



## BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING AGENDA

October 13, 2020

CONFIDENTIAL EXECUTIVE SESSION – 6:00 pm

VIA TELEPHONE CONFERENCE

REGULAR PUBLIC MEETING AGENDA – 7:00 pm

VIA ZOOM WEBINAR

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 October 13, 2020 Verona Board of Education meeting remotely via zoom webinar. 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 below to join the webinar: <https://zoom.us/j/91325696824>
- Or Telephone:  
Dial (for higher quality, dial a number based on your current location):  
US: [+13126266799](tel:+13126266799)  
Webinar ID: [913 2569 6824](https://zoom.us/j/91325696824)
- 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**

**October 13, 2020**

**The Verona Board of Education of the Township of Verona, in the County of Essex, New Jersey, convened in regular session on October 13, 2020 via ZOOM webinar at 7:02 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 511 members of the public present on Zoom and 2 in person. There was 1 member of the press present.**



## BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING AGENDA

October 13, 2020

CONFIDENTIAL EXECUTIVE SESSION – 6:00 pm

VIA TELEPHONE CONFERENCE

REGULAR PUBLIC MEETING AGENDA – 7:00 pm

VIA ZOOM WEBINAR

1. Call to order
2. Pledge of Allegiance
3. Reading of Meeting Notice
4. Roll Call Attendance
5. Public comments on Agenda Items
6. Superintendent Report - Dr. Rui Dionisio, Superintendent of Schools
7. Presentations - Reopening Plan Update, Dr. Miller & Mr. Mauriello
8. Committee Reports
  - Athletics & Co-Curricular - James Day/Pamela Priscoe
  - Education - Timothy Alworth/Sara Drappi
  - Facilities - James Day/Lisa Freschi
  - Community Resources - Pamela Priscoe/Sara Drappi
9. Discussion Items
10. Roll Call Vote on Resolutions
11. Public Comments

NOTE: The next scheduled Public Meeting will be held on **Tuesday, October 27, 2020** beginning with a Confidential Session at 6:00 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 7, 2020. 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   X  

Mr. Day   X  

Mrs. Drappi   X   (remotely)

Mrs. Freschi   X  

  Mrs. Priscoe  X  

#### 5. Public comments on Agenda Items -

**George Kozachuk - 100 Morningside Rd.** - Questioned Resolution #11 - is the Board able to mute members of the public so they are not made to go to the end of the que.

Mrs. Freschi is this the procedure to follow.

**Chris Wacha - 85 Lynwood Rd.** - Agenda Item #7 - Reopening Plan news to know how many students were to be hybrid or virtual. Surrey should be made to determine who wants students in school or not. Need to work on the plan.

**Rita Scalfio - 25 Church St.** - Lack of stakeholder involvement as part of the reopening plan.

**Christopher Mania - 257 Claremont Ave.** - What is the current state of the ventilation system in the buildings? Would like to see everyone come together to make the best plan.

**Lynn Halsey- 53 Linden Ave.** - Questioned minutes from last meeting, would like minutes to be more comprehensive.

**Cynthia Holland - 109 S. Prospect Ave.** - Agenda Item #7 reopening would like information on the ventilation systems. Accommodations for teachers.

**Chris Tamburro - 160 Sunset Ave.** - Commented on the vote of no confidence for Dr. Dionisio.

as told that there would be MERV13 filters. Schools being supplied MERV 7 or 8. Requiring the opening of windows. Have not received follow up on their list of concerns. Want to know how HBW cleaned after person tested positive.

**Marie Zemokhal - 80 Fairview Ave.** - Didn't see her comments on minutes.

**Kristen Donohue - 31 So. Prospect St.** - Commented on reopening plan. Concerned plan was not collaborative.

**Dana DeMars - 8 Witherspoon Rd.** - Commented on unfinished projects. What percentage of projects are finished? Wants status of projects. Important to bring kids back to school.

**Amy Singleton - 33 Brookdale Ave.** - Questioned why larger rooms are not being used to bring more kids back.

**Meg Garcia - 8 Brentwood Dr.** - Distrust between community and SUPERintendent. Very uneasy as a parent.

**Jackie Fricke - 65 Grove Ave.** - Public should receive regular weekly updates.

**Kate Kelly - 23 Sylvan Rd.** - #7 Reopening Plan have supervisors been in the classrooms.

**Laura Garnet - 69 Sunset Ave.** - Wednesday cleaning day - is it really necessary?

**Mike Dupree - 47 Cypress Ave.** - Appreciates the efforts of everyone. SURveyof parents indicates a more robust hybrid plan is desired.

**Diana Ferrera - 49 Fells Rd.** - Curriculum And teacher preparation. PD for teachers.

**Regina French - 44 Brookside Terr.** - What kind of wipes will be used. Concerned about opening windows. Why are teachers not being allowed to teach from home?

