

EAST ROCKAWAY UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT

East Rockaway, New York

Regular Meeting of the Board of Education

7:00 P.M., June 16, 2020

Preceded by Recognition of Retiring Board Trustees,

Keith Gamache and Neil Schloth, Recognition of

Valedictorian, Zachary Hirashima, and Salutatorian, Gianna Wayar,

Tenure Recognitions, Recognition of Retirees,

Recognition of David Barth, Recipient of Certified Athletic Administrator by the National

Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association, and

PTA Installation Ceremony

Meeting Closed to Public – Live Streamed on ZOOM

MINUTES

Present through ZOOM:

Keith Gamache, Dominick Vulpis, Neil Schloth, Kristen O’Hagan, Peter McNally, 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 Keith Gamache at 7:04 p.m.
2. Mr. Gamache thanked everyone for joining us this evening for our fourth remote Board of Education Meeting. In accordance with the Open Meetings Law and prior meetings conducted, he reminded everyone that this meeting is being live streamed and is also being recorded. This meeting is now in order. He asked everyone to please rise for the Pledge of Allegiance and the Pledge was recited.

Tonight’s meeting is celebratory in nature. Due to the pandemic some acknowledgments were postponed and can no longer be put off. During tonight’s recognitions please keep your microphone on mute and use the chat feature if you wish to speak. Mr. Gamache then introduced Superintendent Lisa Ruiz.

Ms. Ruiz thanked everyone for being a part of tonight’s meeting. It is wonderful to have 77-plus people here tonight to celebrate a number of recognitions even though we can’t be together in person.

Our first event tonight is a very important recognition for our two retiring Board of Education trustees, Neil Schloth and Keith Gamache. Ms. Ruiz spoke affectionately about both Mr. Schloth and Mr. Gamache, who will be stepping down from board service at the end of June. She thanked them for their leadership and dedication over the past years as well as their personal support, guidance and encouragement. She has learned much from them. She asked everyone to join her in thanking and congratulating both Mr. Schloth and Mr. Gamache, who will be sorely missed.

Our next recognition is an opportunity to honor our valedictorian and salutatorian. Ms. Ruiz then turned the podium over to Mr. Schafer who will speak about their accomplishments.

Mr. Schafer thanked Ms. Ruiz for the opportunity this evening to honor our top graduates for 2020, Valedictorian Zachary Hirashima, and Salutatorian, Gianna Wayar. Zachary will be attending Harvard University and Gianna will be attending Adelphi University in the fall. Mr. Schafer spoke about their academic achievements over the years, wished them all the best, and thanked them for the impact they made at East Rockaway. Ms. Ruiz congratulated them, was thrilled with their accomplishments and wished them the best.

Ms. Ruiz stated the next recognition will be the recommendation of tenure to the Board of Education for seven educators. She briefly reviewed the criteria for achieving tenure. She then introduced Rhame Avenue School principal, Dr. Ayesha McArthur who will speak about the first candidate.

Dr. McArthur spoke about the accomplishments and successes of teaching assistant Dana Casas and recommended her tenure to the Superintendent and Board of Education.

Ms. Ruiz then introduced Mrs. Susan Kosser who spoke on behalf of ENL teacher Caitlyn Castellano. Mrs. Kosser spoke Ms. Castellano's accomplishments and successes and recommended her tenure to the Superintendent and Board of Education.

Ms. Ruiz then introduced Mr. Schafer, who will be speaking on behalf of four high school teachers and assistant principal, TJ Terranova.

Mr. Schafer first spoke about mathematics teacher Christopher Caputo and recommended that he be granted tenure. Secondly, he spoke about art teacher Kristie Galante and without hesitation, recommended that she be granted tenure. Next up was speech/language teacher, Bethany Kinkaid. Mr. Schafer spoke of her accomplishments and recommended she be granted tenure. Lastly, he spoke about math teacher Alissa Stegner, and, with pleasure, recommended she be granted tenure.

Finally, it was his pleasure to speak about assistant principal TJ Terranova and then recommended to the Superintendent and the Board of Education that she be granted tenure as an assistant principal of East Rockaway Jr./Sr. High School. He then congratulated all the tenure recipients.

Ms. Ruiz congratulated all faculty members and assistant principal TJ Terranova. She thanked all the ERTA members for helping out with sending photographs of tonight's recipients when the "call" was put out for photos. It helped bring the candidates alive and gave more value to the speeches that were presented. She wished everyone a long and successful career in our school district.

Ms. Ruiz continued with the next recognition. She stated it was her distinct pleasure to speak on behalf of Jorge Salazar on the occasion of his retirement from his maintenance position at Rhame Avenue School this coming July. She wished Jorge a healthy retirement and many happy years with his wife, children and grandchildren. She will deliver a congratulatory plaque to him when she returns to the District.

