

Continuing Progress

A Report on the East Ramapo Central School District
For the 2018-2019 School Year

Presented October 2020

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Commissioner's Charge to the Monitors
2018-

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Commissioner's Charge to the Monitors

On August 16, 2016, New York State Education Department (SED or "Department") Commissioner Mary Ellen Elia appointed Charles Szuberla and on November 7, 2018 appointed Dr. Denise Lowe as monitors ("Monitors") for the East Ramapo Central School District ("District").¹ The 2018-19 school year monitoring initiative built on the work conducted by State monitors since June 2014 and included working with the Board of Education ("Board") and District leadership to implement Strategic Academic Improvement and Fiscal Improvement Plans; improving fiscal and budgetary planning; and providing oversight as required by Chapter 59 of the Laws of 2018.² In addition, the Monitors worked with the District as it successfully completed Phase II of a \$58 million bond proposition to fund critical capital repairs and projects. This report focuses on the academic and fiscal condition of the District for the 2018-19 school year.

District Accomplishments

Among the positive developments observed in the 2018-19 school year included:

1. Data-driven Professional Learning Community time (K-12) was implemented, giving every teacher a daily professional development period.
2. Algebra 1 & Living Environment Regents-level courses were offered at all middle schools.
3. Spring Valley High School 9th Grade Academy was created to provide more support to 9th graders.
4. 50 high school freshmen were given the opportunity to accelerate the completion of high school studies while earning up to 60 college credits.
5. 15 high school seniors completed the requirements to earn the New York State Seal of Biliteracy.
6. Seven collaborative special education-general education classes at the K-8 level were added, increasing the number of such classes from 12 to 19.
7. Collaborative courses in grades 9-12 (i.e., x e

9. The following positions were added:

- o Six bilingual teachers;
- o Twelve teachers to implement effective instruction in the high schools;
- o 1.5 teachers for the arts and music;
- o Ten academic standards facilitators so that there are academic standards facilitators at all grade levels; and
- o One elementary guidance counselor, one school psychologist, one teacher of the deaf and hard of hearing, and four teaching assistants.

10.A teacher collaboration model at the high schools for

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Enrollment Overview

Table 1. Enrollment

Subgroup 2016

Table 4. District and School Accountability Status

| NAME | 2017-18 Accountability Status | 2018-19 Accountability Status |
|---|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| EAST RAMAPO COUNTY (SPRING VALLEY) | Focus District | TSIDistrict |
| FLEETWOOD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL | Good Standing | Good Standing |
| GRANDVIEW ELEMENTARY SCHOOL | Focus School | Good Standing |
| HEMPSTEAD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL | Good Standing | Good Standing |
| KAKIAT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL | Good Standing | Good Standing |
| MARGETTS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL | Focus School | Good Standing |
| EAST RAMAPO EARLY CHILDREN'S CENTER AT KAKIAT | Good Standing | Good Standing |
| SUMMIT PARK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL | Good Standing | Good Standing |
| CHESTNUT RIDGE MIDDLE SCHOOL | Priority School | Good Standing |
| SPRING VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL | Focus School | TSISchool |
| POMONA MIDDLE SCHOOL | Focus School | Good Standing |
| ELMWOOD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL | Good Standing | Good Standing |
| RAMAPO HIGH SCHOOL | Focus School | TSISchool |
| LIME KILN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL | Good Standing | Good Standing |
| ELDORADO ELEMENTARY SCHOOL | Focus School | Good Standing |

State Assessments

A new baseline for State assessments was established in 2018 due to the change from three- to two-day testing. As a result, proficiency levels cannot be compared with prior years. Nonetheless, the spring 2019 grade 3-8 State assessments results are encouraging. The Monitors stress the need for an increasingly urgent focus on English Language Learners and students with disabilities.

