

EAST ROCKAWAY UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT

East Rockaway, New York

Regular Meeting of the Board of Education

7:00 P.M., April 12, 2022

East Rockaway Jr./ Sr. High School Auditorium

Preceded by a Recognition of Gary Gregory, Certified Athletic Administrator National Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association, Recognition of Retiree Theresa Daube, Tenure Candidates, Budget Adoption, and a Public Forum

MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC AND LIVESTREAMED

MINUTES

PRESENT:

Members of the Board of Education:

Dominick Vulpis, Peter McNally, Joseph Kilgus, Superintendent Lisa J. Ruiz, Assistant Superintendent for Finance & Operations, Jacqueline A. Scerio, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction, James DeTommaso, District Clerk, Nereyda Amaya Moran.

ABSENT: Kristen O'Hagan and Daniel DeMatteo.

1. The meeting was called to order by Peter McNally at 7:09 pm.
2. Mr. Vulpis introduced high school students Sheva and Elaiah Shem O Visarra, who led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Superintendent Ruiz welcomed everyone and thanked everyone for coming out. She introduced Director of Physical Education, Health & Athletics Mr. Gary Gregory to honor him as he was recognized by the National Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association as a Certified Athletic Administrator. Ms. Ruiz then introduced Guidance Director, Janna Bonacorsi who presented a video tribute to honor retiree Theresa Daube.

This evening two staff members will be recognized for tenure. Ms. Ruiz spoke about the process of how tenure is granted. She then introduced Mr. Richard Schaffer, High School Principal. Mr. Schaffer spoke about the accomplishments and successes of Dr. Bradley Krauz, Assistant Principal. A video tribute was shown. Mr. Schaffer was happy to recommend his tenure to the Superintendent and Board of Education. In addition, Superintendent Ruiz, spoke about the accomplishments and successes of Mr. Richard Schaffer, High School Principal; A video tribute was shown as well and was very happy to recommend his tenure to the Board of Education.

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

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

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

A. March 22, 2022, Meeting of the Board of Education

5. Acknowledgment of Monthly Reports and Correspondence

A. Receipt of Monthly Financial Reports: The Board acknowledged receipt of the February 2022 financial reports.

B. Correspondence

1. An email from a community member regarding Spring Sport spectators
2. An email from a community member regarding Tax levy
3. Three emails from community members regarding transportation
4. A letter from the East Rockaway baseball team regarding a donation of their scrimmage tees to wear for the Grand opening of the Athletic Complex.
5. Email from a parent regarding O.T. services for a specific student

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

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

6. Recommendations of the Superintendent of Schools

- 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. Richard Schaffer, Principal, effective July 1, 2022
 2. Bradley Krauz, Assistant Principal, effective July 1, 2022
- B. Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, accept the following resignations:
1. Rachele Kearns, short term substitute teacher, effective January 31, 2022
 2. Jessica Risso, varsity cheerleading coach, effective April 7, 2022
 3. Molly Butler, cheerleading coach, effective April 8, 2022
- C. Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the request of Diana Sporer for a child rearing leave of absence from her special education teacher position effective April 1, 2022, through June 30, 2022.
- D. Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the request of Crystal Valentin-Espinosa for a FMLA leave of absence from her library media specialist position, effective April 8, 2022, through June 24, 2022.
- E. Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the request of Sara Perrone for a child rearing leave of absence from her English teacher position effective September 1, 2022, through the end of the first semester of the 2022-2023 school year.
- F. Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the request of Caitlin Kavarsky for a child rearing leave of absence from her ENL teaching position, effective September 1, 2022, through the end of the first semester of the 2022-2023 school year.
- G. Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the appointment of Rachel Kearns to the position of leave replacement special education teacher, effective January 31, 2022, through June 30, 2022, at the prorated MA, Step Entry annual salary set forth in the East Rockaway Teacher's Association Contract for the 2021-2022 school year.
- H. Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the two-year probationary appointment of Andrew Kell to the position of special education teacher, (tenure area: special education; certification: Professional) effective September 1, 2022, subject to applicable laws and regulations regarding the granting of tenure, at the MA, Step 7, annual salary set forth in the East Rockaway Teachers Association Contract for the 2022-2023 school year.
- I. Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the four-year probationary appointment of Lauren Lamonsoff to the position of Spanish Teacher, (tenure area: Spanish; certification: initial) effective April 25, 2022, subject to applicable laws and

regulations regarding the granting of tenure, at the prorated MA Step 1, annual salary set forth in the East Rockaway Teachers Association Contract for the 2022-2023 school year.

