

**EAST STROUDSBURG AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD OF EDUCATION
EDUCATION PROGRAMS & RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING
May 11, 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 Newberry called the roll.
- II. Board Committee Members Present:** Dr. Damary Bonilla, Rebecca Bear, Jason Gullstrand, Debbie Kulick
- III. School Personnel Present:** Jessica Newberry, Heather Piperato, William Vitulli, Trenee Lurry, Tabitha Bradley, Maria Casciotta, Cheryl Yacuboski
- IV. Community Members Present:** Shanice Person-Correa, Jen Sadura, Sarah Lavra
- V. APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES**

RECOMMENDATION BY THE COMMITTEE:

Dr. Bonilla asked for a motion to approve the agenda for May 11, 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. Rebecca Bear asked for DEI to be added to the agenda, as well as moving agenda item a to later in the meeting. Motion was made by Rebecca Bear. Debbie Kulick seconded the motion and carried unanimously, 4-0.

RECOMMENDATION BY THE COMMITTEE:

Motion was made by Jason Gullstrand to approve the minutes of the April 13, 2022 meeting. Motion was seconded by Debbie Kulick and carried unanimously, 4-0.

VI. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION:

d. DEI Update – Trenee Lurry

Trenee started with adding that it was a pleasure to see everyone. Their last DEI training for the year is scheduled on May 27th and they have been able to utilize the two-hour delay days as a great way to incorporate training. She was also able to incorporate coffee chats with that group which has been great engaging and having conversations about current events and being able to further connect with individuals about DEI topics. Dr. Bonilla thanked her and handed the meeting to Dr. Vitulli.

a. PTO Presentation-East Stroudsburg Elementary – Jen Sadura, PTO President

Dr. Bonilla introduced the topic as an opportunity for the Ed. Committee and the community to collaborate with and support the PTO. It is informal but an opportunity to highlight the work they are doing. Jen Sadura opened up her presentation with explaining that she is the PTO President. She has been on the board for 8 years. She had them share pictures of the events the PTO has held. She went over all sorts of things that they do for the kids, including providing snacks for PSSA's, getting the kids

planners, providing bulletin boards for teachers, etc. She also added all of the different activities they offer the kids. They do everything from a tricky tray, to a holiday shop, blood drives, and other things. Dr. Bonilla asked when they hold their Tricky Tray, which Ms. Sadura answered is usually in March. Debbie Kulick added that the PTO is the heart of the school and they are doing a phenomenal job setting the culture for the school of supporting and giving. Rebecca Bear commented that she wanted the public to know that the PTO is volunteer work and they do a lot of work but they are thorough and do their work with love. Jason went on to say that while the community sees the work they do, no one knows the hard work that goes on behind the scenes, in terms of working with administration and paperwork. Their work is really appreciated and he thanked her for all the hard work. Ms. Sadura circled back to thank a lot of those that support her at ESE. Dr. Bonilla thanked her and everyone who helps her.

b. Gifted Presentation – Maria Casciotta & Cheryl Yacuboski

Dr. Vitulli went on to introduce Maria Casciotta to provide a presentation about the Gifted Program. Maria went on to explain that she is the Director of Pupil Services for Elementary and Cheryl Yacuboski is a School Psychologist. She went on to explain what is considered Gifted in Pennsylvania and what the classifications are and what those mean. She then went through the program they use, Universal Screener, which is used for all second grade, and then the testing for those that exceed those goals. Students are referred through the Universal Screener program, teacher recommendation, and also written parent request. She handed the meeting over to Cheryl to discuss the next part of the presentation. She went over the timeline of the gifted testing timeline and what type of testing and input they look for. She also went on to provide the criteria a student needs to meet to enter the gifted program. Maria went on to explain that once the testing and input has all been completed; they meet to develop a GIEP and then it has to be agreed with.

Debbie Kulick asked how big the program is? Ms. Casciotta responded that she did not know offhand, but she can get that number. At the end of the presentation, Ms. Casciotta added that they have 121 students in the gifted program. Ms. Kulick then asked how many will not sign off on the agreement of the GIEP and how many then come back and say they made a mistake not signing it? Ms. Casciotta explained that in her time in the role since 2004, she has only had a few decline the services. Ms. Kulick then asked what is the success rate of those coming through the program following them through to High School and beyond? Dr. Bonilla asked for clarification. Ms. Kulick clarified that she means success rate in terms of graduation and post high school. Maria responded that it would be tracked at the secondary level. She can find out and get back to the Committee with the results. Dr. Bonilla agreed with Debbie Kulick that the information of the results of the program are something that the Committee would like to look at and use to help with planning career tracks. Jason Gullstrand asked if there is any monitoring done for students who are on the cusp of Gifted, but do not qualify? She responded that teachers would differentiate and can also have these students tested again in the future. Dr. Bonilla added that retesting can only be done after a year. She also added that they do not want to lose sight of a student's ability and let them get bored, so it is important that they support those students that fit in the gap between gifted and not gifted. Heather Piperato added that she understands the group Jason is referring to. She added that she feels the team in the district do a good job of recognizing this group, but parents still need to speak up when they do find their students are bored. Ms. Yacuboski spoke to the secondary level and how they can accommodate those students that do not qualify. Debbie Kulick asked about seniors, or juniors and if they tend to slack off to elevate their grades? Heather Piperato responded that she does sometimes see students taking classes they may not be passionate about because they are weighted higher in an effort to improve grades or achieve valedictorian status. Rebecca Bear recounted her kids' experience with being part of that gap in between. Dr. Bonilla asked Ms. Casciotta to share what the process is if a child misses being accepted into the program. Ms. Casciotta relayed that while she was not in the buildings, she hopes the team is sharing the news with the parents. Ms. Bear added that all she was told when it happened to her kids was that they did not make it. They discussed a bit of her experience and then Dr. Bonilla asked to shift the conversation to a solution-based conversation about re-testing, etc. They can be tested at any age and

