



Setting a course for excellence

Spring 2019

EAST ROCKAWAY SCHOOL DISTRICT

Parent Coordinator Engages Families & Provides Support

Making and maintaining connections with parents and community members is key to fostering student success. In March, the district hired Parent Coordinator Peggy Schlatter, in a part-time capacity, to act as a liaison between district administration and parents, and provide support to families, students, PTA and community groups.



Ms. Schlatter will answer any questions or concerns from parents or direct them to the person within the district who can address them. In addition, she will be at the forefront for kindergartners and new families by informing them of district resources and providing them with support. Ms. Schlatter also hopes to increase family and community engagement.

"The district has lots of evening programs and other offerings that we want families to be more aware of and get involved with," she said. "I will be sharing information with the community at the East Rockaway Recreation Center, the public library and through other

community resources."

Ms. Schlatter holds master's degrees in early childhood education from Adelphi University and marketing communications from New York Institute of Technology. She earned her bachelor's degree in communication arts and science from Queens College. She has more than 20 years of experience in education.

Ms. Schlatter is looking forward to meeting the district's students, their families and community members. She's also excited to welcome incoming kindergartners and their families for the 2019-2020 school year.

Reach Ms. Schlatter at:

516-887-8300

• x424 (HS) • x265 (Centre) • x324 (Rhame)
pschlatter@eastrockawayschools.org



NEW COURSES OFFER

Real-Life Experiences

Upperclassmen of the East Rockaway Junior-Senior High School will have the chance to explore the field of health sciences thanks to two new science courses being offered in the 2019-2020 school year.

Anatomy and Physiology and Emergency Medical Technician (EMT - Basic) will allow juniors and seniors to earn a full year of science credit next year. The Anatomy and Physiology course will be available first semester, while the EMT - Basic course will take place second semester.

"We wanted to expand on our science electives for our

upperclassmen," Assistant Principal Bradley Krauz said. "While thinking about trending careers that focus on real-life experiences, we felt the Anatomy and Physiology course, along with an EMT course, would be an opportunity for hands-on learning and create an opportunity for community outreach."

In the future, Mr. Krauz hopes to connect with the East Rockaway Fire Department and possibly with a certified trainer, who will work alongside teachers in the school to certify the students.

"Career fields like physician's assistant, nurse practitioners, athletic trainers and EMT staff are rapidly growing. To give our students a glimpse into that world with hands-on learning and opportunities to connect with the community is a win-win and can only benefit our students."

- Bradley Krauz,
Assistant Principal



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Security Enhancements

The district is committed to providing a safe environment for all of our students and staff. With that in mind, we are pleased to report that we have increased our security procedures at each school. This includes the installation of security vestibules and the implementation of a step-by-step entry procedure for visitors.

When arriving at any school within the district, a visitor must first press a buzzer outside of the school's main entrance. A security guard will screen the visitor and determine if they are permitted to enter. The individual(s) will then proceed through a set of doors and approach a window (pictured below at ERHS), where they'll be asked to present their driver's license and sign in. After the security guard has confirmed their appointment, the visitor will be permitted to walk through the second set of doors and be escorted to their destination. If a parent wishes to drop off something for their child, it must be placed in a drop-off box at the entryway.

Facilities Director James Daly said the district is being proactive to ensure the safety of its students and staff.

"We work closely with Altaris Security Consulting Group, which has provided an abundance of resources to assist us in providing the most secure environment possible for our buildings," Mr. Daly said. "The creation of these vestibules and new security procedures is a direct result of their suggestion to limit access to school buildings and filter everyone through one point of access, where they can be vetted properly."

The district continues to focus its efforts on implementing all the best practices to provide a safe learning environment for students.



Other Security Advancements Include

- Hiring additional security staff.
- Ongoing updates to security cameras.
- Use of the Rave app on all administrator cellphones, which connects instantly with NCPD in the event of an emergency.
- Door hardening throughout.
- Swipe card access for building entry.
- Security guards in all buildings.
- Stop the Bleed Save a Life training.

East Rockaway in Advance of NYS Mandate: Survey to Study School Climate

Ahead of a New York State Education Department mandate anticipated for 2020-21, the district is currently exploring ways to evaluate its school climate.

The anticipated survey for parents and students, which will be anonymous, would seek to gauge the instructional climate and culture in school and to help identify any potential areas for improvement. Studies have shown that a positive school climate has a profound positive impact on school safety, student self-esteem, emotional well-being and mental health, as well as lower incidence of substance abuse, student absenteeism and suspensions.

East Rockaway Jr./Sr. High School Principal Richard Schaffer administered a 50-question survey to students at the high school in December to get a sense

of students' perception with respect to procedural matters, safety, academics and offerings. The answers from that survey have already resulted in many modifications to classroom activities, how tablets are utilized and access to additional resources for homework help.

"The anticipated school climate survey will help us gauge how our students feel in and about school, identify areas that may be of concern, and provide feedback about our students' school experiences," Mona Hecht, assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction, said. "If there's anything that we need to be aware of and address, we'll come together and figure out what the next steps are."

Expect to see more information on a districtwide school climate survey in the fall.

Sophomores Examine Mental Health Topics

As part of the 10th grade health curriculum, students are enrolled in the Prepare U mental health program. The multifaceted mental health curriculum improves student culture, fosters emotional resilience and enhances one's well-being.

The program was rolled out earlier this year and will be a full-year course in the 2019-2020 school year. David Barth, district director of athletics, physical education, health, family and consumer science, said the program has taken off among students.

"It gets the kids talking and interacting with one another. They are grasping the content and reflecting on their learning to support their social and emotional needs," Mr. Barth said.

Students will have the opportunity to master the tools to process anger, further develop problem-solving skills, decrease anxiety, recognize suicidal ideation, engage in self-care, promote healthy families,

cultivate empathy, manage social media use, and foster healthier relationships.

Mr. Barth said the district continues to exceed the state's mandated mental health education requirements to not only address any mental health issues that may arise, but to erase any negative stigma that may be associated with it.

East Rockaway has also implemented the elementary school counseling program at Rhame and Centre Avenue schools to provide additional resources and to provide a comprehensive system of support for all students, along with the work of our counselors, social workers and psychologists districtwide.

"We want our students to feel good in school and will do everything we can to make sure that we have a safe, comfortable and welcoming place to succeed," Ms. Hecht said. "The ultimate goal is to give students every opportunity to develop skills for social emotional competence and to thrive."