

EAST STROUDSBURG AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT
EDUCATION PROGRAMS & RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING
SEPTEMBER 2, 2020 -- 7:00 P.M.
VIDEO CONFERENCE (ZOOM)
MINUTES

- I. **The Chairperson**, Dr. Damary Bonilla, called the Education Programs & Resources Committee Meeting to order at 7:03 P.M. and led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance, Secretary Debra Wisotsky called for the roll.
- II. **Board Committee Members Present:** George Andrews, Rebecca Bear, Dr. Damary Bonilla and Debbie Kulick.
- III. **Other Board Members Present:** Larry Dymond
- IV. **School Personnel Present:** Brian Baddick, Terrence Bomar, Tabitha Bradley, Trenee Lurry, Heather Piperato, William Riker, William Vitulli, and Debra Wisotsky
- V. **Members of the Public Present:**
- VI. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES**

ACTION BY THE COMMITTEE: Motion was made by Debbie Kulick to approve the agenda for August 5, 2020. Motion was seconded by Rebecca Bear. Discussion followed:

Mr. Andrews requested that the committee make a motion to add two additional items to the August 5, 2020 agenda. The first item is PDE Scores and the second is Policy 105 Curriculum. Dr. Bonilla asked as far as PDE Scores, what is the purpose? Mr. Andrews replied that certain members of the Board have been trying to get PDE Scores compared to other years. Ms. Bear shared that test scores are listed on the PA Department of Education website, so we can pull them anytime we want. If you click on the lines on the side link, you see Data and Reporting and you can get Keystone scores, CDT scores and PSSA scores for every school in the State of Pennsylvania. We can compare them to other schools, other grades. They are easily accessible and if anyone wants help getting them; she would be happy to assist anyone who wishes to pull them up on the PDE website. Dr. Bonilla asked if Mr. Andrews would like to remove that motion. Mr. Andrews stated yes, we can remove that motion; however, Policy 105, I thought we might want to discuss before we discuss it in policy on September 21st because it says it is the Board's responsibility to approve all curriculum and changes made to it by Administration. Ms. Kulick asked that they wait until we have the documentation in front of us, so that we know exactly what we are talking about and have criteria or at least reference. Dr. Bonilla agreed. Ms. Bear added I think we should review it because we did have some questions from staff members on how that is done and I think that is why Mr. Andrews is asking that question.

ACTION BY THE COMMITTEE: Motion was made by George Andrews to add Policy 105 to the agenda for September 2, 2020. Motion was seconded by Rebecca Bear. A roll call vote was taken and failed 2-2. George Andrews and Rebecca Bear voted yes; Dr. Damary Bonilla and Debbie Kulick voted no.

Policy 105 will be added to next month's agenda and Dr. Bonilla will have a discussion with Administration in preparation for that.

ACTION BY THE COMMITTEE: Original motion was carried unanimously 4-0.

ACTION BY THE COMMITTEE: Motion was made by Debbie Kulick to approve the minutes from the August 5, 2020 meeting (pages 1-14). Rebecca Bear seconded with a request that her comments below to Dr. Vitulli be added to the August 5th minutes.

Ms. Bear had asked for the scores of the ESACA students versus our brick and mortar students. When you go on the PDE website they don't separate or differentiate ESACA students vs. Lehman or ESACA vs. elementary. Students are grouped with their zoned school. That was my question to Dr. Vitulli at the previous meeting. Dr. Riker suggested that this be added to the minutes by Ms. Wisotsky and you can move forward by approving the amended minutes.

ACTION BY THE COMMITTEE: A roll call vote was taken and carried unanimously 4-0 on the amended minutes.

