

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

October 12, 2021

DRAFT MINUTES BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING

A meeting of the Vernon Board of Education was held via Zoom Webinar and in-person on Tuesday, October 12, 2021

1.0 Establish Quorum

Roll call was taken at 7:02 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 7:03 p.m.

3.0 Pledge of Allegiance

4.0 Recognitions and Presentations

4.1 Presentation by Center Road School Students (BOE Goal #1, #2)

Center Road School Kindergarten Teacher Mrs. Piscottano and some of her students modeled their morning message routine for the Board. She uses the morning time to build foundational literacy skills while focusing on executive functioning. Students practice working memory, inhibitory control and cognitive flexibility. Executive functioning activities like this promote social emotional regulation and readiness to learn.

The Board thanked Mrs. Piscottano and the students for attending.

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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:

- The Math Team students compete next week.
- Rockville High School will be having their Powder Puff game on 10/28.
- The homecoming football game is being held on 10/29 and the dance will be held on 10/30.
- Senior Night for Boys' soccer is on 10/27.
- Senior Night for Girls' soccer is on 10/19.
- Senior Night for Girls' volleyball is on 10/29.
- Senior Night for football, cheerleading and band is on 11/18.
- Senior Night for cross country was held on 10/6.
- Moana the cow gave birth to a calf on Friday night. The calf is healthy and the cutest little thing.

Anaya Tolton reported the following:

- School Counseling had a parent/student night on 10/7. There was a presentation by Counselor Peter Ettliger. MCC and UConn were present and spoke with parents and students regarding post high school plans.
- Tomorrow is PSATs for grades 9 – 11 and mock interviews for 10th grade.
- College fairs were pushed to later date because of low initial response.

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.)

Genaro Gonzalez of West Main Street addressed the Board. He spoke about his history. He moved from Hartford and then attended school at Enfield High School. She shared how he was in prison for 20 years but they modified his sentence. He also did more prison time when his father's house was raided. His education comes from prison and Enfield High School. He graduated when he was 14 years old. He also has a lot of experience with children. He runs a gang and they are not allowed to get in trouble – they have to treat others with equal rights and can't disrespect others. He teaches them right. He shared that he will be attending the Board meetings more often and thanked the Board for being great. He reads everything they put out and goes into the data bases also. He offered his help and told the Board he appreciated them.

7.0 Consent Agenda

7.1

- (a) Approval of the Minutes of the Board of Education Meeting held on September 27, 2021
- (b) Approval of \$500 Donation from Elks Lodge to Maple Street School (BOE Goal #1, #2)
- (c) Approval of Revised Board Policy #3516.3 Accident Prevention and Reporting
- (d) Approval of Revised Board Policy #3516.5 Sexual Offenders on School Property
- (e) Approval of Reviewed Board Policy #3517 Security for School System Facilities and Property
- (f) Approval of Reviewed Board Policy #3524 Hazardous Materials in Schools
- (g) Approval of Revised Board Policy #3524.1 Hazardous Materials in Schools/Pesticide Application
- (h) Approval of Revised Board Policy #3532 Liability Automobile Property Insurance
- (i) Approval of Reviewed Board Policy #3534 Employee/Officer Bonds
- (j) Approval of Reviewed Board Policy #3541 Transportation of Students/General Information
- (k) Approval of Revised Board Policy #3541.10 Transportation of Students/ Parent/Guardian Responsibility
- (l) Approval of Revised Board Policy #3541.11 Transportation of Students/Pupil Responsibility

Mr. Kalina pulled Consent Agenda Item #7.1 (i).

Mrs. Fischer pulled Consent Agenda Items #7.1(c), (e), and (l).

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MOTION: Mr. Linton moved to approve Consent Agenda Items #7.1(a), (b), (d), (f), (g), (h), (j) and (k).
SECOND: Mrs. Rodriguez
VOTE: Unanimous

Mrs. Fischer noted that on Consent Agenda Item #7.1(c), page 12, we do not offer “driver education”. It should be deleted from Policy #3516.3 Accident Prevention and Reporting.

Mrs. Fischer noted that on Consent Agenda Item #7.1(e), pages 16 and 17, Policy #3517 Security for School System Facilities and Property, the “Board of Education” should be capitalized.

