

**EAST GREENBUSH CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT  
BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING  
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 14, 2026  
Bell Top Elementary School**

**1. A. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER:** Ms. Turner- 7:00 P.M.

**B. ATTENDANCE**

	Present	Absent	Arrival
Mr. Buono	X		
Ms. Herron	X		
Mr. Marchiony	X		
Mr. Panasci	X		
Ms. Phillips	X		
Mr. Shane	X		
Mr. Temple		X	
Ms. Turner	X		
Ms. Van Orden	X		

**Ex-Officio Student Member**

Ms. Holly Thorpe	X
Mr. William Bollam	X

**Student Council  
Representatives**

Natalie Krisanda	X
Matthew Pallone	X

**Also Attending**

Dr. Kurtis Kotes	X
Ms. Lisa Mahar	X
Mr. Martin Mahar	X
Ms. Jennifer Mulligan	X

**2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**3. EX OFFICIO STUDENT COUNCIL COMMENTS AND PRESENTATIONS**

A. Student Council Representatives: Natalie Krisanda~President; Matthew Pallone~Vice President

Natalie Krisanda and Matthew Pallone reported that the first semester is drawing to a close, with midterm examinations concluding for most students on January 16, 2026. They also reported that In their latest meeting, the Council set a tentative date in March for a field trip to the mall. Students voted for this location because it offers something for everyone while still allowing the group to spend time together. Additionally, they are developing plans for a community vendor fair and food truck event at Columbia in May to serve as a fundraiser.

**4. MINUTES**

RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING OF DECEMBER 17, 2025

Motion by Mr. Shane, Second by Mr. Panasci

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 December 17, 2025

Vote: Ayes- 7, Nays- 0, Abstentions- 1 (Turner)

Motion carried

**5. BOARD FORUM #1**

Ms. Herron thanked Mr. Neumann for hosted tonight's meeting.

Ms. Phillips shared a recent visit to the transportation department conducted with Mr. Marchiony, Dr. Kotes, and Mr. Mahar. She commended Craig Lipps and his team for providing an insightful overview of the complex logistics involved in daily student transportation. While acknowledging that there were concerns regarding transportation in the previous year, Ms. Phillips highlighted the

current stability of the department. She concluded by offering kudos to the new leadership and the entire team for their dedication to keeping the operation running smoothly.

## **6. PUBLIC FORUM #1**

None at this time.

## **7. REPORTS AND PRESENTATIONS**

### **A. Capital Project Phase 2 Bid Presentation**

Mike Collins from Turner Construction and Devon Telberg from Labella Associates presented the bid results for Phase 2 of the capital project. Mr. Collins confirmed that the team thoroughly vetted the low bidders to ensure they understood the scope of work and were comfortable with their figures. Key highlights included the recommendation of general and mechanical contractors, as well as East Empire Electric, whose significantly low bid was verified for accuracy. The project will move forward with alternates 1, 2, and 3—covering classroom HVAC replacements and floor refinishing. Additionally, Mr. Collins detailed non-bid state contracts for specialized equipment, including Trane for HVAC controls, Day Automation Systems for security, and GameTime for new playground equipment at Red Mill.

Ms. Mulligan provided an update on the \$116 million capital project, reporting that while Phase 2 bids for Red Mill came in approximately \$409,000 over preliminary estimates due to playground equipment and sewer work, the project remains in a strong financial position. She explained that these specific deficits are being covered by transferring surpluses from Phase 1B and the Goff library construction, while a \$555,000 contingency remains available for future unforeseen issues. Ms. Mulligan detailed the complexity of tracking funds across multiple buckets to comply with state maximum cost allowances, noting that while savings from the Columbia High School phase are currently restricted by these caps, they remain available for other future construction needs.