Table 5. 3-8 English Language Arts : Percent of Tested Public School Students Proficient (Levels 3 and 4)

| Subgroup | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 |
|----------------------------|------|------|------|
| General Education | 28% | 32% | 34% |
| Black or African American | 24% | 31% | 32% |
| Hispanic or Latino | 18% | 22% | 24% |
| White | 36% | 40% | 44% |
| English Language Learners | 3% | 5% | 5% |
| Students with Disabilities | 4% | 6% | 7% |

Table 6. 3-8 Math : Percent of Tested Public School Students Proficient (Levels 3 and 4)

| Subgroup | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 |
|---------------------------|------|------|------|
| General Education | 23% | 26% | 28% |
| Black or African American | 17% | 21% | 24% |

Table 7. Four-Year High School Graduation Rate as of August 31)

| Subgroup | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 |
|----------------------------|------|------|------|
| General Education | 67% | 59% | 60% |
| Black or African American | 73% | 77% | 75% |
| Hispanic or Latino | 52% | 40% | 47% |
| White | 48% | 44% | 37% |
| English Language Learners | 8% | 6% | 17% |
| Students with Disabilities | 52% | 45% | 50% |

Enhanced Course Offerings

After years of drastic cuts, the District is now offering Advanced Placement (AP) and other college-level courses. In the 2018-19 school year, 508 out of a total of 2,700 high school students took advantage of enhanced courses. (Some students take both AP and College level courses, so they are reflected in both numbers.)

Table 8. 2018 Advanced Placement Enrollment and Results

| | |
|--|-----|
| Total AP Students | 272 |
| Number of Exams | 632 |
| AP Students with Exam Scores 3+ | 81 |
| % of Total AP Exams Taken in which Students Scored 3+ | 54 |

College Courses

Thirteen percent of high school students in the District took college courses in 2018-19. The passing rate for Spring Valley High School students was 95.5% (149 out of 156 students). The passing rate for Ramapo High School students was 97% (198 out of 204 students). College courses taken by East Ramapo students in 18- p

Table 9. Staffing Reductions and Restorations

Notes for Staffing Cuts and Restorations Table:

1. Data is based on information supplied by the District and a review of official Board of Education minutes from September 2011 to 2012:

Average Class Size

Table 10. Average Class Size* by Grade Level

| | 2008-2009 | 2009-2010 | 2010-2011 | 2011-2012 | 2012-2013 | 2013-2014 | 2014-2015 | 2015-2016 | 2016-2017 | 2017-2018 |
|----------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Common Branch | 19 | 20 | 22 | 25 | 24 | 26 | 26 | 25 | 26 | 26 |
| Grade 8 | | | | | | | | | | |
| English | 17 | 22 | 21 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 23 | 20 | 20 | 21 |
| Mathematics | 18 | 21 | 21 | 19 | 19 | 21 | 23 | 21 | 21 | 21 |
| Science | 19 | 20 | 21 | 20 | 20 | 23 | 22 | 22 | 21 | 20 |
| Social Studies | 18 | 21 | 22 | 21 | 20 | 23 | 24 | 21 | 22 | 21 |
| Grade 10 | | | | | | | | | | |
| English | 21 | 21 | 21 | 20 | 20 | 22 | 22 | 18 | 20 | 23 |
| Mathematics | 21 | 20 | 18 | 21 | 21 | 22 | 18 | 20 | 24 | 21 |
| Science | 20 | 21 | 20 | 20 | 21 | 19 | 22 | 20 | 21 | 21 |
| Social Studies | 20 | 22 | 21 | 22 | 20 | 22 | 22 | 21 | 21 | 21 |

*Average Class Size is the total registration in specified classes divided by the number of those classes with registration.

Common Branch refers to self-contained classes in Grades 1–6.

Strategic Academic Plan

Together, the three plans addressed core areas identified through the root-cause analysis exercise that was conducted during the initial development of the strategic academic plan. The strategic academic plan provides measurable objectives and explicit strategies to address areas where improvements are needed, including but not limited to:

- x Financial stability;
- x Academic opportunities and outcomes for all students;
- x Education of and accelerated rates of success for students with disabilities;
- x Education of and accelerated rates of success for English language learners; and
- x Compliance with applicable State and federal laws and regulations

Educational Strategies

The District's strategic plan rests on Four Pillars. The pillars define the skills and capacity needed to achieve the District's goals and provide a framework for the contributions of teachers, leaders, staff, families, and community partners.

Pillar 1: High Expectations for Teaching & Learning

Standards-aligned instructional system:

- Align curriculum, assessments, materials, and pacing guides with the most current learning standards and ensure consistent day-to-day implementation in every school and in every classroom.
- Provide full-day kindergarten for all students.
- Provide access for every student to participate in integrated arts programs and Advanced Placement, honors, and college courses.

