

**EAST STROUDSBURG AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT  
BOARD OF EDUCATION  
EDUCATION PROGRAMS & RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING  
September 14, 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 Jessica Newberry called the roll.
- II. Board Committee Members Present:** Dr. Damary Bonilla, Rebecca Bear, and Jason Gullstrand. Debbie Kulick was not in attendance as of right now as she will be on later.
- III. School Personnel Present:** William Riker, William Vitulli, Heather Piperato, Tabitha Bradley, Brian Baddick, Steve Zall, Eric Forsyth, Sally Yorke-Viney, Janice Rodriguez, Caroline Gavalis, Jessica Newberry, Devyn Kolcun, Amy Polmounter, Carissa Johnson, Ann Bauer, Trenee Lurry
- IV. Community Members Present:** Shanice Person-Correa, Cecilia Mercado, Louisa Dombloski, Carlos Cubas, Keleisha, Roberta Miller, Angelica Morales
- V. APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES**

**RECOMMENDATION BY THE COMMITTEE:**

Dr. Bonilla asked for a motion to approve the agenda for September 14, 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 and Rebecca Bear seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.

**RECOMMENDATION BY THE COMMITTEE:**

Motion was made by Rebecca Bear and seconded by Jason Gullstrand to approve the minutes for the August 10, 2022 meeting. The motion was carried unanimously.

**VI. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION:**

**a. Create a Reader Program - Dr. Sally Yorke-Viney**

Dr. Vitulli introduces Dr. Sally Yorke-Viney to present. Dr. Viney starts her presentation by explaining what Create a Reader is. The program promises to provide resources and strategies to help parents understand their important role in helping their young child become a confident reader and learner. The objectives of the program are as follows: to engage parents, to provide information to the parents, share research, model strategies, create materials, and foster early and lasting partnerships. Dr. Viney explains that the program is based on the science of reading. Dr. Viney goes on to explain what sessions are offered and what parents will be provided with for the program. This program also is meant so children in the program can relate and see themselves in the books they are reading, such as, someone who looks like them and someone who is going through the same situations as the, and Dr. Viney thinks that is a very important matter for the kids. This program is all funded by our Title I Grant and our Parent Outreach and Literacy. Dr. Viney goes into detail about what an evening with Create a Reader Program looks like. Dr. Viney ends her presentation by stating she believes that Create a Reader allows ESASD to build a community of engaged parents who become effective educators in their home environments. Dr. Bonilla

thanks Dr. Viney for her presentation and would like to note that her family participated in the program when her boys were in Middle Smithfield and only has great things to say about the program and is glad that we are able to continue the program. Dr. Bonilla opens up the floor for any questions/comments from the committee. Rebecca Bear would like to state she loves Dr. Viney's passion for education. Shared that her son also participated in the program when he was younger. Jason Gullstrand would like to follow up with what Rebecca had added that the enthusiasm is infectious and asked if there is a limited number of parents that this can be opened up to and how do we get the information out to all the parents in the district? Dr. Viney responds that one of the things that Angela Byrne has all connections to the preschools and newsletters will go out before ours. Dr. Viney would also like to go to the PTO Meetings to talk about the program so they are aware of it as well. Dr. Bonilla would like to commend Dr. Viney on the Multicultural book list and being sure we are inclusive of our diverse students and family population. Dr. Bonilla would like to know how we are supporting our diverse families; those whose English is not the first language they know? Dr. Viney responds as she always introduces new books that are diverse and inclusive that she brings in, in addition to what is already brought in. Dr. Bonilla would like to commend Dr. Viney on her passion and thanks her for her many years of service. Dr. Vitulli would like to add his thanks towards Dr. Viney and recognize Angela Byrne in making this program come to life as well.

\*Presentation available by contacting Dr. Sally Yorke-Viney

#### **b. DEI Update - Trenee Lurry**

Dr. Vitulli introduces Trenee Lurry to give an update for DEI. Mrs. Lurry expresses her excitement to begin the new year and has plans to expand to include some monthly tips for teachers and sharing important cultural dates with our school community. Trenee is also excited for Dr. Viney's program to get diverse learning within the kid's library and increase the knowledge. Trenee is ready to grow and expand and will bring updates to share with everyone. Dr. Bonilla and Dr. Vitulli thank Trenee for the update.

