



CONFIDENTIAL EXECUTIVE SESSION – 5:30 pm
VIA TELEPHONE CONFERENCE
REGULAR PUBLIC MEETING AGENDA – 7:00 pm
VIA ZOOM WEBINAR
March 23, 2021

Based on the recent attention with COVID-19, also known as Coronavirus, and the potential impact on our community, the Verona Public Schools will be conducting the Verona Board of Education meeting remotely via Zoom webinar. There will also be in-person access for the public. This meeting is scheduled to occur with public access and participation availability to ensure the continued regular operation of government and the health, safety, and well-being of our community members. **The next meeting of the Verona Board of Education will be held via zoom webinar. The public shall utilize the following instructions to call into the meeting:**

Please click the link to join the webinar: <https://zoom.us/j/91705981194>

Passcode: 274682

Or iPhone one-tap :

US: +13126266799,,91705981194# or +16465189805,,91705981194#

Or Telephone:

Dial(for higher quality, dial a number based on your current location):

US: +1 312 626 6799 or +1 646 518 9805 or +1 213 338 8477

Webinar ID: 917 0598 1194

- Anyone from the public wishing to address the Verona Board of Education on any matter, when prompted by the Verona Board of Education will be able to raise their hand using the Raise Hand button on their device or dial *9 if you called in (please [click here](#) to determine how to raise your hand using your device). When you are advised it is your turn to address the Verona Board of Education, please state your name and address for the record. You will have time to address the Verona Board of Education. At the conclusion of your comments the Verona Board of Education and/or the Superintendent of Schools may address your comments and/or questions.
- Please make sure you have the current version of Zoom updated on your device in order to have the capability to use the Raise Hand function to make public comments or ask questions.

The New Jersey Department of Community Affairs recently stated that “the Division of Local Government Services reminds local units that, in accordance with N.J.S.A. 10:4-6, et seq., (the “Open Public Meetings Act,” or “Act”), public meetings may be held in person or by means of communication equipment, N.J.S.A. 10:4-8(b), to include streaming services and other online meeting platforms. All meetings, including those held using communications equipment, must be noticed in a manner consistent with the requirements of the Act, unless the meeting is for emergent circumstances and held in a manner consistent with the requirements set forth at N.J.S.A. 10:4-9(b). Local units should also provide guidance to the public for remotely accessing and providing comment at a meeting. Local units should still have an advertised meeting place, which is connected to the meeting through communications equipment, unless otherwise directed by state or local emergency management or health officials, consistent with Executive Order 103 (Murphy 3/9/2020).”

PUBLIC MEETING

March 23, 2021

The Verona Board of Education of the Township of Verona, in the County of Essex, New Jersey, convened in regular session on March 23, 2021 via ZOOM webinar at 7:07 p.m.

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Ernest Turner. 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. Lisa Freschi, President, Vice President, Mr. Jim Day, Mr. Timothy Alworth, Mrs. Pamela Priscoe and Mrs. Sara Drappi. Also present was Dr. Rui Dionisio, Superintendent and Mr. Ernest Turner, Acting Board Secretary.

There were 97 members of the public present. There was 1 member of the press present.



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1. Call to order
2. Pledge of Allegiance
3. Reading of Meeting Notice
4. Roll Call Attendance
5. Superintendent Report - Dr. Rui Dionisio, Superintendent of Schools
6. Presentations - None
7. Committee Reports
 - Finance
 - Community Resources
8. Public Comments on Agenda Action Items to be Approved
9. Discussion Items
10. Roll Call Vote on Resolutions
11. Public Comments

NOTE: The next scheduled Public Meeting will be held on **Tuesday, April 13, 2021** beginning with a Confidential Session at 5:30 pm and 7:00 pm Public Session **via ZOOM webinar** pending the evolving nature of COVID-19.

- 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 5, 2021. 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. The Verona Board of Education operates under a consent agenda format, any board member has the right to have an item pulled to be voted upon or discussed separately. Copies of tonight's agenda and resolutions have been made available to the public and press.

