

PUBLIC MEETING

September 28, 2021

The Verona Board of Education of the Township of Verona, in the County of Essex, New Jersey,

convened in regular session on September 28, 2021 at 7:00 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, Vice President, Mr. Timothy Alworth, Mrs. Sara Drappi, and Mr. Day, Mrs. Priscoe was absent. Also present was Dr. Rui Dionisio, Superintendent and Mr. Jorge Cruz, School Business Administrator/Board Secretary

There were 9 members of the public present. There were 0 members of the press present.



CONFIDENTIAL EXECUTIVE SESSION – 5:30 pm
REGULAR PUBLIC MEETING AGENDA – 7:00 pm
VERONA HIGH SCHOOL AUDITORIUM
September 28, 2021

1. Call to order
2. Pledge of Allegiance
3. Reading of Meeting Notice
4. Roll Call Attendance
5. Presentations- Dr. Frank Mauriello, Director of Special Services- Verona Public Schools -Mental Health Education
6. Superintendent Report - Dr. Rui Dionisio, Superintendent of Schools
7. Business Administrator Report - Mr. Jorge Cruz, School Business Administrator
8. Committee Reports
 - Education/Special Education
 - Finance
9. Public Comments on Agenda Action Items
10. Discussion Items
11. Roll Call Vote on Resolutions
12. Public Comments

NOTE: The next scheduled Public Meeting will be held on **Tuesday, October 12, 2021** beginning with a Confidential Session at 5:30 pm and 7:00 pm Public Session in the Verona High School Auditorium.

- 1. Call to Order: 7:05 PM**
- 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> Absent </u>

5. Presentations - Dr. Frank Mauriello District Mental Health

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

Good evening everyone. The New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) is requiring school districts to administer the "Start Strong Assessments" during the months of September and October. These assessments enable the state of New Jersey to meet the "federal statewide assessment requirement to administer general assessments in English language arts, mathematics, and science for the 2020-2021 school year." In addition to the Start Strong Assessment, each year Verona High School provides students in grade 9 with the PSAT 8/9 and students in grades 10 and 11 with the PSAT/NMSQT at no cost to the students. The District has sent out several email communications and we encourage parents to review those emails.

Lastly, the referendum construction project is making progress provided by Mr. O'Brien of Legacy Construction Management. HBW univents will have completed piping done by

the end of the week. Trane controls will be back in the district Monday to start commissioning HBW univents for air conditioning. The construction project took advantage of the teacher in-session day on September 24, 2021 to complete the cafeteria project.

7. Business Administrator Report - Mr. Jorge Cruz, School Business Administrator

Good evening everyone. I have a few updates for the Business Administrator Report.

First, I would like to provide an update on Finance; in tonight's meeting, we have the July Board Secretary, Treasurer's, and Budget Transfers Report,, and they're all in agreement. We recently closed out the prior fiscal year ending on Jun 30, 2021 and verified all revenue accounts. We're also in the process of reviewing and applying for carry-over on grant funds with an available balance from the 2020-21 school year. The business office is also working closely with our auditors to prepare for our 2020-21 audit taking place this December.

In regards to the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), over the last week, we've engaged in conversations with our elementary school Principals to determine the impact on SCA fundraisers and programming at each school that SCA funds. If Verona joins NSLP, SCA is not allowed to sell food or fundraise with food or beverage items during the school day. Since our last board meeting, I've also had conversations with Cedar Grove to better understand their transition to NSLP and the impact on food portion size, quality, and impact on school culture. Later this week, we will be sharing a short survey for parents/guardians to provide their feedback on the NSLP. In the interim, my office is reviewing all free/reduced lunch applications and as of today, 15 students applied and were approved for free/reduced lunch, which is covered 100% by the Board. We're encouraging all families that qualify, to submit their application as soon as possible.

Lastly, we have exciting news for Verona Public Schools. For the past 30 years, we've used the same financial management system. This system is responsible for our financial, payroll and human resource transactions. Today we're proposing to the Board a new financial management system that will allow our school district an enhanced system that is completely paperless and integrates with our Student Information System. I'm recommending that our school Board approves Genesis SchoolFi as the system of choice, with the go live date of January 1, 2022. Mr. Eltion Ballaj will be leading us in the implementation along with the Genesis SchoolFi team. The cost of our current system, Edumet is \$22,690 and Genesis School Fi is \$22,910, a difference of \$220. The annual cost savings will be significant. Switching our system will save us over \$3000 annually, which represents the cost of purchase order forms and postage. This action item will be added on the agenda for the next board meeting. Thank you.

8. Committee Reports

- Education/Special Education - Timothy Alworth/Sara Drappi - Update on Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI), Mental Health Workshop, Issue with transportation, Looking at purchasing a new bus.
- Finance - Lisa Freschi/Sara Drappi - Search firm proposal comparison

9. Public Comments on Agenda Action Items

Denise Verzella - 130 Personette Ave. - (Reso# 6) asked if the HBW audio/visual position is a stipend or full-time position and how is it funded.

