



BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING AGENDA

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 Verona Board of Education meeting remotely via Zoom webinar. There will also be limited in person seating up to ten members of the public on a first come, first serve basis. 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/93394673029>

Or iPhone one-tap :

US:+16465189805,,93394673029# or +13126266799,,93394673029#

Or Telephone:

Dial(for higher quality, dial a number based on your current location):

US: +1 646 518 9805 or +1 312 626 6799 or +1 213 338 8477

Webinar ID: 933 9467 3029

- 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

November 24, 2020

The Verona Board of Education of the Township of Verona, in the County of Essex, New Jersey, convened in regular session on November 24, 2020 via ZOOM webinar at 7:01 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 111 members of the public present. There was 1 member of the press present.



BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING AGENDA

November 24, 2020

CONFIDENTIAL EXECUTIVE SESSION – 5:30 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. Superintendent Report - Dr. Rui Dionisio, Superintendent of Schools
6. Presentations - Charlie Miller, Glen Stevenson, Steven Schels - Update on Spring 2019
NJSLA results
7. Public Comments on Agenda Action Items to be Approved
8. Committee Reports
 - Finance - Timothy Alworth/Lisa Freschi
 - Community Resources - Sara Drappi/Pamela Priscoe
9. Discussion Items
10. Roll Call Vote on Resolutions
11. Public Comments

NOTE: The next scheduled Public Meeting will be held on **Tuesday, December 8, 2020** beginning with a Confidential Session at 5:30 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	<u> X </u>	Mr. Day	<u> X </u>
Mrs. Drappi	<u> X </u>	Mrs. Freschi	<u> X </u>
		Mrs. Priscoe	<u> X </u>

Return to Confidential Executive Session 7:09 PM

Motion by Mrs. Drappi
Seconded by Mrs. Priscoe
All in Favor AYE

Returned to Public Session 7:34 PM

Roll Call

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>

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

Please join me in congratulating Mrs. Alina Dugan on her upcoming retirement. Mrs. Dugan plans to retire at the close of the 2020 calendar year. She will be greatly missed, especially by Dr. Lanzo! Mrs. Dugan has worked in the Verona Public Schools for the past 29 years and we are extremely grateful for her loyalty, commitment, and professionalism. Congratulations Mrs. Dugan.

The school reopening committees met last week for the first time and it was reported to me that those meetings were constructive and productive. I would like to thank our staff, parents, and administration for their participation. VHS and HBW committees met again today. The elementary committee will not meet this week with the Thanksgiving holiday. We are happy to have reconvened these committees and we are looking forward to the progress from these meetings.

The current state of COVID continues to evolve and is impacting our school district. I highlighted several important points yesterday evening in a letter to the community that is affecting our students and staff in all of our district schools. Yesterday, Monday, November 23, 2020, the Verona Public Schools confirmed three (3) new and unlinked individuals in our schools who tested positive for Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19). At that time, there existed one (1) new confirmed individual at Verona High School and one (1) new confirmed individual at H.B. Whitehorne Middle School. A third confirmed individual impacts both Brookdale Avenue Elementary School and F.N. Brown Elementary School. These cases are in addition to the reported case at V.H.S. on November 18th and H.B.W on November 22nd. The school district is working closely with public health officials and following CDC, state, and local health department guidance in order to ensure the health and safety of our community. The Montclair Health Department has notified any individual who is identified as being a close contact (6 ft or less for a cumulative 15 minutes or more within a 24 hour period) with the positive individual to self quarantine and monitor symptoms as a precaution as per the health department guidance. The New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH) recommends that school districts should consider closing school to in-person learning for 14 days if 2 or more cases that are identified within 14 days occur across multiple classrooms, are not linked to exposures outside the school setting, and a clear connection between cases cannot be easily identified (outbreak involving multiple cohorts). As a result of the current circumstances impacting Verona, in accordance with NJDOH guidelines, and in consultation with the Montclair Department of Health and our district physician, Verona High School and H.B. Whitehorne Middle School will transition to fully remote instruction for the next 14 days. Remote learning at V.H.S. and H.B.W. began today, November 24, 2020 and will continue through Monday, December 7, 2020. Hybrid, in-person instruction will resume at V.H.S. and H.B.W. on Tuesday, December 8, 2020 barring no further transmission risk. Building principals have communicated with staff and parents regarding school schedules and further details. Additionally, the New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH) released the latest COVID-19 Activity Level Report (Thursday, November 19), which includes data for the week ending November 14, 2020. The report explains that the COVID-19 activity level for the

