

IV. ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

1. PRINCIPAL'S REPORT (Submitted by Amy L. Suffoletto)

Amy reported that many illnesses (Covid, flu and strep) have been present over the past month. She also noted there have been some student incidents with marijuana vaping. The YSB has submitted a vaping grant with SERAC to hopefully educate students further on the dangers of these products. The Board suggested starting conversations with students before they reach middle school. Mr. Burrows reported that a Crisis Intervention Team is available, if needed, to check with the school standards/policy and to provide social-emotional support. He stated that the follow-through on this issue will be relentless.

January Highlights:

January 2, 2024 School Resumes

January 10, 2024 Spirit Wednesday – PJ Day

January 12, 2024 Early Dismissal 12pm – Professional Learning

January 15, 2024 No School

January 16, 2024 6-8 grade study circle resumes T/TH

January 19, 2024 Progress Reports

January 2-24, 2024 Winter Benchmark Testing Window

Students as a Focal Point

- **Trimester 1 Assembly:** Students were recognized at our in school Trimester 1 assembly in December: Students of the Trimester PK-8, Honor Roll Students, and NJHS were part of the assembly. Recognition of student success during the year builds confidence and a desire to work to improve in all areas
- **Winter Sports:** Girls and Boys basketball is off to a strong start with some great wins recently.
- **Spirit Days:** In conjunction with promoting our cafeteria breakfast and lunch, themed spirit days are planned to boost meal purchases and school spirit.
- **Morning News:** Our WVES News Team has worked this year at providing a news broadcast online to our school. Interested students in grades 7-8 work during WIN to create a daily news segment in the library with Mrs. Voland.
- **Early Study Circle:** Students in grades 6-8 are invited to participate in our after-school program that supports academic studies. Middle level teachers offer tutoring and other support for students to improve their understanding of topics and overall academic success.
- **School Lunch Program:** The school lunch program saw an increase of numbers this past year due to free breakfast and lunch. For the 23-24 school year, funding will support FREE breakfast for all students and free lunch for free/reduced qualifying students. Full pay is \$3.75 per lunch meal. Students should grab a breakfast and enjoy. Ala Carte – Ice Cream will be sold on Wednesdays, starting on January 10, 2024.
- **Connecticut State Assessment Individual Student Reports (SBAC, CTAA, CAPT, CMT, Skills Checklist):** The 2024 testing season will begin soon. SBAC testing will take place after April vacation.

Curriculum, Learning, and Instruction

- **Curriculum/Committee Work:** Teachers continue with professional learning that promotes new initiatives, learning strategies, while working with their grade level teams on curriculum and implementation of programs. This year teachers will focus on Into Reading and Into Literature, aligning writing instruction/practices and expectations, additionally aligning Science, and Social Studies items into the ELA documents, as well as other curriculum areas to ensure we are meeting the needs of all students. Revamping of pacing guides, benchmark assessments, and report cards will also be throughout this year.
- **Meetings:** Include regular meeting of the following committees as needed: English/Language Arts, Mathematics, TEAM, Wellness, Student Services Department, Safe School Climate, Crisis Intervention Team, Transportation, School Readiness Council, Indoor Air Quality/Tools for Schools/Safety, School Security and Safety, JHS/HS Transition, and a Faculty Meeting monthly as determined logistically.

- **Professional Development:** Teachers and Paras continue with professional learning as determined for school year 23-24 on early dismissal days, committee meetings and professional learning and grade level work takes place.
- **Teacher Evaluation Plan / TEAM:** Any plan updates will be reviewed with the PDEC committee and according to State guidelines. The TEAM program is being monitored by assigned mentors and supporting our new teachers.
- **Grants/Reports/Applications:**
 - **Connecticut Office of Early Childhood:** The monthly School Readiness Reports for the Voluntown Elementary School Pre School and School Readiness Program have been updated for submission by the monthly due date.
 - **FY 23 School Readiness and Quality Enhancement Grants** have been awarded and received.
 - **NAEYC Accreditation:** Accreditation is through 2027 and SR staff continues to work in the portfolio to ensure all action items are met and completed regularly.

Technology, Building, Grounds, Transportation & Safety

- Mike Creaturo, Technology Coordinator, continues to support IT needs within the building.
- Brian Kallio, Director of Maintenance, continues to review, implement, and address needs.
- Anne Michaud, Director of Transportation, continues to review and address needs within our transportation department and has made adjustments, as needed.

Community and Public Relations

- **PTO** - Suggestions are welcome for the school year. Contact Hailie Davis hdavis@voluntownct.org. Voluntown PTO is looking for parent members. Without parent members, we will not be able to host events. Consider supporting an upcoming event.
- **Youth Service Bureau/Local Prevention Council** – The YSB-LPC Advisory Board meets virtually on the third Wednesday each month at 5:00 p.m. YSB programs have been running and students are excited for their offerings. Contact Melinda Bryan mbryan@voluntownct.org.

