

# The Board of Education

## Town of Vernon

30 Park Street – PO Box 600  
Vernon, Connecticut 06066

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

September 13, 2021

### APPROVED MINUTES

#### BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING

A meeting of the Vernon Board of Education was held via Zoom Webinar and in-person on Monday, September 13, 2021.

#### 1.0 Establish Quorum

Roll call was taken at 7 p.m. Board members present: Mrs. Fischer, Mr. Kalina, Mr. Linton, Dr. Buxton, Mrs. Buckler, Mr. Brown, Mrs. Rodriguez, Mr. Thrall, and Ms. Wintress.

There was a quorum.

Student Representatives present: James Wheeler and Anaya Tolton

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

#### 2.0 Call to Order

Chairperson Fischer called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

#### 3.0 Pledge of Allegiance

#### 4.0 Recognitions and Presentations

##### 4.1 (Introduction of New Teachers (Secondary Level) (BOE Goal #2)

Assistant Superintendent of Schools Robert Testa introduced the new Vernon Public Schools teachers (Secondary Level) for the 2020-2021 school year.

#### ROCKVILLE HIGH SCHOOL:

**Katherine Bonaddio** is an English Teacher at Rockville High School.

**Taylor Bonadies** is a School Counselor at Rockville High School.

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**Haley Callahan** is a Speech and Language Pathologist at Rockville High School.  
**Samantha Camolli** is a Mathematics Teacher at Rockville High School.  
**Allasandra Cianci** is a French Teacher at Rockville High School.  
**Anthony DeLaire** is a Physical Education and Health Teacher at Rockville High School.  
**Tara Fotoohi** is a Mathematics Teacher at Rockville High School.  
**Katie Genco** is a Special Education Teacher at Rockville High School.  
**Heather Kennedy** is a Mathematics Teacher at Rockville High School.  
**Leah Leach** is the ASTE Teacher at Rockville High School.  
**Sarah Martin** is a Special Education Teacher at Rockville High School.  
**Rebecca Mondo** is an English Teacher at Rockville High School.  
**Matthew Pogson** is the ASTE Mechanics Teacher at Rockville High School.  
**Alessandra Scripa** is an Earth and Space Science Teacher at Rockville High School.

### VERNON CENTER MIDDLE SCHOOL

**Melissa Battles** is a Special Education Teacher at Vernon Center Middle School.  
**Allison Crooks** is a 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Mathematics Teacher at Vernon Center Middle School.  
**Tracy Hunt** is a Science Teacher at Vernon Center Middle School.  
**Sheila Murchison** is an 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Mathematics Teacher at Vernon Center Middle School.

#### 4.2 Introduction of New Board of Education Student Representative (BOE Goal #1, #2)

Superintendent Dr. Joseph Macary introduced and welcomed new Board of Education Student Representative Anaya Tolton.

Anaya is an 11<sup>th</sup> grade student whose favorite class is creative writing and American studies. She is involved with Rockville High School sports and made the JV Volleyball Team. Outside of school she participates in basketball. Anaya's hobbies include reading and arts and crafts. Her family includes her younger brother and dog Shadow. Anaya's future plans include becoming an author and she would love to play college basketball.

Anaya shared that she was glad to be on the Board and thanked them for the opportunity.

Mrs. Fischer welcomed Anaya to the Board.

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### 4.3 Approval of Vernon Education Foundation Mini-Grants (BOE Goal #1, #2)

Vernon Education Foundation (VEF) awarded mini-grants to the staff of the Vernon Public Schools.

Nikki Tolman is the mini grant program chair. The foundation received several new mini-grants and they are offering them year round for review at their meetings every other month. Applications are now online and it's an easier process. The grants are for extra activities that are not covered under the budget. This round of mini-grants include:

Boston Mathematics Challenge Tour	\$500	RHS
Outdoor Classroom	\$500	RHS/TALC
Decodable Book Sets	\$468	MSS
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Decodable Book Sets	\$468	MSS
Social Emotional and Diverse Books	\$500	NES
Slumber Party Kits for 1 <sup>st</sup> Graders	\$375	MSS

Dr. Macary thanked the VEF for supplementing these classrooms. Mrs. Fischer thanked the VEF also.

MOTION: Mrs. Rodriguez moved that the Vernon Board of Education approve, and accept with gratitude, the mini-grants awarded to staff of the Vernon Public Schools.

