

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

BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING MINUTES

October 8, 2020
 Virtual Meeting - 7:00 p.m.

This Zoom meeting was streamed live to the public on the Voluntown School YouTube Channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC3I7dOmnXMxoTINHzaSZ1zw>

Public comments were able to be made by emailing djackman@voluntownct.org up to 1 hour prior to the meeting.

I. CALL TO ORDER Chairperson Beauparlant called the virtual meeting to order at 7:04 p.m.

ATTENDANCE **Present:** Kate Beauparlant (Chairperson), Cathy Grant (Secretary), Arikka Kalwara, Meagan Wicks, Christopher Wilson and Skart Paul

Absent:

Also Present: Adam S. Burrows (Superintendent), Amy Suffoletto (Principal), and Lloyd A. Johnson, Ph.D. (Director of Student Services)

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE - The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

III. CITIZENS / COMMENTS – None were received.

IV. GUESTS – None

V. CONSENT AGENDA

MOTION #1 (10/8/20) was made (Grant/Kalwara) that the Board approves the Consent Agenda as presented; all in favor. Motion carries.

VI. ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

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

COVID-19 School Closure Updates (Spring and Summer):

- Governor Lamont and Commissioner Cardona have released guidelines for school reopening and frequent updates are communicated on a daily basis. The VES reopening plan was submitted on July 24th to the CT State Department of Education and we are awaiting feedback.
- The VES Reopen Committee meets weekly to review, discuss and address issues that arise and make modifications to the plan to be released in an updated version.
- Our building has undergone cleaning, removing of furniture, additional signage and purchases of materials to ensure a safe reopening.
- On a daily basis, our school is cleaned thoroughly by two daytime and two evening custodians, in addition to our Director of Maintenance, who oversees our custodians.

COVID-19 School Closure Timeline of Events:

SPRING 2020:

- As of March 16, 2020, VES closed due to COVID and is now closed for the remainder of the academic year per Gov. Lamont.
- March 25 to April 9 - All students were given at-home learning packets. Parents collected packets and other belongings, as available, on March 25.
- As of April 20, grades 3-8 moved to online learning through Google Classroom and are provided weekly learning plans.

- As of April 20, grades K-2 continued with a set of 9-day lesson plans and packets were picked-up by parents on this date. Beginning May 4, grades K-2 are using a blended approach to learning.
- Preschool students have been provided a calendar of learning experiences and suggested activities by teachers. As of May 4, preschool students were also provided additional activities on Seesaw for learning.
- As of April 20, faculty and students began using Google Meets/Hangouts for individual, small group and whole group learning experiences. These Meets are initiated at the teacher's discretion and needs.
- Classroom teachers, service providers, and the K-4 interventionist are providing support services to students to the greatest extent possible.
- Our Technology Director, Jim Ward, loaned approximately 100 Chromebooks to families in need. He has worked with families in providing technology support. He provided technology support on a daily basis with devices and gave information on how to secure free internet. Additionally, he managed our online platforms to ensure teachers, students and families have access to available sites. Our website has been updated by faculty and administration to provide families with information and additional learning resources.
- Our Food Service Director, Tom O'Connor, and the Child Nutrition Meal Service program continues to offer meals Monday, Wednesday, and Fridays 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. at Griswold Middle School Cafeteria to all Voluntown Students. Families receive meals for two days at a time for all children under the age of 18.
- Our Director of Maintenance, Brian Kallio, has been working with maintenance staff during the a.m. and p.m. shifts to continue cleaning procedures according to the state recommendations. He and his staff have also been completing repairs and maintenance within the building.

