

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

February 8, 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, February 8, 2021.

1.0 Establish Quorum

Roll call was taken at 7:05 p.m. Board members present in person: Ms. Wintress, Mr. Kalina, Dr. Buxton, Mr. Brown, and Mr. Thrall. Present via Zoom: Mrs. Rodriguez, Mrs. Buckler. Absent: Mr. Linton

Student Representatives present via Zoom: James Wheeler and Allison Blume

Administration present in person: Superintendent Dr. Joseph Macary, Assistant Superintendent Robert Testa, Director of Business and Finance Angela Wang

2.0 Call to Order

Chairperson Fischer called the meeting to order at 7:06 p.m.

3.0 Pledge of Allegiance

4.0 Recognitions and Presentations

4.1 Introduction of New Board of Education Member Jennifer Buckler (BOE Goal #1, #2, #3)

On February 2, 2021 the Vernon Town Council approved Jennifer Buckler to complete the remainder of Latasha Hyatt's term. The Board of Education welcomed new Board of Education member Jennifer Buckler. Mrs. Buckler thanked the Board for their warm welcome and shared that she looks forward to serving on the Board.

4.2 Introduction of New Board of Education Member Kristiana Wintress (BOE Goal #1, #2, #3)

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On February 2, 2021 the Vernon Town Council approved Kristiana Wintress to fill the remainder of Michele Arn's term. The Board of Education welcomed new Board of Education member Kristiana Wintress. Ms. Wintress shared that she is here not to just speak but to do. She will listen and learn and be part of the community.

4.3 Presentation of CIRMA Award of Excellence (BOE Goal #1, #2, #3)

Ian M Havens, ARM, Team Leader, CIRMA Risk Management presented the Vernon Board of Education with the CIRMA Award of Excellence in Risk Management for New and Innovative Risk Management Initiative. The Board was presented with an award check for \$2,500. In the wake of a global health crisis, educators were challenged to reimagine the world they once knew. And during a time of considerable duress, the Vernon Board of Education (BOE) would prove that while they can't predict the future, they can help control its impact. The Vernon BOE sought out the District Health and Safety Committee's expertise and worked tirelessly throughout the summer months to construct a Reopening Plan for the 2020-2021 school year. The Vernon BOE also capitalized on its partnership with CIRMA. Recognizing the value of their bespoke expertise, Vernon worked closely with CIRMA's Risk Management Team to implement critical health and safety protocols in preparation for the re-opening. Due to their ongoing commitment to engaging strategic partners in unique and innovative ways, the Vernon BOE orchestrated a remarkably successful district-wide re-opening that others would widely emulate. The district has not experienced a single claim related to COVID-19 exposures or its handling of the pandemic response.

Mr. Havens thanked the BOE and congratulated everyone on a job well done. Dr. Macary noted how Vernon has had a standing Health & Safety Committee and they were used together with an Executive Committee to put together Vernon's Re-Opening Plan. He is proud that Vernon has completed 100 days of school with only a limited number of remote days and snow days. He noted how he appreciates what CIRMA has done as a partner with us.

Town Administrator Michael Purcaro also congratulated the BOE, Dr. Macary and the staff on this award and noted that this is Vernon's 3rd award that has been earned over the past 5 years. Vernon was able to achieve this due to the close working relationship between the Town of Vernon, the BOE and their shared services.

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4.4 Approval of Donation of a Finishing Machine from Mikro Industrial Finishing to Rockville High School (BOE Goal #1, #2)

Since Mr. Steve Wakefield from Mikro is unavailable to attend this evening's meeting, this agenda item will be moved to a future meeting date.

5.0 Secretary's Report

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

No items were added or deleted.

5.2 Rockville High School Student Representative Report

Student Representative Allison Blume reported the following:

- A lot of exciting things are happening.
- Powder puff is different this year. The students are collecting various items (i.e., canned goods, paper goods, etc.) in a competition and it's getting pretty intense. This competition will stock the shelves at the food pantry. There will be a video about this also. It is becoming a heated competition. Students can get prizes for contributing such as gift baskets, free yearbooks, gift cards, pizza party, and a TV. There is a lot of excitement about this and it ends on next Tuesday.
- As of 2/1 the Rockville High School Football Team is doing training.
- Valentine's Day cards are being collected for Vernon Manor.

Student Representative James Wheeler reported the following:

- The juniors are now bringing it to the Powder Puff competition as they are losing.
- Winter season starts tomorrow night. The games will be streamed on the athletic Youtube channel.
- The lamb watch has begun in ASTE as delivery of the babies are expected next week.
- The trout eggs have hatched. They will be raised and then they will be used to stock local waterways.