SECOND: Mr. Thrall

VOTE: Unanimous

### 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.

#### 5.2 Rockville High School Student Representative Report

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James Wheeler reported the following:

- There will be a home game on 9/14 for soccer and volleyball.
- Cross country has a meet on 9/15.
- There is a girls' soccer game on 9/16.
- The football game will be held on 9/18.
- Everyone is looking forward to a great fall sports season.
- 9/13 and 9/14 is Picture Day.
- The 4 town fair is September 16-19.
- The ASTE Program will be taking a field trip to the Big E. It is the best field trip ever.
- The ASTE Program will be holding their Fall Picnic and Silent Auction and they are accepting donations. Please contact Erika Bahler for more information.
- The cow is due to have another calf.

Anaya Tolton reported the following:

- All fall sports began on 9/9.
- The new track and field opened on 9/10.
- The high school hosted an Open House on 9/9.

### 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 (limited to 15 minutes)

Genaro Gonzalez of West Main Street addressed the Board. He is a new school parent and he has come to talk with the Board. He was in prison in the past and it was hard for him growing up. He spoke about COVID and the regulations from the CDE, OSHA requirements, environmental protection, face masks, contact tracing and the COVID vaccine. He spoke against his son wearing a face mask and the school doing contact tracing. He asked the Board to look at what is in the vaccine and for them to be mindful. He shared that the CDC and Department of Health is being sued for violation of civil rights. He ended by saying that he respects all of the Board.

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### 7.0 Consent Agenda

#### 7.1

- (a) Approval of the Minutes of the Regular Board of Education Meeting held on August 23, 2021
- (b) Approval of the Minutes of the Communications Committee Meeting held on September 8, 2021

MOTION: Mr. Kalina moved that the Vernon Board of Education approve the items listed on the Consent Agenda for September 13, 2021.

SECOND: Mr. Thrall

VOTE: Unanimous

### 8.0 Personnel

#### 8.1 Leave of Absence Request (BOE Goal #2) (Executive Session Anticipated)

The Board will review and may take action on an employee's request for an extended child-rearing leave of absence.

This agenda item was moved to the end of the meeting.

#### 8.2 Superintendent's Evaluation (BOE Goal #1, #2, #3) (Executive Session Anticipated)

The Board will discuss the Superintendent's Evaluation in Executive session.

This agenda item was moved to the end of the meeting.

### 9.0 Teaching and Learning

#### 9.1 Rockville High School and Grades K-8 Summer School Report (BOE Goal #2)

Rockville High School Principal Mr. Jason Magao, Rockville High School Assistant Principals Ms. Allayne Sundt and Mr. Daniel Pichette, and Director of Vernon Public Schools Summer Learning Program Mr. Michael DeBellis shared a report on the Summer School Programs – Grades K-8 and Grades 9-12.

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Mrs. Sundt reported the following:

This year there were a number of programs and they had the largest turnout of students. Most students came every day. There were some field trips and breakfast and lunch were provided this year. The program also included PE summer school intervention this year. Some of the new teachers worked over the summer and had a chance to get to know students prior to the start of the school year. Edgenuity is very independent. It can be quite hard being on-line after students just finished up a year of on-line learning. Students who did Edgenuity did have to come into the school for a certain time. It was a successful Summer School Program this year.

Mrs. Sundt shared the following:

Rockville High School summer school provided the opportunity for RHS students to recover credit in various subjects so as to be on track for graduation. These students were able to recover approximately 90 credits in a variety of core areas utilizing the online program Edgenuity, as well as the intervention courses we ran to recover credit in PE, Alternative Education Credit Recovery Program, Algebra 1, English 9 and Spanish.

### Highlights:

- 98 RHS students participated
  - 27 - Freshmen
  - 28 - Sophomores
  - 32 - Juniors
  - 11 - Seniors
- 5 freshmen are back on track to graduate
- 4 seniors earned enough credit to receive their diploma
- 22 incoming freshmen participated in the Bridge Program

Summer School Historical Data:

2021 - 98 RHS Students + 5 SWHS  
2020 - 55 RHS Students + 8 SWHS  
2019 - 70 RHS Students + 5 SWHS

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2018 - 42 RHS students  
2017 - 44 RHS students  
2016 - 60 RHS students  
2015 - 50 RHS students  
2014 - 76 RHS students  
2013 - 83 RHS students

#### Learning Initiatives:

- SAT Saturday boot camp is being run this fall for seniors and one in the spring for the juniors.
- SAT Resource Site which includes a Google classroom with test strategy videos and practice tests for both Math and English. Link:  
<https://sites.google.com/vernonschools.org/sat-practice-tests/home>
- RAM Center is open with certified teachers and academic tutors to provide learning support to at risk students.
- RHS Advisory will be implemented this year to ensure every student is connected to a trusted adult.
- The STAR program ran last year with certified teachers meeting with students after school in person and via Zoom to keep students on track. Help was offered to students in all subject areas.
- Rock Blocks continue to allow students to seek extra help from subject teachers.
- After school clubs are running in person to encourage team building, positive collaboration among peers, and to strengthen problem solving skills.
- A Student Equity Committee was formed (YES Youth Equity Squad) and student leaders began the process of providing equity education and support to peers. A teacher group will be meeting with Re-Center to further their knowledge of equitable practices.
- The RHS Bridge program provided students entering 9th grade with a summer enrichment program to make connections with RHS teachers and foster a sense of community with their peers. The program provided exposure to RHS courses and students enjoyed several field trips.