4. Roll Call Attendance

Mr. Alworth	<u> X </u>	Mr. Day	<u> X </u>
Mrs. Drappi	<u> X </u>	Mrs. Freschi	<u> X </u>
Mrs. Priscoe <u> X </u>			

5. Superintendent Report - Dr. Rui Dionisio, Superintendent of Schools -

Good evening everyone. The Diversity & Equity Committee met on Tuesday, March 16th with over 70 engaged members of the Verona community. This was a large group kickoff meeting designed to begin discussion on bias. We have scheduled smaller subcommittee meetings for April, May & June that will further examine the areas of diversity, equity and inclusion as it relates to specific themes within our District. Specifically, the sub-committees are as follows:

- Curriculum & Instruction and Professional Development
- Recruiting & Hiring and Community Outreach
- District/School Climate & Culture and Educational Equity

In June, the full committee will reconvene prior to the end of the school year. We also have staff development that will be scheduled for the summer as we prepare to move into the new school year in September with tangible goals as we continue this important work.

The Verona Community Health Town Hall is tomorrow night at 7 pm. It will be recorded for members of the public who are unable to view it live. Access information was sent via email and is also on the Verona Township website.

Employee Vaccinations At this time, approximately 280 VPS staff have a scheduled appointment, received 1 dose, or have been fully vaccinated. This currently represents approximately 80% of the total Verona Public Schools staff. Approximately 97% of staff who have decided to receive the vaccination had the opportunity to become vaccinated. This success is due largely in part to availability of vaccines, partnerships with local health providers such as Vanguard Medical Group and Mountainside Hospital, vaccine appointment coordination by our school nurses, and the tenacity of our staff in seeking out individual opportunities to become vaccinated. On March 19th, the Verona Public Schools also afforded the opportunity to VPS staff to register through the Essex County website food the school employee vaccination program coordinated by Essex County Executive Joseph DiVincenzo which began this week.

Updated CDC Guidance

We are very happy and excited to hear what sounds to be very promising news from the CDC for our elementary schools that was updated on March 19th. The District now awaits updated guidance from the NJ Department of Health (NJDOH) and Montclair Health Department on recommendations following this new CDC guidance. We sent a letter to Governor Murphy last week requesting that NJDOH provide updates to the CDC guidance as quickly as possible and communicate it swiftly so our schools may increase in-person learning. As of today, the NJDOH has not yet provided any new guidance so we are still at 6 feet physical distance in classrooms.

The administration and staff at all levels of our school district has been preparing to pivot in anticipation of the receipt of official updated guidance from the NJDOH. The Verona Public Schools will be able to move to one cohort and afford every elementary student the opportunity to attend in-person school every day from 8:30-12:30 once the 3 feet physical distance guidance is updated by NJDOH. Universal mask wearing will still be required along with all other recommendations and mitigation strategies. Only a few days of transition will be necessary for our schools to adjust to 3 feet distancing for students once NJDOH guidance is officially received. The District has been planning for this possibility for several weeks. More details will be forthcoming as we learn more information from the NJDOH.

The CDC press release guidance states, “Middle school students and high school students should be at least 6 feet apart in communities where transmission is high, if cohorting is not possible.” At the high school and middle school levels, we are also awaiting guidance from the NJDOH and Montclair Department of Health regarding the amount of physical distance required based on the level of community spread of COVID-19. [Click here](#) for more information on updated guidance from the CDC.

We are preparing to make the shift to 3 feet distancing between student to student in elementary classrooms within a few days when we receive the NJDOH guidance. Today our elementary principals sent an email to elementary parents to identify which students will choose to return to in-person learning when we move to 3 feet.

At HBW, our principals and staff are reviewing the parent survey feedback with the number of interested students who have selected to participate in in-person learning. HBW is currently at 3 cohorts and is working hard to be able to get the number to 2 cohorts so students can come into school every other day.

VHS will be surveying parents for in-person learning for the spring to identify the number of cohorts. We are currently at 2 cohorts at VHS and will examine the feedback. We have also been exploring a tentative plan for the afternoon for in-person classes at VHS. Communication will be sent out soon on these options with a survey for parents.