**Laura Giasone - 100 Linden Ave.** - Concerned about not having enough substitutes. Students should not be left unattended in virtual learning.

**Kim Kempton - 127 Forest Ave.** - Thanked the BOE and Administration.

**John Garcia - 8 Brentwood Dr.** - What was the original completion date for construction? What is the new completion date and is there any liquidated damages?

**Nathan Scott - 30 Symington Ave., Livingston** - Teacher in Verona. Reopening plan did not include input from the faculty.

**Connor O'Brien** - Presentation

**Christopher Mania - 257 Claremont Ave.** - Requested more detail on status of construction. Questioned status of fire suppression systems.

**George Kozachuk - 100 Morningside Rd.** - HVAC on back order? Connor O'Brien there were delays in material delivery.

Questions on Connor O'Brien's report.

**Eileen Erwin-Michael - 44 Howell Dr.** - BOE method of questioning is not the best method. Construction has been mismanaged. Reopening plan is not about COVID19 but delays in construction. Very disappointed. Completely support teachers, Administrators and BOE.

**Jackie Fricke - 65 Grove Ave.** - Does window project affect reopening plan?

**Mike Dupree - 47 Cypress Ave.** - Questioned why other schools were able to get MERV13 filters?

**Marie Zemokhal - 80 Fairview Ave** - Is there a recommendation for the type of filter. C. O'Brien - must work with manufacturer.

**Chris Tamburro - 160 Sunset Ave.** - Air changes per hour, air quality testing, why did they not get this information. Supplemental entialiation (windows) Hepa filters have exhaust features.

**6. Presentations** - Reopening Plan Update, Dr. Miller & Mr. Mauriello

Connor O'Brien report

**7. Superintendent Report - Dr. Rui Dionisio, Superintendent of Schools**

Good evening everyone. I hope everyone is doing well. We have several updates and presentations this evening for the Board of Education and the members of the public. Thank you to the VAA and the Board for your support and confidence.

Several members of our administrative team are with us tonight. Dr. Miller and Mr. Mauriello will present later this evening on the work our administration has accomplished over the past two weeks in examining our school reopening plan. We also have our building principals on the Zoom call this evening who will be serving as panelists as we may call on them to provide context to any specific items that may come up.

We have been quite busy over the past several months in the midst of this global pandemic. Last March, our school district quickly pivoted to remote instruction as a matter of public health and safety. We navigated uncharted waters last Spring and we learned from that experience. That process led us to an opportunity in June, July, and August as we were charged with developing a safe return to school for our students and staff.

It is important to note, nobody has ever done this before. We are all learning here: administrators, teachers, parents, students, and the Board of Education, myself included. We are all trying to work together to accomplish one goal.

We recognize these are difficult times for everyone. It is a challenge for our students who are in school, but in a way that is much different than any of us expected. It is a challenge for our parents who are juggling work, family, all while trying to facilitate learning for their children from home. It is a challenge for our teachers and staff, who are trying to teach in new ways under the most unique of circumstances. And it's challenging for our administrators who are working tirelessly to return students and staff to school in a safe manner while managing the competing demands, interests, and constraints that come along with school as we now know it.

Our district is charged with developing a safe return to school for students and staff. But that work is difficult to do when we have groups with opinions diametrically opposed to each other and someone is always disappointed with the outcome. We cannot lose sight that we have a process to coordinate these efforts. Our process began in June, led us to today, and will continue for months to come. Our work on school reopening is not done.

Our process included engaging our teachers, staff, administrators, and parents. We know there are aspects of that process we have done very well. We also recognize that there are aspects that we could have done better. And we are committed to doing it better and getting it right because our students deserve it.

I disagree with the assessment put forth by the VEA and the manner in which it was conducted. Quite simply, it is a mischaracterization of the truth. However, my role as superintendent is to help guide this school district in the best interests of our students and staff. We cannot lose sight of what matters most here. I believe it to be prudent to coordinate a joint meeting that will involve not only myself as the district Superintendent, but also the Verona Board of Education, membership of the Verona Administrator's Association, and the VEA Executive Leadership. The purpose for this meeting will be to address the relevant issues regarding the needs of our students and staff and to ensure that the goal of a safe return to school is accomplished.

At the September 29th Board of Education meeting, we listened to feedback from many parents asking the District to consider a safe and earlier return to school prior to November 9th, especially for our youngest learners in elementary and middle school. Following that meeting, Dr. Miller, Mr. Mauriello, and I immediately began discussions and planning with our administrative team to review our plan and coordinate such possibilities with our teachers and staff. That led us to tonight where we will later present an update on that proposed plan.

Additionally at the last Board meeting, parents requested our consideration for more in-person learning than the current plan calls for. Dr. Miller and Mr. Mauriello will share how our administrative team and staff

believe we can accomplish that goal at this time and what steps will be taken in the future to continue to evolve our plan.