Northeast region, in which Verona is included, is HIGH overall, and the COVID-19 case rate is identified as VERY HIGH. The last times our region was at Activity Level High (3) was March 21 and May 2-16. We anticipate people will travel and/or gather as a family this Thanksgiving and that our COVID number may grow. When discussing this possibility, in consultation with the Montclair Department of Health and our district physician, it has been determined that all district schools, including our elementary schools, will operate in full remote learning from November 30th - December 4th. The purpose of this remote learning period will allow our district to continue to monitor and evaluate the evolving number of confirmed cases and the impact on our students and staff. All of our elementary schools will operate on the remote learning schedule and return to hybrid, in-person instruction on Monday, December 7, 2020. Green phase: Low risk - Evaluate alternatives to in-person learning to ensure continuity of work or educational services; Permit limited activities involving interaction with multiple cohorts, ensuring adherence to precautions. Yellow phase: Moderate risk - Consider a mixture of remote and/or hybrid learning approaches, and/or fully remote learning; Minimize activities that involve interaction with multiple cohorts. Orange phase: High risk - Consider implementing fully remote learning; Restrict activities that involve interaction with multiple cohorts. Red phase: Very high risk - Must implement full remote learning. As we approach January, we will continue to monitor the evolving nature of COVID, exploring the possibility of taking added precautions. Our goal is to limit any transmission of COVID after the December break and we hope to provide an update to parents and staff next week to have a final decision so there is enough time for everyone to plan accordingly. We recognize this news is disappointing and the circumstances are not ideal, we will continue our efforts to return to in-person instructions as soon as it is safe for students and staff. We encourage parents, students, and staff to continue following the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention promoted safeguards in our communications, such as:

- Staying home when you are sick
- Washing hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds
- Covering coughs and sneezes and properly disposing of tissues
- Limiting close contact with people who are sick and not sharing food, drinks, and utensils
- Practicing social distancing (staying at least 6 feet apart)
- Wearing a face covering while in school
- Continuing to monitor your health for symptoms
- Following these measures and others will reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19

Lastly, I want to take a moment to talk to you. As we approach Thanksgiving Day, a day that is grounded in respect for each other, camaraderie, and appreciation. I want to offer insight into our collective journey through this pandemic.

The climate and circumstances we find ourselves in today is more complex than ever. These last 9 months have challenged our fortitude and resolve. At times, it may feel as if there will be no end to this pandemic. But, we should remind ourselves

that we will get through these difficult times. When we ultimately come out on the other side, what will remain and be remembered is how we treated each other. Our present circumstances require focus and situational awareness. These are not times for distractions or divisiveness. In the best interests of safety and well-being of our students, staff, and the goals of our community, we must remain positive and focused.

Many of you are hurting. We have children sitting at home, filled with uncertainty because something they don't understand is keeping them from playing with friends, filling our halls with laughter, and just being carefree kids. We have parents who want their children in the school more often and others who want the school buildings closed so we can keep people safe. We have teachers who are concerned about getting themselves and their families sick and wondering how they can help their own children who are learning remotely in their home school districts. We have students who simply want to shoot a basketball, compete in a wrestling match, or perform on a stage. Let me be clear: We understand and truly care about our students, families, and staff. We recognize that words alone do not offer immediate solutions, but our school district will continuously analyze the data, consider the impact of our decisions, fight through obstacles, and use our combined strength to pull every single child through these challenging times.

If you flip open any of our history books, you will quickly find events that threatened earlier generations and posed major detours for the dreams of countless people. Our detour has altered some of our dreams and expectations, and we are all struggling to bear the weight of the massive challenges we are forced to confront. Let us not allow ourselves to be distracted or divided. Like our predecessors, although we are all not fully in agreement with the path we are taking, let's extend our arms, grab hold of everyone, and together get through to better times. Because, no matter how complicated life may get, our students are watching how we respond to adversity, and will use it as a blueprint for how they will respond to the challenges faced by their generation. What we want our students to learn from us during these times is how to respond to challenges using integrity, humility, and kindness. So, let's stay positive and productive. Let's work together.

We need everyone to get through this. We know there will be questions, disagreements, and doubt, but, if we work together and treat each other with respect, the Verona of tomorrow will emerge stronger than ever. There remains much to be thankful for this holiday season. I wish you and your loved ones a Happy Thanksgiving.

6. Presentations - Update on Spring 2019 NJSLA results

7. Public Comments on Agenda Action Items to be Approved: None

8. Committee Reports

Mr. Alworth - Finance reported

Mrs. Drappi - Community Resources reported

9. Discussion Items -

Mrs. Freschi - getting dates on the table and a mediator to sit with the VEA and Board to hash out some differences. Spoke to NJEA and working on getting a date on the calendar.

10. Roll Call Vote on Resolutions

11. Public Comments - Mrs. Ford - 50 East Reid Pl. - Would like notice when teachers are not going to be in the building. Dr. Dionisio responded.

Chris Wacha - 85 Lynwood Rd. - COVID numbers - is virus spreading within all 6 schools? Dr. Dionisio responded.

Joanna Brietenbach - 14 Woodland Ave. - Request to have notification when teachers are not available. How much flexibility is there for parents to pull their children for a certain amount of time and then have them come back in? Dr. Dionisio responded.

Julia Allen- 116 Elmwood Rd. - County testing results now are 3-5 days. committees and subcommittees survey results - can results be shared with general public. Any further surveys? What is the next step? Dr. Dionisio responded.

Laura Giasome - 100 Linden Ave. - would like to thank all teachers. Superintendent should report should include all the amazing things teachers are doing.

Corrine Zemokhol - 88 Fairview Ave. - thanking teachers for going above and beyond. Community outreach group - be mindful that public comments are what promoted change.

