

**EAST STROUDSBURG AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD OF EDUCATION
EDUCATION PROGRAMS & RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING
September 8, 2021
VIA Zoom
7:00 P.M.
Minutes**

I. The Chairperson, Dr. Damary Bonilla, called the Education Programs & Resources Committee meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. and led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance. Secretary Jessica Newberry called the roll.

II. Board Committee Members Present: Dr. Damary Bonilla, Rebecca Bear, Jason Gullstrand, Debbie Kulick

III. School Personnel Present: Brian Baddick, Tabitha Bradley, Jody Bohrman, Dave Cooper, Carol Deane-Gardner, Erin Dreisbach, Kaite Greiner, Shahida Jones, Trenee Lurry, Anthony Massa, Jennifer Marmo, Jessica Newberry, Heather Piperato, Gillian Turner, William Riker, William Vitulli

IV. Community Members Present: George Andrews, Lisa VanWhy, Ashley De La Rosa, Jane Gagliardo, Jacob Morris, Christopher Wolfel, Terry Laino, Desi Robinson, Charles Quarterman, Ruben Torres, Christian Luna, Luz Colon, Dr. Marilyn Brown, John Gerhardt, Madellyne Marquez, Annette Atkinson, Steven Lurry, Keleisha Phillip-Stringer, Shirley Rodriguez, Joshua Grose

V. APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES

RECOMMENDATION BY THE COMMITTEE:

Motion was made by Rebecca Bear to approve the agenda for September 8, 2021 and with members of the Committee reserving the right to add to the agenda and take further action in the best interest of the District. Motion was seconded by Jason Gullstrand and carried unanimously, 4-0.

RECOMMENDATION BY THE COMMITTEE:

Motion was made by Debbie Kulick to approve the minutes of the August 11, 2021 meeting. Motion was seconded by Jason Gullstrand and carried unanimously, 4-0.

VI. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION:

a. Review of Summer Extended Learning Options

Dr. Vitulli explains that this was a 3 session program to help students who may have struggled during the school year to prepare themselves for the next grade. The ELO summary breaks down by school, the number of students that participated, attendance through the sessions and student progress. An average of 93% of students out of 163 showed progress through the program and moved onto the next grade. We are hoping if the need exists that we'll be able to continue it in the future.

b. Overview of mental health systems from IU 20

Ms. Shae Jones, Coordinator for Social Services for Elementary Programs, begins with the tiered systems for mental health in the district. First, we have our Multi-Tiered System Support Program, MTSS, within that there is a behavior side and social emotional systems. The universal level is all settings and all students. It is preventative and proactive. All students in our district received these universal interventions

