

**EAST STROUDSBURG AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD OF EDUCATION
EDUCATION PROGRAMS & RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING
June 8, 2022
VIA Zoom
7:00 P.M.
Minutes**

I. The Chairperson, Dr. Damary Bonilla, called the Education Programs & Resources Committee meeting to order at 7:03 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: Heather Piperato, William Vitulli, Trenee Lurry, Tabitha Bradley, Erin Dreisbach, Shahida Jones, Matthew Triolo, William Riker, Jessica Barlotta, Janice Rodriguez

IV. Community Members Present: Shanice Person-Correa, George Andrews, Libby Donnelly, Angelica Morales, Jaclyn DiBrienza-Cikovic, Steven Lurry

V. APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES

RECOMMENDATION BY THE COMMITTEE:

Dr. Bonilla asked for a motion to approve the agenda for June 8, 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. A motion was made by Jason Gullstrand. Debbie Kulick seconded the motion. Dr. Bonilla went on to say they were adding the textbook conversation, mental health conversation, and PSA for July movies. The motion was carried unanimously, 4-0.

RECOMMENDATION BY THE COMMITTEE:

Motion was made by Rebecca Bear to approve the minutes of the May 11, 2022 meeting. Motion was seconded by Debbie Kulick and carried unanimously, 4-0.

VI. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION:

a. PTO Presentation- Smithfield - Elizabeth Donnelly

Ms. Donnelly started with a presentation and went on to show and explain the various events the PTO has held. She went over all sorts of things that they do for the kids and the teacher, including a limo ride as a prize for the Read-A-Thon, a holiday pajama party, a Super Twosday Teacher Luncheon, etc. She also went over a chronological list of all the things they accomplished over the year for the kids and how they really have a lot of fun doing what they do but they put in a lot of work to do all that they do and it is all teamwork between the members of the PTO and their families. Dr. Bonilla thanked her and went on to say that she loved that Ms. Donnelly was having fun and they are appreciative of all she does. Jason went on to say that their work, especially being unfunded, is tremendous and is a lot of work but their work is really appreciated and he thanked her for all the hard work.

Debbie Kulick added that them bringing back the programs is great and she appreciates all the work they do. Rebecca Bear commented that they provide such a variety of what they do, she is really impressed and excited to hear about it.

b. DEI Update – Trenee Lurry

Trenee started with adding that it was a pleasure to see everyone. She wished everyone a happy summer and said they would be spending the summer planning and preparing for the next year. She then broke up and Dr. Bonilla finished the statement that she Ms. Lurry prepared. She added that the summer allows everyone to have time to connect with families and others from different diverse walks of life. She went on to recommend a book to read over the summer “The Sum of us: What Racism Costs Everyone and How We Can Prosper Together” by Heather McGee.

e. Reflections Coach - Erin Dreisbach/Matt Triolo (V.b.)

She went on to introduce herself and the topic via a presentation. The idea behind the presentation is that studies have shown the current method of in-school suspension is not successful. They covered the research and data behind it, and then showed the ISS data for ESASD. They then explained that the idea behind the new method is to teach students about the decisions they have made and teach them to make better ones. They asked for a Reflections Coach position. This person would be responsible for creating a classroom environment which is conducive to reflection to learning through the utilization of trauma-informed practices and skills. This person will supervise the classroom formerly known as the ISS room, changed to the title of the Core room. The real positive of this room is to repair relationships. They can learn about what they have done wrong and learn from their mistakes. They will monitor the success of the room by evaluating discipline data. They hope to hire the coach and transition the room over the summer so they can pilot the Core room in the '22-'23 school year. Dr. Vitulli added that the discussion about this room has been going on for over a year and they recognize that discipline is not enough. They need a counseling component added and they want to pilot this at South for a year. Debbie Kulick asked if a different bad behavior would count as not a repeat offender. Dr. Vitulli answered that is not how it would be viewed. She asked if other schools are using this. Erin answered that Bethlehem tried something similar but not the same. She said this will be the first of its type. Debbie asked about the job description and how general it is. Erin answered that the job description is the same as the ones we usually post and it allows flexibility with experience. Debbie also asked if this job would be advertised as only a year and what type of role it would be. Dr. Vitulli answered that it would be just a year advertisement and it would be professional staff. Rebecca wanted to know why things are always piloted at South. Erin answered it was because South has all the data already that they have been collecting for the past year. By next year, we should have the data for North. Jason asked if the ISS programs would work in parallel with the current program and, if successful, would it be rolled out at North? Erin answered that this program would replace the current ISS. It would also be rolled out to North and possibly intermediates, if it proves successful. Jason added he believes the position should require a secondary certification. Debbie Kulick asked what would qualify the program as successful and would the same individual be in charge of North and South or would they eventually be looking to hire several of these roles, one for each building? Erin clarified that it would be one individual per room, but they are only looking to establish this type of room at the two high schools and the intermediate schools, so it would be 4 individuals. Debbie asked a few more questions and then Dr. Bonilla went on to clarify the benefits of the program and that administration will be responsible for ensuring an appropriately qualified individual is hired for the role.