Elementary School Restructuring Update

The results of the recent survey to Verona families have been collated. Only responses from families who will have students in K-4 for 2021-22 were considered. Approximately $\frac{2}{3}$ of Verona families responded to the survey. Of those families who responded, 75% support the District exploring the consideration and development of a plan to restructure the elementary schools for one year should 6 feet of physical distancing still create a limitation in our classrooms.

We will keep this option as one possibility to consider should the 6 feet distancing be necessary in the future. However, we are optimistic that implementing such a proposal will not be needed if and when public health conditions continue to improve in the coming months. In order to accomplish this goal, communities must continue to do their part in vaccinations and following CDC recommendations. That concludes the Superintendent Report.

6. Presentations - None

7. Committee Reports

- Finance - None
- Community Resources

8. Public Comments on Agenda Action Items to be Approved - None

9. Discussion Items

10. Roll Call Vote on Resolutions

11. Public Comments

Motion by: Mrs. Drappi

Seconded by: Mrs. Priscoe

Be it RESOLVED the approval of Resolutions #1 - 9.

Mr. Alworth X

Mr. Day X

Mrs. Drappi X

Mrs. Freschi X

Mrs. Priscoe X

VERONA PUBLIC SCHOOLS – BOARD OF EDUCATION
RESOLUTIONS
March 23, 2021

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

#1 RESOLVED that the Board approve the minutes of the following meetings:

Confidential & Regular Public Meeting March 9, 2021
March 18, 2021

PERSONNEL

#2 RESOLVED that the Board approve the following pending pre-employment paperwork:

2.1 New Hire

Name	Location	Position	Salary	Committee	Term of Employment on or about
Mary Guldin	District	Lunch Aide	\$13.50/hr.	Education	SY 20-21

2.1 Stipends

Name	School	Stipend	Position	Committee	Employment Date	Notes
Robert Merkler	District	\$100/per diem	Administrative in Charge	Education	March 10 - 12, 2021	APPROVE
Steven Schels	Forest	\$100/per diem	Interim Principal	Education	March 8 - 19, 2021	RESCIND
Steven Schels	District	\$100/per diem	Administrator in Charge	Education	March 8 - 9 and March 15 - 19, 2021	APPROVE
Susan Gugger	BRK	\$374.50	Conflict Resolution Coordinator	Education	SY 20-21	RESCIND

Corisa Walker	BRK	\$374.50	Conflict Resolution Coordinator	Education	SY 20-21	RESCIND
Luisa Hirsch	FNB	\$374.50	Conflict Resolution Coordinator	Education	SY 20-21	RESCIND
Louis Waibel	FNB	\$374.50	Conflict Resolution Coordinator	Education	SY 20-21	RESCIND
Tatiana Fella	FOR	\$749.00	Conflict Resolution Coordinator	Education	SY 20-21	RESCIND
Elissa Freda	LAN	\$749.00	Conflict Resolution Coordinator	Education	SY 20-21	RESCIND
Susan Gugger	BRK	\$397.00	Conflict Resolution Coordinator	Education	SY 20-21	APPROVE
Corisa Walker	BRK	\$397.00	Conflict Resolution Coordinator	Education	SY 20-21	APPROVE
Luisa Hirsch	FNB	\$397.00	Conflict Resolution Coordinator	Education	SY 20-21	APPROVE
Louis Waibel	FNB	\$397.00	Conflict Resolution Coordinator	Education	SY 20-21	APPROVE
Tatiana Fella	FOR	\$794.00	Conflict Resolution Coordinator	Education	SY 20-21	APPROVE
Elissa Freda	LAN	\$794.00	Conflict Resolution Coordinator	Education	SY 20-21	APPROVE

2.2 Retirement

Name	Position	Location	Reason	Effective Date of Retirement
George Sona	Head Night Custodian	VHS	Retirement	June 30, 2021

2.3 Extra Pay

Name	Dates From/To	Pay rate	Total	Reason
Kaysee Hill	Mar. 16 - Apr. 9, 2021	\$24 per hr.	not to exceed 5 hrs. for a total of \$120	MAP growth testing

David Furnari	Mar. 16 - Apr. 9, 2021	\$24 per hr.	not to exceed 5 hrs. for a total of \$120	MAP growth testing
Robert Brawley	Mar. 16 - Apr. 9, 2021	\$24 per hr.	not to exceed 5 hrs. for a total of \$120	MAP growth testing

EDUCATION

#3 RESOLVED that the Board approve the attached Statistical Report for the month of February 2021.

