

EAST GREENBUSH CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 15, 2026
Central Administration Boardroom

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

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

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		

B. Pledge of Allegiance

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

Natalie Krisanda and Matthew Pallone reported that the Student Council has been focused on building community, starting with a leadership conference dedicated to improving school culture through shared ideas with other districts. They said the recent blood drive was very successful, and the Council is now preparing for a Vendor Fair on May 9th, featuring 40 vendors and food trucks. Additionally, they reported that individual classes are also busy with specific fundraising projects: juniors and seniors are planning prom, sophomores are organizing a dodgeball tournament, and freshmen are coordinating the prom walk-in and new fundraisers.

D. Approval of Draft Minutes dated March 25, 2026

RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING OF MARCH 25, 2026

Motion by Mr. Panasci, Second by Ms. Herron

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 25, 2026

Vote: Ayes- 8, Nays-

Motion carried

E. Public Forum

Ms. Ingrid Espinosa, a parent of a Goff student, expressed her concerns about screen time and AI in the classrooms. She stated she takes part in national committees that are in the process of bringing a model bill to Legislators in New York to rein in AI in education. She explained they will be advocating for a move away from one-to-one devices as it is distracting and detracts from real learning. She said she thinks the District should not rush to use Artificial Intelligence in education, stressing the need to focus on teaching students the ethical and proper use of these tools. Ms. Espinosa clarified that she is not anti technology, but wants to ensure that its use has appropriate implementation, especially for young children.

Ms. Tammy Cosgrove, district nurse and health services Coordinator, expressed her concerns about eliminating the floating nurse position, noting that the nurse provides crucial coverage when substitutes are unavailable. She stated that the 11 person sub list has individuals that have other jobs and are not always available, so the floating nurse has covered absences 34 days this year. She also explained that the position assists the building nurses with state-mandated duties like vision, hearing and scoliosis screenings which are challenging to complete while also handling day to day first aid needs of the students. Ms. Caitlyn Heeg, Genet nurse, reiterated Ms. Cosgrove's concerns, emphasizing that the role is critical, ensuring that NYS mandated screening and immunization compliance are completed. She said the elimination of the position would be a complete disservice and potentially put the District at risk for non-compliance

2. BOARD FORUM #1

Ms. Herron congratulated Tom Ross for being named News Channel 13 Top Teacher.

Ms. Thorpe congratulated Mr. Ross and said he was a fantastic teacher.

Mr. Buono said he recently attended the Siena-UB Lacrosse game, which honored Coach Liam Gleason who recently passed away, and expressed his support for Goff Guidance Counselor, Ms. Gleason and their family.

3. REPORTS AND PRESENTATIONS

A. Utica National Insurance Group - "School Safety Excellence Award" for 2026 - Superintendent Dr. Kurtis Kotes

Dr. Kotes announced that the District was recognized with the 2026 Utica National Insurance Group Safety Excellence Award for outstanding efforts to create a safer school environment. He explained the award acknowledged the District's overall safety ratings, including a low amount of worker's compensation accidents. He also stated the acknowledgement came with a \$500 endowment that was deposited into the general fund.

B. 2026-2027 Proposed Budget

In this third budget workshop, Dr. Kotes detailed the District's efforts to address a structural deficit and remain at the tax cap by reducing expenditure projections to \$118.8 million. He said to balance the budget, the District will utilize \$7.6 million in non-renewable reserves, a strategy Dr. Kotes warned is becoming increasingly unsustainable as the margin between spending and savings narrows. The Superintendent noted some key instructional reductions including the elimination of the Middle School Jumpstart and MAP programs as data indicated these initiatives were not meeting their intended student performance and attendance goals, as well as the replacement of costly home tutoring with a centralized building-based center to curb expenses from student absenteeism. On the staffing and operational side, the District will realize savings through attrition for a database specialist and a transportation typist, shifting a custodial salary to the self-sustaining school lunch fund, and eliminating positions for a floating nurse and an assistant transportation supervisor.