2. DIRECTOR OF STUDENT SERVICES (Lloyd A. Johnson, PhD)

- Dr. Johnson stated that, in the near future, the Board will need to designate a “District Transition Coordinator” and that this position will involve some training. He also thanked Amy for her continual support on evaluations, referrals, and testing.
- During the past few weeks, the number of assessments required of the department staff has necessitated requests for release time to meet with students to administer the assessments. When the load is light, this is accomplished during planning or WIN time when students are not in content classes. To meet legally mandated timelines, when necessary, Amy has supported my department members by providing coverage so they may meet with students to administer assessments. Analyzing the data and completing reports is completed during non-instructional time.
- I continue to appreciate the creative problem-solving and services provided by our partner high schools. Recently, a few students facing challenges have received strong support and a flexible understanding of their needs. Our students are blessed with high school options with staff capable and willing to meet their individual needs.
- Dr. Emily Casey, our consulting psychologist, led our department members in exploring the Feifer Assessments of Reading and Writing. She has administered these new assessments recently for a few of our students. These assessments are more accurate in identifying Dyslexia and Dysgraphia than previously used. We purchased these assessments for our department with grant funds. The training in the Feifer Assessment of Reading was conducted on October 13, 2022. The training on the Feifer Assessment of Writing was conducted on September 21, 2023. Our Special Education teachers have begun administering the FAR. We have acquired the Feifer Assessment of Mathematics designed to identify Dyscalculia (learning disability in math). Our staff will receive training on that assessment on January 23, 2024.
- By January 11, 2024, this Director will have chaired 78 PPT/504/Parent Meetings held with the following schools: VES, The Learning Clinic in Brooklyn, EastConn’s Northeast School in Killingly, EastConn’s Autism Program in Columbia, Norwich Free Academy, Wheeler High

School, Griswold High School, Griswold Alternative School, The Marine Science Magnet High School in Groton, and the Norwich Transition Academy.

The census of students in Pre-K to 12+ receiving special services is as follows:

	10/01/2021		10/1/2022		1/11/2024	
	IEP	504	IEP	504	IEP	504
PreK -8	34	31	34	36	36	35
9-12+	20	15	18	18	17	13
TOTAL	54	46	52	54	53	48

3. SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS (Submitted by Adam S. Burrows)

- Calendar of Events for January and February
- The District Enrollment Report noted 238 students in Pre-K to 8th grade and 126 high school students.
- \$11,885.50 has been returned to the Town of Voluntown Undesignated Fund from grants, rebates, and other unanticipated savings received.
- Finalized Policy # 5131.81 on Cellular Phones/Electronic Communication Devices
- Letter to 5-6 grade parents from Amy Suffoletto regarding a leave of absence
- 2023-24 Cancellations, Delays, and Early Dismissals list including projected last day of school
- 2023-24 Revised School Calendar
- CABE Policy Highlights – January 2, 2024 (Transitioning to 2024); December 5, 2023 (Play-Based Learning)
- Building Committee Meeting on Tuesday, January 30, 2024 at 1:30 p.m.

VIII. OLD BUSINESS

1. Budget Preparation Timeline for 24-25

Mr. Burrows distributed and reviewed the first draft of the 24-25 Budget Proposal of \$7,397,675 which represented a 4.85% increase or \$342,341 over the 23-24 budget of \$7,055,334.

Questions were raised on certain line items and discussions were held.

The ECS allocation will be \$2,117,243 for 2024/2025 thanks to the legislators for holding us harmless at this level of funding for the past few years. Mr. Burrows stated that he continues to disagree with the “School Finance Project” formula. If that is implemented, Voluntown would receive a potential cut of \$688,800 in ECS Funds.

This timeline has been developed in cooperation with the Board of Selectmen to keep them informed about educational priorities, needs of our students, and the goals of our school system based on a long-term Strategic Plan developed through a comprehensive “Community Conversation” process.

Thursday	02-08-24	Superintendent’s updated 24-25 Proposal submitted to Board of Ed.
Thursday	02-22-24	Board of Education “Budget” Meeting (if needed)
Thursday	03-14-24	Updated 24-25 budget proposal presented to Board of Education
Tuesday	03-19-24	24-25 Budget Proposal is sent to the Town Clerk for public dissemination
Thursday	04-04-24	Public Hearing at 7:00 p.m. and BOE 24-25 budget approval
Monday	04-22-24	Budget proposal for 24-25 delivered to Town Clerk for dissemination
Tuesday	05-07-24	Possible annual Town Meeting to vote on Budgets at the Voluntown Elementary School gymnasium at 7:00 p.m.

