

**EAST STROUDSBURG AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD OF EDUCATION
EDUCATION PROGRAMS & RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING
October 11, 2023
VIA Zoom
5:00 P.M.
Minutes**

- I. The Chairperson,** Dr. Damary Bonilla, called the Education Programs & Resources Committee meeting to order at 5:08 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, and Jason Gullstrand. Debbie Kulick was unable to join due to technical issues.
- III. School Personnel Present:** Brian Baddick, Eric Forsyth, Evan Stokes, Rebecca Lopez, Amanda Kerdzaliev, Shae Jones, Amy Polmounter
- IV. Community Members Present:** N/A

V. APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES

RECOMMENDATION BY THE COMMITTEE: Dr. Bonilla asked for a motion to approve the agenda for October 11, 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 Jason Gullstrand 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 September 13, 2023, meeting. The motion was carried unanimously.

VI. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION:

a. BE ALLiance Update - Trenee Lurry

Trenee Lurry is currently on vacation and sent a brief update to share. Dr. Bonilla shares the update starting with the second Coffee Chat of the year which focused on Hispanic Heritage Month where Dr. Bonilla was the speaker on the chat. Discussed at the Coffee Chat was Civic engagement and considerations. One of the things to come out of the chat was outreach from several members of the district for follow up conversations around ideas that would be good for them and what they wanted to learn more about based on the Coffee Chat. Dr. Bonilla also shares that K-8 staff received training on the culturally relevant sustaining competencies, which is a mandated training by the PA Department of Education. Ms. Lurry Conducted these trainings by herself and will update when more trainings become available during the year.

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b. District Mental Health Update - Shae Jones

Dr. Bonilla introduces Shae Jones to share the Mental Health Update. Ms. Jones shares that October 10 was World Mental Health Day. Ms. Jones starts her update that they recently had all the mental health professionals, which are our licensed mental health staff, fully staffed at all the buildings. They currently have 3 for elementary and 4 for secondary. Shae continues to share that herself and Mr. Ken Smith have been doing bi-weekly supervision groups with the new mental health professional staff to ensure that they have strengths meeting with students, crisis management, time management, therapeutic boundaries, and all necessary things that you would need coming out of your first year out of grad school. Included with the mental health professionals they also have 4 board certified behavior analysts (BCBA). They have been utilizing this staff to help identify their functional behavior assessments to help reduce behaviors of concern in our students and also helped put eyes on students that may be exhibiting different types of behaviors and helping put together a plan to reduce or completely remove these behaviors from occurring. Ms. Jones shares that they have continued to meet and work within our alternatives to expulsion programming with Miss Heather Hill. Shae Jones also provides an update with the SAP team to ensure each building has a strong SAP team and that they are meeting the needs of those students through SAP. Dr. Bonilla expresses thanks to Shae and all those that are part of ensuring that our students have their mental and emotional needs met and have that support. She also shares that it is always a priority within this committee and the full board to know that we have the support services in place. Mr. Baddick adds thanks Dr. Bonilla for allowing them to provide updates to the community with this committee in place.

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c. Pantry Update - Evan Stokes and Amy Polmounter

Dr. Bonilla introduces Amy and Evan who will be providing updates on the Food Pantry at both North and South. Ms. Polmounter starts off with South's update. This program has been going on since 2019 and then this past Summer they heard about the opportunities that were made available to the North Campus to partner with CHOP (Child Hunger Outreach Partners). Larissa, who is the representative for CHOP, reached out to the South Campus and both parties' vision wanted to be able to showcase the food pantry as something for students to not be embarrassed to use or be afraid of the stigma that is attached to it so they really prided themselves on having high quality items that could be given out. Between both buildings they talk about how much high-risk kids they have based on economic disability that they see with their MTSS reports. Ms. Polmounter adds she is really grateful for this partnership and that they got to take advantage of the program. Mr. Stokes adds that he is really proud of the work that they have done up at the North campus to explore the partnership to start out with and they have been distributing an enormous amount of food from the pantry on a daily basis. He shares that they also participate in the backpack program, which is a voluntary program the kids can choose to participate in which they would receive a more substantive meal-based backpack. Mr. Stokes adds that the life skills students have been a tremendous help in this process. Their duties include inventorying, stocking, and distributing. Mr. Baddick adds that this program is run by students for students and that is the importance of this program and believes that is why it has been so accepted and utilized. Dr. Bonilla adds that we are definitely proud to have this opportunity for the students and families.

