

# 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

October 23, 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, October 23, 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, Mr. Grabowski, Ms. Colt, Mr. Kalina, Mr. Linton, Mrs. Rodriguez and Ms. Wintress.

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

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

### **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 Lake Street School Students (BOE Goal #1, #2)**

Mrs. Tracy Duenzl, Principal of Lake Street School, introduced Grade 3 Teacher Mrs. Taylor Martone to the Board. Mrs. Martone is fostering student leadership in her class through 2 special programs; “Teachers in Training” and the “Kindness Squad”. The students have specific jobs within these programs that go beyond academic learning. They have pride in the work that they do and in the classroom they share as a group. They are positive role models to their classmates and help to guide others to act respectfully with one another. They help to solve problems with their peers and guide them to be kind. The

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students provide and accept feedback from one another. The students applied for these positions and really enjoy being a part of these teams.

#### 4.2 Recognition of Years of Service for Retiring Board Members (BOE Goal #1)

Mayor Champagne began by saying how proud he was of the many years of service the four retiring Board members have voluntarily given to the Vernon Board of Education. He announced that he had proclamations from the Mayor and the Town Council for each and read them aloud. He said that they will be sorely missed and that the skills they brought to the Board of Education will not be forgotten. Rep. Kevin Brown of the 56<sup>th</sup> District, and a former member of the Vernon Board of Education, was also in attendance this evening to present Official Citations from the State of Connecticut's General Assembly to the retiring Board members on behalf of himself, Rep. Jaime Foster of the 57<sup>th</sup> District, Rep. Tammy Nuccio of the 53<sup>rd</sup> District and Senator Jeff Gordon of the 35<sup>th</sup> District. He read aloud the citations, offering the General Assembly's sincerest congratulations for their many years of service and best wishes in their retirement. Rep. Brown said it was an honor to serve with the Vernon Board of Education and he learned so much from the Board members as they worked across the aisle to do what's best for children. Retiring Board members Deborah Rodriguez, Stephen Linton and Mark Kalina were then presented with gifts of appreciation from Chairperson Mrs. Anne Fischer. Mrs. Fischer was presented with her gift of appreciation by Vice Chairperson Mr. Mason Thrall. Dr. Macary thanked the four retiring members for their 44 years of service (collectively) and for making a tremendous impact on Vernon Public Schools. They have been a great example of excellence by being advocates for children. They are leaving the Vernon Public Schools District better than it was before and will be very sorely missed.

#### 5.0 Secretary's Report

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

Mrs. Fischer announced that we do have an item to add to the agenda for this evening. Dr. Macary explained that we need to seek Board approval for the MOU for an IT Infrastructure Audit. IT is a shared service with the Town of Vernon, and since Dr. Macary is chairing the Shared Services Council this year, the council members felt this should be presented to the Board of Education for their approval.

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MOTION: Mr. Linton moved to add the MOU for the IT Infrastructure Audit as agenda item 10.2(a)

SECOND: Mrs. Rodriguez

VOTE: Unanimous

## 5.2 Rockville High School Student Representative Report

My-Ngoc Lai-Huyen reported on the following:

- The RHS Math Team scored an impressive 35 points on their first meet against other schools. Both Senior Arthur Ufongene and Junior My-Ngoc Lai-Huyen tied for the most points!
- RHS Spirit Week was last week, 10/16 – 10/20
  - Monday – Dress Up as a Meme Day
  - Tuesday – Twin Day
  - Wednesday – Barbie vs. Oppenheimer Day
  - Thursday – Blue and Gold Day
  - Friday – Class Day
    - Freshman – Holiday
    - Sophomores – Rhyme without Reason (BBQ vs. Winnie the Pooh)
    - Juniors – USA (colors)
    - Senior – Togas (with T-Shirts underneath)
- The UConn ECE Credit registration process wrapped up on Friday, October 20<sup>th</sup>.
- As of today, RHS has hosted college representatives from 32 colleges and universities.
- Homecoming was a success with over 600 students participating.
- Girls' Volleyball has qualified for the State tournament and has a record of 12-4.
- Winter Sports registration is now open. The deadline is November 17<sup>th</sup>.
- The School Counseling Department and a group of Seniors will be visiting the UConn Storrs campus this Friday for a tour of the campus and an informal session.
- Girls' Soccer has their Senior Night this Thursday. Their game is at 6:00 PM with the Senior Day ceremony at 5:30 PM.

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- Girls' Volleyball has their Senior Night this Friday at 5:00 PM with a game to follow.
- The Boys' and Girls' Soccer teams are both two wins away from qualifying for the State tournament. Good luck to them!

Dr. Macary asked My-Ngoc how the PSATs went. She responded that she did well and liked taking them on-line vs. taking on paper.

## 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.)

Mr. John Kopec, 301 West Road, Ashford, CT, addressed the Board. He wanted to express what an honor and a privilege it was to work with retiring Board members Anne Fischer, Mark Kalina, Steve Linton and Deborah Rodriguez during his tenure as a Board member. The Town of Vernon was so fortunate to have each of them serve on the Board of Education.

