

**EAST STROUDSBURG AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD OF EDUCATION
EDUCATION PROGRAMS & RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING
March 9, 2022
VIA Zoom
7:00 P.M.
Minutes**

- I. The Chairperson,** Dr. Damary Bonilla, called the Education Programs & Resources Committee meeting to order at 7:06 p.m. and led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance. Secretary Jessica Barlotta called the roll.
- II. Board Committee Members Present:** Dr. Damary Bonilla, Rebecca Bear, Jason Gullstrand, Debbie Kulick
- III. School Personnel Present:** Renee Stevens, Jessica Barlotta, Heather Piperato, William Riker, William Vitulli, Sarah Campbell, Benjamin Brenneman
- IV. Community Members Present:** Shanice Person-Correa, Santos Rosas, Jenny Bogart, Kondwani Keitt, Aryana Dixon, Misha VanUden, Jenny Ro, Leyti N'Diaye, George Andrews, Amy Serio, Karen Peters
- V. APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES**

RECOMMENDATION BY THE COMMITTEE:

Dr. Bonilla asked for a motion to approve the agenda for March 9, 2022, 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 made by Debbie Kulick. Rebecca Bear seconded the motion and carried unanimously, 4-0.

RECOMMENDATION BY THE COMMITTEE:

Motion was made by Jason Gullstrand to approve the minutes of the February 9, 2022 meeting. Motion was seconded by Debbie Kulick and carried unanimously, 4-0.

VI. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION:

a. PTO Presentation-Resica – Amy Hughes, PTO President

Dr. Bonilla introduced the topic as an opportunity for the Ed. Committee to collaborate with and support the PTO. Tonight's presentation was Resica. Amy Hughes went on to share pictures of the events the PTO has held. They usually have a Tricky Tray, which is their biggest fundraiser, but this year they are changing it to a clock drawing. These activities help support field trips, dances, etc. They showed pictures of the teacher appreciation luncheon that they hold every year. Then pictures of all the field trips they sponsor. They hold a bus driver breakfast, a Veteran's Day Celebration to teach the kids about the veterans, which is greatly supported by parents. They do other fundraisers and gift card sales. Dr. Bonilla asked how they can support the PTO and if some of the events are outside of the school, in terms of the fundraisers? She said they are generally in the school in the gym but the clock drawing will be outside the school. This year it will be at the East Stroudsburg VFW. Dr. Bonilla asked how they will spread the word and if it will be a flyer they hand out? Ms. Hughes answered that they did. They posted on several Facebook pages. They need more parents to come in and help. Dr. Bonilla asked if an hour is enough time for a parent to volunteer? Ms. Hughes responded that the more volunteers there are, the more

spread out the work is. Dr. Bonilla asked who are the other members of the PTO to be recognized for their support and help? Carolyn Metaxas is the Teacher President. Alicia Shaffer is the Teacher Vice President. Lisa Bell and Maribell are the Co-Vice Presidents. There is no Treasurer at the moment. Caren Senior and Jackie Doyle are two Teacher Representatives that do the treasury work for now. Anna Condogi is the Secretary. Sue Ludwig is another Teacher Representative Secretary. Alisandra Resapro is the Financial Coordinator. Dr. Bonilla wanted to highlight the volunteers and the great work that they do. She thanked her for the work they are doing for the community.

Resica has a special place in Rebecca's heart because she was a part of it. Rebecca volunteered last week at the ESE Tricky Tray and would love for Ms. Hughes to call her if they need anything. She tries to get to as many PTO events as she can and to volunteer at as many as she can because she appreciates all the things the PTO does at all levels. She went on to say that any help is appreciated and most do not know how little it takes to help out.

Debbie Kulick thanked them for the gift card sales.

Jason went on to say that they say they only do so much, but they really do a lot. He also asked what a clock drawing is. Ms. Hughes clarified that a clock drawing goes from 2 to 7, where every 15 minutes they draw a number and that person wins some amount of money. That ticket is then put back, and they continue drawing, with the grand prize drawing winning \$1,000.00.