Although not on tonight's agenda, Ms. Ruiz spoke on behalf of Susan Kosser, Interim Director of the Pupil Personnel Office. Mrs. Kosser has served as an interim director for the past three years and will be sadly stepping down at the end of the month. She came at a time when her skill set was much needed in our district. We very fortunate that she agreed to come to our district and stayed for three years. Ms. Ruiz wished her the best in her retirement and thanked her for her tireless efforts for our students. Her expertise is truly unsurpassed and she deserves a true retirement to enjoy her life after having given so much to the children all across Long Island. Ms. Ruiz wished her the best retirement has to offer.

Ms. Ruiz asked everyone to join her in congratulating David Barth, recipient of the Certified Athletic Administrator by the National Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association. We are very fortunate to having Mr. Barth lead our physical education department. A congratulatory plaque will be hand delivered to Mr. Barth. Ms. Ruiz congratulated and thanked Mr. Barth for all his hard work.

Lastly, Ms. Ruiz stated that we have one more event. Every year at this June meeting we have the honor of helping the PTA install their officers for the upcoming year. Traditionally, there is a flower ceremony where we provide all of our officers with a special flower that is significant to the office they will serve. Although we don't have the flowers, we will move forward with the flower ceremony so that we can install the PTA officers. Ms. Ruiz read the oaths to the new officers and declared them duly installed officers of the District's PTA's. Ms. Ruiz thanked the PTA's for everything they do to support our students and helping the District to provide the best education for our children. She also thanked the retiring officers for all the work they have done, and she will miss their dedication. It has been a pleasure working with all of you; and she looks forward to working with the new officers in the 2020-2021 school year.

The presentations concluded at 8:14 p.m. Mr. Gamache stated that at this time traditionally we take a short break and have some cake and congratulate all the recipients. He also congratulated all those who received tenure tonight and commented that he enjoyed reading the congratulatory chats.

Mr. Gamache asked his fellow board members if they wished to share any comments about tonight's recognitions before we move forward with the public agenda. Mr. Vulpis, Mr. McNally, Mr. Schloth and Mrs. O'Hagan congratulated all tenure recipients, Zachary Hirashima, Gianna Wayar, David Barth, Jorge Salazar and the entire class of 2020. Mr. Vulpis, Mrs. O'Hagan and Mr. McNally also thanked retiring trustees Keith Gamache and Neil Schloth for their board service these many years and stated it was an honor and privilege to have served

on the board with them.

3. Public Comments on Agenda Items – None

Mr. Gamache stated that this evening if you have questions regarding items on the agenda or other school district related items you can email them to [boe@astrockawayschools.org](mailto:boe@astrockawayschools.org). Please be sure to include your full name and address so a district administrator can respond to your concern in an appropriate manner. I will also have the email open throughout the meeting and if possible/appropriate will do my best to address the matter. I also want to remind you that most concerns are appropriately addressed with your child's teacher and/or building principal. Other general district questions should be directed to Mrs. Ruiz our Superintendent. Matters involving curriculum and instruction should be addressed to Mrs. Hecht and matters involving the budget and facilities should be directed to Mrs. Scio. Mr. Araoz has created an excellent technology FAQ on the district homepage. If you need any further assistance with technology or have issues with a device, please reach out to him for assistance.

4. Mr. Gamache then asked if he could have a motion to approve the minutes of May 19, 2020, and May 27, 2020.

Upon motion made by Dominick Vulpis, seconded by Peter McNally, all in favor AYE, opposed: NONE; abstained: NONE; the motion was unanimously passed, and the following minutes were approved:

- A. May 19, 2020, Meeting of the Board of Education
- B. May 27, 2020, Budget Hearing

5. Acknowledgment of Monthly Reports and Correspondence

- A. Receipt of Monthly Financial Reports: Mr. Gamache acknowledged receipt of the April 2020 financial reports
- B. Correspondence: Mr. Gamache acknowledged receipt of eleven items of correspondence addressed to the Board and thanked them for taking the time to write to us

6. Recommendations of the Superintendent of Schools

Mr. Gamache then turned the microphone over to Ms. Ruiz for her superintendent's recommendations.

Mr. Gamache asked if the trustees had any questions regarding Items A-D below. There were no questions. Mr. Gamache then asked for a motion to approve Items A-D.

Upon motion made by Peter McNally, seconded by Kristen O'Hagan, all in favor AYE, opposed: NONE; abstained: NONE; the motion was unanimously passed, and the following Items A-D were approved on a consent agenda.

A. Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, grant tenure to the following staff members on the effective date indicated and subject to satisfactory evaluation:

<u>Staff Member</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>Tenure Date</u>
Dana Casas.....	Teaching Assistant.....	September 1, 2020
Christopher Caputo.....	Mathematics Teacher.....	September 1, 2020
Caitlyn Castellano.....	ENL Teacher.....	September 1, 2020
Kristie Galante.....	Art Teacher.....	September 1, 2020
Bethany Kinkaid.....	Speech/Language Teacher.....	September 1, 2020
Alissa Stegner.....	Math Teacher.....	September 1, 2020
TJ Terranova.....	Assistant Principal.....	July 1, 2020

B. Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, accept, with regret, for the purpose of retirement, the resignation of Jorge Salazar, maintainer, effective July 2, 2020.

C. Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, accept the following resignations:

1. Sherry Ma, probationary elementary principal, effective June 30, 2020
2. Theresa Amabile, junior varsity soccer coach, effective June 1, 2020
3. Dana Stuono, temporary teaching assistant, effective June 30, 2020

D. Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the appointment of Russell Cohen to the position of leave replacement special education teacher, effective September 2, 2020 through January 27, 2021, at the prorated MA, Step 1, set forth in the East Rockaway Teachers Association contract for the 2020-2021 school year.

## 7. Other Items

Mr. Gamache read Items 7 A-M and asked if there were any questions. There were no questions. Mr. Gamache then asked for a motion to approve Items A-M.

Upon motion made by Kristen O’Hagan, seconded by Neil Schloth, all in favor AYE, opposed: NONE; abstained: NONE; the motion was unanimously passed, and the following Items A-M were approved on a consent agenda.

A. Approve the following resolution:

WHEREAS, the East Rockaway UFSD advertised for Requests for Proposals published in *Newsday* on May 8, 2020, for masonry reconstruction services, opened at the District Office on May 28, 2020, at 11:00 a.m., and has determined, upon the recommendation of the Assistant Superintendent for Finance & Operations, that Chase Building Renovations, Inc. is the lowest responsible bidder meeting the bid specifications; therefore

BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Education accepts this bid and awards the contract for

masonry reconstruction services to the lowest responsible bidder meeting the bid specifications, and authorizes the President of the Board of Education to execute a contract with Chase Building Renovations, Inc. on behalf of the East Rockaway Board of Education.

B. Approve the following resolution:

BE IT RESOLVED, that pursuant to Education Law §2034(6)(b), after six months have passed since the June 9, 2020, election without any proceeding, the Board of Education hereby authorizes the District Clerk to unseal and open the ballot box and to destroy all of the ballots cast, spoiled and unused in the June 9, 2020, Annual District Budget Vote and Board of Education Election, no earlier than December 9, 2020.

C. Approve the following resolution:

For the purpose of participating in Cooperative Bids for Air Filters HVAC; Blinds, Shades & Stage Curtain Cleaning; Burners and Boiler Service; Carpet and Tile Installation; Custodial Equipment Repair; Custodial Supplies and Trash Bags; Custodial Supplies Green Cleaning; Door Installation and Repair; Drag Mop Rental; Dumpsters; Electrical Service; Electrical Supplies; Elevator Maintenance; Equipment Repair; Fence Installation and Repair; Fire Extinguisher Service; Floor Sanding, Refinishing and Repair; Fuel Tank Alarm/Tank/Manhole Repairs; Geese/Dog Service; General AC and Refrigeration Repairs and Service; General Boiler Welding; Grounds Equipment Repair; Gym Folding Door; Heating Plant Maintenance and Repair; Irrigation Installation and Service/Well Installation; Kitchen Equipment Repairs; Locksmith Services; Lumber and Masonry Supplies; PA, Intercom and Master Clock Service; Paint and Associated Supplies; Painting Service; Pest Control Services; Playground Equipment Repair; Plumbing Service; Plumbing Supplies; Pneumatic Systems; Port-a-pottie; Pump and Motor Repair; Roof Repair; Scoreboard Repair/Electric Partition; Doors/Gym Equipment; Signs and Associated Supplies; Site Work Asphalt/Concrete/Parking Lot Sweeping; Slate Roof Repair; Split System AC Units; Steam Traps and Parts; Storm Drains; Suspended Ceiling Installation; Theatrical Lighting/Stage Rigging; Track/Tennis/Playground Resurfacing Repair; Tree Cutting and Pruning; Uniforms Purchase; Universal Waste Recycling; Window Glass Repairs, Parts, Replacement:

WHEREAS, the Boards of Education of:

Baldwin UFSD	Herricks UFSD	North Shore CSD
Bellmore UFSD	Hewlett-Woodmere UFSD	Oceanside UFSD
Bellmore-Merrick UFSD	Hicksville UFSD	Plainedge UFSD
Bethpage UFSD	Island Trees UFSD	Plainview Old Bethpage UFSD
Carle Place UFSD	Jericho UFSD	Port Washington UFSD
East Meadow UFSD	Lawrence UFSD	Rockville Centre UFSD
East Rockaway UFSD	Levittown UFSD	Seaford UFSD
East Williston UFSD	Long Beach UFSD	Syosset UFSD

Elmont Schools Floral Park/Bellerose Freeport UFS Garden City UFSD Glen Cove City SD Great Neck UFSD	Lynbrook UFSD Manhasset UFSD Massapequa UFSD Merrick UFSD Mineola UFSD NHP-GCP UFSD North Bellmore UFSD North Merrick UFSD	Uniondale UFSD Valley Stream CHSD Valley Stream #30 Valley Stream #13 Wantagh UFSD West Hempstead UFSD Westbury UFSD
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desire to participate in Cooperative Bids during the 2020/2021 school year as authorized by General Municipal Law Section 119-0, and whereas, the Board of Education through its Director of Finance and Operations, or designee, has assumed responsibility for drafting specifications, advertising for Bids, accepting and opening Bids, tabulating Bids, and reporting the results for each of the respective bids to the participating Boards of Education.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Assistant Superintendent for Finance & Operations, or designee, on behalf of the Board of Education of the East Rockaway School District, be and hereby is authorized to participate in Cooperative bidding conducted in conjunction with the Boards of Education of the aforementioned school districts for the bids noted above. Any award of contract pursuant to these Cooperative Bids will be made by the respective Board of Education in cooperation with the participating Districts.

