

The Board of Education Town of Vernon

30 Park Street – PO Box 600
Vernon, Connecticut 06066

Paul Grabowski, Chair
Kristiana Wintress, Vice Chair
Karen Colt, Secretary
Anthony Bedlack
Patricia Buxton
Susan Jablonecki
Kriste Nucci
Simone Sewell
Mason Thrall

December 9, 2024

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 9, 2024.

Roll call was taken at 7:01 PM

There was a quorum. Board members present: Mr. Grabowski, Ms. Wintress, Ms. Colt, Mr. Bedlack, Dr. Buxton, Mrs. Jablonecki, Ms. Nucci and Ms. Sewell. Mr. Thrall was absent.

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

Board Chair Mr. Grabowski called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

3.0 Pledge of Allegiance

4.0 Recognitions and Presentations

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

Dr. Brenda Greene, Principal of Northeast School, introduced teachers Mrs. Champagne and Mrs. Morrow and the students of the Roaring Robotics Team. They are a First Lego League Challenge team that has been meeting since September. The theme for this year is “Submerged” and involves anything involving the ocean. The team has been researching real-world issues related to the ocean, designing and building missions and programming their robot, CODEzilla, to complete them. The team is judged at competitions on four components: robot design, robot game, core values and innovation project. The team attended the First Lego League of the River Tournament on November 23, 2024 and earned the Rising All-Star Award for being a young, aspiring team. They also received a

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golden ticket to the Connecticut State Championship this coming Saturday, where they will compete in all these areas against the best teams in the State. The students then performed a skit for the Board called “Oil, Oil, Everywhere!”

4.2 Recognition of Elementary School Art Student’s Exhibits at Central Office (BOE Goal #1, #2)

Board Chair Mr. Paul Grabowski recognized the following Elementary School Art Students for their art exhibits being displayed at Central Office:

Amelia Maury
Jameson Blanchfield
Amelia Feeney-Cuadras
Liahra Lugo
Kasen Phothisaeng
Olivia Pender
Brayden Inestroza Landrau
Anvi Moger
Ivory Huot
Yexeira Sanchez-Vazquez
Samantha Ferla Aguilar
Audrey Agyeman

Each student was presented with a certificate of recognition for their work.

4.3 Fall Sports Season Report (BOE Goal #1, #2)

Director of Athletics Jeffrey Farrell gave a report on the Fall sports Season to the Board.

VCMS Fall Athletics switched to a different conference this year and offered the following sports:

- Girls’ Soccer – 25 participants
- Boys’ Soccer – 20 participants

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- Cross Country – 39 participants (16 girls, 23 boys)

RHS Fall Athletics had a total of 257 students participate with an overall GPA of 87.7 for all athletes in quarter 1. Cross Country had the highest GPA with 92.4. Athletes performed community service such as food drives, Pink Games and reading to students at Center Road School. The SALT/Avengers leadership team expanded to 30 members and attended a leadership conference at SCSU. They continue to promote sportsmanship and are planning an “Officials Appreciation” event this winter.

The following sports were offered at RHS:

- Unified Sports – 14 athletes
- Girls’ Soccer – 36 participants
- Boys’ Soccer – 29 participants
- Girls’ Volleyball – 39 participants
- Girls’ Swimming (co-op with Manchester) – 9 swimmers
- Cross Country – 19 boys, 7 girls
- E-Sports – 18 participants
- Cheerleading – 22 participants
- Football – 68 participants

We are now on to Winter Sports!

5.0 Secretary’s Report

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

No agenda items were added.

5.2 Rockville High School Student Representative Report

Thomas Glinski, Jr. reported on the following:

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- This past Friday, we had our RHS Diamond Pageant and Trey Perry got third place, Nate Palmer got second place and Lorelei Hutchings won first place!
- Today was our ASTE Holiday Sale, where students and other sellers prepared festive items for people to buy for the holidays.
- We had our Club Photos and Senior Superlatives for the yearbook on November 21st.
- In the Pequot division, our football star Jonathan Kasamba won “Player of the Year” and “All Conference”. Brady Ramsdell, Kayden Boland, William Davis, Amir Muhammad, Andrew Manzanares, Molly Wilson, Jacob Owusu and Hartland Hunter also won “All Conference”.
- 46% of the Senior class has submitted an application to a post-secondary institution.
- RHS hosted 45 post-secondary institution visits during the past three months.
- RHS is hosting weekly FAFSA support sessions for Seniors.