- J. Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the appointment of Josefina Delluvio to the position of short-term substitute ENL teacher, effective April 25, 2022, through June 30, 2022, at the per diem salary established by the East Rockaway Board of Education on the Non-Contractual Salary Schedule for the 2022-2023 school year.
- K. Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the four-year probationary appointment of Danielle Schneider to the position of literacy coach, (tenure area: Literacy, certification: professional) effective September 1, 2022, subject to applicable laws and regulations regarding the granting of tenure, at the MA30, Step 8, annual salary set forth in the East Rockaway Teachers Association Contract for the 2022-2023 school year and further approve the appointment of Danielle Schneider to the position of summer curriculum writer effective July 1, 2022, at the hourly salary established by the East Rockaway Teachers Association Contract for the 2022-2023 school year

7. Other Items

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

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

- A. Approve the revised 2021-2022 Non-Contractual Salary Schedule.
- B. Approve the following resolution:

PROPOSITION NO. 1: 2022-2023 School Budget for East Rockaway Union Free School District:

RESOLVED, that the Proposed Budget of \$42,633,723 for the East Rockaway Union Free School District of the Town of Hempstead, County of Nassau, State of New York, for the fiscal year 2022-2023 be adopted and that the amount of said budget be raised by tax upon the taxable property of the School District after first deducting the monies available from State Aid and other sources.

- C. Approve the following resolution:

BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED that the Board of Education of the East Rockaway UFSD approves the Real Property Tax Report Card prepared by the District's Business Office for the 2022 Annual District Meeting; and

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

D. Approve the following resolution:

BE IT RESOLVED THAT, the Board of Education of the East Rockaway Union Free School District be authorized to place on the ballot at the Annual School District Election to be held on May 17, 2022 a proposition duly submitted by the voters of the District to modify its home to school transportation eligibility policy for Grades K-8 which said proposition shall read as follows:

Shall the school district be authorized and directed, in accordance with a petition received from voters, to raise an additional \$146,178 over and above those sums appropriated to support the school district budget to provide transportation between home and school for all students in grades K-8 who reside at least one mile from the school they legally attend (rather than the existing two mile minimum distance), which said additional appropriation shall be levied against the taxable real property of the District.

E. Approve the following resolution:

WHEREAS, the East Rockaway Union Free School District has received federal stimulus funding approval through the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA) to respond to the COVID public health emergency and address the safe operation of its schools; and

WHEREAS, the District intends to use a portion of its approved ARPA funding in an amount not to exceed \$558,472 to pay for certain portions of the District's 2019 Bond Issue Related Capital Improvement Program, including improved ventilation with upgraded HVAC for Centre Avenue, Project # 28021903-0003-020; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education of the East Rockaway Union Free School District hereby accepts and approves the appropriation of \$558,472 of the above federal stimulus funds for such purposes.

F. Approve the following resolution:

BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED that the Board of Education of the East Rockaway Union Free School District hereby approves the Settlement Agreement dated April 12, 2022, between the East Rockaway School District and the United Public Service Employees Union and authorizes the President of the Board of Education and Superintendent of Schools to execute the agreement on behalf of the East Rockaway Board of Education.

G. Approve the agreement with Textbook Central, a division of Tel/Logic Inc. d/b/a

CentralEd with East Rockaway UFSD for textbook information and management services for the 2022-2023 school year and authorize the Assistant Superintendent for Finance & Operations to execute the agreement on behalf of the East Rockaway Board of Education.