#4 RESOLVED that the Board approve the second reading of the following Policies/Regulations:

A. General Policy and Regulation Guides:

P & R 5330.01 Administration of Medical Cannabis (M) (Revised)
P7425 Lead Testing of Water in Schools (M) (Revised)
R 7425 Lead Testing of Water in Schools (M) (New)
P & R 7430 School Safety (M) (Abolished)
P0145 Board Member Resignation and Removal (M) (Revised);
P0164.6 Remote Public Board Meetings During A Declared
Emergency (M) (New);
R1642 Earned Sick Leave Law (M) (Revised);
P1643 Family Leave (M) (New);

B. No Child Left Behind ACT (NCLB) to Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Policy and Regulation Guides:

P 2415 Every Student Succeeds Act (M) (Revised);
P2415.02 Title I
P 2415.05 Student Surveys, Analysis, and/or Evaluations (M)
(Revised);
P&R 2415.20 Every Student Succeeds Act Complaints (M) (Revised);
P4125 Employment of Support Staff Members (M) (Revised);
P6360 Political Contributions (M) (Revised);
P 8330 Student Records (M) (Revised);
P9713 Recruitment by Special Interest Groups (M) (Revised)

#5 RESOLVED that the Board approve the following:

5.1 Attendance at Conference

Name	School	Event/Location	Date	Cost
Abigail Whelan	BRK	Orton-Gillingham Training/On-line	Aug. 12, 2021	Registration \$895 Training Materials \$240 Total Cost \$1135.00

Samantha Melillo	HBW	Orton-Gillingham Training/On-line	Aug. 12, 2021	Registration \$895 Training Materials \$240 Total Cost \$1135.00
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5.2 Recommendation for Video Film Adoption

Name	Location	Course	Grade
Ferris Bueller's Day Off	VHS	Student Council Movie Night	9-12

#6 **RESOLVED** that the Board approve the 2021 VSEA Business Plan.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

#7 **RESOLVED** that the Board approve the following:

7.1 Student Home Instruction

Student #	School	Grade	Hrs./Week/Duration	Beginning on or about
#242569	VHS	9	4-8 weeks	Mar. 17, 2021

FINANCE

#8 **RESOLVED** that the Board approve an additional fee of \$15,000 for the audit firm of Nisivoccia and Company for the additional work required for the completion of the annual audit report.

#9 **RESOLVED** that the Board approve the enclosed checklist(s) in the following amounts:

<u>Amount</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Check Register Date</u>
\$3,423,598.87	Vendor Checks	March 19, 2021
\$ 476,834.18	Referendum Checks	March 19, 2021

#11 **Public comments**

Linette Mathewson - High School population. Daughter is in high school in-person learning - less than desirable. Dr. Dionisio responded.

Paula DeVito - 90 Woodland Ave. - Is there a Plan B for senior activity? Dr. Dionisio responded all opportunities will be examined.

Anya Singleton - 33 Brookdale Ave. - Would kids be able to use the playgrounds? Dr. Dionisio explained the problem with social distancing.

Dan Vecchio - 36 W. Lincoln St. - Any district not doing the 6 ft. distancing?

Mrs. Freschi - no, all districts at the meeting were complying with the 6 ft. distancing.

Lynn Halsey - 53 Linden Ave - Will elementary students go home for lunch? Will 5th grade be considered elementary school? Dr. Dionisio responded.

Joanna Gaggis - 22 Otis Pl. - Update will occur on Wednesday. Will Verona submit a new proposal to the Department of Education? Dr. Dionisio responded.

RESOLUTION TO ADJOURN

#10 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 by: Mrs. Drappi

Seconded by: Mrs. Priscoe

Mr. Alworth X

Mr. Day X

Mrs. Drappi X

Mrs. Freschi X

Mrs. Priscoe - X

All in Favor: AYE

All Opposed: NONE

This meeting is adjourned at 8:24 PM.

