

2021-2022 ERCSD Annual Monitors Report

Presentation

Mary Fox Alter- Academic Monitor

Bruce Singer- Fiscal Monitor

(Link to Webinar: <https://www.ercsd.org/Domain/3101>)

Introduction

- March 2020, the Commissioner of Education appointed Bruce Singer as the Fiscal Monitor for the East Ramapo Central School District.
- April 2022, the Commissioner of Education appointed Mary Fox-Alter as the Academic Monitor for the East Ramapo Central School District.
- The 2021-22 school year monitoring work builds upon the previous year's work; inclusive of the District's Work detailed in the Board adopted LTSAF Plan.

Legislation and Laws

- Pursuant to Chapter 89 of the Laws of 2016 (Chapter 89) which enacted the original East Ramapo CSD monitor legislation, which authorized the Comm. of Education to appoint monitors to provide oversight, guidance and technical assistance to the academic and fiscal policies, practices, programs and decisions of the East Ramapo CSD, the Board of Education, and the Superintendent

Legislation and Laws (Cont.)

- June 29, 2021 the Governor signed into law Chapter 173 of the laws of 2021, which amended Chapter 89 providing advanced powers and duties of the monitors appointed to East Ramapo CSD.
- Chapter 173 expands the mandating that the District Clerk provide documents to the monitors within 48 hours of a written request. Additionally, Chapter 173 requires that the District Clerk to provide the monitors with copies of the board agenda with all resolutions, and motions on such agenda no later than 72 hours prior to such meeting

2021-22 Academic and Governance Activities

- New Academic Monitor –Mary Fox-Alter, appointed in April 2022
- April – June 30, 2022 – regular site visits to district and schools, in person meetings, tour of the District, meetings with community groups and elected officials.
- Facilitated professional development opportunities for multisensory reading instruction utilizing the research-based Orton- Gillingham approach for over 60 faculty members scheduled for spring 2023.
- Worked with the district administrators on the need to address the enrollment and class registration delays for English language learners that prioritized the class registration needs of ELLs.
- Worked with the district instructional administrators on creating a streamlined and efficient summer registration process for new students – addressing enrollment and transportation needs.
- Direct involvement with the ASI for curriculum regarding the expansion of in-person summer learning opportunities for district students.
- Prepared the NYS required APPR recertification training for administrators – 2 sessions required.

2021-22 Academic and Governance Activities

- Direct involvement with administration regarding the use of an outside consultant to study CTE Programs.
- Monitors did not approve item for BOE agenda due to inadequate instructional information as well as current and future fiscal constraints.
- Met with District administrators regarding extra-curricular coaching certification questions, issues and steps forward.
- Worked with the District regarding Certificate of Occupancy issues for instructional areas for regular school year and summer programs.
- Provided guidance to District regarding the use of facilities through a co-sponsorship model for non-profit supporting ER High School Students
- Worked with administration on the graduation rate and chronic absentee rates.

2021-22 Academic and Governance Activities

- Determined the need to move forward with Policy work with specific steps – monthly meetings, held in public, facilitated by the BOE clerk.
- Direct involvement at the BOE level and cabinet level regarding the district's expanded summer instructional program and the required ESY program when construction delays allowed for limited use of the facilities by community groups for non-district summer camps.
 - Rates established for contracts approved reflect for the first time since 2008, true current costs.
 - Monitor veto would have been used if the contract rates did not reflect true, current costs.

2021-22 Fiscal Activities

- Since July 1, 2021, there have no "Walk-On" agenda items from BOE members.
- Consistent review of every BOE agenda item prior the public BOE meeting. All concerns of proposed agenda items were resolved by the Administration prior to BOE submission.
 - Due to implementation of Chapter 173, there was no need to "Veto" a BOE resolution.
- Reviewed extensive documentation which was prepared by the district including, but limited to: State Aid assumptions; Tax Levy calculations; revenue and expenditure trends; transportation analysis; cost savings resulting from potential retirees and debt service

2021-22 Fiscal Activities

- Participated in the recruitment of the Transportation Director, Facilities Director, and Business Manager
- Meets regularly with State Legislators to discuss state aid and district finances
- Participated in all discussions with Internal Auditors, External Auditors, Claims Auditors to ensure transparency of information. Assisted with the development of the Audit Action Plan to meet compliance with all Audit comments
- Assisted with instituting purchasing policy to eliminate purchases with authorized purchase order

2021-22 Fiscal Activities

- Transportation
 - Participated in the development of the transportation student data base. A completely new student data base was created and input. This led to routing efficiencies. Decrease of 150 contracted school buses.
 - Supported the adherence the submission of transportation applications by April 1 annually
- Capital Construction
 - Attends weekly capital construction meetings with Architects, and Construction Managers. ARPA Monthly Construction Update Reports can be found in the Monitors Section of the District website

2021-22 Fiscal Activities

- Fiscal Challenges facing East Ramapo CSD
 - Provided numerous memos to the Board of Education and Community on the pending fiscal crisis
 - Established bi-weekly meetings with Bond Council and Financial Advisors, Superintendent of Schools, District Staff, and both monitors. At each meeting recommendations on the potential cost saving measures are discussed.
 - The Expenditure Reduction Plan must include:
 - Specific line item and dollar reductions
 - Programs and number of staff affected by the reductions
 - Savings in the areas of supplies, materials, and contractual obligations
 - Date of implementation of the reduction

Long Term Strategic Academic and Fiscal Plan Addendum

- Both Monitors worked extensively with the District on revisions/additions to LTSAFP.
- Monitors presented addendum items at three separate community meetings. The two virtual meetings had 450 participants at each meeting. The LTSAFP addendum was discussed at the Oct 3, 2022, BOE meeting.
 - Both Monitors provided updates on the findings and recommendations.
- The community has been encouraged, in multiple ways, to provide comments and input on the report and future direction of the school district.
- The LTSAFP has been made available on the School District Website.

