

EAST ROCKAWAY UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT  
East Rockaway, New York  
Regular Meeting of the Board of Education  
7:00 P.M., November 16, 2021, East Rockaway Jr. / Sr. High School  
Preceded by College Level Opportunities for High School Students 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, Joseph Kilgus, Daniel DeMatteo, Superintendent Lisa J. Ruiz, Assistant Superintendent for Finance & Operations, Jacqueline A. Scrio, 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: 06 p.m.
2. Mr. DeMatteo introduced Centre Avenue student Jaron Brown who led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Superintendent Lisa Ruiz introduced Mr. James DeTommaso and Mr. Richard Schaffer who began the evening's presentation. Mr. DeTommaso then introduced Guidance Director, Janna Bonacorsi, who introduced senior high school student Sofia Valdebenito. Ms. Valdebenito spoke about her classroom experience with AP courses and dual enrollment courses.

The presentation concluded at 7:50 p.m., and the public portion of the agenda began.

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](mailto: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. Scrio. 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 on the agenda items.

4. Approval of Minutes

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

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

A. October 19, 2021, regular 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 September 2021 monthly financial reports.

B. Correspondence:

1) Three emails were received from Rockville Centre residents regarding the noise level of the sound system at the opening home football game.

2) An email from the East Rockaway Education Foundation regarding grants awarded to teachers.

3) An email regarding gender-neutral bathroom signage concerns.

4) An email from the East Rockaway Library regarding a visit from teachers and the program and services the library has to offer.

5) An email from a former student supporting future project in the district.

6) Anonymous letter concerning Club Rock.

6. Recommendations of the Superintendent of Schools

Superintendent Lisa Ruiz read a retirement message to the community. Her message was posted to the district's website and the Superintendent's webpage.

Mrs. O'Hagan asked if the trustees had any questions regarding Items A-Q below. There were none and Mrs. O'Hagan asked for a motion to approve Items A- Q 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- Q were approved on a consent agenda.

A. Accept, with regret, the resignation dated November 9, 2021, of Lisa J. Ruiz, for the purpose of retirement, from her position as Superintendent of Schools, effective June 30, 2022.

B. Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, accept, with regret, the resignation of Rebeca Pagan-Rodriguez, for the purpose of retirement, from her foreign language teacher position effective June 30, 2022.

C. Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, accept, with regret, the resignation of Carol Hernandez, for the purpose of retirement, from her 12-month senior typist clerk position, effective February 4, 2022.

D. Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, accept the resignation of the following:

1. Kirsten Anderson, short-term substitute elementary teacher, effective October 30, 2021

2. Frank Altamore, junior varsity boys' basketball, effective October 27, 2021
  3. Michael Mercadante, groundskeeper, effective November 9, 2021.
- E. Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the appointment of Michael Bovino to the position of part-time (.8 FTE) foreign language teacher, effective October 28, 2021, through June 30, 2022, at the prorated MA, Step Entry, annual salary set forth in the East Rockaway Teachers Association contract for the 2021-2022 school year; and further approve his appointment to the position of substitute teacher (.2 FTE) effective October 27, 2021, through June 30, 2022, at the prorated per diem salary established by the East Rockaway Board of Education on the Non-Contractual Salary Schedule for the 2021-2022 school year.
- F. Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the appointment of Elizabeth Freeman to the position of short-term substitute teacher, effective November 1, 2021, through November 29, 2021, at the per diem salary established by the East Rockaway Board of Education on the Non-Contractual Salary Schedule for 2021-2022.
- G. Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the previously approved 12-week FMLA leave of absence of Kristina Ranieri to be effective August 31, 2021, through November 29, 2021.
- H. Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the previously approved 12-week FMLA leave of absence of Valerie Parasmio to be effective August 31, 2021, through November 29, 2021.
- I. Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve a continuation of the child rearing leave of absence of Francesca Lagnese from her special education teacher position, effective January 31, 2022, through June 30, 2022.
- J. Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve a continuation of the child rearing leave of absence of Jennifer Melecio from her school counselor position, effective January 31, 2022, through June 30, 2022.
- K. Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve a continuation of the personal medical leave of absence of AnnMarie Kenny-Chapur from her school psychologist position, effective January 31, 2022, through June 30, 2022.
- L. Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve a continuation of the short-term social studies teacher position of Grayson Valentino through November 29, 2021.
- M. Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the appointment of Kirsten Anderson to the position of home tutor, effective October 15, 2021, at the hourly salary established by the East Rockaway Teacher's Association contract at Appendix B.A. and further approve the appointment of Kirsten Anderson to the position of curriculum writer, effective November 2, 2021, at the hourly salary established by the East Rockaway Teacher's Association contract at Appendix B.D.

