

EAST ROCKAWAY UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT
East Rockaway, New York
Meeting of the Board of Education
7:00 P.M., October 21, 2020
East Rockaway Jr./Sr. High School Auditorium
Preceded by a Salute to the Board of Education,
Recognition of Tenure Candidates and a Public Forum
Meeting Open to 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 7:04 p.m. in the auditorium of the East Rockaway Jr./Sr. High School.
2. Kristen O'Hagan introduced Ryan Kahlau, a sixth-grade student at Rhame Avenue School, who led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Ms. Ruiz welcomed everyone back to the auditorium for tonight's meeting and thanked everyone for coming out. It is our annual tradition that we celebrate the Board of Education as part of the NYSSBA's School Board Recognition Week which is October 19-23, 2020. This year's theme, which was the same as last year is "School Boards Lead So Students Can Achieve." Ms. Ruiz, on behalf of the East Rockaway community expressed her thanks for the continuous hard work of the Board. She also thanked their spouses and families for supporting the work of our trustees.

Ms. Ruiz then introduced Dr. Ayesha McArthur, principal of Rhame Avenue School who will be hosting this evening's board recognition. Dr. McArthur spoke on behalf of the Board of Education and thanked them for all they do for the students. A video was shown where students in different grades were expressing their thanks to the board of education. Certificates and items of appreciation were presented to the Board and a photo was taken. Ms. Ruiz thanked Dr. McArthur, the Rhame Avenue PTA, students, and staff for tonight's presentation.

Ms. Ruiz stated that although the next presentation usually takes place in the Spring, due to the hiring schedule and leaves, tenure dates change. This evening she is happy to recommend two teachers to the Board of Education for tenure and wished them a long and successful career in

the District.

She introduced Dr. Ayesha McArthur who spoke on behalf of Caroline Drummy, kindergarten teacher at Rhame Avenue School. Dr. McArthur stated that it is her honor to recommend her tenure to the Superintendent and Board of Education.

Ms. Ruiz then introduced Mr. Richard Schaffer, principal of the East Rockaway Jr./Sr. High School who spoke on behalf of tenure candidate Thomas Canale, English teacher at the East Rockaway Jr./Sr. High School. Mr. Schaffer, without hesitation recommended Mr. Canale for tenure to the Superintendent and Board of Education.

At 7:35 p.m. the presentations concluded. The Board continued with the public portion of the agenda.

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 did receive two requests for public comment.

Mr. Richard Schaffer, on behalf of the East Rockaway Administrators' Association, thanked the Board of Education for their inspiring leadership and read a prepared thank you letter.

Ms. Gail Beyrer, president of the East Rockaway Teachers' Association also read a prepared statement thanking the Board of Education for all the hard work they do as unpaid volunteers for the school community.

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. September 15, 2020, Meeting of the Board of Education

5. Acknowledgment of Monthly Reports and Correspondence

A. Receipt of Monthly Financial Reports – August 2020

B. Correspondence – (2)

Mr. Vulpis acknowledged receipt of the financial reports and two items of correspondence. He read one item of correspondence which was from Gail Beyrer, ERTA President acknowledging and thanking the board.

6. Recommendations of the Superintendent of Schools

Mr. Vulpis asked if the trustees had any questions regarding Items A and B below. There were no questions. Mr. Vulpis then asked for a motion to approve Items A and B.

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 and B were approved on a consent agenda.

- A. Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, accept, with regret, the resignation of Gus Baco, for the purpose of retirement, from his science teacher position, effective, January 6, 2021.
- B. Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, accept the following resignations:
 - 1. Kristina Bruzzo, substitute monitor, effective October 21, 2020
 - 2. Gus Baco, badminton coach, effective October 2, 2020
 - 3. Lorraine Troici, junior varsity cheerleading coach, effective October 1, 2020
 - 4. Jillian Cascio, per diem substitute teacher, effective September 18, 2020

Mr. Vulpis asked if the trustees had any questions regarding Item C below. There were no questions. Mr. Vulpis then asked for a motion to approve Item C.