Dr. Bonilla thanked her for the presentation and wished her a great rest of the night.

b. DECA Update – Jenny Ro, DECA President

Dr. Vitulli went on to introduce the President of DECA, Jenny Ro, who was present to speak about DECA and how they did at the State Competition this year. Dr. Vitulli said that it is one of the largest extracurricular organizations at 102 members. It grows every year and is led by two advisors. He introduced the President, Jenny Ro, and started her slideshow. She started by thanking everyone for having them present. She is the President and a District Representative. She introduced her team and the organization and what they do. She discussed how proud they are of what they do, as well as how committed they are. She showcased some pictures of their displays via the presentation. She then passed the presentation to Misha VanUden and Aryana Dixon. Misha VanUden, an officer, discussed putting DECA into action and what they do at their weekly meetings. Mrs. Bogart and Mrs. Peters are their advisors and they attend the weekly meetings. During their meetings, they practice simulated business and real-world situations. They also review business terminology. She passed the meeting to the Vice President, Aryana Dixon, to discuss competitions. They have several levels of competition, Districts, States, and Nationals. Districts are only role-plays. State levels are also written level with a presentation. Nationals encompass all of them. Role-plays are the main focus of competition. They also have workshops at the competitions. Ms. Dixon then handed the presentation back to Jenny Ro, who handed it back to Misha and Kondwani Keitt to discuss what DECA is to them. Misha said for her, it provides skills in business and gives her the confidence to pursue goals. It also provides her the opportunities to make connections. Kondwani introduced himself as District 7 Representative. For him, DECA is more than a club. It is a place that those with similar interests can come together and discuss business and build their skillset. Jenn Ro thanked them both for their input. They then discussed the legacy of DECA and what they have done the last 15 years. This was discussed by the VP of Finance, Leyti N'Diaye. He went through the legacy of those who have led DECA in the past. Jenny Ro introduced the next slide which was the 2022 State Career Development Conference. They went to Hershey Lodge February 15th to 18th. They were able to network and attended workshops. They showed pictures of the experience and recapped the recognition they received at the event. They followed up that slide with a slide discussing the International Qualifiers from states. They will now have several club members travelling to the International Competition in Georgia in April. Jenny Ro then thanked everyone not only for supporting DECA, but also for those that presented.

Dr. Bonilla thanked them for the presentation and complemented them on their poise and positivity. She then opened it up to Debbie Kulick.

Debbie Kulick commended them for the participation they have in the organization. They are the future leaders and the people they are assured will carry the flag and make us a tremendous nation.

Jason Gullstrand commented how great of an organization it is and how happy he is that we will be represented in Internationals because for so long they were not doing anything due to COVID. For Jason's kids, DECA opened their eyes and changed their minds on what they wanted to study when they graduated. It is an excellent program and has many facets to it.

Rebecca Bear added that this is a very important organization because those that are in it are the future leaders, and those members like them make Rebecca proud to be on the Board, because of all the hard work they put in. She doesn't think they recognize how much work they do. They represent our School District on so many levels and they do it so well.

Jason Gullstrand wanted to add that it is hard to wrangle over 100 kids for the program so he wanted to recognize those that run the program. There is a lot of work for those that run the program and he wanted to thank them for their hard work.

Dr. Bonilla thanked Jason for saying what she was going to. She asked George if he wanted to comment.

George Andrews added that the group gives him faith for the future leaders. He thanked them all and congratulated them. Dr. Bonilla did the same.

c. Climate Survey results - High School North – Ben Brenneman

Dr. Vitulli went on to introduce Mr. Ben Brenneman as the principal to the North High School. Mr. Brenneman proceeded to start a presentation that opened with him discussing his building's plan for student re-entry this past year, which included a lot of activities the opening week of school geared towards welcoming kids back and trying to re-acclimate them to the school building. These activities also included the Climate Survey. As he discusses the results, he explained that one of their focuses for the year was Wellness Wednesday. The three areas of focus for Wellness Wednesdays are career readiness, PBIS integration, and SEL integration, and making that a part of their school integration. Their PBIS is T-WOLF: Tolerance, Wise-choices, Ownership, Leadership, and Friendship. What they are working towards is integrating these concepts. Their survey was administered September 1st. Their student response rate was 67%.

The areas of success that Mr. Brenneman found were around the following with over an 80% rate of strongly agree and agree: 'teachers are available when students need to talk', 'If I'm absent, there's a teacher or some other adult at school, that will notice my absence.', 'teachers make me feel good about myself', 'it's easy to talk with teachers at school', 'I can talk to my teachers about problems I'm having in class', 'there's lots of chances for the students at the school to get involved in sports clubs and other school activities outside of the classroom', 'I feel safe at the school' and others.

The areas of growth, which were strongly agree and agree between 65%-80% included: 'My teachers often connect my learning to the life outside of the classroom', 'Students have lots of chances to help decide things like school activities and rules', 'I feel like I belong', 'I am happy at this school', 'I feel like I am part of this school', and others. These are the areas where they want to be better.