Further financial adjustments involve reducing Special Education contingency seats by \$250,000, lowering projected healthcare cost increases by \$220,000, and cutting underutilized BOCES service contracts. A significant portion of the balancing act relies on a projected state funding increase for Universal Pre-K (UPK) from \$5,400 to \$10,000 per student. While this allows for a \$360,000 reduction in general fund spending and hopefully will attract new community partners through a planned fall RFP. Dr. Kotes cautioned that the District is legally required to adopt the budget next week despite the uncertainty of the state's final numbers. He emphasized that these measures are designed to preserve core programming while ensuring the District meets its statutory requirements and remains sensitive to the community's tax burden.

Mr. Temple asked if the state's legislative delay specifically would involve education.

To address a structural deficit while remaining under the tax cap, Dr. Kotes proposed reducing expenditures to \$118.8 million by utilizing \$7.6 million in reserves and implementing several targeted cuts. The Superintendent said some key instructional reductions include eliminating the Jumpstart and MAP programs at the middle school and replacing costly home tutoring with a centralized after-school center to reduce expenses from student absenteeism. He said non-instructional savings involve leaving vacant positions unfilled for a database specialist and transportation typist, moving a custodial salary to the school lunch fund, and eliminating roles for an assistant supervisor of transportation and a floating nurse. Dr. Kotes warned while these measures balance the immediate budget, relying on non-renewable reserves is an increasingly unsustainable strategy as the District's ability to generate savings diminishes.

Dr. Kotes also expressed some concern over the UPK program funding, stating that if the legislative increase from \$5400- \$10,00 per pupil fails to materialize, the District will begin the fiscal year with an immediate budget hole.

Ms. Phillips asked if the \$10,000 covers all the costs for UPK.

Dr. Kotes said it does not cover the full cost of the Questar programs, but it does close the gap with the community based providers. He said the District cannot issue a request for proposal with the uncertainty of funding, but if the increased state aid is approved, the District plans to open a new RFP in the fall allowing the community based providers to renegotiate contracts and adjust billable amounts. He said with increased funding, it is possible that other providers might now be interested.

Ms. Mulligan said the Questar program is billed on a per classroom basis and the actual rate per student is just under \$11,000.

Mr. Panasci asked if the District could move away from the costly Questar programs.

Dr. Kotes replied at this time there is not enough interested community based providers.

Ms. Herron expressed her concerns over the unknown tuition costs if new students with need enter the District. She stated those special education costs could be substantial, especially for out of district placements.

Dr. Kotes agreed, and replied those risks are always there, and things can change in a day.

Mr. Marchiony asked if the line item for utilities took into consideration the savings from the LED lighting project.

Ms. Mulligan explained that perhaps it is included, but they are not sure of the actual impact. Also, she explained they will be incurring additional costs in utilities with rising costs and the inclusion of things that will be added on, such as the air conditioning. She stated that they are actually been trying to gradually increase those lines to make sure that they are accommodating for that in the future.

Mr. Buono expressed general support for the proposed budget reductions, noting that instructional programs remain consistent while non-instructional cuts appear appropriate. However, he voiced specific concern regarding the elimination of the floating nurse position, emphasizing that the coverage it provides for absenteeism remains a significant need that should be revisited if future funding allows. He urged administration to identify deeper savings in non-salary items and to transition certain purchases into the current year to alleviate pressure on the upcoming budget and reserves.

Ms. Phillips requested a briefing on the District's nursing and healthcare services to better understand roles and staffing levels. She also echoed the need to identify additional non-instructional savings.

Mr. Temple thanked the administration for their hard work on a challenging budget and emphasized the need for a long-term strategy centered on the Board's "North Star": ensuring every student achieves maximum growth regardless of background. He questioned how the proposed cuts would impact this goal and requested disaggregated student data to better evaluate the results of their financial decisions. He also championed educational equity and job security, proposing that the Board define a baseline for staffing to ensure the District can consistently maintain its essential programs despite fiscal pressures.

Dr. Kotes noted that since staffing is the District's largest expense, the current minimum standard is dictated by union contracts, with any higher staffing levels being goals the Board must set together. He warned that non-instructional cuts have reached their limit and the use of reserve funds is no longer a sustainable way to balance the budget. Moving forward, The Superintendent emphasized that the District must rethink how it staffs and runs programs to find more creative, long-term financial solutions.

Mr. Buono questioned the necessity of high reserve balances, suggesting the District may be overfunding accounts for contractual obligations like sick leave and retirement beyond what is actually used.

