

**VOLUNTOWN BOARD OF EDUCATION**  
**195 Main Street, Voluntown, CT 06384**  
**Phone: (860) 376-9167 [www.voluntownct.org](http://www.voluntownct.org)**  
**SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS: Adam S. Burrows**

**ANNUAL REORGANIZATION and ELECTION OF OFFICERS**  
**MEETING MINUTES**

November 9, 2023, at 7:00 p.m. in the Central Office

This public meeting is viewable on the Voluntown School YouTube channel:  
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC3I7dQmnXMxoTINHzaSZ1zw>  
 Citizens are welcome to attend in person to share their comments.

- I. CALL TO ORDER** Adam S. Burrows, Superintendent of Schools, called the Annual Reorganization and Election of Officers meeting to order at 7:10 p.m.

**ATTENDANCE    Present:** Kate Beuparlant (Chairperson)  
 Meagan Wicks (Vice Chair)  
 Valerie Muschiano  
 Sarah Thompson

**Absent:** Cathy Grant (Secretary)  
 Arikka Kalwara  
 Christopher Wilson

**Also Present:** Adam S. Burrows (Superintendent)  
 Amy L. Suffoletto (Principal)  
 Lloyd A. Johnson PhD (Director of Student Services)  
 Dee Dee Jackman (BOE Clerk)

**CITIZENS / COMMENTS** – None

- II. ELECTION OF OFFICERS** Mr. Burrows, Superintendent, opened the floor for nominations for the annual election of the Board of Education Officers for the following positions: Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, and Secretary.

Sarah Thompson nominated Kate Beuparlant for BOE Chairperson.  
 No further nominations were made.

**MOTION # 1 (11/9/23): was made (Thompson/Muschiano) to close nominations and elect Kate Beuparlant as the Board of Education Chairperson;**  
**BALLOT Results: 4 votes received for Beuparlant; Motion carries.**

Chairperson Beuparlant took the floor and opened the nominations for Vice Chair.

Sarah Thompson nominated Meagan Wicks for BOE Vice Chair.  
 No further nominations were made.

**MOTION # 2 (11/9/23): was made (Thompson/Muschiano) to close nominations and elect Meagan Wicks as the Board of Education Vice-Chairperson;**  
**BALLOT Results: 4 votes received for Wicks; Motion carries.**

Meagan Wicks nominated Cathy Grant for BOE Secretary.  
 No further nominations were made.

**MOTION # 3 (11/9/23): was made (Thompson/Wicks) to close nominations and elect Cathy Grant as the Board of Education Secretary;  
BALLOT Results: 4 votes received for Grant; Motion carries.**

Chairperson Beauparlant called the regular meeting to order at 7:17 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited the BOE Mission Statement was read.

The Board reviewed the Committee Assignments and discussed who will serve on each committee. This will be reviewed again at the next meeting.

### III. CONSENT AGENDA

**MOTION # 4 (11/9/23) was made (Thompson/Muschiano) for the Board to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. All in favor; motion passes.**

### IV. ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

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

##### November Highlights:

- Literacy Night Grades PK-8 Nov. 2nd
- Grades 6-8 Dance Nov. 3rd
- Boys Basketball Tryouts start Nov. 6th
- Parent Teacher Conferences Nov. 7th
- Veterans Day Breakfast and Assembly Nov. 10th
- Early Dismissal Nov. 10th 12pm
- Girls Basketball and Cheerleading start Nov. 13th
- PTO Movie Night Nov. 17th
- Early Dismissal Nov. 22 1pm
- No School on Nov. 23-Nov. 25