- N. Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the appointment of Jessica Risso to the position of short-term substitute Family & Consumer Science Teacher, effective November 1, 2021, through December 2, 2021, 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.
- O. Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the appointment of Katharine Calabrese to the position of District Musical Production Director, effective November 17, 2021, at the Group II stipend salary established by the East Rockaway Teacher's Association contract for the 2021-2022 school year.
- P. Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the revised ERHS Club Advisor Assignments for the 2021-22 school year at the stipend salary established by the East Rockaway Teacher's Association contract for the 2021-2022 school year.
- Q. 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. Nicholas Cimorelli, athletic supervisor (day/evening), effective November 3, 2021

7. Other Items

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

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

A. Approve the following resolution:

BE IT RESOLVED, the Board of Education accepts and approves the Board Resolution, attached hereto as Attachment A, setting forth the results of the November 15, 2021, Special District Election.

B. Approve the revised list of participating investment providers for tax shelter annuities as more fully described on Attachment B.

C. Approve the following resolution:

BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Education of the East Rockaway Union Free School District approves the terms of a Side Letter Agreement dated November 1, 2021, regarding the Winter Track Coaching Stipend for the 2021-22 school year.

D. Approve Gail Beyrer and Jeannine Patane as members of the Professional Development Team pursuant to Policy 9700, Staff Development.

Mrs. O'Hagan asked if the trustees had any questions regarding Items E-J below. There were none and Mrs. O'Hagan asked for a motion to approve Items E-J 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 E-J were approved on a consent agenda.

- E. Approve the Health and Welfare Agreement between East Rockaway UFSD and Seaford UFSD for health and welfare services for the 2021-2022 school year and authorize the Superintendent and the President of the Board of Education to execute the agreement on behalf of the East Rockaway Board of Education.
- F. Approve the Special Education Services Contract with Valley Stream UFSD #24, for special education services for one parentally placed student for the 2021-2022 school year and authorize the President of the Board of Education to execute the contract on behalf of the East Rockaway Board of Education.
- G. Approve the Consultant Services Contract between East Rockaway UFSD and Ryan's Story Presentations, LLC on December 1, 2021, and December 2, 2021, addressing Bullying, Cyber Bulling, and Teen Suicide and authorize the President of the Board of Education to execute the contract on behalf of the East Rockaway Board of Education.
- H. Approve the Inter-Municipal Agreement between the East Rockaway UFSD and The Incorporated Village of East Rockaway for sanitation collection and authorize the Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations to execute the Agreement on behalf of the East Rockaway Board of Education.
- I. Approve the Administrative Service Flexible Spending Agreement between the East Rockaway UFSD and FBA of Syosset, dated November 16, 2021, for services on behalf of the District's Flexible Spending Plan, for the period January 1, 2022, to December 31, 2023, and authorize the Assistant Superintendent for Finance & Operations to execute the agreement on behalf of the East Rockaway Board of Education.
- J. Approve the awards of the bids dated November 8, 2021, for transportation services to the following companies and authorize the Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Operations to execute the resulting contracts on behalf of the East Rockaway Board of Education:
  - 1. Suburban Bus Transportation Inc.
    - a) Brookville Center for Children's Services
  - 2. First Student Inc.
    - a) Mary Louis Academy
  - 3. We Transport Inc.
    - a) Holy Trinity High School
    - b) Islip Career Center / Sequoya High School

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

Upon motion made by Peter McNally, seconded by Dominick Vulpis, all in favor AYE, opposed: NONE; abstained: NONE; the motion was unanimously passed, and the following Items K-M were approved on a consent agenda.