VII. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

- a. Diversity, Equity, Inclusion (DEI) Update—Treneae Lurry and Terrence Bomar—Mrs. Piperato first shared a short video of the DEI presentation entitled "Cultural and Learning. Empowering our Students Through Respect" that Treneae recently conducted. Ms. Lurry thanked the committee for the opportunity to present. The video was some of the highlights from three training Ms. Lurry had presented on August 18, 19, and 20th. It was a wonderful experience because there were so many different staff members (cafeteria workers, paraprofessionals, and teachers) that eagerly participated. I am excited to be able to see the work unfold, that everyone has the desire to learn and that the district has provided the opportunity to have Terry and myself move this project forward. I have received excellent feedback from everyone that participated. New teacher induction participants were excited that they moved to a district that is doing this work and that they would like to see everyone participate in this training. I'm glad to be a part of it and that we have such a great team to work with, to be able to see this through. Mr. Bomar also shared that it has really been an honor to ride this wave with Treneae. We have received such great feedback from staff and faculty and are being asked daily about what is the next step and how do we get into trainings and learn about it. We have also worked on a small presentation that building administrators can use to touch on some of the things that go with DEI like some helpful tips when discussing it, why it is important, and we give a little snapshot into the training that Treneae is doing. It is an honor and is becoming something really huge and we are excited about it. Dr. Bonilla thanked them both and stated that she is signing them both up to share what they are doing in the district. We had an IU Board meeting last week where they were discussing DEI, people are asking for this kind of training and the opportunity to engage in DEI conversations, in

formal education that helps build their awareness and sensitivity. I did offer that the district would be willing to share what we are doing, successes, challenges and be able to work through those together. We have a committed Board and Administration and I know we have representation from the teacher's union and support staff. What is important in this partnership is that sometimes people are getting their DEI knowledge from the media and non-credible sources and for us to take this by the reigns, and have an internal program that considers the stakeholders at the various levels is an amazing opportunity. It is also a place to find common ground and work together for the benefit of our students and our community across the board. So thank you both for your leadership and I have also heard from and will send names of individuals that would also like to help. We had an event that was scheduled at MSE for March, then the shutdown happened. Right before that MSE had formed a DEI committee within the school and so the principal and several others have offered their help. I have also had some conversations with ESU on DEI efforts that they have there that will help support the work that we're doing. Ms. Bear shared that she had the privilege of going to a portion of Trenee's training and I'll tell you I almost cried. It was an amazing experience to hear, if you looked at the pictures, it was a completely diverse group of people who would not have come together to take the time to learn about each other. Just to hear them share their emotions and their feelings; there was one woman in the group who was from a different country and she thought that all white people were gringos and bad people. That is what she thought and was taught. It was amazing at the end to see them come together and just embrace each other. It wasn't just about black or white, Jewish or Italian, Hispanic or white, or whatever; it was about embracing your differences and really seeing the differences, acknowledging the differences and then moving forward with those differences. I think that is what we really need to look at, it was about we are all different, we are all special, we all bring something to the table, now let's enhance it and educate our children because that is what we are here for. It was a beautiful experience to hear them all talk about that. It was more than about just color; it was more about coming together. It was a really good program and I wish I was able to stay for more of it. Kudos to Trenee and Terrence for putting this together because it is something I have talked to Trenee about for years and when I got elected, I said let's do it. To see her brainchild come together was amazing. Dr. Bonilla added that there will be training for the Board and I just wanted to clarify that this just didn't happen with one member elected to the Board but several and the work has been happening behind the scenes at different levels. It takes time to have this work come to fruition and it is going to take more time to take it to the next level. The more people we engage, the more challenges we will face because it is not an easy process and for those of us that have been in the DEI space for a long time, we know that and I commend you. Ms. Kulick made a suggestion that come the spring, I know you mentioned MSE, but this should be a program that is offered at each of the schools for the school community to be invited so that they too would be able to benefit from the training. Dr. Bonilla agreed that's an excellent idea and that the MSE piece was an event and there are several, as we have heard on the committee that were held in the past. One of the things we were doing at MSE was we established a program template, documented what the committee's roles were so that it could be a replicable model. Dr. Riker and Administration are aware of this; because we knew along the way it would be an opportunity for any school to pick it up, adapt it and create an event for their school. It could be something as Dr. Riker talked to me over a year ago, that could be district-wide so that we don't even do individual events but go straight to the bigger one. Dr. Bonilla thanked Ms.

Kulick for her support and ideas. Mr. Andrews agreed it is a great program and that he actually tried to get to it but there was a miscommunication between him and H/R, but I would have like to participate too. Dr. Bonilla added don't worry, we have Board training coming up soon and at all levels. It is an exciting time. Dr. Riker thanked everyone and stated this is a long process and we are going to be committed to it forever. It is not a one-time training, we obviously have a lot of work to do and will work with Trenee to find the time to offer the training to employees. We are excited to be a district taking the lead on this and moving the district and the community in a positive direction.

