

# 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  
Michele Arn  
Kevin Brown  
Latasha Hyatt  
Deborah Rodriguez

June 8, 2020

## **DRAFT MINUTES** BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING

A meeting of the Vernon Board of Education was held via Zoom Meeting on Monday, June 8, 2020.

Chairperson Fischer called the meeting to order at 7 PM.

Present (via Zoom Meeting) when the meeting was called to order were: Mr. Linton, Mrs. Rodriguez, Dr. Buxton, Ms. Hyatt, Ms. Arn and Mr. Brown. Mr. Kalina was absent.

Student Representatives Allison Blume and Adam Brucker were present (via Zoom Meeting).

Administration present: Superintendent Dr. Joseph Macary, Assistant Superintendent Robert Testa. Director of Business and Finance Angela Wang (all via Zoom Meeting)

### **1.0 Recognitions and Presentations**

#### **1.1 Recognition of Board of Education Student Representative Adam Brucker (BOE Goal #1)**

The Board recognized graduating senior Board of Education Student Representative Adam Brucker. Mrs. Fischer thanked Adam for doing an amazing job serving on the Board and wished him good luck at UConn. A token of appreciation from the Board will be sent to Adam. Adam thanked the Board for the opportunity to serve on the Board.

### **2.0 Consent Agenda**

#### **2.1**

- (a) Approval of the Minutes of the Regular Board of Education Meeting held on May 26, 2020
- (b) Approval of the Minutes of the Special Board of Education Meeting (Awards Ceremony) on May 26, 2020
- (c) Approval of the Minutes of the Facilities Committee meeting held on June 1, 2020
- (d) Approval of Donation to Maple Street School
- (e) Approval of Reviewed Board of Education Policy #9311 Creation and Revision of Policies

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- (f) Approval of Revised Board of Education Policy  
#9326 Minutes
- (g) Approval of Revised Board of Education Policy  
#9327 Meetings
- (h) Approval of Revised Board of Education Policy  
#9327.1 Board Member Use of Internet Social  
Networks
- (i) Approval of Revised Board of Education Policy  
#9330 Board and School System Records
- (j) Approval of Revised Board of Education Policy  
#9400 Monitoring Products and Processes
- (k) Approval of Revised Board of Education Policy  
#5112 Ages of Attendance
- (l) Approval of Reviewed Board of Education Policy  
#9210 Qualifications of Board Members
- (m) Approval of Revised Board of Education  
Policy#6142.101 Instruction/Student Wellness  
Policy
- (n) Approval of Revised Board of Education Policy  
#5141.21 Administration of Medication Policy

Ms. Hyatt asked questions regarding Consent Agenda Item #2.1(f) – Policy #9326 Minutes specifically, page 14, #12 strikeout which reads **“By request, a brief statement of a Board member may be included”**. She shared that the Board minutes often do not include or capture the discussions of the members and asked to keep #12 in the policy so as to explain the Board member’s vote. She noted that sometimes the dissenting opinions are not included. Mrs. Fischer shared that this sentence was not included in the Board’s original policy and was only a recommendation from CABB. Mrs. Fischer also noted that if something is missing from the minutes, Board members may speak up and pull the minutes and have it added.

Mrs. Fischer noted that on Consent Agenda Item #2.1(m), Policy #6142.101 Instruction/Student Wellness Policy, the policy number needs to be placed on the policy.

MOTION: Mr. Linton moved to approve all the items on the Consent Agenda.  
SECOND: Mrs. Rodriguez  
VOTE: Unanimous

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## 3.0 Secretary's Report

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

Mr. Brown asked to add an agenda item to General Business to acknowledge what is going on with regard to social climate, diversity and equity.

MOTION: Mr. Brown moved to add Agenda Item #7.7 Social Climate, Diversity and Equity

SECOND: Ms. Hyatt

VOTE: Unanimous

Ms. Hyatt requested that the Board add an agenda item to the next Board of Education Meeting regarding the data the Board received at the May 11<sup>th</sup> meeting from the Strategic School Profile and Performance Report; specifically information regarding the achievement gap of students of color and the suspension and expulsion rates. She also requested information regarding educator representation and how the district participates in minority recruitment.

### 2.2 Rockville High School Student Representative Report

Student Representative Allison Blume reported the following:

- There is not much to report on.
- School is coming to a close.
- Make-ups and grades are being completed.
- She is all done with her school work.
- Teachers have been taking time to contact students.