Ms. Mulligan explained that while some reserves have strict rules, others allow for fund transfers; however, moving excess funds requires formal certification to ensure original obligations are still met.

Mr. Temple inquired if reserves could cover recurring expenses to free up the general fund.

Dr. Kotes advised against this, noting that reserves are intended for rainy day or one-time costs rather than annual operations. She also warned of the growing \$2 million deficit and advocated for proactive long-term planning to avoid future financial crises without relying solely on tax hikes.

Mr. Buono credited last year's aggressive cuts and tax cap override for slowing spending growth, emphasizing that continued fiscal discipline is required to protect programs.

Mr. Shane suggested a multi-year strategy of minor tax cap overrides to compound revenue, proposing that transparent, incremental increases might be more acceptable to the public.

Dr. Kotes cautioned against another tax cap override for the 2026-27 year, citing severe community backlash from recent reassessments and the risk of failing to pass the budget.

C. 2026-2027 Class Size Updates - Elementary & Middle Schools

Ms. Mahar explained that the enrollment data presented is strictly projected, noting that figures change daily and have already seen significant increases since the report was drafted. She highlighted that while current kindergarten registration numbers appear low, they are expected to rise substantially as families return their packets and principals continue their outreach. Ms. Mahar noted that principals determine section counts by balancing factors like student academics, behavioral needs, and social makeup to ensure stable cohorts. She specifically pointed out that Genet and Red Mill will serve as the District's K-5 ENL schools next year, which will likely drive their enrollment higher following student testing. Despite some Board concerns regarding the contractual class size limits, 25 for Kindergarten and 27 for Grades 1-5, Ms. Mahar reassured the Board that middle school trends show stable class sizes and that the administration remains committed to using disaggregated data to monitor the impact of these projections on student performance.

D. Star Universal Screener Data

Ms. Mahar explained that the District utilizes the STAR Universal Screener three times a year to provide a normed reference academic temperature check for students in grades K through 8. She explained that this computer adaptive assessment helps identify students for the Multi Tiered System of Support by moving those below proficiency, specifically those below the 33rd percentile in Early Literacy and the 26th percentile in Math and Reading, into Tier 2 or Tier 3 interventions. Ms. Mahar highlighted significant academic growth over a three year trend where Early Literacy proficiency rose from 63.8 percent in Fall 2023 to nearly 80 percent currently while Math performance has remained exceptionally high at 88 percent. She noted that these national norms are highly reliable and valid while effectively reflecting the successful implementation of the Science of Reading and Envisions math programming. Moving forward the District aims to expand the pilot into 9th grade English and fully integrate STAR reporting across all 10 Pre K sites to ensure kindergarten readiness and instructional equity.

E. Administrative/Committee Reports

Dr. Kotes initiated a conversation regarding the need for a formal remote work policy to address operational capacity issues, specifically in departments with singular employees, such as payroll and HR. He explained that the goal is not to promote permanent remote work, but to provide guardrails for extreme circumstances, such as personal catastrophes or health issues, that prevent staff from reaching the office.

Ms. VanOrden expressed concerns about ensuring employees are not pressured to work while truly sick.

Mr. Shane supported the idea of using remote work to solve capacity problems, specifically for employees who are able to work but hit a snag getting to the office. He clarified that if someone is truly sick, they should be allowed to be off, but he sees the value in a remote option for broader widespread situations where keeping the District's operations moving is essential.

Mr. Temple commented on the pressure of accumulating tasks, noting that even during time off, work continues to build up, often making it difficult to fully disconnect.

Dr. Kotes echoed these sentiments, noting that it is often more efficient to stay connected remotely than to fall behind on critical projects. He clarified that the proposed policy is designed to bridge operational gaps during emergencies rather than replace in-person collaboration, which remains the District's priority. To address these extenuating circumstances, Dr. Kotes said he would draft a formal policy for the Policy committee. He said this draft will focus on providing administrative discretion to ensure District operations remain seamless during unexpected absences.

Health Insurance Review Committee - March 31, 2026

Ms. Mulligan reviewed the recent Health Insurance Review Committee Meeting minutes highlighting some key points. She explained that starting July 1, 2026, Highmark is transitioning the District to a "total utilization management" protocol for prescriptions to reduce waste through step therapy and prior authorizations. While nearly 400 letters were sent to members regarding these changes, she noted that many may be resolved automatically by Highmark's smart edit system once it goes live. Additionally, she noted that the District is implementing cost-saving measures such as the Copay Armor coupon program and the

introduction of cheaper biosimilar medications. To further manage the 2026-27 health insurance rates, the District is promoting CanaRX for prescription savings and enhancing employee education on benefits during open enrollment and upcoming wellness presentations.

