

**EAST STROUDSBURG AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD OF EDUCATION
EDUCATION PROGRAMS & RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING
July 13, 2022
VIA Zoom
7:00 P.M.
Minutes**

I. The Chairperson, Dr. Damary Bonilla, called the Education Programs & Resources Committee meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance. Secretary, Amy Famighetti called the roll.

II. Board Committee Members Present: Dr. Damary Bonilla and Debbie Kulick

III. School Personnel Present: William Vitulli, Brian Baddick, Amy Polmounter, William Riker, Joshua Fuller, Matthew Triolo, Tabitha Bradley

IV. Community Members Present: Shanice Person-Correa

V. APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES

RECOMMENDATION BY THE COMMITTEE:

No motion was made to approve the agenda for July 13, 2022. Due to not having a quorum, motions will be forwarded to the July Regular School Board meeting.

RECOMMENDATION BY THE COMMITTEE:

No motion was made to approve the minutes of the June 8, 2022 meeting. Due to not having a quorum, the minutes will be approved at the August meeting.

VI. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION:

a. DEI Update-Trenee Lurry

Trenee Lurry wasn't present at the meeting. Dr. Bonilla gave an update regarding the HR practices that have been implemented. Ensuring that we are asking questions to understand the commitment and the experience that individuals bring to respective roles that we're interviewing for and how to continue to support staff working with diverse students. In the future, we'd like to engage the various layers of the district in conversation and engagement to become more diverse, equitable and inclusive.

b. ATSI Usage Report-Amy Polmounter

Ms. Polmounter would like to showcase what the initiatives purchased at High School South have yielded as far as student growth and success. ATSI was considered a negative thing, but we got a chance as a building to look at how we can continue to grow with our Special Education and all students academically. We looked at MTSS because it captured all of the district visions and initiatives, the SEL captured behavior, attendance and academics. We were able to put together a plan that will be able to increase it using every aspect of the building and using needs assessments to find out what we need to implement or develop in order to help our students achieve their goals to be future ready graduates. The four secondary buildings combined and did an early warning detection system in

Sapphire to determine what students are at risk by three factors, academics, behavior and discipline. The ATSI team met weekly with guidance, school nurses, school psychologists and MTSS Coaches and discussed the students to find out what programs we have and make sure that our students are showing movement and that the interventions are working. Ms. Polmounter was asked to present this information at the Sapphire Conference on July 19, 2022 to showcase how a district could be at the forefront of developing an early warning system that meets their needs for their district. Mr. Triolo presented the manual that was purchased that gives teachers different interventions for when they see a student struggling in class for any type of scenario. Flexible seating was also bought for English and Math classrooms. It's comfortable seating that offers a way for students to go into classrooms and be more excited and it promotes collaboration. Mr. Fuller presented the PBIS Rewards Program that goes along with ATSI. The PBIS is what sets the culture of the building, the Cav Core stands for community, ownership, respect and excellence. All the behavior expectations in every setting the school ties back to those. The PBIS rewards piece is a digital accounting system. This allows students to earn points and redeem them electronically instead of giving out tickets. When students are ready to turn in their points the Accounting III students along with Ms. Hopstetter oversee this. The students submit a "purchase order" and then those are filled by that class and delivered to the students. There is also the Core Cafe that is run by our Life Skills students. Students can purchase different coffee drinks using their points. Mr. Fuller added that in the spring, High School South met with the IU and were able to get State Certification for SWPBS. Dr. Bonilla adds that they are excited about SWPBS and how the students are able to incorporate accounting, experiences and take ownership of what is happening in a way that motivates them and increases morale. It's been a rough school year and having the opportunity to highlight what is working, talking about the data that we have to show the stories that we tell. Ms. Kulick adds she is pleased with the presentation to share the information. Also, she likes that it's a living, breathing program that can be modified and adapted to make changes as needed. Ms. Shanice Person-Correa agrees with this program. As a parent she likes coming to meetings to see what the district is doing for our children. She states that the district is really helping and supporting the students in ways that community members may not notice. She feels that is what No Child Left Behind should be, making sure that any student that is at risk is addressed and given options and integrating their family. Ms. Person-Correa adds that they are doing a good job with the program and loves that the students are taking advantage of it. Dr. Bonilla added the seating and the colorful furniture and all of the opportunities that we have as touchpoints for students' diverse needs. Also, is there a simpler way to share highlights? The negativity comes out easily but the positive efforts take so much work, energy and commitment from our staff and administrators. Dr. Vitulli adds that the staff has done an amazing job of integrating these programs and thanks the Board for the support.

*Presentation is available by contacting Amy Polmounter at High School South.

c. Special Education Plan-Brian Baddick

Dr. Vitulli begins by explaining that our PDE is responsible for ensuring all school districts provide specialized programs that are appropriate, compliant and effective. Part of that requirement is having each School District submit a plan every three years. ESASD is due to submit that plan. Mr. Baddick begins by explaining that we are under the authority of the Department of Education school code chapter for the academic standards and assessment and our purpose is to comply with all state and federal mandates within Chapter 14,15 and 16 of the school code which covers Special Education, Gifted Education, Section 504 and this is a comprehensive planning process which occurs every three years. We are making current revisions and new goal setting. Mr. Baddick displays the timeline up to this point. Right now we are in a public review of the completed draft plan and that is located at the district website and it is on view right now for 28 days, which is a requirement under the code from the Department of Education before it is approved by the School Board and submitted at the end of July. We plan to get this implemented across all ten buildings starting in September or October. We will be

doing quarterly reviews of the plan; this is a new section that was not part of the old plan. PDE revised the entire template that is used for this cycle and we have to go through the goals and anything goal related. PDE wants to see the quarterly actions and our artifacts.