K. Accept the IDEA – Part B, Section 611 Federal Funding Grant Award for the funding dates of July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2022, with an approved budget total of \$323,086.

L. Accept the IDEA – Part B, Section 619 Federal Funding Grant Award for the funding dates of July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2022, with an approved budget total of \$15,924.

M. Accept the following donations:

1. From Penguin Random House, 25 copies of the book, "*Change Sings*" by Amanda Gorman valued at approximately \$374.75 for Gr. K-3 classrooms.
2. A grant award from the East Rockaway Education Foundation in the amount of \$10,645.65 in support of District-wide educational programs.
3. From Club Rock \$100.00 for the Girls Middle School Soccer Team.
4. From Centre Avenue PTA a check in the amount of \$1,760.00 the for the class of 2028.

#### 8. Approval of CSE and CPSE Recommendations

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

Upon motion made by Joseph Kilgus, seconded by Daniel DeMatteo, and unanimously passed, the CSE and CPSE Recommendations were approved.

#### 9. Budget Transfers

Mrs. O'Hagan asked if the trustees had any questions regarding the following budget transfers. There were no questions. Mrs. O'Hagan then asked for a motion to approve the budget transfers.

Upon motion made by Peter McNally, seconded by Dominick Vulpis, 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. 22-007

#### 10. Policy Matters

A. Policy Subcommittee Report:

Mr. McNally reported that the Policy Subcommittee met on Thursday, November 4, 2021. The following policies are up for adoption tonight.

**Policy 1530, Smoking, Vaping and Other Tobacco Use on School Premises:** This policy has been updated to include smoking cannabis and cannabinoid hemp as prohibited where smoking is prohibited and ingesting cannabis and concentrated cannabis on school grounds is also prohibited, these changes reflect the provisions of law.

**Policy 4710, Grading Systems:** This is a local policy that has been updated establishing that a minimum grade of 50 percent is used in all marking periods, in all courses even if the actual grade is lower in order to provide motivation for improved work.

**Policy 8413, Transportation for Non-Public Schools:** This policy reflects education law and regulations and follow state guidelines, the board of education cannot make amendments to transportation guidelines and this directly impacts budget and any change to mileage must be done by voter proposition, therefore the last paragraph of this notice has been removed as per recommendation by the school attorney.

Will continue to review the 17 policies listed in Item C below. The next meeting is to be determined.

Mrs. O'Hagan asked if the trustees had any questions regarding the policies for adoption. There were none and Mrs. O'Hagan asked for a motion to approve the policies below.

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 policies listed in Item B 1-3 were unanimously approved for adoption.

B. For Adoption

1. 4710, Grading Systems
2. 8413, Transportation for Non-Public Schools
3. 1530, Smoking, Vaping and Other Tobacco Use on School Premises

C. For Review

1. 0115, 0115-R, Student Harassment and Bullying Prevention and Intervention
2. 6705, Federal Funds Purchasing
3. 4000, Student Learning Standards and Instructional Guidelines
4. 8110, School Building Safety
5. 8112, Health and Safety Committee
6. 8220, Buildings and Grounds Maintenance and Inspection
7. 5300, Code of Conduct
8. 5420-R, Student Health Services Regulation
9. 5460, Child Abuse, Neglect, and maltreatment in a Domestic Setting
10. 8635-E, Parents Bill of Rights for Student Data Privacy and Security
11. 0101, Gender Neutral Single-Occupancy Bathrooms

12. 1230, Public Comment at Board Meetings
13. 2342, Agenda Preparation and Dissemination
14. 8505, Charging School Meals and prohibition Against Shaming
15. 9630, Sexual Misconduct
16. 9150, Non-Fraternization “New”
17. 8130, School Safety Plans and Teams

## 11. Reports

### A. Superintendent’s Report

We would like to thank the community for their support of the bond expansion project. Although there was a small turnout the bond passed 117 to 50.