SUMMER 2020:

- Our Technology Director, Jim Ward, has been working to secure Chromebooks and digital platforms to prepare for the fall. He has recollected all loaned Chromebooks to repair and complete routine maintenance in preparation for their use this fall. Jim has also created professional development and training for teachers digitally.
- Our Director of Maintenance, Brian Kallio, has worked closely with his summer custodial staff to remove items from classrooms, clean classrooms and other areas, as well as rearrange spaces for maximum use. He has participated in training regarding cleaning practices for a safe return.
- The Child Nutrition Meal Service Program has continued on Mondays and Wednesdays through the summer. Our Food Service Director, Tom O'Connor, has communicated the need for remote lunch pick-up this fall. We are working on a plan for onsite meal distribution this fall for students who are remote learning or in the case that we move to distance learning.
- Our website has been updated frequently to provide needed information to families and community members.

FALL 2020:

- Teachers worked from 8/24-8/28 on professional development regarding social emotional well-being, remote learning, curriculum development.
- Paraprofessional staff returned on 8/26 -8/28 and continued to work with teachers and staff on remote learning, and other training opportunities.
- ALL staff were trained in safety procedures, social distancing practices, hygiene on 8/26/20.
- Our school has devised a remote learning track for students in addition to our in-person model. teachers were supplied with cameras to support live lessons when offered. Google classroom is being used in grades 3-8 and PK-2 is using Seesaw.
- The remote learning track for grades 3-8 is now being supported by a remote learning teacher. This teacher is providing a combination of ELA, Math and offline support to students, in addition to their teachers providing Social Studies, Science, and Specials through Google Classroom.
- On 10/7/2020 we began our School Closure Schedule. This schedule will be used for short- and long-term closure.

Students as a Focal Point

- Students returned to school at 8/31/20 for a week of early dismissals and remote learning on Wednesday. Our students and staff have done an amazing job adapting to this new way of learning and the new environment that has been created. Our students are resilient with their abilities to adapt to the ever-changing environment with COVID 19.

- As of 9/8/20 students have attended full days of school and continue to remote learn on Wednesday for the time being.
- We have enough Chromebooks to supply our grades 3-8 students each with an in-class Chromebook at this time. We are currently waiting for the shipment of Chromebooks expected in late September/October.
- As of 10/8/20, we have received supplies of Chromebooks that were ordered. We are working to continue to distribute those to students and upgrade other Chromebooks as well.
- On 10/7/20, we implemented our closure schedule which includes instruction for students live and offline if/when there is a school closure.

Curriculum, Learning, and Instruction

- Teacher Evaluation Plan - The State Department of Education has released new guidance on the teacher evaluation plan measures and will be reviewed by our PDEC committee.

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.
- Terry Chenette, Director of Transportation, has worked with each high school to plan and coordinate transportation for students. As of now, she is modifying bus runs as schools open and close.

Community and Public Relations

- PTO - Meetings for upcoming PTO meetings will be held online and to be determined in the future.
- Youth Service Bureau/Local Prevention Council – The YSB-LPC Advisory Board meets on the second Wednesday of each month at 5:00 p.m., virtually at this time.

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

- The CT Bureau of Special Education announced the awarding to Public Consulting Group (PCG) a contract to develop the CT Special Education Data System (CT-SEDS). This will provide new IEP statewide forms and data gathering systems. The implementation plan: 2020-21: develop the online program to implement a revised IEP document recently developed by the Bureau of Special Education; 2021-2022 pilot the program in selected districts; 2022-2023 implement the program in all districts in the state. This online IEP program and data gathering system will replace IEP Direct currently offered by Frontline. It is our understanding that much of the data included in the Frontline documents will be imported into the new CT-SEDS by PCG. The new system will be provided to districts at no cost. The savings to Voluntown will be approximately \$7,000 to \$8,000.
- We have some Revaluations to complete this Fall that should have been completed last spring. Students with IEPs must be reevaluated every three years to continue eligibility or be exited from Special Education Services. The State is allowing districts to complete these assessments and PPTs this fall without the usual past due meeting date sanctions.
- As of October 8, 2020, this Director had chaired 31 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, The Marine Science Magnet High School in Groton, United Services Inc. in Willimantic, Ellis Technical High School in Danielson, Norwich Transition Academy and Norwich Technical High School in Norwich, EastConn's Regional Transition Program in Danielson, and EastConn's Quinebaug Middle College in Danielson.
- The census of students in Pre-K to 12+ receiving special services:

	<u>IEP</u>	<u>504</u>
Pre-K to 8	38	21
9-12+	<u>22</u>	<u>11</u>
Total	60	32

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

- Calendar of Events for October and November 2020
- The District Enrollment Report noted 250 students in Pre-K to 8th grade and 130 high school students.
- \$9,715.20 has been returned to the Town of Voluntown Undesignated Fund from grants received.
- Letter announcing the vacancy on the Board of Education from the resignation of Kristen Trahan
- CAFE Liaison Newsletter from October 2020 and information on CAFE Legal Workshops
- State Department of Public Health letter regarding Tournaments - Sports
- CAFE Policy Highlights (September 18 and October 2, 2020 Issues) - Topics include: Face Mask Policy, Special Education, Required Title I Notifications, Travel Advisory Policy, Deadline for Sexual Harassment Prevention Training Extended to October 1, 2020, Live-streaming Classes and Privacy Issues, etc.
- Mr. Burrows shared CSDE detailing COVID-19 infection rates in schools:
 - 396 total cases of the virus in school staff and students since school began,
 - 294 students have contracted the virus,
 - 102 staff have contracted the virus,
 - 89 districts have had at least one case
 - With approximately 366,000 students in CT, the infection rate is .008
 - No widespread transmission found in schools
 - As of this week: 22% of schools are operating fully in person, 63% are operating in a hybrid, 13% are fully remote
- Mr. Burrows reported that the annual Title I and Title II application is due to the Connecticut State Department of Education. This federal grant is based on a formula that uses economic factors, student enrollment, free and reduced lunch, and others. These funds are used for the SRBI program, Tutoring, and part of the Summer School expenditures.

MOTION #2 (10/8/20) was made (Grant/Kalwara) that the Board authorizes the Superintendent of Schools to submit the 2021 application for the Title I Grant for \$40,875 and the Title II Grant for \$6,290 (a total of \$47,165) to the Connecticut State Department of Education; all in favor. Motion carries.

VII. COMMITTEE REPORTS – Mr. Burrows gave a verbal report on the committee meetings and noted the following committees will be scheduled over these next few months:

- School Safety to publish the 20-21 ALL HAZARD PLAN
- IAQ/TFS/Safety to review facilities and maintenance priorities as well as comply with Indoor Air Quality, Tools for Schools, and Safety guidelines
- Wellness to comply with Schools Fitness and Nutrition guidelines
- Curriculum Steering to document the work of several curriculum committees

Mr. Wilson recognized the Youth Service Bureau for finding safe afterschool programs for our students and pointed out that they will be continuing the Science Club again this year.

VIII. OLD BUSINESS

1. **2019-20 Budget Transfers and 2021-22 Budget Preparation Process**

A comprehensive report titled “Budget Comparison Year Ending 2015 to 2020” detailed all actual expenditures over six Board of Education budgets. This document allows the Board the opportunity to review trends in actual expenditures and is helpful in developing the 2021-22 budget proposal. Special Note – There was an averaged budget decrease of \$2,965 per year. The cost-saving efforts of the Board of Education were documented by reviewing the approved budgets.

There was a total of \$11,882 in increases over four years:

- 2017-2018 budget had a decrease of \$11,403
- 2018-2019 budget had an increase of \$104,165
- 2019-2020 budget had a decrease of \$104,644
- 2020-2021 had a \$0.00 increase or 0%

There were actual funds returned to the Town of Voluntown each year because the Board of Education has an expenditure-only budget and has not gone back to the Town for these past 15 years to request any additional allocation for the school budget.

