

EAST ROCKAWAY UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT

East Rockaway, New York

Regular Meeting of the Board of Education

7:00 P.M., May 24, 2022

East Rockaway Jr./ Sr. High School Auditorium

Preceded by a Poetry Madness Contest Winners, Tenure Recommendations,

Natalie Hayes, Student Artist, Music Department - NYSSMA Recognition of student participants, staff, and volunteers

Little Libraries Presentation and a Public Forum

MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC AND LIVESTREAMED

MINUTES

PRESENT: Members of the Board of Education: Kristen O'Hagan, Peter McNally, Dominick Vulpis, Daniel DeMatteo, Joseph Kilgus, Superintendent Lisa J. Ruiz, Assistant Superintendent for Finance & Operations, Jacqueline A. Scio, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction, James DeTommaso, District Clerk, Nereyda Amaya Moran.

1. The meeting was called to order by Kristen O'Hagan at 7:08 pm.
2. A Moment of Silence was held to honor the students and those impacted by the tragedy in Uvalde, Texas. Mr. Vulpis then introduced Centre Avenue student Kacper Beben, who led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Superintendent Ruiz welcomed and thanked everyone for coming out. She introduced High School Principal, Mr. Richard Schaffer to announce this year's Poetry Madness Contest honorees. Four Junior-Senior High School students earned high marks for their poems, which focused on the theme "hope." Madeleine Prucha was awarded first place for her work, "Plight by Pomegranate;" Leslie Madera also was awarded with first place for her piece, "Crown;" Isabelle Anderson took second place for her piece, "A Man With Alzheimer's" and Nolan Annarelli took third place for his piece, "Hourglass."

Fine and Performing Arts Chairperson Peter Ceglie took to the podium to honor those student performers and volunteers who participated in this year's NYSSMA festival, which was hosted at the Junior-Senior High School. To honor their hard work, Mr. Ceglie asked attending festival participants to stand for an applause from the crowd. Junior-Senior High School art teacher Kristie Galante spoke on behalf Junior-Senior High School student Natalie Hayes. Natalie has received top honors in more than one competition for her artwork.

This evening five staff members will be recognized for tenure. Emily Judge (high school special education teacher), Alexandra Pietrantonio (high school science teacher), Donna Robbins (high school counselor), Jessica Salaway (elementary music teacher), and Luke Tesoriero (high school social studies teacher). Each recipient was introduced and recommended for tenure by their respective building principals. Superintendent of Schools Lisa Ruiz congratulated all recipients on this significant steppingstone in their careers.

East Rockaway Teachers Association Presidents Gail Beyrer and Michelle Healy presented three Little Libraries that the association plans to donate to the district. The Little Libraries

will be installed in front of each building where students and community members can take a book or leave a book at any time. The board of education plans to officially accept the donation at the June 14 board of education meeting.

3. Public Comments on Agenda Items

If you are viewing the livestream of tonight's meeting and you have questions regarding items on the agenda or other school related items, you can email them to boardofeducation@ersd.org. This email will be monitored throughout the evening. Please be sure to include your full name and address. 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 Mr. DeTommaso, and matters involving budget and facilities should be directed to Ms. Scio. If you need technological assistance or have issues with a device, please reach out to Mr. Fisk. Anyone who is attending in person, if you would like to make any comments, please complete a comment card.

There were no public comments.

4. Approval of Minutes

Ms. O'Hagan asked if there were any questions regarding the minutes below. There were none and Ms. O'Hagan asked for a motion to approve the minutes.

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

- A. April 12, 2022, Meeting of the Board of Education
- B. April 19, 2022, Special Meeting of the Board of Education
- C. April 26, 2022, Special Meeting of the Board of Education

5. Acknowledgment of Monthly Reports and Correspondence

- A. Receipt of Monthly Financial Reports: The Board acknowledge receipt of the March 2022 financial reports.
- B. Correspondence
 - 1. An emailed petition to deem Sunrise Highway and Ocean Avenue intersection a hazardous zone requiring the establishment of a child safety zone.
 - 2. Two emails from a community member regarding a Diversity Committee and information of the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusivity Policy.
 - 3. An email from a community member regarding an update on the Superintendent search.
 - 4. An email from a RVC resident regarding the field lighting.