Below are the goals:

1. Implementing increasing the tier one, two, and three interventions at the secondary level. This includes all the students with IEP's related to academic and behavioral pattern needs. Also, to increase in the annual academic growth rates with content areas of mathematics, English, Language Arts, Literature, Science and Biology and the Special Education subgroup population. Looking at the comprehensive compliance procedures with all IEP, GIEP, 504 for Professional Development. This is to develop and maintain file compliance with student documents ensuring that we have a high level of services and planning for all of our Special Education students across the district.
2. Implementing a K-12 initially evaluation protocol to assist all district buildings to ensure timely initial evaluations are completed consistently. This will ensure consistent compliant PDE standards for each quarterly reporting period. We will take a look at additional resources and structure at the building level and look at feedback from the Administration and the Department of Education
3. Increase the Special Education population educated with a regular education setting. We would like to enhance and increase the moving of our students from the Supplemental level to the Itinerary level and then exiting them from Special Education and having them return back into the regular education population.

Ms. Kulick asks if we have a section that gives us parental feedback about how the programs are working or classrooms in general? Mr. Baddick responds that it is not currently in the comprehensive plan but can be added. Dr. Bonilla asks if this has been approached in the past, what has the level of parent involvement been? Mr. Baddick explains that part of the state audit we get teacher and administration input. A survey is also sent out to the families. Mr. Baddick states that we get little return back when those surveys are sent out. Dr. Bonilla would like to discuss this further. If there is a survey that is part of the audit, what is the opportunity to enhance that? Mr. Baddick adds that at every IEP meeting, parents have the opportunity to address concerns. Also, think about how we do that in a way that has a DEI lens. Dr. Bonilla doesn't want to hold up the plan that is due at the end of the month and tack on more goals. The important part is the ongoing process. In terms of communication we could put more alerts out. How can we encourage families in terms of what works for them but being thoughtful about it? Ms. Shanice Person-Correa asks if there will be new behaviorists or behavior analysis? Ms. Person-Correa has concerns about the last goal that was presented. Her fear is as a parent with a child with an IEP, not particularly her child, but other children will be pushed out of Special Education or denied IEP's because some parents already are fighting so hard to get their children to have access. With this new strategy we want to reduce it even further and make sure that we have more children in regular classes, basically saying we want to limit the amount of children in Special Education. It was also brought to my attention how hard it is to get outside entities in IEP meetings. There is no communication unless the parents take the extra steps. If a parent signs a consent to have outside people invited, such as Psychiatrist or Speech Pathologist, a reminder should be sent to those people as well. We should be working together so skills can be generalized or treatment plans can be more streamlined. Mr. Baddick responds that the state does not mandate to pull in outside agencies that students are involved in after school. We consider what that information is, we have to focus on our school based evaluations and what we conduct in schools. Dr. Vitulli adds that we are not looking to restrict access to students, we're hoping to get students who are in Special Education to graduate up and not need all the services. That would reduce the number of students getting special services and increase participation in regular education classrooms by helping them graduate to those classrooms and not having the need as opposed to being restricted. Dr. Bonilla added

that sometimes people don't know the different aspects that are happening in the district and has been told that by joining the Education Committee Meetings they have learned so much. Dr. Bonilla suggested there is another session where we could share in advance that we are talking about these specific issues because sometimes the agenda confuses people. It's important to explain terminology and explain what we mean to make it easier for our families to understand.

*Presentation is available by contacting Mr. Brian Baddick and the draft of the plan is available on the ESASD website until the end of July.

d. Tact II- William Vitulli

Dr. Vitulli will be providing Tact II training to about 100 staff members prior to the school year starting.

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

There are no questions from Board Committee Members.

VIII. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – LIMITED TO ITEMS OF DISCUSSION

Dr. Bonilla states that we've taken public participation throughout the meeting. (noted in topics) Shanice Person-Correa would like to add input about Tact II training. She is asking if there is an idea of training or overview for parents at home of safe tactics that we would be able to use to help with de-escalation to keep my child and myself safe. Dr. Bonilla hopes that knowing this is a public space and we are live streaming and recording that people feel comfortable and sharing as Ms. Person-Correa did. She adds that she met with Dr. Riker and Dr. Vitulli recently to discuss how we want to leverage this committee. We're hearing that people trust these conversations and that people are comfortable to come and ask questions and share. We want more of that engagement with the Board so that people don't feel like they're only resort is using their three minutes out of a full Board meeting where we're conducting business. But we're creating more spaces and opportunities for families, guardians and parents to be able to share in this way. Dr. Vitulli thinks this is a great idea and will discuss this moving forward. Dr. Bonilla suggests having initial highlights as well as resources we can share with families as we get ready to go back to school in August and also something we can highlight on the website that people have access to if they are not able to come to the meeting.

IX. NEXT MEETING - Wednesday, August 10, 2022

X. ADJOURNMENT: 8:29 pm

Respectfully submitted,
Jessica Newberry