



Board Briefings

ITEMS FROM THE SCHOOL BOARD'S APRIL 5 MEETING

(conducted in-person & remotely via Webex)

• **RECOGNITION** — Tina LaMendola, High School social worker, was congratulated for receiving the 2021 Ruth Efron Schwartz School Social Worker of the Year Award from NYSSSWA and thanked for her dedication to the well-being of children and families. As he retires, Hamburg Village Mayor Tom Moses was thanked for his partnership with the school district and service to the community.

• **YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID & CULTURE OF KINDNESS** — The district's Culture of Kindness initiative, started in 2013, is going strong, involving and reaching more students than ever. The DASA team spreadheads the effort, driven by Hamburg's core value of ensuring that the schools are kind and welcoming so that every day is a great day to be a Hamburg Bulldog, said Assistant Superintendent Colleen Kaney. Details about how the Culture of Kindness looks in the schools were presented by Director of Curriculum & Instruction Kaitlin Sylvester and school social workers Jilian Accurso and Tina LaMendola. A group of 60 High School and Middle School student Ambassadors bring the Culture of Kindness message into the elementary schools, basing each year's theme and activities on needs identified in a survey. This year's focus was being kind to one's self and taught coping skills to the younger students. Ambassadors Ella Forrest, Flynn Harper and Aurora Smith talked about their experiences and why they enjoy being part of the program. Working in tandem with that program is the district's Youth Mental Health First Aid initiative. Championed by Ms. Kaney, this initiative began in 2018 when all 650 employees, as well as Fisher Bus staff, received training to recognize signs and symptoms of students in mental health distress, and to acquaint them with where to turn for professional help. This school year, nine internal trainers are re-certifying all school employees and bus staff. Jennifer Barker, Director of Pupil Services, explained the ALGEE (assess for risk of suicide or harm, listen non-judgmentally, give reassurance, encourage appropriate professional help, encourage self-help and other support strategies) response for assisting a young person in crisis. It was noted that due to the pandemic, there are more instances of students with anxiety issues and depression. Lindsay Glass from the Office of Curriculum & Instruction was thanked for her assistance in coordinating the training.

• **PERSONNEL** — Appointed to the staff were Holly Lanciano, teacher aide, Boston Valley Elementary and Leonard Omollo, cook, Middle School

• **PUBLIC COMMENT** — A resident thanked the board for its work on behalf of children, while other speakers addressed Covid-related issues, the School Board campaign and communication.

• **NEXT MEETING** — Tuesday, April 19 at Armor Elementary - budget session at 6 p.m./regular meeting at 6:30 p.m.

Michael Cornell, Superintendent
April 6, 2022