

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

June 9, 2022, in the Central Office Conference Room at 7:00 p.m.
 OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

- I. CALL TO ORDER** Chairperson Kate Beuparlant, called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance and BOE Mission statement was recited. The Board had a moment of silence for the students of Uvalde.

ATTENDANCE Present: Kate Beuparlant (Chairperson)
 Meagan Wicks (Vice Chair)
 Cathy Grant (Secretary)
 Arikka Kalwara
 Valerie Muschiano
 Sarah Thompson

Absent: Christopher Wilson

Also Present: Adam S. Burrows (Superintendent)
 Amy S. Suffoletto – VES Principal
 Lloyd A. Johnson Ph.D. – Director of Student Services
 Dee Dee Jackman (BOE Clerk)

CITIZENS / COMMENTS – None

- II. GUEST** – None

- III. CONSENT AGENDA**

MOTION #1 (6/9/22) was made (Thompson/Kalwara) that the Board approves the Consent Agenda as presented; all in favor. Motion carries.

- IV. ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS**

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

Faculty/Staff Assignments for 2022-2023 were distributed and discussed.
 The Board reviewed a report showing a 6-year comparison of the Star Test Results.

Students as a Focal Point

- **COVID-19 Update** – As we close out the year, COVID-19 continues to appear in isolated cases within our building. As our school adapts and changes, we still remain cautious and monitor spikes and transmissions from within the school. We have had increased success with the removal of masks and have remained cautiously optimistic as we end the year to remain in good health.
- **Grade 8 End-of-Year Breakfast** was held on May 31, 2022. Students and their guests enjoyed a breakfast hosted by our school lunch staff, as well as announcements and a slideshow dedication. Afterwards, students went outside with their guests for pictures and to take their graduation signs that were sponsored by the YSB.
- **Track Season** semi-finals were held on June 6, 2022. Congratulations to all of our athletes and coaches.
- **Eagle Study Circle:** The after school Eagle Study Circle ended on May 25, 2022. Through grant funding, it supports students in grades 4-8. Teachers and students work together for homework

completion, project work or other items that are due during this time. As of completion, there were **35 students** who attend a combination of days Monday through Thursday for support.

- **SRBI** - SRBI Session 4 began on March 21, 2022 and ended on June 3, 2022. SRBI provides literacy and math services to students in Kindergarten - 8th grade; some receive both literacy and math. SRBI provides services to all students, as it is a general education initiative. Tier 1 is provided in the general classroom by the general education teacher during WIN block. In grades K-4, Tier 2 and Tier 3 support is provided by our SRBI Interventionists or classroom teacher during WIN/Science-Social Studies. In grades 5-8, Tier 2 support is provided by our general education Reading and Math teachers during the WIN block with consultation with our SRBI Interventionist. End-of-year data team meetings were held to review student progress and needs for the upcoming school year.
- **Connecticut State Assessment Individual Student Reports (SBAC, CTAA, CAPT, CMT, Skills Checklist)** - We received the Connecticut State Summative Assessment Individual Student Reports for SBAC/CTAA English/Language Arts and Mathematics. SBAC is complete.

Curriculum, Learning, and Instruction

- **Professional Development** - Teachers and Paras continue with professional learning virtually. Reading teachers are participating in professional learning related to the program implementation. Paraprofessionals will continue this year with the Compass program through CREC to build capacity within our non-certified staff. On early dismissal days, committee meetings, professional learning and grade level work takes place.
- **Teacher Evaluation Plan** - The State Department of Education has released new guidance on the teacher evaluation plan measures for 21-22. The new plan is in effect for this school year and the evaluation process is currently underway. Changes to this will be based on state guidance.
- **Grants/Reports/Applications**
 - **Connecticut Office of Early Childhood** - the Monthly School Readiness Reports for the Voluntown Elementary School Preschool and School Readiness Program have been updated for submission by the monthly due date each month.
 - **FY 22 School Readiness and Quality Enhancement Grants** - The School Readiness Grant was submitted on May 6, 2022 in full for the request of funding.
 - **NAEYC Accreditation** - At the beginning of January our NAEYC candidacy was submitted. Both portfolios are over two hundred pages and combined details of the components of our program and classrooms. Our 15-day window is between May 16 -June 6, 2022. We are waiting on the one day notice for our visit. The ECERS site visit was on May 24, 2022.
 - **The School Lunch Program** is currently reviewing the updated information regarding payments for the upcoming school year 22-23. There will be additional review of the procedures for these processes and what they will look like moving forward.