Upon motion made by Peter McNally, seconded by Daniel DeMatteo, all in favor AYE, opposed: NONE; abstained: NONE; the motion was unanimously passed, and the following Item C was unanimously approved.

- C. Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, grant tenure to Caroline Drummy, elementary teacher, effective October 6, 2020, upon continued satisfactory evaluation.

Mr. Vulpis asked if the trustees had any questions regarding Item D below. There were no questions. Mr. Vulpis then asked for a motion to approve Item D.

Upon motion made by Kristen O'Hagan, seconded by Joseph Kilgus, all in favor AYE, opposed: NONE; abstained: NONE; the motion was unanimously passed, and the following Item D was unanimously approved.

- D. Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, grant tenure to Thomas Canale, English Teacher, effective October 30, 2020, upon continued satisfactory evaluation.

Mr. Vulpis asked if the trustees had any questions regarding Items E-R below. There were no questions. Mr. Vulpis then asked for a motion to approve Items E-R.

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 6 E-R were approved on a consent agenda.

- E. Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve a change to the leave of absence requested by Heather Figliozzi to be effective September 25, 2020 through December 11, 2020.
- F. Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the request of Donna Smith for a leave of absence for personal medical reasons effective October 9, 2020, through November 25, 2020.
- G. Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the request of Frank Cuttitta for a leave of absence for personal medical reasons effective October 9, 2020, through November 2, 2020.
- H. Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the request of Alexandra Pietrantonio for a FMLA leave of absence from her probationary science teacher position, effective November 30, 2020, through February 12, 2021.
- I. Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the request of Brianna Ostrander for a FMLA leave of absence from her probationary special education teacher position, effective November 14, 2020, through February 5, 2021.
- J. Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the request of Marissa Diamond for a 12-week FMLA leave of absence from her elementary teacher position, effective November 30, 2020, through February 19, 2021.
- K. Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the appointment of Celeste Magluilo to the position of short-term substitute elementary teacher, effective November 30, 2020, through February 19, 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.
- L. Approve the ERHS Club Advisor assignments for the 2020-2021 school year as more fully set forth on the schedule of club/advisor assignments at the stipend salaries established by the

East Rockaway Teachers Association contract for the 2020-2021 school year and authorize the President of the Board of Education to execute the charters.

- M. Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the winter sports coaching schedule dated October 21, 2020.
- N. Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the appointment of Christopher Russo to the position of short-term substitute music teacher, effective September 24, 2020, through December 4, 2020, 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.
- O. Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the appointment of Lauren Radburn to the position of short-term substitute elementary teacher, effective October 5, 2020, through December 11 2020, 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.
- P. Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the appointment of Kristina Bruzzo to the position of School Monitor, Part-Time, effective October 22, 2020, at the prorated Step 1 annual salary established by the East Rockaway UFSD Monitor and Security Unit and the United Public Service Employees Union agreement for the 2020-2021 school year.
- Q. Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, rescind the appointment of:
 - 1. Stefano A. Cilluffo, substitute cleaner, approved at the September 15, 2020, Board of Education meeting
- R. 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. Mary Ann McDonnell, substitute monitor, effective October 22, 2020
 - 2. Kathleen Clemens, substitute monitor, effective October 22, 2020
 - 3. Patricia Pignataro, substitute nurse, effective October 22, 2020
 - 4. Alexis Freudenberg, per diem substitute teacher, effective October 9, 2020
 - 5. Justin McGowan, home tutor, effective October 1, 2020

7. Other Items

Mr. Vulpis asked if the trustees had any questions regarding Item A below. There were no questions. Mr. Vulpis then asked for a motion to approve Item A.

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

Item A was unanimously approved.

A. Approve the following resolution:

WHEREAS, the East Rockaway Union Free School District is required to adopt a Citizen Participation Plan, as a recipient of federal funds in connection with the Living with the Bay Project administered through the Governor's Office of Storm Recovery, in order to meet the citizen participation requirements of Section 508 of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, as amended, and the program policies of the New York State Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) Program; and

WHEREAS, the East Rockaway Union Free School District is committed through adoption of this plan to the full involvement of all residents of the community in the composition, implementation, and assessment of its CDBG-DR Program; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Board of Education of the East Rockaway Union Free School District hereby approves and adopts the Citizen Participation Plan.

