

# The Board of Education Town of Vernon

Anne Fischer, Chairperson  
Dean Houle, Vice Chairperson  
Vicky Rispoli, Secretary  
George Apel, Treasurer  
Laura Bush  
David Kemp  
Susan Norlie-Hesnan  
Kyle Percy  
Paul Stansel

30 Park Street – PO Box 600  
Vernon, Connecticut 06066

February 22, 2010

## REGULAR BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING

A regular meeting of the Vernon Board of Education was held at the Administration Building on Monday, February 22, 2010.

Chairperson Fischer called the meeting to order at 7:10 p.m. Present when the meeting was called to order were Mr. Apel, Mrs. Bush, Mr. Houle, Mr. Kemp, Mrs. Norlie-Hesnan, Mr. Percy, Mrs. Rispoli, and Mr. Stansel. Also present were Mr. Karasinski, Mrs. Murasso, Mr. Paskiewicz, and student representatives Howard Daniel and Erika Tyler.

### 1.0 Secretary's Report

#### 1.1 Approval of the Minutes of the Regular Meeting held on February 8, 2010 and the Budget Workshops held on February 1, 2010 and February 3, 2010

Mrs. Norlie-Hesnan moved to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting held on February 8, 2010 and the Budget Workshops held on February 1, 2010 and February 3, 2010. The motion was seconded by Mr. Houle.

Mr. Paskiewicz noted that the first sentence of the last paragraph under Item 8.0, Executive Session, of the February 8, 2010 minutes should read, "Mr. Apel moved to adjourn at 10:44 p.m."

#### 1.2 Communications

Mr. Kemp reported that he along with various Vernon Emergency Management personnel and members of the American Red Cross toured all seven Vernon schools to determine if they could be used as a shelter if necessary. VCMS was selected as the primary site and NES as the secondary site.

Mrs. Fischer reminded Board members of their invitation to attend the artist reception for the Spring Student Art Exhibit at Rockville Public Library on Monday, March 1, 2010.

Mrs. Fischer informed the Board that Diana Gagne is working with the Town and Public Works to bring recycling programs to the Vernon Schools. The program will

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begin in Center Road School and then spread to the other schools. Mrs. Gagne will provide the Board with monthly status reports.

## 1.3 Opportunity for Board of Education to Add/Delete Agenda Items

Mr. Houle moved to add Item 3.5, Field Trip Request, Item 4.2, Request for Waiver of Rental Fee, and Item 7.0, Resignation, to the Agenda. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Norlie-Hesnan and passed unanimously.

## 2.0 Community Forum

Fine Arts Coordinator Jill Goldberg addressed the Board and personally invited members to attend the Student Art Exhibit at the Rockville Public Library from March 1 through March 30. Ms. Goldberg also informed the Board of the following fine arts events to be held in March:

- The opening reception of the student art exhibit will be held on Monday, March 1, 2010 at 6:30 p.m.
- The RHS and eighth grade band and chorus will perform at 7:00 p.m. at Rockville High School on March 23, 2010.
- The VCMS chamber music/jazz band concert will be held on March 31, 2010 at 7:00 p.m. at VCMS.

## 2.1 Report from RHS Student Representative

Student Representatives Howard Daniel and Erika Tyler reported on the following activities at RHS:

- The boys and girls basketball seasons are coming to an end.
- The Taste of Languages event will be held on Wednesday, February 24, 2010.
- CAPT exams begin the week of March 1<sup>st</sup>.
- The all night volleyball lock-in will be held on Friday, March 5, 2010.

Mrs. Rispoli commented that the committee is still looking for chaperones for the volleyball lock-in.

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## 3.0 Curriculum and Instruction

### 3.1 Early Childhood Education Update

The Vernon Public Schools will be conducting kindergarten registration at each school for all children who plan to attend kindergarten during the 2010-11 school year. Sally Sherman, Supervisor of Early Childhood Education and Special Programs, provided an update on this and other early childhood education initiatives.

Ms. Sherman noted that the registration process begins on March 1, 2010 and distributed registration parent/guardian folders for the Board to review. The registration folders include details on safety town, a raffle ticket, and the various forms required for registration. Additionally, Ms. Sherman distributed details of the data collected on the number of children in Vernon going to kindergarten in the fall of 2010.

