

EAST ROCKAWAY UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT
East Rockaway, New York
Regular Meeting of the Board of Education
7:00 P.M., February 13, 2018, East Rockaway Jr. / Sr. High School
Preceded by a PTA Reflections Contest Winners Recognition,
an Engage Every Family Initiative Presentation, and a Public Forum

MINUTES

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

Absent: John Giannotti, Jr.

1. The meeting was called to order by Patti Nicoletti at 7:05 p.m. Kristin Ochtera led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Board President Patti Nicoletti welcomed everyone to the meeting. She said we would begin with the Reflections recognitions followed by the Engage Every Family presentation. Ms. Nicoletti turned the meeting over to Ms. Ruiz.

Ms. Ruiz welcomed and thanked everyone for coming tonight. She introduced Ms. Sherry Ma, principal of Centre Avenue School, who spoke about the PTA Reflections contest. Ms. Ma welcomed everyone and said she was excited to present Centre Avenue students with awards for their participation in this year's PTA Reflections contest. She thanked all the students, parents and teachers who were involved. Ms. Ma described the requirements and process of this volunteer art program contest. This year's theme was "Within Reach." Ms. Ma thanked parent volunteers Mrs. Yagnisis, Mrs. Gamache, and Mrs. Elias. This was an outstanding opportunity for our students to express themselves. She thanked Ms. Claire Maini for her help with the slideshow. Ms. Maini then began the slideshow and video presentation showcasing the art work and entries of Centre Avenue students. The Centre Avenue students were called and presented with certificates.

Ms. Ma thanked, and called to the stage, all the judges and presented them with certificates: Ms. O'Kane, Ms. Blank, Mr. Schloth, Ms. Nicoletti, Dr. Meagher, Ms. Ochtera, Ms. Massa, and Ms. Cooper.

Mr. Erik Walter, principal, then spoke on behalf of Rhame Avenue School. He also congratulated the Centre Avenue students. He introduced Ms. Maini who began the slideshow and video presentation showcasing the art work and entries of Rhame Avenue students. Mr. Walter announced the names of all the participants and those in attendance were presented with certificates. Mr. Walter also announced that nine entries moved onto the Nassau County level and

revealed the names of those moving forward. Out of those nine entries, two will move onto the State level. He announced that Megan Acuti had two entries in different categories, and both of those will move onto the State level. Mr. Walter also thanked Daniel O'Moore for his technical assistance.

Ms. Ruiz congratulated all the participants and the winners. She thanked the parents, teachers and judges who were involved in the contest. She wished Megan good luck as she moves forward in the contest.

Ms. Ruiz then began the Engage Every Family Initiative presentation. This thorough and informative slideshow showcased the workings of the Engage Every Family Committee. Ms. Ruiz gave a detailed explanation of how the committee was started, its objectives, and future plans. She thanked Mrs. Gamache for designing the logo and thanked all the members of the committee for their hard work. This committee now will be brought to the individual buildings for their own sub-committees. Ms. Ruiz asked if there were any questions. Ms. Lonergan asked about the cost of the family handbook and the job description of the family coordinator position. Ms. Elias also commented on the advantages of having a family coordinator.

At 8:20 p.m. Ms. Nicoletti resumed the public portion of the agenda. She stated that audience members will have an opportunity to question any items on the agenda

2. Upon motion made by Kristin Ochtera, and seconded by Neil Schloth, the minutes of January 23, 2018, were unanimously approved.
3. Acknowledge Receipt of Financial Reports – December 2017
4. Correspondence - None
5. Hearing of visitors on items in the Agenda - None
6. Action Agenda

A. Personnel

Ms. Ruiz announced that Michael Mercadante, who is being appointed as a groundskeeper this evening, is in the audience and welcomed him to the District.

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. Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, accept the resignation of Linda M. Donovan from her teacher aide position, effective February 15, 2018.

2. Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the request of Katie Kuck for a FMLA leave of absence from her elementary teacher position, effective April 23, 2018, through June 15, 2018.
3. Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the request of Alissa Nunes for a FMLA leave of absence from her school psychologist position, effective May 18, 2018, through June 30, 2018.
4. Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve an increase in the teaching assignment of Patricia Soriano to .4 FTE foreign language teacher effective January 29, 2018, through February 6, 2018, at the prorated MA, Step 2 annual salary set forth in the East Rockaway Teachers Association contract for 2017-2018 school year.
5. Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, accept the resignation of Patricia Soriano from her part-time (.4 FTE) foreign language teacher position, and her per diem substitute teacher position, effective February 6, 2018.
6. Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the 2018 Spring Coaching Schedule dated February 13, 2018.
7. Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the appointment of Venesia Heyward to the position of short-term substitute elementary teacher, effective February 2, 2018, through June 30, 2018, at the per diem salary established by the East Rockaway Board of Education on the Non-Contractual Salary Schedule for the 2017-2018 school year.
8. Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the appointment of Michael A. Mercadante, to the position of Groundskeeper effective February 27, 2018, upon Civil Service approval, at the prorated Step A annual salary established by the East Rockaway Custodial Unit 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. Wesley Mailman, substitute teacher, effective February 14, 2018

B. Other Items

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

1. Approve the following resolution:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Board of Education of the East Rockaway Union Free School District, Nassau County, New York, as follows:

Section 1. The following qualified voters of the East Rockaway Union Free School District, Nassau County, New York, are hereby appointed to constitute the Board of Registration of said school district to attend for the purpose of the preparation of the registers for all school-related elections of said school district pursuant to Section 2014 of the Education Law and to serve until the 30th day following the next annual meeting of the district:

- a. Vitina Fazi (District Clerk)
- b. Theresa Garcia
- c. Francine Hernandez
- d. Barbara Winters

Section 2. In addition to the District's continuous registration previously approved by the Board of Education conducted in the District Clerk's Office on days that school is in session, special registration shall be conducted, and shall take place, at: Rhame Avenue Elementary School and Centre Avenue Elementary School, on March 12-16, 2018, between the hours of 8:00 am and 4:00 pm.

Section 3. This resolution shall take effect immediately.

2. Approve the following resolution:

BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED that the Board of Education of the East Rockaway Union Free School District approves the "First Amendment to Employment Agreement" dated February 13, 2018, between the Board and Ms. Lisa J. Ruiz as Superintendent of Schools; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the President of the Board of Education be authorized to execute said agreement on behalf of the East Rockaway Board of Education.

3. Approve the following resolution:

Whereas, the Board of Education of the East Rockaway Union Free School District has solicited and received bids for FEMA Mitigation Projects SED 28-02-19-03-0-001-037, SED 28-02-19-03-0-004-002, and SED 28-02-19-03-0-002-014 for the East Rockaway Jr. Sr. High School and Rhame Avenue Elementary School, and has

determined after consultation with the District's Architect that the contractors listed below are the lowest responsible bidders meeting bid specifications for the contracts to be awarded thereunder; and

Whereas, the East Rockaway Union Free School District has been awarded FEMA grants to be used towards said Mitigation Projects in the amount of \$4,078,233 for the East Rockaway Jr. Sr. High School and \$352,529 for the Rhame Avenue Elementary School; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED, that upon the recommendation of the District's Architect and the District's Assistant Superintendent for Finance & Operations, the Board of Education hereby:

Approves the award of the bid for FEMA Mitigation Project, SED 28-02-19-03-0-001-037, SED 28-02-19-03-0-004-002, & SED 28-02-19-03-0-002-014 for the East Rockaway Jr. Sr. High School and Rhame Avenue Elementary School, General Construction, Contract No. 1 to Stalco Construction, as the lowest responsible bidder meeting bid specifications, for \$567,218 for Rhame Avenue Elementary School and \$1,651,457 for East Rockaway Jr. Sr. High School, for a total contract of \$2,218,675; and authorizes the President of the Board of Education to execute the resulting contract on behalf of the East Rockaway Board of Education; and

Approves the award of the bid for FEMA Mitigation Project, SED 28-02-19-03-0-001-037, SED 28-02-19-03-0-004-002, & SED 28-02-19-03-0-002-014 for the East Rockaway Jr. Sr. High School and Rhame Avenue Elementary School, Plumbing Reconstruction, Contract No. 2 to Hirsch & Company, LLC, as the lowest responsible bidder meeting bid specifications, for \$54,000 for Rhame Avenue Elementary School and \$331,000 for East Rockaway Jr. Sr. High School, for a total contract of \$385,000; and authorizes the President of the Board of Education to execute the resulting contract on behalf of the East Rockaway Board of Education; and

Approves the award of the bid for FEMA Mitigation Project, SED 28-02-19-03-0-001-037, SED 28-02-19-03-0-004-002, & SED 28-02-19-03-0-002-014 for the East Rockaway Jr. Sr. High School and Rhame Avenue Elementary School, Electrical Reconstruction, Contract No. 3 to Eldor Contracting Corp., as the lowest responsible bidder meeting bid specifications, for \$119,900 for Rhame Avenue Elementary School and \$247,910 for East Rockaway Jr. Sr. High School, for a total contract of \$367,810; and authorizes the President of the Board of Education to execute the resulting contract on behalf of the East Rockaway Board of Education.

