

The Board of Education Town of Vernon

30 Park Street – PO Box 600
Vernon, Connecticut 06066

Paul Grabowski, Chair
Kristiana Wintress, Vice Chair
Karen Colt, Secretary
Anthony Bedlack
Susan Jablonecki
Kriste Nucci
Jesse Schoolnik
Simone Sewell
Susanne Vacek

June 8, 2026

APPROVED MINUTES **BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING**

A meeting of the Vernon Board of Education was held in-person and via Zoom Webinar at the Administration Building on Monday, June 8, 2026.

1.0 Establish Quorum

Roll call was taken at 7:00 PM.

There was a quorum. Board members present: Mr. Grabowski, Mr. Bedlack, Ms. Nucci, Mr. Schoolnik, Ms., Sewell and Ms. Vacek. Ms. Colt and Mrs. Jablonecki arrived soon after roll call. Ms. Wintress was absent.

Administration present: Superintendent Dr. Joseph Macary, Assistant Superintendent Mr. Robert Testa and Director of Business and Finance Mr. William Meier III.

2.0 Call to Order

Board Chair Mr. Paul Grabowski called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

3.0 Pledge of Allegiance

4.0 Recognitions and Presentations

4.1 Presentation by Lake Street School Students (BOE Goal #1, #2)

Mrs. Tracy Duenzl, Principal of Lake Street School, introduced Grade 3 teachers Ms. Alyssa Moretti and Ms. Erin Keser, as well as some of their Grade 3 students to the Board. They are here tonight to present their Biography Unit Wax Museum project, where each student was asked to research an important historical figure. The goal of their research was

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to personify the person they selected, transforming themselves into their chosen figures. To celebrate their hard work, the students presented their learning in the form of a “Wax Museum”, where they stepped into character to share their research. Families, students and staff were invited to visit the museum where the students were allowed to showcase their understanding, creativity and public speaking skills, all while bringing history to life. Each student who attended tonight’s meeting was dressed in character once again and presented fun facts about their historical figure to the Board.

4.2 Recognition of Lake Street School Principal Tracy Duenzl (BOE Goal #1)

Board Chair Mr. Grabowski congratulated Mrs. Duenzl for her 13 years of service to Vernon Public Schools and congratulated her on her retirement. Lake Street School has been a special place under her leadership. He also thanked her for her efforts with the Ad Hoc 10-Year Facility Study and Master Plan Committee. Dr. Macary thanked Tracy for 13 years of service and noted that the ABL and ELL Programs are housed at Lake Street and they do a tremendous job with our students requiring those special services. Mr. Grabowski then presented Mrs. Duenzl with a gift of appreciation from the Board.

4.3 Recognition of Board of Education Student Representative Thomas Glinski, Jr. (BOE Goal #1)

Mr. Grabowski noted that Tommy has been on the Board for 2 years and it has been a pleasure to have him as our student representative. He also noted that Tommy has successfully led his “Socktober” fundraising effort during his years at Vernon Public Schools, where he collects socks and undergarments for the homeless in our community. Tommy noted that he plans to continue this event each year. Mr. Grabowski also recognized Tommy’s photography talents and wished him all the best at college. He then presented Tommy with a gift of the Board’s appreciation.

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4.4 Spring Sports Update (BOE Goal #1, #2)

Athletic Director Jeffrey Farrell gave the Board a recap of the Spring Sports season. VCMS offered 3 sports for the Spring season: Baseball with 23 participants, Track with 69 participants & Softball with 14 participants. RHS offered 11 Spring season programs with a total of 281 student athletes participating: Baseball with 31 participants, Softball with 24 participants, E-Sports with 17 participants, Girls' Lacrosse with 17 participants, Girls' Tennis with 17 participants, Outdoor Track with 98 combined participants (39 Girls and 59 Boys), Golf with 21 participants, Boys' Volleyball with 22 participants, Unified Sports with 12 participants (6 athletes and 6 mentors), Boys' Lacrosse with 31 co-op participants, of which 25 were from RHS, and Boys' Tennis with 11 participants. The average GPA was 88.15 and the Girl's Lacrosse team had the highest grade point average at 92.66. Signing Day took place on Wednesday, May 27th where 12 Senior athletes signed letters of intent to play a sport in college. Mr. Farrell noted that all coaches are evaluated annually, and goals and improvement plans are made for the next season. Here's the Year in Review:

- 30 Varsity Sports are Offered
- 14 JV Teams
- 2 Freshmen Teams
- 448 Total Athletes
- 79 Three-Sport Athletes
- 60 All Conference Athletes
- 10 All State Athletes
- 87.79 Athlete GPA During the Season

5.0 Secretary's Report

5.1 Opportunity for the Board of Education to Add/Delete Urgent Agenda Items

Mr. Grabowski announced that we will need to pull item 8.5 - Approval of the Custodians, Maintainers, Secretaries and Clerical Contract due to the membership voting

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down the contract this past weekend.

