

**EAST GREENBUSH CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 25, 2026
Central Administration Boardroom**

1. A. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER: Ms. Turner: 6:34 PM

ATTENDANCE

	Present	Absent	Arrival
Mr. Buono		X	
Ms. Herron	X		
Mr. Marchiony	X		
Mr. Panasci	X		
Ms. Phillips	X		
Mr. Shane			X 6:57 PM
Mr. Temple			X 6:59 PM
Ms. Turner	X		
Ms. Van Orden	X		
Ex-Officio Student Member			
Holly Thorpe	X		
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. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Motion by Mr. Marchiony, Second by Mr. Panasci to enter Executive Session to Discuss Matters Concerning Personnel

Vote: Ayes- 6, Nays-0

Motion carried

Time: 6:34 PM

Motion by Mr. Panasci, Second by Mr. Marchiony to Return to Public Session

Vote: Ayes- 8, Nays- 0

Motion carried

Time: 7:02 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Kimberly Turner,
Board President

3. REOPEN MEETING- 7:04 PM

A. Pledge of Allegiance

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

Matthew Pallone reported that the recent American Dream Mall field trip was a success and is hopefully becoming an annual tradition. He highlighted a busy upcoming schedule, including the student leadership conference and pops concert, followed by a blood drive on Friday, March 27, 2026.

He also announced that Student Council is planning a Spring Market on May 9th, 2026. He explained vendors and crafts people will purchase parking spots to set up their merchandise for the public to shop. Mr. Pallone said the sale is off to a strong start, with nearly a third of the vendor spots already claimed within the first 24 hours.

C. Approval of Draft Minutes dated March 11, 2026

RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING OF MARCH 11, 2026

Motion by Mr. Panasci, Second by Mr. Shane

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 11, 2026.

Vote: Ayes- 8, Nays- 0

Motion carried

D. Public Forum

Will Schwarz, a parent at Genet Elementary, addressed the Board to advocate for equitable class sizes, specifically highlighting concerns regarding rising enrollment for next year's first-grade cohort. While praising the school's leadership for fostering a positive environment, Mr. Schwarz pointed out that Genet already maintains the highest average class sizes in the District and faces a potential jump to 25 students per class for the upcoming year. He compared Genet's high numbers to smaller schools like Bell Top and DPS, arguing the gap is unfair. He said that research shows smaller classes lead to better grades, better behavior, and happier teachers. Finally, he asked the Board to distribute resources based on actual student needs rather than just giving every school the same amount, ensuring Genet kids aren't penalized for attending a larger school.

Ms. Sabine Murphy, a teacher and Odyssey of the Mind coach at Genet, thanked the Board for their financial support in sending the creative problem-solving team to the state competition. She said that even though the team didn't place as high as they hoped, the experience provided the students with a valuable life lesson.

Ms. Jennifer Powell, a Genet parent and long-term educator, requested the addition of a first grade section for the 2026-2027 school year. She stated that moving from kindergarten classes of 18-19 students to projected first-grade classes of 25-26 students would hinder the individualized attention necessary for such a pivotal year of development. Ms. Powell highlighted that smaller classes allow for better reading intervention, stronger teacher-student relationships, and fewer social disruptions. She urged the Board to prioritize this staffing investment to maintain the high quality of education these young learners require.

4. BOARD FORUM #1

Ms. Van Orden praised the recent middle school musical, noting that the talent was fantastic, and said she felt like she was watching high school performers. She also mentioned how much she enjoyed the recent pops concerts, expressing her overall excitement for the school's impressive music and drama programs.

Mr. Temple thanked Dr. Kotes for involving the PTOs early in the budget process. He emphasized the importance of being transparent about the difficult trade-offs involved in budget decisions, and expressed interest in exploring federal Medicaid reimbursements to help fund District medical services. Finally, he raised a concern for the future about ensuring that families who work multiple jobs or face transportation issues also have a voice in these discussions, not just those who can attend PTO meetings.