2021-22 Budget Preparation Process

Thursday	11-12-20	Current curriculum initiatives and projected 21-22 curriculum priorities
Thursday	12-10-20	Review 21-22 projected costs for Transportation and Maintenance
Thursday	01-14-21	Initial Superintendent summary proposal of 21-22 budget to the Board
Thursday	02-11-21	Superintendent's updated 21-22 proposal submitted to Board of Education
Thursday	02-25-21	Board of Education "Budget" Meeting (if needed)
Thursday	03-11-21	Updated 21-22 budget proposal presented to Board of Education
Thursday	03-18-21	21-22 Budget Proposal is sent to the Town Clerk for public dissemination
Thursday	04-08-21	Public Hearing about the 21-22 education budget proposal and Board of Education approval of the 21-22 budget proposal
Thursday	04-22-21	Approved budget proposal for 21-22 delivered to Town Clerk for public dissemination
Tuesday	05-04-21	Possible projected date for annual Town Meeting to vote on the Town and Board of Education Budgets at Voluntown Elementary School gymnasium at 7:00 p.m.

2. COVID-19 Update

Mr. Burrows reported that the Connecticut State Department of Education has notified our school district that we have been awarded a Coronavirus Relief Grant of \$260,474. The allocations awarded or listed by CSDE for our school system include: PPE - \$692, Transportation - \$7,081 (Bus Monitors, etc.), Cleaning, Health, and Safety - \$222,000 (Includes a ventilation system upgrade and completion of A/C in the school), and Transportation - \$30,701 (hopefully a new van) for reimbursement of purchases between 3/1/2020 – 12/30/2020. A recent communication from CSDE indicated that the funding for the van was recently determined to not be an eligible expenditure.

Please note that this grant requires the school system to pay for the items, submit a reimbursement request, and any funds received back for eligible expenditures will then be deposited in the Undesignated Funds of the Town of Voluntown.

3. Reopening Update

K-8 Returning on Wednesdays starting 10/14/20 with dismissal at noon.

Members of the Voluntown REOPEN Committee in the Time of COVID-19

Adam S. Burrows -----	Superintendent of Schools, Chair and Point of Contact
Amy L. Suffoletto -----	Principal and LEA COVID-19 Health and Safety Liaison
Lloyd A. Johnson -----	Director of Student Services
Holly Santiago -----	School Nurse
Brian Kallio -----	Director of Maintenance and Facilities
Terry Chenette -----	Transportation Coordinator
Thomas O'Connor -----	Director of Food Services
Rachel Ricard -----	Executive Assistant to the Superintendent and Parent
Andrea Kelly -----	SRBI Teacher and VEA
Angela Gardella -----	Paraprofessional and CSEA
Kate Beauparlant -----	Board of Education Chair and Parent
Jim Ward -----	Technology Consultant
Kathy Groth -----	Counselor/Social Worker
Tracey Hanson -----	First Selectwoman and Parent
Patrick McCormick -----	UNCAS Health Director
Amanda Page -----	Parent
Toula Wyland -----	Preschool Teacher

The students returned to school on Monday, August 31, 2020, and a hybrid schedule was implemented. This included all students having the opportunity to attend VES on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday, with Wednesday as a remote learning day.

The committee has consulted with UNCAS Health District officials and it was decided to request the Board of Education to authorize the full return to school for VES students, effective the week of October 14, 2020. However, at any point a decision can be made to revert to a hybrid model or full closure due to a number of factors regarding virus spread, active cases, needs or Governor's orders.

MOTION #3 (10/8/20) was made (Wilson/Paul) that the Board approves in-person students returning to school for a full day on Wednesdays beginning October 14, 2020 and approve any scheduled early dismissal days at noon rather than 1:00 p.m. to temporarily accommodate some high school transportation needs; all in favor. Motion carries.

MOTION #4 (10/8/20) was made (Wilson/Kalwara) to allow for flexibility for staff adjustments for assistance with remote learning issues; all in favor. Motion carries.

MOTION #5 (10/8/20) was made (Grant/Kalwara) to adjust the SRBI (Scientific Research-Based Interventions) program funded by Title I to be taught by a certified tutor; all in favor. Motion carries.

4. Personnel

MOTION #6 (10/8/20) was made (Wicks/Kalwara) that the Board of Education accepts, with regrets, the resignation of Holly Santiago as the School Nurse; all in favor. Motion carries.