##### Students as a Focal Point

- **Winter Sports:** Girls and Boys basketball and Cheerleading are underway in November. Students in grades 5-8 must have currently passing grades and a physical on file to be eligible to participate. Winter is our longest season for sports! Students are eager to get back out there!
- **NJHS:** The NJHS food drive was a huge success! Thank-you to our middle school members who collected and to all of our families who donated to the St. Mary's Food Pantry!
- **Book Fair and Family Night:** The Scholastic Book Fair and Family night held in October was a huge success! The PTO put on a "spooky" fun time with decorated trunks, games and of course books!
- **Grandparents Day Celebration:** Students in grades K-2 celebrated with their grandparents and special friends in October. They shared snacks, crafts and books together.
- **Literacy Night:** 53 students participated in literacy night with their families! Our ELA committee put together a "Camping" adventure for students to explore their love of literacy.
- **PTO Fundraiser:** Butter braids are open for orders in Nov! Our PTO and families look forward to selling butter braids every year! Spirit wear is also still available, place an order in time for the holiday season through our website!
- **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!
- **Connecticut State Assessment Individual Student Reports (SBAC, CTAA, CAPT, CMT, Skills Checklist):** Completed and all student reports will be sent to families when received in September 2023. Review of testing and action items will be done at the end of September and throughout the school year.

### 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.
- **VES Website/Social Media:** Great effort has been made to update and post current information/resources for families. VES hosts a Facebook and Instagram page for communication.
- **VES Google Calendar:** Staff continues to utilize the Google Calendar tool, which highlights the important events taking place at VES and in our community.
- **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. In addition to time afforded to the curriculum work needing to be completed.
- **Teacher Evaluation Plan / TEAM:**
  - Any plan updates will be reviewed with the PDEC committee and according to State guidelines.
  - TEAM is meant for beginning teachers. Julia Lavin and Sarah Seifert have been assigned a mentor that will guide them through the two year process.
- **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 each month. June is the final month for the program.
  - **FY 23 School Readiness and Quality Enhancement Grants** have been awarded and received.
  - **NAEYC Accreditation** - Full accreditation was awarded until 2027, and, at that time, renewal process will occur.

### Building, Grounds, and 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 within our school building and on our grounds. Brian Kallio has worked hard to maintain our building.
- Anne Michaud, Director of Transportation continues to review and address needs within our transportation department. Anne created bus routes for all bus runs and has made adjustments due to arrival times to ensure smooth school day.

### Community and Public Relations

- **PTO** - Suggestions are welcome for the school year. Contact Hailie Davis [hdavis@voluntownct.org](mailto: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 of each month at 5:00 p.m. YSB programs have begun for this year and students are excited for the offerings. Contact Melinda Bryan [mbryan@voluntownct.org](mailto:mbryan@voluntownct.org).

Amy distributed a notification regarding CSDE Legislation, effective July 1, 2024 on the new entry age for Kindergarten students. The Board discussed the implementation of this change, possible modifications and strategies for a smooth transition for both parents and students. She also distributed a Right to Read Statewide Professional Learning Series notice.

The Board discussed next year's options to return to a full-time World Language Program (Spanish) with the possibility of coverage for K-8 students. This will be taken into consideration as the Board reviews next year's budget proposal and future staffing in the upcoming months.

## **2. DIRECTOR OF STUDENT SERVICES** (Submitted by Lloyd A. Johnson, PhD)

- Dr. Johnson reported that the PPT/504 meetings are going well. He expressed gratefulness for the school technology which has increased the involvement and attendance with parents. Staff Training with the CTSEDS program. There are still some glitches with the CTSEDS program, but overall it is being used successfully.
- This year is well underway with students receiving services within the revised class schedules and new teachers or those with new assignments. Amy's initiative to record and monitor identified students' IEP goals and IEP/504 Accommodations seems to be operating smoothly and has increased staff awareness and monitoring of these services. New teachers have smoothly transitioned to our PPT/504 meeting expectations.
- 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 November 9, 2023, this Director will have chaired 43 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:

	<b>10/01/2021</b>		<b>10/1/2022</b>		<b>10/6/2023</b>		<b>11/9/23</b>	
	IEP	504	IEP	504	IEP	504	IEP	504
PreK -8	34	31	34	36	38	34	38	34
9-12+	20	15	18	18	16	12	16	10
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>44</b>

- As a follow-up, Mr. Burrows distributed the report of actual expenditures for the "Special Education Expenditures in BOE Budget"
 

2020-21	\$1,968,300
2021-22	\$1,942,425
2022-23	\$1,987,762
2023-24	\$2,028,364 (Proposed amount)

Our recent three years of excess cost allocations for 2020-2023 was \$187,464 or an average of \$62,488/year and this has been returned to the Town of Voluntown Undesignated Fund.