Director of Vernon Public Schools Summer Learning Program Mr. Michael DeBellis shared that the Summer School Program Grades K-8 was very successful. They had

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approximately 280 students. Students were cohorted this year and the program changed how classes were conducted. The program went the whole summer with no COVID cases and no quarantines.

Mr. DeBellis reviewed the following:

The K-8 Vernon Summer Learning Program offered 3 different learning programs for our students to participate in. All of these programs were offered to our students at no cost! This created a wonderful opportunity for our Vernon Students.

**Program 1:** Enrichment Only - In this program students participated in two different enrichment classes. Although the teacher was different for each class, the students stayed in the same cohort for both classes. The first set of classes spanned over the first 3 weeks, and the second set of classes were over the last two weeks of the summer program. This program was for K-5 students.

**Program 2:** Academic Boost: This was a largest program and was broken down into the following format: 60 minutes of ELA, 60 minutes of Math, and 60 minutes of enrichment / team building. This program was offered to students K-7.

**Grade 8 to 9 Bridge Program:** This program was only offered to incoming freshman, and was held at RHS. It was designed to help students transition to the high school. Classes included music appreciation, math, art, technology, and physical education.

## **Enrollment:**

<u>Program</u>	<u>Total # of students</u>
K-5 Enrichment	78
K-7 Academic Boost	172
Bridge Program	22

## Enrichment Program:

Kindergarten - 2nd Grade

1. Arts and Crafts / Connecticut Animals
2. Discovery Science / Under the Sea (Marine Biology)
3. Outdoor Science / Reader's Theatre



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4. Twirling <https://youtu.be/6bm0pvp62G4/> Arts and Crafts  
3rd -5th Grade
1. Cooking 101 / Unplug and Play
2. Green Screen / Arts and Crafts
3. Cartooning / International Cooking
4. Science / Photojournalism

### Highlights:

- In Language Arts the 7th grade students studied the complexities of creating Murder Mystery novels, and began creating their own outlines.
- Every 1st grade student read an average of 3-4 books per day. That means that over the summer program, 1st grade students read 60-80 books independently. They also enjoyed Charlotte's Web as a read aloud.
- In math, students in the Bridge Program constructed their own catapults, and had the opportunity to test them outside of the classroom. Some devices launched foil balls over 30 feet!
- The second grade students got to show off their creative writing skills by making their own comic books.
- 5th grade students used the books "One Green Apple," "A Voice in the Park," and "Goal" to study theme, point of view, and character development.
- A modified "Book Mobile" came to VCMS weekly to provide free books to our Vernon students. Over the course of the summer hundreds of books were given new homes.
- Breakfast and lunch was made available for all students attending the summer program for no charge.
- This was the largest number of students who participated in a summer program in Vernon.
- Student behavior and effort was outstanding throughout the entire summer.

Mr. DeBellis thanked the staff for their help.

Mrs. Fischer thanked Mr. DeBellis for the program.

9.2 School Improvement Plans – Elementary (BOE Goal #1, #2, #3)

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Center Road School Principal Jennifer Miller, Lake Street School Principal Tracy Duenzl, Maple Street School Principal Joshua Egan, Northeast School Principal Brenda Greene, and Skinner Road School Principal Bryan Kerachsky shared their School Improvement Plans with the Board.

Each school created their School Improvement Plans with the school teams. There are some common elements and some specific strategies unique to each school.

## CENTER ROAD SCHOOL

At Center Road School their priorities are social emotional learning, equity, family engagement, literacy footprints, and district professional development. The instructional leadership team collaborated on the plan. For reading they will be focusing on small group instruction. They will be using data and assessment to identify students. They want them to move ahead and grow. In math they are working on keeping rigor high so students can meet the end of the year goals. Melissa Howie will be coming in to work with students. With regard to school climate/culture, they will be doing a book study with the book “Culturally Responsive Teaching and the Brain”. They will also be using the resource Aperture Assessment and training which aligns nicely with second step. They are also looking forward to surveys. The school will continue with communications with families. Mrs. Miller also shared about “Noteworthy News” where a personal note is written to students and they also get to take a certificate home.

