

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

March 22, 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, March 22, 2021.

1.0 Establish Quorum

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

Board members present via Zoom: Mrs. Buckler and Mrs. Rodriguez

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 7:02 p.m.

3.0 Pledge of Allegiance

4.0 Recognitions and Presentations

4.1 Board of Education Member Appreciation (BOE Goal #1, #2, #3)

March is Board Member Appreciation Month. Dr. Macary thanked the Board members on behalf of the staff and students. Vernon Public Schools recognized and thanked the Board members for their service by providing student made cards for each of the Board members. Board members also received small tokens of appreciation with the Vernon Public Schools logo. They were grateful for the recognition and cards.

5.0 Secretary's Report

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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:

- The Rockville High School Junior and Senior classes recently held a Powderpuff Football food drive. RHS was able to provide the Hockanum Valley Community Council Food Pantry with 791 pounds of food (totaling 1098 items).
- Creative Writing students won big in the CT Student Writer Magazine Awards. 41 students received recognition.
- Six Coaches Awards were given for Track - 3 for girls and 3 for boys.
- Rockville High School adopted a new form of communication . This App is called Student Square. Students, staff and parents can share and communicate in one place.
- Today graduation cap and gown measurements were taken.
- The varsity boys baseball team recently held practice.
- The new fencing in ASTE has been put up and it's awesome.
- Tractor supply has donated new horse clippers to the ASTE Program.
- Precision Agriculture has a new set of smaller drones to use.
- The ASTE Program has a new ultrasound to check for animal pregnancies.

Student Representative James Wheeler reported the following:

- This Wednesday all 11th grade students will take the SAT.
- Girls tennis will have their first practice on 3/29.
- There is a Boys Basketball tournament game this evening at 6 p.m. vs. Granby (at home).
- All spring sports practices begin on 3/27.
- Moana the Jersey cow is coming back. She is pregnant and was away at a farm in Ashford. She was separated from her calf as it is not good for the baby calf to

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continue drinking her milk. Now that the calf is old enough, Moana is returning. The calf's name is Tafeti.

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 Regular Board of Education Meeting held on March 8, 2021
- (b) Approval of the Minutes of the Board of Education Finance Committee Meeting held on March 8, 2021
- (c) Approval of New Board of Education Policy #0523 Equity and Diversity Statement
- (d) Approval of Revised Board of Education Policy #1210 - School-Community Relations
- (e) Approval of Revised Board of Education Policy #1212 – School Volunteers
- (f) Approval of Revised Board of Education Policy #1220 – Ad Hoc Advisory Committees to the Board of Education
- (g) Approval of Revised Board of Education Policy #1250 – School Visitors
- (h) Approval of Revised Board of Education Policy #1251 – Trespassing, Loitering, or Causing Disturbances

Mr. Brown asked to pull Consent Agenda Item #7.1 (g). He questioned the dress code for visitors listed in item #4 in this policy. Dr. Macary shared that we have a dress code in Vernon Public Schools but it is not very stringent. There have been no issues. Mr. Brown wanted to be assured that we are being culturally sensitive and appropriate with that

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determination. Dr. Macary shared that all administrators have been trained in equity training. The district is more on the openness side.

MOTION: Mr. Brown moved to approve Consent Agenda Item #7.1(g).
SECOND: Mr. Kalina
VOTE: Unanimous

MOTION: Mr. Kalina moved to approve the rest of the items on the Consent Agenda (#7.1 (a), (b), (c), (d), (e), (f), and (h)).
SECOND: Mr. Thrall
VOTE: Unanimous

8.0 Personnel

8.1 Review of Administration Organizational Chart and Administrative Directory (BOE Goal #2)

Dr. Macary reviewed the administrative organizational chart with the Board. There have been no changes to it. He noted that the Director of 38 Park Street falls under the Director of Pupil Personnel (Special Education). Dr. Macary also reviewed the current list of administrators and the location of their offices.

9.0 Teaching and Learning

9.1 Presentation on Rockville High School Child Development Class (BOE Goal #2)

Rockville High School Child Development Class teacher Miss Veilleux gave the Board a presentation on the Child Development Class. Child development is learning about the growth of children; how they develop basic skills that are necessary for life; the process of conceiving a child; how to raise children; the growth of a child, etc.

Ms. Veilleux shared how the students in her class are running a virtual preschool program this year due to COVID. The students still get to teach the preschool students. The class is run virtually on Mondays and Thursdays. The preschool students are doing well with Zoom. They have seven (7) solid preschool students who are doing a good job listening and sharing.