Mr. Vulpis asked if the trustees had any questions regarding Items B - E below. There were no questions. Mr. Vulpis then asked for a motion to approve Items B – E.

Upon motion made by Peter McNally, seconded by Daniel DeMatteo, all in favor AYE, opposed: NONE; abstained: NONE; the motion was unanimously passed, and the following Items 7 B - E were approved on a consent agenda.

B. Approve the two-year District Plan of Services for Special Education for the East Rockaway School District which outlines the district's comprehensive strategy to address the needs of students with disabilities throughout the district.

C. Approve the following resolution:

BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Education accepts the financial audit and corrective action plan prepared by Nawrocki Smith, LLP, for the year ended June 30, 2020.

D. Approve the Agreement between the East Rockaway UFSD and Heartland School Solutions for 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.

E. Approve the following resolution:

RESOLVED, By the Board of Education of the East Rockaway UFSD that *Retention and Disposition Schedule for New York Local Government Records (LGS-1)*, issued pursuant to Article 57-A of the Arts and Cultural Affairs Law, and containing legal minimum retention periods for local government records, is hereby adopted for use by all officers in legally disposing of valueless records listed therein.

FURTHER RESOLVED, that in accordance with Article 57-A:

1. only those records will be disposed of that are described in *Retention and Disposition Schedule for New York Local Government Records (LGS-1)*, after they have met the minimum retention periods described therein;
2. only those records will be disposed of that do not have sufficient administrative, fiscal, legal, or historical value to merit retention beyond established legal minimum periods.

Mr. Vulpis asked if the trustees had any questions regarding Items F - M below. There were no questions. Mr. Vulpis then asked for a motion to approve Items F - M.

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 F - M were approved on a consent agenda.

- F. Approve the Lease Agreement between the East Rockaway UFSD and Pitney Bowes for a term of five years and authorize the Assistant Superintendent for Finance & Operations to execute the agreement on behalf of the East Rockaway Board of Education.
- G. Approve the Ambulette Transportation Provider Agreement between the East Rockaway UFSD and Lee Way Transportation, Inc., d/b/a Choice Medical Transport dated September 23, 2020, and authorize the Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Operations to execute the resulting contract on behalf of the East Rockaway Board of Education.
- H. Approve the admission of the following students to attend the East Rockaway Public Schools for the Special Education Summer 2020 Program and authorize the President of the Board of Education to execute the tuition agreements between the Board of Education of East Rockaway UFSD and the Board of Education of the sending school districts.
 1. Valley Stream Central High School District, Student No. 939971889
 2. Valley Stream Central High School District, Student No. 939971890
 3. Valley Stream Central High School District, Student No. 939971784
- I. Approve the admission of the following students to attend the East Rockaway Public

Schools for the 2020-2021 school year and authorize the President of the Board of Education to execute the tuition agreements between the Board of Education of East Rockaway UFSD and the Board of Education of the sending school district:

1. Valley Stream Central High School District, Student No. 939971889
2. Valley Stream Central High School District, Student No. 939971890
3. Valley Stream Central High School District, Student No. 939971784

J. Approve the members of the Professional Development Team pursuant to policy 9700, Staff Development:

Mona Hecht, Co-Chairperson	Vincent Healy
William Gibbons, Co-Chairperson	Bradley Krauz
Lee Araoz	Dr. Ayesha McArthur
Janna Bonacorsi	Pam Murano
Calia Kelly	Robert Kennedy
Melinda Best	Toni Ann Donald
Caitlin Castellano	

K. Approve the 2020-2021 Professional Development Plan for continual support and professional learning opportunities for East Rockaway School District faculty and staff.

L. Declare obsolete for the purpose of disposal and/or recycling, the items listed on the Textbook Removal Form dated September 25, 2020.