- H. Approve the Contract for Services with JN Business Services, transportation consultant, for the period July 1, 2022, through June 30, 2023, and authorize the Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations to execute the Contract for Services on behalf of the East Rockaway Board of Education.
- I. Approve the Consultant Services Contract with Matthew C. DeMaria, keyboardist, for rehearsals and performances in connection with this year's district musical "Into the Woods, Jr." 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 following resolution for Automatic Temperature Control Service and Repair Cooperative Bid #22-23:

BE IT RESOLVED, that upon the recommendation of the Assistant Superintendent for Finance & Operations, the Board of Education hereby:

Approves the award of the bid for the Automatic Temperature Control Service and Repair Cooperative Bid #22-23, as indicated in the Notice to Bidders published in *Newsday* on March 19, 2022, opened at the District's Office on April 4, 2022 at 10:00 am, to Cardinal Control, as the lowest responsible bidder meeting the bid specifications, pursuant to Section 103 of the General Municipal Law, and authorizes the President of the Board of Education to execute the resulting contract on behalf of the Board of Education.

- K. Approve the terms of the Letter of Intent dated December 16, 2021, with Nassau BOCES for a 48-month lease for three (3) Xerox multi-task copy machines and authorize the Assistant Superintendent for Finance & Operations to execute the Letter of Intent on behalf of the East Rockaway Board of Education.
- L. Approve the Health and Welfare Agreement between East Rockaway UFSD and Garden City UFSD for the 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.
- M. Approve the Health and Welfare Agreement between East Rockaway UFSD and Valley Stream 24 UFSD for the 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.

- N. Approve the following donation(s):

- 1. From the Centre Avenue PTA, a curriculum enhancement grant in the sum of

\$268

O. Approve the 2022-2023 Board Meeting Schedule as more fully set on Schedule “A”.

8. Approval of CSE and CPSE Recommendations

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

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

9. Budget Transfers

Mr. McNally asked if the trustees had any questions regarding the following budget transfers. There were no questions.

Mr. McNally then asked for a motion to approve the budget transfers. Upon motion made by Mr. Vulpis, seconded by Mr. Kilgus, 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. 22-014
2. Transaction No. 22-015
3. Transaction No. 22-016

10. Policy Matters

A. Policy Subcommittee Report: Mr. McNally: We reviewed the policies up for adoption this evening. The next Committee meeting date is to be determined.

Mr. McNally asked if the trustees had any questions regarding the policies for adoption. There were none and Mr. McNally asked for a motion to approve the policies below.

Upon motion made by Mr. Kilgus, seconded by Mr. Vulpis, all in favor AYE, opposed: NONE; abstained: NONE; the motion was unanimously passed, and the policies listed in B 1-3 were unanimously approved for adoption

B. For Adoption

1. 4000, Student Learning Standards and Instructional Guidelines: This policy has been updated to reflect NYS standards for math, science, and technology language. Also

has been provided to further address issues of educational equity inclusivity and diversity.

2. 4321.12, Use of Time Out Rooms and Physical Restraints: This is a new policy that has been recommended by NYS regulations, require each school to have policies and procedures for the use of time out this policy is offered to guide districts in the use of specific interventions that may be implemented to modify or eliminate inappropriate or self-injury injuries behavior of students with disabilities.
3. 5460, Child Abuse, Neglect and Maltreatment in a Domestic Setting: This policy has been modified to meet the requirements of resolution No. 19 that passed by the voting delegates at the 2020 annual business meeting relating to ongoing training under education law boards of education must develop and maintain written policies on child abuse reporting and established training programs district procedures for reporting of child abuse cases

C. For Review

1. 1050, Annual District Election and Budget Vote
2. 8110, School Building Safety
3. 8112, Health and Safety Committee
4. 8220, Buildings and Grounds Maintenance and Inspection
5. 5300, Code of Conduct
6. 8635-E, Parents Bill of Rights for Student Data Privacy and Security
7. 9630, Sexual Misconduct
8. 9150, Non-Fraternization “New”