Student Representative Adam Brucker reported the following:

- Graduation is June 16<sup>th</sup>. A graduation email was sent out on Wednesday and outlined what graduation will look like. It will be a drive-up/drive-through with a couple of surprises. They are working on the logistics right now.

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## 4.0 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)

Lisa Perry, 36 White Street, addressed the Board. She had sent an email to the Board members, Dr. Macary, Mr. Testa, and her child's case manager and wished to address the Board regarding her concerns. She read to the Board the email that she sent:

*“Many of you know me, for those who do not my name is Lisa Perry I am the mom of a 7th grade student with a disability. I am contacting you because I have serious concerns for my son, and all students with disabilities in VPS. I am willingly sharing information and understand that some of what I have to say may give personal information about my son's identity and disability. I think it is important that you understand what is really going on with families such as mine. In listening to meetings, and reading communication from the district I do not think that you do at all.*

*My son has an IEP, which includes a 1:1 para educator. I work full time, and have been since March when schools were cancelled. I was disappointed to learn that ESY this year will be 100% distance-learning. This is and the end of year survey are what finally prompted me sending this email.*

*While my son's team is working hard to accommodate my son and have been very flexible with us; a child like my son with a significant intellectual delay who uses a para educator to access education is not receiving an education through distance-learning. There is simply no way for him to do so. At best we are preventing learning loss. That would have been fine had we been out of school for a few months, but it is unacceptable for this long period of time. During the May 26 Board of Education meeting Mr. Brown asked Mr. Testa a question regarding that and I don't feel the question was actually answered. It would not have been an easy question to answer, but the lack of an answer says a lot! While I understand we are in extreme circumstances and hard decisions are having to be made; my biggest frustration the silence from the district. There have been no communications from any level acknowledging the fact that children with significant disabilities are not receiving services. I have received one correspondence addressing children with IEP's from the Director of Pupil Services, one.*

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*In speaking with families from around the state it is clear Vernon could be doing more. I would implore you to consider doing the following things:*

*1- Ask us! Send a survey that asks families for real information, questions you may not want to hear the answers to.*

*2- Talk to us! Have administrators, teachers, board members pick up the phone or send us direct correspondence. Ask us what would be the best way to help our kids. Communicate to SPED families directly speak to us about issues that are relevant to us.*

*3- Tell us: What are the districts plans for compensatory services? Do you even intend to do any compensatory services? Acknowledge what our children are not able to receive through distance learning and tell us you plan to do your best to make it up to them and how. This would do wonders to quell worried parents! Right now we feel completely overlooked.*

*4- Consider offering families Interim IEP's (sample attached). Clearly let families know you understand that some services are not being met and what things the district can and will offer. This is in the best interest of the children AND the district.*

*I understand there are executive orders the district needs to be in compliance with however the state is allowing in person summer school starting July 6. I believe the town could've taken advantage with a little creativity of bringing students meeting face-to-face in small group settings. I think we really missed the mark on this decision.*

*With that decision being finalized on ESY and the very strong possibility the next academic year will not be a typical return to school. (All of the advocacy groups that I follow including a recent one where Commissioner Cardona spoke are indicating some sort of hybrid model will be what to expect for the foreseeable future.) As the mom of a child with a disability I am always concerned about am I doing enough? Is the school? Are they following his IEP? If he is out sick what is he missing, how will it affect his progress? I can tell you right now I feel quite simply like I am drowning! I must work, and I am watching my son sink a little more each day into frustration, fear, sadness, anger.*

*I implore you Mr. Macary, Mr. Testa, Ms. Isles, please do not let our most vulnerable students slip through the cracks. Do not let my son slip through the*

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*cracks! I am on the board for East of the River SEPTO, I would love to host any/all of you for a town hall discussion on ways to move forward and best support SPED families/students. I would also be happy to use our mailing list for you to address families at large, or to even have a private conversation with any of you. Our district has received 100's of thousands of grant dollars to engage families. We have the opportunity of a lifetime to do so in such a meaningful way, let's not let the opportunity pass us by."*

Jack Krupiensky, Senior Class Co-President, addressed the Board. He noted that Walker Harrigan, Senior Class Co-President, is attending this Board meeting also. He wanted to speak to the Board regarding the decorating of graduation caps. He shared that this year's graduation will be different and said it would be fair to the seniors to allow them to decorate their caps this year, along with decorating their cars. Decorating the caps would help make-up for what the students have lost. He knows it is a Board policy and asked the Board to consider allowing the seniors to decorate their caps this year. Mrs. Fischer noted that this request would have to go before the Board Policy Committee and it would be possible to do this in the next few days; the Board would get back to him.

