

EAST ROCKAWAY UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT
East Rockaway, New York
Meeting of the Board of Education
7:00 P.M., April 20, 2021
East Rockaway Jr./Sr. High School Auditorium
Preceded by Poetry Madness Contest Winners,
Recognition of Tenure Candidates, Budget Adoption, and a Public Forum
Meeting Open to the Public and Livestreamed

MINUTES

PRESENT:

Dominick Vulpis, Kristen O'Hagan, Peter McNally, Daniel DeMatteo, Joseph Kilgus, Superintendent Lisa J. Ruiz, Assistant Superintendent for Finance & Operations, Jacqueline A. Scrio; Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction, Mona Hecht, District Clerk, Vitina Fazi

Absent: None

1. Mr. Vulpis called the meeting to order at approximately 7:02 p.m. in the Auditorium of the East Rockaway Jr./Sr. High School.
2. Mr. McNally introduced Rhame Avenue School sixth grade student, Maurice Knight who led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Ms. Ruiz welcomed everyone to tonight's meeting and thanked everyone for coming out. She then introduced Mr. Will Gibbons, English and Social Studies chairperson who presented tonight's first recognition, Poetry Madness Contest Winners. He spoke about the contest and announced the top four winners. The students were called to the stage, they read their poems and were presented with an award. Ms. Ruiz congratulated all the students and stated how amazing their poems were. She thanked all the English teachers and Mr. Gibbons for his leadership.

It was her pleasure tonight to recognize two of the District's administrators who will be recommended for tenure to the Board of Education. Both administrators have had four years of evaluations, observations, assessments, and hard work to achieve tenure. Ms. Ruiz first spoke about David Barth, Director of Physical Education and Athletics. She spoke about his accomplishments and successes as the Director of Physical Education and recommended his tenure to the Board of Education.

Ms. Ruiz then spoke about Mona Hecht, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, also her "left/right-hand." She talked about her successes and accomplishments in her role and recommended her tenure to the Board of Education. Ms. Ruiz congratulated both

Mr. Barth and Mrs. Hecht on receiving tenure.

The presentations concluded at 7:35 pm, and the public portion of the agenda began.

3. Public Comments on Agenda Items

Mr. Vulpis stated that Board will be managing Board of Education email items this evening. If you have any questions regarding the agenda times, now is the time to contact the Board's email. You will also have an opportunity at the public comments section to contact the Board.

Mr. Vulpis checked for email comments and there were none. Mr. Vulpis encouraged anyone with comments to email the board at BOE@ersd.org and they will be answered at the end of the meeting.

4. Approval of Minutes:

Mr. Vulpis asked if there were any questions regarding the minutes below. There were none and Mr. Vulpis asked for a motion to approve the minutes.

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

- A. March 16, 2021, Regular Meeting of the Board of Education
- B. March 26, 2021, Special Meeting of the Board of Education

5. Acknowledgment of Monthly Reports and Correspondence

A. Receipt of Monthly Financial Reports

The Board acknowledged receipt of the February 2021 monthly financial reports.

- B. Correspondence: Mr. Vulpis received correspondence regarding posting of board meetings, minutes and agendas on the website and an inquiry about a pre-K program.

6. Recommendations of the Superintendent of Schools

Mr. Vulpis asked if the trustees had any questions regarding Items A-M below. There were none and Mr. Vulpis asked for a motion to approve Items A-M below.

