

**PUBLIC MEETING**

**March 14, 2023**

**The Verona Board of Education of the Township of Verona, in the County of Essex, New Jersey, convened in regular session on March 14, 2023 at 7:03 p.m.**

**The meeting was called to order by Jorge Cruz, Board Secretary.**

**A statement was made that the meeting had been properly advertised in the designated newspapers and the agendas were posted at the appropriate locations.**

**The following members of the Board were present: Mrs. Pamela Priscoe, President, Mrs. Diana Ferrera, Vice President, Mrs. Lisa Freschi, Denise Verzella and Mr. Christopher Wacha. Also present was Mrs. Diane DiGiuseppe, Superintendent and Mr. Jorge Cruz, School Business Administrator.**

**There was 1 member of the public present. There were 0 members of the press present.**



CONFIDENTIAL EXECUTIVE SESSION –6:00 pm  
REGULAR PUBLIC MEETING AGENDA – 7:00 pm  
VERONA HIGH SCHOOL LEARNING COMMONS  
March 14, 2023

1. Call to order
2. Pledge of Allegiance
3. Reading of Meeting Notice
4. Roll Call Attendance
5. Presentations -Tania Symmons - Director of Special Services -  
New Life Skills Program at VHS  
Jorge Cruz - School Business Administrator -  
2023-24 Tentative Budget Presentation
6. Superintendent Report - Diane DiGiuseppe
7. Student Representative Report - Reese Sahadow
8. Committee Reports -
  - Athletics
  - Facilities
  - Policies
9. Public Comments on Agenda Action Items
10. Discussion Items
11. Roll Call Vote on Resolutions
12. Public Comments

Live streaming link: <https://youtube.com/live/KuRpekKGVRI?feature=share>

The next scheduled Public Meeting will be held on **Tuesday, March 28, 2023** beginning with a Confidential Session at 6:00 pm and 7:00 pm Public Session in the Verona High School Learning Commons.

1. **Call to Order**
2. **Pledge of Allegiance**
3. **Reading of Meeting Notice**

This meeting is being conducted in compliance with the open meeting session that the Verona Board of Education passed a resolution at its annual reorganization meeting held on January 3, 2023. The meeting set forth the schedule of its regular meetings which resolution was within 7 days of passage. The schedule was sent to the Verona Cedar Grove Times, the Star Ledger, the Township of Verona and the VEA. Postings of this meeting setting forth the time location and agenda were posted at the Verona Board of Education Office and on the Verona Public Schools district website. Copies of tonight's agenda and resolutions have been made available to the public and press.

4. **Roll Call Attendance**

Mr. Wacha	<u>  X  </u>	Mrs. Verzella	<u>  X  </u>
Mrs. Ferrera	<u>  X  </u>	Mrs. Priscoe	<u>  X  </u>
Mrs. Freschi <u>  X  </u>			

5. **Presentations -**      **Tania Symmons** - Director of Special Services -  
New Life Skills Program at VHS  
**Jorge Cruz** - School Business Administrator - 2023-24 Tentative  
Budget Presentation

6. **Superintendent Report -** Diane DiGiuseppe

DEI Recommendations

Were approved - straw poll by the Board to publish to the website. The Superintendent will make one final edit and then post the recommendations and action plan to the website.

Meeting 2 Strategic Planning - tomorrow

"Dare to Dream - Vision and Expectations for the Future"

Meeting 1 information can be found on the district website - strategic plan site; anyone is invited to join even if they have not attended the first meeting.

Policies and Regulations

We are approving 17 more Policies and Regulations to bring our policy manual up to date.

Class size K-4

There are 4 classes at or above 24 students in K-4, which is not optimal; we don't have basic skills instruction or any form of supplemental support for general education students other than our students with disabilities.

We are looking at the 5-6 grade schedule at HBW to see if we can create a more elementary-style schedule to increase the amount of ELA and math instruction that occurs. This may free up some staff who can transition to the elementary school to support smaller classes or remedial support for our struggling learners.

Mr. Ballaj and the Superintendent are looking to create a functional site map for the website to address some of the redundancies and 'holes' in the information that can be found there.

VHS had its first Semi Formal dance in about 20 years, and the students had a great time.

Table to Table, New Jersey's first food rescue organization, recognized the students at F.N. Brown in Verona, NJ, with the 2022 Bernard and Geraldine Segal Foundation Award for Student Philanthropy in support of Table to Table's year-round Bag a Lunch, Help a Bunch initiative, which invites participants to donate what they would spend on lunch for a day, week, month or more to help Table to Table feed those who need it most. FNB students raised funds to provide 31,530 meals for our hungry neighbors. They were featured on News 12 NJ.

