

PUBLIC MEETING

March 28, 2023

The Verona Board of Education of the Township of Verona, in the County of Essex, New Jersey, convened in regular session on March 28, 2023 at 7:04 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 were 4 members of the public present. There were 0 members of the press present.



REGULAR PUBLIC MEETING AGENDA – 7:00 pm
VERONA HIGH SCHOOL LEARNING COMMONS
March 28, 2023

1. Call to order
2. Pledge of Allegiance
3. Reading of Meeting Notice
4. Roll Call Attendance
5. Presentation -
6. Superintendent Report - Diane DiGiuseppe
7. Board Secretary Report - Jorge Cruz
8. Student Representative Report - Reese Sahadow
9. Committee Reports -
 - Education
 - Finance
10. Public Comments on Agenda Action Items
11. Discussion Items
12. Roll Call Vote on Resolutions
13. Public Comments

Live streaming link: <https://youtube.com/live/EeNrxnX36KI?feature=share>

The next scheduled Public Meeting will be held on **Tuesday, April 11, 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 New Jersey Open Public Meetings Law was enacted to ensure the right of the public to have advance notice of and to attend the meetings of public bodies at which any business affecting their interest is discussed or acted upon. In accordance with the provision of the act, the Verona Board of Education has caused notice of this meeting to be published in the *Star Ledger*, posted with the Township of Verona and the Verona Education Association. 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 via the Board of Education Website.

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. **Presentation**

6. **Superintendent Report - Diane DiGiuseppe**

Our thoughts and prayers are with the families of Covenant School in Nashville.

Meeting 3 Strategic Planning - April 28, 2022 - "Destiny by design - Setting Goals

Update 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. CHanges will be put into place for September 2024.

The VHS Marching Band and Choir performed last weekend at Walt Disney World, this is an honor. You have to submit a video with your application and be selected.

History Day @ Seton Hall - students at HBW participated at Seton Hall University on History Day and many students were selected to move on to the next level of competition

Essex County Unsung Heroes Award went to VHS Senior Jude Ford who was honored last week at a ceremony attended by Mrs. Feschi, Mrs. Priscoe and Mrs. Ferrera.

7. Board Secretary Report - Jorge Cruz

Good evening everyone. I only have one update on our 2023-2024 budget. The preliminary budget for 2023-2024 that was approved by the board earlier this month is currently in review with the County Superintendent Office. We anticipate his approval sometime next week. The advertisement of the public hearing being held on Tuesday, April 25th will be placed on the Star Ledger. I continue to look forward to working with the Superintendent DiGiuseppe and the finance committee in the budget process.

This concludes my report for tonight. Thank you.

8. Student Representative Report - Reese Sahadow

Congratulations to Jude Ford for being honored as one of Essex County's Unsung Heroes. The Unsung Heroes awards recognize students who make positive contributions to their school and community even though they may not receive traditional accolades.

- A. Congratulations to Sarah Bosco, Chris Sluck, and Griffin Riel for receiving verbal commendations, and to Zoe Levine for winning an honorable mention at the North Brunswick Model UN conference last Saturday.
- B. Band trip-- ran from last week to this Sunday
 - 1. Students spent the trip in Disney World, with the band, color guard, and choir performing.
- C. The boys' lacrosse team took a trip last week to Baltimore, MD to visit the Lacrosse Hall of Fame.
- D. Spring sports started up on March 16 and seasons are in full swing.

9. Committee Reports

- Education
 - Mrs. Ferrera provided an update on the life skills program that Mrs. Symmons presented at the last meeting. We're also finalizing on space for the life skills program at VHS. The extended school year program invitations were sent to families and we're in the process of finalizing a reading intervention program for the summer. Curriculum Council will move to in-person on Wednesday, April 19th. NJ Start Strong is now being phased out. NJGPA field test were completed and the actual test will be administered next school year. PD on pedagogy is scheduled for our elementary school. Strategic planning is ongoing and the next meeting is on April 27th at 7 pm in the Learning Commons.

- Finance

- Mrs. Ferrera provided an update on residency verification and collaborating with Verona PD on residency investigations. Brown & Brown, our health insurance broker confirmed a 8.96% increase for 2023-24 and will present it to the committee next month.

Mrs. Verzella asked about the outcome of the residency verification.

Mr. Wacha asked about the possibility to provide an incentive to recruit new candidates by offering discounted or free non-resident tuition.

Mrs. DiGiuseppe shared the hiring process and the practices to vet candidates before making a hiring recommendation.

10. Public Comments on Agenda Action Items

11. Discussion Items

Mrs. Freschi provided information regarding firearm safety in homes. Because safety and security is a component of our school district, we want to ensure that firearm safety is being practiced by all residents with firearms at home.