Ms. Herron shared her appreciation for the impressive student talent she saw at the art show, noting it was her first time visiting the art center. She highlighted how wonderful it has been to engage with students through their artwork, musicals, and sports, and thanked the staff in those departments for their hard work.

Mr. Bollam shared his experience participating in Advocacy Day, where he joined students, teachers, and administrators at the Capitol in Albany. He thanked Dr. Kotes for the opportunity to meet with legislators and share perspectives on school funding that they might not otherwise hear. Overall, he described the trip as a fun and interesting learning experience.

Mr. Shane expressed his gratitude for the support shown to the recent school musicals and celebrated the District's record high representation in several prestigious art exhibitions. He reported his visits to three major shows—the K-8 Empire State Plaza collection, the highly competitive High School Regional Juried Exhibition in Albany, and the Questar III exhibition—noting that multiple students received awards for photography and drawing. He praised the art faculty across all grade levels for laying the foundation for this success and shared his pride in seeing the District's work displayed for lawmakers and the public.

Ms. Phillips thanked the District and Green Meadow leadership for their solution-oriented approach in welcoming younger students into the building during the closure of Tutor Time. She acknowledged that while the stay was short-lived and disrupted the normal school year, the children truly enjoyed the experience and are now excited about their future in elementary school.

5. REPORTS AND PRESENTATIONS

A. 2026-2027 Proposed Budget

Dr. Kotes compared the differences between the Governor's proposal and the Legislative One House bills. He stated the Governor proposes a 1% minimum increase in Foundation Aid for districts with stable or declining enrollment, but both the Senate and Assembly are advocating for a 2% minimum. The Superintendent also covered Universal Pre-K funding, noting both sides lean toward a \$10,000 per student allowance but the Senate is pushing for transportation aid to support what may become a mandated service. He said despite concerns regarding the EV buses, the State remains committed to its aggressive transition timeline without significant relief in the current budget cycle. Dr. Kotes reported that the District is finalizing bus purchases and monitoring class size projections in preparation for the upcoming state budget.

Ms. Phillips asked what happens if a district doesn't comply with the State EV bus mandate.

Dr. Kotes said he is not sure, but said the State could withhold critical aid if the District fails to comply, which is concerning because the cost per vehicle would jump from about \$150,000 to \$500,000. The Superintendent also discussed the Capital Outlay project, and said the District is pushing for more flexible funding. He noted the current \$100,000 limit is far too low for modern public projects, and while there is legislative support to raise it to \$250,000, the outcome remains uncertain.

Dr. Kotes reported that the District faces a \$2 Million budget deficit for the 2026-2027 school year, driven largely by health insurance and benefit costs which are now outpacing salary increases for the first time in a decade, accounting for 40% of total expenditure growth. He explained that while the administration has identified \$1.1 million in non-staff savings by reviewing line

items like supplies and maintenance, a \$900,000 gap remains that may require difficult decisions. He explained that the District plans to utilize \$7.7 million in fund balance, but warned that this strategy is essentially pulling from a savings account, and relying too heavily on these finite resources without replenishing them is a long-term fiscal risk that requires constant monitoring.

Ms. Phillips asked for an updated expenditure report showing where they found the savings.

Mr. Panasci asked if an increase in Universal Pre-K funding to \$10,000 per student would help reduce the current budget deficit. He noted that while the district might not receive the full amount, he wondered if early confirmation of that additional state aid could offset some of the \$900,000 shortfall they are currently trying to close.

Ms. Mulligan explained that revenue was already considered in the \$1.1 million of reductions.

Ms. Mahar presented projected class sizes for the 2026-2027 school year, emphasizing that these figures are very fluid based on current enrollment and rollover staffing with no new positions added. Ms. Mahar noted that final staffing decisions often aren't finalized until August to account for summer move-ins/outs. She explained that building principals monitor growth and special education needs daily to make recommendations.

Mr. Temple asked about the dynamic between the Board of Education and the Superintendent regarding high-level decision-making, specifically concerning class sizes and academic priorities. He wondered how the Board provides input or sets priorities, and how the Superintendent then translates those preferences into a final recommendation for the budget and District operations.

