

**EAST GREENBUSH CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING
TUESDAY, JUNE 29, 2021**

1. A. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER: Mr. Buono- 6:30 P.M.

B. ATTENDANCE

	Present	Absent	Arrival
Mr. Buono	X		
Ms. Curtin	X		
Mr. Dunn	X remote		
Mr. Mann	X		
Ms. Massey	X		
Ms. Muth	X		
Ms. Skumurski	X		
Ms. Taylor	X		
Mr. Yeboah		X	
Also Attending			
Mr. Simons	X		
Ms. Cannon	X		
Mr. McHugh	X		
Ms. Wager	X		

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

3. DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. Discussion and Review of Proposed District Initiatives Through the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act and American Rescue Plan

Mr. Buono explained this meeting is a follow-up of conversations from the June 22, 2021 meeting on the use of the CRRSAA and ARP federal funds and the proposed spending of those funds.

Mr. Simons reported that the Administrative team has met and reviewed the questions and comments the Board members submitted about the proposals. He stated the District has tried to provide more details and supplemental documents for each item to better explain the need.

Mr. Mann asked if the Board would be voting at this meeting, or just having discussions about the proposals.

Mr. Simons said it was just discussions, but hoped to have some idea of where the Board stood on the proposals, so resolutions can be prepared for the July 13, 2021 meeting.

Early Interventions Specialist: Mr. Simons discussed Proposal #1, the establishment and hiring of ten (10) early intervention teachers. These positions are elementary, reading or special ed. certified. The District is recommending hiring this staff to make sure that all of the children in the early elementary grades have every support necessary so that their reading and math performance is improving or on grade level. He stated this is supplemental to the current staff. Mr. Simons noted they expect a large number of Kindergarten, first and second-graders will be returning and qualifying for intervention services. He felt that this proposal was a top priority and wasn't sure ten staff members was even sufficient.

Mr. McHugh stated that a large number of fully remote students have not yet been accessed, but of the 375 fully remote elementary students, 33% were receiving services prior to COVID-19.

Mr. Mann did not feel there was a large increase in need from pre-COVID years.

Mr. Simons stated that some children will need additional time than they did previously. He explained the increase in staffing is because more children will need the support and some children may need the support more frequently.

Mr. McHugh stated that the District has not yet taken into consideration learning loss due to COVID-19, and have not yet considered math. He stated with the new universal screener for math, he expects that even on a normal year they would have had to discuss hiring staff for additional support.

Mr. Simons explained how the new staff would be able to work into the current budget in the next few years. He explained that they would monitor the program and would shift and reduce staff as needed depending on how the program was doing.

Ms. Cannon reported that 15 certified elementary, reading or special ed teachers will be able to retire in the next couple of years.

Ms. Skumurski asked if they could phase the staff in slowly instead of hiring them all at once.

Mr. Simons said he worried if they waited, they will not find the same level of candidates. He also stated he felt the need was greater than they are predicting, and he doesn't want students to be classified as special ed. just because there isn't enough support.

Ms. Skumurski asked if the posting could state that the job is available due to federal money, so the candidates would understand that the position may need to be abolished at a later time.

Mr. Simons said that regardless of the funding source all positions need to be probationary. He stated that employees with low seniority will understand that they are the first to be removed if all staff is not needed.

Extended Learning Resource Center: Mr. Simons reported that currently the Learning Resource Center is not staffed every period and some students are unable to get help. The Superintendent explained he felt additional qualified staff should be hired, so the center can be available before school and all day long.

Mr. Buono asked if the district could monitor the students' progress, make sure the assistance is delivered effectively, and that the students are progressing.

Mr. McHugh stated that students who are struggling will be assigned to the LRC, instead of a study hall.

Global History: Mr. McHugh explained this proposal is to identify students who struggled with Global History in grade 9. He proposed hiring a strong .2 FTE teacher and placing those students in a smaller class to revisit the 9th grade curriculum and spiral in the 10 grade curriculum to reinforce the material.

Afterschool Programs: Mr. Simons discussed the idea of staff being contracted to stay after school for 2 hours, 2 days per week to provide homework help, English language arts help, math help and enrichment activities.

Ms. Wager explained the costs of the afterschool program. She also explained the need to hire a coordinator for the program. This person would maintain attendance, parent communications, and accident reports and would communicate with the building principals. She stated she expected it to be an SRP position.