Upon motion made by Joseph Kilgus, seconded by Daniel DeMatteo, 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. Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, grant tenure to the following staff members on the effective date indicated and subject to satisfactory evaluation:

1. Mona Hecht, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, effective July 1, 2021
 2. David Barth, Director of Physical Education, Health & Athletics, effective July 1, 2021
- B. Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, accept, with regret, the resignation of Donna Smith, for the purpose of retirement, from her special education teacher position, effective June 30, 2021.
- C. Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, rescind Personnel Item 6.J. from the March 16, 2021, agenda, and minutes.
- D. Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the appointment of Heather Bolanos to the position of part-time (.5 FTE) speech/language teacher, effective April 13, 2021, through June 30, 2021, at the prorated MA15, Step 8, annual salary set forth in the East Rockaway Teachers Association contract for the 2020-2021 school year.
- E. Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the appointment of Lauren Radburn to the position of short-term substitute elementary teacher, to be effective May 13, 2021, through June 30, 2021, at the per diem salary established by the East Rockaway Board of Education on the Non-Contractual Salary Schedule for the 2020-2021 school year.
- F. Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the appointment of Kirsten Anderson to the position of temporary teaching assistant, to be effective May 17, 2021, through June 25, 2021, at the salary established by the East Rockaway Board of Education on the Non-Contractual Salary Schedule for Temporary Teaching Assistants for the 2020-2021 school year.
- G. Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the appointment of Sara Guagliano to the position of short-term substitute science teacher, to be effective May 3, 2021, through June 30, 2021, at the per diem salary established by the East Rockaway Board of Education on the Non-Contractual Salary Schedule for the 2020-2021 school year.
- H. Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the following proctor assignments, effective May 1, 2021 through June 25, 2021, at the supervision salary rate established by the East Rockaway Teachers Association contract, Appendix C, for the 2020-2021 school year:
1. Randi Kilcommons
 2. Virginia Sievers
 3. Elizabeth Stack
 4. Helene Yzaguirre

- I. Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the spring sports coaching schedule dated April 20, 2021.
- J. Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the revised elementary club advisor assignments dated April 20, 2021.
- K. Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the request of Ann Marie Kenny-Chapur for a continuation of her leave of absence from her school psychologist position for personal medical reasons through the end of the 2021-2022 fall semester.
- L. Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the request of Francesca Lagnese for a continuation of her child rearing leave of absence from her special education teacher position through the end of the 2021-2022 fall semester.
- M. 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:
 - 1. Noreen Sheehy, athletic supervisor (day/evening), effective March 1, 2021
 - 2. Doreen Johnson, substitute typist-clerk, effective upon Civil Service approval
 - 3. Nicole Masiello, athletic supervisor (day/evening), effective April 12, 2021
 - 4. Jennifer Barth, athletic supervisor (day/evening), effective April 12, 2021
 - 5. Joie Candido, per diem substitute teacher, effective April 13, 2021

7. Other Items

Mr. Vulpis asked if the trustees had any questions regarding Items A and B below. There were none and Mr. Vulpis asked for a motion to approve Items A and B.

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 and B were approved on a consent agenda.

A. Approve the following resolution:

BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Education of the East Rockaway School District hereby abolishes two (2) positions in the teaching assistant tenure area, effective June 30, 2021. The Superintendent is directed to notify the affected staff members of this action.

B. Approve the following resolution:

PROPOSITION NO. 1: 2021-2022 School Budget for East Rockaway Union Free

School District:

RESOLVED, that the Proposed Budget of \$41,764,646.00 for the East Rockaway Union Free School District of the Town of Hempstead, County of Nassau, State of New York, for the fiscal year 2021-2022 be adopted and that the amount of said budget be raised by tax upon the taxable property of the School District after first deducting the monies available from State Aid and other sources.

Mr. Vulpis asked if the trustees had any questions regarding Item 7-C below. There were none and Mr. Vulpis asked for a motion to approve Item 7-C.

Upon motion made by Daniel DeMatteo, seconded by Joseph Kilgus, all in favor AYE, opposed: NONE; abstained: NONE; the motion was unanimously passed, and the following Items 7-C was unanimously approved.

C. Approve the following resolution:

BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED that the Board of Education of the East Rockaway UFSD approves the Real Property Tax Report Card prepared by the District's Business Office for the 2021 Annual District Meeting; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of said report card shall be submitted to the State Education Department by the end of the next business day following this approval.

Mr. Vulpis asked if the trustees had any questions regarding Items D and E below. There were none and Mr. Vulpis asked for a motion to approve Items D and E.

