

# **Continuing Progress**

***A Report on the East Ramapo Central School District***

For the 2018-2019 School Year

Presented October 2020

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## *A Report on the East Ramapo Central School District*

Commissioner’s Charge to the Monitors	2
2018-19 District Accomplishments	2
Enrollment Overview	4
<i>Table 1. Enrollment</i>	
<i>Table 2. K-12 Public School Enrollment by Ethnicity</i>	
<i>Table 3. K-12 Public School Enrollment - Other Groups</i>	
Academic Accountability	4
<i>Table 4. District and School Accountability Status</i>	
<i>Table 5. 3-8 English Language Arts Proficiency</i>	
<i>Table 6. 3-8 Math Proficiency</i>	
<i>Table 7. Four-year High School Graduation Rate</i>	
Enhanced Course Offerings	7
<i>Table 8. 2018 Advanced Placement Enrollment and Results</i>	
<i>Early College Enrollment and Results</i>	
Restoration of Staffing Cuts	8
<i>Table 9. Staffing Reductions and Restorations</i>	
Average Class Size	10
<i>Table 10. Average Class Size* by Grade Level</i>	
Chapter 59 of the Laws of 2018	11
Strategic Academic Plan	12
Educational Strategies	12
Professional Development	14
Academic Challenges	16
Programs for English Language Learners (ELLs)	16
Student Support Services	18
2018-19 Contingency Budget	19
Fiscal Improvement Plan	21
Improving School Buildings and Grounds	22
Improved Fiscal Condition	25
Potential Risks and Future Liabilities	25
2019-2020 Budget	26
Implemented Monitor Recommendations	28
Concerns	29
<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>30</b>

## ***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”).<sup>1</sup> 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.<sup>2</sup> 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 9<sup>th</sup> 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., coteaching) were expanded in the areas of English, math, and science.
8. Phase II of the \$59 million capital construction program was completed on-time and on-budget

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<sup>1</sup> Dr. Sipple concluded his work as a monitor on June 30, 2018.

<sup>2</sup> Chapter 89 of the Laws of 2016 was amended by Chapter 59 of the Laws of 2017 and Chapter 59 of the Laws of 2018.

9. The following positions were added:
- Six bilingual teachers;
  - Twelve teachers to implement effective instruction in the high schools;
  - 1.5 teachers for the arts and music;
  - Ten academic standards facilitators so that there are academic standards facilitators at all grade levels; and
  - 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 English as a New Language (ENL) students was added
11. Expanded summer academic program offerings were provided:
- Instrumental music summer camp for grades 4-12 (400 students);
  - Computer sciences summer academy for grades 2-8 (250 students);
  - Health sciences summer academy for grades 2-8 (250 students);
  - Extended school year program for grades K-8 (255 students); and
  - Student with Interrupted/Inconsistent Formal Education for grades 9-10 (60 students)
12. The Cultural Arts after-school program continued to grow and offer students more time to develop their instrumental music skills. Students can participate in band, orchestra, and elementary marching band.
- The "Little Miracles Show Choir for 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade students started in September after school at Kakiat.
  - The "Miracles" show choir was offered to 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students.
  - The spring musical occurred in each of the middle schools.
  - Both high schools offered dance, fall drama, and spring musicals.
  - General music and chorus and visual arts were offered to all students in K-6<sup>th</sup> grades.
  - Elementary school instrumental enrollment has continued to grow from zero in 2015 to upwards of 785 in 2018.
  - All elementary schools had concerts. Many schools also had additional art shows.

## **Enrollment Overview**

*Table 1. Enrollment*

<b>Subgroup</b>	<b>2016-17</b>	<b>2017-18</b>	<b>2018-19</b>
Pre-K (Half Day)	1,686	1,691	1,692
Pre-K (Full Day)	98	99	100
K-12 Public	8,598	8,843	9,032
K-12 Nonpublic	24,579	26,526	27,679

*Table 2. K-12 Public School Enrollment by Ethnicity*

<b>Subgroup</b>	<b>2016-17</b>	<b>2017-18</b>	<b>2018-19</b>
Black or African American	34.4%	31.7%	29%
Hispanic or Latino	56.4%	59.6%	63.2%
Asian/Native American	4.2%	3.9%	3.4%
White	4.0%	3.9%	3.4%
Multiracial	1.0%	0.8%	0.7%
American Indian/Alaskan Native	0%	0.1%	0.1%