M. Accept the following donations:

1. From The Wendy's Company, 100 breakfast meals for the East Rockaway Jr./Sr. High School staff, valued at \$700
2. From the Mancusi family, lunch for the East Rockaway Jr./Sr. High School staff, valued at \$1,200

8. 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 there were any questions regarding the following budget transfer. There were no questions and he asked for a motion to approve the following budget transfer.

Upon motion made by Joseph Kilgus, seconded by Kristen O’Hagan, 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. 21-0007

10. Policy Matters

A. Policy Subcommittee Report

Mrs. O’Hagan reported that there are no policies up for adoption this evening. The next scheduled Policy Sub-Committee meeting is scheduled for tomorrow, October 22, 2020, at 3:30 pm. We will continue to review the policies listed in Item C (For Review) below.

B. For Adoption – None

C. For Review

1. 4531, Field Trip and Excursions
2. 8121.1-R, Opioid Overdose Prevention Regulation
3. 9150, Non-Fraternization “New”
4. 6705, Federal Funds Purchasing

11. Reports

A. Superintendent’s Report

Update on our Instructional Plan

This is the seventh week of school and we are very pleased overall with how things are going. Aside from the one case of Covid-19 identified in September, we have been doing well. We were proud of how seamlessly our teachers and administration transitioned to remote learning. We have not had any cases aside from fringe cases that do not directly affect our school community at this time. We are continuing to monitor our neighboring districts and pretty much daily there are reports of one or two schools closing for a day or more for a staff or student case. There are also some Districts including BOCES that have closed for longer periods of time. The contact tracing process is generally what guides how long school districts might need to stay closed based on how many people the infected individual came in contact with.

Once again I would like to acknowledge and thank our faculty, administrators and staff who are working diligently and creatively to support our students and provide as much of a normal school environment as possible during these challenges. Tomorrow we will be pushing out a survey to faculty to gauge how our instructional models are going from their

perspective and next week we will be sending out a survey to families to gather information as well. I would like to turn it over to Mrs. Hecht who will provide further details.

Mrs. Hecht provided the following report:

Instruction Plan Update

Our schools have now been up and running for seven weeks. In many ways, we are settling into this very different school year while there are other aspects to this school year that continue to be challenging. As you know, we have students who attend school onsite daily, we have many students who attend school in a hybrid model which includes both onsite and remote learning, and we have a number of students who participate in school through a fully remote learning model. Planning for, and delivering instruction, in these different models is a unique challenge that we were never supposed to have to do in a K-12 school setting – but we are doing it.

Our students have been wonderful with the new safety measures and they consistently wear masks, maintain social distancing when possible and follow the guidelines that are in place for the safety of all members of our school community.

The faculty has taken on this challenging year with determination to ensure that learning is moving forward and with creativity to work around the requirements that prevent us from providing instruction as we did prior to the pandemic. This creativity is seen each day as remote learners at home are greeted on screen by teachers in the classroom and lessons are planned to have students engage and collaborate although they are not working together physically like they would have done in the past.

None of this is easy. Planning for this instruction takes time and creative thought. Delivering this instruction takes energy, it takes patience with oneself and others (and with technology – which can have its own ideas of when it wants to work), and all of this is a work in progress. Nobody expects it to look great all day every day but we appreciate the effort that goes into it and we are grateful for the East Rockaway School community – for the families who are doing this with us and for the faculty and staff who are determined to make this happen. We were never supposed to be teaching like this. But we are doing it. We are also looking forward to our next steps and what may be possible in the future.

I will be reconvening the Instruction Committee in the near future. This is the committee that worked hard this summer to review guidance from the health department, the CDC and the NYS education department, and we created the plan for this year's instructional program. This committee will get together to review our current systems at the different grade levels and we will also review the feedback we receive from families from a survey that is being shared so we can know how families feel about moving into the next phases of reopening that may be possible in the future.

We continue to evaluate how we are serving our students, we continue to develop our system for onsite, hybrid and fully remote learning, and we continue to make this very challenging and unique experience as positive as it can be for our students each day.

