

**EAST GREENBUSH CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING
TUESDAY, APRIL 8, 2025
Genet Elementary School Auditorium**

1. A. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER: Mr. Temple- 7:00 P.M.

B. ATTENDANCE

	Present	Absent	Arrival
Mr. Buono	X		
Mr. Mann	X		
Ms. O'Brien	X		
Ms. Phillips	X		
Ms. Skumurski	X		
Ms. Steinbach	X		
Mr. Temple	X		
Ms. Turner	X		
Mr. Van Orden	X		

Also Attending

Mr. Simons	X
Mr. Mahar	X
Mr. Mulligan	X
Mr. Stiles	X

Student Council

Kole Hardy	X
Natalie Krisanda	X

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

3. MINUTES

A. Approval of Draft Minutes dated March 26, 2025

RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING OF MARCH 26, 2025

Motion by Mr. Buono, Second by Ms. Turner

Resolved, upon the recommendation of the District Clerk, the Board of Education of the East Greenbush Central School District hereby approves the Minutes of the Board of Education Meeting of March 26, 2025.

Vote: Ayes-9, Nays- 0

Motion carried

4. BOARD FORUM #1

Mr. Buono reported that the Board had completed final interviews for the superintendent position, and identified a preferred candidate. He indicated that the Board Attorney, President, and Vice President are engaged in negotiations with this individual, and anticipate having a final agreement and a further update soon.

5. REPORTS AND PRESENTATIONS

A. 2025-2026 Budget Workshop Presentation Workshop #3

Mr. Simons provided an update, stating that the team remains focused on addressing the budget gap. He indicated that, building upon Scenario 2, presented at the March 26, 2025 meeting, the team has developed three new scenarios for the Board's consideration, each outlining varying levels of expenditure reductions.

Scenario one, which proposes a 5.19% tax levy increase, incorporates further reductions in non-staff areas to lower the overall budget increase and minimize the use of fund balance and reserves, resulting in a 3.45% increase over the current year. Mr. Simons then outlined two additional scenarios: scenario two, a 4.25% tax levy, at \$115.1 million (a 3.12% increase) and scenario three which is at the 3.19% tax cap, but has the greatest cuts, is at \$114.1 million (a 2.25% increase).

Mr. Simons acknowledged that the proposed budget reductions primarily target instructional staff (teachers and teaching assistants) because they constitute the largest portion of the district's workforce. He stated that the district had added positions in recent years to

address learning loss during the pandemic, and is now making adjustments based on current financial constraint. The Superintendent explained that rising employee benefit costs, especially in prescription drugs, are the most significant factor driving budget increases. Mr. Temple expressed concern about the budget scenarios, emphasizing the desire for minimal impact on people while acknowledging that budgets are fundamentally about personnel. He highlighted the current economic uncertainty, particularly in the stock market and its potential negative impact on future state revenues, a key driver of New York State income. Mr. Temple stressed the importance of achieving the most stable financial footing now to mitigate potentially larger cuts in the future if state revenues decline. He said his goal is to preserve as much as possible long-term by making prudent decisions today, rather than opting for fewer cuts now only to face more significant reductions later.

Mr. Simons said information he received from the Council of School Superintendents, noted that while current state revenues are strong, the primary concern lies in potential federal funding reductions, particularly in areas like Medicaid, which could indirectly impact state aid to schools. Mr. Simons acknowledged this concern, recalling past instances where federal Medicaid cuts led to considerations of school aid reductions. However, he pointed out that the current state fiscal outlook is positive, with a proposed minimum 3% aid increase for most districts, and even more for growing districts like theirs. The Superintendent said that despite this, the uncertainty around federal actions reinforces the argument for maximizing local revenue generation through property taxes. He explained that as an average wealth district, they rely more heavily on local property taxes than state aid.

Mr. Temple said he thinks the Board should consider a higher tax rate than what's suggested to help the District's finances and keep as many staff as possible. He proposed an 8% tax levy and asked the other board members what they thought.

Ms. Phillips asked for a little more information about future tax cap predictions.