11. Reports

A. Superintendent’s Report

Our District works to foster an inclusive and supportive learning environment for all students and staff and takes any allegations of discrimination seriously. Following the Board of Education meeting, we reached out to the student and her family, and the district reviewed their concerns. I applaud this student’s bravery in speaking publicly on her experiences and hope this is a learning opportunity to work towards positive change as a district and community. We obviously have to do better in ensuring that our schools are safe and welcoming, enabling all students to feel a true sense of belonging. We need to make sure that all students and their families have trusted adults they can confide in if they feel uncomfortable or are wronged by anyone in our school community. We must be made aware so we can address these incidents if they occur. We welcome and invite every parent to speak to an adult if they become aware of a problem – we are here for you and we will listen. You have my word and I know I speak on behalf of all administrators and staff, that we will listen, investigate, and address any and all incidents of discrimination, bullying or mistreatment in our schools. We will continue to provide professional learning in equity, diversity, inclusivity for both our faculty and

students so we can grow to create a truly safe and welcoming environment where every student and family feels that they belong

First Aid Training with Mr. Vulpis

On Thursday, Mr. Vulpis provided a comprehensive training for our administrators on first aid for choking, CPR for adults, children and infants and the use of AEDs. These skills are not only invaluable to our administrative team in their roles in our schools but also in our personal lives. Mr. Vulpis' explanations of these critical life-saving procedures were clear, extensive, and served to engage everyone to understand and be able to apply these techniques in the event of an emergency. Administrators worked collaboratively in pairs to process the information and practice the techniques that allowed everyone to gain a deeper understanding of the content and skills. At the conclusion of the training, all present were tested on the skills learned and everyone received a Red Cross Certificate of Completion which is valid for two years. Thank you to Mr. Vulpis for giving up his time to work with our team on these critical lifesaving skills.

Achievement

Centre and Rhame Avenue 6th grade Math teams collaborated through vertical articulation with the JRHS Math staff to share strategies and resources to support the transition into 7th grade math.

ERHS teachers in science, math, social studies, and English have begun analysis of data from last month's Mock Regents Exams. Teachers are identifying areas of strength and need from the exams to create action plans for the fourth marking period and regents preparation. The ERHS musical production of Into the Woods took place on Friday, April 8th and Saturday, April 9th in front of live audiences! Congratulations to the cast, crew, and faculty advisors for 3 amazing performances. Congratulations to Natalie Hayes for receiving a Gold Medal Honor in this year's Scholastic Art and Writing Awards. This is the second time the ERHS Art department had a Gold Medal winner and Natalie's second award, having received a Silver Medal last year. HS Art Students, Zara Soofiada & Joe Giamonna both won awards in this year's PSLI photo Competition.

Opportunity

Rhame Avenue students kicked off a new Gardening Club as an afterschool enrichment program. Approximately 38 students are participating. Students and families were invited to a presentation regarding a Nassau Community College partnership that will allow East Rockaway Seniors to complete senior classes at Nassau Community College. Students enrolled will earn simultaneous high school and college credit.

High school students in the science research program participated in the final round of the Northwell Spark challenge, which consisted of 3 workshop sessions before

the awards programs. Although we did not place this year, we are very proud of our students' dedication to the project. Several new enrichment programs are in full swing at the Jr./Sr. High School. Choices for students include Anime Club, Film Critics Club, Herstory Writers Workshop, Stress Management, and the return of a student created literary magazine. Additionally, 8 teachers are serving as mentors to 24 students, meeting weekly to provide support to complete assignments, provide organizational strategies, and create a plan to be successful in all of their classes.

Innovation

Centre 1st graders worked on creating a Flipgrid to tape their narrative writing pieces to publish and share with families. Centre and Rhame Ave students are in the beginning stages of engaging in research for their interdisciplinary Entrepreneurship unit. Mr. Caputo is running a Student Broadcasting club at the Jr./Sr. High School. In conjunction with Mr. Howard, students will be trained to operate the scoreboard and sound system of the athletic complex.

Connection

Centre and Rhame 6th grade students engaged in a special presentation on how to safely navigate social media, with Officer Zanni, Officer Destasio, and Officer DiLeonardo from the 4th Precinct. The presentation was tailored specifically to the needs of our students and focused on being respectful digital citizens, the consequences of inappropriate actions on social media, and cyberbullying. Rhame students celebrated Spirit Week to welcome in the month of April. Rhame and Centre Avenue 6th grade teachers collaborated with the JRHS leadership team to develop student cohort groups to support the transition into 7th grade to meet the comprehensive needs of all students.