retesting can only be done after a year and referrals can come from anyone. Ms. Casciotta suggested she share more of the information for the program and possibly hold some meetings to ensure the information is conveyed. Dr. Bonilla agreed that the communication part of it is the most important part. Conveying as much information as possible is key. No one had any further questions or comments. They then moved back to topic a for ESE.

c. NCC College Success Course – Heather Piperato

Dr. Vitulli introduced Heather Piperato to present about the NCC College Success Course. Heather presented a slideshow starting with true/false questions. She then went over what the recommendations/requirements are in regards to the preparation for students for college and careers. She went on to explain the partnership between ESASD and NCC and the details of the course. The next slide encompassed the benefits of the course to the students and to fulfill the requirements set forth for the district. The course is being provided to the graduating class of 2023 and 2024, outside of those in AP courses, per the next slide she offered. The next slide discussed the future of the course and potential courses or areas of opportunity for the district. She then opened it up to questions. Debbie Kulick expressed that she is concerned about them discounting the kids in AP courses from taking the success course. Rebecca Bear wanted to know if, since it is being paid with ESSER funds, it will potentially go away in the future? And if it will not go away, how will it be paid for in the future? She also wanted to know if it is being offered equally to all kids in English 11? Heather responded that, at this point, the class is a trial. In asking how to pay for it in the future depends on what it becomes, as it may be altered, re-designed, or done away with as they determine what is appropriate for the students. It may also depend on strategic partnerships with the community. She added that it would be open to all kids, as it is good for all the students. They went on to discuss an existing partnership between ESU and Northampton and ESASD for credits and the scholarships available for that. Dr. Bonilla mentioned that they need to get more information out about it to ensure the community knows about it. Jason Gullstrand added that his question would have been about who is included the with the class, but Ms. Piperato had already answered it. Dr. Bonilla recapped that she is very excited about the opportunity and is less worried about paying for it, as she thinks it is a great opportunity. She did agree with Ms. Kulick that she would like more thought about allowing the AP kids to take the course as well. She thanked Ms. Piperato and passed the meeting to Dr. Vitulli. Dr. Vitulli added that he wanted to thank Ms. Piperato for her efforts and for finding a solution to the requirements placed upon the district.

e. PSSA/Keystone Updates – Heather Piperato

Ms. Piperato had no visual presentation but wanted to just add in that all the kids are in testing mode and recounted an experience she had interacting with a 3rd grader who was very knowledgeable about the testing. She went over the schedule of the testing, as well as pointing out that AP testing is also taking place in May. She just wanted to ensure that everyone knows that while students are wrapping up doing end of year things, it also includes testing. Ms. Bear recounted an experience with her son and his AP class. Jason Gullstrand added that he knows the tests stress everyone in the schools, so he has compassion for them all. Debbie Kulick added that she was glad it was not her. Dr. Bonilla wrapped the conversation up by saying that she knows the stress the testing can cause for the students and the more dialogue around how to manage it, the better it is for the students. Rebecca added some advice she had provided her kids that they felt really worked to aid them in not stressing over the tests.

f. Curriculum Specialists

The last topic Dr. Vitulli introduced was revisiting the request he had made the month prior for Curriculum Specialists. He presented a sheet regarding a more specific breakdown of the Curriculum Specialists role and specific actions that are needed for the roles. The sheet broke down the Curriculum