MTSS & SEL Committee

Ms. Mahar explained that the District has combined the Multi-Tiered System of Support and the Social Emotional Learning committees to better address the whole learner. She reported that following a comprehensive SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats), the group identified a need to strengthen Tier 1 supports and improve the connection between home, school, and the community. She noted that while initiatives like trauma-informed instruction are moving forward, the committees have successfully merged their mission statements into a single vision focused on providing an equitable, inclusive system that empowers students to reach their full potential.

Portrait of a Graduate

Ms. Mahar explained that the District is currently aligning its Portrait of a Graduate with New York State's Inspires initiative, opting to maintain its current competencies while refining the statements of intent to ensure they are future-driven. To make these goals more accessible, a graphic design class at the high school is developing a simplified one-page visual. Looking ahead, Ms. Mahar emphasized that the next phase involves revising the District roadmap to include learning progressions, defining what skills like critical thinking look like at each grade level, and integrating these intentionally into summer curriculum writing. She also noted that through a design team partnership with Questar III, the District is exploring project-based learning and alternative performance measures to ensure that graduation pathways and instructional requirements meet the needs of every student.

4. DISCUSSION ITEMS

None at this time.

5. REGULAR BUSINESS

None at this time.

6. TABLED MOTIONS

None at this time.

7. OLD BUSINESS

None at this time.

8. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Financial Reports

Claim Auditor Reports for Warrants 0068, 0069, 0070, 0072, 0073, 0074, V061, V067, V072

2026-04-15 Treasurer's Report for the Month of August, 2025

2026-04-15 Revenues Status Report for the Month of August, 2025

2026-04-15 Budget Status Report for the Month of August, 2025

2026-04-15 Budget Transfers for the Month of August, 2025

2026-04-15 Extraclassroom Treasurer's Reports for Columbia High School and Goff Middle School for the Month of August, 2025

2026-04-15 Extraclassroom Treasurer's Reports for Columbia High School and Goff Middle School for the Month of September, 2025

2026-04-15 Extraclassroom Treasurer's Reports for Columbia High School and Goff Middle School for the Month of October, 2025

2026-04-15 Extraclassroom Treasurer's Reports for Columbia High School and Goff Middle School for the Month of November, 2025

2026-04-15 Extraclassroom Treasurer's Reports for Columbia High School and Goff Middle School for the Month of December, 2025

B. Instructional/Instructional Support Personnel Memo

A. DISCONTINUANCE

1. Resignation

- a. Primeau, Claire - Teaching Assistant, Howard L. Goff Middle School, effective 4/20/26.

Date of Hire: 8/31/23. Reason: employment elsewhere

- b. Burroughs, Michelle - Per Diem Substitute Teacher, effective 3/30/26

Reason: per sub request

2. Leave of Absence

- a. McHugh, Kayla - Kindergarten, Genet Elementary School, requesting an unpaid child-rearing leave of absence from 3/30/26 - 6/30/26. Planned return 9/1/26.

B. APPOINTMENTS

1. Probationary Appointment - Teaching Assistant

- a. Uttendorfer, Emma - Teaching Assistant, Red Mill Elementary School
 (New position)
 Tenure Area: Teaching Assistant
 Probationary Period: 4/16/26-4/15/30
 Certification Status: NYS Initial TA Certificate
 Step Placement: Step 1 = \$23.35 per hour
 Hours per day: 6.5

2. Per Diem Substitute Teacher

Name	Certification Area	Degree Status	Effective Date
Long, Jordan	Psychology	B.A	4/16/26

C. OTHER

1. Adjustment to Retirement Effective Date

- a. Janowski, Maureen, Teaching Assistant, Goff Middle School
 From: Effective date of retirement 6/30/26
 To: Effective date of retirement 6/1/26