The areas they need to really work on and dig deeper are less than 65% included 'I regularly attend school events', 'I regularly participate in extracurricular activities', 'Students talk about the importance of understanding their own feelings & the feelings of others', as well as others. In one, there is a disconnect where the students see there are a lot of opportunities of activities but they don't attend them.

Mr. Brenneman next broke down the Areas of Success in a pie chart on slides. Three slides were about the relationships of students with staff. He then proceeded with charts relating to student experience. He followed this up with their Areas for Growth. This included student engagement, student sense of belonging, and student behavior. Their Areas to Dig Deeper included student participation in extracurricular events & activities and student emotions & self-regulation. The conclusion included that students feel that teachers are connecting with them and they feel safe at school. Students are aware of the opportunities available to them but participation rates are low. Students are concerned with their own interactions with one another. Mr. Brenneman than thanked the committee for letting him present.

Dr. Bonilla called on Rebecca Bear for comments or questions. She went on to say that, as a North parent, she appreciates hearing the survey results. She finds it interesting that both North and South surveys were similar and the kids feel the same so she is thankful that there are teachers that the students enjoy talking to and feel comfortable opening up to. She appreciates the surveys because it gives the pulse of what's going on in the schools. As a mom, she feels like it is all going well. Even as an adult, people react before thinking, it is the nature of being human. She appreciates the surveys because she thinks it will help us as a district to be better.

Debbie Kulick commented to add that she was going to say a lot of what Rebecca said. She was really interested to see that the balance of the answers were very similar. She thinks that the attention to the participation in all the various activities and trying to make that a bigger focus will be helpful. She knows they do a lot of things up there, because she hears about them, and she knows they all go out of their way to really have a very full agenda.

Jason Gullstrand added that he agreed with everything that Rebecca and Debbie just said, in terms of the numbers being similar, getting that information and it was the beginning of the year that the information was collected. The important part to doing the surveys is that there is a plan in place to make better the areas of concern from the survey. He went on to say that it is really good to see that both administrators, at North and South identified those issues, know how to make those corrections, and hopefully, while it's not something that's fixed overnight, it's something that's grown over time and he appreciates that they have that plan in place, to make it better and not only the way that they want to see it, but also how they want to be seen by the Community, which is great.

Dr. Bonilla went on to say thank you. There were a lot of good comments and good feedback and she certainly appreciates the collecting of information that presents some picture of what the students are feeling and the one note that she made was she was grateful that the majority of the kids feel safe. With everything that is going on in society and in the Community and in the district, she's just grateful that most of the students said they feel safe. She also added that, like her colleagues have mentioned, there is work to do. They always can work to make things better, but safety is definitely important and part of a positive education experience. She appreciates him walking them through the information and thinking through how to make it better and one of the things they have asked everyone is to be able to see another survey and those results at a later time of the school year so they are looking forward to some areas of improvement there.

Mr. Brenneman added the last thing he wanted to share with everyone that Mr. Triolo and he have known each other for a while, but they spend probably three to four mornings a week on the phone on their trips into work and they do talk and share ideas and Mr. Brenneman wants everyone to know that they work together with the goal of helping the kids of our district. It's not about one versus the other. A good idea is a good idea, and if it can support the kids in the district why not do it? He just wanted to share that with everyone, as they are seeing a lot of similarities, that they are working together as high school buildings within the district.

Dr. Bonilla said that's great because they do ask about the sharing of best practices and being able to share knowledge so that's great to hear and they love proactive nature versus reactive, so all good things.

d. Virtual Classroom Help (VCH) Update - Sarah Campbell

Dr. Vitulli introduced the next guest as Miss. Sarah Campbell, who works at Smithfield Elementary and was there to give an update on the Virtual Classroom Help program that was put into place the year prior with extra tutoring to help any student at the elementary level. It was put in place during the evenings. They restarted that program again this year through the assistance with Dr. Bradley and Mrs. Campbell and then he turned it over to her to give the update on how it's going.

