

**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

**BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING MINUTES**

December 10, 2020  
 Virtual Meeting - 7:00 p.m.

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

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC3I7dOmnXMxoTlNHzaSZ1zw>

*Public comments were able to be made by emailing [djackman@voluntownct.org](mailto:djackman@voluntownct.org) up to 1 hour prior to the meeting.*

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**I. CALL TO ORDER** Chairperson Kate Beuparlant called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

**ATTENDANCE** **Present:** Kate Beuparlant (Chairperson), Meagan Wicks (Vice Chair), Cathy Grant (Secretary), Arikka Kalwara, Valerie Muschiano, Christopher Wilson and Skart Paul (arrived at 7:48 p.m.)

**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 (12/10/20) was made (Muschiano, Grant) 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:**

- 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 our school can reopen safely. 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.

**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.
- As of 10/13/20 VES has been open 5 days a week. We have returned to a regular schedule for K-8 students. Preschool still is on an adjusted/hybrid schedule.
- VES did not adjust the calendar for the November break. We have continued to attend school 5 days a week after the November recess.

### **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.
- The week of 10/22/20 we celebrated VES Spirit Week. It was a great week for students and staff to show their school spirit. So many staff and students participated in the fun-filled week.
- In-person instrument lessons have begun. NFA made bell covers and adjustable mouth covers for students to continue with instrument lessons.
- Free meals have been extended through June 2021 for all students through the school lunch program.
- Starting on December 1st, students in K-3 have been given a grab-and-go breakfast daily. Students in grades 4-8 are offered breakfast as they leave the building. Breakfast is also offered as students enter the building for grades 4-8 or any student that has not had breakfast.
- On December 4th, students in K-3 were sent with a frozen lunch meal for Saturday and grades 4-8 were offered a meal as they exited the building.
- All Chromebooks have been distributed down through kindergarten. Younger classrooms are working on using the Chromebook, keypad and its applications.
- A trimester assembly was held on Friday, December 4th to highlight our honor roll students. Trimester Student Award- Soaring Eagle Award. The event was live-streamed for our classes and then recorded to share with families on our website and social media.

### **Curriculum, Learning, and Instruction**

- Teacher Evaluation Plan - The State Department of Education has released new guidance on the teacher evaluation plan measures and was approved 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 - A PTO meeting was held on 12/7/20 through Google Meet. The butter braid fundraiser was a huge success as well as our Spirit Wear.
- 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. There have been so many successful programs this fall thanks to the YSB.

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

- The progress on completing the Section 504 and PPT Annual Review meetings delayed by the pandemic is “caught up “. I want to thank the general education and special education staff for their hard work and cooperation to attend and complete documents for these many meetings. I also want to recognize the extraordinary work of my secretary, Linda Raymond, in managing the scheduling and hosting of the virtual meetings held.
- The department is currently engaged in working with their students and parents, Mrs. Vaillancourt, and Mrs. Suffoletto on the selection of high schools of choice and the submission to the receiving schools of records and recommendations.
- Student Services Department members are engaged in providing both face-to-face and distance learning instruction to their students dependent on whether they are in school or have chosen Remote Learning. Adjustments are made when student needs develop. Parents participating in virtual meetings have expressed appreciation for the caring contact the staff members are maintaining with their children both in school and online.
- As of December 10, 2020, this Director had chaired 74 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	40	25
9-12+	<u>21</u>	<u>13</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>38</b>

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

- Calendar of Events for December 2020 and January 2021
- The District Enrollment Report noted 249 students in Pre-K to 8<sup>th</sup> grade and 129 high school students.
- \$16,215.20 has been returned to the Town of Voluntown Undesignated Fund from grants received.
- School Lunch Program Annual Revenue and Cost Expenditure Report for the 2019-2020 School Year
- CABE Liaison Newsletter from December 2020
- CABE Policy Highlights (November 13<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup>, 2020 Issues)
- Updated Board of Education Member’s List/Committee Assignments and District-Level and Curriculum Related Committees List

## VII. **COMMITTEE REPORTS** – Reviewed under the Consent Agenda

## VIII. **OLD BUSINESS**

### 1. **2021-22 Budget Preparation Process**

Thursday	12-10-20	Current curriculum initiatives and projected 21-22 curriculum priorities
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.

### **Curriculum Steering Committee Report**

Mr. Burrows submitted a 12-page Curriculum Steering Report. Kate Beauparlant, Arikka Kalwara and Valerie Muschiano noted their appreciation on how informative this report was and were impressed by the importance VES puts on Professional Development for its teachers. As mentioned in the past, many Board members desire seeing a foreign language component added to the curriculum at some point in the future. Also mentioned was the importance of continuing Social/Emotional Learning, especially during this time of the pandemic.