CONFIDENTIAL SESSION IF NECESSARY - No Action Taken

- Matters of personnel
- Negotiations

Meeting adjourned at 10:50 pm

Motioned by: Mr. Alworth

Seconded by: Mrs. Drappi

VERONA PUBLIC SCHOOLS – BOARD OF EDUCATION
ADDENDUM RESOLUTIONS
March 23, 2021

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

Motion by: Mrs. Drappi

Seconded by: Mr. Day

Be it RESOLVED the approval of Addenda Resolutions #1 - 10.

Mr. Alworth X

Mr. Day X

Mrs. Drappi X

Mrs. Freschi X

Mrs. Priscoe X

PERSONNEL

#1 RESOLVED that the Board approve the following:

1.1 Resignation

Name	Location	Position	Reason	Effective on or About	Notes
Jennifer DaSilva	VHS	Guidance Counselor	Resignation	Apr. 23, 2021	RESCIND
Jennifer DaSilva	VHS	Guidance Counselor	Resignation	Apr. 30, 2021	APPROVE

FINANCE

#2 RESOLVED that the Board approve the submission of Amendment #1 to the 2020-2021 IDEA-Basic, Public Grant increasing the 100-500 Other Purchase Services (Tuition) account in the amount of \$363.00. This amount represents the carry-over amount from the 2019-2020 school year.

#3 RESOLVED that the Board approve the submission of Amendment #1 to the 2020-2021 IDEA-Basic, Non-Public Grant increasing the 100-600 Instructional Supplies account in the amount of \$19,779.00. This amount represents the carry-over amount from the 2019-2020 school year.

- #4 **RESOLVED** that the Board approve the submission of Amendment #1 to the 2020-2021 IDEA-Preschool, Public Grant increasing the 100-300 Instruction Purchase Services (Related Services) account in the amount of \$4,179.00. This amount represents the carry-over amount from the 2019-2020 school year.
- #5 **RESOLVED** that the Board approve the submission of Amendment #1 to the 2020-2021 ESEA Title II-A Grant increasing the 200-300 Support Service Purchased Services account in the amount of \$43,697. This amount represents the carry-over amount from the 2019-2020 school year.
- #6 **RESOLVED** that the Board approve the submission of Amendment #1 to the 2020-2021 ESEA Title II-A Non-Public Grant increasing the 200-300 Support Service Purchased Services account in the amount of \$3,415. This amount represents the carry-over amount from the 2019-2020 school year.
- #7 **RESOLVED** that the Board approve the submission of Amendment #1 to the 2020-2021 ESEA Title IV Part A Grant increasing the 100-600 Instruction Supplies account in the amount of \$7,849. This amount represents the carry-over amount from the 2019-2020 school year.
- #8 **RESOLVED** that the Board approve the submission of Amendment #1 to the 2020-2021 ESEA Title IV Part A Non-Public Grant increasing the 100-600 Instruction Supplies account in the amount of \$614. This amount represents the carry-over amount from the 2019-2020 school year.
- #9 **RESOLVED** that the Board approve the submission of Amendment #1 to the 2019-2021 NJ Cares Grant increasing the 100-600 Instruction Supplies account in the amount of \$18,774. This amount represents additional funding distributed by the State of New Jersey.
- #10 **RESOLVED** that the Board approve final payment in the amount of \$2,408 to Greg Mascera, as directed by the Board Attorney.

VERONA PUBLIC SCHOOLS – BOARD OF EDUCATION
ADDENDUM RESOLUTIONS
March 23, 2021

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

Motion by: Mrs. Priscoe

Seconded by: Mr. Day

Be it RESOLVED the approval of Addenda Resolution #1

Mr. Alworth X Mr. Day X

Mrs. Drappi X Mrs. Freschi X

Mrs. Priscoe X

REFERENDUM

#1 RESOLVED that the Board approve a Change Order for Askari Construction in the following manner:

Original Contract Amount	\$362,543.00
Previous Change Order Amount	\$ 17,512.52
Current Change Order	<u>\$(90,000.00)</u>
Final Contract Amount	\$290,055.52

- Board reduce payment application #4 from \$170,863 to net \$80,863, and approve same.
- that the Business Office and Attorney shall take all actions necessary to effectuate the purposes of this resolution.