Ms. Mahar explained that the class size planning process that begins at the building level. She said principals monitor enrollment and special education needs, communicating regularly with District leadership and the Director of Pupil Personnel Services to ensure both mandated and projected requirements are met. She said this information is then brought to the Board to keep them fully informed of the logic behind specific grade-level sectioning.

Mr. Temple emphasized that while the Board maintains a high level of trust in its administrators and relies on their specialized judgment for day-to-day operations, it must remain balanced by staying responsive to the community's concerns to ensure a comprehensive view of the District's priorities

Dr. Kotes agreed that the Board must be responsive to the community, but said those responses must be weighed against the District's limited financial reality. He noted that the Board's role is to help define exactly where those resources should be directed, ensuring that the District's goals align with what is fiscally sustainable for the community. The Superintendent also provided an update on the District's transportation, noting that while the District maintains a fleet of 102 buses, rising costs and an aging inventory have necessitated a request for six new diesel buses. He addressed the complexities of the State's electric vehicle mandate, explaining that while the District has voter authorization for two EV buses, the required infrastructure upgrades would cost approximately \$100,000 and the long-term operational costs of electricity remain a concern.

Mr. Temple questioned why the District would change the budget or invest in the infrastructure for the EV mandate if it is still years away especially since the State is only offering a relatively small amount to address the problem.

Dr. Kotes stated that while the law requires all new bus purchases to be electric starting in 2027, the District can apply for two-year waivers by proving they are making good faith efforts to meet the deadline. He stated he recommends to the Board that the District apply for the two-year waiver. He explained that this extension would buy the necessary time to complete a feasibility study and determine exactly how the District can adapt the infrastructure to meet these requirements, assuming the current mandate and timeline remain unchanged. The Superintendent continued by saying to manage these challenges, the District is exploring a state waiver to delay implementation, citing current technology and manufacturing hurdles. Looking ahead, Dr. Kotes warned that as the bus reserve is depleted and fund balances are used to close a \$2 million deficit, the District may need to transition from its healthy pay-as-you-go cycle to financing vehicle purchases by the 2028-29 school year. He concluded by emphasizing that all options, including regional transportation models and targeted spending reductions, must remain on the table as the Board moves toward adopting a final budget by April 21st.

B. Administrative Reports

Superintendent - Kurtis M. Kotes, Ed.D. - Advocacy Committee- Legislative Visit to Albany 3-20-26

Dr. Kotes discussed the Advocacy Committee's recent trip to Albany, where they met with Assemblymembers McDonald and Bendett and State Senator Ashby to voice concerns about school funding. He praised the student representatives for their professionalism. Dr. Kotes emphasized that as one of the largest districts in the region, it is vital to ensure specific needs are articulated to lawmakers. He stated that in hopes of strengthening future efforts, the committee discussed mobilizing the community through advocacy templates and moving their legislative visits earlier in the year to better influence the state's budget planning process.

Mr. Shane emphasized the importance of publicizing high-priority advocacy points through the website, ParentSquare, and social media to effectively get parents and residents involved in supporting the District's needs. He suggested providing residents with simple, pre-written paragraphs or bullet points to make calling or emailing their representatives as easy as possible.

Dr. Kotes agreed that mobilizing the community is a powerful move, noting that lawmakers are far more likely to take action when they hear from a large volume of people.

Ms. Thorpe suggested that these advocacy efforts would be a great learning opportunity for students, particularly those in government classes. She noted that many students aren't aware of how they can personally take action, and incorporating these real-world topics into the classroom would show them exactly how to get involved.

Dr. Kotes also provided an update on the Health and Safety Committee, which is currently reviewing bus accident policies and developing a new state-required procedure for toileting and diapering to support high-need students staying in-district.

6. DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. Curriculum Presentation Calendar

Ms. Mahar presented a calendar of upcoming presentations for the Board.