5. An email from a parent concerned about the Teacher's College curriculum and inquiring about our district's use of the TC Program.
6. An email from the ERTA Executive Board on behalf of the membership sharing the fantastic job the two elementary school principals – Dr. McArthur and Ms. Kelly - have been doing, both in their work with the teachers and their work as building leaders. Thank you for sharing this with us.

6. Recommendations of the Superintendent of Schools

Ms. O'Hagan asked if the trustees had any questions regarding Items A-V below. There were none and Ms. O'Hagan asked for a motion to approve Items below.

Upon motion made by Mr. DeMatteo, seconded by Mr. Kilgus, all in favor AYE, opposed: NONE; abstained: NONE; the motion was unanimously passed, and the following Items A-V 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. Emily Judge, Special Education Teacher, effective August 30, 2022
 2. Alexandra Pietrantonio, Science Teacher, effective September 27, 2022
 3. Donna Robbins, School Counselor, effective August 30, 2022
 4. Jessica Salaway, Music Teacher, effective August 30, 2022
 5. Luke Tesoriero, Social Studies Teacher, effective August 30, 2022
- B. Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, accept, with regret, the resignation of Linda R. Donovan, for the purpose of retirement, from her teacher aide position, effective June 24, 2022.
- C. Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, accept the following resignations:
 1. Marichelle Weill, music teacher, effective June 30, 2022
 2. James Hickey, Junior High Assistant Football Coach, effective April 29, 2022
- D. Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the four-year probationary appointment of Michael Bovino to the position of world language teacher Spanish (Tenure area: World Languages; Certification status: initial), effective September 1, 2022, subject to applicable laws and regulations regarding the granting of tenure, at the MA, Step 1, annual salary set forth in the East Rockaway Teachers Association Contract for the 2022-2023 school year.
- E. Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the four-year probationary appointment of Isabella R. Famighetti to the position of English teacher (Tenure area: English; Certification status: Initial), effective September 1, 2022, subject to applicable laws and regulations regarding the granting of tenure,

at the MA, Step 1, annual salary set forth in the East Rockaway Teachers Association Contract for the 2022-2023 school year.

- F. Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the four-year probationary appointment of Shannon Conley to the position of Social Studies teacher (Tenure area: Social Studies; Certification status: Initial), effective September 1, 2022, subject to applicable laws and regulations regarding the granting of tenure, at the MA, Step 2, annual salary set forth in the East Rockaway Teachers Association Contract for the 2022-2023 school year.
- G. Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the three-year probationary appointment of Barbara Olivares-Lazcano to the position of World Languages Chairperson, (tenure area: World Languages; certification status: Professional), effective September 1, 2022, subject to applicable laws and regulations regarding the granting of tenure, at the MA60, Step 12, (plus department chair stipend) annual salary set forth in the East Rockaway Teachers Association Contract for the 2022-2023 school year.
- H. Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the part-time appointment of Kathryn Appello to the position of elementary teacher (.8 FTE), effective May 16, 2022, through June 30, 2022, at the prorated BA, Step Entry annual salary set forth in the East Rockaway Teachers Association Contract for the 2021-2022 school year.
- I. Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the appointment of Ronmel Ocampo to the position of permanent substitute teacher, effective May 11, 2022, at the per diem salary established by the East Rockaway Board of Education on the Non-Contractual Salary Schedule for the 2021-2022 school year.
- J. Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the appointment of Taylor Dworkin to the position of permanent substitute teacher, effective May 25, 2022, at the per diem salary established by the East Rockaway Board of Education on the Non-Contractual Salary Schedule for the 2021-2022 school year.
- K. Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the appointment of to the Kacie Curran position of permanent substitute teacher, effective May 25, 2022, at the per diem salary established by the East Rockaway Board of Education on the Non-Contractual Salary Schedule for the 2021-2022 school year.
- L. Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the following proctor assignments, effective May 2, 2022, through June 24, 2022, at the supervision salary rate established by the East Rockaway Teachers Association contract, Appendix C, for the 2021-2022 school year:
 - a. Melissa Watson

- M. Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the revised ERHS club advisor assignments for the 2021-2022 school year at the stipend salary established by the East Rockaway Teachers Association contract for the 2021-2022 school year.
- N. Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the appointment of Jessica White, to the position of Senior Typist Clerk (10 months), effective July 1, 2022, at the Step 7 annual salary set forth in the East Rockaway Secretaries Association Agreement for the 2022-2023 school year.
- O. Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the following special education summer school appointments, effective, July 5, 2022, through August 12, 2022, at the hourly salary established by the East Rockaway Teachers Association contract for Other Educational Assignments for the 2022-2023 school year:

Dr. Rosina Pzena.....	School Psychologist
Dr. Alisa Nunes.....	Substitute School Psychologist
Bethany Kinkaid	Speech Language Teacher
Heather Bolanos.....	Speech Language Teacher
Allison Gerbert.....	Special Education Teacher
Kristen Donovan	Special Education Teacher
Jeannie Mengel	Special Education Teacher
Deborah Iannico.....	Substitute Special Education Teacher
Kathleen Crowley	Specialized Instruction Teacher
Danielle Schaetzle.....	Specialized Instruction - Reading
Deborah Iannico.....	Specialized Instruction - Reading

- 1. Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approved the following appointments for summer CSE/CPSE meetings, effective July 1, 2022, through August 31, 2022, at the hourly salary set forth in the East Rockaway Teachers Association contract for Other Educational Assignments for the 2022-2023 school year:

Dr. Rosina Pzena.....	School Psychologist
Dr. Alissa Nunes	Substitute School Psychologist
Dr. Danielle Lundgren	Substitute School Psychologist
Kathleen Crowley	Special Education Teacher
Deborah Iannico.....	Special Education Teacher
Bethan Kinkaid	Speech Language Teacher
Kimberly Rosenkrantz	Speech Language Teacher
Heather Bolanos.....	Speech Language Teacher
Vincent Healy	General Education Teacher
Robert Kennedy.....	General Education Teacher
Dawn McCabe.....	Social Worker, CPSE/CSE, McKinney Vento
Vincent Healy	Chairperson, CSE/CPSE
Robert Kennedy	Chairperson, CSE/CPSE
Dr. Rosina Pzena.....	Chairperson, CSE/CPSE

Dr. Alissa Nunes Substitute Chairperson, CSE/CPSE
Dr. Danielle Lundgren Substitute Chairperson, CSE/CPSE

- P. Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the following special education summer school teacher aide appointments, effective July 5, 2022, through August 12, 2022, at the hourly salary established by the East Rockaway Teacher Aides Association contract for the 2022-2023 school year:

Kathleen Gicewicz Teacher Aide
Linda Lindsley Teacher Aide
Noreen Sheehy Teacher Aide
John Wolek Fitch Teacher Aide
Tina Lewald Substitute Teacher Aide

- Q. Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the appointment of Thomas White to the position of Security Aide for the East Rockaway Extended School Year Summer Program and the East Rockaway Jr./Sr. High School Summer Program at Rhame Avenue School effective July 5, 2022, through August 18, 2022, at the salary established by the East Rockaway Board of Education Monitor and Security Unit Agreement for the 2022-2023 school year.

- R. Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the appointment of Denise Powell to the position of Summer Security Aide, for the East Rockaway Jr./Sr. High School, effective June 27, 2022, through September 1, 2022, at the salary established by the East Rockaway Board of Education Monitor and Security Unit Agreement for the 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 school years.

- S. Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the appointment of Frederick Cange to the position of Summer Security Aide, for the East Rockaway Jr./Sr. High School, effective June 27, 2022, through September 1, 2022, at the salary established by the East Rockaway Board of Education Monitor and Security Unit Agreement for the 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 school years.

- T. Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the appointment of Denise Cipriano to the position of Summer Textbook Monitor, effective June 19, 2022, through August 30, 2022, at the salary established by the East Rockaway Board of Education Monitor and Security Unit Agreement for the 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 school years.

- U. Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the request of Christine LaFrance for a medical leave of absence effective April 30, 2022, through June 30, 2022.

- V. 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. Dakota Terenzi, concert supervisor, effective May 17, 2022
2. Ksenia Brito, athletic supervisor (day/evening), effective March 14, 2022
3. Kenneth Anderson, athletic supervisor (day/evening), effective March 14, 2022

7. Other Items

Ms. O'Hagan asked if the trustees had any questions regarding Item A below. There were none and Ms. O'Hagan asked for a motion to approve Item bellow.

Upon motion made by Mr. McNally, seconded by Mr. Vulpis, all in favor AYE, opposed: NONE; abstained: NONE; the motion was unanimously passed, and the following Item A was approved on a consent agenda.