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

- Calendar of Events for November and December 2023
- The District Enrollment Report noted 234 students in Pre-K to 8<sup>th</sup> grade and 127 high school students.
- \$9,945.00 has been returned to the Town of Voluntown Undesignated Fund from grants, rebates, and other unanticipated savings received. The report also documented that the town received \$112,742.49 from the state and this was reimbursement for "eligible" expenditures for the 10,000-gallon VES oil tank replacement project.
- VES Mentoring Program flyer

- Letters of thanks to each representative of our designated high schools who attended our Open House on September 19, 2023
- CAFE Policy Highlights – October 20, 2023 (Educator and Leader Evaluation and Support Plan)
- Mr. Burrows notified the Board that a Social Worker has been found, who will be paid with Mental Health grant funds in a cooperative agreement with the Preston School District for purchased services for up to one day per week.

**MOTION # 5 (11/9/23) was made (Thompson/Muschiano) to utilize a Mental Health grant and appoint Emily Ambeau as the School Social Worker for up to one day per week; all in favor. Motion carries.**

- Mr. Burrows distributed an updated list of Faculty & Staff and also the SNP Financial Form Details (Plan to Reduce Excess Operating Balance for the School Nutrition Programs)
- Mike Creaturo, Technology Coordinator, has successfully disposed of 130+ obsolete technology pieces to an organization that will repurpose them. Mr. Burrows praised him for the good work he is doing in this new position and keeping up with student records.

## **VIII. OLD BUSINESS**

### **1. Budget Preparation Timeline for 2024-25**

A 6-Year Budget Comparison Report (2017-2022) of all “Actual Expenditures” in every budget account was distributed to the Board of Education. This is an important part of the annual budget development process. Board members took time to review critical financial developments such as the significant increase in the cost of heating fuel, maintenance costs related to an older school, technology, and other budgetary comparisons.

*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	12-14-23	Review 24-25 projected costs for Transportation and Maintenance
Thursday	01-11-24	Initial Superintendent summary proposal of 24-25 budget to the Board
Thursday	02-08-24	Superintendent’s updated 24-25 Proposal submitted to Board of Education
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
Thursday	03-18-24	24-25 Budget Proposal is sent to the Town Clerk for public dissemination
Thursday	04-18-24	Public Hearing at 7:00 p.m. about the 24-25 education budget proposal and Board of Education approval of the 24-25 budget proposal
Thursday	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 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 – Approved)
- ESSER II Bonus Special Populations Recovery Grant (\$25,000 – Approved)
- 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 approved and being 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 (submitted on 12/1/22)
- Special Education Stipend Grant #2: Application from CSDE will soon be distributed.

#### **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. We will be able to use some of the funds to secure part-time Social Worker services from Preston.
- 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.

The above grants are additional allocations for a wide variety of COVID and other related 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 for our local school budget.

### **3. Building Committee Update**

Mr. Burrows will be scheduling a meeting soon.

### **4. NFA 2025-30 Contract Update**

A two-year notice by Partner School Systems is required to negotiate an upcoming 2025-30 contract with NFA. Several of our partner school systems have been meeting to share ideas and develop a proposal. Mr. Burrows distributed a draft of the NFA contract which included the school attorney's suggestions.

### **5. Technology Manual & Handbook**

A revised 17-page document was created titled "Parent/Student Technology Handbook" was provided to the Board. This will be posted on the school website. The previously created Technology Manual will be a reference guide for the Technology Coordinator.