D. Approve the following resolution:

RESOLVED, the Board of Education of the East Rockaway Union Free School District hereby reaffirms the authorization for the following reserve accounts as prescribed under General Municipal Law and/or Education Law:

1. Capital Reserve for Building Improvements and Repairs II;
2. Capital Reserve for Technology II
3. Unemployment Insurance Reserve
4. Employee Benefits Accrued Liability Reserve (EBALR)
5. Reserve for Employee Retirement System (ERS)
6. Reserve for Teacher Retirement System (TRS) Sub-Fund

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board of Education of the East Rockaway Union Free School District authorize the Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations to fund the reserves for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2020, and assign amounts from the unappropriated fund balance as follows:

<b>Transfer To:</b>	<b>Amount Not to Exceed</b>
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Capital Fund for Technology II	200,000
Reserve for Teacher Retirement System (TRS) Sub-Fund	300,000
Reserve for Employee Retirement System	1,000,000

- E. Approve the Services Agreement Reinstatement for continuation of 403(b)/457(b) administration services by The Omni Group for the 2020-2021 year and authorize the Assistant Superintendent for Finance & Operations to execute the agreement on behalf of the East Rockaway Board of Education.
- F. Approve the Student Accident Coverage Agreement between East Rockaway UFSD and J.J. Stanis and Company, Inc. for the 2020-2021 school year and authorize the Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Operations to sign the Student Accident Coverage Request on behalf of the East Rockaway Board of Education.
- G. Approve the agreement for claims auditing services between East Rockaway UFSD and Deans Archer & Co. for the period January 1, 2020, through June 30, 2021, and authorize the Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Operations to sign the agreement on behalf of the East Rockaway Board of Education.
- H. Approve the day and time of regular Board of Education meeting dates as more fully set forth on Attachment “I.”
- I. Approve the revised 2020-2021 school district calendar as more fully set forth on Attachment “II.”
- J. Approve the Owner/Architect Agreement Continuation Letter between the East Rockaway UFSD and JAG Architect for the 2020-2021 school year and authorize the President of the Board of Education to execute the letter agreement on behalf of the East Rockaway Board of Education.
- K. Approve the Parking Stall Lease Agreement between the East Rockaway UFSD and Rolling River Day School and Camp for the use of parking stalls located at the East Rockaway Jr. /Sr. High School for the period June 29, 2020, through August 21, 2020, and authorize the Assistant Superintendent for Finance & Operations execute the agreement on behalf of the East Rockaway Board of Education.
- L. Approve the appointment of the East Rockaway instructional and pupil personnel staff as per their certification and licensure for CSE and CPSE meeting, effective July 1, 2020 through August 31, 2020.
- M. Accept the following donations to fund scholarships:
  - 1. From Patricia Drugan, a check in the sum of \$150 for the Cheryl Drugan Award

2. A check in the sum of \$650 from various donors delivered to the District by Stacy Lane for the “Keith Lane Visual & Media Arts Scholarship
  
8. Mr. Gamache asked if there were any questions with regard to the CSE and CPSE recommendations. There were no questions and he asked for a motion to approve the CSE and CPSE recommendations.

Upon motion made by Neil Schloth, and seconded by Dominick Vulpis, all in favor AYE, opposed: NONE; abstained: NONE; the CSE and CPSE recommendations were unanimously approved.

#### 9. Budget Transfers

We have one budget transfer this evening. There were no questions and Mr. Gamache asked for a motion to approve the following budget transfer:

Upon motion made by Dominick Vulpis, and seconded by Peter McNally, all in favor AYE, opposed: NONE; abstained: NONE; the following budget transfer was unanimously approved.

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

1. Transaction No. 20-0018

#### 10. Policy Matters

##### A. Policy Subcommittee Report

Mrs. O’Hagan reported that the Policy Subcommittee met on June 8, 2020. Mr. Araoz joined the meeting and we began reviewing the new data security and privacy policies that must be adopted and published by educational agencies in NYS by October 1, 2020. We will be revising this policy to ensure we are compliant with the law, specifically EdLaw 2D. At this time, we do not have a date that we will be holding our next Policy Subcommittee meeting.