Looking at giveback days for the 4 yet unused inclement weather days. A decision will be made by April 3, 2023. Most likely, they will be used on June 6, 2023 (Election Day) and flanking Memorial Day weekend.

## **7. Student Representative Report - Reese Sahadow**

Ken Shelton met with students on March 3.

1. Discussed school climate and students worked in small groups to identify problems and come up with solutions.
- B. The Student Council's dance was on March 8th. Thank you to everyone that helped out, especially the club advisors, decorating committee, and teacher chaperones.
- C. Juniors are taking Graduation Proficiency Assessment tests this week, with 2 days of math and 3 days of English.
- D. Spring sports are starting up on Thursday, March 16.
- E. The music program has a concert on Thursday, March 16, the day of percussion/evening performance on Saturday, March 18, and their trip to Disney World next week.

## **8. Committee Reports**

- Athletics - Mrs. Priscoe shared athletics updates and spring sports. Posting for lacrosse and girls soccer coaches.

- Facilities - Mrs. Freschi shared an update for Buildings & Grounds from the committees meeting with the new director of facilities. A proposal was shared to provide greater efficiency in the department leadership and the management of the custodial services and maintenance. ROD grant is being reviewed to update flooring at Laning with the abatement and removal of carpets. Solar panel review and energy audit will be taking place to verify if our district is eligible and can benefit from these renewable energy sources.
- Policies - Mrs. Verzella shared the policy committees updates and shared the revision being proposed for the board policy to change the name of a board of education facility and/or space. Mrs. Freschi shared a proposal to allow remote instruction for students that are bound to home instruction.

**9. Public Comments on Agenda Action Items - None.**

**10. Discussion Items**

Mrs. Freschi gave a shout out to your DECA team for their fundraising efforts to benefiting Covent House. Congratulations for making it to the nationals.

**11. Roll Call Vote on Resolutions**

**12. Public Comments**

Please note that the public participation portion of the meeting affords an opportunity for the public to share thoughts and comments about school related topics. By law, administrators and Board of Education members are not permitted to publicly discuss personnel matters, student discipline, or other issues requiring confidentiality. While we may not respond to comments during the meeting, all input that is shared with the Board of Education is taken very seriously, and helps inform future deliberations and work by the Board and its committees. Answers appear in many forms including, but not limited to: email, Superintendent/ Committee reports, Board statements, FAQs on website, or after public comment is closed. We appreciate and thank all members of the public for your input.

**VERONA PUBLIC SCHOOLS – BOARD OF EDUCATION**

**RESOLUTIONS**

**March 14, 2023**

**I. ROUTINE MATTERS**

The following resolutions have been recommended by the Superintendent to the Board of Education.

- #1 RESOLVED** that the Board, upon on the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the minutes of the following meetings:

Regular Public Meeting February 28 , 2023

**Motion by:** Mrs. Freschi

**Seconded by:** Mrs. Ferrera

**Be it RESOLVED the approval of Resolutions #1**

Mr. Wacha Abstain

Mrs. Verzella X

Mrs. Ferrera X

Mrs. Priscoe Abstain

Mrs. Freschi X

**III. PERSONNEL**

- #1 RESOLVED** that the Board, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the following:

- 1.1 New Hires** -pending successful completion of pre-employment paperwork.

Name	Location	Position	Salary	Committee	Term of Employment on or about	Notes
Hunter Tramel	Elem.	Sub Teacher	\$110.00/per diem	Education	School Year 2022-203	Rescind
Sharon Suchman	FN Brown	Lunch Aide	\$15.00/ per hour	Education	School Year 2022-2023	
Tara Barrow	FN Brown	MLOA Grade 1	\$235/per diem	Education	Apr. 4 - Jun. 22, 2023	

### 1.2 Reallocation of Days

Employee #	Explanation
#102721	7 Personal Illness Days to 7 Family Illness Days

### 1.3 Without Pay

Name	Date/s	No. of Days/Reason
#105532	Feb. 28, 2023	1 day/Unpaid Sick
#105756	Mar. 1, 9, 2023	2 days/Unpaid Sick
#105691	Mar. 1, 2, 3, 2023	3 days/Unpaid Sick
#105701	Mar. 3, 8, 9, 10, 2023	4 days/Unpaid Day
#105597	Mar. 6, 2023	1 day/Unpaid Day
#101171	Mar. 13, 2023	1 day/Unpaid Day

