

# 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

February 12, 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, February 12, 2024.

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

There was a quorum. Board members present: Mr. Grabowski, Ms. Wintress, Ms. Colt, Mr. Bedlack, Ms. Nucci, Ms. Sewell and Mr. Thrall. Mrs. Jablonecki arrived at 7:06 PM. Dr. Buxton was absent.

Student Representatives present: My-Ngoc Lai-Huyen and Aedan Ruddock.

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 7:00 p.m.

### **3.0 Pledge of Allegiance**

### **4.0 Recognitions and Presentations**

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

Mr. Bryan Kerachsky, Principal of Skinner Road School, introduced Ms. Jessica Roberts, Special Education Teacher, who leads the “SRS Daily News” program with a group of 5<sup>th</sup> Grade students. There are 10 students on the news crew, including 3 researchers, 2 script writers, 3 anchors and 2 camera crew. The news segments are filmed on a swivel iPad. Ms. Roberts explained that she takes a “hands-off” approach with the team, allowing them to think of their own ideas and produce the show from start to finish. Students apply to become a member of the news crew at the end of 4<sup>th</sup> Grade. The students then showed a video of a Daily News segment to the Board.

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## 4.2 Recognition of the Senior Athletes of the RHS Football Team (BOE Goal #1)

This recognition was moved to the March 11, 2024 Board of Education meeting. Many of the Seniors were unable to attend this evening due to playing in a Basketball game.

## 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

My-Ngoc Lai-Huyen reported the following:

- The Wrestling team won the NCCC Conference Tournament over the weekend. It was the first conference win in school history. They will have 8 wrestlers compete this weekend in the State meet.
- The Boys' Basketball team won their home game last Friday night against East Windsor. They have now qualified for the State tournament.
- The Indoor Track team competed last weekend in the Class M meet and will compete this weekend in the State Open.
- Registration for Spring Sports is now open and will close on March 3<sup>rd</sup>.
- On January 25<sup>th</sup>, RHS hosted an 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Open House for the Class of 2028. There were over 230 parents and students in attendance to get a preview of all that RHS has to offer.
- RHS has begun the scheduling process for the 24-25 school year. School Counselors are meeting one-on-one with students to review progress towards graduation as well as to select course requests for the 24-25 school year. Two RHS School Counselors visited VCMS on February 5<sup>th</sup> to meet with all 8<sup>th</sup> Graders to review course selections.

Aedan Rudock reported the following:

- On February 14<sup>th</sup>, RHS will be hosting a FAFSA Completion Help Session geared towards seniors that are still needing support in completing their free application for Federal Student Aid.

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- The students in RHS's Personal Finance class were offered an opportunity to attend the Financial Literacy Innovation Program (FLIP) hosted at UCONN. Several students have been accepted and the program will be held over the next 3 months on Saturdays. Bus transportation will be provided for students.

## 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.)

No one addressed the Board.

## 7.0 Consent Agenda

### 7.1 Consent Agenda

- (a) Approval of the Minutes of the Special Board of Education Meeting held on January 8, 2024
- (b) Approval of the Minutes of the Special Board of Education Meeting (Budget Workshop) held on January 17, 2024
- (c) Approval of the Minutes of the Special Board of Education Meeting (Budget Workshop) held on January 22, 2024
- (d) Approval of the Minutes of the Special Board of Education Meeting (Budget Workshop) held on January 24, 2024
- (e) Approval of the Minutes of the Special Board of Education Meeting (Approval of Superintendent's Proposed 2024-2025 Budget) held on February 5, 2024

MOTION: Ms. Wintress moved to approve Consent Agenda Items 7.1(a), (b), (c), (d) and (e)

SECOND: Ms. Colt

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VOTE: Unanimous

## 8.0 Personnel

### 8.1 Approval of the Vernon School Administrators Association Memorandum of Agreement (BOE Goal #2)

Superintendent Dr. Joseph Macary presented a Memorandum of Agreement between the Vernon Board of Education and the Vernon School Administrators Association, similar to two agreements previously presented and approved for the Nurses' Union and the Teachers' Union. He is requesting that we move the current insurance payments from the September-May schedule to a 26 pay schedule over 12 months. This will eliminate the need to seek repayment from an Administrator who resigns during the summer months when no insurance premiums are collected. He is also asking that the Board approve HSA payments being deposited in September and January rather than in July and January. The Administrators' Union agrees with this new schedule as well as our Insurance Broker and Administrative staff. This would take effect on July 1, 2024.

MOTION: Mr. Bedlack moved to approve the Memorandum of Agreement between the Vernon Board of Education and the Vernon School Administrators Association as discussed and presented.

SECOND: Ms. Nucci

VOTE: Unanimous

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

This item was moved to the end of the meeting.

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

This item was moved to the end of the meeting.

### 8.4 Superintendent's Mid-Year Evaluation (BOE Goal #1, #2, #3) (Executive Session Anticipated)

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This item was moved to the end of the meeting.

## 9.0 Teaching and Learning

### 9.1 Instructional Task Rubric (BOE Goal #2)

Mr. Testa presented an email sent by Dr. Macary to all teachers, along with the Instructional Task Rubric, which was created to evaluate the learning task in each instructional interaction. When our Administrative team met last October, they posed a question: “what are we asking our students to know and do?”.

They came us with 3 “Essential Questions”:

1. How is the instructional task aligned to grade level expectations (standards)?
2. How is the instructional task cognitively engaging for all students (developmentally appropriate)?
3. How is the instructional task rigorous for all students (differentiation)?