B. For Adoption - None

C. For Review – We will continue to review the following policies:

1. 4531, Field Trip and Excursions
2. 8121.1-R, Opioid Overdose Prevention Regulation
3. 8130.1, Extreme Risk Protection Orders (The “Red Flag Law”) “New” “Notice”
4. 9150, Non-Fraternization “New”
5. 6705, Federal Funds Purchasing

## 6. 8635, Information and Data Privacy Security Breach

### 11. Reports

#### A. Board President's Report

Mr. Grillo, our District architect, provided an update on our first bond project, the Centre Avenue Masonry repair and cleaning. We were excited to find out that the bids came in very favorably and we'll be coming in at more than \$700,000 under budget for that project. If things continue this way, we should be able to complete our contingency projects. Let's keep our fingers crossed. He also provided additional information on the possible new heating ventilation units which may be able to include ionization charging capabilities for improved air quality and capturing of virus particles. Depending upon cost and with guidance from our bond counsel, this is something we are considering especially in light of Covid-19. Check the website and be sure to attend meetings to get the most up to date information on bond projects.

We've made a slight adjustment to the school calendar, adding another superintendent's conference day to begin the school year. Depending on conditions at the time, whether we start the school year live and in person or continue with remote learning, this additional day will help our staff be better prepared to begin the school year with our children.

The search for a new Centre Avenue principal continues. After interviews were held with various stakeholder groups, the administration is now checking references and will be bringing finalists to meet with the Board next week.

We had hoped to share the budget and trustee election results with you this evening, but the Governor extended the deadline to receive mail-in votes until 5 pm this evening. Rather than begin counting and having to secure all ballots overnight to continue tomorrow, the counting will begin tomorrow morning with results to be posted on our website and electronic sign once they are known.

The Governor has relaxed the gathering regulations to accommodate groups up to 150 people starting June 26<sup>th</sup>. While not ideal, this does now allow us to conduct in person graduation for graduates and family on our field while maintaining social distancing guidelines. Graduation will be held in two shifts with time in between to adequately empty the campus and sanitize in between shifts. We want to thank Mr. Schaffer and the rest of the high school team for conducting surveys and meeting with student leaders and parents to prepare for a variety of scenarios. Our local representatives have been advocating for even further easing of restrictions. If this does happen, the team will respond accordingly.

Also, a special thank you to the elementary building principals, their faculty, and sixth grade parent groups for providing meaningful graduation and end of year experiences celebrating the 6<sup>th</sup> graders accomplishments under these tight restrictions. Childcare services for essential workers will continue to be offered through SCOPE at Rhame Avenue throughout the summer months.

#### B. Communication Subcommittee Report

Mr. Vulpis stated that the Subcommittee held a virtual meeting on May 28, 2020. Discussion included the budget vote and the Covid-19 pandemic and all the changes associated with it. Members were empowered with learning all the differences on how the vote was going to be done through absentee ballot only and to get the word out to the community. He thanked the members for meeting that evening and their support throughout the year and the committee will continue to meet next year. Mr. Schloth added that the subcommittee has been productive over the past two years and hopes that it will continue to move forward next year. He urged the community to get involved and participate. It is a great way to bridge the gap with the community.

#### C. Superintendent's Report

We are working on planning for re-entry and will be speaking about this in various forums, such as hosting "coffee and conversation" during the summer. There will be many opportunities for stakeholders to join our planning committees. It will be a very inclusive process; currently about 72 parents, staff and volunteers will be participating in these meetings. All meetings will be conducted through ZOOM. We have been told that there are also state-wide committees that are meeting in small groups and making recommendations to the Governor and the State Education Department about reentry. We are hoping that we will continue to move forward and make progress and the level of transmission of the virus continues to decline. We will post on our website the names of the committee members for those who may want to reach out to any of the committee members. Currently, we are planning for three different options: full reentry; remain on remote instruction; or some type of a hybrid.

A survey went out about the Special Education summer program. An executive order was released on June 8, 2020, which gave permission for schools to run an in-school special education summer program. We are in the process of getting feedback from parents. We would like to provide an in-school program for many reasons; but there are a number of factors we would have to work through in order to conduct the program.

Ms. Ruiz asked Mrs. Scrio to provide an update on the budget. Mrs. Scrio stated:

*As of the close of today we received 1,506 ballots out of the 8,000 that were mailed out. As mentioned, we will begin the count at 8 am tomorrow morning. We hope to have the count completed by the afternoon. The vote will be live streamed throughout the entire process. The governor recently issued another executive order that would allow schools to hold a revote should the budget fail. The most likely revote dates are either July 21 or July 28<sup>th</sup> and has not yet been set. Additionally, the governor has not determined whether a revote would be held in person or only via mail in ballots. He indicated further guidance would be provided after the votes are completed this week. The results of our budget will be posted on the website once they are finalized.*

Ms. Ruiz stated that we would prefer not to do a revote. We hope our budget does pass and we will take a wait and see attitude before the board addresses that.

## **Achievement**

Centre Avenue students in fifth grade had their first virtual Entrepreneur Day, in which they shared a prototype of a business idea they created. Students in sixth grade presented their Science Fair projects and students in second grade documented their daily activities with Flat Mrs. Glickman and Flat Mrs. Rottkamp, in honor of the book series Flat Stanley.