### **A. Authorization for Bid Withdrawal of Low Bidder- Capital Project 2024 - Phase 2**

#### **RESOLUTION TO AUTHORIZE THE BID WITHDRAWAL OF LOW BIDDER FOR CAPITAL PROJECT 2024 PHASE 2**

Motion by Mr. Panasci, Second by Mr. Marchiony

Resolved, the Board of Education of the East Greenbush Central School District hereby Approves the Withdrawal of the Low Bidder for Capital Project 2024 Phase 2

Vote: Ayes- 8, Nays- 0

Motion carried

### **B. Authorization to Award of Contracts for Capital Project 2024 - Phase 2**

#### **RESOLUTION TO AUTHORIZE THE AWARD OF CONTRACTS FOR CAPITAL PROJECT 2024 PHASE 2**

Motion by Mr. Buono, Second by Ms. Phillips

Resolved, the Board of Education of the East Greenbush Central School District hereby Authorizes the Award of Contracts for Capital Project 2024 Phase 2

Vote: Ayes- 8, Nays- 0

Motion carried

### **C. Approval of Procurement of Services from Trane U.S. through General Service Administration**

#### **RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE PROCUREMENT OF SERVICES FROM TRANE U.S. THROUGH GENERAL SERVICE ADMINISTRATION**

Motion by Ms. Herron, Second by Mr. Panasci

Resolved, the Board of Education of the East Greenbush Central School District hereby Approves the Procurement of Services from Trane U.S. through General Service Administration

Vote: Ayes- 8, Nays- 0

Motion carried

### **D. Approval of State Contract & Piggyback Purchasing from Day Automation & GameTime**

#### **RESOLUTION TO APPROVE STATE CONTRACT AND PIGGYBACK PURCHASING FROM DAY AUTOMATION & GAMETIME**

Motion by Ms. Van Orden, Second by Ms. Phillips

Resolved, the Board of Education of the East Greenbush Central School District hereby Authorizes the Award of Contracts for Capital Project 2024 Phase 2

Vote: Ayes- 8, Nays- 0

Motion carried

## **9. REPORTS AND PRESENTATIONS**

### **A. 2026-27 Preliminary Salary & Employee Benefit Budget**

Ms. Mulligan presented a preliminary baseline budget for the 2026–2027 school year, which maintains current staffing and service levels without accounting for new requests or potential retirements. She reported a projected \$2.9 million increase in salaries and a 2.5% rise in employee benefit costs, bringing the combined total for salaries and benefits to approximately \$94.6 million—representing 78% of the total budget. While the District achieved over \$600,000 in cost avoidance by transitioning to a new medical plan, these savings are being offset by double-digit premium increases in other plans and a 20% projected rise in prescription drug costs driven by high medical loss ratios.

Ms. Mulligan explained that while the Teachers' Retirement System (TRS) experienced a rate decrease due to favorable market performance at the end of its fiscal year, the Employee Retirement System (ERS) is seeing a mandated increase. She further noted that while the District realized a \$600,000 cost avoidance by switching to an EPO medical plan, these savings are being pressured by high medical loss ratios and a 20% projected increase in prescription drug costs. Currently, salaries and benefits represent approximately \$94.6 million, or 78% of the total budget.

Mr. Panasci questioned whether the Rockefeller study would result in legislative changes or direct budget adjustments. Additionally, he asked whether the state tax levy formula provides any relief for massive spikes in health insurance costs, similar to how it accounts for changes in retirement system rates.

Mr. Buono expressed concern that the District is facing a similar financial situation to the previous year, with rising costs and an uncertain revenue picture. He emphasized that the insurance consortium must find efficiencies or consider competitive bidding to address premium increases. He advocated for being transparent with the community about the fact that benefit costs are a primary driver of the budget's growth.

Dr. Kotes addressed the political and state-level outlook, noting that foundation aid remains uncertain. He explained that much of the conversation in Albany revolves around the implementation of the Rockefeller study recommendations, particularly regarding enrollment and poverty counts. He noted that federal fiscal decisions will likely have a large bearing on the state's final aid runs, making this year particularly difficult to forecast.

