

EAST ROCKAWAY UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT  
East Rockaway, New York  
Regular Meeting of the Board of Education  
7:00 P.M., December 20, 2016 – East Rockaway Jr. /Sr. High School

MINUTES

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

Absent: John Giannotti, Jr.

1. The meeting was called to order by Patti Nicoletti at 7:08 p.m. and Neil Schloth led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Board President Patti Nicoletti announced the recent passing of Anthony Quercia, Director of Facilities for the East Rockaway UFSD. A moment of silence took place to honor Mr. Quercia.

2. Upon motion made by Kristin Ochtera and seconded by Keith Gamache, the Minutes of the November 22, 2016, meeting was unanimously approved.
3. Acknowledge Receipt of Financial Reports – October 2016
4. Correspondence – None
5. Hearing of visitors on items in the Agenda - None
6. Action Agenda

Upon motion made by Neil Schloth and seconded by Keith Gamache, the following Items 1 through 7 were unanimously approved on a consent agenda.

A. Personnel

1. Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, accept the resignation of:
  - a. Linda Donovan, substitute teacher aide, effective December 20, 2016
  - b. Sylvia Asselta, substitute teacher aide, effective December 5, 2016
  - c. Loridana Ippoliti, temporary teaching assistant and substitute teacher, effective December 2, 2016

- d. Alexa Koutsantanou, part-time Spanish teacher and substitute teacher, effective December 16, 2016
- 2. Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the revised Centre Avenue Club Advisor assignments for the 2016-2017 school year.
- 3. Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the request of Donna Smith for a leave of absence for medical reasons from her special education teacher position effective January 30, 2017, through April 7, 2017.
- 4. Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the appointment of Jacqueline Purtee-Beytin to the position of leave replacement special education teacher, effective January 30, 2017, through June 30, 2017, at the MA, Step 1, annual salary set forth in the East Rockaway Teachers Association contract for the 2016-2017 school year.
- 5. Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the appointment of Noreen McDougal, to the position of leave replacement reading teacher, effective December 12, 2016, through June 30, 2017, at the prorated MA, Step Entry, annual salary set forth in the East Rockaway Teachers Association contract for the 2016-2017 school year.
- 6. Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the appointment of Linda M. Donovan to the position of teacher aide, (6 hours per day), effective December 21, 2016, at the prorated Step 1 annual salary set forth in the East Rockaway Teacher Aides Association Agreement for the 2016-2017 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 2016-2017 school year, effective upon Civil Service approval:
  - a. Kathleen Gicewicz, substitute teacher aide and substitute clerical
  - b. Lucia Castro, substitute cleaner

#### B. Other Items

Upon motion made by Keith Gamache, and seconded by Neil Schloth, the following Items 1 through 9 were unanimously approved on a consent agenda.

- 1. Approve the Health and Welfare Services Agreement between the East Rockaway UFSD and Hempstead UFSD for health and welfare services for the 2016-2017 school year and authorize the Superintendent and President of the Board of Education to

execute the agreement on behalf of the East Rockaway Board of Education.

2. Approve the Enterprise Program Services Agreement between the East Rockaway UFSD and Malverne UFSD for Enterprise Program services for the 2016-2017 school year, and authorize the President of the Board of Education to execute the Agreement on behalf of the East Rockaway Board of Education.
3. Accept the Title IIIA – Immigration Education –Federal Funding Grant Award for the funding dates of September 1, 2016, to August 31, 2017, with an approved budget total of \$21,957.
4. Approve the Special Education Services Contract with Great Neck Union Free School District for the 2016-2017 school year for the following students and authorize the President of the Board of Education to execute the contract on behalf of the East Rockaway Board of Education.
  - a. Student ID. No : 180005541
  - b. Student ID. No : 180006249
5. Approve the East Rockaway School District's participation in the Unified Sports Program Basketball League, a Special Olympics inclusive program, for the spring 2017 season, and accept a grant in the sum of \$1,000 from Special Olympics, and a grant in the sum of \$1,000 from Section VIII to support the program.
6. Approve the Non-Contractual Salary Schedule for the 2016-2017 school year.
7. Accept the following donations:
  - a. Check in the amount of \$92.39 from the Centre Avenue PTA for classroom supplies
  - b. Office furniture consisting of 5 desks and 3 credenzas from Weil, Gothshal & Manges LLP valued at \$7,000
8. Approve the following resolution:

**BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED** that approval is hereby granted to enter into service agreements with the following service providers as indicated in the Request for Proposal published in Newsday on November 28, 2016, for the 2016-2017 school year and authorize the President of the Board of Education to execute the agreement on behalf of the Board of Education:

- a. Capital Markets Advisors, LLC for financial advisor services
- b. Dr. Richard L. Addes for school physician services
- c. Nawrocki Smith LLP for external auditor services

d. Cullen & Danowski, LLP for internal auditor services

Ms. Nicoletti asked if there were any questions regarding Items 1-8 above. Prior to making the motion to approve, Ms. Nicoletti explained the Resolution in Item 9. She reminded the audience that a hearing was held on December 13, 2016. A decision was made to unanimously pass this resolution.