### **2. COVID-19 Update: Coronavirus Relief Grant and Reopen Committee Update**

Expenditures are being submitted to the State Department of Education and we have received approval for reimbursement for this first part of the request. We will submit the necessary documents to request the full \$176,639 reimbursement for COVID related identified expenditures between March and December 30, 2020. A special account, approved by the auditor, has been established in the Town of Voluntown grants management program for properly using these funds.

The Reopen Committee has been meeting each week since July 2020 to coordinate issues related to meeting the challenges of COVID-19. This committee promotes the wearing of masks, social distancing, and washing of hands in the ongoing quest to maintain a healthy environment. The committee coordinates activities with the UNCAS Health District and the Office of the Voluntown First Selectwoman in follow-up activities that might involve monitoring any testing as well as contact tracing.

Board members discussed the idea of surveying parents of remote high school students to assess their experiences and success levels, as there was concern for remote students possibly falling behind. It was noted that NFA traditionally has a guest speaker make annual presentations at the January Board of Education meeting each year.

### **3. Personnel**

**MOTION #2 (12/10/20) was made (Wilson/Wicks) to approve Valerie Imre from Western Governor's University as a Student Teacher at VES starting in January, 2021; all in favor. Motion carries.**

### **4. Faculty and Staff Assignments for 2020-21 – A report was provided.**

### **5. School Calendar 2021-22 (Second Draft) There is a need to place this on the January 14, 2021 BOE Agenda to take time to confirm that the April 2022 vacation dates have received regional approval. This helps with coordinating transportation routes.**

### **6. Snow Removal**

**MOTION #3 (12/10/20) was made (Kalwara, Muschiano) to temporarily approve the Snow Removal bid from LUNA Landscaping; all in favor. Motion carries.**

This motion was “temporarily” approved to see if more bids are received and will be reviewed again at a future BOE meeting.

### **7. Job Description Update**

**MOTION #4 (12/10/20) was made (Wilson, Muschiano) to approve an updated job description for the Executive Assistant/ HR Specialist as amended; all in favor. Motion carries.**

**8. Substitute Teacher's Pay**

**MOTION #5 (12/10/20) was made (Wicks/Kalwara) to increase the Substitute Teacher's Pay to \$95 per day; 5 in favor, 1 opposed (Paul). Motion carries.**

**IX. NEW BUSINESS**

**1. Mid-Year Board of Education Self Evaluation (First Review)**

This mid-year review will be helpful when the Board of Education meets with Nick Caruso, CABE Consultant, who will review issues related to the evaluation of the Board of Education as well as the process and procedures related to holding effective meetings.

**2. Five-Year SBAC Summary and CSDE Performance Matters Report**

Mr. Burrows reviewed a multi-year report of the annual State of Connecticut assessments for students in third through eighth grades. Voluntown is in District Reference Group (DRG) F, a group determined by similarities: median family income, free/reduced-price meals, number of students, etc. Out of the sixteen (16) towns in DRG F, Voluntown has consistently, over the years, scored in the top of this DRG.

The 2020 SBAC assessment was cancelled due to the closure of all Connecticut schools and the move to remote learning during the time of COVID-19. There is some concern that if there is a continuation of COVID-19, the upcoming 2021 SBAC assessment may be cancelled as well. This will place additional emphasis on using our purchased (three times each year for 3<sup>rd</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grade) STAR reading and math assessments to measure student performance. Our faculty, staff, parents, guardians, community members, and above all, the students, have appreciated our academic successes as a school system. This was especially noticed when other school systems sent faculty to visit our classrooms to see what was happening in Voluntown.

**3. STAR Reading Report**

Mrs. Suffoletto reported the overall results of the STAR test administered to students at the start of the year. The second test will occur and the results to compare student academic growth in Kindergarten through Eighth grades will be shared with the Board of Education in February, 2021.

**X. SUGGESTIONS FOR NEXT REGULAR MEETING**

- Upcoming BOE meetings: January 14 and 28, 2021 (Regular and Special Meetings)
- Budget Preparation Timeline and Process for 2021-22
- COVID-19 and Reopen Committee Updates
- School Calendar 2021-22 (Third Draft)
- Five-Year Facilities Plan
- Snow Removal
- Preparation for Nick Caruso, CABE Consultant, workshop on January 28, 2021

**XI. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

**MOTION #6 (12/10/20) was made (Wicks/Wilson) to move into Executive Session at 9:36 p.m. for the purpose of discussing Negotiations, Personnel and Qualified Tuition Plan; all in favor. Motion carries.**