My-Ngoc Lai-Huyen reported on the following:

- The RHS Snowflake Dance is this Thursday, December 12th.
- There will be PJ Day for the Kids at CCMC on Friday, December 13th, where students and faculty are able to donate \$1 in exchange for wearing PJs to school.
- The band is having their Winter concert on Tuesday, December 17th.
- There will be a blood drive on December 18th.
- Spirit Week will be from December 16th to December 20th: Monday: Candy Cane Day; Tuesday: Holiday Card Day; Wednesday: Holiday Headwear Day; Thursday: Grinch Day; Friday: Flannel Friday.
- Winter break officially starts on December 23rd and school starts again on January 2nd.
- In our Advisory class, we are doing a door decoration contest where classes are designing based on the theme of “Thankfulness”.

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

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- (a) Approval of the Minutes of the Board of Education Finance Committee Meeting held on November 11, 2024
- (b) Approval of the Minutes of the Regular Board of Education Meeting held on November 11, 2024
- (c) Approval of the Minutes of the Board of Education Policy Committee Meeting held on November 13, 2024
- (d) Approval of Reviewed Board of Education Policy #3514 – Business and Non-Instructional Operations – Authorized Use of School Equipment
- (e) Approval of Revised Board of Education Policy #4112 – Personnel – Selection, Appointment, Hiring of Staff (Certified)
- (f) Approval of Revised Board of Education Policy #4112.5/4212.5 – Personnel – Security Check/Fingerprinting
- (g) Approval of Reviewed Board of Education Policy #4112.51/4212.51 – Personnel – Reference Checks
- (h) Approval of Revised Board of Education Policy #4118.11/4218.11 –

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- Personnel – Non-Discrimination – Equal Employment Opportunity
- (i) Approval of Reviewed Board of Education Policy #4118.22/4218.22 – Personnel – Code of Ethics for Town Officials and Employees
 - (j) Approval of Reviewed Board of Education Policy #4118.53/4218.53 – Personnel – Electronic Media, Communication/Technology Usage
 - (k) Approval of Revised Board of Education Policy #4152.6 – Personnel – Family and Medical Leave (FMLA)
 - (l) Approval of Revised Board of Education Policy #4212 – Personnel – Selection, Appointment, Hiring of Staff (Non-Certified)
 - (m) Approval of Revised Board of Education Policy #5141.7 – Students – Concussion Policy
 - (n) Approval of Revised Board of Education Policy #5145.4 - Students – Non-Discrimination – Students

MOTION: Ms. Wintress moved to approve Consent Agenda Items 7.1(a), (b), (c), (d), (e), (f), (g), (h), (i), (j), (k), (l), (m) and (n)

SECOND: Mrs. Jablonecki

VOTE: Unanimous

8.0 Personnel

8.1 Vernon Public Schools Mandatory Staff Trainings (BOE Goal #3)

Assistant Superintendent Mr. Robert Testa shared a listing of mandatory staff trainings for 2025-2026 and 2026-2027 with the Board. The trainings cover various topics and place us in compliance with the State.

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9.0 Teaching and Learning

9.1 November 5, 2024 PD Day Follow-Up (BOE Goal #2)

Assistant Superintendent Mr. Robert Testa provided a handout to the Board, listing feedback results from staff regarding the November 5, 2024 PD Day.

Criteria included:

- The session was of high quality
- The content will be useful to me
- The presenters were knowledgeable and effective
- I can use the knowledge and skills gained during this session to support the well-being of my students
- A positive and supportive climate and professional community was present during this session

All in all, survey results were favorable with weighted averages of +3.50. The next PD Day will take place in March.

10.0 General Business

10.1 Update on Attendance at the CABA / CAPSS Convention (BOE Goal #1, #2, #3)

Superintendent Dr. Joseph Macary provided a recap of his attendance at the CABA/CAPSS Convention in Mystic, CT last month. Board members who also attended included Susan Jablonecki, Karen Colt and Paul Grabowski. Dr. Macary gave a presentation to a group of 42 people while at the conference and visited six vendors who currently do business with Vernon Public Schools. He also moderated a session for Stamford Public Schools. Everyone enjoyed networking with colleagues, attending various presentations and debriefing at the end of each day. The Board also received the CABA Board of Distinction Award – Level 2 from State Commissioner of Education Charlene Russell-Tucker. All in all, it was a great convention.

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10.2 CABE’s “Board of Distinction Award” and the “Bonnie B. Carney Award of Excellence for Educational Communications (BOE Goal #1, #2, #3)

Dr. Macary previously announced that the Board received the “Board of Distinction Award – Level 2”, however, he wanted to announce that they have also received the “Bonnie B. Carney Award of Excellence for Educational Communications Award”. We were 1 of 16 districts to receive the Level 2 Board of Distinction award and we won the Communications award for our Board Member Handbook, our monthly billboard and the Vernon Voice Magazine – School Edition. A representative from CABE will visit us sometime in the Spring to present the awards to the Board.

10.3 Approval of the Carl Perkins Secondary V Grant Application (BOE Goal #1, #2, #3)

Mr. Testa reviewed the Carl Perkins Secondary V Grant Application with the Board and asked for their approval of the application. This grant is valued at \$71,810.00 and covers expenses for professional educational services, purchased services, conference fees, staff travel, instructional supplies and property and equipment.