9. Approve the following Cold War Veterans Property Tax Exemption Resolution:

**WHEREAS**, the New York State Legislature amended the New York State Real Property Tax law (“RPTL”) to authorize school districts to provide a real property tax exemption from school district taxation for Cold War veterans under RPTL§458-b; and

**WHEREAS**, the state legislation was intended to provide Cold War veterans with real property tax exemptions similar to tax exemptions given to other war time veterans; and

**WHEREAS**, the Board of Education of the East Rockaway UFSD (“Board of Education”) desires by this resolution to extend similar real property tax exemptions to Cold War veterans who are eligible and qualified property owners pursuant to RPTL§458-b; and

**WHEREAS**, a public hearing was held on December 13, 2016, in East Rockaway, New York; now, therefore

**BE IT RESOLVED** as follows:

I. The Board of Education hereby adopts the definitions of “qualified owner,” “qualified residential real property” and “Cold War veteran” as provided in the RPTL§458-b(1); and

II. Eligible recipients shall be entitled to the exemption provided under RPTL§458-b(2)(a) to a maximum of fifteen (15%) percent of the assessed value of such property; provided however, that such exemption shall not exceed Twelve Thousand (\$12,000) Dollars or the product of Twelve Thousand (\$12,000) Dollars multiplied by the latest state equalization rate of the assessing unit, or, in the case of a special assessing unit, the latest class ratio, whichever is less; and

III. Eligible recipients shall be entitled to the exemption provided under RPTL§458-b(2)(b) to the extent of the product of the assessed value of such property, multiplied by fifty percent of the Cold War veteran disability rating; provided, however, that such exemption shall not exceed \$40,000 multiplied by the latest state equalization rate for the assessing unit, or, in the case of a special assessing unit, the latest class ratio,

whichever is less; and

IV. Tenant-stockholders of eligible cooperative corporations, shall be eligible to receive such exemptions as provided in RPTL§458-b (7); and

V. If a Cold War veteran receives an exemption under section 458 or 458-a of the New York State Real Property Tax Law, the Cold War veteran shall not be eligible to receive the exemption provided by this resolution; and

VI. The exemption provided under paragraph II of this resolution shall be granted for a period of ten (10) years, the commencement, measurement and expiration of which shall be governed pursuant to RPTL§458-b(2)(c)(iii).

VII. Application for the exemption shall be made by the owner, or all of the owners, of the qualified residential real property on a form prescribed by the state.

VIII. This resolution may be repealed by the Board of Education. Any such repeal shall occur at least ninety (90) days prior to the taxable status date of the County of Nassau

#### C. Budget Transfers

Upon motion made by Keith Gamache and seconded by Kristin Ochtera, the following Item 1 was unanimously approved.

1. Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, the Board of Education approves the following budget transfer:

a. Transaction No. 17-0002

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

E. Upon motion made by Neil Schloth, and seconded by Keith Gamache, the motion to approve the CPSE Recommendations was tabled until the following month in order to allow the Board an opportunity to review the CPSE Recommendations.

#### 7. Policy Matters

Upon motion made by Keith Gamache and seconded by Neil Schloth, the following Policy was approved for adoption:

1. For Adoption

- a. Policy 4321.4, 4321.4-R, Independent Educational Evaluations and Regulations
8. Good and Welfare
- a. Congratulations to Erik Walter on his engagement to Kim Green
  - b. Condolences to Laura Clarke and family on the passing of her father, Albert Martino
  - c. Condolences to Carol Sanders and family on the passing of her mother, Elaine Sanders
  - d. Condolences to the family of Anthony Quercia on his sudden and unexpected passing
9. Superintendent's Report

#### Achievement

Teachers at Centre Avenue School recently worked with the District's literacy consultant. They were able to watch a demonstration lesson focused on academic vocabulary while incorporating Thinking Maps. Productive conversations took place during the debriefing sessions to discuss next steps to help implement this new focus across all elementary classrooms. The Centre Avenue staff also recently completed progress monitoring meetings with classroom teachers. The reading teachers facilitated these data meetings to discuss the progress of students in literacy and determine how to best target their needs. Teachers will continue to monitor student progress to help them move forward academically.

Progress monitoring meetings took place this week at Rhame and Centre Avenue schools for students receiving interventions in grades K-4. Our reading teachers and building administrators facilitated these meetings and took an in-depth look at a number of data sources to make informed decisions about how students are responding to specific interventions being provided both inside and outside of the classroom. We provided targeted next steps for classroom teachers and teaching assistants to use as a guide to further support their instructional practices when working with groups of students. At Rhame Avenue, we are proud to report that about 10 students "graduated" from services because of their academic growth and we are very proud of their accomplishments and dedication to their school-work.