Ms. Sherman also provided the Board with information on the preschool program. The recruitment process for next school year is in process and they currently have 100 applicants. A lottery for the program will be held on Monday, March 1, 2010. There are approximately 25 lottery spots available for next school year.

For the current year, there are 129 preschoolers who are typically supported by three adults in each classroom. All students have received health and developmental screenings and are taught a standard based preschool curriculum in a lesson plan form. The program has a computerized assessment system and staff has had the opportunity to participate in a number of professional development seminars offered through EastConn.

Ms. Sherman noted that the kindergarten registration forms will be available on the Vernon Schools website by the end of the week.

Mrs. Bush commented that she visited a NES preschool classroom and was very impressed.

### 3.2 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning Environment Grant

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Jerry Griffin, Acting Supervisor of Assessment, Grants, and Career Education, requested approval to apply for a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning Environment Grant. The grant for \$139,865 would provide the hardware (interactive whiteboards, laptops, Netbooks, e-readers, and audience response system) and professional development to implement a technologically enriched learning environment to improve communication skills (reading and writing) at Vernon Center Middle School. The district will be responsible for networking and imaging the computers and will have the responsibility to maintain the hardware; therefore, future costs were taken into account when decisions were made on hardware.

Mr. Griffin noted that this is a very competitive, all or nothing, grant and that he expects to be notified of the results by April 1, 2010.

Mr. Houle moved to approve the submission of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning Environment Grant. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Rispoli and passed unanimously.

### 3.3 NEASC Pre-Self Study Report

In preparation for the 2013 evaluation of the New England Association of Schools and Colleges, Rockville High School administration has completed and submitted the required Pre-Self Study Report. Principal Eric Baim and members of the Follow-Up Committee Jen Stachowiak, Ted Brewer, and Bryan Wright provided information about the NEASC accreditation standards and process.

The 2008 report from NEASC included the following three recommendations for RHS:

- Standard 5: School Culture and Leadership – There is a formal, on-going program through which each student has an adult in the school, in addition to school counselor, who knows the student well and assists the student in achieving the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectation.

A committee has been established to research and examine various Advisor/Advisee programs used in districts throughout the state. Ms. Stachowiak commented that a number of models are out there but one that works with the RHS schedule has yet to be determined.

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Mr. Baim is also working with the teachers' union and administrative team to create a program compatible with contractual obligations. Board members suggested the committee keep them informed of this issue so that the Board can understand what needs to be in the applicable contracts.

- Standard 1: Core Values, Beliefs, and Learning Expectations – The School Community engages in a dynamic, collaborative and inclusive process informed by current research-based best practices to identify and commit to its core values and beliefs about learning. The School has challenging and measurable 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations for all students which address academic, social and civic competencies, and are defined by school-wide analytic rubrics that identify targeted high levels of achievement.

A committee composed of key stakeholders is being established to develop new core values, beliefs, and 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. Once these documents have been finalized and approved, committees will be created to revisit the school-wide rubrics and align them to the 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations.

- Areas of concern where action is needed to prepare for the 2013 evaluation – the mission of RHS needs to be connected to the rubrics.

The committee highlighted progress that has been made and efforts to address all standards.

Board members were concerned with the comment in the report regarding additional renovation work that needs to be done to allow administration to give the student the best possible opportunity to meet the new 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. It was suggested that any needs be brought to the School Building Advisory Commission as soon as possible.

Mrs. Rispoli commented that a significant amount of work has been done since the evaluation and the fact that there are only three NEASC recommendations (two of which are universal to all schools) is incredible.

## 3.4 District and School Improvement/Instructional Plans

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Assistant Superintendent Debbie Murasso provided the Board with an overview of the reports submitted by Vernon's administrative team for the month of January, 2010 to support the District Improvement Plan and School Instructional Plans.

Mrs. Murasso discussed the Scientific Research-Based Interventions, the Connecticut Consortium on School Attendance Grant, the progress of the in-school suspension committee, Positive Behavior Supports, and results of the data team work at each of the schools.

