

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 27, 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 27, 2021.

1.0 Establish Quorum

Roll call was taken at 6:59 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: Assistant Superintendent Robert Testa and Director of Business and Finance William Meier III.

Dr. Macary was absent.

2.0 Call to Order

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

3.0 Pledge of Allegiance

4.0 Recognitions and Presentations

4.1 Introduction of New Teachers (Elementary level) (BOE Goal #2)

Assistant Superintendent of Schools Robert Testa introduced and welcomed the new Vernon Public Schools teachers (Elementary Level) for the 2021-2022 school year:

Celine Afolabi
Catherine Baum

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Tanya Burton
Chloe Chance
Emily Hill
Marybeth Hussey
Heather Smith
Courtney Witham
Courtney Binkowski
Sara Connolly
Lucinda Harrington
Sabrina Hosmer
Kaitlyn Mathieu
Leslie Belsito
Sara Clark
Connor Henry
Anthony Messina
Marissa Morris
Rachel Sexton
Kimberly Velasquez
Laura Gouin
David Mlodzinski
Jessica Roberts
Rebecca Stewart
Nashka Carrion
Alisicia Jackson
Micaela Menard

Mr. Testa and Mrs. Fischer thanked the new teachers in attendance for coming in person to the meeting.

4.2 Honorable Mention in the CABA Bonnie B. Carney Award of Excellence for Educational Communications (BOE Goal #1)

The Board received Honorable Mention in the CABA Bonnie B. Carney Award of Excellence for Educational Communications for their Special Project – School Brochures.

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Mr. Testa, on behalf of CABA, presented the award to the Board for the school brochures. Every two years the Board revises the school brochures. They are sent to magnet school students. Mrs. Fischer thanked the Communications Committee for their work on the brochures.

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

James Wheeler reported the following:

- Grades 9 and 10 will be taking the PSAT.
- Seniors will be completing mock interviews
- The Math Team will hold its first practice this week. Their first meet is on 10/13.
- There will be a fundraiser for breast cancer coming up and Mr. Farrell has agreed to dye his hair pink for it.
- There is a mum sale being held for a fundraiser.
- On 9/3 ASTE had their welcome back picnic and silent auction.

Anaya Tolton reported the following:

- The past 4 Saturdays there was a SAT boot camp.
- Student Council is up and running.
- Last Thursday ASTE went on a field trip to the Big E.

6.0 Community Forum

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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

- (a) Approval of the Minutes of the Regular Board of Education Meeting held on September 13, 2021
- (b) Approval of the Minutes of the Board of Education Facilities Committee Meeting held on September 20, 2021

MOTION: Mr. Kalina moved to approve the items on the Consent Agenda for September 27, 2021.

SECOND: Mrs. Rodriguez

VOTE: Unanimous

8.0 Personnel

8.1 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.

8.2 Review of Executive Order 13G (BOE Goal #2, #3)

Mr. Testa briefly reviewed the Executive Order 13G with the Board. He shared that there are five options for staff members for proving and authenticating their vaccination status or to request an exemption from the mandate including the requirements for proving compliance with the related testing mandate. The district has started the process of tracking each one of the options. It is moving along smoothly.

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9.0 Teaching and Learning

9.1 School Improvement Plans – Vernon Center Middle School and Rockville High School (BOE Goal #1, #2, #3)

Rockville High School Principal Jason Magao and Vernon Center Middle School Principal David Caruso shared their School Improvement Plans with the Board.

Mr. Caruso shared that he was excited to be at the meeting to talk about the School Improvement Plan. He reviewed the following focus areas with the Board:

1. Improve student academic outcomes
2. Build a supportive and vibrant climate and culture
3. Grow our partnerships with Families

Mr. Magao shared that the high school has the same goals:

1. Academic
2. Culture
3. Families

The high school is looking at getting 100% of students meeting success this year and they are going to shoot for the stars at Rockville High School. They took big steps this year and are working diligently with staff with teaching and learning. They have done a lot of collaborative work with Dr. Cormier. They are going to deliver instruction at a high level. Last year was a bit difficult with virtual learning. The school is continuing to grow and they are helping their new staff and their essentials for instruction. They now have a RAM Center that has tutors for students. They also have a new Student Council Government this year. The Parent Square app has been very successful with communications. The school has been improved and is growing, including the ASTE Program.

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Mr. Pichette shared that the RAM Center was created this year and they have two adult tutors – one just graduated from University of Pennsylvania and the other tutor is pursuing her doctorate and is a UConn graduate. Students have been scheduled with Rock Block.

Mr. Testa thanked the administrative team. Quarter one is closing soon and the district will soon have data to see if students are on track to graduation. Both school plans have an important block – Eagle Time and the Ram Center. They are following the Blue Print for Success. Mr. Testa will provide an update in June. He wants 100% of students to be successful which is a shift from the past.

10.0 General Business

10.1 Facilities Project Reports (BOE Goal #3)

Mr. William Peluso, Supervisor of Schools Facilities, gave the Board updated reports on facilities projects.