#### **c. Truancy Programming**

Dr. Vitulli starts this matter with some background on the program. Monroe County Children and Youth has put together, with the support of the school district, the hiring of a School Attendance Improvement Consultant. Dr. Vitulli introduces Caroline Gavalis who is our consultant. Mrs. Gavalis is excited to be with us and ready to help the community to improve attendance throughout the district. Dr. Vitulli starts to explain the program. The program is about addressing those students who have the most difficult time with our compulsory education laws. What is different about the program is Caroline is going to take more of a relational approach with the students and the families to determine the root cause of attendance issues. Mrs. Gavalis will actually go out and meet with these students and families and try to figure out the reason and then work to match some sort of interventions that will help the student and family, including finding resources they might need and make us aware of those situations so we can also better serve the students at the same time. Dr. Vitulli explains that Caroline is an IU employee but working through the Monroe County Children and Youth Program to help families get the services they need. Dr. Vitulli would like to address that Caroline as of right now will only be serving Monroe County students but are in negotiations right now to begin working with our Pike County schools. That way this service will be able to help all students and families across the district. Pike County has already put into place the George Junior Choices Program, which Dr. Vitulli does not want to go away if we bring in our own IU employee. Dr. Vitulli thanks Angela Byrne for finding the funds in the Grants to get a second person. Caroline is currently setting up appointments with all of our principals to get those relationships started. Dr. Bonilla would like to jump in to provide some context. Expressing this effort took a lot of focus, partnership, collaboration, conversations, energy, and finding some money. Dr. Bonilla would also like to highlight the leadership and the work that Dr. Vitulli has done to get us to this point. Dr. Bonilla opens up the discussion to Rebecca Bear and Jason Gullstrand for any questions or comments. Jason Gullstrand would like to express that it is nice to see us going after the root of the concern and trying to make that connection and thanks for

everything being done. Rebecca Bear was unavailable at this time.

## **VII. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – LIMITED TO ITEMS OF A, B, & C**

Dr. Bonilla opens up the floor for any public discussion for the first 3 Agenda items. Janice Rodriguez would like to state that she would be more than happy to help find out information for Dr. Viney and would love to be at the program as well. Mrs. Rodriguez would also note that she has a bilingual library that she may want to take a look at for books that are both in English and Spanish. Angelica Morales would like to know when we will be updating the curriculum for the DEI and SEL since she has been getting notices of the SEL, she would like to know when the community will get to see that curriculum since it is not on the website. Dr. Vitulli would like to respond. He expresses that there isn't a specific SEL curriculum as we don't teach a class on it. Dr. Vitulli continues to explain that we educate our staff and members to recognize the importance of student social emotional wellness as they perform the educational process. An SEL curriculum would not be able to be provided as it doesn't exist. Mrs. Morales states she has gotten a notice on DOJO that the students are already on step 2 of the SEL curriculum. States she is just getting confused as teachers and counselors are posting that it is a curriculum that they are getting. Dr. Vitulli appreciates the information and expresses to Mrs. Morales that he will look into it for her. Angelica also would like to know how to opt her child out of surveys. Dr. Vitulli advises that students are not required to participate in surveys and deferred to Eric Forsyth to help answer the question. Mr. Forsyth states he is not aware of any surveys going around in our school as of now. Mrs. Morales would like to thank and appreciate everyone for the information and these meetings.

### **d. Sub Process - Steve Zall**

Dr. Vitulli would like to acknowledge Steve Zall as he is one of the hardest workers he knows in our district and works relentless hours. Mr. Zall is going to be talking about some highlights of him and his entire team and how they work to keep our district staffed as well as we are. Mr. Zall starts off with what has happened over the Summer in the HR department. Numbers that are on presentation are from June 1, 2022. Mr. Zall went over our CDL efforts for our bus driver training. He continued to explain that they are constantly working on making the process to become a bus driver easier and faster. Steve Zall went on then to explain the substitute teacher efforts and how they go about the process and where they are at currently. Support staff efforts to go over the highly qualified candidate status. This used to be a roadblock trying to secure viable and interested candidates. Mr. Zall goes over the new teacher induction and goes over numbers of our record year of attendees for the opening training days. Mr. Zall brings these numbers to attention as what is attributing to these numbers (i.e. retirees). Mr. Zall would like to say he appreciates the opportunity to speak here with the committee. Dr. Bonilla would like to recognize Debbie Kulick who was able to join us who was able to join at comments of the Truancy Program. Debbie Kulick is "go team!" on the sub process and what Steve Zall is doing. Dr. Bonilla opens up to the committee to comment and commends Mr. Zall for all the work he is doing and making it easier for everyone. Rebecca Bear asks if we do tutoring for the highly qualified test that they are going to take as concerns of the math portion as some struggle. Mr. Zall responds that the module that is administering the assessments will also provide them with up to fourteen modules that provide online training opportunities. Dr. Bonilla would like to note that this great opportunity we have to create a pathway for movement and growth for our staff. Rebecca Bear asks if teachers want to take part in ESU program do they have to take sabbatical for their student teaching or are they allowed to do regular duties and student teach at the same time. Mr. Zall responds that they are prepared to look at it creatively where if a paraprofessional that currently works in a special education classroom with a certified teacher half the day will assume paraprofessional role and second half they would be the teacher and certified teacher would be the mentor. Rebecca Bear would like to add that she is looking forward to the Truancy Program in both counties. Jason Gullstrand would like to add he commends the whole department for working and figuring our creative ways to fix the shortages.

