

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

May 13, 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, May 13, 2024.

Roll call was taken at 7:00 PM

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

Student Representatives present: Aedan Ruddock and My-Ngoc Lai-Huyen were 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 7:01 p.m.

3.0 Pledge of Allegiance

4.0 Recognitions and Presentations

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

Mrs. Tracy Duenzl, Principal of Lake Street School, introduced Samantha Randazzo, Elementary Gifted and Talented Teacher. Mrs. Randazzo introduced three of her 5th Grade Endeavor students, who will be presenting their “Mission to Mars” unit to the Board. The students each spoke about what they have learned in this unit and then gave a presentation, using robotic Lego figures. They explained how they wrote code to program the movement of the robots to perform specific tasks. The students expressed how much they enjoy this class, and one student mentioned an interest in becoming an Engineer.

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4.2 Recognition of Rockville High School Art Student's Exhibits at Central Office (BOE Goal #1, #2)

Rockville High School Art Teachers Stephanie Symkowicz, Maxine Cunningham and Amanda Tooker thanked the Board for the opportunity to display the artwork of their students in the 3rd floor lobby of Central Office. They then presented, along with Board Chair Paul Grabowski, recognition certificates to the following students:

- Dianaris Alvarez
- Andrew Brazinskas
- Kyle Clark
- Alexia Diaz
- Lillian Fontana
- Ava Grano
- April Henderson
- Abigail Kostiuk
- Yalen Mendoza
- Hailey Miller
- Gabrielle Rainey
- Sinai Salmon

4.3 Presentation of Rockville High School's Belize Trip (BOE Goal #1, #2)

RHS Teachers Amanda Maskell and Rebecca Mondo, along with six of their students, gave a presentation to the Board about a recent RHS trip to Belize. The students each spoke about their experiences on the trip and the things they were most impressed with. They also spoke of their apprehension of going on this trip, because many of the 17 students who signed up didn't have established friendships with one another. Once they arrived in Belize, they immediately began to bond with one another. They enjoyed the culture of the country, the food and their tour guide, who they said was amazing! They then showed a video of their time spent in the country. They thanked the Board of Education and their teachers for the opportunity to take this trip and had some advice for future travelers: don't hesitate to sign-up for a trip like this just because you don't know anyone who's going. You'll make new, lasting friendships and will have the best time!

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4.4 Presentation of the “Bonnie B. Carney Award of Excellence for Educational Communications” Plaque (BOE Goal #1)

Superintendent Dr. Joseph Macary announced that the Board of Education received the “Bonnie B. Carney Award of Excellence for Educational Communications” last Fall for their “Board of Education Member Handbook”. This month, the award plaque arrived from CAFE and Dr. Macary presented it to the Board. It will be displayed on the Board room wall next to the many awards received by our Board over the years.

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

There was no report this evening due to the student representatives preparing for AP Exams.

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.)

Alicia Kapinos of 27 Mock Road, Columbia, CT, addressed the Board. She said her son is a member of the Shamrocks Hockey Team and called in to speak on behalf of the parents of the team, expressing their extreme displeasure with the decision not to re-assign Coach Adam as Head Coach for next year. She said a letter was sent via email to Dr. Macary on April 3rd about this issue. She said she has not heard back from him and is asking that someone please get back to her, as parents feel their concerns are being pushed aside. Dr. Macary said he did not receive a letter or email from the group and asked Ms. Kapinos for her phone number. He said he will call her tomorrow morning to discuss this further.

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7.0 Consent Agenda

7.1 Consent Agenda

- (a) Approval of the Minutes of the Board of Education Curriculum Committee Meeting held on April 17, 2024
- (b) Approval of the Minutes of the Board of Education Finance Committee Meeting held on April 22, 2024
- (c) Approval of the Minutes of the Regular Board of Education Meeting held on April 22, 2024
- (d) Approval of the Minutes of the Board of Education Policy Committee Meeting held on April 29, 2024
- (e) Approval of the Minutes of the Board of Education Facilities Committee Meeting held on May 6, 2024
- (f) Approval of Reviewed Board of Education Policy #0521 – Purposes, Goals and Objectives – Nondiscrimination
- (g) Approval of Revised Board of Education Policy #1212 – Community Relations – School Volunteers
- (h) Approval of Revised Board of Education Policy #1250 – Community Relations – School Visitors
- (i) Approval of Revised Board of Education Policy #1251.1 – Community Relations – Weapons and Other Prohibited Instruments
- (j) Approval of Reviewed Board of Education Policy #1316 – Community Relations – Relations Between Public and School Personnel
- (k) Approval of Reviewed Board of Education Policy #1330 – Community Relations – Use of School Facilities