MOTION #7 (10/8/20) was made (Wilson/Grant) that the Board of Education approves Corrine Proulx as the Head Cook; all in favor. Motion carries.

5. Faculty and Staff Assignments for 2020-21 – An updated report was provided.

6. Policy, Regulation and Forms #4000.1 – Title IX (Third reading)

MOTION #8 (10/8/20) was made (Grant/Kalwara) that the Board of Education approves Policy, Regulation and Forms #4000.1 on Title IX as amended; all in favor. Motion carries.

7. Policy and Forms #5111 – Admission/Placement (Third reading)

MOTION #9 (10/8/20) was made (Kalwara/Grant) that the Board of Education approves Policy and Forms #5111 on Admission/Placement as presented; all in favor. Motion carries.

MOTION #10 (10/8/20) was made (Paul/Wilson) that the Board of Education rescind Motion #9 to approve Policy and Forms #5111 on Admission/Placement until further review at the next BOE meeting; all in favor. Motion carries.

8. Policy #5112 – Ages of Attendance (Third reading.)

The Board requested further review and follow-up with what is required and/or specific legal wording with this Policy and also with #5111 on Admission/Placement. Tabled to the November 12, 2020 meeting for a fourth reading.

9. Policy #6172.61 – Distance Learning Plan (Third reading.)

Tabled to the November meeting for a fourth reading. It was suggested that the Reopening Committee review the policy as well and see if these guidelines are able to be included in the Parent/Student Handbook to describe remote learning rather than have a policy.

10. Bylaw #9321.2 – Remote/Electronic Board of Education Meetings (Third reading)

MOTION #11 (10/8/20) was made (Kalwara/Paul) that the Board of Education approves Bylaw #9321.2 on Remote/Electronic Board of Education Meetings as presented; all in favor. Motion carries.

IX. NEW BUSINESS

1. **Teacher Evaluation and Professional Development Mutual Flexibility Agreement**
MOTION #12 (10/8/20) was made (Wilson/Kalwara) that the Board of Education accepts the Teacher Evaluation and Professional Development Mutual Flexibility Agreement; all in favor. Motion carries.
2. **Resignation from the Board of Education**
MOTION #13 (10/8/20) was made with regrets (Kalwara/Wilson) that the Board of Education accepts the resignation of Kristen Trahan from the Board of Education. Her years of service are appreciated by the Board; all in favor. Motion carries.
3. **Filling the Board of Education Vacancy (Moved to Executive Session)**

X. SUGGESTIONS FOR NEXT REGULAR MEETING

- Upcoming BOE meeting: November 12, 2020 at 7:00 p.m.
- Personnel/Staff Assignments for 2020-21
- Budget Preparation Timeline and Process for 2021-22
- Committee Assignments
- COVID-19 Update
- Reopening Update
- Policy and Forms #5111 – Admission/Placement (Fourth reading)
- Policy #5112 – Ages of Attendance (Fourth reading)
- Policy # 6172.61 – Distance Learning Plan (Fourth reading)

XI. EXECUTIVE SESSION

MOTION #14 (10/8/20) was made (Paul/Wicks) to move into Executive Session at 9:05 p.m. for the purpose of discussing Negotiations, Personnel, and possibly filling the Board vacancy; all in favor. Motion carries.

MOTION #15 (10/8/20) was made (Grant/Wicks) to move out of Executive Session at 9:19 p.m.; all in favor. Motion passes.

MOTION #16 (10/8/20) was made (Paul/Wilson) to approve Valerie Muschiano to fill the Board of Education vacancy; 4 in favor, 2 abstain (Beauparlant/Kalwara). Motion carries.

MOTION #17 (10/8/20) was made (Paul/Wilson) to approve Meagan Wicks to fill the Board of Education position of Vice Chair; all in favor. Motion carries.

XII. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION #18 (10/8/20) was made (Grant/Wilson) to adjourn at 9:20 p.m.; all in favor. Motion carries.

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 11/12/20 BOE MEETING**