Responsive instruction and student engagement:

- Implement a common set of research-informed core instructional practices to facilitate culturally responsive, "good first teaching" across academic areas, grade levels, and student groups.
- Strengthen early literacy and numeracy foundations in pre-kindergarten to grade 2 with age-appropriate materials, supports, and ongoing staff development.
- Strengthen student engagement and ownership of learning through a student portfolio system that includes setting academic and behavioral goals, personal monitoring of progress, and student-led conferences and expositions.
- Require every high school graduate to complete a concrete post-secondary plan collaboratively with staff, peers, and parents/caregivers.

Pillar 2: Culture of Safety and Strong Relationships with Families & Community

Positive behaviors & student voice:

- Implement and monitor all tiers of the Positive Behavior and Intervention System in every school and every classroom to create a safe culture for learning and work.
- Implement a student-to-adult or student-to-student mentoring program.
- Conduct at least one student-led summit annually as a forum for open, mutually respectful communication among students, staff, and parents/caregivers.

Family education and collaboration:

- Provide ongoing training to parents/caregivers regarding effective strategies for strengthening language and math skills of students in kindergarten through grade
- Engage parents/caregivers in ongoing training, collaboration, and communication to better understand and support student achievement.
- Educate parents and caregivers about how to access school and community resources that support family health and wellness and behavioral and life success for students.

Internships and dual degree programs:

- Develop community partnerships that provide opportunities for students to enroll in courses at local colleges and universities and to participate in internships and apprenticeships with local employers and community organizations.

Pillar 3: Results-Focused, Collaborative Professional Learning

Standards-based professional development:

- Define and implement the standards-aligned instructional practices that all teachers and classroom-based support staff will master and deliver.
- Define and implement professional standards for support staff at all levels and provide ongoing staff development aligned to those expectations.

Evidence-based collaboration:

- Provide dedicated time for teachers, leaders, and staff to engage in Data Summits at the end of each assessment cycle, with emphasis on analyzing student data, reflecting on professional practices, and planning for the next assessment cycle.

Teacher and administrator leadership networks:

- Develop a cadre of highly skilled and well-trained teachers, leaders, and staff to facilitate professional learning at the school, department, and district levels.

Pillar 4: Data-

and compassionate reflection, educators are equipped with the knowledge and tools in service of more equitable and inclusive learning environments.

The District provides the following professional development opportunities:

- High-Quality learning targets that are unpacked with students to create student ownership of learning.
- Formative assessment practices, including common checks for understanding to be used daily in instruction.
- Engagement practices that include protocols and other strategies that challenge student thinking.
- Use of data to inform instruction, including strategies to scaffold and differentiate learning to meet the needs of all students.
- Leadership development and sustainability of effective teachers and principals, including both external and internal on-site coaching.
- Standards-aligned curriculum and instruction.
- Special Education and ENL/Bilingual classroom implementation of standards-based curriculum and instruction.
- Promoting a culture of social and emotional learning through efficacy and growth mindset.
- Conferences, workshops, and resources designed to enhance student achievement and engagement in learning.
- Workshops focused on the integration of core District goals and preparing students with 21st-century skills.
- Expanded training for all aspects of the Dignity for All Students Act (DASA).
- Enhanced resources and supports for Part 154 and 154-3 implementation.
- Supporting ALL learners through instructional practice aligned with the standards and Universal Design for Learning (UDL) (see [http://www.udlcenter.org](#)).

and quality teaching for English Language Learners. The District's voluntary offerings included Eureka Math August Summer Institutes, Cultivating District Leadership for English Language Learner Success, New Norms for Healthy Schools Training, and Classrooms as Culturally Responsive Learning Communities.

Academic Challenges

As noted above, test results for English Language Learners and students with disabilities are unacceptably low. In addition, the graduation rate for Hispanic and Latino students is very low. The District has launched the new programs described below to help improve instruction for these students and emphasize a mindset that all students can achieve at high levels. The programs noted below are a significant step in the right direction, but more investment is needed to accelerate student achievement and increase graduation rates.

Programs for English Language Learners (ELLs)

During the 2018-19 school year the district was removed (i)6 (C)6 (ul)6 (t)h(m)7elp (r)6Td ()Tj EMC

One-Way Dual Language Bilingual Education

The One-Way Dual Language Bilingual Education model was selected for ELLs in grades 9-12. Unlike the TBE classes, the One-Way Dual Language classes do not require teachers to increase instruction in English and decrease instruction in Spanish for every year that the student is enrolled in the classes. Instead, students can receive instruction in the core area classes (science, math, and social studies) in Spanish. This method of language acquisition best meets the instructional needs of the District's high school ELL population for the two reasons described below.

