

EAST ROCKAWAY UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT  
East Rockaway, New York  
Regular Meeting of the Board of Education  
7:00 P.M., September 19, 2017, East Rockaway Jr. / Sr. High School  
Preceded by the Introduction of New Staff, Strategic Plan Update,  
and a Public Forum

MINUTES

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

1. The meeting was called to order by Patti Nicoletti at 7:10 p.m. Neil Schloth led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Board President Patti Nicoletti welcomed everyone to the meeting. She stated that tonight our new staff members will be introduced, followed by an update of the Strategic Plan, and a public meeting. She turned the meeting over to Ms. Ruiz.

Ms. Ruiz thanked everyone for attending tonight's meeting. We will recognize our new staff, welcome, and introduce them to the Board of Education and our community. Ms. Ruiz then introduced and spoke briefly about: Neil Lederer, Interim Principal, Alex Goldberg, Director of Technology & Learning Analytics, Andrew Rosenberg, Director of Guidance, David Barth, Director of Physical Education and Athletics, and Pete Ceglie, Chairperson of Fine Arts.

Ms. Ruiz then introduced Ms. Hecht who spoke briefly about and introduced the new teaching staff: Caroline Drummy, Julia Garvey, Kellie Higgins, Brianna Lively, Heather Loughran, Bryan Palermo, Maryann Raffaniello, Patty Sertzoglou, Kassie Tillem-Spero, James Zervas, Dana Casas, and Evangelos Anastassatos.

Ms. Ruiz stated that our new staff is very well prepared, have advanced degrees, multiple certifications and many years of teaching experience. She wished them a long and successful career in our District.

An update of the Strategic Plan was presented by Ms. Ruiz. The plan is entering its third year. She thanked all the administrators and teachers for their hard work in bringing this plan to life. A PowerPoint was shown showcasing the achievements and accomplishments of the past two years. Ms. Hecht joined Ms. Ruiz in the presentation. Ms. Ruiz stated that the presentation will be posted on the website. She thanked everyone for their attention and time in allowing her to go over details of the plan. Ms. Ruiz asked if anyone had any questions and turned the meeting over to Ms. Nicoletti at 8:20 p.m.

2. Upon motion made by Kristin Ochtera, and seconded by Keith Gamache, the minutes of August 29, 2017, were unanimously approved.
3. Acknowledge Receipt of Financial Reports – July 2017
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 through 9 were unanimously approved on a consent agenda

A. Personnel

1. Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, accept the following resignation:
  - a. Katrina Rossi, short term substitute ENL teacher, effective August 25, 2017
2. Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the four-year probationary appointment of Dana Casas to the position of teaching assistant, effective September 13, 2017, through September 12, 2021, (tenure area: teaching assistant; certification status: Professional), at the Step 2 annual salary set forth in the East Rockaway Teachers Association contract for teaching assistants for the 2017-2018 school year.
3. Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the four-year probationary appointment of Evangelos Anastassatos to the position of music teacher, effective September 25, 2017, through September 24, 2021, (tenure area: music; certification status: initial), at the MA, Step Entry, annual salary set forth in the East Rockaway Teachers Association contract for teaching assistants for the 2017-2018 school year.
4. Approve the club advisor assignments for the 2017-2018 school year as more fully set forth on the schedule of club/advisor assignments at the stipend salaries established by the East Rockaway Teachers Association contract for the 2017-2018 school year and authorize the President of the Board of Education to execute the charters.
5. Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the request of Sara Perrone to change the dates of her approved FMLA leave of absence to be effective October 6, 2017 through January 5, 2018, and further approve a child rearing leave of absence

effective January 6, 2018, through January 26, 2018.

6. Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the appointment of Jhasmin Herrera-Guzman to the position of food service helper, effective September 14, 2017, at the Step 1 hourly salary set forth in the East Rockaway Food Service and Monitors Unit Agreement for the 2017-2018 school year.
7. Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the appointment of Lisa Zeilberger to the position of part-time monitor effective September 6, 2017, upon Civil Service approval, at the Step 2 hourly salary set forth in the East Rockaway Food Service and Monitors Unit Agreement for the 2017-2018 school year.
8. Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the appointment of Kathleen Gicewicz to the position of teacher aide, (6 hours per day), effective September 20, 2017, at the Step A annual salary set forth in the East Rockaway Teacher Aides Association Agreement for the 2017-2018 school year.
9. 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 2017-2018 school year:
  - a. Debra Anastasio, substitute teacher aide, effective upon Civil Service approval
  - b. Gina Tricarico-Manos, substitute teacher aide, effective upon Civil Service approval
  - c. Ada Molina, substitute food service helper, effective upon Civil Service approval
  - d. Cristina Guiseppone, substitute teacher, effective September 13, 2017
  - e. Daniel Friend, substitute teacher, effective September 20, 2017
  - f. Michael Lennon, substitute teacher, effective September 20, 2017
  - g. Nicole Berberena, substitute teacher, effective September 20, 2017