Ms. Phillips emphasized the importance of being direct with the public about the District's financial challenges. She noted that benefit costs are now roughly 60% of the cost of salaries and stressed that this proportion needs to be clearly explained to the community to provide necessary context for the budget.

## **10. REGULAR BUSINESS**

### **A. Acceptance of Donation of Fund**

*This agenda item was tabled until after Executive session*

### **B. Approval of Agreement with RKE Lighting and Electric LLC**

*This agenda item was tabled until after Executive session*

### **C. Master Staffing Services Agreement with Supplemental Health Care**

RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE MASTER STAFFING SERVICES AGREEMENT WITH SUPPLEMENTAL HEALTH CARE.

Motion by Mr. Panasci, Second by Mr. Marchiony

Resolved, the Board of Education of the East Greenbush Central School District hereby approves the Master Staffing Services Agreement with Supplemental Health Care.

Vote: Ayes- 8, Nays- 0

Motion carried

### **D. Second Reading - East Greenbush Central School District Code of Conduct 2025-2026**

ACCEPTANCE OF SECOND READING OF EGCSO CODE OF CONDUCT 2025-2026

Motion by, Mr. Panasci, Second by Mr. Marchiony

The Board of Education of the East Greenbush Central School District hereby accepts the Second Reading of the EGCSO Code of Conduct 2025-2026

Vote: Ayes- 8, Nays- 0

Motion carried

## **11. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **A.. Lisa Mahar, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction**

Ms. Mahar reported on the January 7th Committee on Curriculum and Instruction meeting, noting successful progress on various program reviews. She highlighted the English Language Learner program, which serves students speaking 22 different languages across all grade levels and disciplines; the program has introduced detailed student profiles and a new ELA program called Benchmark Express to support academic success. She reported the committee also reviewed a proposal for a new College in the High School Microeconomics course through Hudson Valley Community College, which offers affordable, transferable credits for students. Additionally, She introduced a proposal to replace existing honors/AP economics with a Microeconomics course through HVCC, noting it is more accessible and cost-effective for families than through a program at Syracuse University.

Mr. Marchiony asked if credits from HVCC are as widely accepted by other universities

Ms. Mahar stated that most of the credits transfer effectively, often allowing students to enter college as sophomores. Additionally, Ms. Mahar discussed the development of a more comprehensive, objective rubric for middle school accelerated math and science placement. She explained that this new rubric will use multiple measures, including STAR assessment data, to ensure a fair selection process that looks beyond a single placement test or subjective teacher recommendations.

Mr. Buono noted that the previous system caused significant parental concern due to its subjectivity.

Mr. Shane asked about the differences and cost comparisons between the College in High School program and Advanced Placement (AP) courses.

Ms. Mahar explained that College in High School program is an agreement with a specific college where families pay per credit at a reduced community college rate, whereas AP involves a standardized exam fee through the College Board.

Dr. Kotes added that while highly competitive colleges once prioritized AP, data now shows a growing market for College in High School experiences, as colleges are becoming more selective about awarding credit for specific AP scores.

Ms. Turner shared a personal experience about the benefit of having both AP and College in High School credits to maximize the total number of transferable credits, as some universities cap the amount of credit allowed from a single source.

Ms. Van Orden stated that colleges have different standards for credit, so families should research what is best for their student.

Mr. Panasci expressed his concerns about middle school accelerator program, noting that a student's entire academic trajectory in math and science can be determined as early as 5th or 6th grade, which may be harsh for late bloomers.

Ms. Mahar agreed that everyone matures at a different rate, and noted that the new rubric includes a placement test and STAR data to look for potential and effort, moving away from gray zones and perceived favoritism to provide a clearer explanation to parents.

Ms. Van Orden supported the broader rubric, noting that it helps identify students who are strong in class but poor test-takers, or vice versa.

Ms. Turner echoed this, stating that multiple measures help capture good students who might have a bad exam day.