*Table 3. K-12 Public School Enrollment - Other Groups*

<b>Subgroup</b>	<b>2016-17</b>	<b>2017-18</b>	<b>2018-19</b>
English Language Learners	34%	37%	39%
Students with Disabilities	20%	21%	16.7%
Economically Disadvantaged	88%	89%	85%

## **Academic Accountability**

The District is currently classified as a Targeted Support and Improvement (TSI) District. Of the District's 14 schools, all 12 elementary and middle schools achieved the status of schools in Good Standing, while the two high schools were identified for Targeted Support and Improvement, increasing from 43% in the 2015-16 school year to 86% in the 2018-19 school year the percentage of schools in Good Standing.

Table 4. District and School Accountability Status

<b>NAME</b>	<b>2017-18 Accountability Status</b>	<b>2018-19 Accountability Status</b>
<b>EAST RAMAPO CSD (SPRING VALLEY)</b>	<i>Focus District</i>	<i>TSI District</i>
FLEETWOOD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	<b>Good Standing</b>	<b>Good Standing</b>
GRANDVIEW ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	Focus School	<b>Good Standing</b>
HEMPSTEAD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	<b>Good Standing</b>	<b>Good Standing</b>
KAKIAT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	<b>Good Standing</b>	<b>Good Standing</b>
MARGETTS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	Focus School	<b>Good Standing</b>
EAST RAMAPO EARLY CHILD CTR AT KAKIAT	<b>Good Standing</b>	<b>Good Standing</b>
SUMMIT PARK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	<b>Good Standing</b>	<b>Good Standing</b>
CHESTNUT RIDGE MIDDLE SCHOOL	Priority School	<b>Good Standing</b>
SPRING VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL	<i>Focus School</i>	<i>TSI School</i>
POMONA MIDDLE SCHOOL	<i>Focus School</i>	<b>Good Standing</b>
ELMWOOD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	<b>Good Standing</b>	<b>Good Standing</b>
RAMAPO HIGH SCHOOL	<i>Focus School</i>	<i>TSI School</i>
LIME KILN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	<b>Good Standing</b>	<b>Good Standing</b>
ELDORADO ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	<i>Focus School</i>	<b>Good Standing</b>

### 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 whose test results, while improving, are unacceptably low.

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

<b>Subgroup</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>
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)*

<b>Subgroup</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>
General Education	23%	26%	28%
Black or African American	17%	21%	24%
Hispanic or Latino	16%	18%	22%
White	36%	39%	36%
English Language Learners	5%	6%	6%
Students with Disabilities	3%	5%	5%

#### Four Year High School Graduation Rate (As of August 2018)

The Hispanic and Latino graduation rate is unacceptably low, especially compared to the June 2017 four-year Statewide graduation rate of 68% for Hispanic and Latino students. The graduation rates for English Language Learners and students with disabilities are also unacceptable and well below the August 2018 four-year State graduation rates of 27% and 54% respectively. The District has implemented a new system called *Final Five* to track each student's progress towards graduation and post-graduation plans to ensure struggling students are getting extra help to stay on track for graduation. The *Final Five* tracks attendance/behavior, Regents exams/grade point average, SAT/ACT exams, community service and application to college.

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

<b>Subgroup</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>
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 18-19 included:

- English Composition I
- English 101
- College Speech
- Media Communication
- Spanish
- Algebra
- Physics
- Public Affairs
- Psychology
- Economics
- Participation in Government
- Criminal Justice
- College Math
- Spanish II

### ***Restoration of Staffing Cuts***

The District has restored a total of 174.5 positions since the drastic cuts that began in 2008 that were outlined in the November 2015 “Hank Greenberg” Report. Public school enrollment has increased by more than 2,100 students since 2008, primarily as a result of the expansion of pre-kindergarten programs. A summary of the restorations is listed below.