7. REGULAR BUSINESS

A. Notice of Public Hearing

RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

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

Resolved, the Board of Education of the East Greenbush Central School District hereby approves the Notice of Public Hearing, Registration of Voters and Voting on 2026-2027 School Budget, School Buses, and Election of Board Members.

Vote: Ayes- 8, Nays- 0

Motion carried

B. Resolution to Approve EGTA MOA

RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT WITH EGTA.

Motion by Mr. Marchiony, Second by Mr. Shane

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

Vote: Ayes- 8, Nays- 0

Motion carried

C. Labella Associates Additional Services- Grant Application(s) for NY Plays Grant

Ms. Mulligan explained that the District is interested in applying for a portion of a new \$67 million state grant to help fund playground construction, a high-priority and high-cost area of the \$116 million capital project. She noted that the District's architectural firm, LaBella Associates, brought this opportunity to the District's attention as part of their role in monitoring for grants that can offset capital costs. Since LaBella has already finalized the design plans and cost renderings for the Green Meadow playground to meet State standards, the District is a strong candidate for the application. If awarded, this funding would allow the District to stretch its budget further and potentially include new equipment for younger children (ages 2-5) that wasn't part of the original referendum plans.

Mr. Temple asked for clarification on how District intended to use the grant money if awarded. He questioned whether the plan was to simply cover existing costs or to use the additional funds to actually expand or enhance the construction beyond the original scope.

Ms. Mulligan explained that the grant requires a 20% local match, which would be covered by existing capital project dollars. She clarified that the grant acts as a revenue source rather than a budget increase, meaning the District must still stay within its overall spending authority. She stated that by applying these funds to the playground site work, an area currently projected to exceed the state's maximum cost allowance, the District can better balance the budget internally. Ms. Mulligan said if awarded the grant would prevent the need to increase the overall capital project cost while ensuring the construction stays on track without hitting the District's financial limits.

Mr. Temple asked for further clarification, noting that while he understands the total project spending is capped by what the voters approved, he is still trying to grasp exactly how the grant funds function within that limit. He said he would like to ensure he fully understands how the money from the grant interacts with the existing budget and whether it allows for more flexibility or simply replaces local spending.

Ms. Mulligan clarified that the grant acts as a revenue source that helps the District manage its spending. She explained that the overall capital project was already projected to exceed the state's maximum cost allowance by \$18 million, meaning the District has to carefully balance costs across different areas.

She explained that by using grant money for playground site work, which is currently over budget, the District can offset those specific costs. Ms. Mulligan said this will allow the District to use savings from other areas, like the Phase 1A roofing project, to maintain tax neutrality, ensuring the District delivers the promised improvements without increasing the total cost to taxpayers or the overall project budget.

RESOLUTION TO APPROVE LABELLA ASSOCIATES ADDITIONAL SERVICES- GRANT APPLICATION(S) FOR NY PLAYS GRANT.

Motion by Mr. Panasci, Second by Mr. Marchiony

Resolved, the Board of Education of the East Greenbush Central School District hereby approves LaBella Associates Additional Services- Grant Application(s) for NY Plays Grant.

Vote: Ayes- 8, Nays- 0

Motion carried

8. TABLED MOTIONS

None at this time

9. OLD BUSINESS

None at this time

10. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Financial Reports

Claim Auditor Reports for Warrants- 0055,0056,0062,0064,0065,0066,0067,V056.pdf

B. Instructional/Instructional Support Personnel Memo

A. DISCONTINUANCE

1. Resignation

a. Salls, Ellen - CSE Chairperson, Districtwide, effective 4/17/26.
Date of Hire: 8/31/23. Reason: personal

b. Das, Epali - Per Diem Substitute Teacher, effective 3/23/26

Reason: per sub request

2. Leave of Absence

- a. Spear, Katherine - Gr. 4, Donald P. Sutherland Elementary School, requesting an unpaid child-rearing leave of absence from 3/12/26 - 6/30/26. Planned return September 1, 2026.

