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MEMORANDUM

TO: Eastern Suffolk BOCES Staff

FROM: David Wicks

DATE: September 1, 2023

RE: School Opening – 2023

I am happy to be able to have the opportunity to welcome you to the 2023-2024 school year. Our agency has been working hard over the summer to be sure that all of our programs are ready to continue to provide *Educational Services That Transform Lives* to the students and the school districts that we support.

Over the past several months, our agency has experienced a significant amount of transition. Sadly, over the summer, two of our Board members passed away. Norman Wagner was only with the Eastern Suffolk BOCES Board for just over a year, but he served on the Board of Education for the Central Islip UFSD for 18 years. Fred Langstaff joined the Eastern Suffolk BOCES Board in 1998. Before that, Fred served on the Sayville UFSD Board of Education for nine years. Fred was also a former New York State School Board Association's (NYSSBA) Area 12 Director and Immediate Past President for NYSSBA. The service of both of these kind and compassionate advocates of education have positively affected generations of students across our region and our state. I am honored and lucky to have worked with them. They will be sorely missed.

Moving forward, our Board has initiated the process of finding the agency's next Chief Operating Officer. The Board is working with a search consultant to develop a timeline for this search. At this point, they have developed a survey in order to give all agency stakeholders an opportunity to give their input into this process. That survey can be found [here](#). The search consultant will also be meeting with groups representing stakeholders from across the agency. More information on that will be shared as it is available.

Below, I have listed various updates from around the agency. I hope that you find them helpful as we enter this new and exciting school year.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusivity (DEI)

The ESBOCES DEI Liaison Program is entering its third year. We now have 40 DEI liaisons from instructional and non-instructional programs that will partner with agency leadership to support implementing DEI and culturally responsive initiatives in alignment with Board Policy 5124.

The Office of DEI continues to provide regional support to various school districts through the DEI CoSer. Presently, there are 29 school districts who participate at various service levels from Nassau, Suffolk, and Westchester Counties. Additionally, partnerships with Institutes of Higher Education, such as Stony Brook University and Hofstra University, to build capacity for culturally responsive teacher education preparation programs is in progress. The first Long Island Summer Equity two-day Institute was hosted at Stony Brook University, which included 50 educational stakeholders from seven states, with keynote speaker Dr. Bettina Love.

The ESBOCES Parent-Family Advisory Council will enter its fourth year, and will continue to be inclusive of parents/families and alumni of ESBOCES programs to review our policies, practices, and procedures, and provide feedback and suggestions.

Strategic Planning

We held our annual Strategic Planning Council meeting on August 2, 2023. It was our first time back in person since 2019. Strategic planning partners from within the agency and across the region gather to hear from agency leaders about successes and challenges over the course of the past year. Most importantly, participants were asked to give feedback based on what they had heard. This feedback will be used to make additions and amendments to each plan for the upcoming year.

This year will be the final year of our third accreditation period. This means that later this year, we will be starting the reaccreditation process. If we are successful in receiving reaccreditation, this will mark our fourth 7-year accreditation period. Eastern Suffolk BOCES approaches this process with integrity. It allows us to truly and purposefully reflect on how we do our work.

Space

We are thrilled to announce the opening of three new facilities within the Agency. The Sayville Adult Education Center (formerly a Suffolk County Community College site) located next to Sayville Elementary School will be the new home of our Practical Nursing and Health Sciences Programs. In addition, several Special Education classes will be located in the building for the upcoming school year. The Adult Literacy and Adult Education Programs, previously housed in Brentwood, have relocated to the Family Service League in Bay Shore, which also provides students access to a variety of onsite services. The Agency's presence at the Sisters of St. Joseph in Brentwood has ended with the conclusion of the lease agreement this summer. We also have a new Special Education included site at the Edna Louise Spear Elementary School in Port Jefferson. A big thank you to all those involved in making these program moves a success!

Leadership Changes since August 2022

There have been many administrative changes in the agency since the school opening memo of August 2022. Please join me in welcoming and celebrating new administrative staff as follows:

Administrative Council

- Dr. Nichelle Rivers joined us as the Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources, a position previously held by Mr. Christopher Cook, who resigned.

Educational Services

- Dr. Chanelle Cox was appointed Principal at Edward J. Milliken Technical Center. This position was previously held by Jennifer Martino, who resigned.
- Kevin Bernier was appointed Assistant Principal at Harry B. Ward Technical Center. This position was previously held by Luke Ferland, who resigned.
- Michael Viviano was appointed Administrative Coordinator for In-District CTE. This is a newly created position to serve six sections of CTE programs that have been created in component high schools, and eight sections of CTE programming in our Special Education facilities.
- Andrea Pekar, Program Administrator for Health Sciences, resigned, and we are in the process of hiring for this position.
- John Galassi was appointed as Assistant Principal of the Brookhaven Learning Center. This position was previously held by Roberta Kempf, who will be retiring.
- Tashiba Holland was appointed as Assistant Principal of the Sayville Elementary School, a new position due to increased enrollment.
- Michelle Mellilo was appointed as Assistant Principal of the Sequoya High School, a position previously vacant.
- Elizabeth Palmieri was appointed as Program Administrator for Special Education. This position was previously held by Debra Ciccarelli, who resigned.
- Jennifer Solomon was appointed as Principal of the Sayville Elementary School. This position was previously held by Michelle Carpenter, who will be retiring.
- Brittney VanGorden was appointed as Assistant Principal of the Premm Learning Center, a new position due to increased enrollment.

Management Services

- Christopher Carlos was appointed as Chief Accountant for Business Services. This position was made available due to Wendy Tromblee's promotion.
- Arthur McDermott was promoted to School Custodial Supervisor of the Operations and Maintenance Department, a position that was previously vacant.

Eastern Suffolk BOCES Community Legislative Committee

We are excited to begin our eighth 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 2023-24 school year will be held on Thursday, October 5, 2023, so mark your calendars! Additional information about future meetings will be announced as the school year progresses.

BEES Opening Day Meeting

Only union members of the BOCES Educators of Eastern Suffolk (BEES) who pay dues may attend the opening day meeting on Tuesday, September 5, 2023, beginning at 8:00 a.m. The opening day meeting this year will take place virtually via Zoom. The Zoom link will be sent directly to the email address you provided to your union. If you do not receive your Zoom link in the days leading up to the meeting, please email an Executive Board member for the link. You can locate the emails for the Executive Board on the BEES website at www.beesbeacon.org. Members can join the meeting from their homes prior to reporting to their assigned sites. Kindly report to your programs following the meeting.

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

Have a safe and enjoyable Labor Day weekend!

DW/km

c: Eastern Suffolk BOCES Board