Students must pass five Regents exams or complete an approved four-plus-one graduation pathway to obtain a Regents Diploma. Regents exams are available in Spanish, except for the English language arts Regents Exam. Therefore, providing students with consistent instruction in their home language afford them the opportunity to be successful on the exams.

Within the last five years, there has been a marked increase in the enrollment of students between the ages of 17 and 20. Several research reports indicate that learning an academic language can take between 7 to 10 years of quality instruction in English, which makes it imperative that students continue to receive instruction in their home language. To provide students with the opportunity to graduate before turning 21 years old, the District builds on students' prior knowledge and previous instruction in Spanish.

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English as a New Language (ENL)

All ELLs receive ENL instruction. Elementary students in a bilingual setting receive their ENL instruction with their classroom teacher, taught through the content area such as English language arts, social studies, and science. High school ELLs have class periods designated for ENL instruction and taught by a teacher certified in English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL). The number of periods of ENL instruction the student receives is based on their English language proficiency level as per the New York State Identification Test for English Language Learners (NYSITELL) or New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test (NYSESLAT). Students at the beginning stages of English proficiency receive both integrated ENL and stand-alone instruction, while those at higher levels of proficiency receive only integrated ENL instruction.

The Monitors will continue to focus on student outcomes for these programs that serve English Language Learners, ap3Td [(()7 (N)6 (Y)1 ((nt)2 (egr)7u Td -)10 (err)7 (a)10 (n

At the high school level, the District is focused on improving the graduation rate for all students and is carefully tracking the progress of every student towards graduation. The District's new schedule with a single universal lunch period for all students provides more time for students to receive extra help or take electives. As a result of this change, every student had a daily period included in their schedule that could be programmed for extra help or additional coursework.

2018-19 Contingency Budget

The voters defeated both the initial and the revote of the Board-approved budget. As required by law, the Board adopted a contingency budget, which represented the elimination of \$4,375,787 from the Board-approved 2018-2019 budget. The 2018-19 school budget is fiscally in balance with projected revenues and expenses of \$231,084,269. The tax levy was frozen at the prior school year's level versus a 1.48% increase for the 2017-18 school year budget. The 2018-19 tax levy is \$151,461,007. The budget includes neither an allocation for transportation to nonpublic schools on days that public schools are closed nor flexibility for when transportation is provided for nonpublic students.

Table 11: East Ramapo Contingency Budget

| Action | Savings | Comment |
|---|-------------|---|
| Reduction in Capital Bond | \$1,163,742 | Elimination of accelerated bond payment |
| Use of Fund Balance | \$959,000 | |
| Special Education Teaching Assistants | \$625,000 | 15 teaching assistants from non-mandated programs were eliminated. The District's shift to a collaborative teaching model reduced the number teaching assistants required. All teaching assistants were offered positions as teacher aides. |
| Retirement of Teachers | \$252,000 | 15 teachers were projected to retire, but actually did, yielding a savings of \$252,000 |
| Clerical Staff | \$231,352 | Two vacant positions eliminated. |
| Director of Secondary Education | \$151,222 | Vacant position not filled |
| Retirement of three teaching assistants | \$148,462 | |

Safety Supervisor

Fiscal Improvement Plan

Building on the Work of the 2017-18 School Year

The District's 2018-19 student population comprised approximately 9,049 public school students and an estimated 27,962 non-public school students. The public school student population grew slightly by 239 students from the 2017-18 school year. The nonpublic school student population growth is estimated at over 1,100 students. Of the public student population, 85% are economically disadvantaged (as per free and reduced price lunch count) and 39% are ELLs. Furthermore, 29% are African-American and over 63% are Hispanic.

Improving School Buildings and Grounds

The District has responded to the Monitors' Recommendation 3 included in the December 14, 2015 "Opportunity Deferred" report to create a comprehensive and community-inclusive process to develop a new bond issue for purposes of making much-needed capital improvements. During the 2016-17 fiscal year, the District refocused its efforts to secure financing for its infrastructure needs. It held and passed a bond referendum on December 6, 2016. The referendum contained the following:

- Bonding \$58,018,350 to address the most critical work needed in all District buildings, including basics such as roofs, boilers, air ventilation units, and windows.
- Authority to use \$1,127,920 of State EXCEL funds for new windows/doors, exterior doors, and the small courtyard windows at Kakiat Elementary and new windows at Fleetwood Elementary.