Ms. Herron emphasized that every student should have the opportunity to challenge themselves and noted the importance of streamlining the progression so students don't hit trouble points later in their science or math tracks.

Ms. Thorpe inquired about why Microeconomics was specifically chosen for modification and if more College in High School changes are on the horizon.

Ms. Mahar said she is still unsure of future changes, but the District is looking at Portrait of a Graduate pathways and new state diploma designations. She noted that the Microeconomics instructor is highly enthusiastic about the College in High School transition, which felt like the right time for the department.

Mr. Shane gave a shout-out to the ELL program staff for their impressive work in organizing family orientations, tradition celebrations, and providing translated materials to help new community members feel they belong.

Ms. Herron asked for an update on State requirements for the new financial literacy mandate.

Ms. Mahar replied that although final objectives from the State are expected in March, the District is already forming a committee. She explained the District will likely use a hybrid or embedded model to meet the mandate without immediately hiring new staff. Ms.

Mahar concluded by stating that the middle school is in a good position to meet these requirements. She clarified that state guardrails require teachers of embedded financial literacy to be certified in the specific area where the instruction occurs (e.g., Business or Social Studies) and confirmed that the District is already covering many of these topics.

B. Dr. Kurtis Kotes, Superintendent~Advocacy Committee & Legislative Open House

Dr. Kotes reported that the committee outlined a strategic plan to establish district-wide priorities ahead of a planned visit to the state capital in March. He announced in an effort to strengthen local ties, the District will host a Legislative Open House breakfast on January 22, 2026, inviting elected officials to tour facilities like the UPK room and discuss safety initiatives. Looking forward, he stated that the committee is coordinating a trip to Albany in March for students and Board members to advocate for District needs before the State budget is finalized.

## **12. TABLED MOTIONS**

None at this time.

## **13. OLD BUSINESS**

None at this time.

## **14. CONSENT AGENDA**

A. Financial Reports

Claim Auditor Reports for Warrants- 0045, 0046, 0047, V000

B. Instructional/Instructional Support Personnel Memo

A. DISCONTINUANCE

### **1. Resignation for the Purpose of Retirement**

a. Lyte, Melanie - Elementary Education, Bell Top Elementary School, effective June 27, 2026.

Date of Hire: 9/5/95

### **2. Resignation**

a. Pulver, Samantha - Teaching Assistant, Donald P. Sutherland Elementary School, effective 1/4/26.

Date of Hire: 12/18/25

### **3. Leave of Absence**

a. DeThomasis, Michaela - Social Worker, Bell Top Elementary School is requesting an unpaid child rearing leave of absence from 1/27/26-3/31/26. Planned return April 1, 2026.

b. Slater, Michelle - Teaching Assistant, Goff Middle School, requesting to extend unpaid leave of absence from her part time TA position for the remainder of the school year to fill an elementary teaching position at Genet.

## B. APPOINTMENTS

### 1. Probationary Appointment

- a. Beringer, Meredith - Science, Columbia High School  
(Replacing Jennifer Volz, retirement)  
Tenure Area: Science  
Probationary Period: 1/26/26-1/27/30  
Certification Status: NYS Initial Biology 7-12  
Step Placement: 1M = \$50,256.00 (prorated)  
Prior: 11/25-present Per Diem Substitute EGCS  
Degrees: B.S. SUNY, Albany  
M.S. SUNY, Albany

### 2. Term Substitute Appointment

- a. Slater, Michelle - Gr. 2, Genet Elementary School  
(Replacing Victoria Marino, Andy Sweet recall from PEL)  
Effective: 1/15/26-6/30/26  
Certification Status: NYS Initial Childhood Education 1-6  
Step Placement: 1M = \$50,256.00 (prorated)  
Prior: 8/25-present PDS EGCS; 8/22-present Teaching Assistant, EGCS  
Degrees: B.S. Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute  
M.S. SUNY, Cortland
- b. Van Alstyne, Ruth - Special Education, Goff Middle School  
(Replacing Nancy Kroll)  
Effective: 1/15/26-6/30/26  
Certification Status: NYS Permanent Special Education  
NYS Permanent N-6  
Step Placement: OSM = \$107,328.00 (prorated)  
Prior: 9/23-present Per Diem Sub EGCS; 9/88-6/23  
East Greenbush CSD  
Degrees: B.S. Russell Sage  
M.S. SUNY, Albany