within the classrooms. Then we have our targeted group interventions which is about 10-15% of our students that may receive these. Lastly, we have our intensive individual interventions and those are individual students, their assessment based and they are more intensive procedures that we utilize. The universal supports we have within the district are Zones of Regulation, Mind Up, and Second Step, these are part of the Elementary Programs. We also have Ripple Effects for secondary. There is also the PBIS program, Positive Intervention and Support and our trauma informed initiatives. For Tier 2, we have the Check-In Check-Out program, we have social emotional learning groups, and small group counseling. Ms. Erin Dreisbach, Coordinator of Social Services for grades 6-12 begins with Tier 3 support. These are the most intensive supports. They would be Check & Connect, mentoring, social emotional learning, individual lessons, individual counseling, Renew, Alternatives to Expulsion, behavior plans and truancy meetings. Crisis situations are different and are very individualized because each one is different. Our schools provide immediate crisis support to students who need services. Including, Safe to Say, utilizing school police or 911, using the Columbia suicide severity rating scale, having the student go to crisis intervention through a hospital or mobile crises, and also Childline. Each building has a team of individuals that work together. We have four mental health professionals contracted through Colonial Intermediate Unit for the district. They provide crisis management, group and individual counseling, and they will be starting this year to provide education support groups to the community. The service overview shows you the numbers of students who received one on one counseling, in school groups, as well as students that received crisis intervention within the school. Dr. Bonilla appreciates that we're starting the school year with this conversation so that the committee and community will know what services are available. We've talked a lot about trauma and the circumstances that our students have faced during this crisis which is still not over yet. We want to ensure that we continue to talk about what resources are available, what investments we made and are making as a district. Ms. Kulick asks how are we going to introduce programs to the community, where will they be presented and what type of format are we using? Ms. Jones replied it's in the early stages and it is something we are able to do with the Director for this with the IU. They are looking at different support groups that our parents will need and it would probably be through a zoom format at this time. Eventually, the goal would be to open this up to an in person program and it would be occurring at different times during the day. We will also do a needs assessment for our community and see what the need is for our families. Mr. Baddick adds in addition we do have an IU mental health clinic at High School South that provides support to students and families. We also have the mental health clinic that is operating up at the North campus which opened up a year ago with a private provider. In addition to that, we have multiple community agencies that we've established MOU's with. Lehigh Valley, St. Luke's, and DNA are a few providers that come in to help our families and students. We are looking to add and expand and be more specific about what exactly the families need based upon referrals and the information coming in right now with the current conditions in our community with the pandemic. Dr. Bonilla asks Mr. Baddick if we are going to refer to the communications assessment and feedback that came from the committee in terms of best practices and ideas about how to communicate with families. Mr. Baddick replies we have to consider all aspects. We look at the student, the whole family, the family is an integral part of supporting the student emotionally and academically. It has to be a multi prong approach surrounding the students to ensure that we are addressing all the barriers to learning. We are communicating with the family what we provide and we provide it. There is a strong partnership with the families from the referral to the exit of the services. The last few community meetings we are giving pieces of information of what Pupil Services are providing throughout the district. Each month we're doing presentations of what we're providing for our students, staff and for our families.

c. DEI Update

Dr. Bonilla states that there has been a lot of public discussion recently about DEI, which stands for, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. The foundational efforts that are taking place in our district for over a year each month we take time on this committee to get an update and talk about DEI. The foundation that this work is happening across the Commonwealth with leadership from the Pennsylvania Department of

Education, also known as PDE. The following statement is from PDE “PDE which is committed to helping schools across the Commonwealth to meet our shared goal of ensuring that every learner has access to a world class education system that helps prepare them for success in the classroom and beyond. Critical to that mission is creating a culture of inclusiveness at all schools across the Commonwealth where students feel safe, respected, and welcome.” They published the equity and inclusion toolkit in 2017 which has developed to help advance efforts at the state and local levels to create and maintain supportive settings that celebrate diversity and teach students the importance of respect for self and others. The resource was developed in collaboration with other state agencies, organizations, and partners and it focuses on strategies and actions that schools can take to address bias and discrimination in a proactive and effective manner. We approach the work here in a proactive manner and not a reactive manner. The toolkit from PDE is part of a series of educational programs and practices that the department is providing to give schools the tools to move toward equity and inclusion. The conversation which is important is that we are on a continuum when it comes to work, we will never arrive, we’re always striving to be more equitable and to be more inclusive. PDE’s work around equity and inclusion is grounded on the idea that to do their best students must feel safe at school. A healthy and safe environment can help students thrive. Every student regardless of race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression should be provided the opportunity to learn, free from discrimination fear or harassment. PDE has an Equity Task Force. The statewide committee has representation from the Pennsylvania School Board Association, school districts throughout the Commonwealth, intermediate units, including Dr. Wolfel from our IU 20. In addition, DEI work is being conducted by the National School Boards Association. They released in 2021 a resource titled Reimagining School Board Leadership, Actions for Equity, which highlights the following quote. “Policies, programs, and curriculum must be audited for equity. School Boards must understand that with equity there is no such thing as neutral policies. They are either exacerbating, perpetuating, mitigating or eliminating inequities that bring the work that we are doing in our district and why the work is important. The East Stroudsburg Area School District vision is mirrored throughout our district. Our mission statement describes our commitment to prepare all students for a successful future. Our belief statements delineate what is expected of our district staff, students and community and how our collective collaboration affects those endeavors. Our mission statement East Stroudsburg Area School Districts fosters within all students, a commitment to excellence service and lifelong learning, which prepare students to be creative productive responsible citizens with a global perspective. Our vision statement, the East Stroudsburg Area School Districts supports all students on their path to success and values, their rich diversity. Our dynamic programs are delivered by high quality educators who utilize all tools at their disposal and collaborate with home and community in order to deepen everyone's passion for lifelong learning. Our values, these are our shared values, the East Stroudsburg Area School District believes that each individual has the ability and opportunity to learn in a safe and supportive educational environment effective communication and adaptability, is essential to the learning process diversity and understanding is a vital tenant for the success of our Community. A positive school community must have clear and consistent expectations for all members of our community to be treated with respect. School, home, and community partnerships are vital to student motivation performance and success evaluating adapting and utilizing technology is imperative to meet success in our society. Financial supportive education is an indispensable investment in the future of our entire Community. The foundation for success in all disciplines is literacy beginning at birth and progressing throughout life. Curricular and co-curricular activities are vital to student motivation performance and achievement. Instilling the understanding and importance of health and wellness is a vital component for all. Integration of career related activities through every level of education is essential to student success and continuous improvement of our educational system is our commitment to excellence and I want to preface the conversation by stating that. These are the mission statement, vision statement and shared values that we have to work towards every day in an action oriented manner. Each individual that comes here has to be working towards that each day. If we talk about the importance of life skills and don’t talk about the DEI we’re doing a disservice to our students. If we come here to talk about opportunities for workforce development and or career preparation and we don't tie that to DEI and consider the intersectionality that