- b. Curriculum Audit—Ms. Piperato shared that she wanted to capitalize on some of this evening's language such as "riding the wave" and "this is a forever thing". That is the crux of where we are with curriculum. As you are aware, the only thing that we have done so far, is try and open schools and I, unapologetically, say that we have been working 12-14 hours per day trying to open schools. This was, across the board a herculean effort from everyone to get our teachers ready and comfortable enough for them to say okay, we are here and ready to go. In terms of the audit, we have not looked at anything right now except for looking at how our teachers have the best tools they need to navigate the in-person and at-home piece. Our next step of the curriculum audit and the piece where DEI comes in, is we can stop and look at everything or we can say that not just this year, but every year we look at curriculum. Always, we have that lens of DEI as we look at what it is that we teach, what we choose, how we say what are our essential skills for students. So Dr. Riker and our team have talked a little about what our next step is and next month or the month after, we can talk about it. There are curriculum cycle issues that we need to talk about as a committee. We have presented elementary, intermediate and high school, the function of the courses and how we present them. In terms of how we look at curriculum on a regular basis, that is something we need to educate this committee about. We plan to bring to you our new purchasing cycle, we had one ready in March and had developed it, pushed it out to principals and the Chairs but of course Covid hit. Some of our digital resources are time-based that changes our purchasing cycle, so we will have to look at that again and bring it back to you next month. With that then is a cycle that says we are not going to wait six years to look at curriculum again. We should be looking at curriculum on a yearly basis and make those adjustments. When making those adjustments, there needs to be a piece on how we make sure there are filters we look at curriculum through, which is our DEI filter. So that is where we are with the curriculum audit and we will come back to you next month or the month after explaining the process, the difference between a curriculum cycle and a purchasing cycle and within that curriculum cycle we intend to house how we make sure, on a regular basis, we ask ourselves the right questions on what we are teaching and how we are teaching it. Mr. Andrews stated that Ms. Piperato may also want to look at Policy 105. You may want to take a look at it before you get too far into it. I think what you are doing is great but we need to be sure the whole Board gets involved in it. Mrs. Piperato assured Mr. Andrews that nothing happens without the whole Board. We can only do so much and the Board has to approve it. Dr. Riker added that he wanted to be clear with the committee that all curricula and resources that are used by the district and our teachers are required to be and have been approved by the Board. The policy obviously requires that and that continues to be followed. There is a plethora of options available based on those approvals that Administration and the Curriculum Department, in consultation with the department chairs and the teachers, would have

utilized based on what has been approved by the Board. With respect to the audit, I know I shared with Dr. Bonilla today and I can share it with the rest of the committee. One of the items I talked about two months ago after attending a PSBA webinar had to do with the equity policy and a continuum of implementation for an equity approach to how we look at curriculum in other areas such as policy, instructional models, courses, and programs. The tool that was actually shared during that webinar was from the Mid-Atlantic Equity Consortium and I have since reviewed that as one possibility for perhaps the committee to consider as a tool to use. Now I am sure there are many other possible tools out there that can drive our conversation not only as we look at the purchasing, the timing and the approach that Mrs. Piperato spoke about. Curriculum is not a six-year cycle; it is a continuing cycle of improvement. I will share that document with the rest of the committee, as a baseline, to begin our conversations around a tool that we can use as a committee, around the questions of an equity audit of curriculum that supports our DEI efforts. I wanted to share and talked about two months ago and the time since then has been focused on opening schools, so I didn't want anyone to think that this fell off our radar. Any feedback will be greatly appreciated on that tool. Dr. Bonilla shared that she had an opportunity to look at it at a glance. It looks like an easy tool to use compared to others I have seen. As far as documentation, information and assessing where we are. I will share others with you as well because we are looking for different resources to compare.