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

D. Approve the following resolution:

BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED, that the Board of Education of the East Rockaway UFSD authorizes and appoints the following individual to serve in the capacity of election/poll workers in connection with the May 18, 2021, annual school district meeting and election, at the salary set forth on the Non-Contractual Salary Schedule for the 2020-2021 school year:

1. Nancy Landerer
2. Lorraine Keegan

E. Approve the following resolution:

WHEREAS, the Board of Cooperative Educational Services of Nassau County (hereinafter "Nassau BOCES") has proposed and presented its Proposed Administrative Operations Budget for the 2021-2022 school year (July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2022), now therefore, be it

RESOLVED that the Nassau BOCES Proposed Administrative Operations Budget for the 2021-2022 school year in the amount of \$23,234,809 be, and hereby is, approved by this Board.

AND authorize the District Clerk to execute the Ballot and Clerk's Certificate and file same with Nassau BOCES.

Mr. Vulpis asked if the trustees had any questions regarding Item 7-F below. There were none and Mr. Vulpis asked for a motion to approve Item 7-F.

Upon motion made by Joseph Kilgus, seconded by Daniel DeMatteo, all in favor AYE, opposed: NONE; abstained: NONE; the motion was unanimously passed, and the following Items 7-F was unanimously approved

F. Approve the following resolution:

WHEREAS, the filling of three (3) vacancies on the Board of Cooperative Educational Services of Nassau County will be determined by votes of component school district boards of education to be conducted at regular or special meetings of such boards to be held on April 20, 2021, and

WHEREAS, the trustees or board of education of each component school district, by resolution, may cast one vote for each vacancy to be filled, provided that no more than one (1) vote may be cast for any candidate, be it hereby

RESOLVED, that the Board of Education of the East Rockaway Union Free School District, hereby elects by a majority vote of its members three of the candidates listed below (in alphabetical order) for such vacancy on the Board of Cooperative Educational Services: Susan Bergtraum, Martin Kaye, and Michael Weinick and authorize the District Clerk to cast one ballot for each of the said individuals for their election to the Board of Cooperative Educational Services.

Mr. Vulpis asked if the trustees had any questions regarding Item 7-G below. There were none and Mr. Vulpis asked for a motion to approve Item 7-G.

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 7-G was unanimously approved.

G. Approve the following resolution:

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education of the East Rockaway Union Free School District approves the terms and conditions of the Memorandum of Agreement dated April 12, 2021, between the District and the East Rockaway Teacher Aides Association regarding the terms and conditions of employment for the District's teacher aides unit employees for the period July 1, 2019, through June 30, 2023, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Superintendent of Schools is authorized to execute the resulting Agreement on behalf of the Board of Education.

Mr. Vulpis asked if the trustees had any questions regarding Item 7-H below. There were none and Mr. Vulpis asked for a motion to approve Item 7-H.

Upon motion made by Daniel DeMatteo, seconded by Joseph Kilgus, all in favor AYE, opposed: NONE; abstained: NONE; the motion was unanimously passed, and the following Items 7-H was unanimously approved.

H. Approve the following resolution:

BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED that the Board of Education of the East Rockaway Union Free School District approves the "Second Amendment to Employment Agreement" dated April 20, 2021, 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.

Mr. Vulpis asked if the trustees had any questions regarding Item 7-I below. There were none and Mr. Vulpis asked for a motion to approve Item 7-I.

Upon motion made by Kristen O'Hagan, seconded by Peter McNally, all in favor AYE, opposed: NONE; abstained: NONE; the motion was unanimously passed, and the following Items 7-I was unanimously approved.

I. Approve the following employment agreements for the 2021-2022 school year and authorize the Superintendent of Schools to execute the agreements on behalf of the East Rockaway Board of Education:

1. Jacqueline Scio, Assistant Superintendent for Finance & Operations
2. Mona Hecht, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction
3. Vincent Healy, Director of Pupil Personnel Services
4. James Daly, Director of Facilities
5. Mary Volino, Secretary to the Superintendent of Schools

6. Vitina Fazi, Secretary to the Assistant Superintendent for Finance & Operations

Mr. Vulpis asked if the trustees had any questions regarding Item 7-J below. There were none and Mr. Vulpis asked for a motion to approve Item 7-J.