### 1.4 Leave of Absence

Name	Reason	Begin Date	Estimated Return Date on or about
#105195	Unpaid Medical Leave of Absence	Feb. 27, 2023	Apr. 24, 2023
#105210	Extension of Maternity Leave of Absence	Sept. 7, 2023	Aug. 31, 2023

### 1.5 Resignation

Name	Location	Position	Reason	Effective on or About
Maria Barone	BRK	Paraprofessional	Resignation	Mar. 31, 2023

Motion by: Mrs. Freschi

Seconded by: Mrs. Verzella

**Be it RESOLVED the approval of Resolutions #1 - 1.5**

Mr. Wacha   X   Mrs. Verzella   X  

Mrs. Ferrera   X   Mrs. Priscoe   X  

Mrs. Freschi   X

#### IV. EDUCATION

#1 **RESOLVED** that the Board, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the following:

##### 1.1 Attendance at Conference

Name	School	Event/Location	Date	Cost
Heather Anderson	FOR/FNB	LETRS: Unit 1 Facilitator Training/Virtual	May 16-17, 23-24, 2023	\$2,199.00
Robert Orr	VHS	AP Statistics Exam Reading/ Kansas City, Missouri	Jun. 12 - 16, 2023	Meals \$288.00

##### 1.2 VFEE Grant

Grant Recipients	School	Name of Grant	Grant #	Amount of Grant
Kathy Thomas/Jody Sewell/ Melissa Tempesta/Raquel Grasso/Nadia Domenick	HBW	Verona Students in the Community Garden	2023-04	\$3,700.00
Amy Heckel/Paul Moschella	HBW	DNA Detectives	2023-05	\$1,000.00

##### 1.3 Mentor

Novice Teacher	Location	Mentor	Stipend	# of mentoring weeks
Kristen Duffy	LAN	Ann Marie Ruggiero	Waived	14 weeks

##### 1.4 SPLASH Summer Program

Name	Position	Stipend	Term of Employment on or About
Julia Peter	Reading Coordinator	\$2,910	June 27, 2023 - July 26, 2023
Glen Stevenson	Math Coordinator	\$2,910	June 27, 2023 - July 26, 2023
Kristy McCabe	Reading Teacher	\$2,910	June 27, 2023 - July 26, 2023
Erin Coffey	Reading Teacher	\$2,910	June 27, 2023 - July 26, 2023
Kathleen Amora	Reading Teacher	\$2,910	June 27, 2023 - July 26, 2023
Anne Marie Ruggiero	Reading Teacher	\$2,910	June 27, 2023 - July 26, 2023
Tamara Gesario	Math Teacher	\$2,910	June 27, 2023 - July 26, 2023



<b>Cara LaMedica</b>	Math Teacher	\$2,910	June 27, 2023 - July 26, 2023
<b>Cindy Graves</b>	Math Teacher	\$2,910	June 27, 2023 - July 26, 2023

### 1.5 Student Observer

<b>Name</b>	<b>School</b>	<b>School/Teacher/ Grade</b>	<b>Duration</b>	<b>Assignment</b>
Matthew Candelario	Cald. Univ.	HBW/Halpern/Music	9 hrs. Mar. 15 - Apr. 29, 2023	Student Observer

- #2 **RESOLVED** that the Board, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve all District Administration, Child Study Team, and Related Services staff for job-related travel.

Motion by:      Mrs. Freschi     

Seconded by:      Mrs. Ferrera     

**Be it RESOLVED the approval of Resolutions #1 - 2**

Mr. Wacha   X        Mrs. Verzella   X  

Mrs. Ferrera   X        Mrs. Priscoe   X  

Mrs. Freschi   X  

### V. SPECIAL EDUCATION

- #1 **RESOLVED** that the Board, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approved to contract with Care Plus NJ, Inc. (CPNJ) to provide in-district behavioral healthcare services to the Verona School District for the 2023 – 2024 school year (9/1/23 – 6/30/24) at a cost of \$380,000.
- #2 **RESOLVED** that the Board, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve for Dr. Sandra Cammarata to conduct psychiatric evaluations for the Verona School District on an as-needed basis for the 2022-2023 school year at the rate of \$885 per evaluation, not to exceed \$8,850.00.
- #3 **RESOLVED** that the Board, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve Ms. Christina Gess to accompany student #271030 during out-of-district school visits.

- #4 **RESOLVED** that the Board, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the following:

**4.1 Student Home Instruction**

Student #	School	Grade	Hrs./Week/Duration	Beginning on or about
#240909	VHS	11	10 hrs./wk./4-6 wks.	Mar. 7, 2023

- #5 **RESOLVED** that the Board, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, to approve the creation of a High School Language and Learning Disabilities Program for the 2023 - 2024 school year.