relates to diversity, equity, and inclusion in our district and in our Community and society we're doing a disservice to our students. Ms. Trenee Lurry, Dean of Students at Lehman Int. School and DEI Coach begins that in preparation for the new school year we are gearing up for the Welcome Back meeting. The DEI FAQ's were created to share our commitment and purpose as a district to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. They are posted on our district homepage and this is a short snippet of it. At ESASD we celebrate the many diverse backgrounds that our students bring to the classroom. We seek to purposefully create an inclusive learning environment whose resources are equitably shared giving each student a sense of belonging and the opportunity to achieve academic success. What is DEI? Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. In the context of public education. Diversity is defined as the regarding of students' varied backgrounds, race, ethnicity, social class, gender, etc. as a resource to be used in the service of their education. Equity is defined as every student having access to the resources and rigor they need at the right moment and their education across race, gender, ethnicity, language disability, gender identity, sexual orientation, family background and or family income. Inclusion is defined as engagement within a Community where the equal worth and inherent dignity of each person is honored and inclusive Community promotes and sustains a sense of belonging. Dr. Bonilla refers to 2 resources. Beginning with the PDE resource. The PDE resource relates to equity, inclusion, and belonging, in Pennsylvania, and focuses on perceptions and clarity. This is a resource that was recently released by the Pennsylvania Department of Education, the equity piece in education is defining the same characteristics presented as well as inclusion and then belonging. Belonging is defined as experiencing appreciation, validation, acceptance and fair treatment within an environment. They cite the sources for their definitions, as we do in our DEI FAQ's. Then they talk about what is the perception of each of these concepts and then what is clarity. The perception of equity, inclusion, and belonging is another way of promoting critical race theory; the clarity is that critical race theory is not part of or taught in any state required curriculum. Equity, inclusion, and belonging in education helps create spaces for all learners and staff to be their authentic selves. Discussions about cultures and identities in education are important to ensure equitable access for all learners. The next course that we're going to share with you is a resource created by the Pennsylvania school boards association. It is related to School Boards across the nation having recently become embroiled in controversy and debates arising from options about critical race theory. This is a complex issue, in support of PSEA members they are offering context and definition about what critical race theory is and what it is not, the role of school board directors related to curriculum selection and the distinction between critical race theory and the equity promise made to all students. Dr. Bonilla states that the public documents will be made available upon request. Dr. Riker reads a public statement about DEI. "East Stroudsburg Area School District, through its mission statement, has recognized the diversity of our community. We have practiced the concept of inclusion airy practices for decades. We have created programs such as ESACA that last year grew to over 2900 students at its highest point. We have implemented a fully remote synchronous learning option for our students and families in grades three through ten for the first time ever, and recently expanded it to include a class of second graders. This option provides students and families with an opportunity that fulfills their needs, with an understanding that not all students and families have the same need. These options are a recognition that how one learns and the environment they learn in is not the same for everyone, so why make it the same. These are examples of how equity exists within our schools and not a one size fits all approach. Let me expand on other areas where similar practices of equity may be found, such as free or reduced lunch for those that are economically disadvantaged. One on one support for students, after school tutoring small group instruction provided by our paraprofessionals and our teachers. Our program of studies through levels of courses, English as a second language for non or limited English speaking students, medical attention from our school nurses, athletics, after school clubs and activities even the use of an elevator in a school. All of these and many more have one thing in common, they are there to meet the individual needs of the students, they are not there to give one student an advantage at the expense of another. They promote equity, by providing opportunities and our support for those that need them. When we find examples of disproportionality within our district, we all have an obligation to determine why it exists and what we can do to ensure all students have the opportunity for success. We are not here to impose our own biased

