

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 25, 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 25, 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, Mr. Kalina, Mr. Linton and Mrs. Rodriguez. Ms. Wintress attended via Zoom. Ms. Colt was absent.

Student Representatives present: Aedan Ruddock and 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.

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 Skinner Road School Students (BOE Goal #1, #2)

Dr. Macary introduced Mrs. Karen Eckblom, teacher at Skinner Road School, who headed the 3rd Grade Science experiment this past Spring through the First Seed Foundation. The purpose of the experiment was to determine if seeds exposed in Space would germinate any differently from those left on Earth. The students presented their experiment to the Board in May and were asked to come back today to share the results of their findings. The students gave the Board a review of how they prepared for the experiment. They sent

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half of their tomato seeds to the International Space Station via SpaceX. The seeds remained on the Space Station for 5 weeks. Once they returned and were brought back to the school, the students placed the seeds in Ziploc bags and hung them in the windows of the classroom for two weeks to allow them to germinate. Once germination took place, they planted them in potting soil in paper cups to allow the plants to grow. They were not aware which seeds went to space and which seeds remained on Earth. Once they found out, the students noticed that the seeds that stayed on Earth actually grew a bit better than those sent to the Space Station. Once the school year was over, the students were allowed to take their plants home. One student reported that he had success with his plant; unfortunately, the other student did not. Overall, the students really enjoyed the experiment.

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 on the following:

- ECE registration is underway for UCONN's Dual Enrollment Program
- The boys' and girls' soccer teams have both had great seasons so far, winning many games
- The field hockey, swimming and volleyball teams have also been successful
- The football team won their first game of the season on Friday night against Coventry with a score of 50 – 0. The team is off to an amazing season.

My-Ngoc Lai-Huyen reported on the following:

- All students in Grades 9 – 11 will sit for the PSATs on October 11th
- Seniors will participate in a Mock Interview Day on October 11th
- Progress reports come out next week on Friday, October 6th
- The football team has an away game this coming Saturday, September 30th at 11:00 AM vs. CREC

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Dr. Macary asked Aedan to share with the Board his experience on a recent field trip to Ground Zero in New York City. Aedan spoke of his visit to the 9/11 Museum and how impressive it was to see many items from that day on display. He noted that first responders who survived that day are still being affected to this day because of illnesses they are dealing with and dying from due to exposure to the site. He also spoke of a Rockville High School graduate who recently passed away due to an illness he developed from exposure to the site.

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 September 11, 2023
- (b) Approval of the Minutes of the Regular Board of Education Meeting held on September 11, 2023
- (c) Approval of the Minutes of the Board of Education Facilities Committee Meeting held on September 18, 2023

MOTION: Mr. Thrall moved to approve Consent Agenda Item 7.1(a), (b) and (c)
SECOND: Mrs. Rodriguez
VOTE: Unanimous

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8.0 Personnel

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

This item was moved to the end of the meeting.

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

This item was moved to the end of the meeting.

8.3 Personnel Matter (BOE Goal #2) (Executive Session Anticipated)

This item was moved to the end of the meeting.

9.0 Teaching and Learning

9.1 Summer School Program Update (BOE Goal #1, #2, #3)

Melissa Trantolo and Hannah Steed introduced themselves to the Board. Melissa Trantolo spoke on behalf of Alicia McEvila, Elementary Summer School Program Coordinator, who was unable to attend tonight's meeting. Melissa noted that the Summer School program ran from June 26 through July 27th, 2023. Elementary enrollment totaled 121 students. Highlights during the program included a visit to the CT Science Center, a visit from the Vernon PD Canine Unit and Enrichment activities. They had the highest enrollment and attendance in Kindergarten and only 3 grade levels fell below 70% average attendance. All students in grades 3-5 maintained learning or showed growth in reading and math. All students in grades 6-7 increased at least 2 points in reading and math. Some areas to focus on include prioritizing summer learning attendance. Some students missed days due to vacations and planned summer camps.

Hannah Steed spoke of the high school program. The program offered the following:

- Edgenuity Program – an online program for students who require additional credits to maintain being “on-track” for graduation. 34 students participated in semester 1 and 25 students participated in semester 2. Teachers were available to support

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students in their content areas through small group instruction. Students also completed work outside of the classroom setting independently. Semester 1 students earned 15 credits and semester 2 students earned 13.5 credits.

- Intervention Program – for students who require additional support during in-person classes, broken up into two semesters, for extra credit recovery. Classes offered included Biology, Geometry, Algebra, World History, US History, English 9, English 10, Health & Wellness 1 & 2 and Physical Education. In semester 1, 28.5 credits were earned. In semester 2, 32.5 credits were earned. Four external teachers were hired for the Biology, Math, Social Studies and English. One internal teacher was hired for Physical Education and Health. Class sizes ranged from 4 – 17 students.
- ABL Program – for students who could use additional support with their social skills and basic living skills. The students participated in a field trip to the market to grocery shop so that they could cook their own lunch. They also did activities of daily living and academic lessons. 23 students participated in this program.

To summarize the high school summer program, there were a total of 89.5 credits earned, with a total of 86 students participating. 2 of those students were able to graduate.