Upon motion made by Joseph Kilgus, seconded by Daniel DeMatteo, all in favor AYE, opposed: NONE; abstained: NONE; the motion was unanimously passed, and the following Items 7-J was unanimously approved.

- J. Approve the agreement with Textbook Central, a division of Tel/Logic Inc. d/b/a CentralEd with East Rockaway UFSD for textbook information and management services for the 2021-2022 school year and authorize the Assistant Superintendent for Finance & Operations to execute the agreement on behalf of the East Rockaway Board of Education.

Mr. Vulpis asked if the trustees had any questions regarding Item 7-K below. There were none and Mr. Vulpis asked for a motion to approve Item 7-K.

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 7-K was unanimously approved.

- K. Approve the Location Rental Agreement with Debbie Regan Locations, Ltd., and the East Rockaway UFSD for use of premises of the East Rockaway Jr./Sr. High School building for the period April 23 through April 25, 2021 and authorize the President of the Board of Education to execute the agreement on behalf of the East Rockaway Board of Education.

Mr. Vulpis asked if the trustees had any questions regarding Item 7-L below. There were none and Mr. Vulpis asked for a motion to approve Item 7-L.

Upon motion made by Joseph Kilgus, seconded by Daniel DeMatteo, all in favor AYE, opposed: NONE; abstained: NONE; the motion was unanimously passed, and the following Items 7-L was unanimously approved.

- L. Approve the Memorandum of Agreement between the East Rockaway UFSD and Rolling River Day School and Camp for use of fields located at its premises by the physical education classes of East Rockaway Jr. /Sr. High School for the remainder of the 2020-2021 school year and authorize the Assistant Superintendent for Finance & Operations to execute the agreement on behalf of the East Rockaway Board of Education.

Mr. Vulpis asked if the trustees had any questions regarding Item 7-M below. There were none and Mr. Vulpis asked for a motion to approve Item 7-M.

Upon motion made by Kristen O’Hagan, seconded by Peter McNally, all in favor AYE, opposed: NONE; abstained: NONE; the motion was unanimously passed, and the following Items 7-M was unanimously approved.

- M. Approve the AVID College Readiness System Products and Services Agreement, which consists of the 2021-22 Quote/Order, for the East Rockaway School District for the period July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022 and authorize the President of the Board of Education to execute the agreement on behalf of the East Rockaway Board of Education.

Mr. Vulpis asked if the trustees had any questions regarding Item 7-N below. There were none and Mr. Vulpis asked for a motion to approve Item 7-N.

Upon motion made by Joseph Kilgus, seconded by Daniel DeMatteo, all in favor AYE, opposed: NONE; abstained: NONE; the motion was unanimously passed, and the following Items 7-N was unanimously approved.

- N. Declare obsolete for the purpose of disposal and/or recycling, the following:

1. For disposal, the item listed on the Change of Disposition Form dated April 14, 2021
2. Items listed on the two (2) Textbook Removal Forms dated March 23, 2021
3. Items listed on the three (3) Textbook Removal Forms dated March 24, 2021
4. Items listed on the Textbook Removal Form dated April 6, 2021

Mr. Vulpis asked if the trustees had any questions regarding Item 7-O below. There were none and Mr. Vulpis asked for a motion to approve Item 7-O.

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 7-O was unanimously approved.

- O. Accept the following donations to fund scholarships:
1. From Aileen Hummel, a check in the sum of \$500 for the Christopher Scott Hummel Memorial Scholarship
 2. From Patricia Drugan, a check in the sum of \$150 for the Cheryl Drugan Award

Mr. Vulpis asked if the trustees had any questions regarding Item 7-P below. There were none and Mr. Vulpis asked for a motion to approve Item 7-P.