#### **Achievement**

After a hiatus last school year due to Covid protocols, Rhame and Centre Avenue Enterprise students have resumed their program with Mrs. Healy. Classes are held in each building.

Congratulations to our Fall Athletes for a fantastic season! On a different note, our Varsity Volleyball Team won the Nassau County Class C Championship and Brennan Donovan, Matt Pollackov, and 8<sup>th</sup> grader Maya Motherway represented the Varsity Cross Country team in the State Finals. This year’s Fall Athletic Awards were held on November 15<sup>th</sup>, with separate ceremonies for each team. This year we have had a large number of students apply during the early action window. To date, our students have completed over 300 applications.

Congratulations to ERHS junior, Natalie Hayes, for winning first place in this year’s Art Guild High School Art Show with her piece, *Ignorance is Bliss*.

Congratulations to our Canstruction team whose masterpiece titled, *TIME to End Hunger*, won Best CANfiguration (structural integrity) and Most CANtabulous (juror’s favorite).

#### **Opportunity**

Both elementary schools participated in a survey regarding our Second Step Program. The survey was aimed at assessing specific SEL and prevention-related skills, as well as youth substance use beliefs, attitudes, and perception of risk in order to support students in grades 3-6. Students in Ms. Horvath's Senior Seminar class have begun networking to find their internship opportunities for the spring.

Students have identified education, counseling, and trade skills as areas of interest. Students in the AP Art and College Portfolio classes attended a virtual Portfolio Night on November 5, 2021. Art teachers, Mrs. Cabasso and Mrs. Galante organized the 2-hour event. Representatives from 10 colleges reviewed and discussed our students' work and spoke to them about each institution's individual offerings and programs.

ERHS counselors presented to all 9<sup>th</sup> graders to begin their high school career on a positive note. Students engaged in a transcript and resume scavenger hunt and various opportunities and the benefits of involvement were shared. Additionally, counselors visited dual enrollment and AP classes to learn more about the course content and to participate in lessons in order to support the upcoming course selection process for students. AVID students in 9th grade are working on the annual Thanksgiving Adopt- A-Family Food Drive, with the goal of putting together 50 boxes. The donations will be sent to Long Island



Cares in Freeport. Thinking Maps are being used throughout the ERHS Math Department. In Mr. Caputo's UHS Statistics course, students classified statistical vs. non statistical questions using thinking maps. Students created and defended their reasoning through discourse. Ms. Mignella's Algebra II classes created a flow map to support their thinking for factoring polynomials. In Mr. Altamore's UHS Pre-Calculus course, students analyzed transformations of a parent function in a gallery walk style lesson. Students needed to identify four different transformations based on various functions posted around the room, and then create their own transformed parent function for classmates to solve.

### **Innovation**

Rhame Avenue third graders are piloting a new technology-based math program, Prodigy, which is a math game that provides an interactive and engaging adventure to build students' math skills. With third grade students receiving 1:1 devices for the first time this year, Mrs. Schoen is working in third grade classes at both schools to provide students with instruction on how to use the various elements in Google App. Students in Mr. Howard's seventh grade technology class designed and created oven tools. Students learned about functionality and ergonomics, coupled with using various tools for cutting and shaping their wooden oven tools. In Ms. Olsen's multimedia class, students transformed text to make various animal shapes using Photoshop. Congratulations to Jason Miller, Axel Ruiz, and Christian Tavarez, making "Rock History" as the school's first ever eSports players, competing against 764 Rocket League teams across the United States! East Rockaway High School's eSports team is a division of the newly launched Gamers' Club. The inspiration for the club has been student-initiated, beginning with a small group of kids who had a common interest in technology, as well as video games.