Mrs. Campbell introduced herself as a first grade teacher at Smithfield Elementary who is also completing her administration certification. She jumped on board to help Dr. Bradley with the program and she is really excited to be involved because she is seeing it in place and seeing how much it's helping the students already. This year, they have four teachers, one para professional, and two substitute teachers

who are working with the program. They are running the program only three nights a week, due to their commitments, so it's running Monday, Tuesday and Thursday nights from five to seven. Students grades K through five can log on and ask questions. They can ask for help with their homework but a lot of kids are coming on asking for some extra practice, especially in the older grades with math. They might get through their homework but then they feel like they need to do a little bit more so they're asking for a little extra practice. They have only been up and running for four weeks, and due to holiday conferences and snow days so far, they have only had 49 visits, but she thinks that's pretty good for only running for about 12 days. They have a bigger turnout for the grades three through five, than they do for grades K through two. She thinks, from her experience, that may change once report cards come out in a couple weeks because she thinks that parents will see their students might need a little extra help and they may have forgotten from the last report card that they can log on to the program so they will push it out again. She knows principles were asked to push out the flyer once again the week of the meeting and it went up on the Facebook page, the Community Facebook page, so she is hoping that they get a little bit more turnout. What's a little bit different this year, compared to last year, is that they do not have ESACA students attending because they have access to their teachers after school hours now. She believes they are all schedule B teachers, so students are able to log on and ask their teachers questions and get the help that they need. They also have students in school, five days a week, so where last year they were home three days a week and didn't have that connection to a teacher and maybe needed that connection, on a daily basis with the teacher, they were logging on more often. She thinks that, considering those factors, and the fact that they are only running three days a week, that they are doing fairly well. She hasn't gotten much parent feedback, but she did talk to one teacher from her school who shared that she got one of her students involved and the parents said, this is amazing because a lot of parents don't understand the new way of math, as they say, and this is a great way for things to get explained to them. They then also make a connection in other subjects. They're not even quite sure what skills they are always working on with ELA or what they're covering in science, so it's a good way just to come understand what's going on and get the help that they need right away, instead of having to wait for a teacher to respond. So far, she feels like the program is off to a good start and she is hoping that it only gets better as the year goes on.

Dr. Bonilla said it is excellent and allowed Jason Gullstrand the opportunity to provide feedback. Jason added that he agreed that it's a short time to get a complete idea of the number of students but helping any students is tremendously advantageous and it's a way to reach out to the Community and to those students that need that help so he definitely appreciates and thanked Mrs. Campbell for the work.

Rebecca thanked her for doing it. She thinks it's a great tool for the students and the parents. She asked if it is every elementary school that goes on?

Mrs. Campbell responded that there is one login for kindergarten through second grade for all six elementary schools and one login for grades three through five and there is a teacher. Right now they have it so one teacher covers the first hour and other teacher covers the second hour, but they overlap, so that no kids get lost in the mix. The kids are amazing. The three through five group there tends to be maybe four or five in there at a time and they understand they just need to wait until it's their turn, and the teacher will get to them, and they can stay logged on for the whole two hours. They have had a couple parents come on just to ask questions; they want them to work with their kids but they want their questions answered, which the teachers are willing to help them as well.

Rebecca went on to ask if they can ask about any subject matter? Math, English, Social Studies, Science? Mrs. Campbell said yes.

Rebecca responded that they need to get the word out more, so there is a lot more students, but she thinks that's fabulous that they do it because a lot of parents look for tutoring.

Mrs. Campbell added that it's just a great easy way for them to log in, and most have their Chromebooks, outside of kindergartens, but parents can very easily request it, and with their new ID tags, they have a QR code that signs them right in so they bring it home and they're able to log on at night.

Debbie Kulick commented that this is a blessing for the district. Not every district has something that offers this and she knows parents are so happy, the ones that have particularly focused on it and have seen the results with their kids so she told them to keep up the good work and thanked them.

Dr. Bonilla went on to say that she agrees with her colleagues. It's a great opportunity that they are presenting for families. One of the things they always ask about in the committee is what more can we do, what additional resources and programs can they offer? That's the area that they look at, so it's good to get an update. They certainly want to support them in getting the word out, so they will share ideas that they think of to help Mrs. Campbell get the word out as well. Dr. Bonilla some of what she's already mentioned will be helpful. Sometimes people just don't realize what's available to them or so many papers come home and it might get lost in translation, but it is a great resource and they are grateful that they all are part of the project, so thank you.

e. DEI update – Dr. Damary Bonilla in lieu of Trenee Lurry

Dr. Bonilla was introduced for the DEI update. Trenee Lurry was not able to join that evening so she wanted everyone to know that the traveling Smithsonian Exhibit Reception was held on February 24 and had about 25 people participate. In addition to that, the North students were highlighted in the Pocono Record. Dr. Bonilla was unfortunately not able to join the Smithsonian Exhibit, as she had a work event in New York, but she knows others did join, so she wanted to open it up to the board members who participated, to share their reflections.