## **5.0 Personnel**

### **5.1 Non-Affiliated Staff Salaries (BOE Goal #1, #2, #3) (Executive Session Anticipated)**

Since this agenda item is to be discussed in Executive Session, it was be moved to the end of the meeting.

## **6.0 Teaching and Learning**

### **6.1 2018-2019 Four Year Graduation Rates (BOE Goal #2)**

Assistant Superintendent Mr. Robert Testa shared the 2018-2019 Four Year Graduation Rates with the Board.

The Graduation rate statistics were recently released by state officials and they show a pattern of continued improvement at the high school. Rockville High School graduation rate was 85.2 percent for 2018-2019, close to the statewide graduation rate of 88.5 percent. The increase is due to maintaining a high standard including a rigorous curriculum, student interventions, continuous professional development, school climate and accountability

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measures, and parent/family engagement. The numbers show everybody is headed in the right direction.

Mr. Brown shared that considering what we've been thrown into, full teaching was put into place and some students are thriving in on-line learning. It's not watered down.

Ms. Arn questioned whether it was a state requirement that Vernon record and break down the data by free lunch, ethnicity, etc.

Mr. Testa noted that it is important to know who is struggling and it helps us to focus on how we can support our students.

Ms. Arn questioned page 8, New Britain's "Current programming provides an 'extra layer of love'" Dr. Macary shared that it is a social emotional learning program.

Ms. Hyatt questioned whether our summer school program is free. Mr. Testa shared that it is free for intervention students entering 9<sup>th</sup> grade, but for grades 10 through 12 we charge. However, the district always works with families to assist them if necessary.

## 6.2 Vernon Public Schools - School-Parent-Student Compact (BOE Goal #1, #2, #3)

The Vernon Public Schools – School-Parent-Student Compact was discussed. Center Road School Principal Jennifer Miller shared a revised version based on the Board's recommendations and comments received at the last Board meeting. The language was changed to make it more simple, gentle and easy to understand. Attendance was prioritized.

MOTION: Ms. Arn moved to approve the Vernon Public Schools – School-Parent-Student Compact as discussed and presented.

SECOND: Mr. Brown

VOTE: Unanimous

## 7.0 General Business

### 7.1 First Reading of Proposed New Board of Education Policy #9271 Board of Education/Superintendent Relationships (BOE Goal #1, #2, #3)

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Board of Education members had an opportunity to review proposed Board of Education Policy #9271 – Board of Education/Superintendent Relationships prior to voting at the next Regular Board of Education Meeting.

7.2 First Reading of Proposed New Board of Education Policy #9020.1 Advocacy (BOE Goal #1, #2, #3)

Board of Education members had an opportunity to review proposed Policy #9020.1 Advocacy prior to voting at the next Regular Board of Education Meeting.

Ms. Arn shared that this policy would strengthen what the Board already does and would make it easier for building and advocating for Vernon.

7.3 Rockville High School Class of 2020 Graduation (BOE Goal #1, #2)

Superintendent Dr. Macary shared information about the Rockville Graduation for the class of 2020. He noted the following:

- This graduation is not just a drive-up/drive-by graduation.
- There will be surprises for the graduates.
- It will be a nice and memorable event.
- Social distancing will be followed as we have to adhere to social distancing and the graduation had to be approved by the Town of Vernon and the North Central Health District.
- Students will need to wear some type of face covering when they exit the vehicle.
- Speeches will be live streamed at 4 p.m. so you can see them from home or wherever you are. The procession will begin immediately following the conclusion of the speeches.
- Cars will stop at stop 1 and do 3 nice things. At stop 2 they will be given a gift from Project Graduation. At Stop 3 they will stop in front of the stage and get out and receive their diploma.
- Board of Education members will have to park across the street (opposite side of the stage) for viewing.

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- The district and the high school have been working together with the Town of Vernon and Parks and Recreation.

Dr. Buxton shared that she did not want to take up a parking spot for a parent and asked what the Board's role will be this year.

Ms. Hyatt shared she was excited as this is her first graduation. She asked about what would happen if the graduating student/family was homeless or didn't have transportation? Dr. Macary shared that there are extra cars and drivers willing to assist with the drive-up/drive-through graduation.

- 7.4 Corona Virus (COVID 19) Update (BOE Goal #1, #2, #3)
- (a) School Closure
  - (b) Food & Nutrition
  - (c) End of Year Events

Superintendent Dr. Macary gave the Board an update on school closures, food & nutrition, and end of year events during the Covid-19 pandemic.