- A. **BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED THAT** the Board of Education of the East Rockaway Union Free School District appoints James DeTommaso as Superintendent of Schools effective July 1, 2022, on the terms and conditions set forth in an employment agreement dated May 24, 2022; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the Board authorizes the Board President to execute said employment agreement on behalf of the Board.

Ms. O'Hagan congratulated Mr. James DeTommaso on his appointment this evening. And stated that educational leaders play a pivotal role in affecting the climate, attitude, and reputation of their schools. They are the cornerstone on which learning communities' function and grow. They are confident he will successfully lead the East Rockaway School District in a positive direction. Wished him much luck as he continue to serve our district as Superintendent of Schools.

Ms. O'Hagan asked if the trustees had any questions regarding Items B-L below. There were none and Ms. O'Hagan asked for a motion to approve Items below.

Upon motion made by Mr. Kilgus, seconded by Mr. DeMatteo, all in favor AYE, opposed: NONE; abstained: NONE; the motion was unanimously passed, and the following Items B- L were approved on a consent agenda

- B. Approve the following resolution:

The Board of Education accepts and approves the Board Resolution (attached hereto) setting forth the results of the May 17, 2022, Annual District Election.

- C. Approve the Student Accident Coverage Agreement between East Rockaway UFSD and Pupil Benefits Plan, Inc. for the 2022-2023 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.

- D. Approve the following resolution:

BE IT RESOLVED that upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, the President of the Board of Education is authorized to establish “*The Harry Friesleben Memorial Scholarship Award*” to be awarded to a varsity basketball player whose enthusiasm, dedication, and love of the game motivated and inspired his/her teammates, in the amount of \$500.

E. Approve the following resolution:

BE IT RESOLVED that upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, the President of the Board of Education is authorized to establish the “*The Harry Friesleben Memorial Basketball Scholarship Award*” to be awarded to a varsity basketball player who meets the criteria above in the amount of \$250.

F. Approve the following resolution:

BE IT RESOLVED that upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, the President of the Board of Education is authorized to establish “*The Club Rock/Cilluffo Family Scholarship*” to be awarded to a senior athlete who meets the criteria in the amount of \$250.

G. Approve the AVID College Readiness System Products and Services Agreement, which consists of the 2022-2023 Quote/Order, for the East Rockaway School District for the period July 1, 2022, to June 30, 2023, and authorize the President of the Board of Education to execute the agreement on behalf of the East Rockaway Board of Education.

H. Approve the Memorandum of Understanding between the East Rockaway School District and Nassau Community College and authorize the President of the Board of Education to execute the agreement on behalf of the East Rockaway Board of Education.

I. Approve the Summer School Contract (2022) with Nassau BOCES for East Rockaway students for the period July 1, 2022, through on or about August 31, 2022, and authorize the President of the Board of Education to execute the contract on behalf of the East Rockaway Board of Education.

J. Approve the Tuition agreement with Anderson Center for Autism, for special education services for one student, Student I.D. No. 180008082 for the 2022-2023 school year and authorize the President of the Board of Education to execute the tuition agreement on behalf of the East Rockaway Board of Education.

K. Accept the following donations to fund scholarships:

1. A grant in the sum of \$5,000 from The Richard R. Ong and Heidi Lem Ong Charitable Fund to fund scholarships for the Valedictorian and Salutatorian
2. From Linda Bonziglia, a check in the sum of \$50 for the Cheryl Drugan Award

L. Approve the following donation(s):

1. From the Centre Avenue PTA, a curriculum enhancement grant in the sum of \$537.75
2. From Chris Jarmuz, Class of 1976, for two L-Screens for the East Rockaway Baseball Program
3. From Club Rock, \$100.00 for the East Rockaway Varsity Track Program

8. Approval of CSE and CPSE Recommendations

Ms. O'Hagan asked if the trustees had any questions regarding the CSE and CPSE Recommendations. There were no questions. Ms. O'Hagan then asked for a motion to approve the CSE and CPSE Recommendations.

Upon motion made by Mr. McNally, seconded by Mr. Vulpis, and unanimously passed, the CSE and CPSE Recommendations were approved.

9. Budget Transfers

Ms. O'Hagan asked if the trustees had any questions regarding the following budget transfers. There were no questions.