**Table 9. Staffing Reductions and Restorations**

Staffing Reductions and Restorations										
	2008-09	2009-2012 cuts	2012-13 Cuts	2013-14 Cuts	2014-15 Cuts	2017-18 Cuts	2018-19 Cuts	Total Cuts	Restorations as of June 30, 2018	Net Change
Elementary Teachers		75						75	47	-28
Secondary Teachers		93.2		16				109.2	70	-39.2
Special Education Teachers				15				15	1	-14
One-on One Aides		19		5				24		-24
Teaching Assistants		49					15	64	10	-54
Attendance Teachers		1						1	0.5	-0.5
Substitute Teachers		8.3						8.3	0	-8.3
Social Workers		15						15	1	-14
Supervisors:		4	1					5		-5
Deans		12.5						12.5		-12.5
Dept. Chairpersons		10						10		-10
Secondary Asst. Princ.		2						2	2	0
Elementary Asst. Princ.		11						11		-11
Building/Grounds Administrator		1						1		-1
Transportation Administrator		1						1		-1
Central Office Admin.		3					2	5	1	-4
Dir. Secondary Education		1	1					2	1	-1
Teacher Training for Technology		1	1					2		-2
Title I Summer Program		1	1					2	1	-1
Coordinator of Health		1	0.5					1.5		-1.5
Nurses				2			1	3		-3
Civil Service:		88	2	7	20	17	3	137	40	-97
<b>Totals</b>		<b>397</b>	<b>6.5</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>506.5</b>	<b>174.5</b>	<b>-332</b>
<b>FTE's</b>	<b>1,898</b>	<b>1,501</b>	<b>1,495</b>	<b>1,450</b>	<b>1,430</b>	<b>1,413</b>	<b>1,392</b>		<b>1,566</b>	

*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 2008 to June 2018.
2. Public Pre-K-12 Student Enrollment:  
2009: 7,752 (94 Pre-K students)  
2018: 9,855 (including 1,790 publicly funded pre-K students)
3. A significant portion of the reductions in civil service positions is due to the elimination of bus driver positions that resulted from the privatizing of student transportation.
4. Due to changes in the administrative structure of the District, a direct comparison of staffing levels from year to year is difficult. For example, Department chairs in secondary education were replaced by Instructional Supervisors to focus on instruction and teacher development
5. Improvements in the personnel office resulted in the District finding multiple candidates for each open position for the 2018-19 school year.

## 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
<b>Common Branch</b>	19	20	22	25	24	26	26	25	26	26
<b>Grade 8</b>										
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
<b>Grade 10</b>										
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.

Class size limits according to the Teachers' Contract:

Kindergarten/ESL Kindergarten - 26

Grades 1-3 - 28

Grades 4-6 - 31

Secondary Physical Education - 30

Secondary Instrumental Music - 12

Secondary Large Group Instruction - 75

Grades 7-12 - 25

Grades 7-12 At Risk - 24

Grades 7-12 Honors - 29

Grades 7-12 AP - 30

Special Education - Depending on needs and variance, from 6:1:1 to 17:1

***Chapter 59 of the Laws of 2018***

The enacted 2018-19 State Budget continued \$3 million in State funding for the District (Chapter 59 of the Laws of 2018). Chapter 59 of the Laws of 2018<sup>3</sup> required the District to update three major plans in collaboration with community stakeholders and the State Monitors:

- 1) Long-term (2016-2020) strategic academic plan;
- 2) Long-term fiscal improvement plan; and
- 3) Expenditure plan outlining the use of the \$3 million in State funding, which the District used in the 2017-18 school year to implement full-day kindergarten and restore arts programs in the elementary schools.

The updated fiscal improvement plan and the comprehensive expenditure plan for the additional \$3 million in State funds for the 2018-2019 school year were developed as required by Chapter 59 of the Laws of 2018. The 2018-19 educational investments funded with the \$3 million were aligned with recommendations 8 and 10 included in the Monitors' December 14, 2015 "Opportunity Deferred" report:<sup>4</sup> Recommendation 8 was to provide students with full-day kindergarten classes and recommendation 10 was to continue investigating the feasibility of streamlining grade configurations and start times. As a result of the use of these funds, full-day kindergarten was offered to all eligible students during the 2018-19 school year. After review, start times were not changed.

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<sup>3</sup> Chapter 59 of the Laws of 2018 extends the requirements for academic improvement, fiscal stability and expenditure plans until June 30, 2021.

