

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

September 11, 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, September 11, 2023.

1.0 Establish Quorum

Roll call was taken at 7:01 p.m.

There was a quorum. Board members present: Mrs. Fischer, Mr. Thrall, Dr. Buxton, Mr. Grabowski, Mr. Kalina, Mr. Linton, Mrs. Rodriguez and Ms. Wintress. Ms. Colt was absent.

Student Representatives present: My-Ngoc Lai-Huyen.

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

Mr. David Peling, Dr. Macary's Superintendent Intern, was also in attendance.

2.0 Call to Order

Chairperson Fischer called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. She then called for a moment of silence in honor of the Anniversary of 9/11.

3.0 Pledge of Allegiance

4.0 Recognitions and Presentations

4.1 Introduction of New Board of Education Student Representative (BOE Goal #1, #2)

Dr. Macary introduced My-Ngoc Lai-Huyen as our new Board of Education student representative. My-Ngoc is a Junior at Rockville High School and enjoys doing calligraphy, playing badminton and hanging out with her friends and family. In her spare time, she also enjoys reading and watching TV shows. My-Ngoc said she is honored to

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take part in this role on the Board. When asked what her favorite subject was, she said she loves Math. Mrs. Fischer welcomed her to the Board of Education.

4.2 Results of the Transitional Kindergarten Summer Pilot Program (BOE Goal #1, #2, #3)

Mr. Testa introduced RHS Family & Consumer Science teacher Kristen Piscottano, who piloted the Transitional Kindergarten Summer Program at VCMS this summer. Kristen introduced the concept of the program to the Board back in the Spring and was asked to come back to share the results with them. Kristen noted that the program was very successful and met its goal of preparing students for Kindergarten. She had a roster of 11 children. 8 out of the 11 students attended every day. The program lasted for 18 days, beginning at 8:00 AM and ending at 10:00 AM. Breakfast was provided to the students as well as transportation. Skills worked on included language, literacy, numeracy, physical, motor, creative, aesthetic, personal and social. Program successes included transitions and routines, opportunities for self-regulation and problem solving, introduction to Second Step and Foundations, family communication, paid internship opportunities and intern initiatives and proactively speaking to schools about incoming students. Challenges included accessing pre-registration information, finding eligible families and time. Future recommendations include advertising the program early to encourage families to register, extending the learning time from 2 hours to 3 hours per day and offering slots to students transitioning from VPS preschool who may need a boost. Mrs. Fischer said she would love to have a follow-up from the teachers who now have these students in their classrooms to see how they are doing and whether they improved, maintained or regressed in any of the skills learned in the program. Kristen said she would be happy to provide that information once collected.

4.3 Results of the YMCA's Summer Learning Program (BOE Goal #1, #2, #3)

Mr. Testa introduced David Corricelli, Executive Director of the Indian Valley Family YMCA. David stated that their summer program is run through BellXcell, a nationally recognized, non-profit organization, whom he has worked with for the last 10 years. The YMCA was granted additional funding for 2 years to expand the program, and their first thought was to approach Vernon to see if there would be an interest in letting the YMCA run it there. The program was of no cost to families. It ran for 5 weeks at VCMS from Monday – Friday, 8:00 AM to 2:00 PM. This year, the program served 5th and 6th

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graders. Breakfast, lunch and transportation were provided to all students. With a capacity for 40 students, they had 26 who participated. Three certified staff from Vernon Public Schools were hired to teach. The program included 2 90-minute blocks, one in math literacy and one in reading literacy. Fridays were scheduled as “in-house” field trips. The goal of the program was to help students maintain what was learned throughout the previous school year and to be ready for the next school year. Students were tested during the first 2 days of the program and were re-tested during the final days. David reviewed the results of the program with the Board. All in all, the students showed growth in most areas and the program was considered a success. Our teachers enjoyed being a part of the program and would like to participate again next year.

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

My-Ngoc Lai-Huyen reported on the following:

- School started Thursday, August 31st
- RHS is offering an AP Pre-Calculus course for the first time
- Project Graduation is coming up this Wednesday and Thursday
- RHS will be recognized, along with other schools, at a celebration this Friday at Middletown High School by the CT State Department of Education for exceeding the FAFSA Challenge
- Open House will be held this Thursday for Freshmen and their families to learn more about RHS. The School Counseling Dept. will host a brief informational session for families and students, outlining all of the dual/concurrent enrollment programs (opportunities for students to earn college credits)
- The RHS Girls’ Volleyball team has a home game on Friday, September 15th against Tolland at 5:30 PM
- The RHS Football team has a home game on Friday, September 22nd, against Coventry at 6:30 PM

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- Girls' Soccer has a home game on Thursday, September 14th
- Boys' Soccer has a home game on Friday, September 15th

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 Regular Board of Education Meeting held on August 28, 2023

Mrs. Fischer noted a typo on page 4 of the minutes, section 9.1, fourth line from the bottom of the paragraph. "The must" should be changed to "They must".