#### School Closure:

Schools are closed for the remainder of this school year. Summer School will be held virtually.

#### Foot & Nutrition:

The district has received permission to continue to serve meals through the end of June. To date, over 55,000 meals have been served. Summer meals will be provided by the State and run through the Youth Services Bureau but will not be distributed in the parks as in the past.

#### End of Year Events:

On Wednesday, the middle school will hold its Evening of Excellence which will be broadcast live. On Thursday, the elementary schools will hold their car parades for 5<sup>th</sup> graders. Also on Thursday, Rockville High School will hold their Scholarship Night. \$273,000 of scholarship will be announced. There will be no 8<sup>th</sup> grade dance/graduation but there will be a drive-through to pick up awards. Parents will be notified of the event.

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## 7.5 Facilities Committee Update (BOE Goal #3)

The Board of Education Facilities Committee gave the Board an update on Facilities.

1. 38 Park Street – Mr. Linton shared that the Building Official performed the final inspection and provided a Certificate of Occupancy. There are still some punch list items but it is looking good.
2. Summer Facilities Projects – Summer projects will be contingent on funds. Mr. Linton shared some of the summer projects at the schools:
  - ✓ Vernon Center Middle School – oil tank removal.
  - ✓ Lake Street School – drainage issues, doors and windows replaced.
  - ✓ Maple Street School – room 3 remodel with new floor, ceiling.
  - ✓ Center Road School – pointing on side of building.
  - ✓ Northeast School – drainage issues in parking lot and off roof.

## 7.6 Board of Education Finance Committee Report (BOE Goal #1, #2, #3)

Director of Business and Finance Ms. Angela Wang reviewed the Business and Finance Report with the Board. She highlighted:

Budget:

- Executive Summary of Account Balances (Exhibit A, pages 1-2)
- Master Scholarship Account Balances (Exhibit B, pages 3-4)
- Year to Date Report (Exhibit C, pages 5-8 )
- Budget Transfer Requests (Exhibit D, pages 9-26)
- Budget Transfers and Amendments Summary (Exhibit E, pages 27-30)
- Tuition Revenue and Expenses (Exhibit F, pages 31-34)

General Business:

- 2020 Scholarship Award Recipients (Exhibit G, pages 35-37)
- Interest Rate Memo on Master Scholarship Money Market Account (Exhibit H, page 38)

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- Vendor Contracts and Renewals (Exhibit I, pages 39-50)

Food & Nutrition Services:

- Financial Report – P & L through April 2020 (Exhibit J, pages 51-53)

Mr. Brown asked about Exhibit G and disbursement of funds from the Center Road School Novack Scholarship. Dr. Macary shared that it was allowed this year but it will be reviewed for the next school year.

## 7.7 Social Climate, Diversity and Equity

Mr. Brown asked to add this agenda item because he felt that the Board should have a discussion regarding the social climate, diversity and equity due to the recent events that have happened. He shared that while he appreciated Dr. Macary's email regarding "Moving Forward Together", he felt that the Board needed to recommit, and possibly make a statement, that they will continue their work already being done in the district to promote equity and diversity in Vernon Public Schools. He specifically noted the district's work with social emotional learning, family engagement, etc. Dr. Macary shared that he should have included the Board in his email statement he sent out but due to the timing of the events he sent the email quickly along with the message from Education Commissioner Dr. Cardona. Ms. Hyatt shared that she echoed what Mr. Brown was saying. She would like to have the Board draft and make a statement and send it to families. Dr. Buxton also echoed Mr. Brown's recommendation that the Board recommit to serving all students. Ms. Arn also shared that the Board is already committed to this and that there are already things in place especially for students of color and regarding equity. The consensus of the Board was that this statement would be included in the minutes of this meeting. The statement is: **"The Board totally reaffirms our commitment to continue the work being done to promote equity and diversity in the Vernon Public School system."**

## 8.0 To Review and Update Board of Education Calendar

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

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

There were no press members present.

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Mrs. Arn made a motion at 8:31 PM to move into Executive Session inviting the Superintendent to discuss Non-Affiliated staff salaries. Dr. Buxton seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

The Board came out of Executive Session at 9:24 PM.

Mr. Linton made the motion to adjourn at 9:25 PM. Mr. Brown seconded the motion and it passed unanimously

Respectfully submitted,

Stephen Linton, Board Secretary