Upon motion made by Joseph Kilgus, seconded by Daniel DeMatteo, all in favor AYE, opposed: NONE; abstained: NONE; the motion was unanimously passed, and the following Items 7-P was unanimously approved.

P. Approve the following donations:

1. From the Centre Avenue PTA, a check in the sum of \$65 for the High School Music Department's Musical account
2. From the East Rockaway School District to the Roosevelt School District Football Program, a 5 Man Fisher Football Sled

8. Approval of CSE and CPSE Recommendations

Mr. Vulpis asked if the trustees had any questions regarding the CSE and CPSE Recommendations. There were no questions. Mr. Vulpis then asked for a motion to approve the CSE and CPSE Recommendations.

Upon motion made by Kristen O'Hagan, seconded by Peter McNally, all in favor AYE, opposed: NONE; abstained: NONE; the motion was unanimously passed, and the CSE and CPSE Recommendations were unanimously approved.

9. Budget Transfers

Mr. Vulpis asked if the trustees had any questions regarding the following budget transfers. There were no questions. Mr. Vulpis then asked for a motion to approve the budget transfers.

Upon motion made by Joseph Kilgus, seconded by Daniel DeMatteo, all in favor AYE, opposed: NONE; abstained: NONE; the motion was unanimously passed, and the following budget transfers were unanimously approved.

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

1. Transaction No. 21-0014
2. Transaction No. 21-0015

10. Policy Matters

A. Policy Subcommittee Report

Mrs. O'Hagan provided the following report:

The Policy Sub-Committee met on April 12th. There are two policies up for adoption this evening:

0101, Gender Neutral Single Occupancy Bathrooms. This policy addresses Chapter 353 of the Laws of 2020, which requires school district and BOCES boards to develop policies and procedures requiring that all single-occupancy bathrooms in schools and BOCES be designated as gender neutral, with appropriate signage on or near the entry door.

5151, Homeless Children. This policy has been updated to reflect language that clarifies the participation of homeless students in summer school programs. McKinney-Vento requires that districts ensure homeless children eligible for McKinney-Vento services do not face barriers accessing academic and extra-curricular activities, including summer school. Regulations have also been updated.

We will continue to review the following policies:

0105, Equity, Inclusivity, and Diversity in Education
9150, Non-Fraternization “New”
6705, Federal Funds Purchasing
8130, School Safety Plans and Teams

The date for our next meeting is TBD.

Mr. Vulpis asked if there were any questions regarding Item 10 B below. There were no questions. Mr. Vulpis asked for a motion to adopt the policies listed in Item B (For Adoption).

Upon motion made by Peter McNally, seconded by Kristen O’Hagan, all in favor AYE, opposed: NONE; abstained: NONE; the following policies listed in Item B (1-2) were unanimously approved for adoption.

B. For Adoption

1. 0101, Gender Neutral Single-Occupancy Bathrooms
2. 5151, Homeless Children

C. For Review

1. 0105, Equity, Inclusivity, and Diversity in Education
2. 9150, Non-Fraternization “New”
3. 6705, Federal Funds Purchasing
4. 8130, School Safety Plans and Teams

11. Reports

A. Communications Sub-Committee Report

Mr. Vulpis reported that the Committee met and discussed everything that was being done around the community concerning COVID. They were pleased with all the measures taken and guidelines in place. The Committee agreed to not meet for the remainder of the school year unless they were called upon to meet. One of the major charges of this Committee was transparency. However, all the many school meetings regarding COVID have all been

transparent. East Rockaway schools under the leadership of Mrs. Ruiz have done an outstanding job of keeping the community informed including the formation of our plan to return.

B. Superintendent's Report

Thank you to our administrators for their assistance today in addressing the safety of our students regarding the police activity in the area.

Achievement

Fifth grade students are engaged in Informational Writing. They are researching a famous woman for their topic, creating text features appropriate for the genre, and using Thinking Maps to organize their research.