political beliefs, religious beliefs or rewrite history to what we or someone else believes. We are not activists in our schools as members of an educational institution, we are not permitted to influence, manipulate nor impose our beliefs and ideas on the students we serve. On a bus, in a cafeteria, in a classroom, in the halls, in a club, activity or sport and the Board has implemented policy against such activities. But we are also not here to prevent any students' race, religion, nationality, political affiliation, gender or how one may identify themselves from having the opportunity to access everything we offer. We are here to engage students in thoughtful dialogue, critical thinking, problem solving, so they may develop their own views and beliefs, not ours. We are not here to fill their heads with content that can easily be accessed through technology. Culturally responsive teaching and the understanding of others is critical to the positive engagements and relationships we create. It is not critical race theory.” Dr. Bonilla reads from the DEI FAQ’s. “As an employee of the district, how does DEI relate to me embracing the diversity of our school Community begins with every district employee. Exclusionary practices, ensuring the equal worth of every student, employee, and Community Member as we interact and engage throughout our day to day practices. Equity in your day to day practices includes providing access to resources and supporting individual access regardless of a student's race, gender, ethnicity, language disability, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, family background and or family income. Recognition, awareness and application of these principles, as members of our educational community ensure equal opportunities for access by all but not at the expense of others.” Dr. Bonilla continues “As a student or family member and a member of our East Stroudsburg Area School District community, we should be welcoming, caring and grateful for our diversity. We should always strive to be inclusive of everyone, regardless of race, gender, ethnicity, language disability, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, family background and or family income. We should ensure that opportunities to grow and learn are equally accessible by all and that our differences do not limit anyone's opportunity or access. We should extend a hand to those that need additional assistance and while one hand may only extend to one individual, many hands will build an inclusive and welcoming Community for all and that's the Community that we have built in our district, and that we want to continue to foster.” Ms. Bear states she was speaking to a Para at a building and was told that six of our Learning Support students graduated and got jobs through the programs we offer at school. We are providing equity to show children that might have the skills how to get a job after graduation and to be successful. Mr. Gullstrand commends all the hard work that the DEI committee and district has done. Ms. Kulick states this is new to many people and the fact that we are working every month to try and bring the information forward and to be able to make information available to everyone, and the public, in particular. Dr. Bonilla adds that we have not made curriculum changes based on the work of the DEI committee directly. We put together a committee that went through the same process that all new courses are created through. A multicultural course that launched this school semester, it is an elective course. I wanted to clarify the question of why there are no members of the general public on the DEI committee. There is a foundational work that has to happen in house first. You have to create a safe space where educators and those working in our district are able to have conversations, as colleagues, then be able to bring others along. We are not making curriculum changes so there are not formal protocols and processes that are happening. This is happening on a volunteer basis. More information can be found in the DEI FAQ’s.

