

**EAST STROUDSBURG AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD OF EDUCATION
EDUCATION PROGRAMS & RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING
February 8, 2023
VIA Zoom
7:00 P.M.
Minutes**

I. The Chairperson, Dr. Damary Bonilla, called the Education Programs & Resources Committee meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. and led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance. Secretary Devyn Kolcun called the roll.

II. Board Committee Members Present: Dr. Damary Bonilla, Rebecca Bear, Jason Gullstrand, Debbie Kulick.

III. School Personnel Present: William Vitulli, George Andrews, Tabitha Bradley, Brian Baddick, Heather Piperato, Shahida Jones, Stephen Zall, Carissa Johnson, Trenee Lurry, Eric Forsyth, Rebecca Lopez, Caroline Gavalis, Marisa Kehr

IV. Community Members Present: Larisa Yusko

V. APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES

RECOMMENDATION BY THE COMMITTEE: Dr. Bonilla asked for a motion to approve the agenda for February 8, 2023, 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 Rebecca Bear and Debbie Kulick seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.

RECOMMENDATION BY THE COMMITTEE: Motion was made by Jason Gullstrand and seconded by Rebecca Bear to approve the minutes for the January 11, 2023 meeting. The motion was carried unanimously.

VI. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION:

a. BE ALLiance Update - Trenee Lurry

Trenee Lurry starts off the update with the monthly observances which include, American Heart Month and Black History Month. Mrs. Lurry goes on to share National Holidays that are celebrated throughout the month of February. Trenee shares an update on what schools participated in for Martin Luther King Day which included assemblies, read alouds, and courageous conversations. The Coffee Chat for February will be February 28 and they will also be having a guest speaker. Dr. Bonilla thanks Trenee for sharing the events and what is to come.

b. SHARE - Larisa Yusko - Pike County SHARE Counselor

Dr. Vitulli introduces Larisa Yusko who will share the program that she has been working with to assist people with their housing needs. Larisa starts by explaining what the Shared Housing and resource

exchange is. The program was started in June of 2017 to the Pennsylvania Department of Aging. This program started as a pilot program in Monroe, Pike, and Wayne counties. The program is currently expanding to other counties within Pennsylvania. Ms. Yusko shares that this program matches people that have an extra bedroom with someone that wants to live with them in exchange for rent, helping around the house, or a combination of both. With this program one person in the match has to be 60 and over but anyone from the age of 18 and over can apply, including high school students. Larisa then shares that the first step they take within the program they must have to go through an intake call to make sure they are appropriate for the program. The applicant will then fill out an application and meet in person with Larisa and she will take into consideration their lifestyle choices so she can better match them with someone. Larisa shares that before a contract is signed the 2 people must meet and have a trial living together for 3 to 7 days to make sure they get along and are the right match. Ms. Yusko shares that within this contract she will do monthly check-ins with each party to make sure everything is going smoothly. To date in the 3 counties that they provide this program to so far, they have had 82 matches. Dr. Bonilla thanks Larisa for the work she is doing and the presentation. Dr. Bonilla shares that the feedback she has been hearing is only positive from community members. Jason Gullstrand shares that this is an excellent program and that this is a positive solution instead of students who are having issues and staying at friends' houses, etc. He shares that it can also make a big difference in their lives. Rebecca Bear shares that this is a real big benefit for our students and adults in the community as well. Debbie Kulick adds that she has been following the program since it started and able to see the successes. George Andrews shares that it was a great presentation and great program and would like contact information.

c. SRSS Data and Mental Health Programming - Shahida Jones

Shahida Jones shares that this program is going into its third year of screening. She shares that the SRSS (Student Risk Screening Scale) internalizes and externalizes behavior. Our teachers take a few minutes, 3 times a year to complete the screener and then as a team, which includes, Shahida herself, the building administrator, the school counselor, and the MTSS Specialist and they will review the data that came out of the screener and then identify the needs of the students. Mrs. Jones shares some data that includes information on how many students they are currently servicing and how many are currently pending. A lot of the programs that are provided really focus on student mental health comes from the SRSS data. This means they are able to zero in on a bunch of the kids and have those hard conversations. Mrs. Jones shares that they recently reviewed screeners in the different buildings and were able to see how well the building administrators knew their students and enjoyed being able to see that progress. Dr. Bonilla appreciates being able to see the updates on the programs and being able to understand how to support the program. Rebecca Bear does not have any questions at this time but agrees that administrators in the buildings do really know the students. Debbie Kulick adds that she would like to have the data to be able to compare as they go along with the program. Jason Gullstrand would like to know what grade they start the data with, which would be second grade and go through fifth grade.