On April 11, 2021, four East Rockaway high school students were participants in this year's NYSSMA All-State virtual concert. Gabriella Baccari, Sofia Bertolotti, Grace McNally, and Emma Pollackov were members of the Treble Chorus or Mixed Chorus. The concert may be viewed by clicking the link on the New York State School Music Association's website: www.nyssma.org.

On Thursday, April 15, 2021, students in Science Research participated in the final phase of the Northwell SPARK! Challenge Virtual Field Trip. East Rockaway Science Research students submitted a poster focusing on Neuroscience. After being welcomed by Northwell staff, students voted on submitted projects, participated in a Virtual Northwell Health Career Expo, and finally viewed the Awards Celebration. Our team won the Rookie Award and \$500 for our Science Research program.

Our Varsity Boys Soccer team and Varsity Girls Volleyball team qualified for their respective playoffs. This is the first time that the boys have made the playoffs.

Senior, Daniella Pedi was selected as a National Medalist in this year's Scholastic Art and Writing Awards. Daniella's art was entered in the Drawing and Illustration category.

The East Rockaway School District has been honored with the Best Communities for Music Education designation from The NAMM Foundation for its outstanding commitment to music education for the sixth straight year. Now in its 22nd year, the Best Communities for Music Education designation is awarded to districts that demonstrate outstanding achievement in efforts to provide music access and education to all students.

Junior, Leslie Madera was selected to showcase her artwork in this year's Long Island's Best

exhibit. The Hecksher Museum of Art in Huntington hosts this prestigious exhibit, and it will run April 17 through May 23, 2021.

Five East Rockaway High School art students won awards in this year's Photographic Foundation of Long Island competition. Senior, Hailey Arnold was awarded 2nd and 3rd place awards in the architecture category; junior Isabella Anderson was awarded 1st place in the Color Choice category; senior Allyson Lovera was awarded 1st place in the Photo-journalism category; junior, Gianna Mancusi was awarded 1st place in the Scapes and 2nd place in the Portrait categories; Zara Soofisada was awarded 2nd place in the Scapes Category. All five students will now move on to the Youth Showcase Photography Exhibit. A national competition hosted by the Photographic Society of America.

Opportunity

Centre and Rhame Avenue School students participated in NYSMMA and received many honors. Eight orchestra students participated. Four received outstanding scores and four received perfect scores. Twenty-three students participated in voice. Six students received an excellent rating, 17 students received a score of outstanding and five of those 17 received a perfect score. Fifteen band students participated; ten of those students received outstanding ratings and five received excellent ratings. We are so very proud of our students and the leadership of our music teachers: Evan Anastassatos, Jessica Salaway, and Nicole Mihalek.

The return to full live instruction began on April 12, 2021, as the high school welcomed back seniors and students in Grades 7 and 8. Our cheerleaders were outside the middle school wing to greet our returning 7th and 8th graders and balloon arches welcomed back our seniors. Activities are occurring in each core content area class throughout the week to help our middle school students acclimate to their full return. Each day they experienced a different presentation or activity designed to build community and enhance achievement. Guidance presented on future goals. Administration clarified expectations and procedures. Classroom teachers engaged learners in activities designed to foster collaboration.

School Counselors continue to meet with juniors to identify post-secondary goals and create plans to prepare for senior year. Additionally, counselors continue to support seniors as they make decisions about post-secondary choices, including connecting them with trade school programs, supporting them with application and scholarship materials.

Seniors in Participation in Government, Economics, and AP Government classes are participating in a voter registration drive during the week of April 19th. All students will register to vote in local, state, and national elections.

Innovation

Teachers participated in the model schools professional learning opportunity. The focus was on creating Bitmoji classrooms, an interactive technology tool that allows students to independently use a variety of teacher created resources to support their learning.

On Tuesday, March 23rd, science teachers at the high school participated in a virtual Zoom PD workshop on Discovery TechBook. Teachers continued to expand their knowledge of this interactive platform and educational resource with a focus on how to use this tool to develop targeted lessons using the plethora of resources available.