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- There will be an eSports Club meeting on 2/11 via zoom.

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)

No one addressed the Board.

7.0 Consent Agenda

- 7.1 (a) Approval of the Minutes of the Special Board of Education Meeting (Budget Workshop) held on January 20, 2021
(b) Approval of the Minutes of the Special Board of Education Meeting (Budget Workshop) held on January 25, 2021
(c) Approval of the Minutes of the Special Board of Education Meeting (Budget Workshop) held on January 27, 2021
(d) Approval of the Minutes of the Special Board of Education Meeting (Ad Hoc Committee) held on January 28, 2021
(e) Approval of the Minutes of the Special Board of Education Meeting held on February 1, 2021

Mrs. Fischer pulled Consent Agenda Item #7.1(c).

MOTION: Mr. Kalina moved to approve Consent Agenda Items #7.1 (a), (b), (d), and (e).
SECOND: Mr. Brown
VOTE: Mr. Kalina, Mr. Brown, Dr. Buxton, Mrs. Rodriguez, and Mr. Thrall voted in favor of the motion. Mrs. Buckler and Ms. Wintress abstained. The motion carried.

Mrs. Fischer noted that on Consent Agenda Item #7.1(c) Mr. Linton attended the Special Board of Education Meeting (Budget Workshop) held on January 27, 2021. His name should be added to those in attendance.

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MOTION: Mr. Kalina moved to approve Consent Agenda Items #7.1 (c).
SECOND: Dr. Buxton
VOTE: Mr. Kalina, Dr. Buxton, Mr. Brown, Mrs. Rodriguez, and Mr. Thrall voted in favor of the motion. Mrs. Buckler and Ms. Wintress abstained. The motion carried.

8.0 Personnel

8.1 Superintendent Mid-Year Evaluation (BOE Goal #1, #2, #3) (Executive Session Anticipated)

This item was moved to the end of the meeting.

9.0 Teaching and Learning

9.1 Vernon Center Middle School Essentials for Effective Instruction (BOE Goal #2)

Vernon Center Middle School Principal David Caruso shared with the Board the Essentials for Effective Instruction.

Mr. Caruso identified essential practices that are essential in a quest for continuous improvement. He worked with the instructional leadership team last year, an outside consultant and staff members. The teachers appreciated being part of the process. This is tied to and directly linked to the School Improvement Plan. They established a common understanding of effective instruction. They identified three areas of essential practices which began in the fall:

POSITIVE & PRODUCTIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT:

1. Create a welcoming climate where children feel respected, safe, supported, cared for, and have a strong sense of belonging.
2. Build rapport by making personal connections and valuing students' thoughts, opinions, and perspectives.

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3. Establish, communicate, and maintain high expectations (academic, behavioral, and social/emotional) for all students.
4. Promote school-wide and classroom SOAR core values and consistently follow the PBIS Behavior Matrix.
5. Reinforce classroom-wide and individual student behavior management strategies and consistently implement routines and procedures.
6. Promote a sense of urgency for learning and maximize instructional time.

INTENTIONAL & TARGETED INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN:

7. Design, post, and direct students' attention to clear, student-friendly, and measurable learning targets and success criteria.
8. Plan lesson activities that follow a progression of learning and align to the learning target and success criteria.
9. Implement lesson initiations that prime thinking, activate prior knowledge, and/or reinforce previously learned content/concepts.
10. Provide instructional activities at appropriate levels of cognitive challenge/rigor that include opportunities for reasoning, justification, synthesis, analysis, critical thinking, and problem-solving.
11. Emphasize content vocabulary and promote literacy skills across content areas.
12. Provide individualized, criterion-referenced (linked to learning target/success criteria), targeted, and actionable feedback that leads to growth and improvement.
13. Check for understanding by using success criteria in order to inform instructional decisions and guide differentiation/scaffolding.

ENGAGING & STUDENT-CENTERED LEARNING APPROACHES:

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14. Communicate a clear purpose with real-life applications and opportunities for students to connect their personal experiences and prior learning.

15. Engage all learners using a variety of effective strategies (e.g., grouping strategies, inquiry-based learning activities, structured discourse, choice activities).

16. Incorporate a variety of effective classroom questioning techniques (e.g. think time, talk-moves, choral responses, student generation of questions) and planned discourse strategies to increase response rates and to enhance learning and deepen levels of understanding.

17. Plan opportunities for students to work together in different configurations promoting collaboration and social skill development.

18. Support student independence and create opportunities for students to struggle productively, persevere, reflect and see challenge or failure as an opportunity for growth.

Mrs. Fischer thanked everyone that worked on this and thanked the teachers that were involved.