Following the last Board of Education meeting, some parents expressed interest in a survey being sent out that week to collect more feedback from the community. We agree that surveying the faculty and parents is an important component and should help guide our decision making. We also recognize that we could have done a better job in this area. Some people are disappointed that a survey was not sent out immediately following the last Board meeting. As a team, we made that decision for two reasons:

1. First, any data collected would not be actionable in the short window we had to try to return to school prior to November 9th.
2. Second, the administrative team felt their attention needed to be focused on exploring how we could coordinate an earlier return in accordance with our current and approved plan all while managing their regular job responsibilities.

We recognize that some people may feel like they weren't heard but that was not our intention. We are committed to providing these survey opportunities moving forward.

By this Thursday, our district will send out a survey to parents and staff collecting feedback on the plan that Dr. Miller and Mr. Mauriello will share this evening.

Additionally, Dr. Miller will send out a survey on October 30th to check in with parents and staff on how the plan is going. These two surveys will allow us to shape our current plan and evolve it accordingly in the best way it makes most sense. There will be more surveys sent out in the future, but these two surveys will get us started.

All of this work takes an incredible amount of time and effort, with numerous variables to consider pushing and pulling against each other, and coordination is important as we ensure a safe return to school.

Our goal is to return to school safely. But I want to make clear several points about what has happened in the past, what will happen in the coming weeks, and what will happen in the future. There are 3 major points I would like to highlight.

1. First, the process to engage stakeholders in the development of the plan we have in front of us right now. We worked on this plan for several months, followed the NJDOE guidance and recommendations, listened to feedback from many people, and made collective decisions on how to best navigate the challenges based on the unique circumstances in Verona. Decisions are not made in a vacuum. Not everyone is going to like this plan or any plan. It is impossible to satisfy all needs.



2. Second, Dr. Miller and Mr. Mauriello will provide an update shortly on what the next several weeks will look like based on the elements in our current Reopening Plan and the feedback they received in discussions with principals and administrators. Our principals have shared this plan with our faculty and received their input on this roll out. Once again, decisions are not made in a vacuum.
3. Lastly, it is highly probable that the plan we have today may evolve over time as we go through this school year. The process will continue to include the examination of what is working well, what needs refinement, and how to engage as many stakeholders as possible in that process. So what does this mean? It means that coordinating a reopening schedule during a pandemic is a huge operational challenge, even for a district the size of Verona. There are many things to consider in developing and rolling out plans, and many times, things we may want to do in one area are at odds or conflict with another area of our school operation.
  - a. So...once we settle into the next phase of our reopening plan, the District will coordinate the next step in the process. This will include parents in the discussion through committees. We will be emailing an interest form this week for parents to sign up if they would like a seat at the table.
  - b. We will also continue to include our teachers and staff in these conversations, as they were included over the summer. Our faculty will have the opportunity to continue the dialogue with administrators and parents at the same table. They will also receive an interest form this week.
  - c. We will review the interest in participation from the entire community and reorganize these stakeholder committees so they can provide recommendations to our schools, the district, and our Board of Education.
  - d. The district will also coordinate a mechanism for these committees to provide regular updates to the Board and the public so the community understands the progress that is being made.

All kinds of emotions are bubbling over. I cannot underscore enough how important it is for all of us to stay the course, remain focused, and not take anything personally. I believe deep down we all have the same goals at heart, it's how we get there that matters most right now.

There are many voices contributing opinions, and those opinions are highly varied. We take it all into consideration, but make those decisions based on those opinions, federal, state, and local guidelines and what's occurring in our town. The only way we will be successful as a community is if we work together.

In a short while, Dr. Miller and Mr. Mauriello will present the transition to Stage 3 of our reopening plan. But first, we are going to shift our attention to Mr. Conor O'Brien of Legacy Management Construction. Mr. O'Brien is our Project Manager for the school construction project and he has been intimately involved with all aspects of the referendum. He will provide an overview of the timeline and status of the projects, some details regarding the school construction, and the outcome of the project thus far. I will now turn it over to Mr. O'Brien.

- Conor O'Brien Presentation

Thank you Conor for that update on the referendum and the status of our facilities.

At this time, I will turn the meeting over to Dr. Miller and Mr. Mauriello for their presentation.

- Dr. Miller and Mr. Mauriello Presentation

**8. Committee Reports - Athletics - Mrs. Priscoe - sports running smoothly.**

**Mr. Day**- Gov. may allow winter sports

**Education - Mr. Alworth** - reviewed reopening plan, policies curriculum updates, elementary math , QSAC this year, observations have begun.