f. Student Summer Wellness (newly added)

Erin Dreisbach and Shae Jones went on to present a slideshow about how summer can impact students' mental health due to being out of routine. They discussed tips on creating consistency for the kids

including the same wake up time and planning fun activities. This can be trips or time outside and making family time a priority. They also provided some links to different resources. Dr. Bonilla thanked them for the presentation and Dr. Vitulli agreed to have them added to the district website. Rebecca Bear agreed with the points of the presentation, as did Jason and Debbie.

c. Class Size

Dr. Vitulli went ahead to discuss class size. Dr. Bonilla agreed that class size has been expressed as a problem. Dr. Vitulli expressed some information about how smaller classes do not equate to better learning and how splitting up classes mid-year can be disruptive to the learning process. The recommended maximum class size, which they try not to exceed, in K-2 is 22 and 3-5 is 27. This year was an anomaly and the attendance was up significantly from last year and kids continually moved from ESACA and other programs back to brick and mortar this year. They have also had movement of special ed kids this year, which they have to expect these kids may move into classrooms. They are accommodating what is happening by planning to add 6 more teachers, after monitoring the staffing needs. They sent out a survey to evaluate how many kids plan to be in ESACA next year and it is very little. They are also planning on adding 24 more Para's to help with class load, which would provide 4 Para's to each building. Rebecca asked if they split classes, who decides who goes to the new class because we live in a very transient area and kids come in at all different times? Dr. Vitulli answered that they try not to do this as much as possible. They may have done it once, but they decided by way of the registration date as to how to split the class. Debbie added that she thinks the planning they are doing and commitment to stick to the smaller class sizes is a good idea. Jason agreed with most of the discussion and reflected on what resonated with him. He thanked them for the work they are doing. Dr. Bonilla thanked Dr. Vitulli for clarifying how the decisions are made and the information they use to make decisions.

d. Curriculum Specialists (V.a.)

The last topic Dr. Vitulli introduced was revisiting the request he had made the month prior for Curriculum Specialists. Jason Gullstrand had asked a question about how to manage the internships for students. Dr. Vitulli handed the meeting over to Heather Piperato who went on to explain how MCTI Diversified Occupations would be able to manage this role, as they are open to even those that do not attend MCTI. Debbie added that she was going to be sending Dr. Vitulli a list of questions. Jason thanked them for looking into what they did. Rebecca wished they had known the MCTI information earlier.

g. Textbook discussion (newly added)

This was in regards to the Reading Wonders books that they will no longer be using. They reached out to book buyers who would not buy them back. Then they reached out to nonprofit organizations who do not want the books either. It was recognized that the students may benefit from the opportunity to take them home. He wanted to ask permission of the board to do such with the books. They all agreed they would support the decision. They asked if he needed an actual motion which he did not.

h. July Movie (newly added)

This is a program where the kids watch a movie on Tuesdays and get to take a book home for free. It was organized by several people within our district and is being hosted by Pocono Cinema. It is only open to East Stroudsburg students and their families. There are QR codes on the flyer by which you register. It was also suggested to add a phone number to call for those that cannot use QR codes.

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

George Andrews said the new programs were interesting.

VIII. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – LIMITED TO ITEMS OF DISCUSSION

Shanice Person-Correa added that she felt all the topics were interesting but loves the idea that ISS will become not necessarily a punishment but a way to help them modify their behaviors. Dr. Bonilla thanked her for attending the meetings and being involved.

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

- a. Zaner-Bloser Pioneer Materials- \$51,218.13 (VIII.a.).
- b. IXL-\$20,866.00 (VIII.b.)
- c. Noredink-1-year subscription-\$19,850.00 (VIII.c.)

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 Debbie Kulick. Motion was seconded by Rebecca Bear and carried unanimously 4-0.

RECOMMENDATION BY THE COMMITTEE: Dr. Riker asked for a motion to move forward the position guide for the reflection coach to the full Board. Dr. Bonilla asked the committee. The motion was made by Jason Gullstrand. Motion was seconded by Rebecca Bear and carried

X. NEXT MEETING - Wednesday, July 13, 2022

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

XI. ADJOURNMENT: 8:58 pm

Respectfully submitted,
Jessica Barlotta