

PUBLIC MEETING

March 8, 2022

The Verona Board of Education of the Township of Verona, in the County of Essex, New Jersey, convened in regular session on March 8, 2022 at 7:04 p.m.

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Jorge Cruz. 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, Mrs. Pamela Priscoe, Vice President, Mrs. Sara Drappi, Mr. Christopher Wacha. Mr. Day was absent. Also present was Dr. Lydia Furnari, Interim Superintendent and Mr. Jorge Cruz, School Business Administrator/Board Secretary

There were 14 members 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 AUDITORIUM
March 8, 2022

1. Call to order
2. Pledge of Allegiance
3. Reading of Meeting Notice
4. Roll Call Attendance
5. Superintendent Report
6. Presentations
7. Committee Reports
 - Education/Special Education
 - Facilities
 - Athletics
 - Community Resources
8. Public Comments on Agenda Action Items
9. Discussion Items
10. Roll Call Vote on Resolutions
11. Public Comments

Live streaming link: <https://youtu.be/doJelyZ0vVk>

The next scheduled Special Meeting will be held on **Tuesday, March 22, 2022** beginning with Public Session at 6:00 pm, followed by Confidential 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 4, 2022. 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. Wacha	<u> X </u>	Mr. Day	<u> X </u>
Mrs. Drappi	<u> X </u>	Mrs. Priscoe	<u> X </u>
Mrs. Freschi	<u> X </u>		

- 5. Superintendent Report** - Good evening. As you know, today marks the second day for the Verona Public Schools functioning as a “Mask Optional” environment. In my letter dated March 3rd , I was able to clarify several points related to this new development. The most recent CALI report published weekly by the CDC indicates that both the Northeast region (Bergen, Essex and Hudson) and Southeast region (Atlantic, Cape May and Cumberland) of the State are at a low rate of transmission. This is very encouraging news, although we continue to keep a close watch on new developments. One topic that was not included in my letter is the potential ramification of travel for the schools with regard to quarantine/isolation requirements. This is because the CDC and the NJ Department of Health have published differing guidance on travel. For now, the NJDOH advises we follow the previously released quarantine/isolation guidance related to travel. Once we have additional information to share, I will update our school community. I have heard from principals, teachers and parents about the smiles on children's faces over the last 2 days. I want to publicly thank the entire administrative team and all of our staff for working so hard to prepare our schools for student's return on Monday, March 7 th . During one of the more recent Community Relations Committee reports, it was shared that the District will be releasing a winter newsletter. I am happy to report that Verona “School

Notes” will be released this week to our school community. The newsletter includes articles contributed by all of our schools and several District departments. Verona “School Notes” is intended to celebrate happenings in our schools and to inform readers about upcoming activities and events. This newsletter will be followed by an issue of our Verona Magazine in June 2022.

As an update on our work to identify a consultant to conduct an audit of our current HR practices and gather data on climate and culture, as they relate to diversity, equity and inclusion, I first want to make it clear that as per our RFP, the services that a consultant are being asked to deliver do not include driving curriculum, or going into classrooms to interact with students. The work is intended to provide us with a snapshot of where we are and to assist us to strategize next steps in an informed manner. I have continually said that this work is intended to ensure that all of our students feel valued in a learning environment where they feel a sense of belonging based on dignity and respect. Under no circumstances will we deviate from that objective. Our purpose is to ensure that our practices, policies, professional development & resources all support our ability to attain that goal. With that in mind, we have reassessed the matter based on the issues raised at our last meeting. We have spoken with the lead representative from Grand River Solutions several times and we have been assured that the firm can complete all of the tasks we requested with a restructured team that does not include the individual whose messaging was so misaligned with our District’s core values. Therefore, I am prepared to make a recommendation to the Board to accept Grand River Solutions to perform these specific tasks, at the next Board of Education meeting to be held on March 22, 2022. Additionally, I have spoken with Chief Kiernan about the matter and about DEI in general, and we are looking forward to the District and the Verona Police Department collaborating on future joint projects related to this initiative. Just a reminder that VMAC’s Family Night is this Thursday.

Mr. Day commented on the mask optional policy and the positive reaction from children in the community. Mr. Wacha asked Dr. Furnari clarifying questions regarding the DEI recommendation. Mrs. Drappi also commented on the mask optional policy and the positive impact in the classroom. Mrs. Priscoe also thanked Dr. Furnari for the involvement of Chief Kearnan and the involvement of VPD in the DEI process.