d. Civics Exam Update

Dr. Vitulli explains that Pennsylvania Act 35 requires that schools incorporate a civics exam. It was meant to go into place in 2020 but due to COVID, it was pushed back another year. Piperato explains that in 2018 Governor Wolf signed into law Act 35 of 2018. The intent is to make sure that our students are graduating from our K-12 high schools informed of the basics, the foundational issues that make America in our government and civics areas. Instead of dictating an exam they gave local education agencies LEA’s the ability to develop one on their own or adapt the US Citizenship online test. The process began 2 years ago with our Social Studies department chairs at the middle level and high school level. They decided to adapt the US Citizenship test. They put together a test that our students will be taking at the end of their government classes in 10th grade. It will not be a final exam; it will be a course exam that

will count in the calculation of the fourth quarter or second quarter. It will be incorporated into their grade and what gets reported to the state and then ultimately the public is how many of our students in any given year passed or failed the test. The expectation is that by the end of the year, through PIM's reporting, we will be reporting this information. It is reported by number not by student name.

e. SmartMusic

Dr. Vitulli brings up the request for SmartMusic. SmartMusic is an online accompaniment program that allows musicians to learn and practice a piece of music with a full symphonic band, orchestra or chorus as the accompaniment. Much of the band literature we perform yearly is available on smart music libraries to students. They are able to access the music, practice their part, hear the parts of their musicians, and slow the tempo for easier practicing or a variety of other options. The benefit is the increase of student motivation to practice. Students will search through the music library and bring suggestions of pieces that they could play for future performances. It spans all levels, from beginners to collegiate. There are 2 options. Using the band or musical budgeting for \$4500.00 will give them 300 subscriptions. It can also be incorporated in ESSER funding and provide it for all students from beginners through high school for a total of 605 subscriptions. The cost for the additional would be \$8700.00. It is a good tool to give students the opportunity to work from home also. Dr. Bonilla states any resource that will further engage our students in music, in the arts, and in steam activities she supports particularly as we are talking about mental health and social emotional learning. How are the teacher access passes going to be divided up? Dr. Vitulli replies that they will be in place throughout the district. Dr. Bonilla asks how are we choosing the 305 students and if there are more than the 605 can we add on? Dr. Vitulli replied we can add on, the 305 is secondary only. He said it is his understanding that the 605 will accompany all instrument playing students. Ms. Bear asks if it includes all students enrolled in each learning option. Dr. Vitulli assures that every student can participate. Ms. Kulick asked if this purchase needs to be renewed each year? Dr. Vitulli responds yes it does need to be renewed each year. The ESSER money will have until 2024 to spend and 20% of that must be utilized on items such as this. Dr. Bonilla asks if we can pay for more than one year with ESSERS and make the commitment? Dr. Vitulli is confident the company would be willing to do that.

f. Plans for furniture upgrades at South/North Applied classes

Discussed previously are the ATSI grant monies that have been provided to North and South campuses. This funding was approved for an academic lab for South High School. As we come to the end of the first year's grant term, we have about \$30,000 left in this grant money for each High School. This balance will disappear if we do not use it by the end of September. Both schools have ideas on how to utilize the rest of this funding. Amy Polmouter, High School South Assistant Principal, has been working hard to explore new furniture and new ideas. The general idea is to create a new learning environment in the Applied classes. One of the requirements of the ATSI grant is to be utilized to help support a specific group of students and one of those groups is Special Education students. Principals from both schools have decided to examine this idea of creating a new environment within these applied classes that have a higher number of Special Education students. As you know the classroom environment can have a tremendous impact on a child's ability to learn and willingness to cooperate and collaborate. Lighting and seating has a big impact on a student's performance. The Principals have obtained quotes from a Co-star provider of furniture that would exhaust most of the existing grant monies. These are unique couches and chairs. It will be a similar setting to the ESACA blended program with couches, high top tables, and collaborative tables. The South total would be \$26,800 and North is TBD. Dr. Bonilla asks if Dr. Vitulli can ensure that there is equity throughout what we offer to both schools? Dr. Vitulli says each building will work with the designer to duplicate what's already been created for South. Dr. Bonilla adds the furniture at the blended building is fabulous, and is a cozy environment that makes you feel comfortable. Ms. Bear asks if it's the same company that did the North and South Cafe's? Mr. Baddick states that Matt Krauss, Access Coordinator, is working in conjunction with them. They did the North and South Cafe,