Project Adventure: Mr. Simons explained there will be curriculum writing to add a component to the Physical Education classes. Mr. McHugh explained in summer Physical Education curriculum writing this year, K-5 will be working on developing activities, next year grades 6-8 will be developed and the following year grades 9-12. Mr. Simons reported there will be an in-school component, an after-school component, and will also involve field trips for the students to ropes courses, nature trails, hiking and other outdoor activities to reinforce lifelong activities.

Trap and skeet shooting: No questions or concerns were brought forth on this proposal. Mr. Dunn said that he has agreed to help with this program. He stated this program is growing rapidly and students will compete virtually at their own clubs.

Archery program: Mr. Simons stated he met with New York State Department of Environmental Conservation about the National Archery in Schools program. This will be a unit in Physical Education classes, and also an afterschool activity in grades 4-12.

Greenbush Childcare: Mr. Simons stated the District is still trying to figure out what level of support and how to implement support to the Greenbush Child Caring Program. The Superintendent recommended waiving the rental fees, so GCC can use that money to help families. Mr. Buono stated that he would support that if the money waived could be targeted.

Ms. Curtin asked if there would be a problem supporting GCC and not helping other area centers.

Mr. Simons explained GCC is the only school-based childcare program in the District, and they have been hit hard by the pandemic. He also pointed out how helpful GCC was during the pandemic.

Ms. Skumurski stated that taxability issues should be researched.

Air Force ROTC: Mr. Simons explained two instructors are needed, a commissioned officer and a non-commissioned officer. He noted there is a calculation called MIP, which is the minimum instructor pay. The Superintendent stated the Air Force will reimburse the District 50% of the MIP. He stated he felt this program will be important for students' social engagement, social-emotional development as well as improving academics.

Mental Health: Mr. Simons spoke about offering a mental health clinic at Goff once a week to get started. He stated that the stipend has been removed for the office staff position, and stated that a current clerical staff employee will be assigned. He said he perceived having the clinic in the school will prevent missed appointments and absenteeism.

Capital EAP: Mr. Simons explained that Capital EAP is a service the District currently pays for out of the general fund to support staff. Mr. Simons stated the District would like to move this item to the federal fund.

Ms. Wager explained that by moving some approved positions to the grant, it would free up money to create a capital reserve. She suggested they set up a reserve similar to the current bus reserve already established.

Equine Program: Mr. Simons stated there was a question from the Board asking if the equine program could be open to other students, not just students in the CAP program. He said he felt that would not be an issue. Ms. Wager reported the cost of the original plan and stated the district could look to expand that to other students.

Ms. Skumurski said she thought it was a great program and stated she hoped any interested students could join, maybe through an application process.

CTAEP: Mr. Simons reported that there were no comments on this topic. He stated the only concern is finding a Science teacher with multiple certifications.

Food for Families Stipend: Mr. Simons explained the District is hoping to hire someone to coordinate the backpack programs, communicate with the families about accessibility, and make sure the needs are being identified. He said the people who have been involved are back to full work loads and don't have as much time to devote to this program.

Ms. Taylor said there needs to be a way to identify the need. She felt the stipend was a little high, but thought she could support it if the person could work with the Food Department over the summer to target the families in need and reach out and make them aware of the opportunities available.

Ms. Skumurski was in full support of this proposal, and said she would support more if it was warranted.

Mr. Mann felt it could hurt volunteering if someone gets a stipend.
Mr. Simons said the administrators will work to fine-tune this proposal.

RTI Coordinator: Mr. Simons stated this is a key position to support the data analysis and the evaluation of the extra programs for the Early Intervention that will be added. He stated that Mr. McHugh currently does this, but due to his other responsibilities, he is not able to get to the level of detail to give sufficient coordination to how the kids are progressing district-wide, and how the interventions being implemented are being responded to. He reported that this position is an oversight role that fulfills some administrative responsibilities. He stated it is a way of assuring that the delivering of the added services are evaluated, adjusted and reported to the Board accurately. Mr. Buono said he thought this would be a critical position. He stated that there will be a tremendous amount of data to go through, and then report to the Board and community how effectively the approved resources have been deployed.

Teaching Assistants: Ms. Wager reported there were currently eight (8) Teaching Assistant positions in the general fund that the District would like to move to the federal funds. She reported the District is proposing to hire another seven (7) Teaching Assistants. Three positions are mandated by IEP's, one is a .5 FTE for the additional Kindergarten class added in 2021-22, the 3.5 would be additional staff for the new proposals, such as MAP and LRC.