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.
- Ann Michaud, Director of Transportation, continues to review and address needs within our transportation department.

Community and Public Relations

- **PTO** - Suggestions are welcome and can be directed to Hailie Davis hdavis@voluntownct.org.
- **Youth Service Bureau/Local Prevention Council** - The YSB-LPC Advisory Board meets virtually on the second Wednesday of each month at 5:00 p.m. The contact person is Melinda Bryan mbryan@voluntownct.org. Screen-Free Week during the month of May was a great way to celebrate families. The YSB and PTO "BOGO" book fair had many compliments on each fun filled night. The student Mental Health Coalition also participated during that week as a culminating event for their group.

2. **Director of Student Services:** Submitted by Lloyd A. Johnson, Ph.D.

- A challenging issue this past year has been students with emotional health related concerns. A few of our students are dealing with this. Frequently they are high school students. I'm pleased with how promptly their school's staff have initiated interventions and reached out to my office

for support and to conduct Section 504 or IEP meetings. Our regional resources of counselors, partial hospitalization programs, and other resources such as UCFS have been very helpful. At VES our Principal and School Counselor, Rachel Sahoo, are very attuned to the emotional needs of our students. I'm pleased with an aspect of the new CT-SEDS which makes more prominent the need for Executive Functioning goals for students who struggle with planning and organizing that can often increase a student's anxiety and depression if they are not able to keep up with their required work. Previously these needs were met through Study Skills goals.

- As we are reaching the end of this school year, we are completing our required Annual Review meetings. I'd like to thank my department staff and the general education staff for a year of outstanding collaboration in our efforts to meet the needs of our students with disabilities. I'd also like to thank Mr. Burrows for his continued support and encouragement of our servicing all students to reach their highest potential.
- The CT Bureau of Special Education has developed an additional information program for the new CT-SEDS entitled New IEP Preview Sessions. The presentations and PowerPoint Slides are available for viewing. The presentations last 30 min or less. Anyone interested in viewing the presentations should go onto the CT State Department of Education website, select the link for Special Education, select the link for New IEP and scroll to New IEP Preview Sessions. There are 11 of them.
- This director and our six special educators participated in the CT-SEDS IEP Quality Training at EastConn in May. Each session was two full days on consecutive weeks.
- The CT-SEDS program has developed an IEP Expert User Training program for special education staff who has already received the IEP Quality Training. This four hour training is to develop staff in each school to train new staff in CT-SEDS and to be a resource to other special education staff as they begin using CT-SEDS. Our school was allotted three training slots and has identified the three department members who will receive this training: Mrs. Pendill-Brown, Mrs. Nelson, and Ms. Stockford. They are registered. The training is webinar based. Other team members may sit in and also observe the session. Only the three selected will receive the state grant for participating and acting as a resource to their school in the upcoming year.
- Recently the Bureau of Special Education announced the availability of a Stipend Grant to selected districts. This is a competitive grant. The grant provides \$10,000 for certified staff and \$5,000 for non-certified staff training experiences to improve services to special education students. I'd like to recognize Mr. Burrows' expertise in grant writing, skill in composing compelling rationale, and promptness in meeting the very short time period given for submitting the grant proposal. To our delight, Voluntown's application was approved and we are waiting for the official letter authorizing the use of the funds which must be expended by September 30, 2022. Department staff, Mrs. Suffoletto, and this director are developing options for training experiences and content tuned to the individual needs and preferences of our staff. Any remaining balance in the above two grants will be used to offset some costs associated with Summer School.
- As of June 9, 2022, this Director will have chaired 195 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:

	10/01/2020		10/1/2021		06/09/2022	
	IEP	504	IEP	504	IEP	504
PreK -8	38	21	34	31	40	38
9-12+	22	11	20	15	16	18
TOTAL	60	32	54	46	56	56

Current census of students who received OT, PT, and Speech Services:

- Speech (21.50 hrs. services weekly): 17 students with IEPs, 1 student with 504 Plan, and 5 students with PPS Services.
- Universal Speech and Language screenings for all PreK, Kindergarten, and for residents and non-residents.
- Occupational Therapy (9.50 hrs services weekly): 9 students with IEPs; 3 students with 504 Plans and 3 students with PPS Services.
- Physical Therapy (4.00 hrs. service weekly): 5 students with IEPs, 1 student with a 504 Plan

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

- Calendar of Events for June-Aug. 2022
- There is a remaining balance of \$766,351.68 in the 2021-2022 budget of \$6,785,196. It is projected that we will meet all financial obligations and completed the 16th fiscal year without asking the Town for additional funds for the school system.
- The District Enrollment Report noted 260 students in Pre-K to 8th grade and 131 high school students. Our enrollment has started to have a slight increase and we have “Ability to Absorb” new students within our existing budget, unless there are some unique Special Education requirements.
- \$89,426.20 has been returned to the Town of Voluntown Undesignated Fund from grants received.
- CIRMA letter of Commitment for Budget Stabilization Program effective 7/1/22-23 - 7/1/24-25
- CABE membership and services letter
- EASTCONN flyer – Related Services Rates for 2022-23
- A recent CTSDE newsletter noted the allocations for the ECS (Educational Cost Sharing) grant will use an older formula for the distribution of funds to municipalities. Voluntown continued to receive \$2,117,243 for these last few years based on legislative action to maintain level funding. Mr. Burrows will send information to our State Senator and Representative expressing our concern about the formula that is being used that cuts our ECS grant by a total of \$877,000 by 2030. The formula indicates that in 2023-2024 Voluntown is projected to receive a devastating reduction of \$367,731.
- Ellington Public Schools letter to the Connecticut General Assembly
- A letter from Natalie Braswell, Connecticut State Comptroller, was shared with the Board announcing that AETNA was awarded to be the new Medicare Advantage administrators and estimates this contract will provide localized state savings of over \$400 Million over the next three years.
- CABE Policy Highlights – 5/13/22: Remote Meetings Bill is Signed by Governor
- CABE Policy Highlights – 5/27/22: Connecticut’s Condition of Education Report Released
- In a follow-up to the Board of Education Special Meeting on 4-26-22, Nick Caruso, CABE Consultant, indicated an interest in returning to Voluntown for another meeting to review strategies with identifying and implementing social-emotional support.
- Four years ago, 29 Eighth Graders made their choices to attend a high school. The 2022 graduating senior class enrollment documents that there are 26 (or 89.6%) of these VES students preparing for graduation. We are reviewing documents for information about the accomplishments and whereabouts of the three remaining students.
- Mr. Burrows shared his response to several questions received regarding our School Readiness program for three and four-year-old students. We have received \$2,384,350 since approval of our application in 2007-2008. Maintaining full funding of \$198,000 per year requires 44 students. Attendance by non-resident students has allowed us to avoid a grant reduction of \$450 per each student per year below 44. This competitive grant is administered by the OEC (Office of Early Childhood) and requires the Board of Selectmen to appoint a Liaison to administer our local program the is guided by a local School Readiness Council that is Chaired by the Superintendent.
- The School Security Committee has met and are reviewing safety within the school building.
- A letter from Mr. Burrows to Tracey Hanson, Voluntown First Selectwoman regarding the appointment of a School Readiness Liaison to the Office of Early Childhood was provided to the Board.

MOTION #2 (6/9/22) was made (Wicks/Kalwara) to support the decision of the School Readiness Council to forward the name of Amy Suffoletto to the Board of Selectmen to officially appoint her as the Voluntown School Readiness Liaison to the Connecticut Office of Early Childhood for 2022-23; all in favor. Motion carries.

VIII. OLD BUSINESS

1. **Budget 2022-23**

The budget proposal for 2022-2023 shows a total of \$6,850,333 representing an increase of \$65,136 or 0.96% above the 2021-22 approved budget of \$6,785,197.

A Town of Voluntown Referendum took place on Tuesday, June 7, 2022, from NOON to 8:00 p.m. The Board of Education budget was approved by a total of 249 with 67.9% “Yes” and 38.4% “No”.

The approved budget included:

- Negotiated salaries for teachers, non-certified, and classified faculty and staff.
- The most recent cost for the outplacement of Special Education students.
- Projected cost of tuition based on the numbers attending eight designated high schools.
- A 10.5% in the cost premiums for health insurance with a current increase of \$4,050 due to reduced enrollment
- Projected increases in heating oil, diesel fuel, and electricity.