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- (l) Approval of Revised Board of Education Policy #1331 – Community Relations –
Smoke Free Environment: Students
- (m) Approval of Reviewed Board of Education Policy #3516 – Business and Non-
Instructional Operations – Safety

MOTION: Mr. Thrall moved to approve Consent Agenda Items 7.1(a), (b), (c), (d), (e),
(f), (g), (h), (i), (j), (k), (l) and (m)
SECOND: Mrs. Jablonecki
VOTE: Unanimous

8.0 Personnel

8.1 Approval of the Agreement Between the Vernon Board of Education and the Vernon Federation Union of Paraeducators AFT-CT, AFL-CIO (BOE Goal #1, #2, #3) (Executive Session Anticipated)

This item was moved to the end of the meeting.

9.0 Teaching and Learning

9.1 Presentation of the Gifted and Talented Program (BOE Goal #1, #2)

Assistant Superintendent Mr. Robert Testa introduced Samantha Randazzo, Gifted and Talented Teacher at the Elementary level, and Regina Lee, Gifted and Talented Teacher at the Middle School. Samantha spoke of how she travels to all 5 Elementary schools and has a total of 49 students identified as gifted and talented and 82 identified as enrichment students in the Endeavor Program. The students meet with her 30-40 minutes per week. Gifted and Talented identification begins in Grade 3. Students not identified in Grade 3 participate in enrichment if they meet the criteria. Data reviews occur yearly and enrichment students can advance to G&T based on growth, performance and motivation. Regina Lee spoke of the Endeavor Program at the Middle School; 55 students identified as Gifted and Talented and 45 students identified as enrichment. The students meet with Mrs. Lee during their UA rotations. She noted that students may also be

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identified at the middle school level using the same procedures as at the elementary level. Each grade level completes 2 teacher selected units and 2 student selected units. She feels that giving the students the ability to select items of interest to them helps to increase the success of the program. Future plans for the program include continuing to improve and streamline identification procedures, more in-house workshops and bridging events between the elementary schools and VCMS.

10.0 General Business

10.1 Approval of a \$1,000.00 Donation to Vernon Regional Adult Based Education (VRABE) (BOE Goal #1)

Dr. Macary announced that Vernon Regional Adult Based Education (VRABE) has received a donation of \$1,000.00 from ECHN's Family Resource Center and is asking the Board's consideration to accept the donation. These funds would be used to purchase literacy materials for Adult Education families and the Family Learning Program.

MOTION: Dr. Buxton moved to accept, with gratitude, a \$1,000.00 Donation from ECHN's Family Resource Center to Vernon Regional Adult Based Education (VRABE) as discussed and presented.

SECOND: Ms. Nucci

VOTE: Unanimous

10.2 Discussion and Approval of Rockville High School's Trip to Paris and Provence, France and Barcelona, Spain – April 2025 (BOE Goal #2)

Dr. Macary noted that approximately 25 RHS students have signed-up to attend a trip to France and Spain from April 10, 2025 through April 17, 2025. They would be accompanied by 5 chaperones, including History Teacher Paul Courtois and World Language Teacher Allasandra Cianci. He mentioned that the Board of Education previously set-up a continuous scholarship to assist students whose families cannot afford to send them due to financial hardship. This scholarship offers \$1,000.00 to each qualifying student to help defray the cost of the trip. Dr. Macary is asking the Board for their consideration to approve the trip.