Ms. O'Hagan then asked for a motion to approve the budget transfers. Upon motion made by Mr. Vulpis, seconded by Mr. 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 transfer:

1. Transaction No. 22-019
2. Transaction No. 22-020
3. Transaction No. 22-021
4. Transaction No. 22-022
5. Transaction No. 22-023
6. Transaction No. 22-024

10. Policy Matters –

A. Policy Subcommittee Report: Mr. McNally stated that the committee met on May 5th and reviewed 5 policies that will be up for adoption in June. Tonight, we have one policy up for adoption. The next meeting of the policy committee is to be determined. We will continue to review the 15 policies listed on tonight's agenda.

B. For Adoption

Ms. O'Hagan asked if the trustees had any questions regarding the policy below

for adoption. There were none and Ms. O'Hagan asked for a motion to approve the policy below.

Upon motion made by Mr. McNally, seconded by Mr. Vulpis, all in favor AYE, opposed: NONE; abstained: NONE; the motion was unanimously passed, and the policy listed in B-1 was unanimously approved for adoption.

1. 1050, Annual District Election and Budget Vote: Language has been added to this policy stating that copies of the budget to be voted on will be posted on the district's internet website. While this has been a common practice of our district, it was recommended to be added to the policy. Additionally, the guidelines for petitions have been updated to reflect the number of signatures required.

C. For Review

1. 1400, Public Complaints
2. 1405, Complaints about Certain Federally-Funded Programs
3. 1420, Complaints About Curricula or Instructional Materials
4. 2160, School District Officer and Employee Code of Ethics
5. 2330, Executive Sessions
6. 4810, Teaching About Controversial Issues
7. 5300, Code of Conduct
8. 6680, Internal Audit Function
9. 6700, Purchasing
- 10.8110, School Building Safety
- 11.8112, Health and Safety Committee
- 12.8220, Buildings and Grounds Maintenance and Inspection
- 13.8635-E, Parents Bill of Rights for Student Data Privacy and Security
- 14.9630, Sexual Misconduct
- 15.9150, Non-Fraternization "New"

11. Reports

A. Superintendent's Report

Congratulations to Mr. DeTommaso for his new appointment as our next Superintendent. It has been a pleasure working with you this year. I wish you a very long and successful career as a Superintendent. I look forward to support you in a successful transition.

Thank you, to the community for supporting our budget. The budget passed with a tax levy increase of .93% even though our allowable tax levy increase was 3.81%. Thank you to Ms. Scerio for her hard work. Propositions #1, #2 and #3 passed however, Proposition #4 seeking to reduce the transportation boundaries to one mile for students in grade K-8 failed. Congratulations to Mr. McNally on his re-election and on Mr. Michael Motherway on his election to the Board of Education.

Strategic Plan

The Strategic Planning process is moving along. Our next meeting is scheduled for June 1. Most of our subcommittees have begun to develop goals and objectives for their goal areas. We will most likely need to schedule one last meeting in late June. We hope to have a draft plan by the end of June.

Formation of Committee *Building Bridges of Understanding*

As previously discussed, we will be forming a Committee to Address Diversity, Equity and Inclusivity in our district. The committee, Building Bridges to Understanding, will hold its first meeting on June 27 from 6-8 PM and will run next year with approximately 7 additional meetings. We have contracted with consultant Rodney Brown to facilitate our committee. Mr. Brown is an experienced consultant, professor and with vast experience in the areas of DEI. The charge of the committee will evolve as they move forward next year:

The initial purpose of the committee is to Build Bridges in our school community to create a safe atmosphere of collaboration, belonging and dignity that inspires us to gain knowledge and understanding that will enable positive behavior and acceptance in our school community.

The committee will serve as a safe space to engage in collaboration and problem solving to address diversity, equity and inclusivity issues that arise in our school community.

As the committee moves forward, the charge may evolve. We will expect individuals to be committed to this work by being present at all meetings. All committee members will engage in training provided by Mr. Brown. We are seeking parents, community members, faculty, staff and students to serve on this committee. A call for volunteers will go out shortly. We are seeking varied perspectives and representation from our school community.

Reunification Drill

We have scheduled a reunification drill for June 22nd. We have been working closely with Altaris, our Security Consultants, to plan for this important drill. We are seeking parent volunteers who will serve to help us with the drill. The idea is for the district to simulate an emergency where students would need to be released to their families after an emergency evacuation event.

