

The Board of Education Town of Vernon

30 Park Street – PO Box 600
Vernon, Connecticut 06066

Anne Fischer, Chairperson
Mason Thrall, Vice Chairperson
Patricia Buxton, Secretary
Karen Colt
Kevin Brown
Mark Kalina
Stephen Linton
Deborah Rodriguez
Kristiana Wintress

December 12, 2022

APPROVED MINUTES BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING

A meeting of the Vernon Board of Education was held in-person and via Zoom Webinar at the Administration Building on Monday, December 12, 2022.

1.0 Establish Quorum

Roll call was taken at 7:00 p.m.

There was a quorum. Board members present: Mrs. Fischer, Mr. Thrall, Dr. Buxton, Mr. Brown, Ms. Colt, Mr. Kalina, Mrs. Rodriguez and Ms. Wintress. Mr. Linton was absent.

Student Representatives present: Aedan Ruddock. Anaya Tolton was unable to attend.

Administration present: Superintendent Dr. Joseph Macary, Assistant Superintendent Mr. Robert Testa and Director of Business and Finance Mr. William Meier III.

2.0 Call to Order

Chairperson Fischer called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

3.0 Pledge of Allegiance

4.0 Recognitions and Presentations

4.1 Presentation by Rockville High School ASTE Students (BOE Goal #1, #2)

RHS Principal Jason Magao introduced ASTE Department Head Erika Bahler, who brought a group of ASTE students to present their experience at the National FFA Convention to the Board. In order for students to be considered to attend the National Convention, they must be in good standing in the ASTE program by maintaining good grades, participating in FFA activities and maintaining a Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE) project outside of class time. The Convention is held annually at the end of October. Over 68,000 FFA members from across the country attend this event; 15

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Rockville FFA members attended along with 2 teachers. The students each took turns speaking to the Board about their experience attending the Convention and what they enjoyed most while there. They all said it was an awesome experience and they enjoyed meeting other members from across the country who shared the same interests.

4.2 Fall Sports Season Presentation (BOE Goal #1, #2)

This item will be tabled to the January 9, 2023 BOE meeting as Mr. Farrell was unable to attend this evening.

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

Aedan Ruddock announced that the wrestling team had a good showing against Suffield. He also mentioned that Winter Sports are under way.

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 (Individual speakers shall be limited to five minutes and the total time for public forum shall be limited to 15 minutes.)

Genaro Gonzalez III, 137 West Main Street, Vernon, CT addressed the Board. He spoke of his wife teaching their son at home because he had to withdraw him from school due to the flu vaccine mandate for preschoolers. His son wants to go back to school and cries every time they drive by the school. He said lots of things are being done without consent and the State cannot override his constitutional right to Freedom of Religion. He said he had to quit his job; the police took away his car because he didn't keep it up. He's suing everybody; the Board, the Town, the Police, etc. He has nothing against us, but he just needs to do it.

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7.0 Consent Agenda

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- (a) Approval of the Minutes of the Board of Education Facilities Committee Meeting held on November 21, 2022
- (b) Approval of the Minutes of the Board of Education Regular Meeting held on November 28, 2022
- (c) Approval of the Minutes of the Board of Education Policy Committee Meeting held on November 30, 2022
- (d) Approval of the Minutes of the Board of Education Special Meeting (Expulsion Hearing #1) held on December 1, 2022
- (e) Approval of the Minutes of the Board of Education Special Meeting (Expulsion Hearing #2) held on December 1, 2022
- (f) Approval of Revised Board Policy #5114 – Students – Suspension, Expulsion and Due Process (BOE Goal #3)
- (g) Approval of Revised Board policy #5131.3 – Students – Student Driving and Parking (BOE Goal #3)
- (h) Approval of Revised Board Policy #5131.5 – Students – Vandalism (BOE Goal #3)
- (i) Approval of Revised Board Policy #5131.6 – Students – Alcohol Use, Drugs and Tobacco (Including Performance Enhancing Drugs) (BOE Goal #3)
- (j) Approval of Revised Board Policy #5131.7 – Students – Weapons and Dangerous Instruments (BOE Goal #3)
- (k) Approval of Revised Board Policy #5131.8 – Students – Out of School Misconduct (BOE Goal #3)
- (l) Approval of Reviewed Board Policy #5131.9 – Students – Gang Activity or Association (BOE Goal #3)
- (m) Approval of Revised Board Policy #5145.511 – Students – Sexual Abuse Prevention and Education Program (BOE Goal #3)

Mrs. Fischer asked to pull items 7.1 (a), (b), (f), (i), (j) and (m).