<sup>4</sup> The "[Opportunity Deferred](#)" report

## ***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:

- Financial stability;
- Academic opportunities and outcomes for all students;
- Education of and accelerated rates of success for students with disabilities;
- Education of and accelerated rates of success for English language learners; and
- 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-Driven, Effective, and Efficient Systems

### Timely assessment system:

- Implement an assessment system to provide timely and authentic feedback about student growth, instructional practices, interventions, and communication with parents.

### Planning, public reporting, and celebrations:

- Set performance targets and develop results-focused improvement plan for each school and District-level unit.
- Implement a public reporting online dashboard to share school and District progress at least three times per year.
- Organize school- and District-based ceremonies to celebrate the accomplishments of staff and students at least twice during the academic year.

### Culture of service excellence:

- Organize central roles, resources, and processes to better support schools.
- Strengthen faculty and staff professional relationships through a shared vision, improved communication, challenging work, and career development.
- Conduct periodic staff satisfaction surveys to measure feedback and ensure staff satisfaction.

## ***Professional Development***

The District administration believes that a healthy, safe, supportive, engaging, and challenging learning environment is necessary to educate the whole child. In partnership with the Efficacy Institute, staff receive ongoing training in the Efficacy School Transformation Process (ESTP) – a comprehensive school reform process that engages educators in the collective effort to accelerate all students to academic proficiency and strong character. The ESTP is designed to help educators improve student engagement, motivation, and performance. This model has worked effectively for the teachers and the students in the district.

Through workshops, coaching, and other professional development, participants engage in a results-driven package for school transformation: mission, mindset, and method. The three-pronged package builds consensus around a mission of academic proficiency and strong character for all students and establishes a healthy mindset to support it — that is, a belief in the capacity of all students (and their teachers) to learn to achieve at high standards, backed by a data-driven method of self-directed improvement. Through critical

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 21<sup>st</sup>-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).

Each item in the list above refers both to professional learning experiences that selected individuals were required to attend and voluntary offerings (typically offered external to the District) that enhance teacher and leader knowledge and practice. For the 2018-19-18 school year, the District designed and coordinated mandatory sessions that were intensive, collaborative, job-embedded, data-driven, and classroom-focused; specifically, Efficacy Institutes, Eureka, and EL Education on-site coaching, algebra and global studies curriculum writing, specially designed instruction, leveraged leadership,



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 from corrective action status by implementing the programs presented in this section. The District offers students many opportunities to receive language acquisition instruction. The District currently offers Transitional Bilingual Education, Dual Language, and English as a New Language classes.

#### ***Transitional Bilingual Education***

Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE) Programs are currently offered to students in kindergarten through fourth grade.

During their first year of bilingual instruction, students receive 70% of their instruction in Spanish and 30% in English. For every year that the student is enrolled in the TBE program, the percentage of English instruction will increase and instruction in Spanish will decrease by 10%. For example, when students are in year two of the TBE program they receive 60% of their instruction in Spanish and 40% in English. The changes in the percentage of instruction in each language continue until the student has become proficient in English as per the New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test (NYSESLAT), which is administered every spring.

### *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.

The goal of each language acquisition approach is to maximize student academic and linguistic achievement by providing them with instruction in English and their home language and to foster a learning environment for English Language Learners to succeed academically, socially, and emotionally.

### *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, as well as programs for students who do not make adequate progress while in elementary school and late arriving students in high school with interrupted formal education.

### ***Student Support Services***

Evaluative services (on an as-needed basis) are provided for students struggling academically, socially, and behaviorally to help ascertain eligibility for special education services. For students who are not eligible for special education (IEP) services, building-level support services and 504 services are available (these services are annotated with an asterisk in the list below). These services include:

- Special class (Ratios: 8:1:2, 12:1:4, 12:1:2, 12:1:1, 15:1)
- Integrated co-taught classes (K-12)
- Resource room / consultant teacher\*
- Speech/language therapy\*
- Occupational therapy\*
- Physical therapy
- Teacher of the visually impaired
- Teacher of the deaf
- Psychological counseling\*
- Parent training
- Consultant audiology services
- Assistive Technology Behavior Intervention supported by Behavior Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBAs)

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 29 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	\$131,508	The Safety Supervisor in the Transportation Department retired and was not replaced. Instead, the District's Transportation Director will oversee safety.
Nursing Staff	\$67,123	One vacant position eliminated
Director of Elementary Education	\$57,203	New Position not filled.
Storekeeper and Clerical	\$40,381	A portion of these salaries were paid for using grant funding rather than general funds.
Assistant Director of Transportation	\$31,600	Retirement resulted in replacement with lowered salary employee.
Central Administration non-salary expenses	\$26,194	Reductions in expenditures for supplies and materials.
Other savings	\$491,000	Additional savings not enumerated above.