MOTION: Mr. Thrall moved to approve Consent Agenda Item 7.1(a) as amended
SECOND: Ms. Wintress
VOTE: Unanimous

8.0 Personnel

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

This item was moved to the end of the meeting.

8.2 Superintendent's Evaluation (BOE Goal #1, #2, #3) (Executive Session Anticipated)

This item was moved to the end of the meeting.

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9.0 Teaching and Learning

9.1 Smarter Balanced 2022-2023 Student Achievement Results (BOE Goal #2)

Mr. Testa shared the results of the 2022-2023 Smarter Balanced Scores with the Board. He will present the Accountability Index at a later date as the full report was not in yet. The Smarter Balanced Summative Assessment provides an annual snapshot of student achievement that is used along with other information when making educational decisions. It measures the percent of students who meet grade level mastery in English Language Arts (ELA) and Math in Grades 3-8 and Science in Grades 5, 8 and 11. There are four achievement levels: Levels 1 and 2 identify students as not meeting or approaching grade level mastery; Levels 3 and 4 are considered meeting grade level mastery. Mr. Testa went over the results with the Board. Vernon met or exceeded the standard in ELA and outperformed 58 School Districts in CT. Vernon also outperformed the State average in ELA and was ranked 1st in ELA when compared to the Alliance Districts. In Math, Grades 3-8 met or exceeded the standard and outperformed 52 School Districts in CT. Vernon also outperformed the State average and was ranked 1st in Math when compared to the Alliance Districts. In Science, Grades 5, 8 & 11 met or exceeded the standard and outperformed 45 School Districts in CT. Vernon also outperformed the State average. Going forward, the 3 key ways to make improvements are:

1. Raise the cognitive level of the content that is being taught
2. Increase the skills and knowledge of the teacher through Professional Learning
3. Increase the engagement of the students in learning

There was concern that half of our students are not meeting goal in Math. Dr. Macary said Vernon did well, but can do much better. COVID also played a large part in learning loss and, considering the impact of the pandemic, Vernon did well. Our curriculum is solid, but we will develop a plan to improve performance.

10.0 General Business

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

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Director of Business and Finance William Meier announced that the Finance Committee met this evening to review the Year-to-Date Budget. He presented two action items that he would like to ask the Board to consider for approval:

- (a) 2023-2024 Tuition Rates for Non-Resident Students
- (b) Asset Disposal Requests

Item 10.1(a):

Mr. Meier noted that the Finance Committee is recommending raising the 2023-2024 Out-of-District tuition rate by 5%

MOTION: Mr. Kalina moved to approve a 5% increase to the 2023-2024 Out-of-District tuition rate as presented
SECOND: Mr. Linton
VOTE: Unanimous

Item 10.1(b):

MOTION: Mr. Thrall moved to approve the Asset Disposal Requests as presented
SECOND: Dr. Buxton
VOTE: Unanimous

10.2 Revision to the 2023 Board of Education Meeting Calendar (BOE Goal #1, #2, #3)

Dr. Macary asked that the Board consider approving a change to the Board of Education meeting calendar due to the Municipal elections and swearing in of four new Board members in November. He is recommending that the November 13th meeting be held at Central Office rather than at VCMS as originally scheduled, and that the November 27th meeting now be held at VCMS immediately after the BOE Student Awards, which would normally have been held during National Education Week. This change will allow for the new Board members to be sworn in at Central Office rather than offsite.

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MOTION: Mr. Thrall moved to approve the revision to the Board of Education meeting calendar as presented
SECOND: Mrs. Rodriguez
VOTE: Unanimous

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.

MOTION: Dr. Buxton moved that the Board of Education go into Executive Session at 8:10 PM to review Personnel items 8.1 and 8.2, inviting Dr. Macary and Mr. Peling.
SECOND: Mrs. Rodriguez
VOTE: Unanimous

The Board came out of Executive Session at 8:22 PM to vote on item 8.1, Leave of Absence Request

MOTION: Mr. Grabowski moved that the Board approve the request for an extension of maternity leave, submitted by Sasha Anderson 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: Mr. Kalina
VOTE: Unanimous

MOTION: Mr. Thrall moved that the Board return to Executive Session at 8:24 PM to address item 8.2, Superintendent's Evaluation
SECOND: Mr. Linton
VOTE: Unanimous

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The Board came out of Executive Session at 9:05 PM

13.0 Adjournment

MOTION: Mr. Linton made a motion to adjourn at 9:06 PM
SECOND: Mr. Kalina
VOTE: Unanimous

Respectfully submitted,



Patricia Buxton, Ed.D., Board Secretary