The capital construction is being phased over a four-year period that began in the summer of 2017.

- Phase I was started in the summer of 2017 with more than \$16 million. It was successfully implemented with major capital work completed on four school building roofs and the administrative building's roof, two high school athletic fields, two school building boilers, and K-8 model school conversion work at Kakiat STEAM Middle School.
- Phase II, which accounted for an estimated \$32.1 million, was started in early Spring of 2018 and will be completed in December 2019. Major capital work was completed or is being done in 11 school buildings, including eight roofs, six boilers, three ventilation systems, phase II of K-8 model school conversion work at Kakiat STEAM Middle School, and a new library at Chestnut Ridge Middle School.

YEAR 2 – 2018

| Building | Project | Budget |
|----------------|--------------------|--------------|
| CHESTNUT RIDGE | ROOF | \$2,000,000 |
| ELDORADO | ROOF | \$245,000 |
| GRANDVIEW | ROOF | \$585,000 |
| HEMPSTEAD | ROOF | \$830,000 |
| KAKIAT | ROOF | \$2,500,000 |
| LIME KILN | ROOF | \$285,000 |
| MARGETTS | ROOF | \$300,000 |
| SUMMIT PARK | ROOF | \$1,250,000 |
| FLEETWOOD | BOILERS | \$770,000 |
| CHESTNUT RIDGE | BOILERS | \$935,000 |
| GRANDVIEW | BOILERS | \$770,000 |
| HEMPSTEAD | BOILERS | \$770,000 |
| KAKIAT | BOILERS | \$990,000 |
| KAKIAT | WINDOWS | \$2,700,000 |
| SVSHS | WINDOWS | \$1,410,000 |
| FLEETWOOD | WINDOWS | \$1,000,000 |
| SUMMIT PARK | WINDOWS | \$1,000,000 |
| CHESTNUT RIDGE | AIR HANDLING UNITS | \$3,600,000 |
| KAKIAT | AHU REPLACEMENT | \$700,000 |
| ELDORADO | MAIN AHU | \$300,000 |
| LIME KILN | MAIN AHU | \$300,000 |
| SVSHS | FIELDS/BLEACHERS | \$3,401,000 |
| RAMAP HS | FIELDS/BLEACHERS | \$3,293,000 |
| CHESTNUT RIDGE | LIBRARY | \$700,000 |
| KAKIAT | STEM/DANCE | \$1,500,000 |
| SUB-TOTAL | | \$32,134,000 |

- Phase III, accounting for an estimated \$9 million, started in Spring of 2019 and is expected to be completed in December 2020. Major capital work was completed or is being done in all schools and the administration building, including three boilers, one roof, window replacement, classroom/library furniture and paving.

| | | |
|-------------------|-------------------|-------------|
| SUMMIT PARK | WINDOWS | \$1,049,500 |
| SPRING VALLEY HS | WINDOWS | \$1,355,000 |
| FLEETWOOD | WINDOWS | \$1,034,500 |
| ELMWOOD | ROOF | \$514,000 |
| SUMMIT PARK | BOILER | \$908,807 |
| POMONA MS | BOILER | \$856,795 |
| ADMIN BUILDING | BOILER | \$1,208,854 |
| ADMIN BUILDING | FLOORING | \$639,889 |
| KAKIAT MS | CLASS FURNITURE | \$33,390 |
| CHESTNUT RIDGE MS | LIBRARY FURNITURE | \$85,913 |
| DISTRICT WIDE | PAVING | \$1,225,450 |
| SUB-TOTAL | | |

- In 2011-2012, the District charged the school lunch fund for \$724,616 for capital expenditures that did not receive prior approval by the New York State Education Department. The District entered in a Board-approved agreement to reimburse the school lunch fund for the above amount during a seven-year period starting from 2017-18. The District continues to fulfill its obligation regarding this requirement.
- School transportation was a significant area of weakness in 2018-19. Bus runs were scheduled inefficiently, resulting in higher costs than budgeted and necessitating mid-year adjustments in bus routes. The District hired a new Transportation Director who has made significant improvements in bus routing.

2019-2020 Budget

Implemented Monitor Recommendations

The District implemented several of last year's recommendations made by the monitors including:

- Hired a new Transportation Director
- Hired a consultant to improve the efficiency of bus routing
- Hired a consultant to study busing for nonpublic students

create common ground is important if the district is to better serve all its students.