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MOTION: Ms. Wintress moved to approve Rockville High School’s Trip to Paris and Provence, France and Barcelona, Spain in April 2025, as discussed and presented.
SECOND: Mrs. Jablonecki
VOTE: Unanimous

10.3 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 3 action items requiring Board approval:

(a) Scholarship Establishment Request for the “Jennifer Ann MacDonald Memorial Scholarship”

MOTION: Dr. Buxton moved to approve the “Jennifer Ann MacDonald Memorial Scholarship” as discussed and presented.
SECOND: Mrs. Jablonecki
VOTE: Unanimous

(b) Scholarship Establishment Request for the “Arline Jacob Memorial Scholarship”

MOTION: Mrs. Jablonecki moved to approve the “Arline Jacob Memorial Scholarship” as discussed and presented.
SECOND: Ms. Wintress
VOTE: Unanimous

(c) Asset Disposal Requests

MOTION: Ms. Nucci moved to approve the Asset Disposal Requests as discussed and presented.
SECOND: Ms. Wintress
VOTE: Unanimous

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10.4 Review and Adoption of the 2024-2025 Vernon Board of Education Budget (BOE Goal #1, #2, #3)

Dr. Macary announced that the 2024-2025 Budget needs to be revised due to Health Insurance costs. The bottom line has changed, with an increase over last year's budget of \$867,008.00 or 1.50%. The total of the 2024-2025 Proposed Budget is \$58,734,884.00.

MOTION: Mr. Thrall moved to adopt the Proposed 2024-2025 Budget totaling \$58,734,884.00 as amended.
SECOND: Dr. Buxton
VOTE: Unanimous

10.5 First Reading of Board of Education Policy #1252 – Community Relations – Sexual Offenders on School Property (BOE Goal #1, #3)

Dr. Macary explained the process of adopting a new Board of Education policy. A First Reading takes place at a Regular Board of Education meeting and then goes for approval at the next Regular Board meeting. He noted that the Policy Committee met and agreed to follow Shipman & Goodwin's Model Policy #1252 and bring it forward to the full Board for adoption.

10.6 First Reading of Board of Education Policy #1332 – Business and Non-Instructional Operations – Hazardous Materials in Schools: Pesticide Applications (BOE Goal #1, #3)

Dr. Macary noted that the Policy Committee met and agreed to follow Shipman & Goodwin's Model Policy #1332 and bring it forward to the full Board for adoption. This policy also conforms to State Law.

10.7 First Reading of Board of Education Policy #3524 – Business and Non-Instructional Operations – Green Cleaning Programs (BOE Goal #1, #3)

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Dr. Macary noted that the Policy Committee met and agreed to follow Shipman & Goodwin's Model Policy #3524 and bring it forward to the full Board for adoption. This policy also conforms to State Law.

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

Mrs. Jablonecki reported that Lake Street School's Family Fun Night will take place on Friday, May 17th from 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM.

Board Chair Mr. Paul Grabowski asked for a motion to go into Executive Session to discuss agenda item 8.1, inviting Superintendent Dr. Joseph Macary.

MOTION: Ms. Wintress made a motion to go into Executive Session at 8:17 PM to discuss agenda item 8.1, inviting Superintendent Dr. Joseph Macary.
SECOND: Ms. Nucci
VOTE: Unanimous

The Board returned from Executive Session at 8:26 PM.

8.1 Approval of the Agreement Between the Vernon Board of Education and the Vernon Federation Union of Paraeducators AFT-CT, AFL-CIO (BOE Goal #1, #2, #3) (Executive Session Anticipated)

MOTION: Ms. Nucci moved to approve the Agreement Between the Vernon Board of Education and the Vernon Federation Union of Paraeducators AFT-CT, AFL-CIO as discussed and presented.
SECOND: Ms. Wintress
VOTE: Unanimous

11.0 Review and Update Board of Education Calendar

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

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No updates were made.

Dr. Macary reminded the Board of the following events:

- VRABE Graduation is June 7th
- RHS Graduation is June 12th
- VCMS Evening of Excellence is June 13th
- Last Day of School for Grades K-8 in June 17th
- Last Day of School for Rockville High School is June 18th

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

Respectfully submitted,



Karen Colt, Board Secretary