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d. Restorative Practice Update - Evan Stokes

Mr. Stokes starts his update that they had a 2-day training in which they learned about the restorative conferencing process which is essentially when a student has a significant violation of a policy, we offer them the opportunity to acknowledge and repair the harm that has caused the scenario in a restorative context. Mr. Stokes adds that they had brainstormed the best initial intersection in our own school policy for how we can introduce this and they settled on the infractions of first fights and threatening of staff or students. He adds that when students engage in their first fight, they are immediately suspended the way that we have always done and then a mediator or facilitator runs the restorative conference. Mr. Stokes shares the mediator or facilitator will contact the families and allow them the opportunity to participate in the conference. This conference does not take place if they feel the student is not there to grow through the restorative process as the goal is not to shorten suspensions but to repair relationships and make students feel comfortable, safe, and recognized in school. When the parties agree to this they are brought back into school the following day to the reflections room and the reflection room teacher works with the kids to follow through on the agreement that they reach in that meeting. Lastly, when they successfully complete the terms agreed upon they would get to return to their regularly scheduled classes.

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e. Communications Update - Eric Forsyth

Mr. Forsyth and Ms. Lopez started their update with the new website design that should be finished by the end of this school year. They share that they had a design team meeting with the developer at Final Site and being able to really look at what they want in the website and what they need to do in order to meet the communication goals that were set. Mr. Forsyth shares they also are going to be working on all the social media pages that ESASD has and reaching out to the individuals who hold those accounts so they can recruit them as a content army so they can gather as much content as possible. This includes the successes of our students, teachers, and staff. Ms. Lopez shares some of the programs that they have had in the past month and what is to come. She shares information on the Safety Town event which ran for 5 days and they had different EMS, school police, and transportation come to go over safety protocols with children.

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f. 12+ Program - Pupil Services

Mr. Forsyth introduces Amy Polmounter who is going to discuss the 12 plus program. Ms. Polmounter shares that these students get to work within different settings of the cafeteria, working with food services, environmental services, the core cafe, and working at churches/schools and CamelBack. Ms. Polmounter adds that the transition program is the heart of special education as it prepares the students for life after school. Amy Polmounter introduces Amanda Kerdzaliev who works directly with the 12 plus program. Ms. Kerdzaliev shares information on how the 12 plus program came to life and what they have the students do on a daily basis. Ms. Kerdzaliev shares many thanks to the administration and everyone for the support and opportunities that they are able to provide to the students.

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

Jason Gullstrand starts with the Mental Health Update and shares information he had heard on the radio the other day about AI driven technologies and the overwhelming information that comes in with different students and helping them drive to the proper channels that they need and being on the educational side he can see how much time and work is put into it. Mr. Gullstrand would like to know how the students at North and South apply for the pantry in the schools. Mr. Stokes shares that before they had the partnership it did rely on homeroom teachers or content teachers developing a significant relationship with students who came to be aware of their hardships and they would refer the student to the pantry. Ms. Polmounter shares that at South they promote it on their website to be able to see the pantry there. Mr. Gullstrand shares that he is happy that there is training involved for restorative practices and thinks it is a wonderful thing when conducted properly. He adds that he is also looking forward to the final development of where the website is going to go. Mr. Gullstrand also shares he is a fan of Safety Town and believes it is a great program and does think the idea of having it on the weekend could have made it busier. Mr. Gullstrand sends thanks for the 12+ Program for everything Ms. Kerdzaliev is doing with the students and the numerous jobs they have them helping out with.

Rebecca Bear shares that she loves the food pantry and that it is run by students for the students. She adds she is super happy to have it at both campuses and that it is also clothing along with the food. Ms. Bear is also excited about the restorative practices and being able to see how this works with the students and seeing the successes from the program. She adds that the 12+ Program is amazing and the amazing work that they are doing. Ms. Bear adds thanks for allowing this committee to happen and believe in the fact that the committee adds value to the community.

Dr. Bonilla adds that it is always a great opportunity to partner with everyone and the support that is provided. She adds that today was an opportunity for us to talk about different aspects of communication in terms of students, families, and the district. Dr. Bonilla shares that these connections are happening and how the various programs throughout the district are coming together in terms of addressing the whole student be it the food pantry or addressing the needs of the students.

VIII. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – LIMITED TO ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

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

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

- A. Discovery Education (CIU20) - Renewal - \$5,130.13 paid by C&I (VII.a.)**
- B. HiTech Instruments - 30 microscopes - \$16,465.00 paid by ESSERs (VII.b.)**

RECOMMENDATION BY THE COMMITTEE: Motion to move item a and b to the Board of Education was made by Jason Gullstrand and seconded by Rebecca Bear. The motion was carried unanimously.

X. NEXT MEETING - November 8, 2023

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

XI. ADJOURNMENT: 6:01 pm

Respectfully submitted,
Devyn Kolcun