Mr. Wacha raised concern that the sample resolution refers to the Superintendent to educate the public, but we shouldn't use this resolution because the Superintendent is not a gun safety expert.

Mrs. Verzella agreed with Mr. Wacha and suggested drafting a resolution that would capture the notification, a notice that is intended with gun safety.

Mrs. Ferrera echoed the comments of the prior two board members and added that a collaboration with the Verona Police Department is needed to roll out a curriculum in our schools.

Ms. Sahadow shared that posting it in multiple locations would be overkill. One district-wide notification and instruction would be good.

12. Roll Call Vote on Resolutions

13. 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.

Margaret Acosta - Verona Student - Volunteer at the Community Garden. The community garden is used by our residents and it's used by HBW middle school students. I'm requesting support to expand the community garden so more residents can obtain a section of the garden.

Maureen Wacha - congratulated Ms. Sahadow as a wonderful addition to the board.

VERONA PUBLIC SCHOOLS – BOARD OF EDUCATION

RESOLUTIONS

March 28, 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:

Special Meeting	March 1, 2023
Confidential & Regular Public Meeting	March 14, 2023
Special Meeting	March 15, 2023

Motion by: Mrs. Freschi

Seconded by: Mrs. Verzella

Be it RESOLVED the approval of Resolutions #1

Mr. Wacha Abstain Mrs. Verzella X

Mrs. Ferrera X Mrs. Priscoe X

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
Kathy Belcastro	Elem. Only	Sub Teacher (Mon.-Tues.-Fri.)	\$110/per diem	Education	Mar. 10, 2023 - Jun. 22, 2023
John Loconsolo	District	Sub Teacher	\$110/per diem	Education	SY 2022 - 2023

1.2 **Resignation**

Name	Location	Position	Reason	Effective on or About
Olivia Magana	LAN	Paraprofessional	Resignation	Dec. 16, 2022

1.3 **Without Pay**

Name	Date/s	No. of Days/Reason
#103161	Mar. 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 2023	5 Days/Unpaid
#105707	Mar. 13, 2023	1 Day/Unpaid Sick
#105532	Mar. 14, 2023	1 Day/Unpaid Sick
#105724	Mar. 15, 22, 2023	2 Days/Unpaid
#105750	Mar. 15, 16, 17, 2023	2.5 Days/Unpaid
#102166	Mar. 16, 17, 20, 22, 23, 24, 2023	6 Days/Unpaid Sick
#105701	Mar. 17, 2023	1 Day/Unpaid
#105745	Mar. 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 2023	5 Days/Unpaid
#105597	Mar. 21, 2023	1 Day/Unpaid
#105039	Mar. 23, 24, 27, 2023	3 Days/Unpaid

1.4 Permanent Substitute Teacher

Name	Location	Position	Salary	Committee	Term of Employment on or about	Notes
Kathy Belcastro	FNB	Permanent Sub Teacher	\$125/per diem	Education	Feb. 15 - Jun. 22, 2023	RESCIND
Kathy Belcastro	FNB	Permanent Sub Teacher - Wed. and Thurs.	\$125/per diem	Education	Feb. 15 - Jun. 22, 2023	APPROVE

1.5 Leave of Absence

Name	Reason	Begin Date	Estimated Return Date on or about	Notes
#105198	Unpaid Medical Leave of Absence	Feb. 27, 2023	Apr. 24, 2023	Rescind
#105198	Unpaid Medical Leave of Absence	Feb. 27, 2023	Apr. 20, 2023	Approve

1.6 Staff Change

Name	Current Location/ Position/Salary	New Location/ Position/Salary	Effective Date on or about
Felisha Camacho	LAN/Registered Behaviorist/\$40,455	LAN/MLOA Spec. Ed Teacher/\$280 per diem	Mar. 13 - Jun. 22, 2023

Be it **RESOLVED** the approval of Resolutions #1 - 1.6

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 attached District Statistical Report for the month of February 2023.

- #2 **RESOLVED** that the Board, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the attached revised Board of Education Meeting dates for the 2022-2023 school year.
- #3 **RESOLVED** that the Board, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the attached revised 2022-2023 District School calendar.