- c. ESACA Update—Dr. Vitulli shared that he and Dr. Riker had an informal meeting and thought it would be a great opportunity to update everyone on where we are and lay down the groundwork from what we did over the summer to where we are at. Dr. Riker and I start back in February when we discussed Covid, where we were at, what might happen and how it might affect our school. Immediately after the school year ended we went on an aggressive effort to make sure that everyone knew about the opportunities we provide through ESACA, knowing we were going to be targeted by elevated advertising from competing Cyber Charters. We were expecting a detrimental hit to the financial situation of our district. So we got aggressive right away and got updated information on the website and we even created some tools to capture interest and enrollments at both the elementary and secondary level as early as June 1st. We provided a number of parent meetings that involved elementary and high school parents to give them a full idea of what was expected in our cyber program starting this year. Again, not knowing how many people might enroll, but we had a feeling it was going to be elevated. These meetings went on through the month of July and right into first week of August. We discussed the programs and details parents wanted to know to make that proper decision. Our elementary program is considerably more intense, when it comes to parental participation. We had to make sure parents had a good understanding about what they were getting involved with and what it meant for them as a partner in the education of their child. Our numbers continue to grow through the summer, we even created our own Facebook page to get more info out. We made sure our website had prominent exposure and the ability to request information. We added a daily announcement page, parent and student orientation, resources, demo accounts, FAQs and anything we could to provide information to our families. Enrollment forms are there too. In August, Dr. Riker sent out an email asking parents to make a choice so we could plan. This followed a previous survey that I had sent out to families asking whether they were considering cyber for the coming year. Over 800 families with about 1000-1200 children responded with a high response rate for joining the

cyber program. We continue to have over 1580 people continue to apply. In an effort to handle, with a small crew of eight people. I need to stop and give a shout-out to my team that are doing this. They have worked tremendously and tirelessly over the summer. Kate Krammes, our school counselor working to get things set up, Stephanie Stricker, our elementary cyber coach, Lisa Vitulli, our intermediate cyber coach, and our secretary, Jessica Newberry. In an effort to help manage all this stuff with the help of our technology department, we have created an Edgenuity Help email that helps distribute the emails to various members of our team so that no one person is getting overloaded with emails. We purchased some phone equipment to assist our secretary in handling the increased calls. We also requested a point person (secretary) in each school that we could run our information through and Jessica has trained them to get them started on some of the basic questions that are being asked, so that they can help our families when they call. We provided 2 ½ days of training to our elementary and intermediate teachers prior to the start of this year. We've had a little less time with our high school but most of them have a little more experience with Edgenuity than our intermediates and elementary's do. I continue to reach out to principals to keep the cyber students in mind when sending out any information and when making calls not to forget these students and their parents. I don't want fears of disenfranchising to happen, including the staff itself so that they don't feel disenfranchised as well. We will keep that message coming all year. Currently, we have 1,536 secondary students and 860 elementary students for a total of 2,396 in attendance. Both programs have started this week, we had two days of soft start for secondary getting to know each other, where to find information and getting to know the teacher. Today was the first day of academics for our secondary students. Elementary is still on a four-day soft opening and getting to know each other as we continue to prepare a second elementary program. Our intermediate and current elementary program, of 2,396 are filled to capacity. Our H.S. program is growing tremendously and we have made more requests for Schedule B help. People are responding to help us meet the needs of these children. We currently have a waiting list of 295 secondary students and 238 elementary students. We came to a point where we had to stop and prepare for the opening of school. We may have taken about 40 elementary teachers to create and support the elementary program of 860 kids. So we had to start and put the others on a waiting list and prepare a second program for them. In response, for the secondary students, we are going to basically do Edgenuity as it normally is and go back to an asynchronous program supported by Schedule B teachers. We will be scheduling the 300 waiting list students over this weekend for a complete start on Tuesday. Elementary is a little different and has 238 students at the moment, waiting to be enrolled. We are working to get our Edgenuity portion of that program ready. We have about a dozen Schedule B teachers to provide an afterschool program for a couple of hours each day to support these children. Those couple of hours of direction and the required support of parents that they will need so that these children will do okay as well. We held a parent meeting today with 100 different parents, explaining this option because I wasn't sure how to do or how it would work out. Today is the first day that we tried to roll that out, with good response. Parents would certainly like to have their students in front of a teacher all day long but they understand the situation. They are happy their children can still stay home with them and receive some form of education at this point in time. These parents are anxiously waiting for us to get those students enrolled. Our goal is to have everything ready by Tuesday. That is quite an undertaking and I am going out on a limb to make that happen along with my staff. The community has been responsive, very compassionate, patient and happy that they have an option

like this to keep their children at home where they feel is the safest place to be. Last year we started with 230 kids and now we have about 2,000; that is quite a leap.

