

The Board of Education

Town of Vernon

30 Park Street – PO Box 600
Vernon, Connecticut 06066

Anne Fischer, Chairperson
Mason Thrall, Vice Chairperson
Patricia Buxton, Secretary
Karen Colt
Kevin Brown
Mark Kalina
Stephen Linton
Deborah Rodriguez
Kristiana Wintress

August 29, 2022

APPROVED MINUTES BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING

A meeting of the Vernon Board of Education was held via Zoom Webinar and in-person at the Administration Building on Monday, August 29, 2022.

1.0 Establish Quorum

Roll call was taken at 7:01 p.m.

There was a quorum. Board members present: Mrs. Fischer, Mr. Thrall, Dr. Buxton, Mr. Brown, Ms. Colt, Mr. Kalina, Mr. Linton, Mrs. Rodriguez, and Ms. Wintress.

Student Representatives present: Anaya Tolton

Administration present: Superintendent Dr. Joseph Macary, Assistant Superintendent Mr. Robert Testa and Director of Business and Finance Mr. William Meier III.

2.0 Call to Order

Chairperson Fischer called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

3.0 Pledge of Allegiance

4.0 Recognitions and Presentations

Mrs. Fischer began by welcoming Karen Colt as the newest member to the Board of Education.

4.1 Welcome and Introduction of New School Administrators Heather Earley, Lori Purcaro, Kate Howard-Bender and Michael Savignano (BOE Goal #1, #2, #3)

Superintendent Dr. Macary welcomed four new Administrators to the Vernon Public Schools Administrative team; Heather Earley, Principal of Center Road School; Lori Purcaro, Assistant Principal of Center Road School; Kate Howard-Bender, Assistant Principal of Rockville High School; Michael Savignano, Assistant Principal of Vernon

The Board of Education

Town of Vernon

30 Park Street – PO Box 600
Vernon, Connecticut 06066

Anne Fischer, Chairperson
Mason Thrall, Vice Chairperson
Patricia Buxton, Secretary
Karen Colt
Kevin Brown
Mark Kalina
Stephen Linton
Deborah Rodriguez
Kristiana Wintress

August 29, 2022

Center Middle School. He spoke of their background and experience and then asked each of them to say a few words. A light reception was immediately held to celebrate their joining the Vernon Public Schools family.

4.2 Presentation by VCMS Teacher Regina Lee of her trip to Hawaii with RHS Senior Nic Angeli for the National History Day Program “Sacrifice for Freedom: World War II in the Pacific Student and Teacher Institute” (BOE Goal #2, #3)

VCMS Teacher Regina Lee and RHS Senior Nic Angeli spoke to the Board about their trip to Hawaii for the National History Day Program “Sacrifice for Freedom: World War II in the Pacific Student and Teacher Institute”. They spoke of the long selection process and the many documents they had to submit in order to be considered as one of the 16 student/teacher teams for this great opportunity. They had to complete 12 modules of course work from January to July. These requirements were equivalent to a college class for adults and an Independent Study for students. They found out in January that they had been selected, but had to wait several weeks before they could announce to anyone that they were chosen for the program. They said it was very hard to keep this quiet and not share with their colleagues and classmates. They left for Hawaii in July for what would be a very busy week. Upon arrival, they dove right into their itinerary and visited many sites on the island, including Diamond Head, the Bishop Museum, the USS Arizona, USS Oklahoma, USS Utah, USS Missouri and USS Bowfin. A favorite was a visit to the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency, which rarely allows visitors due to the sacred nature of the work that goes on there identifying veterans remains. They also visited the Pearl Harbor Aviation Museum. They had the opportunity to study about the cultural and historical clashes of Hawaii. A very special part of their trip was when they chose to honor a veteran named William Grant Fournier, a native of Connecticut. They studied about him and spoke of his rough upbringing and the losses he endured in his family at such a young age. He was killed in battle in Hawaii and they decided to write a eulogy about him and read it aloud at his grave. It was a very emotional moment and a memory that will remain in their hearts forever. They said this trip was an opportunity of a lifetime and the experience was life changing. Regina said that her dream is to be able to offer this experience to every student in Vernon. Nic added that going to these places was more impactful than reading a book about them; his one takeaway from the experience was that “Freedom isn’t Free”. They were both so grateful for the opportunity to experience all that this wonderful program had to offer.

The Board of Education Town of Vernon

30 Park Street – PO Box 600
Vernon, Connecticut 06066

Anne Fischer, Chairperson
Mason Thrall, Vice Chairperson
Patricia Buxton, Secretary
Karen Colt
Kevin Brown
Mark Kalina
Stephen Linton
Deborah Rodriguez
Kristiana Wintress

August 29, 2022

5.0 Secretary's Report

5.1 Opportunity for Board of Education to add/delete urgent agenda items

No agenda items were added or deleted.

Mrs. Fischer noted that Anaya Tolton was present this evening and asked her how her Summer was. Anaya mentioned that she had the opportunity to attend FBI Camp at Yale University. Her favorite part of the camp was the presentation about "Women in Law Enforcement". She said that as a result of attending this camp, she has a strong interest in becoming an FBI Agent.

6.0 Community Forum

Opportunity for comments on agenda items, potential future agenda items, or general information provided to the Board from citizens and community organizations (Individual speakers shall be limited to five minutes and the total time for public forum shall be limited to 15 minutes.)

Esther Borba of Turning Point USA, 4940 East Beverly Road, Phoenix, AZ spoke to the Board about her organization, a non-profit, non-partisan group. They encourage high school students to register to vote and would like to partner with Vernon Public Schools and open a chapter at Rockville High School.