Sensory Integration rooms, and multiple Special Education rooms located throughout the district. Dr. Bonilla asks Dr. Vitulli to share the pictures and quotes with the committee.

VII. Questions & Comments from Board Committee Members on agenda items

n/a

VIII. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – LIMITED TO ITEMS OF DISCUSSION

Limited to comments on this agenda by residents and taxpayers of the school district (3 min. ea.)

- a. Mr. Steven Lurry states he is very disgusted about how the last meeting took place. He felt the Board was pressed by uninformed and some misguided individuals that tried to tear down our DEI program with incorrect information. He said he saw what happened at Stroudsburg School District when they voted against the DEI program. He said he really hopes that every Board member there stands with our DEI program because if the Board is a representative of our schools, then you will be backing the program because our schools and communities are diverse.
- b. Mr. Jacob Morris asks in the future if the Education Committee could add to the agenda the discussion of the potential establishment of a Website Content Committee. Mr. Morris states he sent a two-page PDF to Dr. Bonilla about the difference between Critical Race Theory and Educational Equity. It is a two-page form from Massachusetts. He states that Massachusetts has some of the same problems as Pennsylvania, he said that's remarkable in light of what happened at the last school Board meeting in the misinformation that was put forth. The straw man that was erected by some of the speakers equating Critical Race Theory with diversity, equity, and inclusion. It was distasteful and boggling. Critical Race Theory is not being taught at the high school level or in the schools in the East Stroudsburg School District. This needs to be communicated emphatically and clearly to all the citizens that vote in the election.
- c. Mr. Anthony Massa states he is an employee of the East Stroudsburg School District as a Social Studies teacher at High School North and also is a member of the DEI Committee. He does not live in the East Stroudsburg School District. As an employee and DEI member he would like to offer an emphatic voice support for DEI. The real focus of DEI is on students, on making sure that all students are seen, all students are heard and that all students are represented, that is inclusivity. Whether this is in our Curriculum, clubs, or district awareness, our kids and their unique identities need to be embraced and celebrated, that's what DEI is all about, representation. Mr. Massa is currently teaching a new Social Studies elective for the district, a multicultural perspective on US History. It focuses on different aspects of American history but told from the perspectives of the historically underrepresented from all kinds of ethnic groups and identities. Mr. Massa says he had a student recently tell him that they are really appreciating the course and DEI because they felt seen, because they felt represented, and that is why courses like this existed and its why DEI is doing the work that it does, it's for our students, it's for our community. DEI is not about taking anything away from anyone, it is not subtraction, it's addition, and I really think that's something we can all get behind.
- d. Mr. George Andrews states that Dr. Riker's explanation of DEI was excellent, he thinks if we get that out there on the website the community will understand the difference between what we're trying to do with DEI and it has nothing to do with Critical Race Theory. Mr. Andrews thinks it will be helpful to prevent what happened at the last Board meeting. He thinks it's great that came from the Superintendent because the community knows that the Board and Superintendent are working together.