4. Approve the terms of the Letter of Agreement dated January 29, 2018, between the Board of Education of the East Rockaway UFSD, and the East Rockaway Teachers Association for emergency school closings during the 2017-2018 school year, and

authorize the Superintendent to execute the Letter of Agreement on behalf of the East Rockaway Board of Education.

5. Approve the 2018-2019 school district calendar.
6. Approve the Health and Welfare Agreement between the East Rockaway UFSD and Malverne UFSD for health and welfare services for the 2017-2018 school year, and authorize the President of the Board of Education to execute the agreement on behalf of the East Rockaway Board of Education.
7. Accept the following donations:
 - a. A check in the sum of \$400 from the Rhame Avenue School PTA for a third grade curriculum enhancement grant
 - b. A check in the sum of \$400 from the Rhame Avenue School PTA for a fourth grade curriculum enhancement grant
 - c. A check in the sum of \$200 from The Kiwanis Club of East Rockaway, Inc. for the K-Kids Club at Rhame Avenue School
 - d. A check in the sum of \$1,080 from the Centre Avenue PTA for the Centre Avenue Class of 2024
 - e. A check in the sum of \$400 from the Centre Avenue PTA for a third grade in-house field trip
 - f. A check in the sum of \$246.96 from the Centre Avenue PTA for a kindergarten curriculum enhancement grant
8. Declare obsolete for the purpose of disposal and/or recycling:
 - a. Items listed on the attached "Equipment for Disposal" list dated February, 2018
 - b. Items listed on the attached "Change of Disposition" form dated February 9, 2018

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 Keith Gamache, the CPSE Recommendations were unanimously approved.

7. Policy Matters

Upon motion made by Kristin Ochtera, and seconded by Neil Schloth, and passed unanimously, the following policies were adopted.

1. Policies for Adoption
 - a. 2110-E, School Board Powers and Duties Exhibit

- b. 2410, Policy Development, Adoption, Implementation and Review
2. Policies for Review
- a. 0115, Student Bullying, Prevention and Intervention
 - b. 2111-E, School Board Member Code of Conduct Exhibit
 - c. 2210, Board Reorganizational Meeting
 - d. 2342, Agenda Preparation and Dissemination
 - e. 2360, Minutes
 - f. 2120.1, Candidates and Campaigning
 - g. 5100, Attendance
 - h. 5251, Student Fund Raising Activities
 - i. 5252, Student Activities Funds Management
 - j. 5405, Wellness
 - k. 8332, Use of District-Owned Cell Phones
 - l. 8505, 8505R, 8505-E, Meal Charge Policy
8. Good and Welfare
- a. Condolences to Ann Chiaffitelli and family on the passing of her father-in-law, Salvatore Chiaffitelli
 - b. Condolences to Arleen Buckley and family on the passing of her husband, Thomas Buckley
 - c. Condolences to Peggy O’Neil and family on the passing of her brother, John O’Neil
9. Superintendent’s Report

Ms. Ruiz stated that the Board of Education approved the agreement with the ERTA regarding snow days. Due to this year’s calendar, and the two snow days taken in early January, if we were to need another two snow days during this school year, those days will not have to be made up. If a fifth day is needed, teachers will return to school on Monday, June 25, 2018. If a sixth snow day is needed, Friday, April 6, 2018, (spring recess) will be an instructional day. New York State requires 180 school days and we must comply with the law. Next year’s school calendar will be on our website with four snow days built in and school ending on June 26, 2018.

Achievement

During the last week in January both elementary schools officially launched the Thinking Maps roll out. Each week teachers and staff focus on one of the eight specific maps in various content areas. Week one was circle maps, which is often used for brainstorming. Week two was flow maps which helps in sequencing. This week all students are focusing on tree maps which helps in categorizing. Throughout the 12 week roll out, a consultant and all the teachers who have been trained in Thinking Maps will support the rest of the staff to help in the use of the maps.

Seven DECA students qualified in local competition and will move on to the New York State Competition in March.