5.2 Rockville High School Student Representative Report

Anne Aggarwala reported on the following:

- Senior exams have started and will end on Tuesday
- The Senior outing took place at Holiday Hill – everyone had a great time.
- On Thursday, May 28th, RHS hosted their annual Senior Awards/Scholarship Night. 118 Seniors were honored and scholarships totaling \$450,400.00 were awarded.
- The 2026 yearbooks have been distributed.

Thomas Glinski, Jr. reported on the following:

- Seniors will be getting together for Senior Sunset
- RHS is getting ready to host the Graduation Ceremony for the Class of 2026. This event will take place this Thursday at 6:00 pm.
- Finals week is next Monday through Thursday
- The last day of school is Friday, June 19th

6.0 Community Forum

Susanne Vacek, 43 Venetta Drive, Vernon, spoke before the Board. She mentioned that she provided a sample book of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence that she and her family wished to provide to graduating students in our District. The version she provided was vetted by Dr. Macary and Mr. Grabowski, however, they objected to the copy provided because it was published by a Christian organization. Ms. Vacek noted that the separation of Church and State is not in the Constitution, and that references to scripture are written on many buildings and the currency used in our country. However, she is grateful to Dr. Macary and Mr. Grabowski for providing an alternate copy of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution to students, even if it is not the version provided by her and her family.

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7.0 Consent Agenda

7.1 Consent Agenda

- (a) Approval of the Minutes of the Special Board of Education Meeting held on May 18, 2026
- (b) Approval of the Minutes of the Board of Education Special Meeting – Ad Hoc 10-Year Facility Study & Master Plan Committee Meeting held on May 26, 2026

MOTION: Mr. Schoolnik moved to approve Consent Agenda Items 7.1(a) and (b)
SECOND: Mr. Bedlack
VOTE: Unanimous

8.0 Personnel

8.1 Non-Affiliated Staff Salaries (BOE Goal #1, #2, #3) (Executive Session Anticipated)

This item was moved to the end of the meeting.

8.2 Approval of Interim Superintendent Contract (BOE Goal #1, #2, #3) (Executive Session Anticipated)

This item was moved to the end of the meeting.

8.3 Approval of the New Job Description for the School to Career Pathways Coordinator (BOE Goal #1, #2, #3)

Dr. Macary announced that there was a need to create a new position called the “School to Career Pathways Coordinator”. This is a non-certified position and would be a person who has “one foot in education and one foot in the workforce”. This person would assist in

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fostering increased student learning and engagement by bringing forth overall connections with outside agencies and organizations, along with career pathways for students. This position was budgeted for 2026-2027. Dr. Macary is asking the Board to approve the newly created job description for this position.

MOTION: Ms. Sewell moved to approve the new job description for the School to Career Pathways Coordinator

SECOND: Ms. Nucci

VOTE: Unanimous

8.4 Approval of the Cafeteria Workers' Contract (BOE Goal #1, #2, #3) (Executive Session Anticipated)

This item was moved to the end of the meeting.

8.5 Approval of the Custodians, Maintainers, Secretaries and Clerical Contract (BOE Goal #1, #2, #3) (Executive Session Anticipated)

This item was pulled from the meeting agenda by Board Chair Mr. Grabowski.

8.6 Interim Administrator Appointments (BOE Goal #1, #2, #3)

Dr. Macary announced that, with Mr. Testa's retirement effective June 30, 2026, he has appointed Mrs. Melissa Iles, current Director of VRABE, to become Interim Assistant Superintendent of Schools. As a result of this interim appointment, Dr. Macary has also appointed Ms. Cortney Gerlach, current Assistant Director of VRABE, as Interim Director of VRABE. These appointments will be effective July 1, 2026.