- e. Mr. Reuben Torres lives in Middle Smithfield Township and has children in the district. He states that he supports DEI in the school system and that his daughters have been let down by various school systems in New York and coming to the East Stroudsburg School District knowing that this type of initiative is taking place, they know that their voices matter. Mr. Torres says it's important to him and the future of his children. What happened at the last Board meeting was appalling. He felt the racism that was expressed by many public comments needed to be addressed and with the right information being put out by the school Board and district that DEI doesn't equal Critical Race Theory is necessary. Mr. Torres thinks the Board and district are doing a good job and heading in the right direction by keeping this program active and alive.
- f. Mrs. Dr. Marilyn Brown is an educator in the New York City Department of Education. She teaches CRSE which stands for Cultural Sustainability and Critical Race Theory, DEI is not CRT. Dr. Brown states as a taxpayer of Middle Smithfield Township she is glad to see that the tax dollars are being used properly. She states that seven years ago she was not happy with the School Board and is glad we're making progress. We do have a long way to go and hopefully we will get to CRT because it's not in subtraction. Dr. Brown thanks the Board and district for the work they are doing. She would like to implore people to use the materials that were presented tonight in the chat, to read the FAQs and don't go by what people say. Do your own research and if you're not well versed or know anything about DEI, CRE or CRT please have that courageous conversation with someone is and may be on the other aisle of your mindset. Dr. Brown states that the only way we are going to learn, we're going to model for the students is to engage in these tough conversations and then come together to collaborate for their benefit. We want the students to stay here after graduation and help build our community. If our young people don't see themselves in the curriculum and they move on after school we're not going to have much of a town left. Dr. Brown thanks the Board and committee for all they are doing for DEI.
- g. Mrs. Katie Greiner is a teacher in the district and lives in East Stroudsburg Borough. She is a DEI member and it's one of her favorite things she does as a teacher. Her goal last year in ESACA was to have the kids who didn't have access to books have books that represented who they are in the different cultures. Mrs. Greiner states she made a virtual library for the students. One of her students, a foster child, told her she read every book she posted and loved the stories because there's girls that looked like her. The extra work I did was worth it, it made her day and she appreciated having the books of different cultures and holidays. She says it was a proud moment that I made a difference and I learned through the DEI Committee and doing research on my own. She appreciates that ESASD is doing this as a taxpayer and educator in the district and also all the work Mrs. Lurry and the Board have done.
- h. Dr. Jody Bohrman, Asst. Principal at Lehman Intermediate School says she wants to thank the DEI Committee for their hard work, Mrs. Lurry, Dr. Riker and the school Board. As a teacher and Asst. Principal she grew to see that my idea that education provided a level playing field for all opportunities was not the reality. As educators we have a responsibility to serve our students regardless of their background, to be the best they can be. Dr. Bohrman states that to her is the effort of DEI and she is grateful there is a receptive audience and applauds all who support it.
- i. Mrs. Jennifer Marmo lives in Lehman Township and teaches at High School North. She wants to thank Dr. Riker for what he said earlier about DEI. She thinks a lot of the comments people are making need to be transparent to the community. The clarity is going to be something that is really important. She says she has two children in the district and as a teacher and living in the community she sees what is happening around us. She sees students without Wi-Fi and food. Mrs. Marmo delivered food to her community during the shutdown. What DEI is doing for everyone at this point is so much more than what, unfortunately, people picked up at the last school Board

meeting. She thinks being here tonight, saying these things, showing our support and having the district put out something that is going to make things very clear to all of the taxpayers and parents of the district could help stem the negativity that came out. Mrs. Marmo thinks that when our students are seen and heard and know that we care about them it makes a difference to them. This is something she dedicates herself to every moment that she is in the classroom. As the English Department Chair at the North High School I am very excited about the class that Mr. Massa is doing and my son in 10th grade is also. I'm hoping that we can do an English course that would mirror that as an elective and continue to enrich our children. We had a multicultural literature course but it has disappeared from our curriculum. The fact that we are looking at what we are doing and constantly evolving is so important to our children and to all of us. Mrs. Marmo says thank you and she is very proud to be a part of East Stroudsburg.

