

EAST ROCKAWAY UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT
East Rockaway, New York
Regular Meeting of the Board of Education
7:30 P.M., February 24, 2009 – East Rockaway Jr. /Sr. High School
Preceded by a Presentation on the New York State Physical Education Profile
and a Public Forum

Present: Members of the Board of Education: Mary Boccuzzi, Vicki Alspector, Neil Schloth, Linda Schmidt, Superintendent, Dr. Roseanne Melucci; Director of Finance and Operations, Concetta Robinson; District Clerk, Denise Lobascio.

Absent: Marie Girace

MINUTES

1. The meeting was called to order by Mary Boccuzzi and the Pledge of Allegiance was led by Linda Schmidt.

Upon motion by Vicki Alspector, seconded by Neil Schloth, the following items #2 & 3 were unanimously approved:

2. Minutes of January 20, 2009 Board Meeting.
3. Minutes of January 31, 2009 Special Board Meeting.
4. Acknowledged Receipt of Financial Reports - December 2008
5. Acknowledged Receipt of Treasurer's Reports – November 2008 and December 2008
6. Correspondence - None
7. Action Agenda

A. Personnel

Upon motion by Linda Schmidt, seconded by Vicki Alspector, the following Items 1 -8 have been unanimously approved:

1. Upon the recommendation of the superintendent, accept the resignation of Jennifer Laut, from the position of teacher aide, effective January 23, 2009.
2. Upon the recommendation of the superintendent, accept the resignation of Sonia Engstler from the position of monitor, effective January 29, 2009.
3. Upon the recommendation of the superintendent, approve the continuation of the appointment of Diane Cullen to the position of leave replacement speech/language teacher (FTE .8), effective April 20, 2009 through June 30, 2009 at the prorated MA, Step 7 annual salary set forth in the East Rockaway Teachers Association Contract for the 2008 – 2009 school year.
4. Upon the recommendation of the superintendent, approve the spring sports 2008-2009 coaching assignments as more fully set forth on the attached schedule.
5. Upon the recommendation of the superintendent, accept the resignation of Rosemary Ruggerio from the

following positions, effective March 11, 2009.

Principal Account Clerk, 12 months;
School District Treasurer
MIS Coordinator

6. Upon the recommendation of the superintendent, accept, with regret, the resignation for the purpose of retirement of Carol A. Baerlein, from the position of school psychologist, effective June 30, 2009.
7. Upon the recommendation of the superintendent, approve the following temporary assignments at the salary approved by the East Rockaway Board of Education:

Glenn Kennedy, substitute teacher, effective February 2, 2009

8. Upon the recommendation of the superintendent, approve the continuation of the “emergency, conditional” personnel appointments for the following individuals pending receipt of notification of their fingerprint clearance from the State of New York, Department of Education:

Andrea Faranda, substitute monitor
Anthony Quercia, Director of Facilities

B. Other Items.

Upon motion by Neil Schloth, seconded by Linda Schmidt, the following items #1 – 6 were unanimously approved:

1. Approve the following resolution:

BE IT RESOLVED THAT upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools and upon the request of the employee named in confidential attachment A, the Board of Education of the East Rockaway School District hereby appoints the employee named in confidential Attachment A to an extension of the probationary term from May 15, 2009 to May 14, 2010, unless discontinued earlier by action of the Board of Education.

2. Approve the Notice of Budget Hearing and Annual District Election of the East Rockaway UFSD and the publication of such notice as required by law in the “Oceanside, Rockville Centre, East Rockaway Tribune” and “The Lynbrook/East Rockaway Herald.”
3. Authorize the District Clerk to nominate the following individuals as candidate(s) for three seats on the Nassau Board of Cooperative Educational Services. Ira Wolfson, Susan Bergtraum, Michael Weinick.
4. Approve the following consultant services contracts for Abilities/Wellness Week and authorize the superintendent of schools to execute the contracts on behalf of the board of education.

Peter Hawkins, Drinking And Driving, Wheelchair Athlete Program
AJK Diversified, Hate Crimes 101
A Vision in Motion, Disabilities and Unlimited Possibilities

5. Approve the appointment of Ornella Drevnyak and Eileen Hinshaw to serve as Parent Members for District CSE meetings.
6. Approve the contract with the Department of Mental Health, Chemical Dependency and

Developmental Disability Services for the period January 1, 2009 through December 31, 2010 and authorize the President of the Board of Education and/or the Superintendent of Schools as appropriate to execute the contract, exhibits and appendices on behalf of the Board of Education.