Mr. Simons stated that the estimated tax levy increase will be around 2.7%. He illustrated that raising taxes to this cap next year would increase the tax levy to \$60.8 million, generating an additional \$1.88 million in recurring revenue. Subsequent 2.7% increases each year would build upon this new base, resulting in a total tax levy revenue of \$321.2 million after five years. He then explained that if the tax levy were raised to 5.19% next year and then increased by the average tax cap in the following years, it would generate an additional \$6.2 million in revenue over the same five-year period.

Ms. Mulligan confirmed this, emphasizing that a higher initial increase establishes a larger base value that compounds over time, leading to significantly more revenue.

Ms. Van Orden asked for an explanation of the criteria used to determine which positions were considered for elimination versus others, to better understand the rationale behind the choices.

Mr. Simons explained that the decision-making process for potential position eliminations in each budget scenario involved evaluating whether services could be provided more cost-effectively while maintaining program integrity. He said this included considering factors like student impact, state mandates (especially at the middle school), the necessity of elective courses at the high school, and historical staffing increases. The Superintendent reported the aim was to find a balance between addressing the significant budget gap and preserving a comprehensive educational experience across all grade levels and program areas, avoiding the complete elimination of any single program.

Ms. Steinbach asked if administration was actively communicating with the principals and administrators at the school level to understand their perspectives and insights on these considerations.

Mr. Simons said they have had multiple meetings with principals, both individually and as a group, prior to the initial budget presentation. He stated they are also in ongoing discussions with the bargaining units regarding the potential impact of these changes. The Superintendent said they discussed the considerations with the unions early on about the likelihood of recommended reductions and are continuously exploring further cost-saving measures leading up to the community vote. Mr. Simons stated that even after the budget's passage, they will continue to seek ways to lower costs and assess potential staffing implications.

Ms. Steinbach brought up the UPK program and asked if the \$185,000 savings mentioned represents the difference between the current state reimbursement and what Questar BOCES charges. She asked if the calculation is based on the existing reimbursement rate and stated that if the state were to approve the proposed increase to \$7,000 reimbursement, the savings figure would need to be adjusted, as the District would receive more state aid, thus reducing the net savings.

Ms. Mulligan stated that the Questar program costs roughly \$10,500 per student, and the state currently provides \$5,400 in aid per student, leaving a significant difference. She stated that the District is exploring whether potential increases in state aid could influence and reshape how this program is offered in the future, and said they will know more once the State budget is passed.

Ms. Steinbach expressed concern about moving the four in-school programs to CBO locations without guaranteed acceptance from the CBOs. She stated that if the anticipated state aid increase doesn't occur and the CBOs can't accommodate the classes, the District would need to identify alternative cuts of approximately \$185,000 to maintain the current program structure, rather than relying on additional fund balance.

Mr. Stiles stated that he has had conversations with the community-based Pre-K providers to determine their capacity to potentially host two of our existing on-site classes. He said two of the providers have indicated interest and are in the process of evaluating their facilities to confirm adequate space. Mr. Stiles said since these discussions are still underway, a definitive commitment has not yet been made, but he will be reaching out to see if they can confirm 100% that they can accommodate additional students.

Ms. Steinbach then asked about the the percentage of vote needed to go over the tax cap.

Mr. Simons explained that in scenarios one and two, they would need 60% of the voters to approve, in scenario three, 50+1%

Mr. Buono stated he was willing to go over the tax cap, not as high as Mr. Temple mentioned, but he would also like to see more expenditure cuts, just not any cuts related to the programs.

Ms. Turner and Ms. O'Brien both agreed that they were willing to support the 5.19% tax levy, but also acknowledged there could be more difficult budget talks in the following years.

Ms. Skumurski said it would be unfair to the population to go to an 8% tax levy and she would not support it. She said they must find ways to be fiscally accountable and achieve balance, since in five years there will not be any reserves left to rely upon.

In summary, Mr. Simons indicated his understanding that a majority of the Board favors the proposed 5.19% tax levy increase. Nevertheless, he acknowledged the Board would like for the District to propose additional expense reductions. He said the District will work to bring some new ideas to the April 22, 2025 meeting.