10. Discussion Items

11. Roll Call Vote on Resolutions

12. Public Comments -

Kristen Donohue - 31 S. Prospect St. - asked about the status of using a Google form for community engagement at Board meetings.

Shannon Heffernan - 83 Franklin St. - regarding the National School Lunch Program, how does it affect fundraising? What is the current COVID policy in notifying parents regarding positive cases? Is the district considering random testing of students?

Joanna Gaggis - 22 Otis Pl. - Is the district assessing learning loss? When will a decision on NSLP be made? Do we have a bus driver shortage? What is the cost for an electric bus? Also recommended increasing public participation for virtual attendees.

Christina Ford - 50 E. Reid Pl. - Asked when the live stream decision was made and will this option be available for future meetings.

Mrs. Freschi responded to the question about the live stream option, which was decided by the Board at the last meeting.

Dr. Dionisio responded on COVID policy and shared that additional detail regarding mandatory testing will be shared as soon as the Department of Health selects the vendor for VPS. He also shared a response on NSLP and the conversations taking place with stakeholders.

Mrs. Drappi shared information on the NJSMART assessment to gauge our students. She also confirmed that there are challenges with the bus driver shortage. Mrs. Drappi provided an update on the Google form to collect public comment/feedback. Also clarified that the decision to provide the live stream didn't require a resolution since it was a change in meeting format.

VERONA PUBLIC SCHOOLS – BOARD OF EDUCATION
RESOLUTIONS
September 28, 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:

Special Meeting September 20, 2021

PERSONNEL

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

2.1 New Hires

Name	Location	Position	Salary	Committee	Term of Employment on or about	Notes
Sandra Alvarez	FNB	Permanent Lunch Aide	\$14.50/hr.	Education	SY 21-22	RESCIND
Sandra Alvarez	FNB	Substitute Lunch Aide	\$14.50/hr.	Education	SY 21-22	APPROVE
Rosalie Melillo	FNB	Permanent Lunch Aide	\$14.50/hr.	Education	SY 21-22	RESCIND
Rosalie Melillo	FNB	Substitute Lunch Aide	\$14.50/hr.	Education	SY 21-22	APPROVE
Maria Palacio	BRK	Part Time Custodian	\$18.00/hr.	B&G	SY 21-22	
Roseann Cicetti	FNB	Permanent Lunch Aide	\$14.50/hr.	Education	SY 21-22	
Susan Conlon	HBW	6th Grade English	MA/+30/Step 9/ \$67,213	Education	Sept. 29, 2021 - Jun. 30, 2022	
Brian Meisner	VHS	Business Teacher	BA/Step 14/ \$71,822	Education	Nov. 29, 2021 - Jun. 30, 2022	

2.2 Marriage

Name	Location	Position	Reason	Dates	Notes
#105442	FNB	4th Grade teacher	Marriage	Oct. 28-29 - Nov. 1, 2021	3 days with pay with the cost of a substitute to be deducted

2.3 Stipends

Name	School	Stipend	Position	Committee	Employment Date
Jalisa Figueroa	Board Office	Degree/ \$1,104.00	Human Resource Specialist	Education	Sept. 2, 2021
Jacqueline Santiago	Board Office	Degree/ \$1,104.00	Accounts Payable Specialist	Education	Oct. 1, 2021

2.4 Staff Changes

Name	Current Location/ Position/Salary	New Location/ Position/Salary	Effective Date on or about
Rhanda Kramer	Forest Avenue/Paraprofessional/ \$16,899.96	Forest Avenue/Kindergarten Classroom Aide/ \$16,899.96	Sept. 20, 2021

2.5 Without Pay

Name	Date/s	No. of Days/Reason
#105346	Sept. 24, 2021	1/2 day WOP/Personal

2.6 Reallocation of Days

Employee #	Explanation
#105598	Reallocate 5 PI days to 5 Paternity Days Sept. 20 - 24, 2021

#3 **RESOLVED** that the Board approve **Dr. Frank Mauriello** as the District Mental Health Coordinator with a stipend amount of \$7,500 from July 1, 2021 - June 30, 2022.

EDUCATION

#4 **RESOLVED** that the Board approve the second reading of the following policies:

- Policies 1648.13 - School Employee Vaccination Requirements (M) (New)

#5 **RESOLVED** that the Board approve the following for the 2021-2022 school year:

5.1 Student Observer

Name	School	School/Teacher/ Grade	Duration	Assignment	Notes
Tara Barrow	Cald. Univ.	BRK/Cirigliano/Grade 1/ Symczak/Grade 3	60 hrs.	Student Observer	
Stephanie Verdi	Cald. Univ.	HBW/Albretsen/Lang. Arts	Sept. 15 - Dec. 10, 2021/ 175 hours	Observer	RESCIND
Stephanie Verdi	Cald. Univ.	HBW/Albretsen/Lang. Arts	Jan. 10, 2022 - May 16, 2022	Student Teacher	RESCIND
Stephanie Verdi	Cald. Univ.	LAN/Banta/2nd Grade	Sept. 15 - Dec. 10, 2021/ 175 hours	Student Observer	APPROVE
Stephanie Verdi	Cald. Univ.	LAN/Banta/2nd Grade	Jan. 10, 2022 - May 16, 2022	Student Teacher	APPROVE

5.2 Mentor

Novice Teacher	Location	Mentor	Stipend	# of mentoring weeks
Daniel Cohen	HBW	Julianne Curro	\$1,000	30 weeks

#6 **RESOLVED** that the Board approve the attached HBW Audio Visual Director Job Description.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

#7 **RESOLVED** that the Board approve to contract with the Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired for student #301883 for the 2021-2022 school year. This student will receive Level 1 services at the rate of \$2,200. This amount will be deducted from the school district's state aide.