Motion by: Mrs. Freschi

Seconded by: Mrs. Verzella

**Be it RESOLVED the approval of Resolutions #1 - 5**

Mr. Wacha X Mrs. Verzella X

Mrs. Ferrera X Mrs. Priscoe X

Mrs. Freschi X

**VI. ATHLETICS/CO-CURRICULAR**

- #1 **RESOLVED** that the Board, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the following:

**1.1 Coaches**

Volunteer Coach	Location	Sport Name	Stipend	Term of Employment
Steven Priscoe	VHS	Volunteer Baseball	NA	Spring 2023

**1.2 Chaperones**

Last Name	First Name	Location	Trip
Coe	Sam	VHS (Coach)	Baltimore, MD Lacrosse
Wenzel	Brian	VHS (Coach)	Baltimore, MD Lacrosse
Freedman	John	VHS (Parent)	Baltimore, MD Lacrosse
Salerno	Craig	VHS (Parent)	Baltimore, MD Lacrosse

**Motion by:** Mrs. Ferrera

**Seconded by:** Mrs. Verzella

**Be it RESOLVED the approval of Resolutions #1 - 1.2**

Mr. Wacha X Mrs. Verzella X

Mrs. Ferrera X Mrs. Priscoe (Abstain 1.1, yes to 1.2)

Mrs. Freschi (Recuse 1.1, yes to 1.2)

## **VII. FINANCE**

- #1 RESOLVED** that the Board, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the enclosed checklist(s) in the following amounts based on the recommendation of the Superintendent:

<u>Amount</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Check Register Date</u>
\$764,823.03	General/Athletics	March 10, 2023
\$ 10,463.10	Referendum	February 28, 2023
\$ 4,080.54	VHS	March 10, 2023
\$ 2,626.51	HBW	March 10, 2023

- #2 RESOLVED** that the Board, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the Report of the Secretary for the period(s) as follows:

January 2023

- #3 RESOLVED** that the Board, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the Report of the Treasurer of School Monies for the following month:

January 2023

- #4 RESOLVED** that the Board, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the attached list of individual transfers of line items in the 2022-2023 budget for:

January 2023

- #5 RESOLVED** that the Board, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the Preliminary Budget for the 2023-2024 school year in the amount of:

	<b><u>GENERAL FUND</u></b>	<b><u>SPECIAL REVENUES</u></b>	<b><u>DEBT SERVICE</u></b>	<b><u>TOTAL</u></b>
<b>2023-2024 Total Expenditures</b>	\$42,168,627	\$1,282,927	\$4,925,350	\$48,376,904
<b>Less: Anticipated Revenues</b>	<u>\$ 4,523,199</u>	<u>\$1,282,927</u>	<u>\$ 1,108,428</u>	<u>\$ 6,914,554</u>
<b>Taxes to be Raised</b>	<u>\$37,645,428</u>	<u>\$0</u>	<u>\$3,816,922</u>	<u>\$41,462,350</u>

**BE IT RESOLVED** that the Verona Board of Education includes in the tentative budget and appropriation of surplus in the amount of \$902,047.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the 2023-24 Budget includes adjustments for the use of health care benefits cost, in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-10.3(b), in the amount of \$271,213.

**BE IT RESOLVED** that the Verona Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, approves to deposit a combined total not to exceed \$1,000,000 into Capital Reserve and/or Maintenance Reserve and/or Emergency Reserve, if determined to be prudent given the need for long term financial planning and budgeting, as permitted by N.J.S.A. 18A:7F-41/N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-14-3. The actual amounts to be deposited will be determined as part of the actual FY22 audit.

**BE IT RESOLVED** that the tentative budget be approved for the 2023-2024 School Year using the 2023-2024 state aid figures and the Secretary to the Board of Education be authorized to submit the following tentative budget to the Executive County Superintendent of Schools for approval in accordance with the statutory deadline:

And to advertise said tentative budget in the *Star Ledger* in accordance with the form suggested by the State Department of Education and according to law; and

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that a public hearing be held on April 25, 2023, at 7:00 p.m. in the Verona High School Learning Commons for the purpose of conducting a public hearing on the budget for the 2023-2024 School Year.