Achieve 3000 has been up and running in Grades 3-6 again this year to help provide differentiated learning opportunities for our students in the classroom and at home. The classroom teachers have utilized a new set of resources to further align the software and informational articles with what their students are learning across all content areas as well as in the Journey's Reading Program and several Engage NY Units that are being taught. As of this month, we have seen a 42% increase in the number of activities that students are completing each week and 75% of all students using the program are scoring at or above proficiency as measured by the system on their first try! That's almost a 10% increase in itself from last month too. We are very proud as well of the accomplishments and progress that our students are making in this area of reading and comprehending informational text.

Congratulations to the Music and Art Departments on an outstanding Winter Concert/Art Show. It is truly amazing to see the passion and excitement in both departments and watch it manifested in such a diverse array of talents.

Students in Grades 3-6 recently performed in the Winter Concert. All music groups including the 3rd/4th grade chorus, 5th/6th grade chorus, orchestra and band, created beautiful music that was enjoyed by all. A special thanks to all of our music teachers: Mr. Schloen, Mr. Ceglio, Ms. Weill, Ms. Silver, Ms. Mihalek, and Ms. Lalama; and our art teachers, Ms. Cabasso and Ms. Hirten for all their hard work and dedication in helping students foster their musical and visual arts talents and abilities.

The Girls Volleyball team, led by Coach Ksenia Ferrand, was recognized by the East Rockaway Village Board this past Monday at their monthly meeting for their recent Long Island Championship and trip to the State Championship.

### Connection

Our Engage Every Family committee held its second meeting. We reviewed the family engagement survey as well as various family engagement frameworks. The committee will be engaged in a collegial read of the text *Beyond the Bake Sale* which will inform the work moving forward.

The fifth and sixth grade student council recently visited the Oceanside Care Center to spread some holiday cheer. Students made special holiday cards to distribute, performed holiday sing-alongs, read stories and played bingo with the residents. It was a wonderful opportunity for the students to engage with members in our surrounding community during the holiday season. The smiles on the residents' faces were priceless and the students were thrilled to be the ones to make someone else's holiday even more special than they anticipated this year.

We had a fantastic turnout for Alumni Day on November 23, 2016. Thirty four (34) members of the Class of 2016 returned and the counselors moderated two assembly programs for our students in Grades 9-12. Alumni wore college shirts/sweatshirts and spoke with students in their classes about their college choices.

The Guidance Counselors conducted classroom sessions with students on the following topics: PSAT score reports (Grades 10 and 11) and academic planning (Grades 9 and 10). They have also visited Rhame and Centre Avenue schools to begin the transition to middle school.

Counselors are also working hard in preparation for Career Week. The December issue of the Guidance Newsletter has been distributed. It includes much information about counseling department activities as well as scholarship information.

## Innovation

### *East Rockaway Middle School Takes First at Robotics Competition:*

The East Rockaway Middle School Robotics Team coached by Mr. Cimorelli and assisted by Mr. Howard, competed on Thursday, December 15, 2016, at Elwood Middle School. Competing were 10 school districts and 31 robotic teams. East Rockaway entered five teams consisting of students in Grades 6, 7 and 8. Three of those teams qualified for the final round of 10. Daniel Ricci and Elizabeth Son captured first place in the teamwork challenge working together with a team from Elwood. There are three more competitions, culminating with the state qualifier for the nationals to be held here at East Rockaway High School on Saturday February 11, 2017. The top teams can go on to compete with students all over the country in Iowa next April.

Centre Avenue students in Grades 3-6 are excited to begin their robotics unit in our elementary STEAM program. Using the Lego Mindstorm NXT Robots, students will spend the beginning sessions of the robotics module completing several steps. They will collaborate in groups to build their robots and learn about the functions of each of their robot's components. Next, they will practice writing code, using the Lego coding interface. Finally, they will predict and test the outcome of their coding on their robot. This hands-on unit draws on students' knowledge of coding while eliciting problem solving skills, collaboration, and excitement.

Students in Grades 3-6 at Rhame Avenue recently participated in "The Hour of Code" with their classroom teachers as an extension of the "Coding" work they had been doing with Mrs. Healy during her first cycle of our new "Enrichment for All" program at the Elementary Schools. The Hour of Code started as a one-hour introduction to computer science, designed to demystify "code", to show that anybody can learn the basics, and to broaden participation in the field of computer science. It has since become a worldwide effort to celebrate computer science, starting with 1-hour coding activities, but expanding to all sorts of community efforts. Our students engaged in a multitude of coding projects using the technology available in the building which include 1:1 tablets in Grades 5 & 6, the computer lab, chromebooks, tablets, I pads and classroom Smart Boards. This was an exciting and innovative opportunity for our students and teachers to engage in together which reached tens of millions of students across 180 different countries during the week of December 5<sup>th</sup> alone.