Motion by: Mrs. Verzella

Seconded by: Mrs. Priscoe

Be it RESOLVED the approval of Resolutions #1 - 3

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, approve Amy Dages, Linda Barone, Jody Sewell, Melissa Tempesta, and Kathy Thomas to travel to surrounding area public school districts to tour established Language and Learning Disabilities Life Skills Programs.
- #2 **RESOLVED** that the Board, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve for participation in the Joint Transportation Agreement with Sussex County Regional Transportation Cooperative for Special Education, Athletic, and Field Trip Transportation for the 2023 – 2024 school year per attached contracts.
- #3 **RESOLVED** that the Board, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the following:

3.1 Student Home Instruction

Student #	School	Grade	Hrs./Week/Duration	Beginning on or about
#271652	HBW	8	10 hrs. per wk./4 wks.	Mar. 23, 2023

Motion by: Mrs. Freschi

Seconded by: Mrs. Ferrera

Be it RESOLVED the approval of Resolutions #1 - 3.1

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 Field Trip

Name	School	Club/Destination	Date of Field Trip
S. Munoz/ C. Nevill	VHS	Choir/Spotlight Players/ New York, NY	Apr. 19, 2023
Robert Orr	VHS	DECA/Orlando, FLA	Apr. 22-26, 2023
C. Garson	VHS	The Brooklyn Museum/Brooklyn, NY	Jun. 1, 2023

1.2 Coaches

Name	Location	Position	Stipend	Committee	Employment Date/s
Kristen Garibell	VHS	Fall Cheer Coach	Step 3/\$6,098	Education	SY 23-24

Motion by: Mr. Wacha

Seconded by: Mrs. Freschi

Be it RESOLVED the approval of Resolutions #1 - 1.2

Mr. Wacha X

Mrs. Verzella X

Mrs. Ferrera X

Mrs. Priscoe X

Mrs. Freschi X

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>
\$2,270.96	VHS	March 28, 2023
\$105,375.00	Chromebook	March 28, 2023
\$9,134.41	Referendum	March 28, 2023
\$ 653,839.53	General	March 28, 2023

- #2 **RESOLVED** that the Board, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve a donation from the New Jersey State Bar Foundation for \$500.00 for FNB Peer Mediation.
- #3 **RESOLVED** that the Board, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve a donation of a Yamaha piano, approximately value of \$1,000 for the music program at Brookdale Avenue School from Executive Kids of Verona.
- #4 **RESOLVED** that the Board, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve a \$400 grant from C.H.I.L.D. for funds to supplement Library Books budgets at Brookdale and FNB to further develop the collection of books focused on celebrating difference, supporting neurodiversity and disability awareness.

Motion by: Mrs. Verzella

Seconded by: Mrs. Freschi

Be it RESOLVED the approval of Resolutions #1 - 4

Mr. Wacha X Mrs. Verzella X

Mrs. Ferrera X Mrs. Priscoe X

Mrs. Freschi X

VIII. FACILITIES

- #1 **RESOLVED** that the Board, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve L.R. Watts & Son Roofing and Construction, Inc. roof repair proposal for the Laning Avenue School, in the amount of \$32,400.

Motion by: Mrs. Freschi

Seconded by: Mrs. Priscoe

Be it RESOLVED the approval of Resolutions #1

Mr. Wacha X

Mrs. Verzella X

Mrs. Ferrera X

Mrs. Priscoe X

Mrs. Freschi X

IX. 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.

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. Ferrera

All in Favor: AYE

All Opposed: None

This meeting is adjourned at (TIME) 8:17 P.M.

VERONA PUBLIC SCHOOLS – BOARD OF EDUCATION
ADDENDUM RESOLUTION
March 28, 2023

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

I. EDUCATION

- #1 RESOLVED** that the Board, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve AYUSA, a Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) for the purposes of facilitating foreign exchange students with a J-1 Visa.

Motion by: Mrs. Ferrera

Seconded by: Mrs. Freschi

Be it RESOLVED the approval of Addenda Resolution #1

Mr. Wacha X

Mrs. Verzella X

Mrs. Ferrera X

Mrs. Priscoe X

Mrs. Freschi X

II. GOVERNANCE/POLICY

- #1 **RESOLVED** that the Board, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the SECOND 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. Priscoe

Be it RESOLVED the approval of Addenda Resolution #1

Mr. Wacha X

Mrs. Verzella X

Mrs. Ferrera X

Mrs. Priscoe X

Mrs. Freschi X

III. CO-CURRICULAR

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

1.1 Co-Curricular

Advisor	Location	Club Name	Stipend	Term of Employment
Paul Salierno	VHS	Play Music Director and Conductor	\$2,000.00	SY 22-23
Amanda Hyland	VHS	Play Assistant Director	\$1,500.00	SY 22-23
Brian Michalowski	VHS	Play Pit Musician - Keys and Transposition Services	\$600.00	SY 22-23

Motion by: Mrs. Freschi
Seconded by: Mrs. Ferrera

Be it RESOLVED the approval of Addenda Resolution #1- 1.1

Mr. Wacha X Mrs. Verzella X
Mrs. Ferrera X Mrs. Priscoe X
Mrs. Freschi X