Mr. Caruso shared that the teachers have risen to the occasion. They are providing the best education possible to the middle school students. Mr. Caruso is proud of the work the school has done. This has been very well received.

10.0 General Business

10.1 IT District Network Update (BOE Goal #1, #2)

IT Director Robert Sigan reported that the district had a disruption in their network. He gave an overview of what transpired. On 1/21 and 1/22 the network outage affected the Town of Vernon, the Police Department and the Board of Education. It was the perfect storm. The 2 data centers are connected by fiber. This fiber kept going up and down on channels and the switches got confused. When this happened the network went down completely. A switch went bad at the health center and caused a routing loop. When this

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happened it took down the whole system including the phone system. However, it was back up and running on the evening of 1/22. The turnaround was within 24 hours. School had to be cancelled and IT had to resolve the issue quickly. They found a bad transceiver and replaced the fiber and also replaced the switch at the health center. In September IT will be replacing the data centers and they will have more storage and horse power. They are still in the process of getting bids for this and it should be a seamless transition. It will be a 5 year lease.

10.2 Elementary and Secondary Emergency School Relief Fund II (ESSER II) (BOE Goal #1, #2, #3)

Dr. Macary shared that on January 28th we received notification regarding ESSER II funding. Vernon received approximately \$2 million to be used from January 2021 to September 2023. Right now, there have been preliminary meetings and the district is looking at three priorities:

1. Make whole the Food & Nutrition Department – We are awaiting to see if we can use funds for this.
2. Summer School - Recovery of Services – This will be led by Mr. Testa and will be done during the summer providing special education services, enrichment, recovery of services for students not on grade level-virtually or in person. That will be coupled with summer school. This is being planned for the next two summers.
3. Interventionists at the Elementary and Middle School – We are working with the principals on this to have 4 interventionists added. Conversations have been had with Mr. Caruso and Mrs. Fox. We are trying to prioritize the early years.

10.3 COVID-19 Update (BOE Goal #1, #2, #3)

Dr. Macary reported today was the 101th day of school. We are awaiting on school re-opening nationally. Right now we are targeted and focused on vaccines. The Town of Vernon has asked for volunteers at the hospital and clinic and we are supporting this. School nurses have been volunteering and assisting at the Senior Center clinic. The

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guidance we have received is that the vaccine for front line workers will open up in March sometime. We have a list of school personnel ready to upload. The more we vaccinate the more lives we can save.

Mr. Kalina requested an ongoing list of COVID expenses. A list will be provided at the March Board Meeting.

10.4 Approval of 2021-2022 School District Calendar (BOE Goal #1, #2, #3)

Superintendent Dr. Macary reviewed the draft 2021-2022 school district calendar with the Board. A committee of teachers worked on this together with Dr. Macary to create the draft 2021-2022 district calendar. Dr. Macary shared that the district has \$3-4 million in summer projects this year to complete and the committee would like to propose that school start on September 1, 2021. It was noted that November 11, 2021 is not a day off. Students are in session on Veterans Day and special events are held at the schools including the Superintendent's Challenge for Veterans Day cards. In the past, Veterans have been invited to come into the schools for presentations, recognitions, breakfasts and lunches.

MOTION: Mr. Kalina moved to approve the 2021-2022 School District Calendar.
SECOND: Mr. Thrall
VOTE: Unanimous

10.5 Approval of 2021-2022 Board of Education Budget (BOE Goal #1, #2, #3)

Dr. Macary thanked the Board for their hard work on the budget. It's a difficult job to do. The proposed 2021-2022 Board of Education budget is \$55,220,612 – a 1.29% change. Board members also thanked everyone for their hard work on the budget and greatly appreciates everything they did. The budget supports education. It's a responsible budget.

MOTION: Mr. Kalina moved to approve the 2021-2022 Board of Education Budget as presented.
SECOND: Mr. Thrall
VOTE: Unanimous

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10.6 Approval of Asset Disposal Requests (BOE Goal #1, #2, #3)

The Board was asked to review and approve the request for disposal of fixed assets for Maple Street School and Northeast School as presented.

MOTION: Mr. Kalina moved that the Board approve the request for disposal of fixed assets for Maple Street School and Northeast School as presented.
SECOND: Dr. Buxton
VOTE: Unanimous

11.0 To 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. Buxton made the motion to go into Executive Session at 8:32 PM inviting the Superintendent to discuss his mid-year evaluation. Mr. Thrall seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

The Board came out of Executive Session at 9:22 PM.

13.0 Adjournment

Mr. Brown made the motion to adjourn at 9:22 PM. Dr. Buxton seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,


Stephen Linton, Board Secretary