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## MEMORANDUM

TO: Eastern Suffolk BOCES Staff

FROM: Ryan Ruf

DATE: August 30, 2022

RE: School Opening – 2022

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It gives me great pleasure to welcome faculty and staff to the 2022-23 school year. As your new Chief Operating Officer, I look forward to joining you as we continue to provide quality services to our 51 component school districts and our strategic partners in the region. Our students will be joining us on Tuesday, September 6.

We certainly have learned a lot about ourselves as we look back over these last few years. The major take-away was that we were quick to adjust to whatever was thrown at us as the pandemic brought many challenges to how we all did our jobs. Health issues, testing protocols, communications, remote learning, technology needs, providing food for our students, in true ESBOCES fashion, we joined hands, worked together, and successfully made it through these last couple of years. Once again, our heartfelt thanks to one and all for your dedicated efforts.

Today, while we tend to see these challenges in the rear view mirror, our experiences have told us that we must not let our guard down. Common sense and good health habits will be the order of the day until we hear differently from health officials. Additionally, ESBOCES has made major investments in all of our buildings including upgrades to our HVAC (heating, ventilation, and air conditioning) systems. This work will continue to be the focus for our Operations and Maintenance department.

On the business side of the agency, we find ourselves growing in many of the services that we offer. Special Education classes, Career, Technical, and Adult Education courses, professional development, technology services, and Educational Support Services are all in high-demand; a true testament to the hard work and dedication that we bring to the job each and every day. Together, we have built a solid foundation that puts us in a position to meet this high demand and to continue to bring quality to everything that we do.

### Diversity, Equity, and Inclusivity (DEI)

Overall the course of the past year, our DEI CoSer has grown to 27 school districts. We hired Amanda Chansingh, Administrative Coordinator for DEI Regional Services, to coordinate this service. Additionally, I credit our Director of DEI, April Francis-Taylor, for helping to guide our agency as we continue to grow together with our DEI initiatives. She has established herself as a leader across the region, as well as a as a DEI expert in New York State. We are also in the process of updating our Hiring Practices Manual to facilitate an onboarding process that ensures the best candidates are hired for our vacancies. There are many opportunities to be involved in this work, and I encourage you to participate.

### Strategic Planning

We held our annual Strategic Planning Council meeting virtually on August 3. As part of highlighting our work, a yearbook of achievements was developed. Please click on the following link to access the [Strategic Plan Achievements - 2022](#) and learn about the focus of our work.

### Leadership Changes since August 2021

There have been many administrative changes in the agency since the school opening memo of August 2021. Please join me in welcoming and celebrating new and relocated administrative staff as follows:

#### **Administrative Council**

- This past October, Christopher Cook joined us as the Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources, a position previously held by Dr. Sam Gergis. Dr. Gergis resigned to take an administrative position in a school district.
- James Stucchio was appointed to the position of Associate Superintendent for Management Services and jumped right in, bringing a wealth of knowledge to the agency.
- Wendy Tromblee was appointed to the position of Director of Business Services. This position was previously held by Colleen Lipponer, who resigned.

#### **Career, Technical, and Adult Education**

- Dr. John Frias was appointed as Program Administrator for Adult Literacy. This position was previously held by Donna Singer, who retired.
- Erin Sellek was promoted to Administrative Coordinator for Incarcerated Youth/Funded Programs. This position was previously held by Robert Dembia, who retired.
- Marjorie Peter was promoted to Program Administrator for Adult CTE. This position was newly created after the retirement of Donna Singer.

- Milagros Marchese was appointed as Administrative Coordinator for Adult CTE. This position was made available due to Marjorie Peter's promotion.

### **Educational Support Services**

- Vanessa Biagioli-Dittrich was appointed as Program Administrator for School Data Bank Services, a title change due to expanded responsibilities.
- Dr. Sharon Hayes was appointed as Assistant Administrative Coordinator for School Data Bank Services. Sharon works alongside Vanessa Biagioli-Dittrich in supporting School Data Bank Services. Sharon's strengths reside in translating and educating administrators and teachers on the benefits and effective use of data to inform programmatic and instructional change.
- Danielle Hudek was appointed as Program Administrator for Enrichment Services, a title change due to expanded responsibilities.

### **Special Education**

- Alicia Freda was appointed as Assistant Principal of Jefferson Academic Center. This position was previously held by Kenneth McCloud, who resigned.
- Vincent Iorio was appointed as Principal of Jefferson Academic Center. This position was previously held by Steven Davis, who resigned.
- Jonathan Krapin was appointed as Assistant Principal of Sequoya High School, a position previously vacant.
- Celenia Hines is being recommended to the Board as Assistant Principal of the Westhampton Beach Learning Center. This position was previously held by Michael Fink, who resigned.

### **Federal & State School Support Initiatives (FSSSI)**

- Tinamarie Rickmers joined the agency as the new Administrative Coordinator for the Family Education Outreach Program, replacing Julia Schnurman, who retired in May 2022.

### **Eastern Suffolk BOCES Community Legislative Committee**

We are excited to begin our seventh year of the ESBOCES Community Legislative Committee. We are thankful to Mr. William K. Miller, ESBOCES Board Vice President, for facilitating this unique committee made up of students, parents, staff, and community members. Our first meeting for the 2022-23 school year will be held on Thursday, October 13, 2022, mark your calendars! Additional information about future meetings will be announced as the school year progresses. Information about the October 13 meeting will be forthcoming.

### Agency Wide Fundraisers

With all of the worthwhile organizations to support, ESBOCES has limited our agency wide support to two organizations over the years. These have been supported by staff volunteers with activities occurring in buildings that wish to participate. Those organizations are Autism Speaks, which supports research into Autism spectrum disorders, and St. Baldrick's Foundation, which supports research into childhood cancers.

Mark your calendars now for the annual Long Island Autism Speaks Walk, which is scheduled for Sunday, October 9, 2022 at Jones Beach State Park – Field 5. Please make sure that you register for the Eastern Suffolk BOCES team. You can join the ESBOCES team by clicking on the following link on the *Walk Now for Autism Speaks Long Island* website:

<https://act.autismspeaks.org/site/TR/Walk/LongIsland-October 9, 2022>

### BEES Opening Day Meeting

Only union members of the BOCES Educators of Eastern Suffolk (BEES) may attend the opening day meeting on Thursday, September 1, 2022, beginning at 8:00 a.m. **The opening day meeting for this year will take place virtually. The Zoom information to log in may be found on the BEES closed Facebook page and will also be sent out via the mass text messaging system.** Members can join from their homes prior to reporting to their assigned sites. If you are not currently a member of the closed group, please visit the BEES webpage at [www.beesbeacon.org](http://www.beesbeacon.org) for a link to join the closed group. Kindly report to your assigned building following the virtual meeting.

Non-BEES union members, and all other employees, should report to work as directed by their supervisors.

### Our Future

Looking towards the future, we continue to ask ourselves where will we be in the next few years and how will we get there? To this point, our Strategic Planning initiative keeps us “on task” while we also explore new ideas and programs. Our work with local legislators and government officials continues to support us as we search the grant wires to learn of new funding streams in support of these future-thinking activities.

Yes, the future at Eastern Suffolk BOCES is bright as we continue our work to TRANSFORM LIVES. Welcome back to those of you who are returning for the 2022-23 school year and welcome to those of you who are new to the agency.

RR/km

c: Eastern Suffolk BOCES Board