Mandatory COVID-19 Testing in Yellow Zones

New York State has implemented a Cluster Action Initiative. The initiative is composed of three zones, red, orange, and yellow, to address COVID-19 hot spots or micro clusters. The red zone is the cluster itself the orange zone is a warning zone, and the yellow zone is precautionary. In both red and orange zones, schools will be closed and move to full remote instruction. The NYS Department of Health has determined that schools open to in-person instruction in yellow zones are required to test 20% of in-person students, teachers and staff, at least once a week starting Friday October 16, 2020, for as long as the school remains in a designated yellow zone. The guidance advises that schools, in a yellow zone, should contact their Local Health Departments, and other local health care partners to establish partnerships and make arrangements for deployment of these tests in their school setting to facilitate the required testing of students, teachers, and staff attending in-person.

As you may be aware, the Lawrence School District was closed for two weeks as areas were identified as yellow, orange, and red zones. Since they were closed, they did not conduct testing, but the County did open two testing sites free of charge in the Five Towns area for this purpose. We have not been designated in any zone at this time, but we do want to be prepared in the event that we do, and we will be exploring this further. We had an update from the Commissioner of the Nassau County Department of Health today at my superintendent's meeting. As you are aware the transmissions level in our area continues to be low and we are pleased about that. New York State is 49/51 states/territories in the country with an overall 1.16 positivity percentage.

Living with the Bay Update

The LWTB project is finally moving forward and we have a tentative start date of November 1, 2020, for the bulkhead construction. The full-service generator and parking lot construction will follow in the spring and summer. At next month's board of education meeting the LWTB team from the Governor's Office of Storm Recovery will present details on these three projects. As long as the bulkhead project proceeds according to schedule, we will begin the bond work for the athletic field construction in March. I will provide an update on the progress of the bond work a bit later in my report.

Achievement

Extra help has begun in all three schools. Please consult the buildings for the schedules.

Centre and Rhame teachers received training to support the implementation of the new reading program, *Wonders*. They followed up in grade level meetings to discuss the grows and glows of the implementation thus far.

The district is proud to congratulate Junior-Senior High School students who have earned

the distinction of Advanced Placement Scholars. These students are recognized for their successful performance on the 2020 AP exams. With 16 students earning the distinction of AP Scholar, four students earned the distinction of AP Scholar with Honor and four students earned the distinction of AP Scholar with Distinction. We will honor these students at the December Board of Education Meeting.

Congratulations to seniors Sofia Bertolotti and Daniella Pedi, and junior Gianna Mancusi for having their artwork accepted into the Huntington Art Council's juried exhibit, "Nightmare on Main Street." Their artwork will be on display from October 16 to November 5, 2020 in Huntington.

Congratulations to our four NYSSMA All-State participants:

- ✓ Gabriella Baccari
- ✓ Sofia Bertolotti
- ✓ Grace McNally
- ✓ Emma Pollackov

Opportunity

Centre and Rhame students celebrated Unity Day, on Wednesday, with all students wearing orange. Students also completed an online pledge committing to be inclusive of others. Kindergarten students in both schools started a new bullying prevention program, "Caring Kids," which uses puppets to teach students how to be a good friend.

Students and staff have access to the virtual East Rockaway High School *Social Work Calm Down & Wellness Rooms* which can be accessed online through Instagram or the East Rockaway Wellness and Support Google Classroom.

Students in social studies and English classes participated in weekly anti-bullying lessons in coordination with October as National Bullying Prevention Month. Anti-bullying messages have been featured all month on the morning announcements and over 200 East Rockaway high school students have signed a virtual pledge to create a world without bullying through kindness, acceptance, and inclusion.

Every senior will meet with their guidance counselor over the coming three weeks to ensure that their college essay is appropriate for the college application process. This starts on October 5, 2020 and corresponds with the Senior College Planning Night and is coordinated through students' English classes.

October 14, 2020 was PSAT Day at the high school. Eighty-two students in Grade 10, and 85 students in Grade 11 took the exam. This included 27 of our full remote students. Counselors visited classrooms on October 8, 2020 to educate students about the PSAT format, strategies, and preparation tips. Teachers in English and math classes took class time to review relevant content and skills.