Mrs. Fischer noted that on Consent Agenda Item #7.1(l), page 27, the word “board” should be capitalized.

With regard to Consent Agenda Item #7.1(i), page 23, Policy #3532 Liability Automobile Property Insurance, Mr. Kalina asked what the purpose of this item is and whether it is a state mandate or a policy. Dr. Macary shared that this is a CAFE recommended policy. He contacted CIRMA and they recommended \$100,000 coverage.

MOTION: Mr. Thrall moved to approve Consent Agenda Items #7.1(c), (e), (i), and (l).
SECOND: Dr. Buxton
VOTE: Unanimous

8.0 Personnel

8.1 Leave of Absence Request (BOE Goal #2)

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

This item was moved to the end of the agenda.

8.2 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.

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This item was moved to the end of the agenda.

8.3 Superintendent of Schools Employment Agreement (BOE Goal #1, #2, #3) (Executive Session Anticipated)

The Board will review the Superintendent of Schools Employment Agreement in Executive Session.

This item was moved to the end of the agenda.

9.0 Teaching and Learning

9.1 Department Improvement Plan-Teaching and Learning (BOE Goal #2)

Director of Teaching and Learning (Secondary) Mrs. Dominique Fox and Director of Teaching and Learning (Elementary) Mrs. Melissa Trantolo shared their Department Improvement Plan with the Board.

Mrs. Fox and Mrs. Trantolo highlighted and discussed the following goals of the department with the Board:

- Goal #1-All Vernon Public School students will have access to a guaranteed and viable curriculum.
- Goal #2-All Vernon Public School teachers will have access to high-quality professional development.
- Goal #3: Ensure that Vernon Public Schools teachers utilize the essentials for effective instruction.
- Goal #4: Ensure an equitable learning environment where all students have what they need to grow and thrive

Strategies, staff responsibility, resources and learning needed, timelines and intended outcomes were discussed with the Board.

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9.2 Department Improvement Plan-Family, School, Community Partnerships (BOE Goal #1, #2)

Director of Family School Community Partnership Cynthia Zingler was absent and not able to share her Department Improvement Plan with the Board at this meeting. This item was tabled and will be presented at the October 25, 2021 Board Meeting.

9.3 Department Improvement Plan-Pupil Services (BOE Goal #2)

Director of Pupil Services Mrs. Melissa Iles shared her Department Improvement Plan with the Board. Mrs. Iles reported that the team read through data and the feedback from parents and developed three goals for the department:

- Goal #1- All Vernon Public Schools students who are identified as eligible for special education and/or related services will be provided with high quality specially designed instruction.
- Goal #2-All Vernon Public Schools students who are identified eligible for special education and/or related services will be afforded the opportunity to participate in a safe and supportive learning environment that maximizes instructional time.
- Goal #3-The Vernon Public Schools Office of Pupil Services staff will enhance engagement around the educational process with parents, students, administrators and community members by way of updated tools, documents, and protocols.

Mrs. Iles reviewed the action plans to accomplish each goal and shared the department priorities.

She also noted that the State will be changing the IEP forms. The district presently uses Frontline and now there is going to be a state version. It will hold all the IEPs from the state in one place. On top of that, there will be a brand new IEP that the state is producing. Staff, administration and parents will have to get used to this new format. Parents have been used to this old format and will now have to get used to the new one. The state is changing due to the ability to exchange records easily and the form will be better for parents.

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9.4 2019-202 District Annual Performance Reports and Determinations – Meets Requirements (BOE Goal #2)

Director of Pupil Services Mrs. Melissa Iles reviewed the 2019-2020 District Annual Performance Reports and Determinations – Meets Requirements with the Board.

She shared that according to the data used in the Annual Performance Reports, the Connecticut State Department of Education acknowledged that the district met the requirements in relation to the targets in the State Performance Plan. Mrs. Iles highlighted the compliance indicators used to make district determinations based on data and performance: areas sections 4B, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, general supervision system and timely and accurate submission of data.

Mrs. Iles also shared again about the new IEP platform and new IEP forms required. Staff will need to be trained on this and parents will need information on how to read and review the IEPs. Also, the district will be working with Futures looking at data. The number of special education students at the high school is much higher than in the past. The needs of the students are increasing. Mrs. Iles will keep the Board up to date on the new IEPs. The new forms go into effect next school year.