## ***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.

Notwithstanding the fiscal constraints due to the District's specific challenges, the District has continued to focus on improving its fiscal status. The District's unassigned fund balance has shown significant improvement, moving from negative in the 2014-15 school year to 3.6% of the 2018-19 fiscal year budget. New York State's legal limit for a school district's unassigned fund balances is 4% of the next fiscal year approved budget. The unassigned fund balance as of June 30, 2018 stood at \$8,413,535. At the end of the fiscal year 2017-18 the District added another \$244,853 to this fund balance.

### Comprehensive Expenditure Plan for the \$3 Million Legislative Grant

During the 2018-19 school year, the District continued to support two major academic programs with the \$3 million grant: full-day kindergarten and arts education.

In accordance with Chapter 89 of the Laws of 2017, in the 2016-17 fiscal year the District fully implemented its goal of providing full-day kindergarten for all students. The District created 28 full-day kindergarten classes, a dramatic increase from the four full-day classes offered in 2015-16.

The District hired seven monolingual kindergarten teachers, four bilingual kindergarten teachers, and one additional teacher of the arts. All classes are fully equipped with instructional technology, including Smart Boards and desktop computers for daily teaching. In addition, two teachers of the arts were hired for a total of 43.5 teachers. This school year, the District entered into a lease-purchase agreement to provide 400 musical instruments for students. More than ten elementary music classrooms were equipped with Smart Boards and other instructional supplies.

In 2017-18, the District served 734 students in full-day kindergarten. In 2018-19, 707 students were served.

### ***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**

<b>Building</b>	<b>Project</b>	<b>Budget</b>
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		\$ 8,912,098

### ***Improved Fiscal Condition***

In the 2017-18 fiscal year, the District fiscal stress designation by the Office of State Comptroller improved from “moderate fiscal stress” with a score of 51.7 to “no designation” with a fiscal score of 23.3. The Comptroller’s office designates districts as significantly stressed if the fiscal stress score falls between 65-100 and those with moderate fiscal stress as having a score between 45 and 64.9. Given that in 2014-15 the District’s fiscal stress score was 86.7, the District has made significant fiscal improvement.

The primary reasons for the District’s upgrade include restoration of fund balance and several years of balanced budgets.

In the 2018-19 fiscal year, the District fiscal stress designation by the Office of State Comptroller increased from “no designation” with a score of 23.3 to “susceptible to fiscal stress” with a fiscal score of 30, above the cut point of 25 for this designation. The primary reasons for the District’s downgrade include the budget defeat and use of fund balance to address the contingency budget.

In the 2019-20 fiscal year the District regained its improved fiscal stature by scoring 26.7 in the Office of State Comptroller rating. This is only a shy 1.8 points higher than a score of 24.9 which would have returned the District back to the “no designation” rating of 2017-18. In addition, Moody’s rating, renewed in 2020, for the School District remains at Baa2 with outlook “stable.”

### ***Potential Risks and Future Liabilities***

In the 2018-29 school year, the District began to focus attention on assessing potential risks and future liabilities as well as resolving as many of them as possible. Below is a full list of identified liabilities and an update on the work to address them:

- In 2011, the District entered into an energy performance contract with Johnson Controls, Inc. to install numerous energy efficient controls and devices throughout the School District's buildings. Due to disagreements regarding the contract and project funding, this matter proceeded to mediation. This resulted in a Board-approved agreement between the District and Johnson Controls to pay \$1 million over a five-year period starting in fiscal year 2017-18. In July 2019, the District made its third payment of \$200,000 towards this settlement.