#### B. Other Items

Upon motion made by John Giannotti, Jr., and seconded by Kristin Ochtera, the following Items 1 through 10 were unanimously approved on a consent agenda

1. Approve the following employment agreements for the 2017-2018 school year and authorize the Superintendent of Schools to execute the agreement(s) on behalf of the East Rockaway Board of Education:
  - a. Jacqueline Scrio, Assistant Superintendent for Finance & Operations
  - b. Laura Hastings, Director of Pupil Personnel Services
  - c. James Daly, Director of Facilities
  - d. Tina Fazi, Secretary to the Assistant Superintendent for Finance & Operations and District Clerk

2. Approve the admission of the following student to attend the East Rockaway Public Schools for the 2017-2018 school year and authorize the President of the Board of Education to execute the tuition agreement between the Board of Education of East Rockaway UFSD and the Board of Education of the sending school district:
  - a. Island Park UFSD, No. 23072712
3. Approve the Consultant Services Provider Contract between the East Rockaway UFSD and Dr. Jodi Allison Mishkin-Michaelson for Assistive Technology related services for the 2017-2018 school year and authorize the President of the Board of Education to execute the contract on behalf of the East Rockaway Board of Education.
4. Approve the Consultant Services Contract between East Rockaway UFSD and Ryan's Story Presentations LTD for two student assembly presentations on December 15, 2017 and one parent presentation on December 14, 2017 addressing Bullying, Cyber Bulling, and Teen Suicide and authorize the President of the Board of Education to execute the contract on behalf of the East Rockaway Board of Education.
5. Approve the terms of the Consultant Services Contract with Shari Berman for the District Musical *The Little Mermaid* leading up to and including the public performances, and authorize the President of the Board of Education to execute the contract on behalf of the East Rockaway Board of Education.
6. Approve the consultation services contract with Engtze Pan, accompanying pianist for concerts rehearsals and performances during the 2017-2018 school year, and authorize the President of the East Rockaway Board of Education to execute the contract on behalf of the East Rockaway Board of Education.
7. Approve the Addendum to the Consultant Services Contract with John Perricone for professional development services to include travel expenses 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 Collaborative Agreement, Administration of Epinephrine Auto-Injectors in East Rockaway Schools for the 2017-2018 school year with Dr. Richard Addes in accordance with New York State Public Health Law Section 3000c and authorize David Barth in his capacity as the Director of Physical Education, Health and Athletics to execute the agreement on behalf of the East Rockaway Board of Education.
9. Accept the following donation:
  - a. A check in the amount of \$0.69 from The Kula Foundation
10. Declare obsolete for the purpose of disposal and/or recycling, the following item:
  - a. Xerox vend station (coin collection system)

C. Budget Transfers

Upon motion made by Keith Gamache, and seconded by Neil Schloth, the following budget transfer was unanimously approved:

1. Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, the Board of Education approves the following budget transfer:
  - a. Transaction No. 18-0003

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

E. Approval of CPSE Recommendations - None

7. Policy Matters - None

8. Good and Welfare – None

9. Superintendent's Report

Achievement

- Last year a Homework Committee, comprised of teachers, administrators and parents, created a set of homework guidelines for students in both elementary schools. The guidelines will be implemented this coming school year. Updated information was added into each school's school handbook and will be reviewed during Back to School Night by the teachers.
- Students in grades K-6 have begun to brainstorm ideas for their first narrative writing piece of the year. By using Thinking Maps as a learning tool, all students will be developing a Narrative writing piece to convey real or imaginary experiences.
- Teachers in Grades 3-6 began the school year this week by digging deeper into Achieve 3000 with a professional development consultant in order to set new goals and increase expectations for their students.
- Our new math specialists and teaching assistant math interventionists also received valuable professional development this week around a new program called "Number Worlds." This is a high caliber and research based math intervention program that our service providers and classroom teachers will have access to in order to best meet

the needs of their students.

- Mr. Lederer has been meeting each department chair to discuss regents results and how to improve them through extra support; item analysis of past exams and Professional Development.
- Our High School has been working on refining our AIS model to clearly define the intent, structure, and assessment of these support classes in ELA and Math.