2. **COVID-19 Update: REOPEN Committee Update**

The REOPEN Committee has not had a need to meet since 3/16/22, but the school continues to follow all protocols and guidelines put forth from the Department of Public Health, UNCAS Health District and the CT State Department of Education.

Special Update from UNCAS Health District - Patrick McCormack of Uncas Health District noted in a recent update that the availability of vaccines continues to increase for all age groups, but the desire to become vaccinated has seen a decline in the lower risk groups. The hope is that over the summer months COVID-related numbers will decline even more and hopefully we will not see another wave. He emphasized that we need to be vigilant as we prepare to return to school for the 2022-23 school year. It is important for people who feel sick to stay home and away from school as they safely monitor for illness, seek to be vaccinated, if available, and always practice the protocols of hand washing, social distancing, and wearing a mask, if needed. The REOPEN Committee will only meet, as needed, in the future. It stands ready to follow-through to meet any developments that require careful analysis and implementation of a plan of action to maintain a healthy and safe school environment.

3. **Review of Progress with Several Grants**

Mr. Burrows summarized the status of the following 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 Approved)
- Comcast local grant to school systems (\$3,500 approved)
- Sp. Ed. Grants (Recently submitted - \$10,000 for Certified and \$5,000 for Non-certified – Initially Approved)

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 nations, 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.

4. Solar Panel Review Committee Update

The next meeting of this committee will be held in 22-23.

Members of the committee include Glenn Bronson, Brian Kallio, Jack Wesa, Adam S. Burrows, Tracey Hanson, Cathy Grant, and Darlena Loranger. Agendas and Minutes are also shared with Bob Serpanski and Julie Zelinski.

The Solar Panel Committee has determined that we estimate receiving transmission savings of about \$23,000 per because the electricity generated by the solar panels goes directly to VES.

Recent invoices document the following overall Eversource costs for electricity:

<i>Month</i>	<i>Supply</i>	<i>Delivery</i>	<i>Total for Month</i>
January	\$2,522.26	\$1,954.24	\$4,476.52
February	\$2,703.51	\$2,398.26	\$5,101.77
March	\$969.18	\$1,959.59	\$2,928.77
April	\$136.02	\$1,779.99	\$1,916.02
May	\$0.00	\$1,772.64	\$1,772.64

5. Strategic Plan 2022-26

A final draft of the 2022-26 Strategic Plan, approved at the 5/12/22 BOE Meeting, was provided for the meeting and includes the following priority areas: Students as a Focal Point; Finances; Curriculum/Instruction/Learning; Building/Grounds/Transportation; and Community/Public Relations.

MOTION #3 (6/9/22) was made (Thompson/Muschiano) to rescind Motion # 3 from 5/12/22 in order to make additional changes to the 2022-26 Strategic plan and also to re-approve it with the updates; all in favor. Motion carries.

6. BOE Meetings (Online Access)

The Cable Television Advisory Council of Southeast Connecticut or CTACSC has awarded \$3,500 to purchase equipment to help member towns and schools produce content that can be used on local public, education, and government (PEG) access television channels on Comcast and Atlantic Broadband. PEG access television is a vital tool that helps to keep our community informed, educated and entertained. PEG Access programming includes:

- Public Access (Channel 12) - Community events, church activities, public opinion, and general interest programming
- Education Access (Channels 19 and 96) - Board of Education meetings and school activities or school-based programs
- Government Access (Channels 2 and 96) - Town government meetings, town department activities or programs

7. Policy and Regulation #3543.31–Electronic Communications Use and Retention (Third reading – Tabled)

8. BOE Goals for 2022-23 (Second reading-Tabled)

9. Administrative Goals for 2022-23 (Second reading-Tabled)

10. BOE Evaluation for 2021-22 (Third reading-Tabled)

11. Triennial Wellness Assessment 2022

MOTION # 4 (6/9/22) was made (Thompson/Wicks) to confirm compliance requirements are completed for the 2022 Triennial Wellness Assessment: all in favor. Motion carries.

12. CABE Leadership Awards Announcement

The CABE Leadership Award recipients are Chase Busila and Hannah Couillard.