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She related the program to the district's Blue Print for Success:

1. Build and improve relationships and partnerships with family and community
 - Students take on the responsibility of a mentor and a role model to the young children that come to the program. They get to meet and communicate with their parents and become part of that village it takes to raise a child.
 - Students experience a new perspective that help them relate to the adults around them.
2. Increase the achievement of every student through high quality curriculum, instruction and assessment
 - Interests- Students are excited and engaged with the young children. They want to know more and always have questions. There is room to teach based off of students' interests. This year students wanted to learn more about pregnancy.
 - Experience- Students get to apply and practice the material they were exposed to at the beginning of the year as well as throughout the year.
 - Personal- Students learn more about themselves, the people around them, and develop their own opinions and beliefs about people, their futures, and more. Some students are interested in careers in nursing, childcare providers, etc.
3. Promoting safe environments that are socially, emotionally, and physically conducive to learning
 - Students learn about play and how it is purposeful.
 - Students spend time teaching younger people functional skills.
 - Students learn to collaborate with each other, teach other, and learn from each other.

9.2 Summer School Program Information (BOE Goal #2)

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Mr. Testa highlighted the offerings for the Vernon Public Schools Summer Learning Program. It's an inclusive program for students in grades K-12. It supports learning through a number of options – Extended School year, Recovery of Services, Academic Boost, Enrichment, Freshman Bridge, On-Track for Graduation, and Credit Recovery. The program purpose is for extended learning opportunities to students during the summer months. The district is excited to offer this for our students. All classes will be in-person. The funding for these programs is part of the ESSER II funding. With the funds we are also able to offer bus transportation this year. The dates of the program are June 21st – July 22nd – Monday through Thursday from 8 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. Breakfast will be provided and lunch is a potential option. Mr. Testa highlighted each of the opportunities:

K-7 Academic Boost Program – This is designed for students who would benefit from extra support in the core academic subjects of reading, writing, and mathematics.

K-7 Enrichment Program – The enrichment program will be organized into cohorts and students can opt to attend the first 3 weeks, the last 2 weeks or all 5 weeks. Sessions include science, cooking, technology, arts & crafts, engineering.

8th-9th Grade Freshman Bridge Program – This program is designed for 8th grade students who are entering Rockville High School in the fall of 2021. It will be taught by Rockville High School teachers and will help students transition. Students will review core subjects of math, English language arts and will participate in team building activities. It will be held at Rockville High School. This is not a mandatory program for students, but students would benefit from it.

Grade 9 On-Track for Graduation Program – This program is for grade 9 students who have not earned five credits during their freshman year. Students will receive small group instruction by certified teachers. Courses include earth and space science, world history, health, algebra I and English 9.

Rockville High School Credit Recovery – This is an option for high school students who were unable to earn credit during the school year but were able to earn 60-69% of their course work. They will use Edgenuity online learning. This program allows students to gain master in Common Core standards in which they are deficient. Their progress will be monitored by content area teachers.

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The district is hoping that there will be no charge for students in grades K-7 for summer learning. Pricing has not been finalized yet.

10.0 General Business

10.1 Request from the Vernon Board of Education to Designate Funds from the Capital and Non-Recurring Education Account (BOE Goal #3)

The Center Road School Roof Project is moving forward. The Board was asked to take action and approve a resolution indicating that the Superintendent request that the Vernon Town Council approve a designation in the amount of \$50,000 from the Capital and Non-Recurring Account to be used for the Center Road School Roof Project. Pursuant to discussions with the School Construction Project Grant Administrator during the review process, it was recommended that having additional funds available would assist with expediting approval of the project.

MOTION: Mr. Thrall moved that the Board of Education approve the following resolution:

RESOLVED, that the Vernon Board of Education authorizes the Superintendent to request that the Vernon Town Council approve a designation in the amount of \$50,000 from the Capital and Non-Recurring Account to be used for the Center Road School Roof Project.

SECOND: Mr. Linton

VOTE: Unanimous

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

Dr. Macary gave background information regarding this grant funding. This supplemental funding opportunity from the CARES Act and the CRRSA Act is intended to help school districts safely reopen schools, and measure and effectively address significant learning loss. Originally the district was told they would receive \$1.9 million from state. Then they made a revision and told the district is would be \$2 million and then this past Friday the state said they made a mistake and they are giving Vernon \$1.9 million. They will hold

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harmless to Vernon and Vernon will get the extra funds for a total of \$2 million. Vernon is receiving the full money over the next two years.

Dr. Macary gave the following overview of this grant:

FEATURES:

There will be a lot of shifting and moving of positions within in the district. These positions will be for two years. The interest is high to fill all these positions:

Salaries and Benefits:

- 1.0 FTE reading interventionist at Center Road School
- 1.0 FTE reading interventionist at Skinner Road School
- 1.0 FTE math interventionist at Maple Street School
- 1.0 FTE reading interventionist at Vernon Center Middle School (VCMS)
- 1.0 FTE math interventionist at VCMS
- 2.0 FTE tutors at Rockville High School (RHS)
- 1.0 FTE interventionist at RHS
- 2.0 FTE Social Workers district wide
- Additional Summer School personnel.