9.5 District Leadership Theory of Action (BOE Goal #1, #2, #3)

Superintendent Dr. Joseph Macary reviewed the District Leadership Theory of Action and asked the Board for their approval. Dr. Macary shared that there were some changes on this year's District Leadership Theory of Action due to covid. Dr. Macary briefly reviewed the goals/statements and action plans which align with the district's strategic improvement process.

- In-Person Schooling after Covid-19 Health Pandemic
- Build Leadership Capacity & Efficacy
- Vision of the Graduate
- Advocate Community and Parent Outreach
- Conduct Administrator School Visits

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Dr. Macary asked the Board for their approval of the 2021 District Leadership Theory of Action.

MOTION: Mr. Thrall moved that the Board approve the Superintendent's District Leadership Theory of Action as presented.

SECOND: Mr. Kalina

VOTE: Unanimous

10.0 General Business

10.1 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. Mr. Meier noted that he will be sending out the Budget Handbook next week to administrators. There is a tentative schedule for budget completion.

10.2 Approval of Proposed Meal Price Increase for School Year 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 (BOE Goal #1, #2, #3)

Information was shared with the Board regarding proposed meal price increases for school year 2021-2022 and 2022-2023. The Board was asked to approve the increases.

This item was discussed this in Board Finance Committee and the prices for food are increasing. The committee would like to go forward with a one year increase of 15 cents for both breakfast and lunch and then wait until next year to be sure they are doing the fiscally responsible thing. Vernon is near eligibility for free meals for the district but not quite there yet. The assumption is that we will have free summer meals again this summer. Dr. Macary will come back to the Board in May to report on this.

MOTION: Mr. Kalina moved to increase meal prices by 15 cents.

SECOND: Mr. Linton

VOTE: Mr. Kalina, Mr. Linton, Dr. Buxton, Mrs. Buckler, Mrs. Rodriguez, Mr. Thrall and Ms. Wintress voted in favor of the motion. Mr. Brown opposed the motion. The motion carried.

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11.0 Review and Update Board of Education Calendar

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

It was noted that the Board is changing the way that they are doing the meeting on November 8th. It will be held here at the Administration Building and not at Vernon Center Middle School. The Board Awards Ceremony will be held on Wednesday, November 10th at Vernon Center Middle School. It will be held on a different night than the Board Meeting.

12.0 Opportunity for Questions from the Press Regarding Agenda Items

There were no questions from the press.

MOTION: Mr. Kalina moved to go into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing the Leave of Absence requests and the Superintendent's Contract, inviting Dr. Macary.
SECOND: Mrs. Rodriguez
VOTE: Unanimous

The Board went into Executive Session at 8:23 p.m.

The Board came out of Executive Session at 8:37 p.m.

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

The Board took action on an employee's request for an extended child-rearing leave of absence.

MOTION: Mr. Brown moved that the Board approve the request for an extended child-rearing leave of absence submitted by Sarah Roos for the reasons discussed in executive session and authorize the Superintendent to inform the employee of the Board's decision and the reasons therefore.
SECOND: Ms. Wintress
VOTE: Unanimous

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The Board took action on an employee's request for an extended child-rearing leave of absence.

MOTION: Mr. Kalina moved that the Board approve the request for an extended child-rearing leave of absence submitted by Lauren Backus for the reasons discussed in executive session and authorize the Superintendent to inform the employee of the Board's decision and the reasons therefore.
SECOND: Mrs. Buckler
VOTE: Unanimous

8.3 Superintendent of Schools Employment Agreement (BOE Goal #1, #2, #3) (Executive Session Anticipated)

The Board took action on the Superintendent of Schools Employment Agreement.

MOTION: Dr. Buxton moved that the Board approve the Superintendent of Schools Employment Agreement as discussed and presented.
SECOND: Mr. Thrall
VOTE: Unanimous

13.0 Adjournment

MOTION: Mr. Thrall moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:39 p.m.
SECOND: Ms. Wintress
VOTE: Unanimous

Respectfully submitted,

Stephen Linton, Board Secretary