IX. NEW BUSINESS

1. Personnel

MOTION #5 (6/9/22) was made (Thompson/Grant) to appoint Kayla Barber, Hailie Davis, Lynne Lawrence, Val Lord, Megan Glidden, Anthony Rizzuto, and Andrea Kelly to work extra hours using available funds from Account #2210-111 prior to June 30, 2022 in order to develop curriculum updates in English/Language Arts for K-8, draft a Foreign Language Handbook, and also an SRBI (Scientifically Researched-Based Interventions) Handbook; all in favor. Motion carries.

MOTION #6 (6/9/22) was made (Grant/Kalwara) to appoint April Florence as the Paraeducator for the Camp Q Summer program; all in favor. Motion carries.

MOTION #7 (6/9/22) was made with regrets (Thompson/Muschiano) to accept the resignation of Jake St. John, Fifth Grade Teacher; The Board expressed their sincere thanks and appreciation for his twelve years of service to the Voluntown Public Schools all in favor. Motion carries.

MOTION #8 (6/9/22) was made with regrets (Muschiano/Thompson) to accept the resignation of Gary Chenette, School Custodian; The Board expressed their sincere thanks and appreciation for his nine years of service to the Voluntown Public Schools all in favor. Motion carries.

2. Upcoming Grants

MOTION #9 (6/9/22) was made (Wicks/Grant) to authorize the Superintendent to sign and submit two grant applications (\$10,000 for Special Education Professional Development for Certified Faculty and \$5,000 for Paraeducator Professional Development with any remaining balances to offset the costs of Summer School) in order to meet the deadline of all funds being expended by September 30, 2022; all in favor. Motion carries.

3. Title IX Coordinator for 2022-23

MOTION #10 (6/9/22) was made (Kalwara/Thompson) to appoint Rachel Sahoo as the Title IX Coordinator for 2022-23; all in favor. Motion carries.

4. Use of Facilities Requests

MOTION #11 (6/9/22) was made (Kalwara/Grant) to approve the school parking lot use request from the Voluntown Recreation Department for the Voluntown Fun Day; all in favor. Motion carries.

MOTION #12 (6/9/22) was made (Thompson/Kalwara) to approve the school parking lot use request from The Charity Challenge; all in favor. Motion carries.

5. Superintendent Evaluation for 2021-22

MOTION #13 (6/9/22) was made (Wicks/Thompson) to move the Superintendents Evaluation for 2021-22 into Executive Session; all in favor. Motion carries.

X. UPCOMING MEETING(S)/AGENDA ITEMS:

- Regular BOE Meeting – July 14, 2022 at 7:00 p.m. in the Central Office Conference Room
- COVID-19 Update
- BOE Meetings (Online Access)
- BOE Goals 22-23 (Third reading)
- Administrative Goals 22-23 (Third reading)
- BOE Evaluation 22-23 (Fourth reading)
- Policy #3543.31 – Electronic Communication Use and Retention (Fourth reading)
- Personnel
- School Medical Advisor
- Cyber Insurance/Technical Policies
- Guest - Tom O'Connor, Food Service Director

XI. EXECUTIVE SESSION

MOTION #14 (6/9/22) was made (Wicks/Muschiano) to enter Executive Session at 9:51 p.m. for the purpose of discussing Personnel and the Superintendent’s Evaluation for 2021/22; all in favor. Motion carries.

MOTION #15 (6/9/22) was made (Thompson/Kalwara) to exit Executive Session at 10:10 p.m.; all in favor. Motion carries.

MOTION #16 (6/9/22) was made (Thompson/Wicks) to authorize the Board of Education Chair to sign the approval for two extra days in 2021-2022, as presented and to comply with all 45% TRB rules, for the Director of Students Services; all in favor. Motion carries.

MOTION #17 (6/9/22) was made (Thompson/Muschiano) to authorize the Board of Education Chair to sign the approval for four extra days in 2021-2022, as presented and to comply with all 45% TRB rules, for the Superintendent of Schools ; all in favor. Motion carries.

XII. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION #18 (6/9/22) was made (Wicks/Thompson) to adjourn at 10:11 p.m.; all in favor. Motion carries.

Witness	Date	Attest	Date
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Respectfully drafted and edited by:
Dee Dee Jackman, Board of Education Clerk
Adam S. Burrows, Superintendent of Schools

APPROVED AT THE 7/14/22 BOE MEETING