B. Capital Project Planning

Mr. Simons reported that despite the recent cold weather, phase 1A of the capital project, which includes roof replacement and upgrades to the tennis and basketball courts, is moving forward. He announced the District is also planning a groundbreaking ceremony for Friday, April 25th, to which everyone will be invited, marking the official start of construction. He said the District is pleased to be ahead of schedule on this project.

C. Utica National Insurance Group - "School Safety Excellence Award" for 2025 - Superintendent Jeffrey Simons

Mr. Simons announced that the District has received the Utica National Insurance Group School Safety Excellence Award for 2025, marking over 20 years of this recognition for their strong safety record encompassing transportation, school incidents, policies, and infrastructure. He stated that this award, which includes a \$500 check, acknowledges the District's outstanding efforts in creating a safer school environment and their adherence to safety principles

6. PUBLIC FORUM #1

The Rapant family spoke in support of the CTAEP program. They stated how the alternative program saved their daughter and puts her on a path to be able to graduate. They asked the board to please preserve the program.

Ms. Joan Freehill, parent of a former Operation Graduation student praised that program and stated how it was beneficial to her oldest child. She said she doesn't think he would have graduated and been as successful after high school if he was not in the program. She stressed that all students learn differently and stated that the alternative programs are really needed.

Mr. Simons explained that they were not planning on abolishing any of the alternative education programs, but might make some changes to make them more affordable. He suggested moving CTAEP into the CHS classrooms being vacated by Questar. The Superintendent explained the area is somewhat isolated from the high school population and it would allow the program to share resources, such as utilizing teachers already in the building to teach some of the classes, eliminating the need for specific teachers dedicated to just that program. Mr. Simons acknowledged the value of the programs and reiterated his intention to find a more cost-effective way to maintain them.

7. DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. March for Our Lives Guilderland-Secure Firearm Storage

Mr. Mann explained that he would like the District to reach out to Guilderland High School to explore a partnership with an organization founded by survivors of the 2018 Parkland school shooting. The goal is to collaborate on raising awareness about the impact of guns on students within schools, as Guilderland has already expressed interest in this program

Ms. O'Brien said she strongly supports the student-led initiative, and likes that they are collaborating with another high school, to raise awareness about gun safety, particularly the current lack of state safe gun storage legislation they hope to see passed. She agreed on the immediate need to send guidance to families in the community regarding safe gun storage and said she is willing to support this effort.

Ms. Steinbach noted her personal experience as a victim of gun violence and emphasized her support for promoting gun safety and responsible gun ownership.

Mr. Simons said he will contact Mr. Harkin to explore a potential partnership between Columbia High School and Guilderland High School focusing on June since it is Gun Safety Month.

8. REGULAR BUSINESS

A. Approval of Programs for Resident Children with Disabilities

RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE PROGRAMS FOR RESIDENT CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

Motion by Ms. Phillips, Second by Ms. O'Brien

Resolved, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, the Board of Education of the East Greenbush Central School District hereby approves the Programs for Resident Children with Disabilities.

Vote: Ayes- 9, Nays- 0

Motion carried

B. Memorandum of Agreement with EGTA

RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT WITH EGTA

Motion by Mr, Mann, Second by Ms. Skumurski

Resolved, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, the Board of Education of the East Greenbush Central School District hereby approves the Memorandum of Agreement with EGTA

Vote: Ayes- 9 Nays- 0

Motion carried

9. TABLED MOTIONS

None at this time.

10. OLD BUSINESS

Mr. Buono asked for an update on the student ex-officio board member.

Mr. Simons indicated that Mr. Harkin has received student letters of interest and that he will be contacting the committee soon.

11. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Financial Reports

Claim Auditor Reports for Warrants-0084, 0084, 0088, 0089, V083, V088

B. Instructional/Instructional Support Personnel Memo

A. DISCONTINUANCE

1. Resignation for the Purpose of Retirement

- a. Dipreta, Renee - Teaching Assistant, Green Meadow Elementary School, effective 6/30/25.
Date of Hire: 1/5/04

B. APPOINTMENTS

1. Student Teacher/Intern 2024-2025 School Year

Building	Student	Content Area	Cooperating Teacher	College/Term
Green Meadow	Thomas Supeau	Elementary	Michelle Baldwin	Russell Sage/Spring 2

C. MISCELLANEOUS

1. Unpaid Coach 2024-2025 Spring Sports Season

The following will volunteer for our spring athletic programs. He holds current certification in AED/CPR, First Aid, Blood Borne Pathogens, DASA, Concussion Management, SAVE and Child Abuse.