New Recommendations 2022-23

The ERCSD LTSAF 22-23 Plan addendum highlights:

Governance

- BOE shall address 2021-22 requirements for self-evaluation and annual evaluation of Superintendent of Schools
- BOE shall review and discuss the financial impacts of universal transportation versus transportation at the NYS mandated levels on the Budget
- BOE shall discuss and adopt, and the district leadership shall implement a strategy to educate district voters of the district's ability to provide a public education as required by law should the proposed 2023–2024 school year budget not be approved.

New Recommendations 2022-23

Governance

- The district shall provide multiple opportunities for student engagement and feedback on the LTSAF Plan. Such opportunities shall begin with the spring budget development process, continue through the opening of schools in September, and conclude 10 days after the LTSAFP fall public hearing date.
- The District shall continue the Policy work with NYSBBA.
- The District shall commit to DEI training for the 22-23 year.

Academic

The ERCSD LTSAF 22-23 Plan Addendum Highlights:

- Strengthen alignment of curriculum, assessment, instruction, instructional materials, responsive intervention Lexia, Atlas
- ELLs and the Newcomers Program
- ELL students – work with HBERN and NYSED
- Literacy instruction and intervention – Orton Gillingham
- Professional development work - APPR training, Generation Ready, Learning Walk Tool, Multi-sensory Reading Instruction,
- Digital and hands on instructional materials
- Evidenced based interventions
- Progress monitoring
- SEL and CR-F work- Mindfulness, See3 consultants

Academic

The ERCSD LTSAF 22-23 Plan Addendum Highlights:

- Professional development and instructional coaching
- Learning Walk Tool and School support visits
 - Partnership with the local Teacher Center, BOCES
- PD work – ELLs and SWDs
- Frontline tool for transparency and efficiency
- Superintendent Circles and Student Circles
- Student attendance and role of social workers
- Master Schedule work
- PE, Art, Music – new instructional materials and equipment
- Organizational charts
- Technology access – Schoology, Microsoft Translate, Device and Internet access – at home, on campus

Academic

The ERCSD LTSAF 22-23 Plan addendum highlights

- Enhance parent engagement and family –school partnerships
 - Language interpreters and translations
 - Family University
 - Parent Teacher conferences
 - Monitor listening tours
 - FACE (Family and community engagement events)
 - Student safety – monitors lunch, drop off and pick up
 - Technology

Fiscal

The ERCSD LTSAF 22-23 Plan Addendum Highlights

The Board of Education shall adopt the 2023-2024 Budget Development Calendar that details the due dates for budget submission of budget documentation such that each phase of the budget process shall be completed timely

Fiscal

The ERCSD LTSAF 22-23 Plan Addendum Highlights

The District staff shall submit to the Board of Education an analysis of salary schedules, benefits, debt service payment schedule, including transportation expenditures necessary for the development of the 2023-2024 Budget

Fiscal

The ERCSD LTSAF 22-23 Plan Addendum Highlights

- Shall be based upon strategic examination of current resources
- Shall be based on review of expenditure trends and projected expenses, including all revenue sources
- Notes shall be added to explain unusual line items and shall be appended to the Budget
- Staff shall provide with guidance and procedures
- Budget shall be aligned with the Plan

Fiscal

The ERCSD LTSAF 22-23 Plan Addendum Highlights

- The 2023-2024 Budget shall be based upon on a strategic examination of current resource use in order to determine the contribution that each investment makes to educational outcomes
- The 2023-2024 Budget shall be based on review of expenditure trends and projected expenses, and revenues
- Notes shall be added to the 2023-2024 budget to explain any unusual line item variance. These notes will enable the reader further insight to budgetary changes
- The 2023-24 Budget shall be aligned with the Plan

Fiscal

The ERCSD LTSAF 22-23 Plan Addendum Highlights

Fund Balance:

- District staff shall provide the Superintendent and Board of Education monthly projected June 30,2023 Fund Balance.
- The goal shall be a positive year end fund balance.

Audits of School District:

- School District shall update 5-year Financial Plan after the adoption of the End of Year Financial Audit
- School District shall ensure that all auditor suggestions, concerns, and areas for improvement are resolved

Fiscal

The ERCSD LTSAF 22-23 Plan Addendum Highlights

Weekly Meetings of a Budget Crisis Team:

Beginning no later than September 26, 2022, Dr. Ellis will convene weekly meetings to identify cost savings in the current 2022–2023 school year budget.

Financial Efficiencies:

Superintendent shall create 3-part Financial Efficiencies and Expenditure Reduction Plan to ensure that the June 30, 2023 Fund Balance is positive
Process shall begin immediately

Fiscal

The ERCSD LTSAF 22-23 Plan Addendum Highlights

The district was able to end the 2022–2023 school year with a positive fund balance, of \$4.3 Million (Audited June 30, 2022) the district must address a total the shortfall of nearly \$32 million, which is the the loss of CRRSA funds for the 2023-2024 School Year.

Fiscal

The ERCSD LTSAF 22-23 Plan Addendum Highlights

- Should the steps specified above not be implemented with timely planning, execution, and full fidelity, the monitors will use their authority under the law to compel district compliance and/or notify the Commissioner of the need for intervention to ensure the fiscal and programmatic integrity of the district.
- The crisis about which the monitors have warned is now upon the district, and the time for targeted action is now.

Contact Information

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- Please email concerns or questions