Rockville High School:

- New field turf stadium and track
- Small gym floor refinished
- Upgraded 5 lavatories
- Crack sealed the tennis courts done with shared services
- Concrete sidewalk repair
- New guidance suite
- Updated graphics art lab
- Robotics room
- Sykes fire science/auto mechanics theory room
- ABL program expansion

Vernon Center Middle School:

- Retaining wall repair
- New stage curtain ordered
- Concrete repair

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Center Road School:

- HVAC controls upgrade
- Solar canopy project
- Parking lot pavement project
- Final section of repointing exterior walls

Skinner Road School:

- Repaired concrete sidewalk
- Brought water and power to greenhouse

Lake Street School:

- Completed window replacement
- Hall painted and floors resealed
- Solar panel installation

Maple Street School:

- Pavement

Northeast School:

- Solar panel installation
- Parking lot
- HVAC controls upgrade

Central Administration:

- Crack sealed parking lot

In addition to all the summer projects, all the schools were cleaned.

Mr. Testa and Mrs. Fischer thanked Mr. Peluso, Mr. Ryniewicz, and the DPW workers for their work and partnership. All the major projects were done in collaboration with the Town of Vernon.

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10.2 Approval of CABA Board Recognition Awards Application (BOE Goal #1, #2, #3)

The Board was asked to approve the application for the CABA Board Recognition Awards. Every year the Board applies for this award. They qualify for level 2.

MOTION: Mrs. Rodriguez moved that the Board approve the application for the CABA Board Recognition Awards.

SECOND: Dr. Buxton

VOTE: Unanimous

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

Dr. Buxton attend the PTO Meeting at Lake Street School. They have a lot of initiatives going on. There is a sign-up for the Lyman Pie Fundraiser and an on-line swag store for school spirit items. The Book Fair will be held December 6th – 10th. They are participating in Amazon Smiles. Picture Day is 10/6 and retakes will be held on 11/18. Trunk or Treat will be held on 10/22. They will be doing the Top Turkey fundraiser again this year also. This is a busy group of parents at Lake Street School.

Mrs. Rodriguez attend the CREC Meeting. You could attend in person or via Zoom. She attended via Zoom. There was a nice presentation on the Head Start Program. They received \$10 million from Head Start. There are 29 towns involved. For the Teacher Residency Program they have 25% participation. They gave away 1300 backpacks at the start of school and they have more if kids need them. Their legislative person was talking about moving the bus driver approval process along because everyone is having trouble with hiring bus drivers. It takes 12 weeks or longer for the process from hire to actual driving. The applicant has to go through record checks and it takes a long time. They are urging legislators to move this along. Mrs. Rodriguez is hoping to attend the next meeting in person. She has the Head Start Program PowerPoint to share if anyone is interested.

11.0 Review and Update Board of Education Calendar

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

11.1 Revision to Board of Education Meeting Calendar 2021 (BOE Goal #1)

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The Board was asked to review and make a revision to the Board of Education Meeting Calendar 2021. The meeting location for the November 8, 2021 Board Meeting is being changed from Vernon Center Middle School to the Board of Education Meeting Room, 3rd Floor, Administration Building, 30 Park Street, Vernon, CT.

MOTION: Mr. Thrall moved that the Board revise the Board of Education Meeting Calendar 2021 by changing the meeting location for the November 8, 2021 Board Meeting from Vernon Center Middle School to the Board of Education Meeting Room, 3rd Floor, Administration Building, 30 Park Street, Vernon, CT.

SECOND: Mrs. Buckler

VOTE: Unanimous

12.0 Opportunity for Questions from the Press Regarding Agenda Items

There were no questions from the press.

Mrs. Rodriguez asked about the drop-off and pick-up at the high school and if it was getting any better. Mr. Testa said that the traffic flow is better but it is still busy in the afternoon.

Since Dr. Macary is absent, the Board will invite Mr. Testa to attend the Executive Session in his place for item #8.1.

MOTION: Dr. Buxton moved to go into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing the Superintendent's Evaluation and inviting Mr. Testa in place of the Superintendent.

SECOND: Ms. Wintress

VOTE: Dr. Buxton, Ms. Wintress, Mr. Kalina, Mr. Linton, Mr. Brown, Mrs. Rodriguez, and Mrs. Buckler voted in favor of the motion. (It is noted that Mr. Thrall was not in the room during the vote.) The motion carried.

The Board went into Executive Session at 8:12 p.m.

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

The Board discussed the Superintendent's Evaluation in Executive session.

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Mr. Testa left the Executive Session at 8:58 p.m.

The Board came out of Executive Session at 9:34 p.m.

13.0 Adjournment

MOTION: Mr. Linton moved to adjourn at 9:34 p.m.
SECOND: Mr. Thrall
VOTE: Unanimous

Respectfully submitted,



Stephen Linton, Board Secretary