Name	Sport
a. Gibson, Dan	Softball

2. Per Diem Substitute Teacher

Name	Certification Area	Degree Status	Effective Date
Adesina, David	Degree in Psychology	B.S.	4/9/25
Bachar, Aidan	Degree in History	B.A.	4/9/25

C. Non-Instructional Support Personnel Memo

Discontinuance as listed:			
Name	Position	Effective Date	Reason
Stevens, Rebecca	Typist-CHS	04/19/2025	resignation
Van Gelder, Gregory	Substitute Bus Driver	03/24/2025	resignation
Appointment as listed:			
Name	Position	Effective Date	Salary
Bultman, Samantha	Cook-CHS Probation: 4/9/25-12/8/25	04/09/2025	Step 1 = \$17.31 6 hours per day\10 months
Substitute employees as listed:			
Name	Position	Effective Date	Salary
Adesina, David	Aide	04/09/2025	Step 1 (BS) = \$21.83 per hour
Hansen, David	Mechanic	04/09/2025	Step 3= \$28.54 per hour
Morris, Kayla	Aide	04/09/2025	Step 1 (HS) \$17.62 per hour
	Monitor	04/09/2025	Step 1 = \$16.41 per hour
	Sr. Monitor	04/09/2025	Step 1 = \$17.20 per hour
Appointment adjustment:			
Name	Position	Effective Date	Reason
Blackburn, Susan	Food Service Helper-CHS	04/10/2025	Change from 5.5 hours per day to 6 hours per day
Coons, Brook	Food Service Helper-DPS	04/10/2025	Change from 3.75 hours per day to 4.5 hours per day
Forcinella, Janet	Food Service Helper-CHS	04/10/2025	Change from 6 hours per day to 6.5 hours per day

Grant, Deborah	Food Service Helper-CHS	04/10/2025	Change from 5.25 hours per day to 5.5 hours per day
Langenbach, Lisa	Food Service Helper-Genet	04/10/2025	Change from 3.75 hours per day to 5.5 hours per day
Matteo, Felicia	Food Service Helper-CHS	04/10/2025	Change from 3.75 hours per day to 4.25 hours per day
Pineiero, Nicole	Food Service Helper-RM	04/10/2025	Change from 3.75 hours per day to 5.5 hours per day
Sweet, Cathy	Food Service Helper-GM	04/10/2025	Change from 3.75 hours per day to 5 hours per day
Tedford, Deborah	Food Service Helper-CHS	04/10/2025	Change from 5 hours per day to 5.5 hours per day

D. Acceptance of Gifts and Authorization to Increase the 2024-2025 Budget

E. Tuition Rates for North Greenbush Common School District

F. Disposal of District Property - Assets

G. Health & Welfare Services Contracts 2024-2025

H. Health and Welfare Services Contract- Averill Park Central School District

I. Health and Welfare Services Contract - Schenectady City School District

J. Approval of Consent Agenda

Motion by Mr. Buono, Second by Ms. Skumurski

Vote: Ayes- 9, Nays- 0

Motion carried

12. NEW BUSINESS

None at this time.

13. PUBLIC FORUM #2

None at this time.

14. BOARD FORUM #2

None at this time.

15. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Motion by Ms. Steinbach, Second by Ms. Turner to Enter Executive Session for purposes of the Employment History of a Particular Individual

Vote: Ayes- 9, Nays- 0

Motion carried

Time: 9:37 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeanne Pangburn

District Clerk

Motion by Ms. Van Orden, Second by Ms. Skumurski to return to public session

Vote: Ayes- 9, Nays- 0

Motion carried

Time 10:40 P.M.

16. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Ms. Steinbach, Second by Mr. Mann to Adjourn the Meeting

Vote: Ayes- 9, Nays- 0

Motion carried

Time: 10:41 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Buono

Assistant District Clerk