Kristin Ochtera: Ms. Ochtera expressed how thankful she is for the District reaching forward and taking on initiatives to further educate our students, enabling them to compete globally in their endeavors, in the areas of academics, sports and the Arts. She is proud of all the students' accomplishments and is thankful for the work the administration is doing.

Ms. Ruiz added that she attended the East Rockaway Education Foundation Dinner Dance on November 18, 2016. Ms. Ochtera was honored for all of her efforts and hard work on behalf of the students and community. Also honored was Scott Gerken, teacher honoree. They both are very well deserved recipients. She congratulated both of them and thanked the Education Foundation for their support.

Patti Nicoletti: Ms. Nicoletti said "great minds think alike." She thanked Mr. Piccarella for his very interesting Thinking Maps presentation. Mr. Piccarella does many presentations and his knowledge and hard work really shows. She also thanked Mr. Kennedy and the students who presented for *The East Rockaway Gull*. They did a fabulous job and she thanked them for updating our newspaper. On tonight's agenda donations were accepted from our hard working PTA, as well as a donation from the Whalen Foundation, thanks to the hard work of staff member Tom Schloen. She thanked the East Rockaway Education Foundation for honoring Kristin Ochtera and Scott Gerken. Mr. Gerken is a great example of the many staff members who go the extra mile. Ms. Ochtera is a very hard working board member who spends so much time and goes the extra "kilometer." She also thanked Ms. Ruiz and the administration for the trying day yesterday. She doubts any other school district did as thorough a job as East Rockaway did and she is very thankful to Ms. Ruiz and the staff. She wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving and hopes to see everyone next month.

12. Upon motion made by John Giannotti, Jr., and seconded by Kristin Ochtera, and passed unanimously, the meeting was adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Vitina Fazi  
District Clerk