### 3. Appendix "D" Advisor 2025-2026 School Year

Name	Columbia Club/Activity	Compensation
Roberts, Emily	Musical Choral Director	\$2,916.00

### 4. Driver Education Instructor 2025-2026 School Year

- a. Johnas, Lisa - Salary \$40 per hour

### 5. Per Diem Substitute Teacher

Name	Certification Area	Degree	Status	Effective Date
Evertsen, John	School Counselor	M.S.		1/7/26
Farrington, Dinah	Chemistry	Ph.D.		1/15/26

### 6. Student Teacher/Intern 2025-2026 School Year

Building	Student	Content Area	Cooperating Teacher	College/Term
Bell Top	Htoohay Ma	Elementary	Tracy Cornell	SUNY Plattsburgh/Spring 2
Columbia	Gavin Follos	Social Studies	Rebecca Wilson	SUNY Oneonta/Spring 2
Columbia	Savannah Rodriguez	Physical Education	Courteny Hotaling	Russell Sage/Spring 2
Columbia	Troy Snyder	Physical Education	Troy Snyder	Russell Sage/Spring 2
Goff	Jordan Long	English	Lauren Calderone	SUNY Albany/Spring 1
Green Meadow	Alexis White	Speech	Tracy Santore-Goodman	SUNY Plattsburgh/Spring 2

C. OTHER

1. Mentor Teacher Appointment Adjustment 2025-2026 School Year

- a. Marie Chieco From: Stipend \$675.00 (20% prorated)  
To: Stipend \$3,375.00 (100%)

2. Correction to Salary

- a. Williams, Jessica - Psychologist, Genet Elementary School  
From: \$80,330.00 To: \$78,755.00  
Salary listed on appointment was Step 13M for 26-27 school year

D. MISCELLANEOUS

1. Athletic Coaching Position 2025-2026 Winter/Spring Sports Season

- a. Courtney Townsend Varsity Unified Bowling  
Certified Teacher - Health/P.E. - Goff/Columbia/Red Mill  
Experience: Bowling Unified Bowling - Columbia - 2025  
Soccer Girls' J.V. Soccer - Columbia - 2025  
Base Salary: \$1,100.00  
Start Date: January 26, 2026

C. Non-Instructional Support Personnel Memo

<b>Discontinuance as listed:</b>			
<u>Name</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>Effective Date</u>	<u>Reason</u>
Dermody, Colin	School Bus Driver	1/31/26	retirement
Hadley, Judith	Substitute Bus Aide	12/17/25	resignation to accept another position in the district
Myers, Kyle	Substitute Custodial Worker	12/17/25	resignation to accept another position in the district
Witherell, Todd	Database Specialist	6/30/26	retirement
<b>Appointment as listed:</b>			
<u>Name</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>Effective Date</u>	<u>Salary</u>
Lucero-Wehner, Kristina	Bus Aide-Transportation probation: 1/15/26-9/14/26	1/15/26	Step 1 (HS) = \$18.15 per hour 5.75 hours/10 months
<b>Substitute employees as listed</b>			
<u>Name</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>Effective Date</u>	<u>Salary</u>
Dermody, Colin	School Bus Driver	1/31/26	Step 7 = \$34.82 per hour
Patterson, Ella	Aide	1/15/26	Step 1 (Three-Year College) = \$21.03 per hour
Smith, Jeffrey	School Bus Driver	1/15/26	Step 7 = \$34.82 per hour
<b>Leave of absence adjustment:</b>			
<u>Name</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>Effective Date</u>	<u>Reason</u>
Carmona, Aida	School Bus Driver	10/31/25-12/14/25	change in return date for unpaid medical leave