1. Approve Travel and Related Expense Reimbursement 2023-2024

**WHEREAS**, the Verona Board of Education recognizes school staff and Board members will incur travel expenses related to and within the scope of their current responsibilities and for travel that promotes the delivery of instruction or furthers the efficient operation of the school district; and

**WHEREAS**, N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-7et seq. requires Board members to receive approval of these expenses by a majority of the full voting membership of the Board and staff members to receive prior approval of these expenses by the Superintendent of Schools and a majority of the full voting membership of the Board; and

**WHEREAS**, a Board of Education may establish, for regular district business travel only, an annual school year threshold of \$150 per staff member where prior Board approval shall not be required unless this annual threshold for a staff member is exceeded in a given school year (July 1 through June 30); and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, the Board of Education approves travel and related expense reimbursements in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-7, to a maximum expenditure of \$50,000, for all staff and Board members; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the School Business Administrator track and record these costs to insure that the maximum amount is not exceeded.

**Motion by:** Mrs. Verzella

**Seconded by:** Mrs. Ferrera

**Be it RESOLVED the approval of Resolutions #1 - 5**

Mr. Wacha   X   Mrs. Verzella   X  

Mrs. Ferrera   X   Mrs. Priscoe   X  

Mrs. Freschi   X  

## **VIII. GOVERNANCE & POLICY**

**#1 RESOLVED** that the Board, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve to accept the HIB report for February 2023.

**#2 RESOLVED** that the Board approve, based on the recommendation of the Superintendent, the attached Student Safety Data System report for Reporting Period 1, July 1, 2022 through December 31, 2022.

[Student Safety Data System Board Report for Period 1 2022-2023](#)

**#3 RESOLVED** that the Board, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the FIRST READING of the following Board Policies and Regulations:

**Policies**

P1511 [BOARD OF EDUCATION WEBSITE ACCESSIBILITY \(M\)](#)  
P1581 [DOMESTIC VIOLENCE \(M\)](#)  
P1613 [DISCLOSURE AND REVIEW OF APPLICANT'S EMPLOYMENT HISTORY \(M\)](#)  
P2415.55 [H.B. WHITEHORNE TITLE I – SCHOOL PARENT AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT \(M\)](#)  
P2415.56 [VERONA HIGH SCHOOL TITLE I – SCHOOL PARENT AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT \(M\)](#)  
P2418 [SECTION 504 OF THE REHABILITATION ACT OF 1973 –STUDENTS \(M\)](#)  
P2425 [EMERGENCY VIRTUAL/REMOTE INSTRUCTION PROGRAM \(M\)](#)  
P8140 STUDENT ENROLLMENTS (M)  
P8330 [STUDENT RECORDS \(M\)](#)

**Regulations**

R1581 [DOMESTIC VIOLENCE \(M\)](#)  
R 1613 [DISCLOSURE AND REVIEW OF APPLICANT'S EMPLOYMENT HISTORY\(M\)](#)  
R2418 [SECTION 504 OF THE REHABILITATION ACT OF 1973 –STUDENTS \(M\)](#)  
R7250 [SCHOOL AND FACILITY NAMES](#)  
R8420.2 [BOMB THREATS \(M\)](#)  
R8420.7 [LOCKDOWN PROCEDURES \(M\)](#)  
R8420.2 [ACTIVE SHOOTER \(M\)](#)

**Motion by:**       Mrs. Freschi      

**Seconded by:**       Mrs. Verzella      

**Be it RESOLVED the approval of Resolutions #1 - 3**

Mr. Wacha     X     Mrs. Verzella     X    

Mrs. Ferrera     X     Mrs. Priscoe     X    

Mrs. Freschi     X

**IX. PUBLIC COMMENTS - None.**

Please note that the public participation portion of the meeting affords an opportunity for the public to share thoughts and comments about school related topics. By law, administrators and Board of Education members are not permitted to publicly discuss personnel matters, student discipline, or other issues requiring confidentiality. While we may not respond to comments during the meeting, all input that is shared with the Board of Education is taken very seriously, and helps inform future deliberations and work by the Board and its committees. Answers appear in many forms including, but not limited to: email, Superintendent/ Committee reports, Board statements, FAQs on website, or after public comment is closed. We appreciate and thank all members of the public for your input.

**CONFIDENTIAL SESSION IF NECESSARY**

**RESOLUTION TO ADJOURN**

- #1 RESOLVED** that the Board meet in private session, from which the public shall be excluded, to discuss the topics of negotiations and personnel or potential litigation which private discussion is being held pursuant to Section 7b and 8 of the Open Public Meeting Act. The matters under discussion will be disclosed to the public as soon as final decisions are made and voted upon.

**Motion to adjourn the meeting:**

**Motion by:** Mrs. Freschi

**Second by:** Mrs. Verzella

**All in Favor:** AYE

**All Opposed:** None

**This meeting is adjourned at (TIME) 8:38 P.M.**