**Facilities - Mr. Day** - construction timelines

**Community Resources - Mrs. Priscoe** reported.

Mrs. Freschi, Board President, read the following statement of support on behalf of the Verona Board of Education in support of Superintendent of Schools Dr. Rui Dionisio:

**BOARD STATEMENT IN SUPPORT  
OF SUPERINTENDENT DIONISIO**

The last time New Jersey schools were forced to close was over 100 years ago, during the flu of 1918. We are currently living in unprecedented times. You have heard us repeat that message at Board meetings, and through district wide communications. There is no doubt that the physical, social and emotional impact of the Covid-19 pandemic has been staggering. There is also no doubt that our schools would not have fared as well if it were not for the leadership of our Superintendent. As a Board, we have watched Dr. Dionisio and his team shepherd our school district through these uncertainties with the utmost focus. From the rapid closure and pivot to purely online instruction in the spring, to coordinating how to deliver instruction with district stakeholders including the VEA and teachers, hosting over 10 hours of town hall style Board meetings to address public concern, answering hundreds of written questions and emails, arranging for child care in District for teachers, and overseeing the preparation of the District's Restart and Recovery plan and working towards its

implementation; Dr. Dionisio has without question, eaten, slept and breathed Verona during this challenging time.

Bearing witness to his dedication, it was a surprise to the Board when we were presented with a purported “vote of no confidence” taken by the VEA late last week (some not all). Other districts like Wayne and Parsippany recently have had similar surprises also when a “vote of no confidence” was presented to their Boards. The letter from the VEA claims that Dr. Dionisio acted unilaterally, recklessly, and contains what can be characterized as a statement of demands that need to be met for confidence to be regained.

We have reviewed these demands, and it is safe to say that virtually everything on that list has been discussed in one form or another and addressed over the past months. The return to school plan was developed transparently, in full view and with the input of the staff. The Board has asked Dr. Dionisio to setup a meeting with the VEA leadership and the administrative staff. Earlier this year, Dr. Dionisio had the full support of the Board, and we agreed to a new contract keeping him at the helm until June 2024. Today, we do not waiver from that support. There are no right answers, yet many difficult decisions to be made. We place our highest confidence that our school district is being operated in the best manner possible, and we are fortunate to have him as the educational leader of the Verona Public Schools.

This is a time to come together to create the best plan to get our students and staff back into our buildings for in person instruction. Please support the administration in their efforts as that is their goal to do it efficiently and safely.

**New Business** - Motion To Approve statement in support of Dr. Dionisio.

Motioned by: Mr. Day

Seconded by: Mr. Alworth

AYES - 5

NAYS - 0

Mr. Turner, Board Secretary to the Verona Board of Education read the following statement of support from the Verona Administrators Association and District Administration:

October 12, 2020

Dear Verona Board of Education Members,

We, as the Verona Administrators Association (VAA) in partnership with Mr. Frank Mauriello, Director of Special Services, Dr. Charles Miller, Director of Curriculum and Mr. Eltion Ballaj, IT Manager, are writing in support of Dr. Rui Dionisio, Superintendent of Schools. The general membership of the VAA confirmed by balloting using the one-person-one-vote principle to compose and submit this letter of support. The Director of Special Services, the Director of Curriculum and the IT Manager, have indicated as non-VAA members, their individual support. The COVID-19 pandemic impacted every aspect of our lives. Leading any school district during a pandemic is an enormous undertaking. Reopening schools during a global pandemic is a complex task. Verona is a multifaceted district with its own unique issues, each of which requires a laser focus to address. To move the academic needle in any district requires innovation and collaboration. As we work closely with Superintendent Dionisio we have witnessed his dedication to our district and believe he is acting effectively and in good faith. For this, we would like to reaffirm our confidence in his leadership.

Dr. Dionisio's record for improving student achievement is unquestionable. His resolve in addressing the myriad of inequities present in our district is unchanging. Dr. Dionisio is a strong example for our students of what an effective leader looks like; he is a former English Language Learner (ELL). He is showing all students, particularly our ELLs, that they too can lead. He continues to demonstrate the ability to create the change that our students deserve in order to create a better future for themselves. The results are clear: it is working.

Dr. Dionisio continues to be actively involved in a leadership capacity at the county and state level. Dr. Dionisio was recognized in 2019 as the Superintendent of the Year for Essex County. He is in his seventh year and third contract as our Superintendent. It should be noted that we

have had nine superintendents (including two interim and two acting) since 2002. This consistent block of time has had a positive impact on district initiatives resulting in sustainability and yielding measurable progress. Dr. Dionisio is a skillful leader. He has demonstrated skills in hiring, retaining and coaching a talented faculty and leadership team.

These are challenging times. We all continue to deal with the effects of an unprecedented global pandemic. Dr. Dionisio's primary focus has been student centered as he pushed for our youngest and most vulnerable student populations (Pre-K, K, 1 and specific special education populations) to return to in-person instruction as Verona opened its doors on Monday, September 14th. He understood that our youngest learners most likely could struggle due to limited school experience exasperated by a virtual setting. Much preparation took place for this to occur.