Dr. Bonilla thanks the Educators and District Staff who are doing the work with our students on the front line, who are committed to supporting all of our students and being the embodiment of and taking action on behalf of the district relating to the values, the mission and the vision that we have set forth for the district. She does want to address the comment about transparency. Every time there is fear people talk about transparency, she is uncomfortable with words being thrown around and not being defined because something is not shared right at this moment doesn't mean that it's not going to be shared at the time it is appropriate for the organization. There is foundational work that is happening because we are creating the space for individuals to be able to have uncomfortable conversations within each other for these educators who are working with the students to be able to come here and say this is what I'm doing, this is why I'm doing it. We weren't having the same public conversation a year and a half ago when this committee was not formulated in the way that it is now. Things were happening at different levels of the district. Once we came together and said there are different efforts happening, how do we bring that to a cohesive effort and move it forward and advance the work and benefit our students and community that's when we've been able to elevate the conversation and have uncomfortable conversations and at this time, from last month's Board meeting, it is evident that we are not at a place and from Stroudsburg's Board Meeting, which has been referred to several times, we are not at a place the community to have that kind of very public respectful discourse. The work that we're doing is leading us to the place where we can have a town hall where people can have opposing views, be respectful, and not share misinformation. Dr. Bonilla continues that you cannot come to our meetings in this community and say anything you want. You can agree with me and not be allowed to do that. We do inform our community and that's why every month we have these updates and if you watch these meetings, the minutes and the recordings are available to you, you will know what we've been talking about along the way. As we feel we are able to open up, then we are putting things out like the FAQs. This is something we want to do for the new school year because we've been at these conversations here with the leadership space and we did. Dr. Bonilla states we will not allow disagreement and chaos to lead the timeline that we have for what is right for our students and our district. You may ask for something right now and we may write back to say we're still working on something, this is what we have so far and refer to that. We ask for patience and partnership, because this is a partnership, the parents, community, business owners, everybody is in it together. Dr. Brown referred to the economy and the importance of retaining our students to stay here to come back and teach and be able to stay within the district. We want people to stay and be able to give back and be able to do things that Mrs. Marmo referred to. When you put out information for the sake of putting out information and people are not ready to have those conversations respectfully it causes some of the chaos that we have seen in other districts across the Commonwealth and across the country. This conversation will continue, this committee will continue doing the work and engaging different levels of the district because everybody here is important to us. We are not a perfect district; we have work to do.

IX. PREVIOUSLY SUBMITTED TO FINANCE COMMITTEE

none

X. ADVISORY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CONSIDERATION BY THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

Dr. Vitulli explains School Wide Positive Behavior Support (Item c.) is to provide the program at each building some stimulus cash to secure prizes and items that will help support and recognize students' attendance, behavior and academic efforts through various means. It will be similar to what the High Schools are doing with the scanners that were recently approved to track and award student points. The points then are turned in for prizes. To support this effort, we would like to consider a \$5 per student per school fee, from ESSERS money to give the programs a head start. Ms. Kulick asks how are we going to keep funding this when ESSERS is no longer available in the future. Dr. Vitulli responds that in the future the funds will come from building budgets. We are giving them a head start this year because they haven't had the ability to plan for it. Ms. Kulick replies she is fine with the program but wants to make sure there is a future plan. Mr. Gullstrand says it's a good incentive for the students that are coming back. Ms. Bear agrees with Mr. Gullstrand and also that this could be implemented into our MTSS programs as well in the future.

BY THE RECOMMENDATION COMMITTEE: Dr. Bonilla asks for a motion to move the advisory recommendations for consideration which include: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, Acadience, School Wide Positive Behavior Support, SmartMusic and High School South and North furniture upgrades to the Finance Committee. Motion was made by Ms. Kulick. Motion was seconded by Mr. Gullstrand and carried unanimously 4-0.

XI. NEXT MEETING- Wednesday, October 13th at 7:00 p.m.- Via Zoom

BY THE RECOMMENDATION COMMITTEE:
Motion was made by Ms. Bear to adjourn. Motion was seconded by Mr. Gullstrand carried unanimously, 4-0

XII. ADJOURNMENT: 8:32 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,
Jessica Newberry