### Connection

- The Centre Avenue PTA is helping to sponsor two after-school activities this year. The fall session will be Brixology, a Lego building program, and the spring will be a Mad Science session. We are thrilled to offer these after-school activities to the students in Grades 2-6.
- The Rhame Avenue PTA and our school community have come together to collect donations for the victims of Hurricanes Harvey and Irma. Supplies are currently being gathered to ship down to Florida and beyond in order to help those less fortunate. Students also wrote personal cards with messages of hope and short stories about their own personal experiences after going through something quite similar when Sandy hit our area not too long ago.
- Mr. Lederer conducted a ninth grade parent meeting to inform parents of graduation requirements and expectations for student achievement. Also covered was the opportunity for each ninth grade student to receive a laptop.
- A meeting was held with PTA leadership to offer support for their programs and to open a dialogue between the PTA and the Principal.
- Grade level "tune-up" assemblies were conducted at the Jr. Sr. High School to introduce our new principal, advise students of the new cell phone rules, the need to be punctual, and to established expectations for academic performance.

### Opportunity

- K-Kids and Student Council students will begin meeting this upcoming week. Their first fundraiser will help the relief efforts of the areas affected by the hurricanes.
- This year Centre Avenue is happy to hold an Art Club for third and fourth grade students. (Rhame already has an Art Club). Students will be able to explore their artistic ability and design creative art projects throughout the school year.

- Rhame Avenue and Centre Avenue Schools will be celebrating the "International Day of PEACE" on Wednesday. Students across all grade levels were exposed to lessons and literature about the importance of peace and created "Pinwheels for Peace" that will be displayed on the field outside each building in the shape of a gigantic Peace Sign. All students and staff will be wearing the color white to show support for world peace on this very special day.

### Innovation

- Centre Avenue students in Grades 3-6 have recently started their coding unit in STEAM program. Each grade used different activities and tools, such as tangrams, a dice game, and graph paper to create algorithms. In the coming weeks, they will apply their knowledge to design algorithms and begin coding on the computers.
- Students in Grades 3-6 will begin their Enrichment for ALL experience with Mrs. Healy very soon at Rhame and Centre Avenue schools, learning about Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics using a hands on, project-based learning approach. Students in Grades 5 & 6 also received their 1:1 tablets as we are continuing this technology initiative in our schools. They are extremely excited to use these new tools to enhance their own learning.
- We have been working with the Living with the Bay team which includes representatives from the Governor's Office of Storm Recovery and TetraTech, an engineering firm, on a proposed project for East Rockaway High School. This project which is described as being in the 30% design phase, is close to receiving approval. If these plans move forward as expected, we will receive at no cost to district taxpayers, a new turf field, a greenway walkway, a new bulkhead and drainage improvements in our parking lots. We have been working with the team for the past several months and are very excited about this project which will be an amazing addition to our community. We hope to host a community meeting, possibly sometime in October, where the Living with the Bay team will share the plans for this project with our community.

### 10. Privilege of the Floor

Annette Buzzolani: Ms. Buzzolani questioned why a parent meeting was not held regarding AP classes for college credit. An informational meeting for parents and students would be very helpful. She also asked about the 3-year science research program and why students' schedules aren't allowing them to continue in the program. Ms. Nicoletti and Ms. Ruiz stated that an appointment should be made with the Director of Guidance and Mr. Lederer for follow-up.

Dan Caracciolo: Mr. Caracciolo reiterated the need for a crossing guard at the corner of Ocean Avenue and Atlantic Avenue. Despite submitting a petition to the Nassau County Police Department in 2014, there has been no activity in procuring a crossing guard. Ms. Ruiz responded that the District has been actively pursuing a crossing guard for that corner. She has reached out to the Nassau County Police Department, the POP officer, and the Village of East Rockaway. Ms. Nicoletti also stated that the District will continue to address the need for the crossing guard.

Ms. Nicoletti asked if the next speaker would like to speak on behalf of the parents regarding the same issue. Ms. Sommer agreed to speak on behalf of Ms. Lewald and Ms. Lynch.

Stacy Sommer; Ms. Sommer asked the Board if they will consider hiring an additional teacher for the fifth grade classroom at Centre Avenue School. There are currently 28 students in one class and parents believe the children will not achieve the goals of the District's Strategic Plan with those many students. Ms. Ruiz and Ms. Nicoletti both assured Ms. Sommer that they are aware of the class size and steps have been taken to place additional support in that classroom in the form of teaching assistant who is a certified teacher. Ms. Ruiz said they will continue to monitor and evaluate the classroom and the students' needs.