- 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***

The voter approved 2019-20 fiscal year budget, which was passed in May 2019, represented a year to year increase of 3.11% in expenses. This was supported with a 2% increase in tax levy. Voters approved the budget in the first vote and with a good margin.

During the 2018-2019 school year, the Pupil Transportation Consultant was asked to find operational and procedural impediments to achieving the best possible and most efficient Transportation System for East Ramapo. With that charge in mind, the Consultant looked at the 2018-19 school year public and nonpublic school bus and route assignment schedule. This schedule listing demonstrated that due to the restrictive and inconsistent times between tiers, many buses could neither do consecutive multi-route bus assignments nor could they raise bus route load counts to the industry-wide standard for school bus transportation systems. The East Ramapo School District needed to add more time between tiers to improve the efficient use of the contracted buses. A revised tiered school bell time schedule was introduced.

This new tiered bell time schedule created a uniform route run availability time of forty-five (45) minutes that would allow most of the seats to be filled (target was 90%). As can be seen in the 2018-2019 school year efficiency analysis, the public-school load counts were much lower than this target. The nonpublic load counts mirrored this same trend as well and would become part of the overall efficiency improvement plan. After many meetings with school administrators and union officials, refinements were made, and the final revised 2019-2020 school year Bell Time Schedule was agreed upon-

After meeting with the various unions, the district approved revised bell times for the 2019-2020 school year. The plan for phase one of TEEP (attached) was to implement those new tier times for the public schools and the nonpublic schools that received bus service from the district's two main bus contractors, Chestnut Ridge Transportation and Student Bus Transportation. With the new schedule in place for the majority of students and the separation of vans used for Special Education Transportation now being used exclusively for children with special Transportation needs, the district anticipated fewer buses being needed to accomplish the routes that were now loaded to higher load counts thereby lowering costs.

This was all done while simultaneously pushing an extraordinarily strong initiative to compel the nonpublic schools to submit their nonpublic Student Transportation certification forms before the subject students could be transported. This would provide greater lead time to prepare more efficient routing with fewer buses used and create the type of accountability the State's Audit Team had noted in their Audit Review Report.

TRANSPORTATION EFFICENCY & EFFECTIVENESS PROCESS (**TEEP**)

<b>Public</b>		
Phase 1		
Timeline	Plan	Rationale
December 2017 - April 2019	Identified/addressed inefficiencies; collaborated with public school Bargaining Units to adjust start/end times of the school day	Secured safe and timely transport of students  Reallocated funds to support instruction
<b>Nonpublic</b>		
Phase 2		
Timeline	Plan	Rationale
March - August 2019	Collaborate with nonpublic Administration transported by two of the largest contractors (tentative change September aligned with public schools) to identify/address inefficiencies	Secure safe and timely transport of students  Vendors provide service on existing public line-ups
Phase 3		
August 2019 - January 2020	Collaborate with remaining nonpublic Administrators to identify/address inefficiencies	An accurate account of services provided and maximize efficiency
<b>Public and Nonpublic</b>		
Phase 4		
Timeline	Plan	Rationale
January -June 2020	Identify areas within Special Education and McKinney-Vento for possible efficiency enhancements	Ensure that all services are provided with fidelity

***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
- Installed signs about unauthorized presence on school grounds
- Had a board retreat in March 2019 facilitated by Executive Director Timothy K. Kremer of the New York State School Board Association (NYSBBA), The majority of the board members were in attendance in addition to the Superintendent and the State Monitors.
- Two Board members received recognition by NYSBBA for Master Board Certification.

## **Concerns**

More than 93% of school districts have passed their budgets on the first or second vote in the last five years. East Ramapo is an outlier with three contingency budgets needed in the five year period in which the 2015-16 to 2019-20 budgets were acted upon. Looking ahead, it remains critical that the community comes together to build support for school budgets, especially if they adhere to the tax cap.

The estimate for simply maintaining support for existing academic programs and increasing bus ridership is at least an additional \$20 million over the next five years. Any budget that fails to pass in the next five years will result in virtually all the cuts coming out of academic programs, which comprise the bulk of the budget. Budget defeats mean larger class sizes, fewer supports for English Language Learners and students with disabilities, and reductions in Advanced Placement and college course offerings. In addition, budget defeats threaten the District's ability to recruit and retain highly qualified teachers and administrators.