**MOTION # 6 (11/9/23) was made (Muschiano/Thompson) to approve the Parent/Student Technology Handbook and the Technology Manual as amended; all in favor. Motion carries.**

### **6. Policy # 4132 – Publication or Creation of Materials (2<sup>nd</sup> reading)**

**MOTION # 7 (11/9/23) was made (Wicks/Thompson) to approve Policy # 4132 on the Publication or Creation of Materials as presented; all in favor. Motion carries.**

### **7. Policy, Regulation, and Form # 5125 – Student Records/Confidentiality (2<sup>nd</sup> reading)**

**MOTION # 8 (11/9/23) was made (Muschiano/Thompson) to approve Policy, Regulation, and Form # 5125 on Student Records/Confidentiality as presented; all in favor. Motion carries.**

### **8. Policy and Forms # 6162.51 – Survey of Students (2<sup>nd</sup> reading) – Tabled to the next meeting.**

## **IX. NEW BUSINESS**

### **1. Personnel**

**MOTION # 9 (11/9/23) was made with regrets (Thompson/Wicks) to accept the resignation of Denise Frye as a Bus Driver. The Board expressed their thanks to Denise for her 25 years of service at VES; all in favor. Motion carries.**

### **2. 2024 Schedule of Meetings for the BOE**

**MOTION # 10 (11/9/23) was made (Thompson/Wicks) to approve the 2024 BOE Schedule of Meetings and authorize the BOE Clerk to submit it to the Town Hall as presented; all in favor. Motion carries.**

### **3. Authorized Signer of the ED-099 Agreement for the Child Nutrition Program**

**MOTION # 11 (11/9/23) was made (Muschiano/Wicks) to authorize Amy Suffoletto to be the signer of the ED-099 Agreement for the Child Nutrition Program; all in favor. Motion carries.**

- 4. Authorize the Superintendent – Title IV Part A Grant and the Title I and II Grants**  
**MOTION # 12 (11/9/23) was made (Muschiano/Thompson) to authorize the Superintendent to sign and submit the Title IV Part A Grant and the Title I and II Grants; all in favor. Motion carries.**

- 5. ALL-HAZARDS Plan for 23-24**  
**MOTION # 13 (11/9/23) was made (Muschiano/Thompson) to verify the submittal of the 2023-2024 ALL-HAZARDS Plan to the State of Connecticut by the annual deadline of November 1<sup>st</sup>. All in favor. Motion carries.**

- 6. Eversource CT Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging Program**  
 Mr. Burrows informed the Board that the Town Hall and the Library are reviewing the installation of charging stations as part of an Eversource CT Electric Vehicle Charging Program. Documents were provided explaining the program and some of the costs for installing a charging station at VES front parking lot with a quote of \$49,104. There is an Electric Utility Rate Rebate of \$40,000 and ELE (Resource Lighting and Energy) provides a one-time credit of \$9,104 to the Voluntown Public Schools. Many additional questions need to be answered before making such a long-term commitment using school property and projecting future expenditures.

**X. UPCOMING MEETING(S)/AGENDA ITEMS:**

- Regular BOE Meeting – Thursday, December 14, 2023 at 7:00 p.m. in the Central Office Conference Room
- Budget Preparation Timeline for 24-24
- Building Committee Update
- Committee Assignments
- Policy # 6162.51 – Survey of Students (3<sup>rd</sup> reading)

**XI. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

**MOTION # 14 (11/9/23) was made (Thompson/Muschiano) to invite the Superintendent of Schools into Executive Session at 9:10 p.m. for the purpose of reviewing Personnel issues; motion passes.**

**MOTION # 15 (11/9/23) was made (Thompson/Wicks) to move out of Executive Session at 9:25 p.m.; all in favor; motion passes.**

**MOTION # 16 (11/9/23) was made (Thompson/Wicks) to approve the reallocation of funds in the contract of the Superintendent of Schools, effective after December, 2023, and maintain compliance with the CT TRB 45% rules; all in favor; motion passes.**

**MOTION # 17 (11/9/23) was made (Muschiano/Thompson) to support the signing of a MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) on a non-precedent basis with the Non-Certified Union with regards to the hourly rate of a recently hired bus driver who has extensive experience. The agreement goes beyond Step 1 of the salary schedule in the contract; all in favor; motion passes.**

**XII. ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION # 18 (11/9/23) was made (Muschiano/Thompson) to adjourn at 9:27 p.m. All in favor; motion passes.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Witness

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Attest

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Date

*Drafted and edited by:*

*Dee Dee Jackman, BOE Clerk*

*Adam S. Burrows, Superintendent of Schools*

**APPROVED AT THE 12/14/23 BOE MEETING5**