Rhame kindergarten students participated in a Virtual Moving Up Celebration with their classroom teachers and teaching assistants. Students were extremely excited to see all of their classmates as they have primarily connected virtually in small groups. Third grade students celebrated their final unit of study on Butterflies by releasing their butterflies into nature. They also maintained journals and created butterfly inspired poetry.

It was a clean sweep by East Rockaway High School art students in this year's Congressional National Art Competition. Hosted by Rep. Kathleen Rice, we received the following honors: received the following honors: 1st Place - Lauren Cronin; 2nd Place - Matthew Pollackov; 3rd place - Gianna Campanaro, Abby Davila & Emily Ramos. Additionally, Natalie Morales' work, ""Fun Times"" won 3rd place in the PFLI (The Photographic Federation of Long Island) showcase and six East Rockaway Jr./Sr. High School students had their photographs accepted into the PSA Youth Showcase.

On Friday June 5, 2020, Spring Senior Athletes were honored during a special "Senior Day" event. Students were given the opportunity to take a picture wearing their uniform one last time, were presented with the traditional "Senior Day" flower and were given an honorary participation certificate representing their number of years on the team.

On June 9, 2020, East Rockaway Jr./Sr. High School hosted a live Virtual Senior Awards Ceremony with Zoom videoconferencing. Over 30 faculty members presented 70 members

of our Class of 2020 with 135 scholarships worth almost \$45,000. The live event provided the community the opportunity to post comments in real time in support of our award winners.

On June 3, 2020, our National Honor Society Induction Ceremony took place. Forty-one new members were inducted into the Senior Honor Society and 26 new members were inducted into the Junior Honor Society. The ceremony was held live virtually and featured each of the student officers speaking about the virtues of scholarship, leadership, character and service.

## **Opportunity**

Many children in both elementary schools participated in virtual Field Day on the last day of school. This included seven events, such as Keep it Up, the Towel Flip Challenge and the Spoon relay, to complete at home with family members. Many pictures and videos were submitted to remember the fun and active day.

Rhame Avenue fourth grade students participated in a Virtual Tour of the Summer Programs and Services offered by the East Rockaway Public Library, hosted by Mrs. Heather Massa. She engaged students with book talks highlighting some of the books that they may be interested in reading over the summer.

Recommendation Letters that Rock: On June 2, 2020, Mrs. Bonacorsi hosted a Virtual Workshop on how to write effective recommendation letters. Questions submitted in advance via padlet were addressed, along with ways to make our students stand out in letter writing. Items reviewed included the differences between teacher and counselor letters, traditional letter vs. organized narrative letters, sample modifiers by category, personalization and the internal procedure for requesting letters.

The 84th Annual Rock Rivalry took place virtually on Friday, June 12, 2020. The presentation featured performance by each class, video tributes to the class of 2020 and to Mr. Cimorelli for his 25 years of dedication to this amazing tradition. The link to the video is available on the school's website.

A College Essay Writing workshop will be held on June 25, 2020, at 12 PM for our rising seniors. The Class of 2021 will learn from Andrea Nadler, the Senior Associate Dean of Admission Hofstra University. Mrs. Nadler will review the importance of the essay, dos and don'ts of college essay writing, and share tips with our students. The live workshop will be available by joining a Zoom Link.

## **Innovation**

Teachers participated in professional development sessions to begin learning about the new Wonders reading program. They also attended a professional development session that focused on trauma informed care and how to respond to students who have experienced challenges while schools were closed.

Rhame Avenue fifth grade students participated in a virtual Scavenger Hunt to culminate their time together. They also enjoyed participating in Entrepreneur Day! Please see the Rhame Website to access the link showcasing their projects.

Throughout the time that schools were closed, professional development opportunities in various technology platforms have been offered. Our partnership with Model Schools provided PD in Wakelet, NearPod, Google Sites, and PearDeck in the recent weeks.

### **Connection**

The Centre Avenue staff was busy closing out the school year for all students, especially the sixth graders, in a creative and memorable way. Several teachers drove to each student's houses to give them end of year gifts and say good-bye. There was a Centre Avenue Staff Send Off on June 12<sup>th</sup>, as the staff gathered around the front lawn of the school waving to students and their families, as they drove by in a reverse car parade. The 6<sup>th</sup> grade students participated in a car scavenger hunt where they collected their end of year gifts from staff at 10 different stations around town. The awards ceremony was conducted virtually and Mrs. Salaway performed a beautiful and personalized tribute to all the 6<sup>th</sup> grade students. Each 6<sup>th</sup> grade class had a Moving Up Ceremony in which each child was able to take pictures in front of the beautifully decorated school and then they receive their certificates, awards, and yearbooks.

The three Rhame Avenue Self-Contained classes closed the school year with festive theme weeks that included: 80s day, a talent show, crazy hat day, and mad Scientist day.

High School seniors registered to vote for the primary election, general election, and budget vote through their social studies class. Seniors also participated in a virtual lesson, hosted by Superintendent Ruiz, regarding the school budget process.