On October 15, 2020, the school counselors presented at the PTA meeting to 8th and 9th grade families on graduation requirements and student transcripts as a beginning of the post-secondary planning process. The importance of extracurricular activities and choosing the right courses was also discussed.

All students in Grades 7-12 will have the opportunity to participate in fall sport intramurals. Over 200 students have registered. Additionally, several of our clubs have already begun to meet or will begin to meet in the coming days. These clubs include DECA, Key Club, Mock Trial, The Gull and Student Council. In addition, the art club is going to focus on school beautification this year. At the elementary schools, Newscaster will begin, and our principals are looking into adding additional clubs shortly.

Innovation

Centre and Rhame teachers received technology training to support the delivery of instruction for hybrid, remote, and in-person learning. In Rhame Avenue School teachers in Grades K-2 received training with Google Classroom with this being new for them this year. Special Area Teachers and Specialists received training on Bitmoji Classroom. Teachers in Grades 4-6 used Smart Notebook to create teaching tools to support reading instruction. At Centre Avenue School, teachers also had the opportunity to attend training with Google Classroom as well as the features of Google Meet. Teachers at Centre Avenue School also had the opportunity to engage with JamBoard and how they can utilize the program to increase engagement.

The first meeting to plan the new classrooms as part of the bond took place on September 23, 2020. Teachers from the Science, Art and FACS departments, along with administrators, met with District Architect, John Grillo, to begin the discussion for these state-of-the-art rooms. Subcommittee meetings subsequently took place to discuss plans for each of the instructional spaces. We have also moved forward with the design of the athletic complex and Mr. Barth and our coaches are providing input regarding this project.

The morning announcements are back at East Rockaway High School! A student crew has been assembled and they help to produce a 4-5-minute presentation each morning to share important information for all students. All work is done remotely. Thank you to Mr. Schaffer for stepping in to do such a stellar job and taking this on.

Connection

Rhame students will participate in our annual PTA sponsored “Pumpkin Patch” on Thursday and Friday, where each student will receive a pumpkin. They will be able to decorate their pumpkins with their families to participate in the Night of the Jack O’Lanterns. Centre Avenue students engaged with teachers to decorate literary pumpkins and virtually vote on which literary pumpkin reflects the character the best. Also, Centre Avenue students in Grades K-3 will receive a pumpkin sponsored by the PTA. They will be able to decorate within their class or bring home to decorate with their families.

Back to School Night took place on Thursday, September 24. The event, which was virtual, began with a live-stream session during which school administration introduced themselves and presented general procedures and information. Families then followed their child's schedule and met each teacher via Google Meet. Teachers shared course expectations and curriculum. Families got a taste of what their children experience on remote learning days.

Student interviews are showcased in our daily morning announcements. Students record shot videos sharing suggested best practices and tips to be successful in the current learning environment.

Students in Grades 9-12 and their families are invited to participate in virtual visits with admissions counselors.

B. Communication Subcommittee Report

Mr. Vulpis provided the following report:

The Communication Subcommittee met on October 19, 2020. The Committee renewed its Mission Statement:

This committee is charged with engaging in productive dialogue regarding communications methods and messaging strategies for the East Rockaway School District. The goal is to create a positive discussion that will potentially drive future district communications decisions.

The topic of our first meeting this year focused on Equity and Inclusivity in Education. I attended a NYSSBA Leadership Development Webinar and was motivated to bring this charge to the board and thought it would be a great opportunity to hear from our community members. The committee explored the following questions:

- ✓ What does Equity in education mean?
- ✓ What does Inclusivity in education mean?
- ✓ What is the role of the school board to foster Equity and Inclusivity in the school community?

The outcomes from the meeting were:

Equity - reduce the predictability who achieves and who fails by cultivating the unique gifts and talents of all students.

Inclusivity - the practice or policy of providing equal access to opportunities and resources for people who might otherwise be excluded or marginalized, such as those having physical or mental disabilities or belonging to other minority groups.

