

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
Paul Grabowski
Karen Colt
Mark Kalina
Stephen Linton
Deborah Rodriguez
Kristiana Wintress

August 28, 2023

APPROVED MINUTES BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING

A meeting of the Vernon Board of Education was held in-person and via Zoom Webinar at the Administration Building on Monday, August 28, 2023.

1.0 Establish Quorum

Roll call was taken at 7:00 p.m.

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

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

Mr. David Peling, Dr. Macary's Superintendent Intern through UCONN, was also in attendance.

2.0 Call to Order

Chairperson Fischer called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

3.0 Pledge of Allegiance

4.0 Recognitions and Presentations

4.1 Introduction of New Teachers (BOE Goal #2)

Dr. Macary announced that Mr. Testa will be introducing 30 new teachers for the 2023-2024 school year, but first wanted to speak about Convocation, which took place this morning at 8:00 AM at Rockville High School in the auditorium. It was a great morning filled with uplifting speeches, including one from our Board Chair, Anne Fischer as well as our Teacher of the Year, Shireen Rhoades. Both did a terrific job! Mrs. Fischer received a standing ovation from the staff, as she will be retiring from the Board in November and this was her last Convocation speech. The event re-energized everyone and prepared them

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for a great school year. Dr. Macary announced that many of the new teachers were in attendance at this evening's meeting and thanked them for taking time out of their busy schedules to be here. He also thanked them for all they do for students. Mr. Testa then began the introductions, referring to a New Teacher Bio sheet handed to the Board. He called each teacher by name and asked that they stand when their name was called.

4.2 Presentation and Board Approval of Maple Street School's Family Resource Center Grant (BOE Goal #1, #2, #3)

Joy Chudary, of ECHN, prepared a presentation for the Board about the role of Maple Street School's Family Resource Center. Dr. Macary asked Ms. Chudary to give a brief overview about the purpose of the Center before she began. She said that the Family Resource Center is part of the Family Development Center out of Manchester Memorial Hospital, ECHN. The center is located in the basement of Maple Street School and provides referrals and resources, while partnering with the community, to service families in Vernon. Some of the components of the grant include Early Child Care & Education, Family Literacy, Family in Training and Positive Youth Development. They partner with the Indian Valley YMCA for Early Child Care and Education. They provide before and after school care through the YMCA and after school programs are provided by the center as well. Vacationing programs are provided by the center and the YMCA and Summer programs are provided to Park West Maple Street students. The center also partners with Vernon Regional Adult Based Education (VRABE) with a focus on ELL and GED programs. Positive Youth Development includes activities designed to encourage self-confidence, promote wise decision making, strengthen leadership skills and enhance academic interests. Ms. Chudary serves as a resource for parents and providers via telephone, mailings, technical assistance and training and collaborates with community partners for resources.

MOTION: Mr. Thrall moved to approve Maple Street School's Family Resource Center Grant as presented.
SECOND: Ms. Wintress
VOTE: Unanimous

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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.

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.)

No one addressed the Board.

7.0 Consent Agenda

7.1 Consent Agenda

(a) Approval of the Minutes of the Regular Board of Education Meeting held on June 26, 2023

MOTION: Mr. Kalina moved to approve Consent Agenda Items 7.1(a)

SECOND: Mrs. Rodriguez

VOTE: Unanimous

8.0 Personnel

8.1 Approval of the Agreement between the Vernon Board of Education and Local 1303-279 of Council 4, AFSCME AFL-CIO, Library/Media Managers and Library Assistants (BOE Goal #1, #2, #3) (Executive Session Anticipated)

This item was moved to the end of the meeting.

8.2 Workers' Compensation Claim Update (BOE Goal #3) (Executive Session Anticipated)

This item was moved to the end of the meeting.

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9.0 Teaching and Learning

9.1 School-Parent-Student Compacts: Elementary, Middle & High School (BOE Goal #1, #2, #3)

Dr. Macary mentioned that the School-Parent-Student Compacts for Elementary, Middle and High School levels were approved by the Board before Covid and was bringing them back to the Board to see if they would like to make any changes. School responsibilities include believing all students can and will learn at high levels, implement high-quality curriculum, provide opportunities for parents to participate in their child's school experience, ensure regular, timely and meaningful communication and facilitate Social Emotional Learning development. Family responsibilities include ensuring regular and on-time attendance for their children, supporting homework completion, staying informed on school happenings and participating in school meetings, encourage positive use of extracurricular time and responsible use of technology and partner in decisions relating to their child's education. Student responsibilities include being safe, respectful and responsible. They must conduct themselves in a safe and appropriate manner at all times, communicate respectfully with students and staff, follow the school and bus rules and attend school, giving their best effort and completing their homework. Our intent is to get this out to parents and students more often to communicate these expectations.

