

December 14, 2023, in the Central Office Conference Room at 7:00 p.m.

I. **CALL TO ORDER** - Chairperson Kate Beauparlant called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Adam S. Burrows (Superintendent)
Amy L. Suffoletto (Principal)
Dee Dee Jackman (BOE Clerk)

Festive Friday - Ugly Sweater Dec. 1
Festive Friday - CCMC PJ Day Dec. 8
Slipper Spirit Day - Dec. 12
Griswold Chorus Performance Dec. 12
Winter Concert K-3 - Dec. 13 @ 5:30pm
Snowflake Shop Dec. 14 (Approximately 1,600 gifts were purchased. Thanks to all who helped.)
Butter Braid Pick-Up - Dec. 14
Trimester 1 Assembly - Dec. 15
Festive Friday Flannel - Dec. 15
Winter Concert - Dec. 20
Festive Friday - Holiday Spirit Dec. 22
Early Dismissal - Dec. 22 @ 1pm

Many thanks were given for all the support with the December activities during and after school through the work of the staff, PTO, and the YSB.

Amy Suffoletto noted that there are still families in need of gifts and/or gift cards. Those willing to donate can go to the Town Hall for more information or take a card off the Christmas tree in their meeting room.

Students as a Focal Point

- **Soaring Eagles:** Students in grade 7-8 enjoy their first soaring eagles movie and snack! It provides a time for enjoyment or a time to catch-up on work before the trimester closes.
- **Winter Sports:** Girls and Boys basketball and Cheerleading have begun, games to begin in December.
- **PTO Movie Night:** PTO hosted a great movie night on Nov. 17th. Food, snacks and a great movie!
- **PTO Butter Braids:** PTO has raised over \$1,600.00 for programming with the butter braid fundraiser.
- **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)** - 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.
- **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. Planning is underway for the 24-25 school year.
- **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. The TEAM Plan packet was distributed to the Board.
- **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 within our school building and on our grounds.
- 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. Contact Melinda Bryan mbryan@voluntownct.org.

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

- 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 December 14, 2023, this Director will have chaired 70 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		12/14/23	
	IEP	504	IEP	504	IEP	504
PreK -8	34	31	34	36	37	33
9-12+	20	15	18	18	16	12
TOTAL	54	46	52	54	53	45

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

- Calendar of Events for December and January
- The District Enrollment Report noted 236 students in Pre-K to 8th grade and 128 high school students.
- \$9,945.00 has been returned to the Town of Voluntown Undesignated Fund from grants, rebates, and other unanticipated savings received.
- Approved 2024 BOE Meeting Schedule

- Certification Alert: Connecticut Educator Certification News from the CT State Dept. of Ed. (June 2023 – Emergency Educator Certification Endorsements for the 23-24 School Year; July 2023 – Legislation Affecting Educator Certification)
- CSDE Student Assessment News – November 2023 (New NGSS Assessment Interim Items)
- Every Student Prepared for Learning, Life, and Work Beyond School
- CABE Policy Highlights – November 10, 2023 (Leading from Why and the Tactical Decisions that Follow); December 5, 2023 (Play-Based Learning)
- CIRMA, our insurance company, secured quotes for cyber insurance with the highest quote of \$9,988 per year from Coalition, others were from CFC (\$5,840 for a \$3 million policy and \$3,490 for a \$1 million policy). We have secured the \$3 million cyber insurance policy with CFC for an initial annual cost of \$5,840.

VIII. OLD BUSINESS

1. Budget Preparation Timeline for 24-25

Mr. Burrows distributed a 16-year comparison report for Transportation and Maintenance.

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. 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.

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 noted that the Town Hall has been helping guide the HVAC Request for Proposals for the gymnasium upgrades. Engineering specs have been completed for this project as well. He thanks Darlena Loranger, Julie Zelinsky, Brian Kallio and Tracey Hanson for their work on this.

The Board inquired about the safety on Route 138 again which will be added to next month's agenda. Mr. Burrows will call the Selectwoman and State Representative for status updates.

The Town is installing two electric charging stations at the Town Hall and two at the Library. Although the Board of Education fully supports the installation of these at those locations, pursuing one for the school is a concern with the parking lots constantly utilized by staff and students.

4. NFA 2025-2030 Contract Update

The new school attorney, Dan Murphy, has reviewed the NFA Contract for 2025-30 and has made suggested edits. Shipman and Goodman, at the request of a group of NFA partner school districts, are also in the process of reviewing it. Mr. Burrows had a draft available for the Board to review. This final coordinated document from the partner school systems will then be forwarded to NFA for a response.

5. Committee Assignments

The Board reviewed the list of Committee Assignments.

6. Policy # 5131.81 – Cell Phone/Electronic Communication Devices (2nd reading)

MOTION # 2 (12/14/23) was made (Grant/Wilson) to approve Policy # 5131.81 on Cell Phone/Electronic Communication Devices as amended; all in favor; motion passes.

7. Policy and Forms # 6162.51 – Survey of Students (3rd reading) Tabled to the next meeting.

IX. NEW BUSINESS

1. Policy # 3542.42 – Food Services (1st reading)

MOTION # 3 (12/14/23) was made (Thompson/Kalwara) to approve Policy # 3542.42 on Food Services; all in favor; motion passes.

2. Policy and Regulation # 3542.43 – Charging Policy (1st reading) Tabled for a 2nd reading.

3. Policy and Regulation # 4111.1/4211.1 – Equal Employment Opportunity (1st reading)

MOTION # 4 (12/14/23) was made (Wilson/Kalwara) to approve Policy and Regulation # 4111.1/4211.1 on Equal Employment Opportunity; all in favor; motion passes.

4. Policy and Regulation # 6142.101 – Wellness (Annual review)

MOTION # 5 (12/14/23) was made (Grant) to approve the Wellness Policy and Regulation # 6142.101. Motion fails due to a lack of a second.

Discussions were held regarding the students' physical activity time. It was noted there will also be a review of the amount of time allocated for recess each school day. This item was tabled to the next meeting.

5. Personnel

MOTION # 6 (12/14/23) was made (Wilson/Grant) to appoint Katelyn Stockford as a One-on-One Tutor; all in favor; motion passes.

MOTION # 7 (12/14/23) was made with deep regrets (Grant/Wilson) to accept the letter from Penny Dermody announcing her retirement. The Board expresses their dearest thanks and appreciation for her 40 years of service to the Voluntown Public School and wishes her well in the next chapter of her life; all in favor; motion passes.

6. 24/25 School Calendar

The draft of the 24/25 School Calendar was reviewed.

7. Capital Improvement Plan

The Capital Improvement Plan was provided to the Board.

X. UPCOMING MEETING(S)/AGENDA ITEMS

- BOE Meeting – Thursday, January 11, 2023, at 7:00 p.m. in the Central Office
- Budget Preparation Timeline 24-25
- Building Committee Update
- Safety on Route 138
- NFA 2025/30 Contract Update
- 24/25 School Calendar
- Policies/Regulations
 - Policy and Forms # 6162.51 – Survey of Students - 4th reading
 - Policy and Regulation # 3542.43 – Charging Policy - 2nd reading

XI. EXECUTIVE SESSION - None

XII. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION # 8 (12/14/23) was made (Wicks/Kalwara) to adjourn at 8:35 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 1/11/24 BOE MEETING