Other:

Purchased Professional Services: Transportation for all students to Summer School.

Operations: Offset Food and Nutrition costs associated with reduced participation in school food program.

Supplies: Personal Protection Equipment and Supplies district wide for staff and students, to ensure the health and safety of entire school population.

FUNDING:

Salaries and Benefits

\$1,538,026.32

Purchase Professional Services

\$ 150,000.00

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Operations
\$ 250,000.00
Supplies
\$ 92,384.68
TOTAL
\$ 2,030,411.00

MOTION: Mr. Thrall moved to approve the application for the Elementary Secondary Emergency School Relief Fund II (ESSER II) as presented.

SECOND: Ms. Wintress

VOTE: Unanimous

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

Superintendent Dr. Macary gave the Board an update regarding COVID. On Tuesday the district received official word that when staff are fully vaccinated – 2 doses and 2 weeks out - they do not need to quarantine. If a student has COVID, the teacher does not need to quarantine. Also, the Travel Advisory has changed. We will follow the Governor's Order. April 26th is a big day for more in person learning. We will be changing to either a 4-5 day in person schedule for middle and high school students. This is another step towards normalcy.

The Teacher/Staff Vaccination clinic is scheduled for 4/1. This will be a remote learning day. We will be vaccinating 445 of our staff members. Tomorrow there is conference call scheduled with the Department of Health. Once staff are fully vaccinated they do not need to quarantine. The district is looking into vaccinating 16 years old and up at Rockville High School - maybe in June. We are working with the Town of Vernon on this and will be sending information out to parents.

10.4 Revision to 2021-2022 Board of Education Budget (BOE Goal #1, #2, #3)

The Mayor has sent a letter to Dr. Macary requesting a revision to the Board of Education Budget for 2021-2022. There is a request for budget reduction in the following accounts:

Medical Insurance – (\$50,000)

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Dental Insurance – (\$20,000)
Utility – Natural Gas – (\$50,000)
Contingency – (\$68,000)
Total Reduction of (\$188,000)

These cuts are basically to non-teaching and learning items. The ESSER II funds will allow the contingency fund to be reduced by providing funds for COVID supplies. We are confident in seeing the savings in medical and dental. We are going to self-insurance.

Dr. Buxton and Board members questioned the \$68,000 in contingency funds and if that could be used for a teaching position and if that amount could be kept in the contingency fund if the ESSER II funds cover a portion of COVID supplies. Dr. Macary shared the process of the budget and how the Board's budget is forwarded to the Mayor and then given to the Town Council for approval. The Town Council members usually approve the Mayor's recommendation. Dr. Buxton shared how she wants the citizens of the Town of Vernon to understand that the Board is being extremely fiscally responsible. The district has yet to see the ramifications of the pandemic. Board members held a discussion regarding their frustration with regard to the \$68,000 reduction in the Contingency Fund. The Town of Vernon and the Board have a great relationship and they are hoping the Town Council members would look at this \$68,000 reduction and restore it.

MOTION: Mr. Linton moved to revise and reduce the 2021-2022 Board of Education Budget by \$188,000.
SECOND: Mr. Thrall
VOTE: Mr. Linton, Mr. Thrall, Mr. Kalina, Mrs. Rodriguez, Ms. Wintress voted in favor of the motion. Mr. Brown, Dr. Buxton and Mrs. Buckler opposed the motion. The motion carried.

10.5 Reports from Board of Education Liaisons Regarding Attendance at Organization/Committee Meetings (BOE Goal #1)

Mr. Kalina reported that last week he attended the VCMS PTO and was amazed how the PTO has adapted to the current situation and how they are looking for ways to improve life for students and staff. They recently held a game event "Are you smarter than a middle schooler" and it was pretty popular. Gifted and Talented Teacher Mrs. Lee said that the

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Board is supporting the teachers. Project Graduation held a presentation. There was a lot of post-COVID talk about the Rockville High School Scholarship Committee. The PTO was grateful for Dr. Macary and the vaccination clinics. It was a very good meeting and great to see the hopefulness.

Dr. Buxton wasn't able to attend the Lake Street School PTO Meeting. She noted that Lake Street School Principal Tracy Duenzel does a fantastic job with her newsletter. The PTO is planning a drive through Family Night. They also did a fun thing with door prizes for the parents who came to meetings. They gave out science center tickets, etc. The Munsons' fundraiser is coming to an end. They are still selling yearbooks. There was summer learning opportunities information in the newsletter and information regarding other activities outside of school such as – Legos, Parks & Recreation Fishing Derby, Mother's Day Dash, etc.

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...

13.0 Adjournment

MOTION: Mr. Linton moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:39 p.m.

SECOND: Mr. Thrall

VOTE: Unanimous

Respectfully submitted,



Stephen Linton, Board Secretary