Achievement

Rhame Avenue 6th grade students presented their independent scientific investigations to our families at the annual STEM Fair. Out of 2400 entries from all over, Centre Avenue 4th Graders from Mrs. Miolan's class won Grand Champion in their division for their Class Anthology in Walt Whitman Birthplace

Associations' 36th Annual Student Poetry Contest. Also, two 4th grade students, Mia Maxwell and Francine Manzano received honorable mention for their individual poems. All poems required a focus on renewal.

On May 11th, over 180 students were recognized at the Jr/Sr High School's Academic Awards Ceremony. Students earned honors and recognition in scholarship, academic achievement, and service to the school and community. Awards season continued on May 12th, as WE ROCK awards were given to nearly 120 ERHS students. WE ROCK Awards are given out to students twice a year that exhibit the traits of Wisdom, Empathy, Respect, Optimism, Compassion, and Kindness.

The following teams earned NYSPHSAA Scholar Athlete Teams: Girls Lacrosse 94.35, Boys Track 90.90, Girls Track 94.80, Softball 92.65, Badminton 91.19 and Unified Basketball 91.06. Fifty student-athletes earned Scholar Athletes! Girls Softball has made it to the Playoffs.

The ERHS Instructional Cabinet has met three times over the last month to assess the aligned pedagogical strategies across departments at the high school. Based on feedback from departments and committee members, specific instructional goals will be created for next school year, including the integration of AVID collaborative discussion protocols.

AP Testing ran from May 9th-May 19th. 117 students participated in testing. We will submit 220 exams in Language and Composition, Literature and Composition, United States History, Government and Politics, Calculus, Biology, Environmental Science, Physics, Italian, Spanish, and Studio Art.

Congratulations to Natalie Hayes, Isabella Schaefer, Mimi Bilardello, Grace Del Valle and Sofia Valdebenito on their sweeping 1st, 2nd & 3rd place in this year's Congressional Art Competition. This is the 4th time East Rockaway Students have won 1st place in this competition. Natalie Hayes' first place entry will be on display in the Capitol Building in Washing D.C., for a full year.

Congratulations to Natalie Hayes on receiving a Gold Medal for her painting, "you're the missing piece" in this year's Scholastic Art & Writing Awards, National level. Established in 1923 and presented by the Young Artists & Writers, these awards are the nations' largest and longest-running, most prestigious visual and literary art program for students in grades 7-12.

Opportunity

Rhame and Centre Avenue students showcased their musical talents in our first Spring Concert in two years. Band, Orchestra and Chorus students, in grades 3 – 6, provided spectacular performances.

All seniors registered to vote in local and national elections during their 12th grade Social Studies classes. Students who were 18 by the BOE budget vote also registered with the school district to vote on May 17th.

On April 28th, the School Counseling Department hosted close to 20 representatives from a variety of fields. Industries represented include military, trade schools, certificate programs at community colleges, as well as others. The professionals who visited East Rockaway engaged with all grade levels. Several representatives indicated that the students asked great questions and that they would like to participate in similar events in the future. Opportunities discussed included summer employment, internships, and post-secondary positions. Our seventh through tenth graders were guided with questions in the form of a scavenger hunt.

On 5/13 and 5/20 East Rockaway Jr./Sr. high school EMT students visited the VEEB EMS training center in Plainview where they participated in training to earn CPR and AED certification.

On Wednesday, May 4th, our junior class was invited to attend the College Prep Day at Citi Field. A presentation was offered to students from all over the surrounding areas to help prepare for the college admissions process, learn about SAT/ACT testing, and provide other helpful information to students beginning their post-secondary planning. Students were able to enjoy video spots featuring Mets players describing their college experiences. After the presentation, students were able to attend a college fair in the stadium and talk to representatives from all over the country. The day concluded with watching the NY Mets play the Atlanta Braves. It was an educational and fun experience for all.

The Music Department hosted this year's regional NYSSMA festival at ERHS. Students in grades 4-12 participated by performing solos and small ensembles for adjudication. Many students also volunteered to assist with the running of the event. Both the performers and volunteers received accolades from NYSSMA administration, adjudicators, and parents. They all represented the ERSD proudly.