B. APPOINTMENTS

1. Per Diem Substitute Teacher

Name	Certification Area	Degree Status	Effective Date
Mendrysa, Sydney Marketing		B.S	3/26/26
Walsh, Michelle	Supervision and Management	B.S	3/26/26

C. MISCELLANEOUS

1. Unpaid Coaches 2025-2026 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 & Child Abuse.

Name	Sport
a. Beringer, Meredith	Softball
b. Gildart, Daniel	Boys' Lacrosse
c. Rowse, Morgan	Baseball

C. Non-Instructional Support Personnel Memo

Discontinuance as listed:			
Name	Position	Effective Date	Reason
Lynagh, Michael	Senior Monitor-CHS	3/26/26	resignation to accept another position in District
Waters, Benjamin	Custodial Worker-Goff	3/17/26	resignation
Das, Epali	Substitute Aide	3/23/26	per employee request
Appointment as listed:			
Name	Position	Effective Date	Salary
Arana-Gregory, Enrique	Custodial Worker-Bell Top Probation period: 3/26/26-12/25/26	3/26/26	Step 1 = \$19.79 per hour 8 hours/10 months
Lynagh, Michael	Bus Aide-Transportation Probation period: 3/26/26-12/25/26	3/26/26	Step 6 (BA) = \$24.86 per hour 5.5 hours/10 months
Substitute employees as listed:			
Name	Position	Effective Date	Salary
Bulan, Jeffrey	Custodial Worker	3/26/26	Step 1 = \$18.21 per hour
Derouville, Paul	Custodial Worker	3/26/26	Step 1 = \$18.21 per hour
Durfee, Elizabeth	Aide	3/26/26	Step 1 (HS) = \$18.15 per hour
Gilroy, Sierra	Occupational Therapy Assistant	3/26/26	Step 1 = \$28.07 per hour
Heim, Amanda	Monitor	3/26/26	Step 1 = \$16.90 per hour
Mendrysa, Sydney	Aide	3/26/26	Step 1 (BS) = \$22.48 per hour
Maunu, Brianna	Monitor Sr. Monitor	9/1/25	Step 1 = \$16.90 per hour Step 1 = \$17.72 per hour
Walsh, Michelle	Aide	3/26/26	Step 1 (BS) = \$22.48 per hour

D. Approval of Programs for Resident Children with Disabilities

E. Library Materials Recommended for Weeding-Columbia High School Library

F. Resolution Administrator Tenure

G. Disposal of District Property - Assets

H. Approval of Consent Agenda

RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA AS PRESENTED

Motion by Mr. Panasci, Second by Mr. Marchiony

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

Vote: Ayes- 8, Nays- 0

Motion carried

11. NEW BUSINESS

None at this time.

12. END BUSINESS MEETING

A. Public Forum

None at this time.

B. Board Roundtable

Mr. Temple congratulated Mr. Jones on achieving tenure.

Ms. Phillips suggested that the District proactively address recurring community questions regarding the budget, specifically concerning class sizes and EV buses. She noted that as public interest grows, it would be beneficial to release a formal memo or presentation explaining the District's decision-making process.

Regarding transportation, Ms. Phillips emphasized the importance of clear communication for those who voted for EV buses. She suggested the District release a statement explaining the commitment to the transition, the associated costs, and the long-term benefits, ensuring that residents who don't attend Board meetings still understand the District's rationale.

Mr. Shane echoed the need for unity, emphasizing that the District and the taxpayers are all in it together. He pointed out that the community is experiencing high growth, with many new families moving to the area specifically because of the school District's strength. He suggested that the messaging should frame advocacy as a community-wide effort. He said by working together to demand more state aid, the community can help keep local taxes lower while maintaining the quality of the schools. Mr. Shane advocated for providing a scripted way for residents to join the District in this shared goal, reinforcing that the schools are a central asset that everyone has a stake in protecting.

13. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Not needed at this time.

14. ADJOURNMENT

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

Vote: Ayes- 8, Nays- 0

Motion carried

Time: 8:46 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Jeanne Pangburn
District Clerk