D. MISCELLANEOUS

1. Unpaid Coach 2025-2026 Spring Sports Season

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

Name	Sport
a. Feldman, Valerie	Girls' Lacrosse

C. Non-Instructional Support Personnel Memo

Discontinuance as listed:			
Name	Position	Effective Date	Reason
Clum, Willard	Senior Monitor-CHS	7/1/26	retirement
Corellis, Pamela	Cook-Bell Top	6/30/26	retirement
Uttendorfer, Emma	Monitor-Red Mill	4/16/26	resignation to accept another position in District
Walters, Nicholas	Custodial Worker-Red Mill	5/1/26	resignation to accept another position in District
Ackley, Mary	Substitute Typist	3/31/26	per employee request
Burroughs, Michelle	Substitute Aide	3/30/26	per employee request
Appointment as listed:			
Name	Position	Effective Date	Salary
Walters, Nicholas	Truck Driver	5/1/26	Step 7 = \$28.00 per hour 6 hrs per day/12 mnth
	Custodial Worker	5/1/26	Step 7 = \$24.82 per hour 2 hrs per day/12 mnth
	Probation period: 5/1/26-10/31/26		
Substitute employees as listed:			
Name	Position	Effective Date	Salary
Clum, Willard	Senior Monitor	7/1/26	Step OS = \$25.06 per hour
Corellis, Pamela	Cook	6/30/26	Step 7 = \$24.91 per hour
Appointment adjustment			
Name	Position	Effective Date	Reason

Arana-Gregory, Enrique	Custodial Worker-Bell Top	3/26/26	correction from 10 month to 12 month position correction in probation period: 3/26/26-9/25/26
Leave of absence:			
Name	Position	Effective Date	Reason
Coester, Deborah	Bus Driver-Transportation	3/30/26-4/28/26	unpaid medical leave
Ingram, Rachel	Bus Driver-Transportation	4/1/26-6/26/26	unpaid medical leave

- D. Approval of Programs for Resident Children with Disabilities
- E. Health and Welfare Services Contract - Rensselaer City School District
- F. Health and Welfare Services Contract- North Greenbush Common School District
- G. Agreement with Interim CSE Chairperson - Lori Metallo-Hotaling
- H. Request to Correct Additional Tax Rolls
- I. Resolution Teaching Assistant Tenure
- J. Disposal of District Property - Assets
- K. Columbia Girls Flag Football Overnight Trip
- L. 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- 9, Nays- 0

Motion carried

9. NEW BUSINESS

None at this time.

10. END BUSINESS MEETING

A. Public Forum

Mr. Mark Halsey, Asst Transportation Supervisor, addressed the Board regarding the elimination of his position due to budgetary cuts. He cited his 26 years of service in various roles throughout the department, including driving, routing, dispatch, and most recently overseeing the struggling maintenance department. Mr. Halsey said if the elimination must proceed and he can return to driving, he asks that an agreement be reached with CSEA for him to retain his District seniority. Mr. Halsey explained that he is on track to retire in 39 months, and starting as a new hire would result in a 60% pay reduction, significantly impacting his final earnings.

B. Board Roundtable

Mr. Shane said he was looking forward to attending the Multi-Cultural Fair at CHS on Friday, April 17, 2026 and encouraged everyone to attend.

Ms. Herron mentioned a recent invite from Questar to learn more about the Tech Valley Program. She said she recently spent time there as a consultant, and learned a lot about the program. She encouraged the others to visit to learn about the opportunities available for students.

Mr. Buono stated that there are currently seven East Greenbush students at Tech Valley and 22 in the STEM Program. He noted that the District is a big supporter of these pathways, typically sponsoring two new Tech Valley students each year.

11. EXECUTIVE SESSION

A. Executive Session - to discuss proposed, pending, or current litigation regarding tax certiorari proceedings.

Motion by Mr. Marchiony, Second by Ms. Phillips to enter Executive Session to Discuss Proposed, Pending or Current Litigation regarding Tax Certiorari Proceedings.

Vote: Ayes- 9, Nays- 0

Motion carried

Time: 9:54 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeanne Pangburn
District Clerk

Motion by Ms. Van Orden, Second by Ms. Phillips to Exit Executive Session

Vote: Ayes- 9, Nays- 0

Motion carried

Time: 10:18 P.M.

12. ADJOURNMENT

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

Vote: Ayes- 9, Nays- 0

Motion carried
Time: 10:18 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Buono
Assistant District Clerk