A group of Long Beach teachers visited East Rockaway High School classrooms this week to observe our 1-1 tablet initiative. They were hugely impressed with what they saw and thanked us for the hospitality and collegiality.

The Thinking Maps initiative continues to grow as building trainers recently conducted Learning Walks with the staff developer (Adam) from the company and shared findings with the faculty.

## Opportunity

Recently, Centre Avenue students in K-Kids and Student Council have been working on different service projects. A bulletin board of the Mitten Tree is currently displayed in the main hallway. Students have been asked to decorate a mitten and send in \$1 or \$2. Gift cards will be purchased with the money raised for local families in need during the holidays. The school is also holding a toy drive. All toys will be donated to Toys for Tots and Little Saint Nick, which is an organization that seeks to make hospitals a kid-friendly place.

Students in third grade have been studying Geography as part of their Social Studies Curriculum and most recently embarked on a journey to publish a class book titled "*Third Grade Ocean Adventures.*" This book captures the essence of our writing framework as each third grade student was asked to write an "imaginary" narrative that included the appropriate story elements for a fictional adventure through one of the oceans that were studied in class. These stories are currently at the publisher named "Student Treasures" and families were able to order copies of the book too. We look forward to the arrival of the class book in January and will be having a "Publishing and Book Release" party to celebrate this accomplishment with our students and families.

Kindergarten students at Rhame Avenue were given an opportunity learn about "Force and Motion" through a number of hands-on scientific investigations during the month of December. They conducted investigations comparing the effects of different strengths and different directions of pushes and pulls on the motions of various objects. Students were given opportunities to race toy cars down ramps set at different heights, push spools across horizontal and vertical ropes, and use force to hold a beach ball under water to observe its effects. The students were excited to share how these investigations connected to various forces and motions that they have experienced in their everyday lives.

The DECA club is off to a great start with an upcoming competition in January at Freeport High School. Numerous schools from the county will be competing for the right to participate at the State level. We are excited about our first endeavor into the competition.

10. Privilege of the Floor - none

11. Board Member Comments

Neil Schloth: Mr. Schloth thanked the veterans for coming out tonight and was happy that the Board was able to support them by extending the tax abatement to our Cold War Veterans. His dad was a Korean War veteran, his uncle a Vietnam War veteran, and he is very involved in the Wounded Warriors Organization. He appreciates how hard our veterans train to come to our Country's defense. He thanked them for their service to our country.

Mr. Schloth spoke about Mr. Quercia. They had become good friends and he respected him immensely. Mr. Quercia was an important part of the team in the District. He worked very hard and made all the buildings look good. His men loved and respected him and he treated all people

with respect. Mr. Schloth's thoughts and prayers are with his family.

Mr. Schloth thanked Kristin Ochtera for her involvement with the NSSBA. She has helped our district to be more involved with projects and become more recognizable. Because of Kristin's hard work of advocacy, Mr. Schloth was invited to attend a roundtable meeting in Latham, New York. He was also able to speak with the Commissioner of Education MaryEllen Elia, and hopes the Commissioner will plan to visit our school to observe our district.

Mr. Schloth thanked the teachers, staff and administration for continuing improvements and achievements in academics and athletics. A special note of thanks to our PTA's and other volunteers who do so much for our school. Much has been accomplished from the many committees that meet. He wished everyone a happy holiday, a great new year, and thanked the audience for attending tonight.

Kristin Ochtera: Ms. Ochtera echoed the comments of Mr. Schloth and said she cannot speak any more eloquently than him. She said our East Rockaway family, on multiple levels, is feeling the pain and loss of Mr. Quercia's passing.

Keith Gamache: Mr. Gamache reminded the audience to treasure the time you spend with your friends and loved ones during the holiday season. He thanked everyone for coming tonight.

Patti Nicoletti: Ms. Nicoletti stated that, in general there is always a consensus between all the board trustees, and we are all on the same page. She thanked her fellow board members for acknowledging the veterans, the Quercia Family, and for all the work that the staff does for the District. She wished everyone a happy, healthy, and restful holiday.

Before closing the meeting, Ms. Nicoletti addressed a question from the audience. Ms. Adrianna DeAngelis, parent of students at Rhame Avenue School, questioned the possibility of a swim team; perhaps partnering up with a neighboring district. Ms. Nicoletti thanked her for advocating for her children, and suggested that she go back to Mr. Vulpis to canvass for the need and to do the groundwork.

12. Upon motion made by Kristin Ochtera, seconded by Neil Schloth, and passed unanimously, the meeting was adjourned at 7:42 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Vitina Fazi  
District Clerk