

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
Paul Grabowski
Karen Colt
Mark Kalina
Stephen Linton
Deborah Rodriguez
Kristiana Wintress

March 27, 2023

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, March 27, 2023.

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, Ms. Colt, Mr. Kalina, Mr. Linton and Ms. Wintress. Mrs. Rodriguez was present via Zoom meeting. Mr. Grabowski was absent.

Student Representatives present: Anaya Tolton and Aedan Ruddock.

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

2.0 Call to Order

Chairperson Fischer called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

3.0 Pledge of Allegiance

4.0 Recognitions and Presentations

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

Two Center Road School students were accompanied by Mrs. Heather Earley, Principal and Mrs. Lori Purcaro, Assistant Principal along with 3rd Grade Teacher Rachel Deprey and Kindergarten Teacher Diane Sirois. They spoke of their “Buddy Classroom”, an event that takes place once per month (usually on the last Friday of the month). Every classroom within the school has a buddy classroom. All classrooms gather at the same time so that everyone can take part in various planned events and activities. These help to build

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community within the building. They then played a video for the Board which highlights some of the themes and activities of recent “Buddy Classroom” events.

4.2 Board Member Appreciation Month (BOE Goal #1)

Dr. Macary announced that March is “Board Member Appreciation Month”. He thanked the Board of Education members for their service to Vernon Public Schools and presented them with a water bottle from Rockville High School, a gift of the administration there. Board members were also presented with two thank you cards each, hand-made from the students of the schools they represent.

4.3 Presentation by Athletic Director Jeff Farrell; Recap of Winter Sports Season (BOE Goal #1, #2)

Athletic Director Jeff Farrell reviewed a PowerPoint Presentation, recapping the Winter Sports Season with the Board. Winter sports included Girls’ and Boys’ Basketball, Cheerleading, Unified Sports, Wrestling, Indoor Track & Field, Girls’ and Boys’ Ice Hockey, Boys’ Swimming, Gymnastics and new this year, Dance Team. There were 206 total participants during the season with an overall academic average of 88.82. Spring Sports are now underway.

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 reported that Spring Sports have started up and athletes are excited to compete. Seniors are in the process of getting measured for caps and gowns. Rockville FFA held a Cake and Pie Auction on March 16th as part of their FFA Degree and SAE Night. Juniors had their SAT day on Wednesday, March 22nd. Anaya Tolton reported that Rockville is having a Girls in Gaming Night on March 31st. Girls of all grades will be able to meet and play games like Mario Kart 8, Super Mario Party, Minecraft and more.

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Quarter 3 closes on Friday, March 31st. Rockville is hosting a Dodgeball tournament on March 30th. The cost to watch is \$3.00 at the door. Girls' Lacrosse is hosting Enfield on Thursday, March 30th at 4:00 PM. Students on the France / Spain trip will be leaving next Thursday, April 6th at 3:00 PM. Junior and Senior Prom tickets are being sold during lunch next week. Students are encouraged to buy their tickets soon with who they'll want to sit with as they are selling very quickly.

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 Board of Education Finance Committee Meeting held on March 13, 2023
- (b) Approval of the Minutes of the Regular Board of Education Meeting held on March 13, 2023
- (c) Approval of Reviewed Board of Education Policy #5141.27 – Students – Use of Automatic External Defibrillators (AEDs)
- (d) Approval of Reviewed Board of Education Policy #5141.28 – Students – Sudden Cardiac Arrest Prevention
- (e) Approval of Revised Board of Education Policy #5145 – Students – Student Civil and Legal Rights and Responsibilities
- (f) Approval of Revised Board of Education Policy #5145.11 – Students – Police in Schools

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- (g) Approval of Reviewed Board of Education Policy #5145.14 – Students – On-Campus Recruitment
- (h) Approval of Reviewed Board of Education Policy #5145.15 – Students – Directory Information
- (i) Approval of Revised Board of Education Policy #5145.4 – Students – Non-Discrimination
- (j) Approval of Revised Board of Education Policy #5145.511 – Students – Sexual Abuse Prevention and Education Program
- (k) Approval of Reviewed Board of Education Policy #5145.6 – Students – Student Grievance Procedure

Mrs. Fischer pulled Consent Agenda items 7.1(d) and 7.1(e). She noted that item 7.1(d) will need a few edits; on page 17 under “Coach Training”, delete the phrase “Students 5141.2” at the end of paragraph 1 and then merge paragraphs 1 and 2. She also asked that item 7.1(e), Policy #5145 – Students – Student Civil and Legal Rights and Responsibilities, be taken back to the Policy Committee for further review.

MOTION: Mr. Linton moved to approve Consent Agenda Item 7.1(d) as amended and to take Consent Agenda item 7.1(e) back to the Policy Committee for further review.