Let us; parents, administrators and staff specifically, work together to ensure the outcome is a good one. Let us as a community support him as he works to find the best solution for getting our 2-12 students back in the classroom while continuing to implement safe measures for all involved.

In the weeks ahead as we transition to the next stage of our hybrid model, we support Dr. Dionisio's leadership. We are confident that he will continue to balance the needs of all stakeholders - parents, students, staff, administrators, community members and BOE members. This is not an easy task during uncharted times. There is not a one size fits all approach and there is not a playbook to follow. However what we do believe is that this is not a time for blaming or shaming. In the words of Henry Ford, "Coming together is a beginning; keeping together is progress; working together is success."

Please see the attached highlights of Dr. Dionisio's accomplishments while serving as Superintendent of the Verona Public Schools.

Thank you for your time and dedication to the Verona Public Schools.

Verona Administrators Association

**Attachment (see below)**

### **Highlights of Dr. Dionisio's Accomplishments in the Verona Public Schools**

The Verona administrators through their Association in partnership with Mr. Frank Mauriello, Director of Special Services, Dr. Charles Miller, Director of Curriculum and Mr. Eltion Ballaj, IT Manager, wish to offer their support to our superintendent, Dr. Dionisio. The obstacles we face today are unprecedented. None of us have ever lived through a pandemic. Therefore, navigating through this difficult period is a learning experience for all of us. Our suggestion is that the decisions being made now by the Superintendent should be seen in the context of the unique challenge we are facing while taking into account the track record that has been established under Dr. Dionisio's seven-year stewardship.

Listed below are just some of the instructional accomplishments that we believe Dr. Dionisio has helped to bring about in the Verona School District:

- Continued to support student opportunities by eliminating gatekeepers to high level coursework & leveraged AP Potential data integration increasing school-wide AP enrollment
- Embraced open enrollment & added seven new AP courses (AP World History, AP Human Geography, AP Physics 1, AP Computer Science Principles, AP Microeconomics, AP Macroeconomics)
- Supported National Research Council inquiry-based science pilot program with district adoption (grades 1-8)
- Oversaw the design and implementation of the Orton-Gillingham multi-sensory reading intervention staff cohort program in partnership with Fairleigh Dickinson University
- Supported expansion of Senior Capstone internships to over 90% of graduating class in areas of student career interest
- Instituted improved methods of communication: Superintendent Entry Plan,

Superintendent Student Advisory Councils, Parent Coffee Houses,  
Schoolhouse Visits,  
Superintendent Corner Column newsletters

- Fostered a healthy & respectful school culture consistent with core values through facilitation of community Action Committee on Mental Health & Suicide Prevention with successful adoption through approved second question for mental health programming
- Led the design & approval of the middle school house model system to create close-knit learning communities, established collaborative grade level teams, & enhanced communication
- Supported Columbia University Teachers College Reading & Writing Project at the middle school level
- Expanded staffing in music programs improving academic opportunities for the arts
- Supported enhancement of middle school & high school STEM course offerings in grades 5-12
- Recommended addition of revised academic literacy coach positions & instructional technology coaches
- Administered & analyzed research-based climate surveys & implemented responsive action plans.
- Coordinated collective bargaining negotiations for teacher union and administrator contracts
- Facilitated Education Council meetings with Verona Education Association and administration on critical matters of school and district operations
- Facilitated strategic planning steering committee and action teams composed of Board members, administrators, faculty, parents, community members, and students to refine mission statement, establish strategic goals, & develop strategies to actualize mission & goals
- Upgraded district-wide technology infrastructure through strategic planning & implementation
- Designed Google Teacher Academy cohort for staff professional learning through GAFE, cloud computing, & deployment of 1,100+ wireless Chromebooks

The instructional improvements cited above have occurred at least in part because

of the budgetary accomplishments that have occurred over the last several years:

- Securing financial resources through local partnerships and grant opportunities to provide upgraded, sustainable buildings, grounds and technical infrastructure.
- Managing a \$16 MM bond referendum (2014) on capital improvement projects and developed community approval of a \$28 MM bond referendum (2019).
- Facilitating the approval and implementation of \$3.5 MM ESIP to enhance energy efficiency.
- Assisting in obtaining community approval for an annual budget increase of \$765,000 through a second question for therapeutic mental health programming and full day kindergarten expansion.
- Obtaining a \$75,000 VFEE grant for “Chromebooks in the Classroom”.
- Securing a pilot program awarding \$160,000 in furniture/technology to support renovation of high school Learning Commons.
- Developing a strategic fundraising plan to overhaul high school student fitness center into an inclusive space for all students.