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MOTION: Mr. Thrall moved to approve Consent Agenda Items 7.1 (c), (d), (e), (g), (h), (k) and (l)
SECOND: Mr. Brown
VOTE: Unanimous

Mrs. Fischer mentioned that she had already notified Board Clerk Mrs. Ritchotte of some minor changes to spelling in items 7.1 (a) and (b) and asked the Board to approve as amended.

MOTION: Mr. Kalina moved to approve Consent Agenda Items 7.1 (a) and (b) as amended
SECOND: Mr. Thrall
VOTE: Unanimous

Mrs. Fischer reviewed pulled items 7.1 (f), (i), (j) and (m), noting that any instances of “his/her” should be changed to “their”.

MOTION: Mrs. Rodriguez moved that the Board approve items 7.1 (f), (i), (j) and (m) as amended.
SECOND: Mr. Kalina
VOTE: Unanimous

8.0 Personnel

8.1 Status of all Open Positions in District as of 12/7/2022 (BOE Goal #2)

Assistant Superintendent Mr. Robert Testa shared a list of current open positions within the District:

- Nurse Supervisor
- Floating Nurse
- Speech & Language Teacher
- Paraeducators (5)
- Special Education Teacher
- Custodian

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- ASTE Secretary
- LPN 1:1
- Special Education – ABL Program
- School Nurse

To keep nursing coverage in place, staff is being shifted. Mr. Testa did say we have applicants that we will be interviewing for the various positions.

9.0 Teaching and Learning

9.1 New Teacher Support (BOE Goal #2)

Assistant Superintendent Mr. Robert Testa introduced Directors of Teaching and Learning Mrs. Dominique Fox (Secondary) and Mrs. Melissa Trantolo (Elementary), who will be sharing their New Teacher Support program.

Mrs. Fox noted that we have hired 86 new teachers in the last 2 years. She spoke of the “New Teacher Academy”, which has been run in August for the past two years. This program focuses on Relationship Building, Social Emotional Learning, Lesson Design, Readers/Writers Workshop, Math Workshop and Technology Resources (Pear Deck, Formative and Edpuzzle).

Mrs. Trantolo spoke of ongoing supports throughout the school year, including the Instructional Coaching Model and Elementary & Secondary monthly meetings with new teachers. Some of the meeting session topics include:

- Teacher Evaluation
- Classroom Walkthroughs & Observations
- Learning Targets & Success Criteria
- Reading & Writing Curriculum
- Interactive Read-Aloud
- Peer-to-Peer Observations
- Family Engagement
- Classroom Management
- Reflection

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Mrs. Trantolo also spoke of the 4th Grade teachers at Center Road School who decided on their own to meet every Thursday with Instructional Coach Ali Sinacola. Mrs. Fischer thanked them both for all of the support they offer to our new teachers. She has heard that teachers say they love the support they get from the District.

10.0 General Business

10.1 Approval of the Board of Education Budget Priorities 2023-2024 (BOE Goal #1, #2, #3)

Superintendent Dr. Macary said a meeting was held two weeks ago in which the 2023-2024 Budget Priorities were discussed. He is asking that the Board approve the Board of Education Budget Priorities 2023-2024 as presented.

MOTION: Ms. Colt moved that the Board approve the Board of Education Budget Priorities 2023-2024 as presented.

SECOND: Mrs. Rodriguez

VOTE: Unanimous

10.2 Approval of the Pioneer Builders of Newington, Inc. Contract for the RHS Science/Chemistry Lab (BOE Goal #3)

Director of Business and Finance Mr. William Meier III announced that we went to competitive bid for the Science Lab, Greenhouse and Restroom renovations project at Rockville High School. We received 3 bids, all quoting the same specific design elements established by an architect. Pioneer Builders of Newington, Inc. was the lowest bidder with a total price of \$1,449,118.00. Dr. Macary said this project would be covered by ESSER III funding and would take 10 – 12 weeks to complete, beginning the day after school ends in June 2023. Mr. Meier is recommending that the Board award the contract to Pioneer Builders.

MOTION: Dr. Buxton moved that the Board award the contract for the Science Lab, Greenhouse and Restroom renovations project at Rockville High School to Pioneer Builders of Newington, Inc. as presented.