East Rockaway Art Students' works received multiple awards in the Scholastic Art & Writing Northeast Regional Competition. Specifically, 13 art students won a total of 26 awards this year across seven categories at the 2018 Northeast Regional Scholastic Art Awards. The Scholastic Art & Writing Awards have been held annually since 1923, and past winners have included Robert Redford, Andy Warhol, Richard Avedon, Richard Linklater, and Zac Posen, among many others. The Northeast Regional competition is administered by the Alliance for Young Artists & Writers' national office in New York City. Last year they received approximately 18,000 submissions from our region which were viewed by more than 50 judges, with more than 330,000 entries nationally.

Six students receiving a Gold Key (Tessa Lark, Kristina McDougal, Zachary Olewnicki, Emily Ramos, Katelyn Reddy, and Grace Riordan) will go on to compete in the national competition. National award winners will be announced in mid-March.

The ENL teachers hosted an excellent workshop entitled "Immigrant Students College Opportunities" presented by Osmin Canales on February 2, 2018, to our high school ELL students.

Connection

On January 24, 2018, the elementary reading and math specialists presented at the Title 1 Parent Meeting. First the teachers provided an overview of their programs. Then they shared resources, tips and activities with parents to help support learning at home. Mrs. Ruiz, Mrs. Ma and students from the high school helped with child care and pizza was provide for the children. The night was a huge success with over 50 parents in attendance!

K-Kids at Rhame Avenue ran a school wide fundraiser for the Bethany House, a nonprofit organization that helps to support women and children facing homelessness. All students were asked to decorate a heart along with a \$1.00 donation for the Bethany House. The decorated hearts are being displayed on the K-Kids bulletin board. In addition, the East Rockaway Kiwanis club made a donation to help get much needed supplies for the children living at the Bethany House.

Another successful musical is in the books at East Rockaway School District. *The Little Mermaid* was sold out on Friday evening, with near sellouts on Saturday. It was an exceptional event. Thank you to our faculty and the cast for their outstanding efforts.

Students in all grades at the Jr./Sr. High School are studying appropriately-selected poetry and non-fiction to celebrate *Black History Month*.

Mr. Cimorelli, Mr. Rosenberg and Mr. Goldberg presented at the recent Jr./Sr. High School PTA Meeting.

Lynbrook High School read the *LI Herald* and *Newsday* article regarding the Mentoring Initiative at East Rockaway and would like to model what we have at our school.

Westbury High School would like to visit our school based on the workshop presented by Melinda Best and Caitlin Castellano at the NYS TESOL conference in November which highlighted our use of Thinking Maps as a strategy to enrich ELL academic performance. Kudos to our faculty members for representing our district at this important professional conference.

Innovation

The Makerspace unit of the STEAM Program has been a big success at Centre. The students have been incorporating the engineering by design process in order to design, create and test functional arcade-type games. Students incorporated simple machines into their designs and used recyclable materials to create their games. It is now time for the students to artistically decorate their games in their art classes with Mrs. Brody. Students will also create original signs for their games and discuss the role art plays in marketing.

Mr. Goldberg has begun to hold regularly scheduled meetings with teachers across both schools focused on ways to improve and enhance the use of Instructional Technology in the classroom. "Padlet" is an interactive tool that teachers can use with their 1:1 devices. The students in Ms. DeVarso's fifth grade classroom researched their assigned economic system and then posted on the padlet wall. Students are able to show their comments, post links and videos that are connected to what they are learning and the projects they are working on. Thanks to Mr. Goldberg for helping to show our teachers how to use this wonderful new tool for learning.

East Rockaway Jr./Sr. High School hosted 41 teams at the Vex Robotics Competition on Saturday, February 10, 2018. East Rockaway was represented by two teams. Thank you to Mr. Cimorelli and Mr. Howard for their ongoing efforts to host this event.

Opportunity

Centre Avenue ENL students have recently started writing to their pen pals at PS 330Q in Corona, Queens. Students are currently in a persuasive writing unit and they are writing letters to persuade their pen pals to read their favorite book. Later in the year, the plan is to incorporate the use of technology such as corresponding via email and then through videos.

Student Council just completed their "Valentines for Vets" cards and recently began collecting bottle caps for "Caps of Love"- a charity with a mission to provide free wheelchairs and wheelchair repairs to handicapped children in the USA using plastic recycling proceeds.