#### 3.4 Field Trip Request: FIRST Robotics Regional Competition, Baltimore, Maryland

Rockville High School Principal Eric Baim and FIRST Robotics Advisors Chuck Nystrom and Paul Cusson requested Board approval for an overnight, out-of-state trip for the Rage Robotics Club to compete in the FIRST Robotics Regional Competition in Baltimore, Maryland from March 10, 2010 to March 13, 2010. Students will miss a total of two school days to participate in this competition.

Mr. Kemp moved to approve the request for the Rage Robotics Club to compete in the FIRST Robotics Regional Competition in Baltimore, Maryland from March 10, 2010 to March 13, 2010. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Bush and passed unanimously.

It was mentioned that pictures of the RAGE Robotics team competing in a scrimmage in Suffield, CT were in the Journal Inquirer on Monday, February 22, 2010.

Mrs. Bush reported that she attended the Suffield scrimmage ('shakedown') and the RAGE Robotics team did not advance to the finals but did very well. The game this year is called Breakaway and is a soccer game with robots. Mrs. Bush encouraged Board members to attend the Hartford regional competition in April.

#### 4.0 General Business

##### 4.1 Reports from Liaisons to Organizations/Committees

Mr. Apel reported that the Maple Street School kitchen project has been approved by both the fire marshall and building official.

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Mrs. Rispoli commented that the benefit for Haiti held at RHS on Saturday, February 20, 2010 was a huge success. Over 800 people attended the event and close to \$20,000 was raised. The custodians and technicians hired were outstanding and the event could not have been held without the support of the Vernon Schools.

Mr. Stansel and Mrs. Fischer reported on the FFA SAEP Fair held at RHS on February 10, 2010. Mr. Stansel commented that it was an outstanding event with a large number of parents and families in attendance. Mrs. Fischer reported that the SAEP displays were very impressive and a total of 34 items were auctioned off.

Mr. Houle reported that the Facilities Committee met prior to the BOE meeting this evening. The Committee has some follow-up items to address and will report back to the Board at a later date.

Mr. Houle also noted that the superintendent search is in its final stages and will be an agenda item for an upcoming BOE meeting.

Mrs. Norlie-Hesnan attended a couple of CRS PTO meetings and informed the Board of the following upcoming activities:

- Special celebration activities are being planned for the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of CRS.
- A family night at the Wolfpack game will be held on March 26, 2010 and a family night at the Rock Cats is also being planned for May or June.
- A number of 5<sup>th</sup> grade girls are collecting donations for Haiti.
- CRS PTO has collaborated with SRS PTO for a joint assembly.
- The spring book fair is being planned.
- The CRS school fair will be held on Saturday, March 6, 2010 from 10:00 – 2:00.

The Superintendent will present the approved 2010-2011 budget to the public on Thursday, February 25, 2010.

#### 4.2 Request for Waiver of Rental Fee

The Vernon Police Department requested a 100% waiver of rental fees for the use of Rockville High School on the evening of March 3, 2010 for an Awards Ceremony

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(awards will be given to outstanding police officers who protect our community). The RHS auditorium will be utilized at a total cost of \$600 in rental fees. Additional labor fees for an operator/technician may be incurred.

Mr. Percy moved to approve a 100% waiver of rental fees for the Vernon Police Department to use the RHS auditorium on the evening of March 3, 2010. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Norlie-Hesnan and passed unanimously.

## 5.0 To Review and Update Board of Education Calendar

There were no changes to the calendar.

## 6.0 Opportunity for Questions from the Press Relative to Agenda Items

There were no questions from the press.

## 7.0 Resignation

Mr. Percy moved to accept the resignation of Diana Latorre, Language Arts teacher (Mastery Skills/Read 180) at VCMS, effective at the end of the 2009-2010 school year. The motion was seconded by Mr. Kemp and passed unanimously.

Mrs. Fischer reminded the Board that the Taste of Languages will be held on Wednesday, February 24, 2010 at 6:00.

Mr. Apel requested a year-to-date expenditure report for the next regular Board of Education meeting.

Mr. Apel moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:30 p.m. The motion was seconded by Mr. Houle and passed unanimously.

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Respectfully submitted,

Secretary