6. Presentations - None

7. Committee Reports

- Education/Special Education - Mrs. Drappi shared education updates, report cards, MAP Growth, curriculum, and DEI. Mr. Wacha also shared some updates in the middle school. Mrs. Drappi also provided an update on the new school buses on order and the submission of a grant for an electric school bus.
- Facilities - Mr. Day provided an update on the finalization of the HVAC project, retaining wall and walkway addition at FNB. Mrs. Freschi provided an update on the playground surface repairs at Brookdale and Forest and the addition of “No Idling” signage added at FNB and Laning.
- Athletics - Mrs. Priscoe provided an update on recent athletic games and fundraiser events. Mrs. Freschi also shared the success of ESports in Verona.
- Community Resources - Mrs. Priscoe also shared updates for community resources and the success of Reading Across America in our elementary schools.

8. Public Comments on Agenda Action Items

George Kozachuk - Verona, NJ - (Reso #2.2) Asked how the administration processes the vetting of teachers before they start in our schools. Also asked clarifying question on resolution #3, #8 and #9.

9. Discussion Items

10. Roll Call Vote on Resolutions

11. 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.

Maria Squilanti - 6 Belleclaire Pl. - Shared comment of the DEI work and shared concerns about the proposed consultant for the work.

Derrick Czupak - 7 Durrell St. - commented on the Grand River Solutions and shared concerns of hiring this firm for the DEI.

Donna Ciccolini - 14 Windemere Rd. - Shared concerns about electives offered to HS students in special education programs and the need for more resources to prepare them for life skills after high school.

George Kozachuk - Verona, NJ - shared comments on the idling in front of the schools. Suggested Verona Police Department to assist with the traffic and idling issues at arrival and dismissal.

Motion by: Mr. Day

Seconded by: Mrs. Priscoe

Be it RESOLVED the approval of Resolutions #1 - 15.

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

VERONA PUBLIC SCHOOLS – BOARD OF EDUCATION
RESOLUTIONS
March 8, 2022

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

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

Confidential & Regular Public Meeting February 22, 2022

PERSONNEL

#2 RESOLVED that the Board approve the following pending pre-employment paperwork based on the recommendation of the Interim Superintendent:

2.1 New Hires

Name	Location	Position	Salary	Committee	Term of Employment on or about
Kristen Venezia	District	Sub Teacher	\$100/per diem	Education	SY 21-22
Kristina Oliver	District	Sub Secretary	\$100/per diem	Education	SY 21-22

2.2 Resignation

Name	Location	Position	Reason	Effective on or About
Timothy Adase	VHS	Chemistry Teacher	Resignation	Feb. 25, 2022
Nicole Tierney	FNB	Paraprofessional	Resignation	Mar. 11, 2022

2.3 Retirement

Name	Position	Location	Reason	Effective Date of Retirement
Robert Cashill	Math Teacher	VHS	Retirement	Jul. 1, 2022
Joan Jasterzbski	Art Teacher	FNB/BRK	Retirement	Jul. 1, 2022

2.4 Without Pay

Name	Date/s	No. of Days/Reason
#105198	Feb. 24, 2022	1 Day/Unpaid Sick
#105629	Feb. 28, 2022	1 day WOP/PI
#105479	Mar 3, 4, 7 2022	3 days WOP/PB
#105618	Mar. 4, 2022	1 day WOP/PB

2.5 Class Coverage

Name	Dates From/To	Pay rate	Reason
Matthew Swajkowski	Feb. 28 - Jun. 23, 2022	\$41/per class	Class coverage

2.6 Extra Class

Name	Location	Course	Amount	Term of Employment on or about	Notes
Alex Cali	VHS	Chemistry	\$4,851.74	Feb. 28 - Jun. 23, 2022	
Terrance Lennon	VHS	Chemistry	\$5,193.89	Feb. 28 - Jun. 23, 2022	
Paula Ramos	VHS	Chemistry	\$7,162.52	Feb. 28 - Jun. 23, 2022	
Mark Edgerton	VHS	Chemistry	\$6,810.49	Feb. 28 - Jun. 23, 2022	

Lynette Rivera	VHS	Chemistry	\$5,193.89	Feb. 28 - Jun. 23, 2022	
Janan Wehbeh	VHS	Chemistry	\$7,598.88	Feb. 28 - Jun. 23, 2022	
Nadia Domenick	HBW	Math	\$14,506.00	Nov. 22, 2021 - Jun. 23, 2022	RESCIND
Nadia Domenick	HBW	Math	\$13,512.60	Nov. 22, 2021 - Jun. 23, 2022	APPROVE

EDUCATION

- #3 RESOLVED** that the Board approve the Superintendent's presentation of HIB first reading report as follows:

1st Readings
VHS28271
HWO228373
HWO228271

- #4 RESOLVED** that the Board approve the Superintendent's presentation of HIB second reading report as follows:

2nd Readings
VHS227762
VHS227461
VHS227856

- #5 RESOLVED** that the Board approve the following based on the recommendation of the Interim Superintendent:

5.1 Student Observer

Name	School	School/Teacher/ Grade	Duration	Assignment
Gabriella Montagna	Bloomsburg Univ.	FNB/Boylan/ESL	6-10 hrs./ Mar. 9 - May 15, 2022	Student Observer

5.2 Mentor

Novice Teacher	Location	Mentor	Stipend	# of mentoring weeks
Anthony Cassie	FNB	Joe Phelan	\$550	30 weeks

5.3 Movie Adoption

Name	Location	Course	Grade
The Giver	VHS	English I-IV	9-12
Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children	VHS	English I-IV	9-12

- #6 **RESOLVED** that the Board approve the revised 2021-2022 District School Calendar based on the recommendation of the Interim Superintendent.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

- #7 **RESOLVED** that the Board approve the following based on the recommendation of the Interim Superintendent:

7.1 Student Home Instruction

Student #	School	Grade	Hrs./Week/Duration	Beginning on or about
#251156	VHS	9	10 hrs./wk./SY 21-22	Mar. 1, 2022

7.2 Home Instructor

Name
Jessica Groff
Amanda Hyland

- #8 **RESOLVED** that the Board approve to contract with Summit Home Health Care, Inc. to provide nursing services as needed for the Verona School District's out-of-district students based on the recommendation of the Interim Superintendent.
- #9 **RESOLVED** that the Board approve to contract with Effective School Solutions to provide therapeutic, mental health services to the Verona School District for the 2022 – 2023 school at a cost of \$397,950 based on the recommendation of the Interim Superintendent.
- #10 **RESOLVED** Request Board approval to contract with Effective School Solutions to provide additional Tier 2 Brief Treatment services at a cost not to exceed \$12,500 for the 2022 – 2023 school year based on the recommendation of the Interim Superintendent.

ATHLETICS/CO-CURRICULAR

- #11 RESOLVED** that the Board approve the following based on the recommendation of the Interim Superintendent:

11.1 Stipend

Name	School	Stipend	Reason	Committee	Employment Date
Jason Calo	VHS	\$200.00	Wrestling Quad	Athletics	Feb. 12, 2022

11.2 Field Trip

Name	School	Club/Destination	Date of Field Trip
Carolyn Pietrucha	HBW	8th Grade Trip/Pocono Valley Resorts Readers, PA	Jun. 3, 2022

BUILDING AND GROUNDS

- #12 RESOLVED** that the Board approve the following based on the recommendation of the Interim Superintendent:

WHEREAS, petroleum-based gasoline and diesel fuel are nonrenewable fuels and should be used wisely and not wasted; and

WHEREAS, emissions from gasoline and diesel powered vehicles contribute significantly to air pollution, including greenhouse gases, ozone formation, and fine particulates; and

WHEREAS, emissions from gasoline and diesel powered vehicles contribute a multitude of potentially harmful pollutants that can trigger an asthma attack and other ailments; 1 and

WHEREAS, diesel vehicles emit numerous carcinogenic chemicals, including benzene and formaldehyde, and; the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency estimates that all vehicle emissions account for as many as half of all cancers attributed to outdoor air pollution; and

WHEREAS, we can avoid producing unnecessary greenhouse gas emissions and exposure to air toxics by reducing or eliminating wasteful vehicle idling; and

WHEREAS, an average school bus uses ½ gallon of diesel fuel for each hour of idling and reducing idling by 30 minutes per day would save 45 gallons and \$135.00 per bus per year (assuming a diesel fuel cost of \$3.000/gal); 2 and

WHEREAS, a car idling for 10 minutes uses as much fuel as it takes to travel 5 miles and uses more than 27 gallons of fuel a year; and

WHEREAS, for every gallon of gasoline used, the average car produces about 20 pounds of carbon dioxide (CO₂), the largest contributor to greenhouse climate change, with one-third of greenhouse gas emissions coming from the transportation sector 3 ; and

WHEREAS, idling more than 10 seconds uses more fuel and emits more pollutants than turning a warm engine off and on again; 4 and idling is not generally beneficial to a vehicle's engine because it wears engine parts; 5 and

WHEREAS, vehicle idling occurs on school drop off and pick up locations and parking lots where children are more highly exposed to air pollutant emissions; and

WHEREAS, asthma is a significant public health concern, especially among New Jersey's school age children where up to 25% are asthmatic—the leading cause of school absenteeism; and

WHEREAS, the American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that children's exposure to diesel exhaust particles should be decreased and that idling of diesel vehicles in places where children live and congregate should be minimized to protect their health; and