School counselors visited 12th grade English classes to support with post-secondary transitions. Counselors reviewed choosing a college, negotiating financial aid, and applying for additional scholarship opportunities. Students in Advisory are experiencing presentations about The Crown Act. This activity is in conjunction with our school's Dignity Club and is led by upperclassmen. Special thanks to Joyce Kenny, the club's advisor. All of this is in an effort to further expand inclusivity and awareness. On April 2nd, the Grand Opening for our Athletics Complex took place. Alumni, current students, staff, families, and youth organizations were present to watch the Varsity Softball and Baseball games as well as take part in activities on the field and in the "Club Corner". The Art Club hosted a very successful Ukraine Support Drive. Several truckloads of supplies were collected!

Ms. Ruiz asked Ms. Scio to provide a budget update. Ms. Scio stated the following

Our fourth and last budget work session was held on Tuesday, April 5th. Discussions included the final budget proposal, District Initiatives for 2022-23

school year, Three-part budget, and a review of the Revenue.

The proposed budget is a 2.08% budget to budget increase. The proposed budget does not include the additional cost for the transportation proposition.

Now that we have the state aid numbers the final tax levy cap for East Rockaway is 3.81%. However, we are pleased to announce the proposed tax levy increase is .93% which is 2.88% below the cap and \$917,461 less than the allowable increase.

All budget presentations are posted on the district's website.

We will have a budget presentation at the budget hearing on Tuesday May 10th, at 7:00 p.m. in the High School Auditorium. We encourage you to attend the hearing.

12. Good and Welfare

- A. Condolences to Mary McLeod and family on the passing of her sister Maureen T. DePasquale.
- B. Congratulations to Crystal Valentin and husband Jeinson, on the birth of their son, Noah Elias, born on April 8, 2022

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

Sandra Pozo, East Rockaway student, read a letter from her sister, Alexandra Pozo, former student of class 2019, who shared her experiences and point of view regarding discrimination she experienced while a student.

Michelle Lizama Fernandez, East Rockaway student, read her statement regarding incidents their family had with cultural and racial issues, including improper comments made to some of her classmates as well; etc.

Angelina Palma, East Rockaway resident, read her statement regarding previous incidents during sport night's event and the aftermath. She also read an anonymous letter from a student who supported student Lucy Pozo's comments at the last board meeting.

Michelle Gamache, East Rockaway resident, read a statement on behalf of Theresa Devlin, former PTA president, strategic planning committee, and former budget advisory, about her experience as a foster parent in the district and the difficulties she experienced with cultural and racial issues at school and how disappointed she was on the way these situations were handled.

Daniel Caracciolo, East Rockaway resident, Read an anonymous letter in support of student Lucy Pozo's statement during last board meeting. Also, read a letter from Joseph Petraro a former student, regarding multiracial cultural issues and his experiences in the district.

Aniyah Osouna, East Rockaway student, Read a statement in support to student Lucy Pozo's comments at the last board meeting. She also expressed her experiences regarding the implementation of her special plan accommodations, racial comments made by others, etc. Mr. Osouna, father of student requested a follow up regarding these incidents.

Jennifer Racanelli Cuthbert, East Rockaway resident, read her statement concerning the incidents and aftermath during sport night's event. She quoted statements that support the Dignity Act and expressed her concerns on how this was managed, and that more efforts should be placed against bullying and harassment incidents.

Dineen Cilluffo, East Rockaway Resident: She asked for detailing information about the calculation amount assessed regarding the extra mile for transportation. She thanked the Board and Mrs. Scio for their job at keeping below the tax cap all these past years. She expressed her opinion regarding the process of hiring the next superintendent. She read her statement and suggested to have back "American Day" to celebrate all heritages.

Maribel Ugalde, East Rockaway resident, read a letter from her son, James Lukens, class of 2014, regarding incidents about cultural differences.