Michael F. Tobin, Jr., 21 Court Street, Rockville, CT also addressed the Board. He spoke of attending Vernon Public Schools and about his family. He mentioned that he has written the Mayor, the Chief of Police and the Postmaster and has received no response. He wants to open a Women's Homeless Shelter in Vernon. He has a long history of alcoholism, drug abuse and mental illness and is facing a number of medical problems; he says that these are his strengths and he wants to send a message to the young people. He would like to speak to them about not going down the same road he has. He wants to give to the community rather than take going forward.

7.0 Consent Agenda

7.1 Consent Agenda

- (a) Approval of the Minutes of the Regular Board of Education Meeting held on June 27, 2022

The Board of Education

Town of Vernon

30 Park Street – PO Box 600
Vernon, Connecticut 06066

Anne Fischer, Chairperson
Mason Thrall, Vice Chairperson
Patricia Buxton, Secretary
Karen Colt
Kevin Brown
Mark Kalina
Stephen Linton
Deborah Rodriguez
Kristiana Wintress

August 29, 2022

(b) Approval of the Minutes of the Special Board of Education Meeting held on July 25, 2022

MOTION: Mr. Kalina moved to approve Consent Agenda Items #7.1 (a) and (b)
SECOND: Dr. Buxton
VOTE: Unanimous

8.0 Personnel

8.1 Report on Open Certified Staff Positions (BOE Goal #2)

Assistant Superintendent Mr. Testa reported to the Board on the open certified staff positions. His handout noted six openings, but a teacher was hired today which reduces the number to five open positions. He noted that the RHS Principal Jason Magao is pulling teachers together to cover vacancies until those positions are filled.

8.2 Review of the EEDC Report on Staff Evaluations (BOE Goal #2)

Assistant Superintendent Mr. Testa spoke of the EEDC Report on Staff Evaluations and displayed a PowerPoint presentation to Board members. He went through each slide, explaining the data presented. There was some concern amongst Board members that a few teachers were in the “Developing” category. Mr. Testa explained that new teachers typically fall under this category for the first few years. He expects this to be the trend and is comfortable with these results. “Developing” does not mean that they are not a good teacher. He also mentioned that “Exemplary” is very hard to achieve. He spoke of steps we are taking to support District Improvement and spoke of the key areas of the Vernon Public Schools Blueprint for Success. He said he’s not expecting teachers to be perfect in the first two years. The Superintendent’s Office visits teachers regularly and Vernon provides the resources for them to improve. We offer peer to peer classroom visits as well as school to school visits. He spoke of a teacher that came up to him recently to say how pleased she was by the support and resources offered to new teachers.

The Board of Education Town of Vernon

30 Park Street – PO Box 600
Vernon, Connecticut 06066

Anne Fischer, Chairperson
Mason Thrall, Vice Chairperson
Patricia Buxton, Secretary
Karen Colt
Kevin Brown
Mark Kalina
Stephen Linton
Deborah Rodriguez
Kristiana Wintress

August 29, 2022

9.0 Teaching and Learning

9.1 Presentation of the District Attendance Report for 2021-2022 (BOE Goal #2)

Assistant Superintendent Mr. Testa showed another PowerPoint presentation to the Board regarding the District Attendance Report for the 2021-2022 School Year. He went through the data on each slide and answered the Board's questions. He did say that he's very interested to see the State's Chronically Absent data for the 2021-2022 school year, as that has not yet been published. COVID-19 had a direct impact on these results. We hope to see improvement this year in the data with a more normal school year. Our District Attendance goal is 95%. We will continue to monitor attendance and will provide multiple options to do so, such as student check-in/check-out, home visits and mentoring. We try various methods; not all work for all families & students. Our lowest attendance rates were at RHS & VCMS. Sports do help to get kids back to school.

9.2 Smarter Balanced 2021-2022 Student Achievement Results (BOE Goal #2)

Assistant Superintendent Mr. Testa began by speaking of the press conference we hosted at Skinner Road School with the State Commissioner of Education to announce the Smarter Balanced 2021-2022 Student Achievement Results. Mr. Testa then went over his PowerPoint presentation of the Vernon Public Schools SBA results. He explained that this is a summative assessment that provides an annual snapshot of student achievement which helps us to make educational decisions for our students. There are four achievement levels:

1. Level 1 = Does not meet the achievement standard
2. Level 2 = Approaching the achievement standard
3. Level 3 = Meets the Achievement standard
4. Level 4 = Exceeds the achievement standard

We target the top three. Every student has a target that they aim for. We are constantly assessing our students; the hiring of interventionists has helped to achieve desirable results. Dr. Macary said that we took a hit with the pandemic and we have work to do. Our goal should be 80%. We can be very proud of our positive growth as we have one of the top growth rates in Connecticut. We want to get back to pre-pandemic levels and grow even more.

**The Board of Education
Town of Vernon**

30 Park Street – PO Box 600
Vernon, Connecticut 06066

Anne Fischer, Chairperson
Mason Thrall, Vice Chairperson
Patricia Buxton, Secretary
Karen Colt
Kevin Brown
Mark Kalina
Stephen Linton
Deborah Rodriguez
Kristiana Wintress

August 29, 2022

10.0 Review and Update Board of Education Calendar

<https://www.vernonpublicschools.org/district-information/district-calendar>


No updates were made.

11.0 Opportunity for Questions from the Press Regarding Agenda Items

No one from the Press was in attendance.

12.0 Adjournment

MOTION: Mr. Linton made a motion to adjourn at 8:55 p.m.
SECOND: Mr. Brown
VOTE: Unanimous

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia Buxton, Board Secretary