The Poetry Madness Competition continued during remote learning in both the middle school and the high school! Our middle school winner, Ava LaVolpe, will have her winning poem read during this week's 8th Grade Moving Up Ceremony. Our High School winner will be announced this week and videos each some of our Elite 8 poems will be shared through social media.

Incoming 7th Grade Parent Orientation was held on Thursday, June 11, 2020. Building administration provided an overview and an introduction to the Jr/Sr High School via virtual technology.

Rising seventh graders met their future teachers (June 5th). Members of the 7th grade team and building administration created an opportunity for students to meet their future building community members. Special thanks to the sixth-grade teachers for their support.

On Monday, June 15, 2020, East Rockaway Jr./Sr. High School hosted a Senior Family Drive-Through to honor the class of 2020. Students drove through campus in their cap and gowns, were treated to music, giveaways, hot food and were greeted by their teachers. It was an amazing event to honor our deserving seniors!

High School students in our Senior Seminar Internship course participated in a Mock Interview Series. The students were interviewed by professionals that work in the fields that they are interested in pursuing. Interviewers included two attorneys at law, a hedge fund Chief Financial Officer, a small business owner, a physical therapist, a Senior Director in Sports Marketing, and a Co-president and founder of an Event Planning agency. Our students interested in education were interviewed by Mr. Schaeffer, Mr. Krauz, Mrs. Hecht and Mrs. Ruiz. Interviews were done virtually. Students were very professional and made strong impressions on their interviews.

The final ERHS Virtual Coffee and Conversation was held on June 4th. Over 50 parents attended and we discussed questions and concerns regarding our re-entry to school in September among many other topics.

## 12. Good and Welfare

- A. Condolences to Dawn McCabe and family on the passing of her grandfather, Vincent McCabe, on May 19, 2020
- B. Condolences to Kristina Imandt and family on the passing of her daughter, Tara Keena-Knox on June 9, 2020
- C. Condolences to Nancy Pentola and family on the passing of her mother, Dolores Olson on June 7, 2020

## 13. Public Comments

Mr. Gamache stated that this evening if you have questions regarding items on the agenda or other school district related items you can email them to [boe@eastrockawayschools.org](mailto:boe@eastrockawayschools.org). Please be sure to include your full name and address so a district administrator can respond to your concern in an appropriate manner. I will also have the email open throughout the meeting and if

possible/appropriate will do my best to address the matter. I also want to remind you that most concerns are appropriately addressed with your child's teacher and/or building principal. Other general district questions should be directed to Mrs. Ruiz our Superintendent. Matters involving curriculum and instruction should be addressed to Mrs. Hecht and matters involving the budget and facilities should be directed to Mrs. Scio.

There was one previously submitted question about the End of School Year Special Education summer program which Ms. Ruiz provided the answer to in her report.

#### 14. Board Member Comments

**Dominick Vulpis:** Mr. Vulpis congratulated Keith Gamache and Neil Schloth for their years of service and dedication to the Board of Education. Their leadership and service are second to none. Congratulations to all who received tenure and retirements this evening. Here is a shared quote from Oprah Winfrey. "The more you praise and celebrate life, the more there is in life to celebrate." Mr. Vulpis also sent prayers to a district employee who recently suffered a terrible loss.

**Kristen O'Hagan:** Congratulations to all who were recognized this evening - those who received tenure, retirees, Mr. Barth for your award, and Keith and Neil for your years of service to the district. Zachary and Gianna - this year's valedictorian and salutatorian, I wish you and the entire class of 2020 much success in all of your future endeavors. As this school year comes to a close, I have to applaud the efforts of the administrative team and entire staff of East Rockaway. Sometimes we forget how truly amazing our district is. I have received phone calls from friends and colleagues in surrounding districts commending East Rockaway for all they have done academically and how well the families have stayed connected to the district during this pandemic. The partnership between the ERTA and central administration was evident. Much of this success must also be attributed to Lee Araoz and his tech team who provided the technology, professional development and support at all times. All of this combined is a true testament of a district who puts students first. Thank you. I wish everyone a relaxing, enjoyable, and healthy summer.

**Peter McNally:** Mr. McNally congratulated Zach and Gianna for being the Valedictorian and Salutatorian. Your hard work and dedication is inspiring. He also congratulated all the tenure recipients and retirees. He had the privilege of going on the senior drive-through and thanked the administration for the invitation and Mr. Schafer for the awesome job they did. It was a very inspiring day and the kids were so happy. Mr. McNally also attended the Centre Avenue School moving up ceremony which was also inspiring and thanked Mrs. Ma. He was sorry he didn't get a chance to go to Rhame Avenue School but heard they did an amazing job.

There are always two people behind the scenes that don't receive enough recognition. One is

Mrs. Scio who is extremely knowledgeable about the budget and the district's finances. He can't say enough about her – you can ask her anything and she is able to answer. The district is in good hands because of her knowledge. The second person is Mrs. Hecht, who is responsible for the implementation of remote instruction. Lastly, he thanked Keith Gamache and Neil Schloth for everything they have done for the district and for what they taught him this year. He has learned a great deal from them both.