9.0 Teaching and Learning

9.1 Student Attendance Data (BOE Goal #2, #3)

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Assistant Superintendent Mr. Robert Testa reviewed student attendance with the Board. He reviewed 2 bar graphs that provided data regarding “Average Daily Attendance by School Year” and “Chronic Absenteeism by School Year”. For the 25-26 school year, our Daily Attendance was at 94.4% as of May 31, 2026. Our goal is 95% and we are getting close to achieving that goal. Chronic Absenteeism has decreased this year from years past and we are currently at 12.1%. Our goal is 10% and we are trending in that direction. Chronic Absenteeism is a priority for all of our school buildings, and Administrators are developing creative ways in their school improvement plans to increase student attendance in school.

10.0 General Business

10.1 Board of Education Finance Committee Report (BOE Goal #1, #2, #3)

Mr. William Meier III, Director of Business and Finance, noted that the Finance Committee met this evening to review the year-to-date budget report. He is also presenting one action item for the Board’s approval:

(a) Asset Disposal Requests from Food Services & Nursing

MOTION: Mr. Bedlack moved to approve the Asset Disposal Requests from Food Services & Nursing as discussed and presented

SECOND: Mrs. Jablonecki

VOTE: Unanimous

10.2 FY2026 Ending Year-to-Date Summary - Resolution 2026-2027 (BOE Goal #1, #2, #3)

Mr. William Meier noted that, each year, the Board of Education is asked to adopt a resolution regarding Board of Education unexpended funds. This year, we are requesting those funds be transferred to the Capital Non-Recurring Account.

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MOTION: Mr. Bedlack moved that the Vernon Board of Education approve a resolution indicating that the Superintendent is authorized to request from the Town of Vernon that the remaining fiscal year 2026 Board of Education fund balance be transferred to the capital Non-Recurring Account.
SECOND: Mr. Schoolnik
VOTE: Unanimous

10.3 Reports from the Board of Education Liaisons Regarding Attendance at Organization / Committee Meetings (BOE Goal #1)

No one had any reports to share this month. Dr. Macary reminded everyone of the Time Capsule event taking place at Northeast School on June 15th.

11.0 Review and Update Board of Education Calendar

<https://www.vernonpublicschools.org/district-information/district-calendar>

Dr. Macary announced that there will be a few additional meetings this month for the Superintendent Search, as well as a meeting to appoint the Assistant Principal of VCMS and a possible meeting on July 6th to appoint the new Superintendent. He also reminded everyone about the VCMS Evening of Excellence Ceremony on June 16th.

12.0 Opportunity for Questions from the Press Regarding Agenda Items

No one from the Press was in attendance.

Mr. Grabowski took a moment to say a few words about Dr. Macary and Mr. Testa on their years of service to Vernon Public School and that they will be sorely missed. He wished Dr. Macary the best in his Superintendency Middletown and Mr. Testa the best in his retirement.

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MOTION: Ms. Vacek motioned to go into executive session at 7:46 PM to address items 8.1, 8.2 and 8.4, inviting Superintendent Dr. Joseph Macary & Assistant Superintendent Mr. Robert Testa
SECOND: Mr. Bedlack
VOTE: Unanimous

The Board came out of executive session at 8:19 PM

8.1 Non-Affiliated Staff Salaries (BOE Goal #1, #2, #3) (Executive Session Anticipated)

MOTION: Ms. Nucci moved to approve the Non-Affiliated Staff Salaries as discussed and presented
SECOND: Mrs. Jablonecki
VOTE: Unanimous

8.2 Approval of Interim Superintendent Contract (BOE Goal #1, #2, #3) (Executive Session Anticipated)

MOTION: Ms. Vacek moved to approve the Interim Superintendent Contract as discussed and presented
SECOND: Ms. Colt
VOTE: Unanimous

8.4 Approval of the Cafeteria Workers' Contract (BOE Goal #1, #2, #3) (Executive Session Anticipated)

MOTION: Mr. Schoolnik moved to approve the Cafeteria Workers' Contract as discussed and presented

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SECOND: Mr. Bedlack
VOTE: Unanimous

13.0 Adjournment

MOTION: Ms. Colt made a motion to adjourn at 8:20 PM
SECOND: Mr. Schoolnik
VOTE: Unanimous

Respectfully submitted,



Karen Colt, Board Secretary