9.2 Approval of the Digital Art 1, Foundations of Art & Design 1, French II, Mathematical Modeling and US History II Curriculum (BOE Goal #2, #3)

Mr. Testa reported that the Curriculum Committee met on Wednesday, September 20, 2023 and reviewed the following 5 RHS courses with Mrs. Dominique Fox, Director of Teaching & Learning, Secondary:

- Digital Art 1
- Foundations of Art & Design 1
- French II
- Mathematical Modeling
- US History II

Once reviewed, the Committee recommended that they move forward for full Board approval.

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MOTION: Mrs. Rodriguez moved to approve the Digital Art 1, Foundations of Art & Design 1, French II, Mathematical Modeling and US History II Curricula as presented.
SECOND: Dr. Buxton
VOTE: Unanimous

9.3 2023 RHS Advanced Placement & Dual Enrollment Programs (BOE Goal #2, #3)

Mr. Testa reviewed his presentation with the Board regarding the 2022-2023 Advanced Placement and Dual Enrollment Programs offered at Rockville High School. We currently offer 8 AP courses and will outperform last year by 5%. Dual Enrollment provides access to college courses while in high school, earning college credits at minimal cost as compared to the cost once enrolled as a college student. Teachers must be certified to teach these courses and we do support them should they need to go back to school. Our Dual Enrollment Program partners with Middlesex Community College, Manchester Community College, Eastern Connecticut State University, University of Connecticut and Goodwin University. In 2022-2023, a total of 1,187 credits were earned across all dual enrollment programs and 260 RHS students earned college credits. This equals approximately 55% of the Class of 2023 earning college credits. 77% of the Class of 2023 are furthering their education at a two or four year college or university and 78 Seniors earned scholarships totaling \$396,310.00. Mrs. Fischer asked what the number of students taking courses was for this year. Mr. Testa said he would find out that information and report it back to the Board.

10.0 General Business

10.1 Approval of the 2023-2024 Alliance Grant (BOE Goal #1, #2, #3)

Dr. Macary explained that the 2023-2024 Alliance Grant, totaling 3.6 million dollars, will cover the following services:

- Reading and Math Interventionists
- Additional Instruction time, such as Summer School
- Transportation for students who attend Summer School
- Purchasing literacy resources & instructional materials

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- Teacher training from third-party consultants
- Purchasing 550 Chromebooks to replace outdated laptops
- Purchasing several Newline Displays
- Upgrading teacher and student furniture for one RHS Special Education Room

MOTION: Mr. Thrall moved to approve the 2023-2024 Alliance Grant as presented

SECOND: Mr. Kalina

VOTE: Unanimous

10.2 September 21, 2023 Job Fair Results (BOE Goal #1, #2, #3)

Mr. Testa reported that the Vernon Public Schools Job Fair took place on September 21, 2023. 56 people came through the doors, and the Café and Para tables had the most traffic. When asked what brought them in, many people responded that the lawn signs around town were very effective. We are working with those who expressed an interest in a position and are awaiting their completed applications in order to move forward in the hiring process. Mr. Testa will share with the Board the number of those candidates hired in about a month.

10.3 Approval of the CABE Board Recognition Award Application (BOE Goal #1, #2, #3)

Dr. Macary announced that it is once again time to submit our application for the CABE Board Recognition Award. He referred to the application form and explained that all needed criteria was highlighted. He also reminded the Board that the full submission packet was uploaded last week to the Google Drive for their review

MOTION: Mrs. Rodriguez moved to approve the CABE Board Recognition Award Application as presented

SECOND: Mr. Grabowski

VOTE: Unanimous

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

No one had anything to report, but Mrs. Rodriguez mentioned the upcoming Ice Cream

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Social and Book Fair at Lake Street School.

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 the November 13, 2023 Board meeting will be held here in Central Office and the November 27, 2023 meeting will be held at VCMS immediately following the BOE Awards Ceremony.

12.0 Opportunity for Questions from the Press Regarding Agenda Items

No one from the Press was in attendance.

MOTION: Mr. Thrall moved that the Board of Education go into Executive Session at 8:02 PM to review Personnel items 8.1 - Superintendent's Evaluation, 8.2 – Leave of Absence Request and 8.3 – Personnel Matter, inviting Superintendent Dr. Macary and Assistant Superintendent Mr. Testa.

SECOND: Mrs. Rodriguez

VOTE: Unanimous

Mr. Testa left the Executive Session at 8:30 PM.

The Board came out of Executive Session at 8:32 PM to vote on item 8.2, Leave of Absence Request

MOTION: Mr. Thrall moved that the Board approve the request for an extension of maternity leave, submitted by Sarah Roos, 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: Dr. Buxton

VOTE: Unanimous

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MOTION: Mr. Linton moved that the Board return to Executive Session at 8:36 PM, inviting Superintendent Dr. Macary, to discuss item 8.1, Superintendent's Evaluation
SECOND: Dr. Buxton
VOTE: Unanimous

The Board came out of Executive Session at 9:34 PM

13.0 Adjournment

MOTION: Mr. Linton made a motion to adjourn at 9:35 PM
SECOND: Mr. Grabowski
VOTE: Unanimous

Respectfully submitted,



Patricia Buxton, Ed.D., Board Secretary