Under Dr. Dionisio’s leadership, and with the collaboration and strong effort of staff and administrators alike, this has led to several citations, including:

- Improved national rankings to highest mark ever: America’s Most Challenging High Schools #318 (2018), a climb from The Washington Post America's Most Challenging High Schools Ranking #1512 (2016)
- College Board 9th Annual AP District Honor Roll for Significant Gains in Student Access & Success (2018)
- College Board #2 High Schools in New Jersey (2018)
- NJ Monthly Magazine Top High Schools #24 in New Jersey 2018, a climb from #94 to highest rank ever
- Recognized by U.S. News & World Report 2019 Best High Schools for first time in school history
- Recognized at Rutgers University Center for Effective School Practices Annual Conference 2019 as Exemplary School District for articulating inspiring & proactive messaging through community publication initiative



- Future Ready Schools initiative resulting in NJDOE certification for VHS, HBW, Brookdale Avenue School (2019)

C: Dr. Rui Dionisio, Superintendent of Schools  
Mr. Ernie Turner, Board Secretary

**9. Discussion Items - None**

**10. Roll Call Vote on Resolutions**

**11. Public Comments - Dana DeMars - 8 Witherspoon Rd.** Was HVAC the reason for not opening school? Was there a penalty for not meeting the deadline? Feels that teachers are being put down.

**Chris Tamburro - 160 Sunset Ave.** - Staff was not included in making the plan. Community does not agree with his statement that all were included in the planning. He read the letter of no confidence.

**Chris Wacha - 85 Lynwood Rd.** - He is a Superintendent and his district is bringing students back. Plan is bad.

**Maureen Wacha - 85 Lynwood Rd.** - On Her campus she has 4,400 students. They have been hybrid since September. Not enough communication with the community.

**Marie Zemokhal - 80 Fairview Ave.** - Suggested alternate plan. Asked about special audit.

**Julia Allen - 416 Elmwood Rd.** - Discussed reopening plan. Questioned available technology.

**Lynn Halsey - 53 Linden Ave.** - Questioned how students that need supplemental instruction in the elementary grades. Need to have all questions in the minutes.

**Jackie Fricke - 65 Grove Ave.** - How many teachers and staff need to be hired in the schools? What is the contingency plan? Dr. Dionisio - all positions are filled.

**George Kozachuk - 100 Morningside Rd. -**

Confidence in BOE is very low. Concerned with change orders. Buildings not maintained properly. Does the Superintendent hold certification as B&G Supervisor?

C. O'Brien discussed change orders sharing a reduction of \$74,000- Dr. Dionisio responded to maintenance of buildings.

**Marla Burns - VHS teacher** - Would like staff members to be included in planning. Will there be another survey to parents? Joshua Cogdill responded.

**Mrs. Albert Rawding -155 Forest Ave.** - Should we look to schools that are already open? **Dr. Dionisio** - yes, we will continue to community with other districts. **Joe Higgins** is exploring UV lights.

**Alanna Duerk** - 90 Pease Ave. - Her family is not in favor of her children going back to school. Wants teachers to be careful with what they say to kids about coming back to school.

**Michelle Bernardino - 34 Elk Rd.** - It is obvious that there is a lot of communication happening. Concerned that there is a parent group that will not allow her to join.

**Howard Krieger - 22 Cypress Ave.** - Feels the reopening plan is rushed and reckless. Focus on virtual learning.

**Maria Sperling - 152 Forest Ave.**- Will she be made aware which teachers will be present?

**Shannon Curtain - 25 Howell Dr.** - When were teachers notified of the plan?

**Diana Romano - 5 Hemlock Dr.** - Read VEA letter. Concerned that social distancing is not possible.

**Amy Minier - 4 Valhalla Way** - Is there a possibility of changing the hybrid method? Dr. Dionisio - will explore more students.

**Eileen Erwin-Michael - 44 Howell Dr.**- As a former teacher she is "blown away" by how the BOE is handling this meeting. Referendum has been destroyed. Referendum has been mismanaged. Not about COVID-19 but about the mismanagement of the referendum.

**Jillian Armenti - 40 Ann St.** - Commenced on the plan on grades K-1.

**Motion by:** Mr. Timothy Alworth

**Seconded by:** Mrs, Pamela Priscoe

**Be it RESOLVED the approval of Resolutions #1 - 12.**

Mr. Alworth  X

Mr. Day  X

Mrs. Drappi  X

Mrs. Freschi  X

Mrs. Priscoe  X

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

**#1 RESOLVED** that the Board approves the minutes of the following meetings:

Confidential & Regular Public Meeting September 29, 2020

**PERSONNEL**

**#2 RESOLVED** that the Board approve the following for the 2020-2021 school year pending pre-employment paperwork:

**2.1 New Hire**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Salary</b>	<b>Committee</b>	<b>Term of Employment on or about</b>
<b>Elly Manoochehri</b>	HBW	LOA Guidance Counselor	\$250/per diem	Education	Oct. 5 - Dec. 10, 2020
<b>David Rullo</b>	HBW	Permanent Substitute Teacher	\$120/per diem	Education	Oct. 14, 2020 - Jun. 25, 2021
<b>David Furnari</b>	District	Permanent Substitute Teacher	\$120/per diem	Education	Oct. 14, 2020 - Jun. 25, 2021
<b>Gianna Fazzini</b>	FNB	Permanent Substitute	\$120/per diem	Education	Oct.14, 2020 - Jun. 25, 2021