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SECOND: Mr. Kalina
VOTE: Unanimous

10.3 Approval of the Superintendent's Memo Dated 12/12/2022 (BOE Goal #3)

Dr. Macary presented a request to the Board from students of the Class of 2023 to decorate their graduation caps. The students presented their case to the Policy Committee and worked with Committee members to establish the following protocol that they would agree to abide by: decorations must be two-dimensional with positive and respectful word marks. Negative words, racial slurs and profanity are not permitted. They must submit their design two weeks prior to graduation and may not alter their design in any way once approved by Administration. Any violations to the protocol will result in the student not being permitted to walk their graduation ceremony. Over 100 students agreed to sign their acceptance of the established protocol. Superintendent Dr. Macary is asking the Board to approve a one-year exemption to Board Policy 5127 – Graduation Ceremony. If future graduating classes wish to decorate their caps, they would need to come before the Policy Committee each year to make the request for an exemption to Policy 5127.

MOTION: Mr. Brown moved that the Board approve the Superintendent's memo dated 12/12/2022, regarding a request from the Class of 2023 for a one-year exemption to Board Policy #5127 – Graduation Ceremony, and allow the students to decorate their graduation caps in accordance with the agreed upon protocol as presented.

SECOND: Dr. Buxton
VOTE: Unanimous

10.4 CAPSS Alliance Districts Narrative (BOE Goal #2)

Dr. Macary spoke of a presentation he and Mrs. Fischer conducted in November at the CABE Convention regarding Alliance Districts. He mentioned that the CAPSS narrative included in tonight's Board packet is new. Three additional towns have joined this year: Enfield, Stratford and Plainfield. There are now 36 unique, diverse and complex districts identified as Alliance Districts, predominantly situated in those Connecticut communities in need of support and who serve 44% of Connecticut's children (226,365) including:

- More than 64% of CT's 260,703 students of color

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- 66% of CT's 208,375 low-income students
- 77% of CT's 45,184 English Learners (EL) students

Dr. Macary said that Alliance Districts outpaced Non-Alliance Districts in ELA and \$2,400.00 less per student is spent in Alliance Districts. We need support for sustainability and growth in funding for Alliance Districts; we need to continue to work to develop universal Pre-School for Alliance Districts and we need to focus policy and funding supports to elevate and prioritize whole child needs.

10.5 Student-Centered Funding (BOE Goal #2, #3)

Dr. Macary spoke of an initiative to support the passage of a student-centered funding system. If passed, student-centered funding would fix the state's current complex way of funding public schools, make significant strides in reducing Connecticut's economic and racial funding gaps and fully and fairly fund all public-school students based on their learning needs. The initiative is advocating for the money to be distributed in 2023 rather than in 2028. In this system, Vernon would not pay for Magnet School students' tuition. There are many facets to this system and there is no silver bullet, but signing on to support the initiative would start the process. The Board had many questions and thought this would be a good conversation for the Focus Group with Legislators on Wednesday, December 14th. Dr. Macary offered to have a presentation for the Board to answer their questions via Zoom; Board members were in favor of learning more about it before signing on to support the cause. Dr. Macary did say that CAFE and CAPSS are in support of this initiative as well.

10.6 Board of Education Business and Finance Report (BOE Goal #1, #2, #3)

(a) Asset Disposal Request

Mr. William Meier, Director of Business and Finance, said the Finance Committee met this evening and gave the Board an updated report including the Year-to-Date Budget. He said they are monitoring rising utility costs and other costs as they prepare to present the Superintendent's Proposed 2023-2024 Budget to the Board on January 9, 2023.

The Board was asked to approve one action item on the report; an asset disposal request from Food & Nutrition.

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MOTION: Mr. Kalina moved that the Board approve the Asset Disposal Request as presented.
SECOND: Mr. Brown
VOTE: Unanimous

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

There were no reports.

11.0 Review and Update Board of Education Calendar

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

No updates were made.

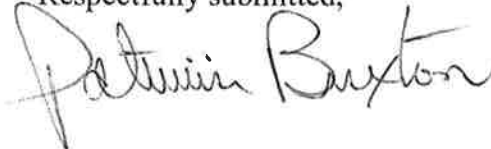
12.0 Opportunity for Questions from the Press Regarding Agenda Items

No one from the Press was in attendance.

13.0 Adjournment

MOTION: Mr. Kalina made a motion to adjourn at 8:22 PM
SECOND: Mr. Brown
VOTE: Unanimous

Respectfully submitted,



Patricia Buxton, Board Secretary