

VOLUNTOWN BOARD OF EDUCATION
195 Main Street, Voluntown, CT 06384
Phone: (860) 376-9167 www.voluntownct.org
Superintendent of Schools: Adam S. Burrows

MEETING MINUTES

May 11, 2023 in the Central Office Conference Room at 7:00 p.m.

- I. CALL TO ORDER** - Chairperson Kate Beauparlant called the Public Hearing to order at 7:01 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

ATTENDANCE

Present:

Kate Beauparlant (Chairperson)
 Meagan Wicks (Vice Chair)
 Cathy Grant (Secretary)
 Valerie Muschiano
 Sarah Thompson

Absent:

Arikka Kalwara
 Christopher Wilson

Also Present:

Adam S. Burrows (Superintendent)
 Amy L. Suffoletto (Principal)
 Lloyd Johnson (Director of Student Services)
 Darlena Loranger (Executive Assistant to the Superintendent)

CITIZENS / COMMENTS – None

- II. GUESTS** – None

- III. CONSENT AGENDA**

MOTION # 1 (5/11/23) was made (Muschiano/Thompson) 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)

Students as a Focal Point

- Middle school students have enjoyed the movie night and the City the Never Sleeps Dance as two end of the year activities!
- Grades 5-8 went on a trip to the CT Sun and our chorus sang the National Anthem. Congrats to Mrs. Gould and our singers for an awesome performance!
- Track season is underway this Spring. Grades 5-8 are able to participate in skills based instruction to learn about track.
- Grade 5 recently completed their partnership with EastConn's Faces of Culture Grant- The goal is to open up a student's world a little bit through shared learning and academic growth with new friends with a variety of experiences and correspondence.
- **Connecticut State Assessment Individual Student Reports (SBAC, CTAA, CAPT, CMT, Skills Checklist)** ~ 2023 testing season has been completed. We had 100% student participation in our state testing.
- **Upcoming:**
 - 5/5 Grades 6, 7, 8 "City that Never Sleeps Dance"
 - 5/8 - 5/12 YSB Screen Free Week and VES Spring Book Fair
 - 5/11 NJHS Induction Ceremony 6pm

- 5/18 Grade 7,8 Science Fair 6pm
- 5/25 Night of the Arts and Spring Concert
- 5/26 Energy in Action Mobile Presentation Grades 2-8 /Early Dismissal 1PM - PD
- 5/30 8th Grade Breakfast 9:30am
- 5/31 PTO and YSB BMX Assembly
- 6/9 Trimester Assembly and Last Day for Grade 8
- 6/12 Graduation 5:30pm
- 6/13 Field Day (weather permitting)
- 6/15 Last Day of School 12PM dismissal

Curriculum, Learning, and Instruction

- **Professional Development:** Teachers and Paras continue with professional learning. Reading teachers are participating in professional learning related to the program implementation and technology PD is also being offered on the VUE Sonic boards. On early dismissal days, committee meetings, professional learning and grade level work takes place.
- **Teacher Evaluation Plan:** The State of CT will be releasing additional guidance this Spring regarding updates for the teacher evaluation programs. Additionally the EDREFLECT platform will be discontinued and our PDEC committee will be reviewing other programs from surrounding districts. Once the State releases information. TEAM program draft is also being updated and reviewed due by 6/30/23.
- **Grants/Reports/Applications**
 - **Connecticut Office of Early Childhood** - The monthly School Readiness Reports for the Voluntown Elementary School Pre School and School Readiness Program are submitted through the ECE reporting system.
 - **FY 22 School Readiness and Quality Enhancement Grants** – Updated information has been provided by the Office of Early Childhood for the upcoming fiscal year and the grants were approved and are drawn down monthly in the grant system for expenditures.
 - **FY 23** allocations for the Priority and Competitive School Readiness Enrollment-based grants have been disbursed.

Building, Grounds, and Transportation & Safety

- 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.

Community and Public Relations

- **PTO** - Suggestions are welcome. Contact Hailie Davis hdavis@voluntownct.org. A BMX assembly through PTO and YSB will be in May.
- **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. Contact Melinda Bryan mbryan@voluntownct.org.