Students in Ms. DiNome's Italian 1A class are experiencing language immersion using Rosetta Stone. Students were provided individual user accounts and headsets to advance acquisition of the target language.

Connection

Centre and Rhame Schools welcomed back K-4 full remote learners and 4th grade hybrid students this week. Our respective PTA's provided balloon displays to celebrate their return. Fourth grade students engaged in community building activities in their classrooms, supported by the guidance counselor, to promote a sense of community.

Last week, 12th graders and their families were invited to pick up Class of 2021 lawn signs, as we kick off the celebration of the Class of 2021! Additionally, at the April ERHS PTA meeting, senior families were invited to hear about the activities scheduled for the Class of 2021 throughout the months of May and June.

The high school Skills and Achievement Class and the Senior Honor Society teamed up to "Light it up Blue" for Autism Awareness/Acceptance Month. Students and staff wore blue on Friday, April 9th and the Honor Society sold bracelets and stickers and will donate \$325 to Autism Speaks.

The high school beautification process is underway! We have installed WE ROCK avenue banners around the front oval, high school logo signs throughout the building, Advisory Kindness memes tile the main hallway, WE ROCK decals have been placed on staircase risers, and we have installed new TV screens outside the auditorium for an Alumni Spotlight Scroll and to provide the middle school students with access to the daily announcements while in the hallway. The Art Club will begin work on hallway murals in the coming weeks.

School Counselors presented in Grades 7-11 to get feedback on individual student progress

as well as career aspirations. Additionally, in accordance with NYS mandates, Individual Progress Reports were reviewed in class and completed.

To prepare for elementary to junior high transition, counselors are facilitating classroom discussions on changes, and reviewing articulation with teachers. Articulation is also being reviewed to transition 7th to 8th grade. These collaborative conversations include building support staff, administration, grade team, and counseling department.

Mrs. Hecht provided an update on “Return to Learn”:

Our students have been returning to daily in-person learning in staggered groupings by grade level since the start of last week. Last week we welcomed back our seniors along with our 7th and 8th graders in the Junior/Senior High, and we welcomed back our grade 4 students in the elementary schools. This week our 5th and 6th graders followed so we now have all elementary students in for daily instruction except for those who have chosen to be on a fully remote learning model. This week we also welcomed back our 9th and 10th graders in the Junior/Senior High School, and we look forward to completing the process with our juniors returning next Monday.

Overall, we have just under 11% of our students on a fully remote model which is down from 17% in late winter. There has been very little movement over the last couple of weeks with students moving from in-person to remote or vice versa. The transition has been positive – students are happy to be together with their peers and the teachers are thrilled to have them back on a daily basis. We want to thank the PTAs for their continued support and participation in preparing for the students’ return. Each building had balloons and signs welcoming the students upon their return and we know that our PTAs assisted in supporting that along with other efforts to make the full return positive and exciting for all.

The NYS Education Department distributed updated guidance for schools, and we have been reviewing that very carefully. Due to our planning and efforts to communicate with families throughout the process, we believe we are in good shape with regard to the expectations in the new guidance. We will be revising our Return to Learn document which has been posted on our website throughout the year, and we will ensure that the updated version reflects all aspects of our current models. We will notify families when that document is posted in the near future but please that it contains all the information that we have been sharing throughout the process during our zoom meetings for families as well as during our Board of Education meetings.

Mrs. Scio provided an update on the budget:

Our fourth and last budget work session was held on Tuesday, April 13th. Discussions

included the final budget proposal, District Initiatives for 2021-22 school year, three-part budget, and a review of the revenue. The proposed budget has a 1.33% budget to budget increase and tax levy increase of 1.60% which is a 1% less than the tax levy cap of 2.60%. All budget presentations are posted on the District's website. We will have a budget presentation at the budget hearing on Tuesday May 11th, at 7:00 p.m. in the High School Auditorium. We encourage you to attend the hearing.