\*Presentation available by contacting Steve Zall in HR

**e. Late Pass / Sapphire Connection - Eric Forsyth & Carissa Johnson**

Dr. Vitulli introduces Carissa Johnson & Eric Forsyth who will be going over the power of sapphire and all their administrative services. Mr. Forsyth starts off by explaining what his department is responsible for. Goes on to explain what Ms. Johnson's duties are within the department including: managing the technical aspects of various initiatives and technological integrations that happen within the broad scope of operations. Ms. Johnson starts to explain the new student id badge to have more capabilities for use within our district. Mr. Forsyth would like to add that they are performing all these functions in cooperation with the systems they impact, such as the technology services department. Mr. Forsyth goes over the Zonar system and how it works within the transportation aspect and being able to always locate where a student and/or bus is. Mr. Forsyth and Ms. Johnson go into detail on what Sapphire is and what new items they are using on the program. One of the new initiatives being used is the attendance scanner. Carissa Johnson explains this feature and how more efficient it is going to be vs. the old way. Eric and Carissa go into explain the Sapphire Truancy Dashboard and what work went into it so it could launch this year after doing a pilot last year. Mr. Forsyth explains the fees and obligations that students have throughout the year and Carissa adds in details about the Student Fees that they are able to use via Sapphire. Mr. Forsyth and Ms. Johnson briefly touched on the community web portal online student registration and hopes to come back at a future meeting to discuss further, but gave a brief overview of the web portal. Carissa Johnson went over the data cleansing guides that she did within Sapphire. Mr. Forsyth and Ms. Johnson go over google classroom and how they have developed it into helping our teachers. Dr. Bonilla appreciates Mr. Forsyth and Ms. Johnson for walking us through what they do. Jason Gullstrand kudos to the amount of work they are doing and is excited for the attendance scanner to integrate the technology to make everything easier. Rebecca Bear adds that she is excited we are using Sapphire for more than just looking at grades. Would also like to add maybe we can add a link on the website on training with everything they can do on Sapphire. Debbie Kulick adds that she would like them to come back every meeting and share items to keep everyone updated. Dr. Bonilla expresses that she would like them to come back and give updates. Dr. Bonilla would like to remind everyone that this body of work that is happening is part of our commitment to improving communication throughout the district.

\*Presentation is available by contacting Eric Forsyth or Carissa Johnson in Admin Services

**f. CPE - Free Lunch - Dr. Vitulli**

Dr. Vitulli would like to go over our new program of Free Lunch for everyone. Dr. Vitulli would like to thank our Food Services team and director Melissa Collevecchio for being ahead of it in our district. Provides breakfast and lunch for all students within our district. This program promotes equity and reduces the stigma or embarrassment that some students may feel by participating in meal programs. Also reduces stress for their families if on tight food budgets. Dr. Vitulli also points out that sometimes students live in households that don't earn enough to make ends meet but yet the family may earn too much to qualify for free and reduced lunch. Dr. Bonilla thanks for highlighting this program and is amazed that we were able to provide the free meals to the students. Debbie Kulick adds that this puts us miles ahead of everyone else and hopes families will take advantage of the program. Jason Gullstrand adds that he agrees with everything said and the importance of hunger in the classroom. Rebecca Bear would like to add a thank you for looking out for the community as sometimes these meals are the only meals they get.

**VIII. Questions & Comments from Board Committee Members on agenda items**

There are no questions from Board Committee Members.

**IX. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – LIMITED TO ITEMS OF D, E, & F**

Dr. Bonilla opens up the meeting for questions or comments and adds if we cannot get through every item that we will follow up by email. Cecilia Mercado recently joined ESASD as a sub and expresses she was never able to do her student teaching as it was going to be a financial hardship for her. She wants to know from Mr. Zall if there is a way as a substitute if she can join in and have a mentor teacher or season teacher to be able to show her the ropes so she can get her certification. Mr. Zall lets Cecilia know that he is going to reach out so he can hear the specifics so they can discuss the topic. Dr. Bonilla thanks Cecilia for her interest in the program. Shanice Person-Correa adds that she is loving the education and development initiatives for hiring and the current hires. Shanice adds she is learning a lot of information about Sapphire. She loved seeing all the integrations and she loves being able to see all the items it provides for her and her sons. Shanice would like to know since she has different kids in different districts if there is any plan of the different operating systems to work together. Eric Forsyth responds thanks to Shanice for sharing her experience with Sapphire and asks Shanice to send him an email to go over it on an integration level. Dr. Bonilla thanks Mr. Forsyth adds for Shanice that they do have answers for her regarding last month's meeting and advises Dr. Vitulli will be following up with her via email.

**RECOMMENDATION BY THE COMMITTEE:**

Previously submitted to the Finance Committee: BrainPOP Renewal - \$14,768.78

**RECOMMENDATION BY THE COMMITTEE:**

Motion to move BrainPOP to the full board made by Debbie Kulick and seconded by Rebecca Bear. The motion was carried unanimously.

**X. NEXT MEETING - Wednesday, October 12, 2022**

**RECOMMENDATION BY THE COMMITTEE:** Motion was made by Debbie Kulick and seconded by Jason Gullstrand. The motion was carried unanimously.

**XI. ADJOURNMENT: 9:06 pm**

Respectfully submitted,  
Devyn Kolcun