### **Connection**

Rhame and Centre Avenue students created cards of gratitude for area firefighters. Mrs. Raffaniello and Mrs. Iannico's second grade class, as well as Centre Avenue's Student Council, had the opportunity to meet Councilman, Anthony D'Esposito, Town Clerk, Kate Murray, and Town Supervisor, Donald X. Clavin, who visited both schools to thank the students for their efforts.

Rhame and Centre Avenue's K-Kids and Student Council are leading a school-wide food drive to provide food for families in need for the Thanksgiving holiday. They also lead a halloween candy collection to send non-chocolate candy to our troops abroad.

On Saturday, October 30, 2021, the first home football game of the season was played on our new athletic complex. Following a brief opening ceremony, our team took the field for the first time. We welcomed back many Varsity Football alumni, our classes were able to fundraise by selling food and beverages, and the stands were full. It was a great afternoon for East Rockaway.

ERHS Tri-M Chapter hosted this year's East Rockaway's Got Talent event. Students and staff demonstrated their talents in front of our first "LIVE" audience since March 2020. Students in Ms. King's Theatre Class are collaborating with our Life Skills program. They are acting as customers to support skills needed for job coaching.

Counselors visited 11th Grade classrooms to advertise a college trip to Southern Connecticut State University, which will take place next month. This is our first in person college campus trip in over two years and enrollment is at capacity! PPS staff and counselors visited 7th and 8th grade classrooms to present on developing and understanding empathy and the steps needed to put this knowledge into practice. Activities were facilitated in pairs and included character role-plays and self-assessments. Last month, building tours at ERHS were held for families of 7th and 8th graders and new entrants that had

never had the opportunity to see our school before.

## 12. Good and Welfare

- A. Condolences to Robert Kennedy and Erin Kennedy on the passing of grandmother and grandmother-in-law, Frances M. Kennedy on October 19, 2021.
- B. Condolences to Kelly Cabasso and family on the passing of her mother, Lyn Quinn on November 13, 2021.

## 13. Public Comments:

Please be reminded that the meeting is livestreamed and being recorded. I encourage residents to contact the board at [boardofeducation@ersd.org](mailto:boardofeducation@ersd.org) and to contact your child's teacher or appropriate administrator with any concerns. At this time if you have a comment, please complete the form prior to speaking.

There were no public comments.

## 14. Board Member Comments

Kristen O'Hagan on behalf of the Board of Education: We would like to begin by congratulating Superintendent Ruiz on the announcement of her retirement. Having informed the board of your retirement plans last January, we are thankful that you are guiding the district as we ease back into normalcy. Retirement is a time to look back with pride on achievements made. After 9 years at the helm, you have so many accomplishments to be proud of and we thank you for making a difference here in East Rockaway. Additionally, we would like to congratulate Ms. Rodriguez and Ms. Hernandez. This is certainly a time to celebrate the future with all its possibilities.

Thank you to all who voted yesterday allowing the district to re-allocate bond funds to benefit the health and safety of the students. Thank you to Ms. Scio for all of your hard work related to the bond projects and proposing these improvements and to Ms. Amaya-Moran, Ms. Fazi, and the poll workers for all of their time and hard work yesterday.

Tonight's presentation on College Level Opportunities for High School Students was tremendous. As a board member, educator, and most importantly, a parent, I can speak first-hand about this unbelievable opportunity. Students get a glimpse into the world of college – understanding a syllabus, adhering to deadlines, and discovering their interests and passions. Thank you, Mr. DeTommaso and Ms. Bonacorsi, for continuing to enhance this dual-enrollment program for our kids and a special thank you to Sophia for sharing your experiences in these courses.

James E. Faust once said, "The thankful heart opens our eyes to a multitude of blessings that

continually surround us.” We are blessed to leave our children in the care of such amazing administrators and staff who continue to go above and beyond each and every day. We wish you all a Happy Thanksgiving filled with bountiful blessings!

15. Upon motion made by Mr. Peter McNally, seconded by Dominick Vulpis, and passed unanimously, the public meeting was adjourned at 8:34 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Nereyda Amaya-Moran  
District Clerk