10.0 General Business

10.1 New Entry Age for Kindergarten (BOE Goal #1, #2, #3)

Dr. Macary announced that the CSDE has released information on the recently enacted change by the Connecticut General Assembly to raise the minimum age for automatic entry into public school in Connecticut. Children will now need to turn 5 years old by September 1st in order to attend Kindergarten. This new rule will go into effect with the 2024-2025 school year and will present its own set of challenges. Children born after September 1st, who would normally move on to Kindergarten under the old ruling, provided they turn 5 by January 1st, will now be required to remain in Pre-K for an additional year. This transition will cause high numbers of children attending Pre-K and will reduce attendance in Kindergarten classrooms. It will also cause a financial burden

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for families who were hoping to have their children in school full-time and will now need to seek day care arrangements for an additional year. We may need to open more Pre-K classrooms. Dr. Macary said this new law allows for a waiver, but he feels the waiver could present a greater problem to the District. We will need to establish a uniform policy on how to handle the waiver and also need to determine if the waiver is mandatory. Dr. Macary is waiting for clarification on this from the Policy Chair at CAFE. Mrs. Fischer noted that the document states the decision for a waiver can be made by the Principal or Superintendent. She feels it should be the decision of the Superintendent only.

10.2 State Transition Assistance for Breakfast and Lunch Expenses (STABLE) – Free Meals for Students for SY2023-2024 (BOE Goal #1, #3)

Dr. Macary announced that we received the STABLE document in early August and needed to sign-off by August 18th, which we did do. What this means is that our 3 CEP schools, Northeast School, Skinner Road School and Maple Street School, will remain at receiving free breakfast and lunch for the coming school year. Rockville High School, Vernon Center Middle School, Lake Street School and Center Road School students will receive free breakfast only under the new STABLE Program, and only those students identified as reduced will receive free lunch. This program is effective only for the 2023-2024 school year and is funded through the ESSER Grant. In the future, we would like to see more of our schools qualify for the CEP Program. We are encouraging families to fill out the paperwork for free/reduced lunch. This will help to increase our eligibility for CEP.

10.3 ARPA School Mental Health Specialists Grant Award (BOE Goal #1, #2, #3)

Dr. Macary announced that Vernon Public Schools has received \$323,000.00 in funds from the ARPA School Mental Health Specialist Grant. This grant allowed us to hire a new social worker at Vernon Center Middle School, and along with school counselors and The Village now having a location at VCMS, we will be able to target our Middle School student population and have a good handle on mental health.

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10.4 Donation of School Supplies to Vernon Public Schools (BOE Goal #1, #2)

Dr. Macary asked that the Board accept a donation from Spare Time in Vernon, who has generously collected school supplies during the month of August for Vernon Public School students.

MOTION: Dr. Buxton moved that the Board of Education accept, with gratitude, a generous donation of school supplies to the students of Vernon Public Schools.

SECOND: Mrs. Rodriguez

VOTE: Unanimous

10.5 Summary of Education-Related Legislation Enacted in the 2023 Regular Session (BOE Goal #1, #2, #3)

Dr. Macary reviewed the summary of Education-Related Legislation enacted in the 2023 Regular Session of the Connecticut General Assembly. He mentioned the “Financial Literacy Instruction” act and said we are ahead of the game on this with our current curriculum offerings at RHS. He also announced the new act regarding “Board Meeting Agenda and Document Posting”. As of July 1, 2023, we are now required to post our Board Packet to our website along with the Board meeting agenda. There were certain items that were repealed during the session and we will need to go back to our policies to remove them.

MOTION: Mr. Thrall moved that the Board of Education go into Executive Session at 8:02 PM to review Personnel items 8.1 and 8.2, inviting Dr. Macary, Mr. Meier and Mr. Peling.

SECOND: Mr. Linton

VOTE: Unanimous

The Board returned from Executive Session at 8:18 PM

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Item 8.1: Approval of the Agreement between the Vernon Board of Education and Local 1303-279 of Council 4, AFSCME AFL-CIO, Library/Media Managers and Library Assistants

MOTION: Mr. Thrall moved that the Board approve the Agreement between the Vernon Board of Education and Local 1303-279 of Council 4, AFSCME, AFL-CIO, Library/Media Managers and Library Assistants as presented.

SECOND: Mr. Kalina

VOTE: Unanimous

11.0 Review and Update Board of Education Calendar

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

No updates were made.

12.0 Opportunity for Questions from the Press Regarding Agenda Items

No one from the Press was in attendance.

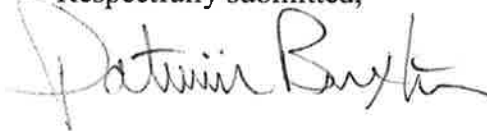
13.0 Adjournment

MOTION: Mr. Linton made a motion to adjourn at 8:20 PM

SECOND: Mr. Grabowski

VOTE: Unanimous

Respectfully submitted,



Patricia Buxton, Ed.D., Board Secretary