## LAKE STREET SCHOOL

At Lake Street school the theme is giving students what they need. For reading they will have small group instruction with tier two support. In math they will be using Melissa Howie and looking at gaps and strengths. They will utilize SRBI to analyze data to determine what supports are needed for students. For school climate and culture they are looking to bring everyone together with a focus on strategies from “Unconscious Bias in Schools and Social Emotional Learning and the Brain to make sure they are being inclusive. Lake Street School will be using Aperture assessment and training to support students socially and emotionally. They are taking a deeper dive into looking at chronic absenteeism. They will also focus on having the school reflect the culture of our students.

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## MAPLE STREET SCHOOL

Maple Street School is focused on small group work for literacy. In math, the focus is on differentiated instruction during the tier 1 mathematics block to meet the needs of students. Data teams will not just look at pre and post data but instructional strategies. For climate and culture they are focusing on implementing zones of regulation in each class – feelings associated with colors. They developed an equity team and met over the summer. They started day one with building connections with staff – why are we doing this every day? It lays the foundation for their equity work. For family engagement, they will continue with fundraisers, literacy night, virtual tours of building, etc. They want to connect the community to Maple Street School. They will also work collaboratively with families who have a student identified as chronically absent in order to establish support for getting the child to school.

## NORTHEAST SCHOOL

At Northeast School they will set high expectations. They will offer support for social emotional learning and will try to be proactive. Most staff members have been together for 6 years. By spending so much time together they are able to build meaningful relationships. They have 180 students and 43% of the students have not been at Northeast School the entire time. The school strives for constant communication with parents and they rely on Seesaw. This creates a really good school climate.

## SKINNER ROAD SCHOOL

Skinner Road School will be focusing on math and there is an extra interventionist this year. They will also be working with Melissa Howie. There will be a lot of celebrations of students and staff at the school. They are focusing on four words: love, care, value and trust.

### **10.0 General Business**

#### 10.1 Connecticut Legislation-Acts Affecting Education (BOE Goal #1, #2, #3)

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Superintendent Dr. Joseph Macary shared Connecticut Legislation-Acts Affecting Education with the Board.

There is a lot of legislation regarding education within the next 5 years. Dr. Macary highlighted the following acts with the Board and noted that these will be reviewed with the Policy Committee:

- Black and Latino Studies Course
- Alliance District Plans
- Town Education Funding
- Emergency Action Plans for School Athletic Events
- School Immunization Requirements
- School Resource Officers (SROs) and Social-Emotional Training
- Vision Screening
- Water Bottle Filling Stations
- Safe School Climate Committee Members
- Anti-Discrimination Law
- Gifted and Talented Student Identification

## 10.2 Board of Education Business and Finance Report (BOE Goal #1, #2, #3)

Mr. William Meier, Director of Business and Finance, gave the Board an updated report including the Year-to-Date Budget. There were three action items requested.

### (a) 2021-2022 Tuition Rates for Non-Resident Students

MOTION: Mr. Kalina moved that the Board approve the 2021-2022 Tuition Rates for Non-Resident Students as presented.

SECOND: Mrs. Buckler

VOTE: Unanimous

### (b) ED-099 Authorized Signatures Change Form

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MOTION: Mrs. Buckler moved that the Board approve the ED-099 Authorized Signatures Change Form as presented.

SECOND: Mr. Kalina

VOTE: Unanimous

(c) Asset Disposal Request

MOTION: Mrs. Buckler moved that the Board approve the Asset Disposal Request as presented in Exhibit N

SECOND: Dr. Buxton

VOTE: Unanimous

### 11.0 Review and Update Board of Education Calendar

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

No changes were made to the calendar.

### 12.0 Opportunity for Questions from the Press Regarding Agenda Items

There were no questions from the press.

Dr. Macary introduced his intern Tanya Stoute to the Board. She attended the meeting along with Dr. Macary's other intern Joseph LeRoy.

Mrs. Rodriguez made the motion to go into Executive Session at 8:52 PM inviting Superintendent Dr. Macary and his two interns, Tanya Stoute and Joseph LeRoy to discuss the Request for a Leave of Absence as well as the Superintendent's evaluation. Dr. Buxton seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

The Board came out of Executive Session to vote on the Leave of Absence Request at 9:00 PM.

Mr. Brown made the motion to approve the request for an extended child-rearing leave of absence submitted by Sasha Anderson for the reasons discussed in executive session and authorized the Superintendent to inform the employee of the Board's decision and the reasons therefore. Mrs. Rodriguez seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

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The Board returned to Executive Session to discuss the Superintendent's evaluation.

The Board came out of Executive Session at 9:43 PM.

**13.0 Adjournment**

Ms. Kristiana Wintress made the motion to adjourn at 9:44 PM. Mrs. Buckler seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,



Stephen Linton, Board Secretary