The committee is aware that the board of education needs to be vigilant in policy making that both equity and inclusivity must be examined and used as a measure of the strength of that policy making, for the East Rockaway schools. One of the many strengths of the district is the ability to deliver educational needs while meeting the social/emotional needs of all students at the forefront of education.

We are looking forward to future staff development in this area along with board of education policy making that reflects equity and inclusivity for our students and staff.

Mr. McNally commented that the meeting was great. Ms. Ruiz commented that this is an important topic, and she salutes Mr. Vulpis for attending the webinar and bringing the topic to the committee.

12. Good and Welfare

- A. Congratulations to Luke Tesoriero and his wife, Caitlin O’Dea who married on August 15, 2020
- B. Congratulations to Heather Figliozzi and family on the arrival of her daughter, Zoe Leigh, on September 25, 2020
- C. Thoughts and best wishes to TJ Terranova’s son, Cole, as he recovers from his accident
- D. Condolences to Deanna Mignella and family on the passing of her brother, Michael Bruntvedt

13. Public Comments

Mr. Vulpis stated that the Board did not receive any email comments this evening. Please direct your comments to boe@esrd.org and we will get back to you on those comments.

14. Board Member Comments

Joseph Kilgus: Mr. Kilgus thanked Dr. McArthur and the Rhame Avenue students, PTA, and staff for all the gifts. He commented that they are in fact the real heroes. He recognized his fellow board members and thanked them for their hard work as well. He is very proud to be a part of this team.

Peter McNally: Mr. McNally thanked Dr. McArthur and the Rhame Avenue School PTA, students, and staff for tonight’s board recognition. He also thanked the administration for recognizing board appreciation week. It is really all of you who are in the trenches every day. We make the tough decisions but you are with our children every day and we appreciate you so much. We have a stake in our children’s’ future but cannot thank you enough.

Daniel DeMatteo: Mr. DeMatteo seconded everything his fellow board trustees stated. He thanked the Rhame Avenue School PTA, staff, students, and everyone involved in tonight’s recognition. It is greatly appreciated to be recognized for our time and value. Mr. DeMatteo shared the following quote:

"Integrity is doing the right thing. Even when no one is watching." C.S. Lewis

Kristen O'Hagan: I would like to begin by thanking Superintendent Ruiz, Dr. McArthur and the Rhome Avenue School, and the PTA for the Board Recognition this evening. It is an honor serving in this position and seeing those smiling, engaged faces involved in that beautiful collaborative presentation was truly heartwarming. Congratulations to Ms. Drummy and Mr. Canale on receiving tenure this evening. Keep working hard honing your craft, challenging the students, and enlightening young minds in this district. I would like to take a moment to acknowledge all of the teachers for learning how to teach in the hybrid environment, many going outside of their comfort zones, taking risks, and figuring out what works best for their students. I would also like to acknowledge the students who have been involved, engaged, and working hard – whether it is live in class or virtually. This is certainly not easy on anyone. It is the goal of this Board to work with the central administration to monitor how things progress and it is our hope to eventually phase students in safely in a return to learn. This will take some time, so in the meantime I urge you to reply to any surveys sent out and continue to communicate with the PTAs, the building leaders, and the BOE to ensure your voices are heard. Thank you.

Dominick Vulpis: Mr. Vulpis "dittoed" everything his fellow board trustees stated. Each year the PTA from each of the buildings hosts Board Appreciation Night and presents gifts to the board. Our PTA's are always behind the scenes and he thanked them for that. He also thanked Ms. Ruiz for her kind words about the board. On average, most board members spend 6 hours or more per week on board activities. For the month of September alone, this board has spent more than 100 hours. We are all putting in the extra time and have become an extended family. It is a great honor tonight to be appreciated by the community. Thank you to Mr. Barth for bringing in a sports after school program. We are adding the programs back in a safe way. It brings warmth to your heart to see the kids doing what they should be doing, and I thank Mr. Barth for that.

15. Mr. Vulpis asked for a motion to adjourn. Upon motion made by Peter McNally, seconded by Joseph Kilgus, and passed unanimously, the public meeting was adjourned at 8:36 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Vitina Fazi
District Clerk