Tina Lewald: Ms. Lewald inquired whether the agenda can be posted in advance of the meeting to give residents an opportunity to review it prior to making a decision to attend. Ms. Lewald also questioned why the new Art Club at Centre Avenue School was for only third and fourth grade students. The Art Club at Rhame Avenue School is for Grades 3-6. As a parent of a student in Dr. Soto's class, she was told that his class total has 27 students. She questioned how students, (ENL), are assigned to the elementary buildings for district programs. She also inquired about the start date for the new teaching assistant for the fifth grade class at Centre Avenue School. Ms. Ruiz responded that she hopes to have a teaching assistant in place as soon as possible.

Mr. Caracciolo: Mr. Caracciolo added that as a member of Living with the Bay Committee, a meeting has been scheduled at the Oceanside Knights of Columbus next week. Ms. Ruiz responded that she was aware of the meeting and a District representative will be in attendance.

## 11. Board Member Comments

John Giannotti, Jr.: Mr. Giannotti, Jr. thanked everyone for coming out tonight. He welcomed all the new teachers and administrators. He heard the concerns of all the parents and, more than usual, found himself "nodding his head in the yes position." The concerns brought before the board this evening will not go unheard.

Keith Gamache: Mr. Gamache stated that the beginning of a new school year, although exhausting, is an exciting time. Students and parents are adjusting to new routines. He enjoyed Ms. Ruiz's presentation on the Strategic Plan. He is very pleased with the achievements that have been gained and the results so far. He thanked all the administrators and teachers for their help with the plan. He thanked the audience for attending tonight's meeting.

Neil Schloth: Mr. Schloth thanked the Superintendent, administrators and committee members for



their support in moving the District forward in many ways. Enhancements to our security procedures in our buildings have been implemented. As a law enforcement officer in NYS courts, he has taken this issue personally and believes the District has made great strides in this area. Mr. Schloth joins with Dan Caracciolo regarding the crossing guard issue. Residents need to step up and send letters to your politicians. The possibility of a student being hurt is a real problem and clearly has been ignored for many years and we should not tolerate it anymore. Additional vehicles from Marina Pointe development can impact the traffic in the area. He understands the concerns of the Centre Avenue School parents regarding class size. Further conversation will take place going forward; however, the 2% tax cap limits what the District can do financially.

Mr. Schloth welcomed the new teachers and administrators. He thanked the PTA's and all school community volunteers for their participation in our school committees and programs. These committees and programs have made tangible improvements to our buildings. He thanked everyone for attending tonight.

Kristin Ochtera: Ms. Ochtera stated that as a representative to N-SSBA, she will comb through NYS resolutions for professional groups as they get ready to attend next month's convention. She is able to target and focus on their goals and she is very proud of that opportunity. She does this because she is concerned with education. Ms. Ochtera found it invigorating to hear tonight's comments. As to the parent who spoke about A.P. credits, Ms. Ochtera reminded the audience that is an important service that the District offers. She thanked the parent for bringing it up. She thanked Mr. Caracciolo for taking the time to talk about the crossing guard. To the Centre Avenue parents, she's reminded of the same issue 15 years ago when parents advocated for their children when classes passed the 55-mark. She respects the fact that they attended tonight's meeting; as this issue has come up from time to time. Ms. Ochtera thanked Ms. Ruiz for being proactive in addressing this issue. It is clear that much thought and planning has gone into addressing the class size. Ms. Ochtera thanked the audience for attending this evening and encouraged them to attend the monthly meetings.

Patti Nicoletti: Ms. Nicoletti thanked Ms. Ruiz and Ms. Hecht for the update on the Strategic Plan. As a new school year starts, it allows us to continue to find new ways to support our Strategic Plan. She looks forward to seeing new and continued initiatives which will move our District forward. Ms. Nicoletti welcomed the new staff members and looks forward to seeing their many contributions to our school and our students. Ms. Nicoletti stated that when decisions are made about hiring a teaching assistant instead of a new teacher, the Board may consider the funding, but that does not drive their decision. It is always based upon what is best for the students. She thanked everyone for coming to tonight's meeting and hopes to see everyone at the next meeting.

12. Upon motion made by Kristin Ochtera, and seconded by John Giannotti, Jr., and passed unanimously, the meeting was adjourned at 9:17 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Vitina Fazi  
District Clerk