related part of the roles, Professional Development, Research, and the Technology related areas of them. It would be a 3-year project to try initially. Debbie Kulick added that she requested a job description and would like a copy of the sheet that Dr. Vitulli was showing as the presentation. Rebecca Bear added that she was not exactly clear of what type of experiences they are looking for from this role. She thought it was more of a two-part role; having one person to write curriculum and having another person to develop relationships with the outside world. Dr. Bonilla added that she knows a job description will help identify the role, but she is confident that the administrative team will select candidates that can do anything necessary to fulfill the job description. She then called on Jason Gullstrand. Jason asked how long do they see it before they incorporate other career pathways besides the two they have already chosen and what steps are there to decide on the other pathways? He also asked if the district uses a career pathways program through guidance to develop career pathways? If they do, could this be shifted to these newly hired individuals to help with students or will these individuals not be student facing? He wants to make sure whatever data is being collected does not get lost, if we are collecting data. He also asked if they will only be developing out the Health Sciences and Future Educators pathways over the next 3 years, or will they be developing other ones in those 3 years as well? Dr. Vitulli offered to answer what he could of those. The two pathways they are looking at initially are easier because there are already relationships established that will help these be the easier of the pathways. There are more that are in thought and as they re-write curriculum, they will keep the pathways in mind and write the curriculum with the pathway process as part of it. His thought it that once the figure out the process of creating the first pathway, it will become easier to then work on others. Dr. Vitulli believes the pathways will make the guidance counselors jobs easier, as it will provide direction to the courses the students need to follow and what to take. He answered that there is no program for career readiness at the middle school level, but there is a requirement for it. His hope is that once the pathways are established at the secondary level, it will be easier to push it through to the middle school grades so it can make the 9th grade transition easier. Dr. Bonilla added that the conversation is on-going and it will be a shift in culture in how the curriculum is planned. The actions to the topic is that Dr. Vitulli would share the sheet he created defining the role, and that they compile an actual job description to bring to the Ed. Committee. Dr. Vitulli clarified that he was looking for the okay to move forward to refine the job description with the hope in mind that they will support it. He does not want to put more effort into it if it is likely that they will not go forward with the positions. Rebecca Bear asked if it would be Act 93 or Union and he clarified it would be a Union position. Jason Gullstrand asked for more clarification on one of the bulleted points on the job description. Dr. Vitulli explained that they have discussed the topic and have yet to decide and will do so once they have arrived at that point, but after the three years of these roles, they may have to fall back on others in the district. Jason Gullstrand expressed his concern that he would not want anything added to any of the existing roles that already have descriptions. Dr. Bonilla asked for a response from each member to identify if they need more information or details or if they are in agreement with the role. Debbie Kulick endorsed the idea but needed more detail and more understanding of what the follow through will be. Rebecca Bear wanted to know more of the details of who will be responsible for the pathways and the monitoring of it. Dr. Bonilla summarized it by suggesting that they all want to know the bigger picture of the pathways program in general and what role these specialists will be playing within the program and the district. Jason added that the plan is a bit clearer and it is getting more clear with every conversation. The committee was in agreement with the idea of the program and pathways, but need the documents to ask more questions and see more detail, and with those documents, may be in a better place at the next meeting to figure out the timing and next steps. Dr. Bonilla added that she appreciates all he input and reminded the committee that once they get to a certain point, they have to trust the administration to bring on the right people for the role. Dr. Vitulli agreed he would share the document he had shown as the presentation. He did not have the job description as granular as they wanted it. Dr. Bonilla suggested that he share the job description or thoughts that he has on paper which will allow the committee to share their ideas and give him additional direction.

VII. QUESTIONS & COMMENTS FROM BOARD COMMITTEE MEMBERS ON AGENDA ITEMS

VIII. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – LIMITED TO ITEMS OF DISCUSSION

Shanice Person-Correa added that she was excited about the community college pairing and how well it will marry together with Dr. Vitulli's efforts towards the pathways. She added a recommendation for a website containing some information that could be beneficial for the Curriculum Specialist role. Dr. Bonilla thanked her for sharing and added that she was glad to hear the excitement about what they are doing. She added that she appreciates those who take the time to attend the meeting and that she feels the Ed Committee is a great place to share and where a lot of the ground work gets done. There were no other comments.

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

- a. McGraw Hill-Earth & Science, Life Science and Physical Science-VII.a.
- b. McGraw Hill-Study Sync-VII.b.
- c. HMH ELA -VII.c.
- d. Superkids ELA Professional Development Component-VII.d.
- e. Superkids ELA-VII.e.

RECOMMENDATION BY THE COMMITTEE: Dr. Bonilla asked for a motion to move the items previously submitted to the Finance Committee forward to the full Board. Motion was made by Jason Gullstrand. Motion was seconded by Debbie Kulick and carried unanimously 4-0.

Dr. Bonilla handed the meeting over to Dr. Vitulli to go over the topics quickly. He started with the McGraw Hill-Earth & Science, Life Science and Physical Science which is a 3-year subscription for Science for Middle School. The second item was Study Sync, which is a 4-year subscription for Middle School ELA. The third item was the new ELA resource for 3-5. Dr. Vitulli went on to recognize Dr. Bradley for her work to get new K-5 ELA resources lined up and negotiate the pricing of which. The last two items on the agenda were the K-2 ELA resources. Letter d was the ongoing professional development for the resources and letter e was the combination of the first year of the resources and the following 5 years, as both ELA resources are for 6 years. It was a lot of hard work over a few years for many of the teams. Rebecca commented how the new program was replacing Reading Wonders and expressed how appreciative she is of all the hard work to source and test the new programs. Debbie expressed the same, as well as Dr. Bonilla who thanked Dr. Bradley.

X. NEXT MEETING - Wednesday, June 8, 2022

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

XI. ADJOURNMENT: 9:11 pm

Respectfully submitted,
Jessica Barlotta