- D. Approval of Programs for Resident Children with Disabilities
- E. Resolution Teaching Assistant Tenure
- F. Acceptance of Gifts and Authorization to Increase the 2025-2026 Budget
- G. Disposal of District Property - Assets
- H. JV & Varsity Competitive Cheer Overnight Trip

I. Approval of Consent Agenda

RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA AS PRESENTED

Motion by Ms. Van Orden, Second by Mr. Panasci

Resolved, the Board of Education of the East Greenbush Central School District hereby approves the Consent Agenda.

Vote: Ayes- 8, Nays- 0

Motion carried

**15. NEW BUSINESS**

Mr. Buono proposed dedicating time in upcoming board meetings to strategically structure future agendas, aiming to provide clearer guidance for the administration. He emphasized the need to balance high-priority items like the budget and capital projects with academic goals, strategic planning, and student presentations. By mapping these topics out over the course of the year, Mr. Buono hopes to ensure that the Board's two-year goals are addressed in a logical sequence rather than being overshadowed by immediate business needs.

**16. PUBLIC FORUM #2**

None at this time

**17. BOARD FORUM #2**

Mr. Shane congratulated teaching assistant Kathleen Childs for all her hard work to achieve tenure.

Mr. Buono highlighted the importance of the student internship and mentorship programs, noting how beneficial it is to see teachers returning to support students in this capacity. He emphasized that students greatly need this type of hands-on experience to prepare for their careers. Furthermore, he expressed a desire to see these opportunities expanded, acknowledging that breaking into a professional field can be a significant challenge for students without such guidance

Mr. Bollam noted the tradition where the Columbia High students travel to the elementary school to play during the holiday. He said he remembers this from when he was in elementary and was excited to perform for the younger students. He thanked the district and the teachers for coordinating the transportation and logistics necessary to make these performances possible. Mr. Bollam noted that this tradition is a wonderful way to spread holiday cheer while allowing younger students to see the talent and opportunities available in the music program as they get older.

Ms. Herron expressed her appreciation for the musical performances held during the recent holiday gathering for faculty and staff. She mentioned that the event was a great way for staff to socialize and connect in a positive setting.

Mr. Panasci reported that the District will be holding Winterfest on January 17 & 18, and he also reminded everyone of the fundraiser at the Recovery Room on January 16, 2026 to support the family of Rich Hill.

**18. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Motion by Mr. Marchiony, Second by Ms. Herron to enter Executive Session to discuss proposed, pending or current litigation

Vote: Ayes- 8, Nays- 0

Motion carried

Time: 8:

Respectfully submitted,

Jeanne Pangburn

District Clerk

Motion by Mr. Shane, Second by Mr. Marchiony to exit Executive Session and return to Public Session

Vote: Ayes- 8, Nays- 0

Motion carried

Time: 9:14 P.M.

A. Acceptance of Donation of Funds

RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE DONATION OF FUNDS

Motion by Mr. Buono, Second by Mr. Shane

Resolved, the Board of Education of the East Greenbush Central School District hereby approves the Donation of Funds.

Vote: Ayes- 8, Nays- 0

Motion carried

B. Approval of Agreement with RKE Lighting and Electric LLC

RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE AGREEMENT WITH RKE LIGHTING AND ELECTRIC, LLC.

Motion by Mr. Panasci, Second by Mr. Marchiony

Resolved, the Board of Education of the East Greenbush Central School District hereby approves the Agreement with RKE Lighting and Electric, LLC.

Vote: Ayes- 8, Nays- 0

Motion carried

**20. ADJOURNMENT**

Motion by Ms. Van Orden, Second by Ms. Phillips to Adjourn the Meeting

Vote: Ayes- 8, Nays- 0

Motion carried

Time: 9:15 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Buono

Assistant District Clerk