2. DIRECTOR OF STUDENT SERVICES (by Lloyd A. Johnson, Ph.D)

- Dr. Johnson stated that due to the upcoming asbestos removal project that adjustments have been made to the Summer School schedule to be three days per week instead of four from July 5-27, 2023.
- The majority of our high school students engage, attend, and enjoy extracurricular activities. They work with their school's staff to plan their post-secondary education activities. For a few students, their experience is more challenging and fraught with roadblocks. On those occasions, I'm frequently called upon to assist the family in its problem-solving and solution-planning. I'd like to recognize the flexibility, support, and understanding Mr. Burrows provides our department in these cases. Recently, we've celebrated the accomplishments of a few of those students. In these cases, the availability of the Virtual Learning Academy has been valuable. A student completed his diploma requirements last summer, engaged in a company-endorsed specialized training program, and is now employed at an hourly rate well above the minimum wage with the potential

of much more. Two other students were assisted through VLA in smoothly transferring schools. VLA's fees are reasonable and frequently our general ed staff assists by being tutors who grade VLA tests. Our mutual goal is that all Voluntown students receive the support necessary for them to succeed.

- ESY is Extended School Year. Many students with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) and a few students who receive SRBI (Scientific Research-Based Intervention) qualify for summer school. The justification is to prevent or mitigate regression of learned skills due to inactivity during the summer months. VES has run a summer school for many years. This year we are adjusting the dates of the school to respond to the school's closing for the asbestos abatement. This year we are planning to meet three days a week, 3 hours a day, for four weeks.
- Tech and Magnet School acceptances have been received. We have transferred IEP and 504 documents to the 8th graders' schools of choice. Transition meetings for each of those students with their next school are underway. The meetings are virtual and hosted by us with a representative of the receiving school. As a reminder, once a student enters a State Tech High School, that school becomes its LEA.
- At this point in the year, most department members have developed or completed CT-SEDS IEPs or 504 Accommodation Plans. The time demands are significant. After-school hours are needed to complete the documents in a timely manner as required by statutes. The Bureau of Special Education offered an additional Stipend Grant. The application was submitted by Mr. Burrows and was approved. The funds may be spent through the Summer of 2023. Voluntown qualified for a grant of \$10,000. The funds may be used for planning time, learning time, and professional development. It may also be used for substitute coverage for in-district and out-of-district training opportunities.
- Dr. Emily Casey, our consulting psychologist, is leading 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 those used previously. We purchased the evaluations for our department with grant funds. The training in the Feifer Assessment of Reading was completed in October/November. We're planning to engage in the training on the Feifer Assessment of Writing in September. Our Special Education teachers have begun administering the FAR.
- As of May 11, 2023, this Director has chaired 144 PPT/504/Parent Meetings distributed among the following schools: VES, The Learning Clinic in Brooklyn, EastConn's Northeast School in Killingly, EastConn's Autism Program in Columbia, Norwich Free Academy, Griswold High School, Griswold Alternative School, Wheeler, The Marine Science Magnet High School in Groton, Norwich Transition Academy, and EastConn's Regional Transition Program in Danielson.

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

	10/1/2021		10/1/2022		5/1/2023	
	IEP	504	IEP	504	IEP	504
PreK -8	34	31	34	36	42	42
9-12+	20	15	18	18	14	18
TOTAL	54	46	52	54	56	60

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

- Calendar of Events for May and June 2023
- The District Enrollment Report noted 253 students in Pre-K to 8th grade and 126 high school students is a total of 379.
- \$93,448.28 has been returned to the Town of Voluntown Undesignated Fund from grants, rebates, and other unanticipated savings received.
- Revised 22/23 School Calendar
- 22/23 Faculty/Staff Assignments

- State of Connecticut Department of Education letter regarding Mental Health Awareness Month: *Get Outside and Play for Children's Mental Health Day*
- CAFE membership letter, invoice, and flyer listing the benefits of having a CAFE membership
- CAFE Policy Highlights – April 28, 2023 (Time to Review and Update Your Library Book Selection Policy)
- 22-23 Budget has a remaining balance as of 5/9/23 is \$1,338,879.28 or 19.54% of \$6,850,335

MOTION # 2 (5/11/23) was made (Grant/Muschiano) to authorize the Superintendent and BOE Chair to write a letter of appreciation to Kristen St. Germain, Principal of Wheeler High School, who received the 2023 High School Principal of the Year Award; all in favor; motion passes.

VIII. OLD BUSINESS

1. Budget Proposal for 2023-24

Mr. Burrows distributed the most recent budget proposal of \$7,055,334 representing an increase of \$205,001 or 2.99% above the 2022-23 approved budget of \$6,850,333. This budget proposal will be reviewed and voted upon at the upcoming Annual Town Budget Meeting to be held on Tuesday, May 30, 2023 at 7:00 p.m.