C. Budget Transfers

1. Upon the recommendation of the superintendent, the Board of Education approves the following budget transfer: Transaction No. NONE

Upon motion by Vicki Alspector, seconded by Linda Schmidt, the following items D and E were unanimously approved.

D. Approval of CSE Recommendations

E. Approval of CPSE Recommendations

8. Policy Matters: None

9. Superintendent's Report

We are now into the second half of the school year. Although February is a short month there are still many activities and events that occurred throughout the district.

The NYS Accountability and Overview report for 2007-2008 is now available and I am pleased to report that our students have made adequate yearly progress in all categories and for all subgroups. This is the summary of our performance on all of the state assessments. Each of our schools is a school in good standing, which is the highest rating that the state assigns.

As part of our participation in the Nassau County Middle School Collegial Circle we have an opportunity for Dr. Nancy Doda to work with our staff and students. Some of you may recall that last year she was our featured speaker during the wellness week parent meeting. She has conducted a great deal of research on middle school thinking and learning.

She was onsite today working with the 7th grade teachers and students on collaborative teacher-student curriculum planning. During the activity the students are asked to create questions they have about themselves and the world they live in. Through dialogue and discussion the teachers learn about what matters most to the students about their own learning and will use that information to make connections from their curriculum to the students' interests. Research teaches us that students are more inclined to participate in learning activities and retain information that is directly related to their own areas of interest. It was a wonderful opportunity for students to have a voice in their learning.

I have often mentioned our new phonics program, Foundations. Before the break Mrs. Guggino and the teachers at Rhame Avenue coordinated a parent workshop to help the parents understand the program so that they could reinforce what the students are learning in school.

Also at Rhame the 5th grade students participated in an activity known as Entrepreneur Day. For this activity the students had to invent or create an item to "sell" to the public. They learned about supply and demand and marketing as well as using their technology skills to create their own business cards. It was a wonderful display of creativity!

Students at Centre Avenue celebrated Black History month and President's Day with a variety of grade level activities.

The 6th grade students, at both elementary schools, completed a photo story project. For this they had to write a narrative and then using their technology skills they incorporated photographs and music. Mr. Piccarella, Dr. LoVerde and I had an opportunity to see some of the presentations. Thank you to Mrs. Strugatz, our elementary technology teacher.

The ALPSS program had a successful first half of the year. All of the students passed the required state and local assessments. In addition, three students met graduation criteria early and completed their programs in January.

Novels being read at our elementary schools this month include: The Devil’s Arithmetic and Number the Stars, Snow Treasure, Winn Dixie, Charlotte’s Webb, Salty Dog and the Whipping Boy. At the secondary school:

7th Grade: soon to begin The House on Mango Street

8th Grade: The Pigman

9th Grade: To Kill a Mockingbird

10th Grade: Science Fiction Unit – short stories by Vonnegut and Bradbury

11th Grade: short story and poetry unit in preparation for Regents

12th Grade: soon to begin One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest

Please ask your children what they are reading in school and encourage a dialogue about the literature.

The boy’s varsity basketball team finished this season in 3rd place in the “C” classification in Nassau County. The girls’ basketball team finished the season in 2nd place in the “C” classification in Nassau County. Congratulations to our basketball players!

The spring sports season begins next week on March 2nd. Please check our website for the schedule of the various events.

After two spring seasons we are back on our home fields for softball and baseball. On behalf of Mr. Vulpis and all of our student athletes, I thank the Board and the community for supporting the bond issue to update and improve the fields.

Rhame Avenue School sponsored a Family Gym night earlier this month.

The February performance of Oliver was fantastic! I thank our students for entertaining us with their talents and I also want to thank the staff who spent countless hours preparing and participating in this event. It was an incredible production!

Students at Centre Avenue created Tiffany lamps as part of their art work. Their work will be on display in the building.

Our SEL program continues to thrive and be a beacon for other schools. We were recently visited by the principal of PS/IS 327 in Brooklyn. In a letter of appreciation to Mrs. Singer for arranging the visit, the principal wrote, “You certainly have created a nurturing environment that you should be proud of and that is a model for all to see.”

6th grade words—alienation and envious @ Rhame and at Centre—rebellious and arrogant.

7th grade—frustration, secure, self-esteem, devastated

8th grade words are—depression, deprivation, jubilant, and prejudice.