District-wide 12 month Nurse: Mr. Simons reported that this position has evolved from the initial proposal and a new 12-month job description has been added.

Ms. Cannon stated the 12-month nurse would have a 260-day work year that would cover the summer months. She reported the District has met with SRP leadership, and they have agreed to move forward with the position, if approved by the Board.

Ms. Skumurski said she doesn't feel comfortable supporting this proposal, since the current nurses are not supporting it.

Ms. Cannon reported that the District is having trouble with summer school coverage because the current staff is unavailable. She also stated the District has not been able to acquire substitute nurses for coverage throughout the school year. She explained how this position would rotate throughout the District to provide coverage.

Ms. Curtin stated her support for the 12-month position. She said it seems it is always difficult to find summer coverage, and the District needs continuity. She feels it should be up to the District to determine the need.

Mr. Dunn said he understands the nurses' concerns, but he also supports the District's decision to hire a 12-month nurse.

Ms. Taylor expressed her concerns that this position will be fully utilized in the summer, since summer school is only half-day.

Mr. McHugh revealed that the District hires the current nurses to assist Mr. Leonard during the summer, but if this position were to be approved, the candidate would take over those duties.

Attendance Intervention Specialist position: Mr. Simons stated that the District has asked for a Social Worker for this position because they feel many students will have difficulty transitioning back to full in-person learning. He stated many researchers expect school-related phobias, reluctance to come to school and avoidance will all be exasperated by what has happened over the last 18 months with COVID-19, so the District felt a Social Worker in this position is warranted.

Fitness, Nutrition & Wellness Coordinator: Mr. Simons explained that this position is intended to work with students directly on health, fitness and wellness in coordination with other positions in the District. This candidate must be certified in Strength and Conditioning with a background in Nutritional counseling.

Ms. Taylor stated she fully supports this position, but feels the District should hire two separate positions, Strength and Conditioning and a Nutritionist to work together District-wide.

Mr. Simons suggested the District look to hire an outside Licensed Nutritionist, instead of hiring additional staff.

Heating and Ventilation: Ms. Wager said the District has been talking with Trane, and is proposing air purifiers in each of the buildings to improve air quality. She stated they also have discussed replacing 10 of the unit ventilators at each of the five elementary buildings. Ms. Wager reported they have discussed air conditioning at the elementary buildings, but this would be considered a capital project, which would require SED approvals. She stated these are items to look at in the building condition survey and would be something a capital reserve could be used for.

Mr. Simons said he felt using a capital reserve would be the best way to implement this proposal.

Mr. Mann stated he did not support moving items from the general funds to the federal funds.

Mr. Wager stated that all Capital Improvements have to be approved by district residents and SED, regardless of the funding.

Technology: Mr. Mann asked why the District is not using the SmartSchools money first for the Technology proposals.

Mr. Simons said they should use the federal funds first, because there isn't a timeline that the SmartSchools money needs to be spent.

Mr. Mann suggested the District share some of the money with Holy Spirit, Montessori, or any other area private schools. He also proposed using some money for the Class of 2020, possibly for college or job fairs, and suggested looking into providing a Community Violence Intervention program.

Mr. Mann encouraged the District to find ways to help students who fall in the middle, as well.

Ms. Taylor asked if the staff understood there was grant money available to bring in speakers, authors, etc.

Mr. Simons said he thought they did, but would speak to the principals to make sure they are communicating this availability to staff. He said he felt these types of activities will occur more frequently, because it supports social activities and mental health.

Tutoring:

Mr. Simons discussed the implementation of a 2 hour/4 day a week afterschool program, staffed by certified teachers at Columbia High School and Howard L. Goff Middle School in all the core subjects.

4. REGULAR BUSINESS

Mr. Dunn thanked the Administration and Board for this process and tonight's meeting and reported he has contacted NYSSBA about a custom Board retreat. He asked the Board to discuss scheduling something to do one or two in-person retreats.

5. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Motion by Ms. Massey, Seconded by Mr. Mann to enter Executive Session for purposes of Personnel.

Vote: Ayes- 8, Nays- 0

Motion carried

Time: 9:28 P.M.

6. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Ms. Massey, Seconded by Ms. Muth to Adjourn

Vote: Ayes- 8, Nays- 0

Motion carried

Time: 10:18 P.M.