		Teacher			
<b>Diedra Dyson</b>	District	Sub Teacher	\$90/per diem	Education	SY 20-21
<b>James Hill</b>	District	Sub Teacher	\$90/per diem	Education	SY 20-21
<b>Debra Gambella</b>	District	Sub Teacher	\$90/per diem	Education	SY 20-21
<b>Ilene Klein</b>	District	Sub Nurse	\$175/per diem	Education	SY 20-21
<b>Patty D'Angelo</b>	District	Sub Secretary	\$90/per diem	Education	SY 20-21
<b>Margaret DeVivo</b>	District	Sub Secretary	\$90/per diem	Education	SY 20-21

## 2.2 Marriage

Name	Location	Position	Reason	Dates	Notes	
#105048	FNB	Spec. Ed. Teacher	Marriage	Oct. 7, 8, 9, 2020	3 days with pay with the cost of a substitute to be deducted	RESCIND
#105048	FNB	Spec. Ed. Teacher	Marriage	Oct. 8, 9, 2020	2 days with pay with the cost of a substitute to be deducted	APPROVE

## 2.3 Resignation

Name	Location	Position	Reason	Effective on or About
<b>Yvonne Reyes</b>	VHS	Paraprofessional	resignation	Oct. 16, 2020

## 2.4 Extra Class

Name	Location	Course	Per Diem Amount	Total	Term of Employment on or about
<b>Ray Bowes</b>	HBW	Physical Education	\$90.87	\$4,906.98	Oct. 5, 2020 - Dec. 28, 2020
<b>Andrea Jordan</b>	HBW	Physical Education	\$104.12	\$5,622.48	Oct. 5, 2020 - Dec. 28, 2020

**EDUCATION**

#3 **RESOLVED** that the Board approves the Superintendent’s presentation of HIB report as follows:

<b>HIB Case</b>
VHS 219658
VHS 219647

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

**4.1 Professional Development Presenters**

<b>Name</b>	<b>School</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Hrs./Stipend</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Andor Kish</b>	HBW	Sept. 10, 2020	3 hrs./\$60/hr.	\$180.00
<b>Brian Michalowski</b>	HBW	Sept. 10, 2020	3 hrs./\$60/hr.	\$180.00
<b>Julia Albretsen</b>	HBW	Sept. 4, 2020	3 hrs./\$60/hr.	\$180.00
<b>Julia Albretsen</b>	HBW	Sept. 10, 2020	3 hrs./\$60/hr.	\$180.00
<b>Elissa Freda</b>	LAN	Sept. 10, 2020	6 hrs./\$60/hr.	\$360.00
<b>Jennifer Kleinknecht</b>	HBW	Sept. 1, 2020	2 hrs./\$60/hr.	\$120.00
<b>Jennifer Kleinknecht</b>	HBW	Sept. 10, 2020	3 hrs./\$60/hr.	\$180.00

**4.2 Mentors**

<b>Novice Teacher</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Mentor</b>	<b>Stipend</b>	<b># of mentoring weeks</b>
<b>Tricia Davis</b>	Laning	AnneMarie Ruggiero	Waived	10 weeks
<b>Judith Dias</b>	Laning	Kristy McCabe	Waived	30 weeks

#5 **RESOLVED** that the Board approve the first reading of the following policies and regulations:

P 1649 – Federal Families First Coronavirus (COVID-19) Response Act (FFCRA) (M)  
(New)

P 2622 Student Assessment (M) (Revised)

P&R 5111 Eligibility of Resident/Nonresident Students (M) (Revised)

P&R 5200 Attendance (Revised)

P&R 5610 Suspension (M) (Revised)

P 5620 Expulsion (M) (Revised)

P&R 8320 Personnel Records

- P 1620 Administrative Employment Contracts (M) (Revised)
- P 2464 Gifted and Talented Students (M) (Revised)
- P 6440 Cooperative Purchasing (M) (Revised)
- P&R 6470.01 Electronic Funds Transfer and Claimant Certification (New)
- P&R 7440 School District Security (M) (Revised)
- P 7450 Property Inventory (M) (Revised)
- P&R 7510 Use of School Facilities (M) (Revised)
- P 8420 Emergency and Crisis Situations (M) (Revised)

#6 **RESOLVED** that the Board approve the following curriculum for the 2020-2021 school year:

- Math Grade 1
- Science K,
- Dance K-12 (new)

**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
#210048	VHS	12	School Year 20-21	Sept. 14, 2020
#201497	VHS	12	10 hrs./wk./6 months	Oct. 2, 2020

**ATHLETICS/CO-CURRICULAR**

#8 **RESOLVED** that the Board approve the attached H. B. Whitehorne and Verona High School extra curricular activities for the 2020-2021 school year.