d. Truancy Consultant - Program Update - Caroline Gavalis

Caroline Gavalis shares that this program has been a good initiative so far, meeting with the students and understanding some of the underlying causes to their truanancies and also providing them with the necessary resources that are available. Ms. Gavalis shares that as of January 20th she has met with 153 students and parents/guardians to address attendance within the district that had truancy concerns. With this program it is best used to better understand the causes and conditions that lead to truancy and to help alleviate those issues. Ms. Gavalis shares some of the success she has had so far including connecting with a student who she was able to connect with a new school counselor to help check in and get the support they needed as they deal with mental health struggles. Some key terms that are used to describe certain truanancies are: truancy, habitual truancy, chronic absenteeism, and unlawful absences. Caroline then shares why it is important to address truanancies at 3 unexcused absences which

include, that is when it becomes a cause for concern and schools will send out a written notice to the guardians and this would be the first step in the truancy process. The student attendance improvement plan is set up after a student has 6 unexcused absences which will be setup by the principal to meet with the student and guardian to identify attendance issues and ways to improve school attendance. Ms. Gavalis shares how parents and guardians can help at home and how they can regulate regular attendance. Dr. Bonilla thanks Caroline for the works she does within the district and the presentation she has provided. She also adds that she is grateful that we as a school district offer this program. Dr. Bonilla shares the opportunity they had at the summit and being able to hear different leaders in the community talking about the importance of this work was wonderful and that our school district is leading in a lot of different ways. Debbie Kulick shares that this is a more than valuable program and being able to hear all the information gathered is really important as well. Ms. Kulick asked if any research shows that high school students should be starting later and if that would be helping with attendance. Caroline Gavalis expresses that that is something she will have to look into further to better understand. Jason Gullstrand adds that from an educator's perspective that there is so much learning loss that can be attributed to absences and thanks Ms. Gavalis for what she does and sharing the information. Rebecca Bear shares some important information that is helpful to express to parents on getting a good night's sleep, that the school provides breakfast if they can't at home, and lunches are also free.

**Presentation available by contacting Caroline Gavalis

e. HR Staffing Update - Stephen Zall

Stephen Zall starts off by sharing highlights and where the HR department is with ESASD. Mr. Zall shares an update in the Support Staff Teacher Certification Program that the first class will be coming up with 5 members who are taking the next step towards their teacher certification and they will all be beginning their Spring semester next week. Mr. Zall adds that this past August they have kicked off training and assessments that they would be offering within our district for highly qualified testing process which is for individuals that choose to pursue a paraprofessional assignment or a student aide assignment within the district. To date they have offered these resources to 110 individuals. Mr. Zall discusses that they continue to offer the CDL Bus Driver Training which is sponsored and supported by the transportation department. He adds that we are hitting the recruitment season and are currently participating in sessions throughout the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania which include, Philadelphia Job Consortium, Millersville University, Kutztown University, and Penn State University. The HR Department also conducts mock interviews with individuals that are in their graduating or student teaching semester and also includes the juniors with getting them on board in our district as prospective teacher candidates that will be eligible to serve as a professional substitute in the district. Stephen Zall includes additional outlets that we continue to post or promote or vacancies which include, Pennlink and PA Reap. Dr. Bonilla thanks Steve for being excited about staffing even though we experience shortages and difficulties. She adds that hopefully colleagues of the program will share with each other that it is a positive experience so more will sign up. Debbie Kulick adds that creatively thinking is definitely needed in this field today and gives kudos to Mr. Zall through it all. Rebecca Bear shares appreciation for Steve and the HR Department for all they do and also shares that they have the van drivers who they can transition into bus drivers. Jason Gullstrand shares that everything is great and to hear the positive feedback with the applying and seeing that it is also happening internally. George Andrews thanks Steve for working hard and doing a great job.