#8 **RESOLVED** that the Board approve to contract Horizon Healthcare Staffing and Delta T as a vendor for paraprofessional services during the 2021-2022 school year.

#9 **RESOLVED** that the Board approve to contract with Epic Health Services, Inc. dba Aveanna Healthcare, to provide nursing services as needed for the 2021 – 2022 school year.

ATHLETICS/CO-CURRICULAR

#10 RESOLVED that the Board approve the following for the 2021-2022 school year:

10.1 Coaches

Name	Location	Position	Stipend	Committee	Employment Date/s	Notes
Sam Coe	VHS	Head Boys Lacrosse	Step 3 \$9,805	Athletics	SY 21-22	
Brandon Adler	VHS	Freshman Boys Soccer	\$4,000	Athletics	Fall 2021	Paid for by VHS Boys Soccer program
Jonathan Thai	VHS	Girls Varsity Tennis	\$9,569	Athletics	Fall 2021	RESCIND
Jonathan Thai	VHS	Girls Varsity Tennis	\$9,689	Athletics	Fall 2021	APPROVE
Matt Swajkowski	VHS	Girls JV Tennis	\$6,539	Athletics	Fall 2021	RESCIND
Matt Swajkowski	VHS	Girls JV Tennis	\$6,621	Athletics	Fall 2021	APPROVE

10.2 Co-Curricular

Advisor	Location	Position	Stipend	Term of Employment
Corisa Walker	BRK	Conflict Resolution Coordinator	\$794.00	SY 21-22
Eugenie Mordkovich	VHS	French Club	\$925.00	SY 21-22
Vanessa Reisinger	VHS	Environmental Club	\$925.00	SY 21-22

FINANCE

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

<u>Amount</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Check Register Date</u>
\$1,072,621.42	Vendor Checks	September 24, 2021
\$1,139,724.22	Referendum Checks	September 24, 2021

#12 RESOLVED that the Report of the Secretary for the period(s) as follows be approved:

July 2021

#13 RESOLVED that the Board approve the Report of the Treasurer of School Monies for the following month:

July 2021

#14 RESOLVED that the Board approve the attached list of individual transfers of line items in the 2020-2021 budget for:

July 2021

#15 Public Comments

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 by: Mrs. Drappi

Seconded by: Mr. Day

Mr. Alworth __X__

Mr. Day __X__

Mrs. Drappi __X__

Mrs. Freschi __X__

Mrs. Priscoe __Absent__

All in Favor: __AYE__

All Opposed: __None__

This meeting is adjourned at 8:22 P.M.

VERONA PUBLIC SCHOOLS – BOARD OF EDUCATION
ADDENDUM RESOLUTIONS
September 28, 2021

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

Motion by: Mr. Day

Seconded by: Mrs. Drappi

Be it RESOLVED the approval of Addenda Resolution #1 - 5.

Mr. Alworth X Mr. Day X

Mrs. Drappi X Mrs. Freschi X

Mrs. Priscoe Absent

PERSONNEL

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

1.1 New Hire

Name	Location	Position	Salary	Committee	Term of Employment on or about
Steven Gemma	HBW	Paraprofessional	\$16,899.96	Education	Sept. 29, 2021 - Jun. 23, 2022
Steven Gemma	HBW	Sub Teacher	\$100/per diem	Education	SY 21-22

1.2 Reallocation of Days

Employee #	Explanation
#102887	Reallocate 5 PI days to 5 Paternity Days Oct 18 - Oct. 22, 2021

EDUCATION

#2 **RESOLVED** that the Board approve the attached District BOE Meeting Technician job Description.

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

3.1 Student Observer

Name	School	School/Teacher/ Grade	Duration	Assignment
Emily Kincaid	Cald. Univ.	FNB/Amora/4th Grade	60 hrs./ Oct. 13 - Dec. 15, 2021	Student Observer

CO-CURRICULAR

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

4.1 Clubs

Advisor	Location	Club Name	Stipend	Term of Employment
Steven Munoz	VHS	Book Club	Volunteer	SY 21-22
Christine Garson	VHS	Spanish Club	\$925	SY 21-22
Christine Garson	VHS	Co-Advisor Spanish Club	\$462.50	SY 21-22
Valerie Useche	VHS	Co-Advisor Spanish Club	\$462.50	SY 21-22

FINANCE

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

<u>Amount</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Check Register Date</u>
\$1,949.79	Vendor Checks	September 28, 2021