MOTION: Dr. Buxton moved to approve the Carl Perkins Secondary V Grant Application as discussed and presented.

SECOND: Ms. Nucci

VOTE: Unanimous

10.4 Approval of Superintendent’s Memo Dated 12/9/2024 (BOE Goal #3)

Dr. Macary announced that, at the recent Policy Committee meeting, the Senior Class officers of Rockville High School attended the meeting and gave a presentation to the committee members, asking for a one-year exemption to Board of Education Policy #5127 Students – Graduation Ceremony, to allow them to decorate their graduation caps. They also presented a petition regarding this request with over one hundred signatures on it. This is similar to a request presented two years ago from the class of 2023. Dr. Macary felt the students gave a great presentation and the committee felt compelled to honor their request. Dr. Macary is asking the Board to approve a one-year exemption to Board of

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Education Policy #5127 – Students – Graduation Ceremony as stated in his Superintendent’s memo presented in the Board packet.

MOTION: Ms. Colt moved to approve a one-year exemption to Board of Education Policy #5127 – Students – Graduation Ceremony as discussed and presented.

SECOND: Ms. Wintress

VOTE: Unanimous

10.5 2024-2025 Enrollment Projection Report from NESDEC (BOE Goal #1, #2, #3)

Dr. Macary announced that we are a member of NESDEC and that part of our membership includes a complimentary Enrollment Projection Report. The report states that “over the next three years, Grades K-5 enrollments are projected to decrease by 47 students, Grades 6-8 enrollments are projected to increase by 65 students and Grades 9-12 enrollments are projected to decrease by 71 students as students move through the grades”. For the last 10 years, we’ve hovered around 3,000 to 3,200 students. We are stable for our District with no major increases or decreases. Rockville High School increased due to the ASTE Program.

10.6 Review of Proposed 2025-2026 District Calendar (BOE Goal #1, #2)

Dr. Macary presented a proposed District Calendar for the 2025-2026 school year. In line with our equity stance, the proposed calendar now recognizes some religious holidays that school families have approached us on for consideration. They include Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur and Eid al Fitr. Columbus Day/Indigenous People’s Day would be eliminated and there would be a two-week Holiday Break for Christmas / Hannukah / Kwanza. There would also be only 4 PD Days rather than 5. He asked the Board for their thoughts. One major concern expressed was the two-week break for the Christmas / Hannukah / Kwanza Holidays, especially with regard to our Special Education population. They felt this may be too long of a disconnect for these students. The Board was asked to think about these changes and we will discuss further and vote on it at the next Board meeting in January.

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10.7 First Reading of Proposed Board of Education Policy #1130 – Community Relations – Non-Discrimination (Community) (BOE Goal #1, #3)

Dr. Macary announced that the Policy Committee put this new policy forward to the Board for their consideration.

10.8 First Reading of Proposed Board of Education Policy #4119 – Personnel – Code of Ethics and Professional Responsibility for Personnel (BOE Goal #1, #3)

Dr. Macary announced that the Policy Committee put this new policy forward to the Board for their consideration.

10.9 First Reading of Proposed Board of Education Policy #5126 – Students – FAFSA Completion Program (BOE Goal #1, #3)

Dr. Macary announced that the Policy Committee put this new policy forward to the Board for their consideration.

10.10 First Reading of Proposed Board of Education Policy #5141.8 – Students – Exertional Heat Illness Awareness for Intramural and Interscholastic Athletics (BOE Goal #1, #3)

Dr. Macary announced that the Policy Committee put this new policy forward to the Board for their consideration.

10.11 First Reading of Proposed Board of Education Policy #5141.9 – Students – Emergency Action Plan for Athletic Events (BOE Goal #1, #3)

Dr. Macary announced that the Policy Committee put this new policy forward to the Board for their consideration.

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

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Mrs. Jablonecki reported that she attended Lake Street School's PTO meeting in-person. Their Trunk or Treat event was not as great a success as they had hoped for, as there were a lot of other events going on. Current fund raisers & events include a Lyman's Pie Sale, Wolf Pack Tickets, the Snowflake Fair and their Winter Concert.

Mr. Grabowski reported that the Center Road School PTO's Booster-thon was a great success. They also plan to hold a Bingo event and have lots of future events planned.

11.0 Review and Update Board of Education Calendar

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

Dr. Macary reminded the Board of the upcoming Budget Workshops in January and early February.

12.0 Opportunity for Questions from the Press Regarding Agenda Items

No one from the Press was in attendance.

13.0 Adjournment

MOTION: Ms. Wintress made a motion to adjourn at 8:15 PM

SECOND: Dr. Buxton

VOTE: Unanimous

Respectfully submitted,



Karen Colt, Board Secretary