They then developed a score for each task:

- Low – Recall & Reproduction
- Low/Med – Skills & Concepts
- Med/High – Strategic Thinking & Reasoning
- High – Extended Thinking

Dr. Macary’ s email to all teachers noted that the district’ s expectation is that not all tasks are in the 4 (high) range – that is not realistic. However, each task needs to be evaluated to determine its effectiveness. He left teachers with some thoughts to consider:

- Effective planning for your tasks will yield successful student outcomes
- Think/Reflect on the “Essential Questions” when designing your tasks
- Use a balanced approach to developing instructional tasks throughout the unit
- Collaborate with other teachers (PLC) to create common Instructional Tasks
- Use the 2<sup>nd</sup> page of the Rubric for possible tasks and products with high expectations

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## 10.0 General Business

### 10.1 Approval of the Vernon Public Schools District Calendar for 2024-2025 (BOE Goal #1, #2)

Dr. Macary presented a draft of the 2024-2025 District Calendar for the Board's review and approval. He noted that the School Culture Committee met to develop the calendar, which includes 3 PD Days in August, 1 in November and 1 in March, as well as all major Holidays and early dismissals.

MOTION: Ms. Colt moved to approve the Vernon Public Schools District Calendar for 2024-2025 as discussed and presented.

SECOND: Mrs. Jablonecki

VOTE: Unanimous

### 10.2 Approval of the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving (HFPG) Grant Application (BOE Goal #1, #2, #3)

Mr. Testa presented the Continuation Grant Application for the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving and is asking the Board for their consideration in approving the application. This is a 2-year grant that runs for this year and next year. This grant, in the amount of \$260,000.00, covers salaries, purchased services, conference fees, transportation for parents and families, instructional supplies and general supplies and food for Family Engagement events.

MOTION: Ms. Nucci moved to approve the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving (HFPG) Grant Application as discussed and presented.

SECOND: Ms. Wintress

VOTE: Unanimous

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## 10.3 Approval of Legal Services (BOE Goal #1)

Mr. Grabowski noted that the Legal Services Ad Hoc Committee met over 2 days for the purpose of interviewing the 5 law firms that submitted bids to represent the Board of Education in legal matters. The Committee consisted of Mr. Grabowski, Ms. Wintress, Mr. Thrall, Dr. Macary, Mr. Testa and Mr. Meier. After interviewing all 5 law firms, they selected Shipman & Goodwin LLP to represent the Board of Education. They are a premier law firm with a wealth of knowledge in Educational Law, and have over 20 attorneys in their Educational Unit. Their experience can't be beat and they really do deliver. They also help in bargaining unit negotiations and offer compliance training for staff. Dr. Macary stated that our Board Attorney had recently announced his retirement and this was the reason we advertised for bids for legal services.

MOTION: Mr. Thrall moved that the Board authorize the Superintendent to enter into an agreement with Shipman & Goodwin LLP for Legal Services with the Vernon Board of Education as discussed and presented.

SECOND: Mrs. Jablonecki

VOTE: Unanimous

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

Mr. William Meier III, Director of Business and Finance, announced that the Finance Committee met this evening and reviewed the Finance Report and the Year-to-Date Budget.

Mr. Meier also presented two asset disposal requests and asked for the Board's consideration in approving them. One request is for a Food Service item being replaced and the other is for analog radios that have been replaced. These radios will be donated to mutual aid departments for their use.

MOTION: Mr. Bedlack moved to approve the asset disposal requests as discussed and presented.

SECOND: Ms. Colt

VOTE: Unanimous

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

Ms. Colt spoke of the Legislative Breakfast held for CAFE Area 3 on January 31<sup>st</sup>. There were great discussions on K-3 Reading and unfunded mandates. She also mentioned that CREC will be holding a Legislative Breakfast on February 21<sup>st</sup> at the State Capitol and then their monthly meeting will follow.

Ms. Sewell attended the PTO meeting at Maple Street School. They spoke of raising \$5,000.00 at the Scholastic Book Fair. They will hold Spirit Day every month to earn money for the PTO. They are also planning for Teacher Appreciation Week, their end of the year party and their yearbook. She also spoke of the Youth Services Bureau, which helps kids who get in trouble and gives them a second chance. Instead of going to court, they go before the Board of the Youth Services Bureau.

Mr. Grabowski spoke of attending the Center Road School PTO meeting. They spoke of their Munson Chocolates fundraiser, their family dance event, Spring Day in March and purchasing spirit wear.

Board Chair Mr. Paul Grabowski asked for a motion to go into Executive Session at 7:55 PM to discuss agenda items 8.2, 8.3 and 8.4, inviting Superintendent Dr. Joseph Macary.

MOTION: Ms. Wintress made a motion to go into Executive Session at 7:55 PM to discuss agenda items 8.2, 8.3 and 8.4, inviting Superintendent Dr. Joseph Macary.  
SECOND: Ms. Sewell  
VOTE: Unanimous

The Board returned from Executive Session at 8:25 PM.



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

MOTION: Mr. Thrall moved that the Board deny the request for an extended leave of absence, submitted by Usha Sridhar, for the reasons discussed in Executive Session, and authorize the Superintendent to inform the employee of the Board's decision and the reason therefore.

SECOND: Mrs. Jablonecki

VOTE: Unanimous

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

MOTION: Ms. Colt moved that the Board approve the request for an extended leave of absence, submitted by Josie Schneider, for the reasons discussed in Executive Session, and authorize the Superintendent to inform the employee of the Board's decision and the reason therefore.

SECOND: Ms. Nucci

VOTE: Unanimous

## 11.0 Review and Update Board of Education Calendar

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

No updates were made.

Dr. Macary reminded everyone that there will be no school tomorrow due to the impending snow storm.

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

No one from the Press was in attendance.

## 13.0 Adjournment

MOTION: Mr. Thrall made a motion to adjourn at 8:27 PM

SECOND: Ms. Wintress

VOTE: Unanimous

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Respectfully submitted,



Karen Colt, Board Secretary