Innovation

Rhame's 3rd and 4th grade students are learning about the elements that compromise Animation shorts and movies in STEAM. Rhame's 5th grade students presented the unique products they created to market and "sell" for Entrepreneur Day. Students created bunces to market their products, business cards with QR codes for advertising, and sold their actual products to parents and staff. Students generated a little over \$4,000 in mock sales.

Students in Ms. Olsen's Middle School Technology classes are learning to use WeVideo software. They are combining still images with sound to create whole video projects.

In Ms. Olsen's Multimedia Technology class, students are learning how to use Adobe Pro video editing software to create their own version of music videos to various pop songs.

Connection

Rhame Avenue promoted reading by hosting a Book Bingo Night for all families. Bingo winners were able to select books of their choice as well as donated gift baskets. All students in attendance received free books at the close of the event. Centre Avenue 4th graders, Hannah Mollo and Kennedy Meltzer, met with Deana Michielini from Aramark to discuss ways we can enhance Centre Avenue's breakfast and lunch menus. Next year Hannah and Kennedy will chair the Food Service Committee with Mrs. Kelly and Aramark. This committee will include representatives from all grades. A special thank you to Assistant Superintendent Scio for arranging our meeting.

The Poetry Madness competition took place during the end of April and early May. Congrats to the winners! The theme was Allusions. The winners were: 1st Place, a tie: Leslie Madera and Madeleine Prucha. 2nd Place: Isabelle Anderson. 3rd Place: Nolan Annarelli. Middle School winners were: Andrew Chen, Sofia Ferkov, Gavin Gulane, Jenna Mateo, and Victoria Schafer.

On Tuesday, May 17th, members of the ERHS Dignity Club met with staff from the Cultural Competency Task Force. The purpose of this meeting was to get input from students about how a more inclusive environment can be fostered. Students were divided into groups and asked a specific question about what they would like to see in our school moving forward. Topics included how we can help all students feel that their identity is affirmed, what schoolwide norms should be established, and how can we physically represent diversity throughout our building. The feedback will be used to create a plan for various activities next year.

The Art Department hosted the annual District-wide Art show on May 17th. The show included artwork in students K-12/AP. Congratulations to Mrs. Brody, Mrs. Cabasso and Mrs. Galante, and their students on such a prolific display.

The Music Department had its first in-person concert on May 17th. The elementary Band, Chorus and Orchestra performed for a packed house. This was the first in-person concert since December of 2019. Thank you to all who attended.

12. Public Comments

Please be reminded that the meeting is livestreamed and being recorded. I encourage residents to contact the board at boardofeducation@ersd.org and to contact your child's teacher or appropriate administrator with any concerns. We believe it is crucial for us to hear from the community members about their concerns and issues. Please note that the board is here to listen public comments and is not designed to be a discussion accordingly please do not expect the board to respond to your concerns and questions tonight, this is because we take the concerns and questions seriously want to have sufficient time to process and research issues if needed. We will however respond to your questions and concerns at future meetings or have the proper staff member get back to you at a specific time. Each individual is entitled to 3 minutes and the individual time limits will be enforced so that many members of the public who wish to speak, may do so.

Ms. O'Hagan stated that as a Board they have heard the community concerns and like Superintendent Ruiz stated, it is now time to build those bridges by creating a committee and they will be meeting in June. I think it is the first step so we can listen to these issues and work on coming up with solutions and this will be the new form to share those issues and work together to come up with solutions.

At this time if you have a comment, please complete the form completely prior to speaking.

Keith Gamache, East Rockaway resident: Read his statement thanking the board for establishing a District Committee to address the concerns regarding racism issues, expressed during March and April's regular Board meetings. He also requested the board to provide a copy of the notes taken by a board member. He is requesting as per Open meeting laws, to provide more detailed information and an explanation of the reasons why the Board entered into Executive Session for the period between March 22nd regular meeting and the May 10th work session.

Michelle Gamache, East Rockaway resident: Read her comments in regards of a specific question asked to one of the nominated candidates running for the board during Meet the Candidates night event. She expressed her discontent and how past events caused her to lose trust on this board and reinstated her question on how to re-establish trust for community members that did not vote for new elected trustees.