This proposal includes:

- Negotiated salaries for teachers and classified faculty and staff with non-certified to be negotiated.
- The projected cost for outplacement of Special Education students based on identified needs.
- Projected cost of tuition based on the numbers attending eight designated high schools.
- A projected increase of 7.7% in the cost of health insurance premiums. A slight reduction in the overall amount for the 2023-2024 health benefits is the result of resignations.

MOTION # 3 (5/11/23) was made (Thompson/Grant) to approve the 5/11/23 budget proposal for 2023-2024 of \$7,055,334 which represents an increase of \$205,001 or 2.99% over the 2022-2023 town approved total of \$6,850,333; 4 in favor, 1 opposed (Wicks); motion passes.

2. Federal and State Grants

The following is a summary of short-term grants:

- 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.

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. These federal grants require us to maintain a “Continuity of Services” during this time to implement health and safety protocols and addressing learning loss during the time of COVID.

3. **Building Committee Update**

The April 4, 2023 Building Committee minutes was provided to the Board. A discussion was held regarding utilizing approximately \$51,000 of the \$75,086.42 remaining funds from the Oil Tank Reimbursement towards purchasing new fire extinguishers.

The asbestos abatement project will begin during the week of June 19, 2023 in the 1954 and 1970 sections of the school building. High quality carpets will also be installed.

MOTION # 4 (5/11/23) was made (Thompson/Muschiano) to approve Northeast Floor Company to install the carpets; all in favor; motion passes.

4. **Technology**

A posting was made for an IT Coordinator and a job description update was reviewed. Megan Wicks requested amendments to the job description.

MOTION # 5 (5/11/23) was made (Thompson/Grant) for the Board to authorize the Superintendent to make the decision on the IT Coordinator; all in favor; motion passes.

5. **Vision of an 8th Grade Graduate**

The Vision of an 8th Grade Graduate was provided and approved. Amy Suffoletto will add it to the school handbook.

6. **BOE Goals for 23/24 (2nd reading)**

MOTION # 6 (5/11/23) was made (Muschiano/Grant) to approve the BOE Goals for 23/24; all in favor; motion passes.

7. **Administrative Goals for 23/24 (2nd reading)**

MOTION # 7 (5/11/23) was made (Grant/Thompson) to approve the Administrative Goals; all in favor; motion passes.

8. **Evaluation of the Superintendent of Schools for 22/23 - Tabled to the June BOE meeting.**

IX. NEW BUSINESS

1. **Personnel**

MOTION # 8 (5/11/23) was made (Wicks/Muschiano) to approve Carolyn Stands as the Summer School Para with Special Services; all in favor; motion passes.

MOTION # 9 (5/11/23) was made (Thompson/Grant) to approve Mike Creaturo as the IT Coordinator; all in favor; motion passes.

2. **BOE Evaluation for 22/23 (1st reading)** A second reading will be done at the next BOE meeting.

3. **IDEA, School Readiness and Quality Enhancement Grants**

MOTION # 10 (5/11/23) was made (Grant/Wicks) to authorize the Superintendent to sign and submit the 23/24 IDEA Grant; all in favor; motion passes.

MOTION # 11 (5/11/23) was made (Grant/Wicks) to authorize the Superintendent to sign and submit the 23/24 School Readiness/Quality Enhancement Grant; all in favor; motion passes.

4. **Continuity of Services Plan 22/23 Review**

The Plan was reviewed, and action will be taken, if needed.

X. UPCOMING MEETING(S)/AGENDA ITEMS:

- Annual Town Budget Meeting – Tuesday, May 30, 2023 at 7:00 p.m. in the VES gymnasium
- BOE Meeting – Thursday, June 8, 2023, at 7:00 p.m. in the Central Office Conference Room
- Building Committee Update
- Technology Update
- Personnel
- Evaluation of the Superintendent of Schools 22/23 (3rd reading)
- BOE Evaluation for 22/23 (2nd reading)

XI. EXECUTIVE SESSION

MOTION # 12 (5/11/23) was made (Muschiano/Thompson) to invite the Superintendent of Schools and enter into Executive Session at 8:54 p.m. for the purpose of discussing Personnel, Non-Certified Negotiations; the Superintendent's Evaluation for 23/24; all in favor; motion passes.

MOTION # 13 (5/11/23) was made (Thompson/Grant) to move out of Executive Session at 9:16 p.m.; all in favor; motion passes.

No action was taken.

XII. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION # 14 (5/11/23) was made (Thompson/Grant) to adjourn at 9:16 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 6/8/23 BOE MEETING