Kevin Denis, commented on previous incidents and expressed support to student Lucy Pozo's for her comments at the last board meeting. He handed a letter to the board from a former student, class of 2018.

Jonathan Meneses, East Rockaway resident, read a letter as an ex-alumni class 1997 to student Lucy Pozo, showing support for speaking out regarding discrimination and racial issues that the community is facing and expressed his discontent with the past incidents and requested the Board to do a follow-up.

14. Board Member Comments

Joseph Kilgus: Thanked everyone who spoke during this evening and to Lucy Pozo for speaking out, he reinstated his support to all students and community members. Congratulated to Mr. Schaffer and Dr. Krauz on their tenure and to Ms. Theresa Daube, congratulations on your retirement and thank you for your time.

Dominick Vulpis: Congratulations to everybody tonight for their tenures and retirement. We began discussions and we started to work with our Diversity policy as soon as it came out. We have started the process of healing, hear first and to make sure that we include everything that was mentioned tonight. This is the most important thing. We suggest speaking up to the administration as soon as events like this arise. We went through the documents, and we need to hear when this happened to address it. We always considered the High School as the hub, and you are bringing this to the right place. No body put kids first more than us in all Long Island. We need to work on it, we are hearing the stories now.

Peter McNally: Congratulated the personnel that was recognized in this evening, we are happy for you. Also, emphasized to show kindness, and respect when we speak with one another tonight. We are all humans and as we might not have all the answers right now, rest assure that we are working for you and to do what is right.

Mrs. Ruiz: I do understand that these microaggressions and macroaggressions and comments that have been made to students over the years are not easy to address. You come to our schools, and you expect us to provide you with a safe environment to keep you safe, to keep you away from harm and obviously the same institution that opened its doors to welcome you did not. It's not easy to come back and tell us that you have been harmed. We understand that. We are deeply sorry for what you went through. We understand, and but we want to have a dialogue and make all students feel welcome, safe and feel that you belong, and we do want to hear more about what you have to say and what your experiences have been. Because that dialogue will help us to understand and to know where we can start and what we can do. In the last two months that I am here I would like to do something. We can put our heads together to see what the best way is to move forward. It does start with hearing what you are saying and not just from a particular group but anyone who is interested in adding to the conversation. We need to listen to one another with respect and to be treated dignity. We are all humans, and we have to listen to one another and that is the bottom line. We have been doing training about treating people with dignity as a fundamental right. We need to start reading more diverse authors from the US and international. Whatever skill we are leaning, we have to change people's belief systems before their practice will follow. And I think it is the same thing with this. We have been doing training on DEI for the last 5 years in the district. Most recently, we are reading a book and the foundation of the book is about treating people with dignity because dignity is a human right and of course is it is about race, and it is about discrimination, but it is about a more fundamental human right and that is to be treated with dignity and that is where we are starting from this point. I recently provided a professional development opportunity for our new teachers about cultural competence, and I asked them that there here are strategies we and you to learn and things we want you to do in your classrooms like really look at the literature we are reading. Should we still be reading the classics or are there other new diverse authors from the US and across the world that we should be exposing our children to. So those are parts of it.

But I asked our teachers to do one thing - to be aware to what is going on in the classrooms and listen in the hallways and not walk by when someone makes an inappropriate or derogatory comment, to stop people and hold them accountable for

their behavior and be assertive in terms of making sure that the environment we provide for all our students is an environment is one of dignity and one of belonging because we want every student to feel that they belong here in our school district and feel comfortable. That is what we meant by a dialogue, and I am going to follow up with some of the people who spoke here tonight because it is disturbing to think about the things that have happened, and the feeling is that we did not protect and support you. And that is the farthest from the way we feel- our actions did not actually speak as loud as they should have. I advise that if you hear something to speak up. We want to hear from you we want to support you and we want you to feel safe in our schools. I think the board has spoken to that and I know our administration feels the same way.

15. Upon motion made by Mr. Kilgus, and seconded by Mr. Vulpis, and passed unanimously, the public meeting was adjourned at 9: 31 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Nereyda Amaya Moran
District Clerk.