f. Communications Update - Eric Forsyth

Eric Forsyth and Rebecca Lopez start their presentation with introducing 2 projects that they are currently working on that are going to enhance the ability to communicate with our students, their guardians, and our community. The first project that they are working on is with our website and

the new district app which is going to be rolled out through the remainder of the school year. Mr. Forsyth also shared a recap of some good things that have happened within the district which included, The Children's Round Table Summit. Rebecca Lopez shares a sample of what the new website for the district would look like and shares some highlights that have been updated. Ms. Lopez starts with some front page changes which include, google translate that will allow the whole website to a language that is user friendly for all families and community members, more color representation between North and South with more blue and purple opposed to just purple, and updated global icons and links and information. Mr. Forsyth adds that part of the process is also to remove unvisited pages and add more pages that would be utilized to make sure the majority of the website is useful. With this website change it will also include an easier way to access the website through a mobile device with it being more user friendly. Ms. Lopez also shares that this new website will focus more on the district as a whole and not too many layers that the current website has. Mr. Forsyth adds that with this new website they will be sending out a communications email so everyone won't be surprised and lost when it comes out. This will include adding pictures and showing what moved and where the user can find it now. Eric and Rebecca share the app that they currently are working on that works with Blackboard that integrates with all of the existing structure. Mr. Forsyth shares some events that they also have coming up which include the Kindergarten Fair that will allow the team to spend time showing families how to get online to register their kids for the school year. Guardians will be able to take home a flier that has a QR code on to make it easier to get to where they need to be on the website to register. Mr. Forsyth also shares that they are producing new business cards with the HR department that will also help with handing out and given out to potential candidates who are looking to apply to the district. Dr. Bonilla thanks Eric and Rebecca for their presentation and the hard work that they have put in. Dr. Bonilla also adds that it is exciting to see all the different components which include it being more user friendly especially with the phone usage. Rebecca Bear asks about logging into Sapphire with the mobile app and setting a preference for google translate on the website. Eric Forsyth shares that you will be able to login to Sapphire on the app and can use biometrics to then login after, which include facial recognition or fingerprint. Jason Gullstrand asks if the other schools websites would also have the same interface as the main page and how long that would take to come out. Mr. Forsyth responds that they will have the same interface and by the end of the school year all should be ready to go. Mr. Gullstrand adds thanks to the team and appreciates all that they are doing. George Andrews shares that it looks really good with the new website and likes the idea of the ease of how it will work. Debbie Kulick had to get off the zoom as she had a prior engagement.

**Presentation available by contacting Eric Forsyth or Rebecca Lopez

g. Comprehensive Plan Process

Dr. Vitulli begins to share a brief overview of the comprehensive plan process. Dr. Vitulli starts by explaining what the Comprehensive Plan is and how it will work. He shares that this year is a little different in how PDE has organized the comp plan process and shares bulleted points that are being combined underneath the Comprehensive Plan. Other items that are needing to be addressed include the academic standards and assessment requirements which is basically a checklist that basically ensures that the district is complying with all the curriculum standards and the assessments that we should be doing. Dr. Vitulli shares that they have been reviewing data for years and really getting back to the roots as we need to focus on getting our readers up to speed. He shares that they have seen it more so in the earlier grades and they do have a plan for them going forward. Dr. Vitulli provides a slide with what the district is going to do going forward to help those struggling with reading/mathematics. The timeline is shared of when this plan will be revised and then began the approval process. Dr. Bonilla shares that she likes the opportunity that this process provides for individuals to engage, give feedback, and provide ideas. Rebecca Bear asks if the community is allowed to also engage and make comments or if it is only available for members of the administration. Dr. Vitulli responds that currently it is only to about 50 people

who have been involved in the process and then on around February 20th they will make it available to the public to provide opportunities for them to give feedback. Jason Gullstrand adds that he likes how you can access the padlet and it really shows how the process and comprehensive plan is growing.

**Presentation available by contacting Dr. Vitulli

VII. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – LIMITED TO ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

Dr. Bonilla opens up the meeting to public discussion. There are no questions or comments from the public.

VIII. ADVISORY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CONSIDERATION BY THE FINANCE COMMITTEE AND BY THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

1. Edgenuity Elementary Pre-Paid 23/24 Expenses - \$54,500 - see quote (VIII.1.)
2. Edgenuity Secondary Pre-Paid 23/24 Expenses - \$68,800 - see quote (VIII.2.)

RECOMMENDATION BY THE COMMITTEE: Motion to move items A and B to the Finance Committee was made by Rebecca Bear and seconded by Jason Gullstrand. The motion was carried unanimously.

IX. NEXT MEETING - March 8, 2023

RECOMMENDATION BY THE COMMITTEE: Motion to adjourn was made by Rebecca Bear and seconded by Jason Gullstrand. The motion was carried unanimously.

X. ADJOURNMENT: 9:08 pm

Respectfully submitted,
Devyn Kolcun