Neil Schloth: Mr. Schloth commented that he felt as if he were graduating after 12 years of board service; feeling some happiness, a little melancholy, and some apprehensiveness. The Superintendent and her team have implemented many programs that have moved our school district in a positive direction. He admires what she has done and hopes the new Board of Education will continue in that direction. Mr. Schloth thanked the stakeholders in the community who showed him their loyalty and trust especially during times as the possible Princeton Plan, challenges with Superstorm Sandy, and now the challenges with COVID-19. Our school district rose up, particularly the teachers and administration, with the COVID-19 challenges and clearly led the way with remote teaching. Mr. Araoz was instrumental in helping our teachers transmit and communicate with our children. He admires our school district and believes that it will continue to rise and get better. Many thanks for everything you did for me and he looks forward to continuing to be involved in some way in the future.

Keith Gamache: When I first ran for the Board my slogan was “Increase Access, Increase Achievement”. Believing that increasing access to our best curriculum and increasing access to opportunities for all students was the best way to improve the achievement level at our schools, I was thrilled when both opportunity and achievement became a part of our Strategic Plan. A move toward Honors by Achievement gave students at the secondary level access to our best curriculum and the opportunity to demonstrate their ability to excel, rather than being told that they couldn't learn the material based on past performance. At the elementary level an enrichment program designed to meet the needs of a select few students was replaced by a dynamic, project-based STEAM program open to all; giving exposure to interesting concepts and ways of learning previously unavailable to our children.

Sixteen clubs, at all levels of schooling, have been added to our extra-curricular program appealing to the changing and more diverse interests of our students and helping to foster a stronger connection to our schools, better ensuring a sense of belonging that is vital to the mental health and well-being of children, as they grow and mature into adults. Tripling the number of students able to attend BOCES for career and technical training that better meets individual interests, skill set, and future plans is perhaps the change I am most proud to have been a part of.

Through smart budgeting, we have built capacity to better educate and keep our children safe during stable and uncertain times. We now have sufficient, dedicated reading and math

specialists in our elementary schools where we previously hadn't. We have trained, security personnel at our school building entrances that were previously filled by aides, and additional security that walk our grounds. We have a dedicated Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Director of Technology, positions that were once combined and not adequately meeting the needs of our faculty and students, who have demonstrated their effectiveness and necessity in providing support to our teachers resulting in high-quality, continued instruction as we were forced to swiftly move to a remote learning model due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

When I first started attending PTA meetings, sitting in at Board Meetings, and serving on the Budget Advisory Committee prior to running for the Board, I too frequently heard the phrase – “we’re a small school district, we can’t afford to do that”. It is with tremendous pride, and satisfaction that I can say that all of the previous mentioned advances, and so many more, have been achieved while staying within the restrictive 2% tax levy cap. Last year, we were even able to come in under the allowable levy increase, without negatively impacting the quality of education for our children. We have been respectful, careful stewards of the community’s trust and tax dollars spending money responsibly, transparently, and in line with our Strategic Plan.

This cannot happen by accident. It is by design, the result of smart, strong, and sensitive leadership by our Superintendent, Lisa Ruiz, working in partnership with our school board to develop and implement a comprehensive plan, ensuring a high-quality educational experience for all of East Rockaway’s children. Thank you for the leadership you have provided. It has been a pleasure working with you for the past six years. I wish you years of continued success here in East Rockaway.

I also want to thank Mrs. Volino and Mrs. Fazi, two names that don’t get enough mention, for all of the help, guidance, information, and patience you have provided over the years. Thank you also to Mrs. Scio. Your in-depth knowledge of school finance has us well positioned to weather the uncertainty ahead. You helped us pass years of responsible budgets and a much-needed bond. Thank you to Mrs. Hecht, you’ve helped us develop curriculum and a plan in areas that were previously lacking, such as a comprehensive and sequential K-12 writing program. You’ve researched and purchased the materials and resources our teachers need to be effective and have overseen targeted and sustained professional development.

Thank you to the entire staff, no plan can be effective without the buy-in and contributions of those responsible for implementing and carrying out the plan. You interact with and care for our children directly every day with wisdom, empathy, respect, optimism, compassion, and kindness.

Thank you to Mr. Giannotti, Mrs. Nicoletti, Mrs. Ochtera, and Mr. Schloth. You welcomed me and helped me find myself and understand my role as a board trustee. Mr. Schloth, you have served our schools and this community as a Board member for 12 years, essentially a full

generation of students – THANK YOU!

It's been a great, though not always easy six years. Even during the best of times, serving on the board means making tough, occasionally unpopular, decisions. Always bound by the law and to be most effective, we have to put the big picture and the common good ahead of personal, self-interests. Finally, thank you to the current and new board members, may you feel the same sense of pride and accomplishment at the end of your board service that I feel today. Have a wonderful summer everyone. Be safe and take care.

15. Mr. Gamache asked for a motion to adjourn. Upon motion made by Neil Schloth, seconded by Kristen O'Hagan, and passed unanimously, the public meeting was adjourned at 9:08 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Vitina Fazi  
District Clerk