Rebecca Bear commented that she is always impressed when she hears the students speak and the passion that they had for the artwork. She also got to see them understanding stuff that she didn't understand and had them explain it to her. One thing she learned was Latina/Latino and Latin X. They explained to me all of that, and she had never known. They also talked to her about being Hispanic versus Latino versus being Puerto Rican versus this and how they identify. She said it was really interesting to talk to the students and how they reflected on the art exhibits. One thing her and Mr. Brenneman did put out that they didn't get a lot of feedback on was a cultural 'bring your dish' but because of COVID, they could not. In place of that, they are trying to compile cultural recipes so if anyone has a recipe they want to share, they can feel free to email it to Rebecca and they are going to try and put together a North recipe book of all recipes because, as Mr. Brenneman said, they're a very diverse group of students and families up at North and they all love food, so if anyone wants to send a recipe, she'd love to learn how to cook new and interesting foods.

Dr. Bonilla said it is a great idea. Maybe they could be open to inviting others. George Andrews added that it should be for the whole district. Rebecca agreed that the idea of the whole district was okay. George Andrews that it was small but they had a great group. They had a good time. The Choraliers did a great job singing. The students who gave the presentations as they walked through did a great job. He was very pleased with it. He was glad he could make it.

Dr. Bonilla responded that she was glad they were able to join in and that they could give their reflections. Dr. Bonilla was really sad to miss it, but she was happy to read the Pocono Record piece, and to see the students featured is great. The other thing is that some of the activities, students who are not engaged in other clubs or other activities sign up because they get to talk about their culture and a part of them that they may not feel they can share in other spaces and here they are in school with the opportunity to share, about themselves.

Rebecca added there's a student there that spoke last year at the event that they had, and it was her first time ever public speaking. She spoke again this year and it was amazing to watch her grow as a student and, as a person. She was so pleased that Rebecca remembered her when they had that conversation. She went on to say Mr. Massa does a really good job with this type of stuff there too and picking students to speak.

Dr. Bonilla commented that it's a great opportunity, but to Rebecca's point exactly; they may never have spoken in other places, but if she is sharing, who she is with someone, it could make it easier to talk publicly about it. Dr. Bonilla loves that Rebecca notices that she had been there and that she was able to recognize her in that way and that they are creating these spaces for the students to be able to share themselves. She also wanted to go back to the piece about the recipe book. She loves it because they have been in different areas of the district talking about wanting to do some kind of diversity potluck and

it just hasn't happened.

George Andrews added that they just go get the Expositions down to the South school so they get to see them. Rebecca Bear said that they were at South, but she did not know if they put them up. George said that we have to get them to both places. Dr. Bonilla asked Dr. Vitulli or Dr. Riker to comment. Dr. Vitulli said they looking at next fall.

Dr. Bonilla said once they get things up and running it'll be easier like with North, because they did it last year, they were able to do it again and so they will be able to have representation in both of the high schools, which is great. They will continue plugging away at ensuring that the students are represented in the different facets that they bring to school and to the school community and district community.

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

Rebecca said they had some really good presentations for the night. She liked having all this positive stuff.

George Andrews added that it was a nice enjoyable night. He actually learned a lot about the decade program which was very interesting how successful the district has been and the students have been because the district has the advisors, but the students are the ones to make it go.

Dr. Bonilla commented that they were fabulous. She was excited when she saw all the students on the screen. That made her night already, but to hear all of them and all of the great work that's going on, she can celebrate the night as a good evening.

VIII. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – LIMITED TO ITEMS OF DISCUSSION

Dr. Bonilla proceeded to open the meeting for public comment. She did remind everyone that the public participation is limited to the items of discussion and asked that those interested in commenting, raise their hand. There were no comments.

IX. ADVISORY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CONSIDERATION BY THE BOARD OF EDUCATION PREVIOUSLY SUBMITTED TO FINANCE COMMITTEE

There were no advisory recommendations for this meeting.

X. NEXT MEETING - Wednesday, April 13, 2022

RECOMMENDATION BY THE COMMITTEE: Motion to adjourn was made by Rebecca Bear. Motion was seconded by Debbie Kulick and carried unanimously, 4-0

XI. ADJOURNMENT: 8:21 pm

Respectfully submitted,
Jessica Barlotta