Dr. Bonilla thanked Mr. Vitulli for his report and asked if the committee members had any questions. Mrs. Bear stated that she has had all positive feedback from everyone, whether ESACA, asynchronous, synchronous, or in the school. It went very well this week so far and kudos to everyone. Mr. Andrews shared that everyone in the district has been working extremely hard and we have to give them a lot of credit. Dr. Bonilla added it's been a great week, we had a good first day of in-person. We had a lot of support from the teacher and everyone is trying so hard. It is evident that everyone is working together, so thank you for the update. It is important that as the ESACA community has grown exponentially in the last couple of days, that we continue to talk about what you are doing.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Phil Kerzner thanked Bill Vitulli and Kate Krammes, stating that the amount of work that they have put in has been immense and is incredible. Talking with parents, information has not been out to them as quickly as they would like, and they understand it is a difficult week, but that's the one thing I'm hearing. The same thing that Bill was talking about from the home school that's going on with Edgenuity because I do have MCTI students and I have students that are half day cyber/half day MCTI, full day virtual, half day in school, I have a bunch of different subgroups so when I send out emails and try to explain all the different priorities for each group, then all the parents get confused. So I informed students today, if you are in Edgenuity, make sure you just log into Edgenuity for your attendance, if you take your classes in school make sure you log into Sapphire and I was very succinct about each group and I had all these parents calling for passwords. If Dr. Vitulli can do ConnectEd just for his cyber students that would be helpful. Dr. Vitulli agreed communication is critical, there are so many different scenarios and so many things to get out, it is a difficult thing to do. Mrs. Piperato added that some of our systems don't easily do that but as we put to bed the most important things, which is making sure that students feel safe, feel heard and feel connected were our main goals for our first week of school. We will be able to in the next week or so, build some manual processes that will aid in that communication. It is coming and one of the things that I know Dr. Vitulli has stressed in all of his communications with teachers and administrators alike is, talk to parent, talk to parent and by the way, talk to parents. I appreciate that with Dr. Vitulli and his teams and the teachers are starting to embed that in their routines. Dr. Bonilla thanked Mr. Kerzner and Mr. Krammes for joining us today and bringing this to our attention. It is helpful to talk about this together and there is transparency and partnership amongst the different levels of the district and it is good to have these discussions.

Mr. Dymond asked if there is a chart of the classes offered at each grade level. In looking at other districts, they have the courses offered out there. I'd like to have a look at that so the Board can review and make some recommendations. Dr. Bonilla shared that over the course of the last couple of months the Education Committee went through a schedule of what's available for students at the various grade levels. In terms of the curriculum audit, assessing what we have, what is irrelevant, what we need to remove or add. We would love to have you participate in these

committee meetings as well. Mrs. Piperato shared that she and Dr. Bradley presented at the last three meetings and that the elementary and intermediate offerings are on the previous minutes. The High School courses are collected in our Program of Studies 2020-2021, which is available on our website and it does contain all of the classes that we offer our students. Quick reminder, it doesn't mean that we always offer those classes, offerings are based off of what students select and if there are enough students to run the class. The curriculum cycle that we will talk about will also address how we go about choosing the classes that we do choose by subject every year when we do this review. Different districts have different ways of doing things, so we will talk about that next month and what our value system is as administration, teachers and department chairs, what do we value and according to our strategic objectives and what is the driving force of why we do things here at East Burg. We believe those are the founding pillars that start to decide why we offer the courses that we do and why we offer the certain electives and how many do we offer. It is a really good time to look at what we value and realign our course offerings according to what we say is important to us. I am really looking forward to that conversation.

ACTION BY THE COMMITTEE: Advisory Recommendations for Consideration by the Board of Education--
NONE

The next meeting is Wednesday, October 7th at 7pm.

ACTION BY THE COMMITTEE: Motion to adjourn was made by Rebecca Bear at 8:06 p.m. Motion was seconded by George Andrews and carried unanimously 4-0.