For this district, it is not enough to simply pass a budget within the tax levy cap. The only way for the District to catch up to districts that have been able to consistently pass budgets in terms of the resources the district provides its students is to begin passing small tax levy cap overrides.

Transportation and healthcare currently represent more than 25% of the budget and have been growing at more than 5% annually – more than twice the rate of inflation. Transportation costs are driven primarily by increases in ridership. Healthcare costs are driven by significant increases in health insurance and prescription drug prices. It is critical the District find ways to contain these costs.

Interactions with the community have made clear to the monitors that many public school parents believe that their voices are not being heard and that they lack agency regarding decisions that affect their children. The board is aware of this perception. The monitors have consistently advocated that board members receive additional training to address the concerns of parents that board meetings must become more effective and efficient and diverse viewpoints must be recognized.

During the 2018-19 school year, a diverse group of community members, called East Ramapo United, began to meet monthly with the goal of sharing perspectives and finding common ground. The monitors were provided information regarding these meetings, and Mr. Charles Szuberla attended some of them. Over time, the meetings stopped and communication has broken down. East Ramapo remains a district in which key stakeholders have not yet coalesced around a common vision. The need to continue to

create common ground is important if the district is to better serve all its students. Commendably, the board has expressed a willingness to continue to receive training on board governance and to learn more about how diversity and inclusivity can be addressed in ways that impact positively the district's public-school students.

East Ramapo is at a crossroads. Significant improvements have been made in classroom instruction and leadership, and school buildings and facilities are being brought up to current standards. There has been an issue with nonpublic misdistribution of textbooks and accountability. It is unclear what level of tax levy the community will support, but it is certain that contingency budgets will make it significantly harder for the district to improve the academic performance of the district's students, which is already below state averages. Budgeting is not a one-year-at-a-time activity. The Monitors are committed to working with the entire community to forge a long-range plan for success.

### ***Recommendations***

1. The district should continue to expand and strengthen implementation of the academic strategic plan, with particular focus on those elements that have resulted in improved student outcomes, particularly data driven professional development, learning walks, and formative assessment practices.
2. All Board members and District staff should continue to receive training related to adopting a mindset that all children can learn and the District's efficacy approach. It is critical that the District is successful in changing attitudes to reflect the expectation that all students can be successful.
3. All Board members should be encouraged to continue to receive training that will help them to better understand the needs of students of color. The monitors recommend they attend the "Undoing Racism Workshop" presented by the People's Institute for Survival and Beyond.
4. The Board and Community groups should hire a facilitator, such as the Harvard Project, to facilitate an honest and open discussion of the needs of public school students of color and nonpublic school students.
5. The District and Board should provide more transparency in all areas of school governance by posting materials presented at board meetings (e.g., PowerPoints) on the district website in ways that make them easily accessible to the public.

6. The Board should continue to conduct an annual Board Retreat focused on ensuring effective and efficient board governance.
7. The Board of Education and the Superintendent should expand efforts to reach out to the community to explain how strong public schools can benefit everyone in the community.
8. As a supplement to or as part of an expanded Superintendent's Community circle, the district should convene a community workgroup to establish a five-year budget plan to adequately support students and outline the federal, State, and local revenues needed to support the plan. The workgroup should solicit input from the community on student achievement goals, graduation rates, equity, nonpublic transportation, and tax tolerance.
9. To complement presentations that have been made regarding how funds are allocated for nonpublic students, the district should develop a primer on this topic and post the primer on the District web site.
10. The District should during the 2019-2020 school year complete the process of digitizing the ordering, lending, and inventory of pre-approved textbooks to nonpublic schools to ensure schools receive their textbooks in a timely fashion.
11. Based on the completed bond work, the district should, to the extent funds can be made available, hire at least 2 HVAC technicians to assist with the maintenance of school facilities.
12. The district should seek a change to the Pre-K State Aid formula to include a count of nonpublic and public students. Pre-K programs in East Ramapo serve all students in the District, including a significant number of students who will attend nonpublic K-12 schools.

The East Ramapo Central School district is continuing to make progress as systems and structures have been put in place to assist the district in improving and providing a quality education for the students.