## 7.0 Consent Agenda

### 7.1 Consent Agenda

- (a) Approval of the Minutes of the Board of Education Finance Committee Meeting held on October 10, 2023
- (b) Approval of the Minutes of the Regular Board of Education Meeting held on October 10, 2023
- (c) Approval of the Minutes of the Board of Education Facilities Committee Meeting held on October 16, 2023
- (d) Approval of Reviewed Board of Education Policy #5125 – Students – Student Record Confidentiality
- (e) Approval of Reviewed Board of Education Policy #5145.51 – Students – Sexual Harassment

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- (f) Approval of Revised Board of Education Policy #5145.511 – Students – Sexual Abuse Prevention and Education Program
- (g) Approval of Revised Board of Education Policy #6159 – Instruction – Individualized Education Program / Special Education Program
- (h) Approval of Reviewed Board of Education Policy #6161– Instruction – Equipment, Books and Materials
- (i) Approval of Reviewed Board of Education Policy #6161.1 – Instruction – Evaluation of Instructional Materials
- (j) Approval of Revised Board of Education Policy #6161.2 – Instruction – Care of Instructional Materials
- (k) Approval of Adopted Board of Education Policy #6162.51 – Instruction – Survey of Students (Student Privacy)

Mrs. Fischer pulled items 7.1(c), 7.1(f), 7.1(g), 7.1(i) and 7.1(k)

**Item 7.1(c)** – Page 13, Attendees: “*Mrs. Ann Fisher*” should be changed to “*Mrs. Anne Fischer*”.

**Item 7.1(f)** – Policy #5145.511 – page 23, section A – 1<sup>st</sup> line – “Implementing a child sexual abuse Curriculum to *provided* age-appropriate...” should be changed to “Implementing a child sexual abuse Curriculum to *provide* age-appropriate...”.

Page 24, section D, 4<sup>th</sup> line down, “Any student from the Sexual Misconduct with Children Program shall be provided...” should be changed to “Any student *exempt* from the Sexual Misconduct with Children Program shall be provided...”.

This policy will now have to be marked as “*Revised*” rather than “*Reviewed*”.

**Item 7.1(g)** – Policy #6159 – page 26, 1<sup>st</sup> paragraph – this paragraph needs to be re-written in order to be grammatically correct. The current language, “*In accordance with the regulations of the State Board of Education, each local and regional board of education shall: (1) Provide special education for school-age children requiring*”

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*special education; (2) The obligation of the school district under this subsection shall terminate when such child is graduated from high school or at the end of the school year during which such child reaches age twenty-two, whichever occurs first.*” should be changed to **“In accordance with the regulations of the State Board of Education, each local and regional Board of Education shall provide special education for school-age children requiring special education. The obligation of the school district under this subsection shall terminate when such child has graduated from high school or at the end of the school year during which such child reaches age twenty-two (22), whichever occurs first.”**

Page 29, under “Transition of Services”, section A, Item #3, 3<sup>rd</sup> line down, “his/her” should be changed to **“their”**.

Page 29, under “Transfer of Rights”, 1<sup>st</sup> paragraph, 3<sup>rd</sup> line down, “his/her” should be changed to **“their”**.

**Item 7.1(i)** – Policy #6161.1 – page 33, last paragraph, second line from the bottom, “his/her” should be changed to **“their”**.

**Item 7.1(k)** – Policy #6162.51 – page 36, 3<sup>rd</sup> paragraph, last line, delete the word **“Note”**.

Page 37, under “Marketing”, after items A – F, delete the word **“Note”** from the next paragraph.

Page 38, 1<sup>st</sup> paragraph, 5<sup>th</sup> line down, delete the word **“Note”**.

Page 38, under “Inspection of Instructional Material”, 5<sup>th</sup> line down, delete the word **“Note”**. Delete the last two sentences **“The law does not identify a reasonable period of time. Therefore, the district is free to identify and period of time it deems reasonable”**.

MOTION: Mr. Thrall moved to approve Consent Agenda Items 7.1(a), 7.1(b), 7.1(d), 7.1(e), 7.1(h) and 7.1(j) as they stand and 7.1(c), 7.1(f), 7.1(g), 7.1(i) and 7.1(k) as amended by the Chair

SECOND: Mr. Kalina

VOTE: Unanimous

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## 8.0 Personnel

### 8.1 Update on Current Roster of Positions (BOE Goal #2, #3)

Mr. Testa provided the Board with data regarding the current roster of positions in the District as of October 17, 2023. The data included the employee count within each bargaining unit as well as positions for salary and hourly non-affiliated staff and Adult Education staff. The District has a total of 826 paid employees. A question was asked as to how many individuals were hired as a result of the Job Fair held in September. Mr. Testa reported that we hired 4 Paraprofessionals and a few subs.

### 8.2 Approval of MOU Between the Vernon Board of Education and the Vernon Education Association (BOE Goal #2)

Dr. Macary announced that there is an MOU before the Board or their review between the Vernon Board of Education and the Vernon Education Association. He is requesting that we move the current insurance payments from the September-May schedule to a 24 pay schedule over 12 months. This will eliminate the need to seek repayment from a teacher 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 Union is in agreement with this new schedule as well as our Insurance Broker and Administrative staff.