Randi O'Moore, East Rockaway resident: Read her comments and congratulated Mr. DeTommaso for his appointment as the new Superintendent of schools and personally thanked Superintendent Ruiz for all the dedication and hard work while serving as a superintendent and specially for raising the academic bar programs in the district which personally helped her child achieving his academic studies at BOCES's Barry Tech program. She also thanked Mrs. O'Hagan for serving and volunteering as a trustee and president of the Board.

Jennifer Racanelli Cuthbert, East Rockaway resident: Congratulated Mr. DeTommaso on his new appointment and gave a wholehearted thank you to Superintendent Ruiz for her service these past nine years. She commented that after Meet the Candidates night she had the chance to see the responses of the candidates regarding a question of "Critical Race Theory" known as CRT and expressed concerns about their opinions regarding the possibility of teaching critical race theory "CRT" in our schools in the future. She stated that CRT is not based on fiction but

rather on factual events that have transpired over the past two and half centuries. As a current parent of a student, she is concerned considering the past events and wishes a new start for the next school year where real solutions take place in protecting the safety, progress and unity of all children in the community.

Daniel Carracciolo, East Rockaway resident: Expressed his opinions in regards of the topic of Race Critical Theory "RCT". He believes that the board should take more time and effort to consider this teaching.

Mrs. O'Hagan made a statement: Thank you to the community for supporting the school budget and propositions, congratulations to Mr. McNally on his re-election and Mike Motherway for being elected to serve our district as trustees for the next three years. I would also like to recognize and thank Ms. Scio for all her hard work throughout the budget process. Congratulations to all the staff members who received tenure this evening. This is an exciting milestone in your career, and I wish you continued successes in your positions. Congratulations to Natalie Hayes and to all the winners of the Poetry Madness competition. I am in awe of the creativity and talent inspired by this event, and I would be remiss if I did not recognize the AP Art students whose work was showcased in the gym during the budget vote. The stories behind the art were beyond powerful and the works created were riveting. I have to commend the district because you are truly moving beyond the classroom allowing the students to hone their talents and discover their passions. To me, that is the best education anyone could ever ask for. Thank you, ERTA, for donating the Little Library. It has been said that "a child who reads will be an adult who thinks". This addition is one more step to cultivating a continued love for books among our young community members. Good luck to our girls Varsity Softball team as you move onto the B-Finals this weekend.

Lastly, I would like to reiterate regarding CRT, which is not a public-school program because school districts are driven by the standards of curriculum from NYS and this is not part of the curriculum; however, this doesn't mean that topics of race are not discussed within the classroom and within history lessons.

Aniyah Osouna, East Rockaway student: She read her statement thanking the Board and thanking the administrators for their time and effort to meet with her and her parents and their sincerely apology for what happened in regards of her report at the last April's Board meeting. She expressed that speaking out is valuable which can help other students and can help to prevent further conflicts.

Dineen Cilluffo, East Rockaway resident: She read her comments, thanking the Board and Ms. Scio for keeping a low budget. Thanked students for their strength to report issues to the board and community. She pointed out what the community can and have accomplished when they put conflicts and differences aside. She urged the community to move forward and to be more inclusive, volunteer and get involved.

Frank Passanisi, East Rockaway resident: Congratulated Mr. DeTommaso for his new appointment as Superintendent and thanked Superintendent Ruiz for her time and wished her a happy retirement. He also thanked the Board for volunteering their time and continuing to do a great job. He spoke about his role as a volunteer fireman for 32 years and how important it is for the community to step up and be involved. He congratulated Mr. McNally on his re-election and suggested opening the field for the softball to congratulate students.

13. Board Member Comments

Mr. DeMatteo: Gave a quote by Martin Luther King Jr. “Love is the only force capable of transforming an enemy into a friend”, you’ll catch more flies with honey.

Mr. Kilgus: Gave his opinion in regards of the latest issues faced by the community and reiterated that the Board is here to help and support. He urged the community to stop malicious comments and to make a bridge to close the gap. He stated that are currently working on a committee “Building Bridges to Understanding” and this is what we are here to do.

Mr. McNally: Commented on the past meet the candidate’s night event and reinstated that he is open for feedback and conversations with community members who wish to speak on issues, he stated that we all have different opinions, but they must be addressed respectfully and with kindness and to come and work together.

14. Upon motion made by Mr. McNally and seconded by Mr. Kilgus, and passed unanimously, the public meeting was adjourned at 9:10 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Nereyda Amaya Moran
District Clerk.