We welcome our new Director of Facilities, Mr. Anthony Quercia. He started yesterday and fills the vacancy created by Mr. Ristano’s departure last summer. We thank Mr. Fred Smith for filling in as the part-time administrator for that position.

We have received two portable security cameras, one for each of the elementary schools, and we are in the process of setting them up to use to monitor external areas of the property.

Other areas of interest include the following:

The HS Its Academic team defeated the 1st place team, Valley Stream South. Our team is now in 1st place.

At Rhame Avenue Mrs. Fedoronko is working with a group of teachers on stress and the impact on student achievement.

The NY Islanders visited Rhame Avenue School to talk about teamwork and the importance of reading.

The Centre Avenue student council sponsored a jump for heart program this month.

Four Enterprise students represented our district in the United Cerebral Palsy Trivia

Challenge finals and won the Trivia Challenge Champion Bowl! The students were: Peter

Liotta, James Tierney; Declan Louw; and Alex Sharkey. Congratulations to our students.

In addition, Dr. LoVerde, Mr. Silk, Mrs. Gerber (HS Psychologist) and I attended a Special Education forum at Hewlett High School earlier this month. The forum was an opportunity to meet with administrators and Pupil Personnel Staff from other districts to discuss the different programs that we have implemented to meet the needs of the students with disabilities.

Budget— We are still developing the budget and are looking forward to hearing how the stimulus package will impact our state aid. We have heard that we will be receiving additional Title I and IDEA funds. We have been told that the figures provided are estimates. Everyday we get another piece of the puzzle.

On Saturday, 2/28 there is an education aid rally from 11-12 at the Ellsworth Allen Park in Farmingdale.

That concludes my report.

10. Privilege of the Floor - none

10. Board Member Comments

Neil Schloth – Thank you Mr. Vulpis and Mr. Piccarella for the Physical Education program. I like to see the balance of programs in different areas.

Linda Schmidt – Thank you Mr. Vulpis and Mr. Piccarella, your presentation was very informative. I was very impressed with Oliver! Congratulations and best wishes to Mrs. Baerlein.

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Vicki Alspector – Thanks to Dom Vulpis and thank you for not making us do pushups.

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Mary Boccuzzi – Congratulations to Mrs. Baerlein on her retirement. Thank you Mr. Vulpis and Mr. Piccarella. This coming June, I will be completing my 4th term; 12 years as a BOE trustee; probably six of them as President. I am proud to have been part of many changes taken place for our kids and our community. I have served with 3 formidable Superintendents, each one bringing with them their own color palette to this district. Most importantly, I have served with eight different trustees. Richard Meagher who got me started and even ran my election campaign. Sal Scrimenti; Debbie Tufano; Bill Barton; Marie Girace; Vicki Alspector; and our newly elected Linda Schmidt and Neil Schloth

I think being a board member can be a life changing experience. You give entirely of yourself because you see everything through very special lenses. It changes you, for the better.

It is a true honor to have served with this very special group.

We very often hear the term “it’s been an honor to serve with”, please let me tell you what it means to me when I say it.....

It means that I have served with those who will put our community before themselves...

It means I have served with those who give selflessly at each and every turn.....

It means that I have served with those who have cried with me struggling to find the right solution...

It means that I have served with those who understood that the easy solution is rarely the right one...

It means that I have served with those who have stayed until passed the hour of midnight to help solve an issue for our community...

It means I have served with those that have come in on and hours notice for emergencies...

It means that I have served with those whose children may have received less than anyone else’s for fear that anyone thinks they were being favored in any way...

It means that I have served with those who leave their egos at the door...

It means that I have served with those who served dinner to their families only to turn around to come to a board meeting...

It means that I have served with those who openly admit when they are wrong and can tell me the same...

It means that I have served with those who will fight tooth and nail for your children...

It means that I have served with the best this community has to offer and I want to thank them.

It is with a very heavy heart this year that I will not be picking up a petition to seek re-election. I feel I am leaving the board in excellent hands and I am confident of what can still be accomplished. As for me...I am getting a hefty pension now that I am leaving.....?? No?

A brand new Cadillac...No???

Health insurance into my retirement...no???

A New chair???...No???

No?? Then I guess I really must have loved this job for other reasons.....And I still do...

I urge you to consider running with this wonderful group of individuals for an exceptionally special school district.

I want to thank everyone for such a humbling and fantabulous journey.

I hope I have made you proud.

11. Upon motion by Vicki Alspector, seconded by Linda Schmidt and unanimously approved, the meeting was adjourned at 8:35 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Denise Lobascio
District Clerk