MOTION: Mrs. Rodriguez moved to approve the MOU between the Vernon Board of Education and the Vernon Education Association as discussed and presented.

SECOND: Mr. Linton

VOTE: Unanimous

## 9.0 Teaching and Learning

### 9.1 School Improvement Plans – Vernon Center Middle School and Rockville High School (BOE Goal #1, #2, #3)

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Mr. David Caruso, Principal of Vernon Center Middle School and Mr. Jason Magao, Principal of Rockville High School, introduced themselves to the Board.

Each were asked to present their School Improvement Plans to the Board. They outlined their plans for the coming school year, explaining how they fall in-line with the Vernon Public Schools Mission Statement, Vision of the Graduate, Core Beliefs, Equity Stance and 5-Year Strategic Plan. Their plans follow the three strategic plan priorities: Student Success, Family and Community Partnership and System Excellence. They described how they are meeting these goals and how they plan to continue to meet them in the 2023 - 2024 school year. They spoke of school data related to these priorities, roles for school-based committees and the school-based accountability index.

## 10.0 General Business

### 10.1 Approval of Grant Applications (BOE Goal #1, #2, #3)

Mr. Testa referred to the following Grant applications presented in the Board packet and asked for Board approval:

- ARP ESSER Dual Credit Expansion Grant Program
- IDEA Part B Section 611 Grant
- IDEA Part B Section 619 Grant
- Title I – Part A Improving Basic Instruction
- Title II – Part A
- Title III – Part A English Language Acquisition and Enhancement

MOTION: Dr. Buxton moved to approve the following applications as discussed and presented:

- ARP ESSER Dual Credit Expansion Grant Program
- IDEA Part B Section 611 Grant
- IDEA Part B Section 619 Grant
- Title I – Part A Improving Basic Instruction
- Title II – Part A



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- Title III – Part A English Language Acquisition and Enhancement

SECOND: Ms. Wintress  
VOTE: Unanimous

### 10.2 Facilities Report on Summer Projects (BOE Goal #3)

Mr. Mark Rizzo, Supervisor of School Facilities and Special Projects, and Dwight Ryniewicz, Director of Public Works, updated the Board on the 2023 Summer Projects. They displayed a PowerPoint presentation which showed before and after pictures of the RHS Science Lab renovations, the RHS Lavatories renovations, the VCMS Hot Water Heater replacement, the VCMS Sykes projects (Carpentry Wing and Sewing Room), the CRS Roof replacement, the CRS Kitchen and Café renovation, the District-Wide Sidewalk and ADA Pad repairs and the construction of the Miracle Field. Mr. Linton and Mrs. Fischer thanked Mark and Dwight for their efforts during these renovations. They did a beautiful job on each project.

### 10.2(a) Approval of the MOU for an IT Infrastructure Audit (BOE Goal #1, #2)

Dr. Macary announced that, with the retirement of the IT Director, it was time to perform an Infrastructure audit to determine the needs of the IT Department. They will review all aspects of the department, including staffing, software, etc. It will take place in 4 phases and the cost will be split between the Town and the Board of Education. The Board's portion will be \$18,500.00. NSI, who has done previous work with the Town, will perform the audit.

MOTION: Mr. Kalina moved to approve the MOU for an IT Infrastructure Audit as presented  
SECOND: Ms. Colt  
VOTE: Unanimous

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

- Mrs. Rodriguez, Board Liaison for Lake Street School, reported that they are still holding their meetings via Zoom. Their Spooktacular event will be held this

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Thursday. They did well on their Scholastic Book Fair and their Ice Cream Social. Top Turkey is coming up. Picture Day went well.

- Mr. Grabowski, Board Liaison for Skinner Road School, reported that their Trunk or Treat is this Thursday. Their Pie Fundraiser went well. They are planning some great events the week of November 6th to celebrate being named a Blue Ribbon School.
- Dr. Macary announced that the Unified Team is playing South Windsor this Thursday at the new Miracle Field from 3:00 PM to 5:00 PM. All are invited to attend.
- Ms. Wintress, Board Liaison for Vernon Center Middle School, reported that a Model Train Show will take place at VCMS on Sunday, October 29<sup>th</sup>. This benefits the RHS Music Dept.
- Mrs. Rodriguez, Board Liaison for CREC, reported that she joined a Zoom meeting with CREC. They reviewed policies and budgets; nothing unusual.

## 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. Linton made a motion to adjourn at 8:34 PM

SECOND: Mr. Kalina

VOTE: Unanimous

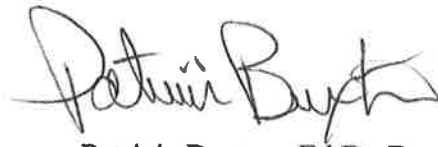
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Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Patricia Buxton". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Patricia" being more prominent than the last name "Buxton".

Patricia Buxton, Ed.D., Board Secretary