SECOND: Mr. Thrall

VOTE: Unanimous

MOTION: Mr. Thrall moved to approve Consent Agenda Items 7.1(a), (b), (c), (f), (g), (h), (i), (j) and (k)

SECOND: Mr. Linton

VOTE: Unanimous

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8.0 Personnel

8.1 Hiring Practices Memo (BOE Goal #1, #2, #3)

Mr. Testa reviewed the “Hiring Practices Memo” with the Board. He noted that he shared this document with all Administrators in March and posted all open positions in March as well. This memo outlines the process of how we hire new staff. Mr. Testa said he will re-post any positions as needed if we don’t get enough candidates.

9.0 Teaching and Learning

9.1 Transitional Kindergarten Summer Program (BOE Goal #1, #2, #3)

Mr. Testa introduced Kristen Piscottano, Family & Consumer Science Teacher at Rockville High School. Recently, Kristen presented her Capstone Project on her “Transitional Kindergarten Summer Program”, inviting Dr. Macary and Mr. Testa to the event. She did a great job with her presentation and Mr. Testa thought she should come to tonight’s meeting to present her idea to the Board. Kristen has been teaching in Vernon for 9 years: 5 years as a Pre-K Special Education Teacher at CRS; 3 years as a Kindergarten Teacher at CRS; 1 year at RHS as a Family & Consumer Science Teacher. She opened her presentation by saying that 82% of States in this country have a cut-off age for Kindergarten of September 30th. Connecticut’s cut-off age is January 1st. This causes children, who may not be quite mature enough, to attend Kindergarten sooner than they are ready to. Research shows that, with an increased focus on academic content in Kindergarten, 72% of children experience challenges with transition to Kindergarten. Many children do not attend pre-school, making the transition even more difficult. She proposed an idea that we can help incoming students at the local level by holding a “Transitional Kindergarten Summer Program”. Certain criteria would need to be met in order to be recommended to the program:

- Age eligible for Kindergarten (5 on or before January 1)
- Birthday on or after September 1st
- Limited Pre-School experience or a Pre-School recommendation supporting transitional Kindergarten
- Supportive Kindergarten Screening Data
- Family survey input

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As part of her proposal, she would first communicate her plan with Stakeholders and then, if approved, would hire a Summer Program teacher by June 1st. She would contact families of the recommended students by May 25th and finalize the summer roster by June 1st. The program would run from June 22nd to July 28th. This would all be offered for free to recommended students due to grant funding. This is an excellent opportunity to pilot the program for this year and measure success during the Summer and again in the Fall. The goal of the piloted program is to prepare students for Kindergarten. The return on investment would be:

- Decreased student referrals for behavior
- Decreased student retention requests
- Decreased SRBI referrals for academics
- Increased academic outcomes
- Increased readiness as measured by Kindergarten inventory

Dr. Macary recommended that we try a pilot of the program for this Summer. The program would need to be held at VCMS due to some Summer maintenance projects taking place at other schools beginning in June. The Board was in favor of Dr. Macary's recommendation and agreed that this should move forward as a pilot for this summer. Once the data is collected, it will be reviewed for future consideration of continuing the program permanently.

9.2 Results of the March 17th PD Day (BOE Goal #2)

Mr. Testa spoke of the results of feedback on the March 17th PD Day sessions. He had a total of 252 teacher responses and 118 Para responses. Paras found the subject matter very helpful as it related to their day-to-day experiences with student behaviors and de-escalation. Teachers said they much preferred on-site learning rather than virtual learning. It was noted that the feedback scores do not include a neutral score. Mr. Testa will share this observation with the PDEC group. As an FYI, Mr. Testa also presented each Board member with a hiring campaign flyer that was handed out at the UCONN Career Fair.

10.0 General Business

10.1 Approval of June 14, 2023 as the Graduation Date for Rockville High School (BOE Goal #1)

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Dr. Macary recommended that the Graduation date for Rockville High School's Class of 2023 be June 14, 2023 at 6:00 PM. Project Graduation is set for June 14th and this would line up perfectly with that event. The 182nd day of school would be June 15th, which would be the last day of school and a ½ day.

MOTION: Dr. Buxton moved to approve June 14, 2023 as the Graduation date for Rockville High School's Class of 2023

SECOND: Ms. Wintress

VOTE: Unanimous

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

There were no reports.

Dr. Macary spoke of the Air Force Band Concert that took place last week at RHS. It was a great event, very well attended and was good for the Vernon community. Mrs. Fischer commended Mr. Sinclair on his directing of one of their pieces at the concert. Dr. Macary also spoke of the first Lego League Robotics event to be hosted by Vernon Public Schools at VCMS on March 25th. It was a great event. Mrs. Fischer mentioned that Dr. Macary was recently named Outstanding Superintendent for 2023 by the NEAG School Alumni Board at the University of Connecticut. He gave a great speech at the awards ceremony and she is very proud of his accomplishments.

11.0 Review and Update Board of Education Calendar

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

No updates were made.

Dr. Macary reminded the Board that there is a Focus Group meeting on Monday, April 3rd and an Expulsion Hearing on Wednesday, April 5th.

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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 8:18 PM
SECOND: Ms. Colt
VOTE: Unanimous

Respectfully submitted,



Patricia Buxton, Board Secretary