#9 **RESOLVED** that the Board approve the following for the 2020-2021 school year:

**9.1 Stipends**

Name	School	Stipend	Position	Employment Date
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Matthew Rosa	VHS	\$3,197.00	PBSIS Coordinator	SY 20-21
Marissa Albano	HBW	\$1,598.50	PBSIS Coordinator	SY 20-21
Andrea Jordan	HBW	\$1,598.50	PBSIS Coordinator	SY 20-21
Susan Gugger	BRK	\$374.50	Conflict Resolution Coordinator	SY 20-21
Corisa Walker	BRK	\$374.50	Conflict Resolution Coordinator	SY 20-21
Luisa Hirsch	FNB	\$374.50	Conflict Resolution Coordinator	SY 20-21
Louis Waibel	FNB	\$374.50	Conflict Resolution Coordinator	SY 20-21
Tatiana Fella	FOR	\$749.00	Conflict Resolution Coordinator	SY 20-21
Elissa Freda	LAN	\$749.00	Conflict Resolution Coordinator	SY 20-21

## **FINANCE**

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

<b><u>Amount</u></b>	<b><u>Description</u></b>	<b><u>Check Register Date</u></b>
\$3,336,201.79	Vendor Checks	October 9, 2020

## **MISCELLANEOUS**

**#11 RESOLVED** in accordance with Local Finance Notice 2020-21, members of the public attending meetings of the Board of Education via live streaming will initially be placed on mute. Any member of the public wishing to provide public comment shall do so via the "raise hand" feature on the Zoom platform, or by pressing \*9 if attending by telephone. Such person will be placed in queue and recognized for comment in the order in which such requests were received. Once recognized by the Board, the person shall be allotted 5 minutes to present their comments/questions, in accordance with Board policy, and will be placed back on mute at the conclusion of their statements.

Members of the public wishing to submit questions in writing to the Board

may do so provided they are received at least 24 hours before the Board meeting. These questions will be read aloud and addressed as appropriate. In accordance with the Local Finance Notice, duplicative questions will be noted but only answered once.

## 10. Public Comments

### **CONFIDENTIAL SESSION IF NECESSARY**

#### **RESOLUTION TO ADJOURN**

**#12 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:** Mr. Jim Day

**Second by:** Mrs. Pamela Priscoe

**All in Favor:** AYE

**All Opposed:** NAY

**This meeting is adjourned at (TIME) 12:17 A.M.**

**NOTE: The next scheduled Public Meeting will be held on Tuesday, October 27, 2020 beginning with a Confidential Session at 6:00 pm and 7:00 pm Public Session via ZOOM webinar pending the evolving nature of COVID-19.**



**October 13, 2020**

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

Motion by: Mr. Jim Day

Seconded by: Mr. Timothy Alworth

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

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>		

**PERSONNEL**

**#1 RESOLVED** that the Board approve the following for the 2020-2021 school year pending pre-employment paperwork:

**1.1 New Hires**

Name	Location	Position	Salary	Committee	Term of Employment on or about
<b>William Gibney</b>	VHS	MLOA	\$375/per diem	Education	Oct. 19, 2020 - Apr. 30, 2021
<b>Nora DiBona</b>	District	Permanent Substitute Teacher	\$120/per diem	Education	Oct. 14, 2020 - Jun. 25, 2021
<b>Alexis Cabrera</b>	BRK	Part Time Custodian	\$18/per hour	Education	SY 20-21
<b>William Neal</b>	FOR	Part Time Custodian	\$18/per hour	Education	SY 20-21
<b>Dana Wynne</b>	BRK	Permanent Substitute Teacher	\$120/per diem	Education	Oct. 12, 2020 - Jun. 25, 2021
<b>Nick Klose</b>	BRK	Permanent Substitute Teacher	\$120/per diem	Education	Oct. 14, 2020 - Jun. 25, 2021

<b>Diane Bartell</b>	FOR	Permanent Substitute Teacher	\$120/per diem	Education	Oct. 14, 2020 - Jun. 25, 2021
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**1.2 Resignation**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Reason</b>	<b>Effective on or About</b>
<b>Jayson Harris</b>	Forest	Part time custodian	resignation	Sept. 28, 2020

**EDUCATION**

#2 **RESOLVED** that the Board approve the attached Monthly Statistical Report for September 2020.

**FINANCE**

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

August, 2020

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

August, 2020

#5 **RESOLVED** that the Board approve the attached list of individual transfers of line items in the 2019-2020 budget for:

August, 2020