Student Council is also participating in a Pet Food Drive sponsored by Long Island Cares in collaboration with Assemblywoman Missy Miller's Office, starting February 26th through March 23rd. Students and staff will be encouraged to fill collection boxes with pet food in an attempt to gather pet food donations for struggling Nassau and Suffolk families.

Thirty high school students visited Nassau BOCES for the "Taste of Tech" event on February 1, 2018. Thank you to Mr. Rosenberg for organizing this opportunity for our students to learn more

about the vocational programs offered at Barry Tech.

The Social Studies Leadership Committee will be presenting to both the elementary schools regarding updates in the NYS framework and Regents changes.

Advisory students completed a survey about areas of interest to inform upcoming project-based learning for the spring semester.

Middle school ELA and math teachers will soon begin evaluating midyear NWEA data to inform second semester instruction.

Staff members are currently evaluating different texts to incorporate into our Grade 7-12 coursework to further build cultural competency.

Superintendent's Conference Day will be held on Friday, February 16, 2018. Ms. Hecht reported that Dr. Nancy Kaplan will be the keynote speaker. Over 30 workshops, conducted during three sessions, as well as a team building session, will follow. All the workshops are being facilitated by faculty members and administrators. There is an assortment of topics being discussed during the workshops including a potluck lunch.

Italian teacher Frank Cuttitta visited Rhame and Centre Avenue schools during midterm week to conduct introductory language lessons to sixth grade students as part of a language exploration plan.

Mock Trial Team will compete at the Mineola Court House on February 7 and 14, 2018, led by April Francis and Tom Canale. Ms. Francis held her annual "Mock Trial" presentation for the criminal and family law class with guest judge, Janine Schatz, Esq.

Budget Update from Ms. Scio:

Our second budget work session was held on Tuesday, February 6, 2018. We discussed the Districts Fiscal Stress Score, the Governor's budget proposal and Debt Service. Transportation was reviewed and a discussion held about the need to purchase a new van to replace our aging fleet. In addition, the proposed Capital and Technology projects for the 2018-19 school year were reviewed.

Based on the most current information, the tax levy cap for East Rockaway is 2.63%, for an increase of approximately \$764,636.

The budget presentation has been posted on the District's website. Please continue to check our website as all future presentations will be posted.

Our next budget work session is scheduled for Tuesday, March 13th at 7:00 in the High School Conference Room. We will be discussing expenditures and making a final decision on Capital and

Technology Reserve Propositions for the 2018-19 school year. We encourage you to join us during these budget work sessions.

10. Public Comment

Daniel O'Moore: Mr. O'Moore thanked everyone involved in this year's musical. The teachers are very devoted. He also thanked the parents who made food for the students. This is what makes East Rockaway a great community. He asked about computers in the district currently used by teachers and the status of the Smartboards. Ms. Nicoletti and Ms. Ruiz responded that the computers are being replaced and the Smartboards are being replaced with new line true touch boards. To date, 19 Smartboards have been replaced and they expect all to be replaced in the near future. Mr. O'Moore commented that he liked the layout of the new faculty rooms.

Dineen Cilluffo: Ms. Cilluffo, president of Club Rock, expressed concern about the process and status of the mascot. Ms. Nicoletti stated that the Board of Education did not make the decision on a new mascot; all they required was that it not be gender specific and did not resemble the old mascot.

Carol Sanders: Ms. Sanders, teacher and ERTA president, made the following statement:

"I would like to respond to part of a statement made by a community member at last month's BoE meeting regarding teachers leaving the district.

As head of the teachers' unit, I am unaware of teachers leaving the district for reasons other than maternity, retirement, and in very few cases, personal reasons.

Voting on a contract is an opportunity for teachers to let the administration know if they are happy or unhappy with their job and or working conditions. About three weeks ago, the teacher's unit ratified their contract with the fewest 'no' votes in about 15 years."

Ozzie Lonergan: Ms. Lonergan stated that she does not want to sound disrespectful and wants the Board to know that she is appreciative of the work the Board does. The Mascot Committee was not informed of the new mascot decision; she found out from her children. She questioned why there was no further communication from the Board. Ms. Nicoletti replied that the Board removed themselves from the mascot discussion. The board had two requirements: that it not be gender specific; and not in the likeness of the "Rockman." Ms. Nicoletti suggested that Ms. Lonergan contact Mr. Lederer regarding the new mascot.