WHEREAS, moving beyond New Jersey's existing no-idling code* of 3 minutes would significantly improve public health, air quality, reduce costs and greenhouse gas emissions; and

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Verona Public Schools Supports the adoption of "Idle Free Zones" on school grounds, including a pledge by school buses, school employees, and parents to:

- Turn off school bus engines while waiting to load and to unload students.
- Turn off vehicles when parents are parked and waiting to pick up and drop off children.
- Installing "Idle Free Zone" signs at school drop-off and pick-up locations.
- Use the newest buses for the longest routes.
- Maintain buses properly to eliminate any visible exhaust.
- Complete school-bus driver training on eliminating idling.
- Conducts and/or support broad education of school employees, parents, students and the public about the health, environmental and economic impacts of idling and ways to reduce idling.

FINANCE

#13 RESOLVED that the Board approve the enclosed checklist(s) in the following amounts based on the recommendation of the Interim Superintendent:

<u>Amount</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Check Register Date</u>
\$2,977.00	Athletics	March 8, 2022
\$2,714.00	Food Service	March 8, 2022

\$86,132.55	General	March 8, 2022
\$3,616.12	HBW	March 8, 2022
\$3,242.28	VHS	March 8, 2022

- #14 RESOLVED** that the Board approve a donation of a refrigerator to the Brookdale Avenue School by the Chirico Family with an estimated value of \$500 based on the recommendation of the Interim Superintendent.

#11 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

- #15 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. Priscoe

Second by: Mrs. Drappi

All in Favor: AYE

All Opposed: None

This meeting is adjourned at (TIME) 8:18 P.M.

VERONA PUBLIC SCHOOLS – BOARD OF EDUCATION
ADDENDUM RESOLUTIONS
March 8, 2022

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 Resolution #1 - 5.

Mr. Wacha X

Mr. Day X

Mrs. Drappi X

Mrs. Priscoe X

Mrs. Freschi X

PERSONNEL

#1 RESOLVED that the Board approve the following based on the recommendation of the Interim Superintendent and pending pre-employment paperwork:

1.1 New Hire

Name	Location	Position	Salary	Committee	Term of Employment on or about
Taylor Barrett	FNB	Extension of LTS Secretary	\$150/per diem	Education	Mar. 24 - Apr. 8, 2022
Maureen O'Neill	District	Sub teacher	\$100/per diem	Education	SY 22-23
Sally Goodgold	FNB/BRK	Extension of LTS Art Teacher	\$240/per diem	Education	Mar. 21 - Mar. 25, 2022
Alexandra Allison	FNB	Paraprofessional	\$17,832.75	Education	SY 21-22
Alexandra Allison	District	Sub teacher	\$100/per diem	Education	SY 21-22

1.2 Leave of Absence

Name	Reason	Begin Date	Estimated Return Date on or about
#100998	Extension of Medical Leave	Oct. 26, 2021	Mar. 28, 2022

EDUCATION

- #2 **RESOLVED** that the Board approve the following based on the recommendation of the Interim Superintendent:

2.1 Attendance at Conference

Name	School	Event/Location	Date	Cost
Brooke Raskin	District	NJABA Conference/ Virtual	Apr. 1, 2022	\$300.00

SPECIAL EDUCATION

- #3 **RESOLVED** that the Board approve **Christine Garson** to provide up to 10 hours of interpretation services as needed for IEP meetings, etc. for the 2021 – 2022 school year at the rate of \$55.26 per hour at the recommendation of the Interim Superintendent.

CO-CURRICULAR

- #4 **RESOLVED** that the Board approve the following based on the recommendation of the Interim Superintendent:

4.1 Co-Curricular

Advisor	Location	Club Name	Stipend	Term of Employment	Notes
Simone Stinson	VHS	Finance Committee Chairperson	\$3,059.50	SY 21-22	RESCIND
Simone Stinson	VHS	Finance Committee Chairperson	\$2,039.64	Mar. - Jun. 2022	APPROVE

Gina Ballinger	VHS	Finance Committee Chairperson	\$6,119.00	SY 21-22	RESCIND
Gina Ballinger	VHS	Finance Committee Chairperson	\$4,079.33	Jul. 2021 - Feb. 2022	APPROVE
Gina Ballinger	HBW	Finance Committee Chairperson	\$1,666.68	Mar. - Jun. 2022	APPROVE

FINANCE

#5 RESOLVED that the Board approve the enclosed checklist(s) in the following amounts based on the recommendation of the Interim Superintendent:

<u>Amount</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Check Register Date</u>
\$98,354.88	Referendum	March 8, 2022
\$868,469.00	General	March 8, 2022