2. Federal and State Grants

The following is a summary of short-term grants:

2021 through 2023

- COVID Relief Fund (\$176,639 – Expended)
- Elementary/Secondary Emergency Relief Funds or ESSER I (\$32,674 – Expended)
- Elementary/Secondary Emergency Relief Funds or ESSER II (\$136,204 being expended)
- American Rescue Plan or ARP-ESSER III (\$306,105 being expended)

- Special Education Stipend Grant (\$20,000 Expended)
- ESSER II Special Education Recovery Grant (\$30,000 – Expended)
- ESSER II Bonus Special Populations Recovery Grant (\$25,000 – Expended)
- ESSER II Bonus Dyslexia Recovery Grant (\$3,250 - Approved)
- Homeless Grant (\$1,770 – Application Submitted)
- USDA School Lunch Program Equipment Grant (\$25,000 Expended)
- Comcast local grant to school systems (\$3,500 Expended)
- Sp. Ed. Grants (\$10,000 for Certified and \$5,000 for Non-certified – Expended)
- HVAC Grant request of \$170,000 to State of Connecticut (denied)

2023 -2024

- A Mental Health 3-year federal-state grant has been approved for our school system and we will receive allocation of \$25,150 in 23-24, \$25,150 in 24-25, and \$17,605 in 25-26 for a total amount that equals \$67,905. These funds secure part-time Social Worker services from Preston. There were necessary edits to the Mental Health grant which have been addressed by the Central Office.
- Received a Title IV grant for \$10,000 to purchase technology instructional supplies
- Received Title I (\$42,320) and Title II (\$5,878) grant funds totaling \$48,198 to partially support our SRBI (Scientifically Researched-Based Interventions) program that offer reading and math support for identified students.
- Right to Read grant (\$33,000 – recently submitted)
- SERAC Vaping grant (\$2,265 – approved)

The above grants are additional allocations for a number of priorities especially related to improving air quality in schools throughout the nation, addressing learning loss, supporting technology connectivity, additional PPE of Personal Protective Equipment, etc. These funds were not used to replace the day-to-day and year-to-year school expenditures from our local school budget.

3. NFA 2025-2030 Contract Update

The Partner school districts have been in communication with the Head of NFA and are in the process of negotiating the 2025-2030 contract.

4. 24/25 School Calendar

The 24/25 School Calendar was provided to the Board along with regional calendars from EASTCONN and LEARN. Administration will research if other local school districts will be taking December 20, 2024 as a half day. This item was tabled.

5. Safety on Route 138

This item was discussed at the beginning of the meeting with Selectwoman Tracey Hanson.

6. Policy and Regulation # 3542.43 – Charging Policy (2nd reading)

MOTION # 3 (1/11/24) was made (Muschiano/Kalwara) to approve Policy and Regulation # 3542.43 on Charging; all in favor; motion passes.

7. Policy and Regulation # 6142.101 – Wellness Policy (2nd review-Tabled)

8. Policy and Form # 6162.51 Survey of Students (4th reading-Tabled)

IX. NEW BUSINESS

1. Policy # 6172.3 – Home Schooling (1st reading - Tabled)

2. Personnel

MOTION # 4 (1/11/24) was made with regrets (Grant/Wicks) to accept the resignation from Katherine Brown as a Paraeducator; all in favor; motion passes.

3. **Annual Meaningful Notice/403b:** Provided to the Board.

4. **IAQ/TfS/Safety Annual Checklist and Technician HVAC Assessment**

New legislation PA 23-167 mandates that school systems, as per a recent 12/21/23 memo released from the SDE, are required to complete the following:

- Indoor Air Quality Assessment Checklists which need to be posted on the school website for Building and Grounds, Waste Management, Ventilation, Walkthrough, Pest Management, and Food Services
- A comprehensive HVAC Assessment every five years by a certified technician

X. UPCOMING MEETING(S)/AGENDA ITEMS

- BOE Special Meeting – Thursday, January 25, 2024 at 7:00 p.m. in the Central Office with Attorney Dan Murphy
- Regular BOE Meeting – Thursday, February 8, 2024 at 7:00 p.m. in the Central Office
- Budget Preparation Timeline 24-25
- Safety on Route 138
- 24-25 School Calendar
- NFA 2025/30 Contract Update
- Policies/Regulations: 6142.101 (Wellness), 6162.51 (Survey of Students), 6172.3 (Home Schooling)
- Personnel (Volleyball, Drama)

XI. EXECUTIVE SESSION - None

XII. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION # 4 (1/11/24) was made (Muschiano/Kalwara) to adjourn at 9:01 p.m.; all in favor; motion passes.

Witness

Date

Attest

Date

Respectfully drafted and edited by:

Dee Dee Jackman, Board of Education Clerk

Adam S. Burrows, Superintendent of Schools

APPROVED AT THE 2/8/24 BOE MEETING