Ms. Ruiz thanked Mrs. Scrio for preparing a fiscally sound budget while maintaining all our programs and staffing and staying 1% under the tax cap.

12. Good and Welfare

- A. Congratulations to Alissa Stegner and family on the arrival of her son, Richard Vincenzo, on April 15, 2021
- B. Condolences to Kaitlyn Terrio and family on the passing of her grandmother, Jeanne Guidice
- C. Condolences to Christine LaFrance and family on the passing of her father, Samuel Conanan

13. Public Comments

Mr. Kilgus checked the board's email and there were no emailed comments or comments from the audience this evening.

14. Board Member Comments

Joseph Kilgus: Mr. Kilgus thanked Mrs. Scrio for all her hard work in preparing this year's budget. The increase of 1.60% is a full percentage point below the 2.60% tax cap. Ms. Scrio was able to do this without cutting any of our programs. As a board member and a taxpayer, he is very appreciative of all her efforts to keep the tax increase low. She did a great job with the budget. He also congratulated Mrs. Hecht and Mr. Barth on receiving tenure tonight. He enjoyed hearing the poems and congratulated the winners of the Poetry Madness Contest.

Daniel DeMatteo: Mr. DeMatteo agreed with all the comments made by Mr. Kilgus and shared the following quote: **"Never look down on anybody unless you're helping him up."** —**Jesse Jackson.**

Peter McNally: Mr. McNally commented that at every monthly meeting we see all the hard work done by Mrs. Scrio on our budget and especially getting it 1% under the tax cap. He echoed the comments of his fellow trustees in congratulating Mrs. Hecht and Mr. Barth. He congratulated the winners of the poetry contest and stated that he wished he could write as well as they can.

Kristen O'Hagan: I would like to begin with congratulating the winners of the Poetry Madness competition. Every year I am in awe of the creativity and talent inspired by this event. Next, I would like to congratulate Mrs. Hecht and Mr. Barth on their well-deserved tenure recognition. It is my hope that you will both continue to move the district forward academically and athletically in the years to come. Additionally, congratulations to Ms. Donna Smith on your retirement. Your years of service and dedication to the students – whether in the classroom, during musical rehearsals, or meeting yearbook deadlines – you faced each challenge with a smile on your face and a readiness to dig in. You inspire young learners to reach for the stars. Thank you for all you have done and enjoy the many adventures that await. Lastly, thank you Mrs. Scio for all the work you have put into the budget. Your attention to staying under the tax cap while not only maintaining programming but offering more opportunities for the children in this district is a remarkable feat. You are an asset to our community, and I am sure I can speak on behalf of the entire board when I say we truly appreciate you and all you do. Thank you.

Dominick Vulpis: Mr. Vulpis stated that we constantly hear accolades about our students' achievements in poetry, art, athletics, music, etc. A well-rounded student is one of the things that East Rockaway does so well. Our students continue to shine around and beyond the County. It is all about the nurturing process that takes place. Thank you to the administration and your leadership to the teachers. Thank you to central office who causes that pathway to the administration. Thank you to Mr. Schaffer for all the signs around the building. It inspires me; it brings out traditions and students take pride in that. Thank you to Mr. Barth for his great teamwork.

Tenure is a great celebration. Congratulations to both Mrs. Hecht and Mr. Barth on being granted tenure. It is well-deserved and you should celebrate it. I hope to have you around for many years to come. I recently spoke with Donna Smith who announced her retirement. It was a great conversation, filled with laughter and emotion about a career so well lived in our District. Mr. Vulpis thanked her for her many years of service to the children of East Rockaway. Many thanks to my fellow trustees for supporting me as I run for my second term for a seat on the Board of Education. Thank you for coming out tonight.

15. Mr. Vulpis asked for a motion to adjourn. Upon motion made by Peter McNally, seconded by Kristen O'Hagan, and passed unanimously, the public meeting was adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Vitina Fazi
District Clerk