Ms. Lonergan questioned whether there was a half day of school for students on Friday, March 16, 2018. Ms. Ruiz replied that there will be a half day for Grades 9-12 students, and a full day of school for seventh and eighth grade students.

Tara Elias: Ms. Elias questioned whether curriculum being taught was consistent between the elementary buildings. Ms. Hecht replied that she should make an appointment to meet with her.

Dineen Cilluffo: Ms. Cilluffo had questions regarding the Engage Every Family Committee, i.e., do you see more families involved; has there been any changes at all; is it reaching out to families.

She said she never felt there was a wall when communicating with the school. Ms. Ruiz replied it is too soon to see any results. The intent of the committee is to try to engage all the families in the district and have consistent involvement and access for all our families. The action plans have not been rolled out yet. Changes in the registration process have been implemented. Ms. Nicoletti added that this Committee was formed based upon research which shows that if families are engaged, students will be more successful.

11. Board Member Comments

Keith Gamache: Mr. Gamache thanked Mrs. Elias and Mrs. Gamache (his wife) for organizing the PTA Reflections contest for our children. It is another opportunity provided for our students. Thank you also to the parents who support their own children's creative spirit. Congratulations to all of the students. He thanked Ms. Ruiz for the commitment shown to our district from the Five Year Strategic Plan to the Engage Every Family Initiative and everything in between. She has taken steps to increase opportunities for all of our children. In the short time he has been on the Board, he is proud of the growth of programs during the District's continued challenges and financial constraints. This has been achieved through wise and thoughtful planning and leadership along with the ongoing support of the community at large.

Neil Schloth: Mr. Schloth joined Mr. Gamache in thanking the PTA Reflections Committee for their support in organizing this year's contest. It is great seeing the works of our young students as they grow and expand their horizons. He recently attended "Lobby Day" activities in Albany early in the week. He thanked our local representatives, Assemblyman Curran, Assemblywoman Melissa Miller and Senator Kaminsky who indicated there will be aid increases to our budget this year. The district has included them in school events. Assemblywoman Miller is anxious to visit. He met NYSED Commissioner Mary Ellen Elia and she is excited to see the new programs the Superintendent has rolled out. Mr. Schloth is very optimistic about continued improvements in the district.

Over the last couple of meetings Mr. Schloth commented that many residents speak during public comment. He reminded the audience that there is a chain of command that is to be followed. If you have a concern or an issue, the first place to start is with your child's teacher, then the principal, department chair, assistant superintendent, and up the ladder. He encouraged parents to attempt to resolve the issue by following this chain of command before bringing it to the board. Most of the questions can be answered by the school staff as the board does not have the information and could not answer questions on the spot. If the question or issue does not get resolved through the chain, the board will be happy to hear from the community. He thanked everyone for staying tonight and wished them a good week.

Kristin Ochtera: Ms. Ochtera acknowledged Mike Mercadante, new groundskeeper, who remained until the end of the meeting. He got a good glimpse of what is coming ahead. She welcomed him on board and said that he was joining an impressive group of custodial workers. Ms. Ochtera acknowledged the efforts of the PTA over the years. Over the past 15-20 years that we have been watching public school changed, it has not been easy keeping up with progress and technology.

The PTA has stepped up many times when the district could not maintain programs. They have provided enhancements, financial assistance, and volunteered manpower to provide learning experiences in events like the talent show, flight night, and many others. Ms. Ochtera celebrates our participating in the national PTA Reflections contest. As we take a look at the Engage Every Family Initiative, we realize what an important role the PTA has been and will continue to be.

Patti Nicoletti: Ms. Nicoletti echoed the comments of her board members. The Engage Every Family initiative was a vision of Ms. Ruiz. Much time and effort has been expended on her part to bring this committee to fruition. As Mr. Gamache said before, we thank her for her hard work. Ms. Nicoletti announced that Ms. Ruiz is the recipient of the Nassau BOCES Education Partner award which she will receive at the Nassau BOCES 12th Annual Education Partner Awards Gala on April 11, 2018. Ms. Ruiz has made a substantial difference in the education of our children for which we are very thankful and very proud. The Engage Every Family Initiative is a very small piece of the puzzle. She is a leader in education not only for the students in the East Rockaway community, but in Nassau County. She wishes everyone a good night and happy Valentine's day.

12. Upon motion made by Neil Schloth, and seconded by Kristin Ochtera, and passed unanimously, the meeting was adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Vitina Fazi
District Clerk