Kristin Donohue- 31 S. Prospect St. - thanking teachers and principals. Are the same Metrics are being used to make decisions for the Spring? Mrs. Freschi responded.

Megan Pellegrino - 30 Kenwood Ave. - 3rd Grade FNB teacher - thank everyone for all of their hard work. As a parent, if her child's teacher is home for any reason she has no issues with them being on ZOOM.

Lynn Halsey - 53 Linden Ave. - thanks teachers - assessing each individual school's safety going forward. Any discussion about going back to conservative hybrid model instead of fully remote. Has there been any interest in following what European Union is doing? Mrs. Freschi - Italy is doing the same as what we are doing here. Dr. Dionisio responded.

Michelle Bernardino - 34 Elk Rd. - comment on Mrs. Drappi's report - thank you for talking about the role of the Board - thanked the Board for all of their work. Also, pulling your children in and out of school makes it difficult for teachers.

Chris Wacha - 85 Lynwood Dr. - when we get COVID reports - important piece of data is whether the virus was able to spread in any of our school buildings. We all saw just how tough it is to start this operation once we shut it down - we shut it down in March and we are still dealing with the ramifications of having to start it again. Need to lay groundwork now.

Motion by: Mr. Day

Seconded by: Mrs. Drappi

Be it RESOLVED the approval of Resolutions #1 - 8.

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 November 10, 2020

PERSONNEL

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

2.1 New Hires

Name	Location	Position	Salary	Committee	Term of Employment on or about
Taylor Franklin	District	Sub Teacher	\$90 per diem	Education	SY 20-21
Elhaam Manoochehri	HBW	Leave of Absence Guidance Counselor	\$250 per diem	Education	Dec. 10, 2020 - Jun. 25, 2021
Gabriela Mustica	LAN	Paraprofessional	\$13,020.70	Education	SY 20-21
Ilias Milloshi	HBW	Part time custodian	\$18/per hour	Education	SY 20-21

2.2 Leave of Absence

Name	Reason	Begin Date on or about	Estimated Return Date on or about
#102972	Extension of Maternity Leave of Absence	Jan. 27, 2020	Sept. 1, 2021
#105171	Maternity Leave of Absence	Jan. 19, 2021	May 25, 2021
#100647	Leave of Absence Without Pay	Dec. 7, 2020	Sept. 1, 2021

2.3 Retirement

Name	Position	Location	Reason	Effective Date of Retirement
Alina Dugan	Administrative Assistant	FNB	Retirement	Dec. 31, 2020

2.4 Staff Changes

Name	Current Location/Position	New Location/Position	Effective Date on or about
Paula Petrucelli	FNB/Paraprofessional	VHS/Paraprofessional	Nov. 16, 2020
Kimberley Petersen	HBW/Paraprofessional	VHS/Paraprofessional	Nov. 18, 2020

EDUCATION

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

Standard 9 for the following curricula:

- 21st century life and careers
- Library media
- PE and Health
- Visual performing arts
- World Languages
- ELA
- Social Studies
- Elementary Theatre (new)

#4 **RESOLVED** that the Board approve the second reading of the following policies and regulations: add copies of resolutions to packet and public

P 2431.3 Heat Participation

P&R 5320 Immunization

P&R 5330.04 Administering an Opioid Antidote

P 2431 Athletic Competition

R 2431.1 Emergency Procedures for Sports and Other Athletic Activity

P&R 5330.05 Seizure Action Plan

#5 **RESOLVED** that the Board rescind the following:

5.1 VFEE Grant

Grant Recipients	School	Name of Grant	Grant #	Amount of Grant	Notes
Jennifer Kleinknecht	H.B. Whitehorne	Banish the Boring and Basic with Buncee	2021-03	\$1,000.00	RESCIND

Jennifer Kleinknecht	H.B. Whitehorne	Banish the Boring and Basic with Buncee	2021-03	\$1,500.00	APPROVE
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ATHLETICS/CO-CURRICULAR

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

6.1 Stipends

Name	Location	Position	Stipend
Owen Haveron	VHS	Football - extra duties	\$1,397
Ray Bowes	VHS	Football - extra duties	\$1,397
Brian Wenzel	VHS	Football - extra duties	\$1,397

6.2 Clubs

Advisor	Club Name	Location	Stipend	Term of Employment
Jonathan Thai	Math Honor Society	VHS	\$700.00	SY 20-21
Nadia Domenick	Yoga Club	HBW	Volunteer/Trial Basis	SY 20-21

REFERENDUM

#7 **RESOLVED** that the Change Order #004 with USA General Contractors Corp. be approved in the following manner:

Original Contract Sum \$1,402,000.00
 Previous Change Orders 37,727.39
 Revised Contract Amount \$1,439,727.39
 Change Order No. 004 (\$22,525.94)
 Revised Contract Amount \$1,417,201.45

Change Order No. 004 is comprised of the following:
 Additional RTU Flashing of Rooftop Curbs \$7,577.86
 Installing Detail 4/A2.02 at Roof Area #12 Edge 58 LF and Reinforcing of Rafter Tails at Roof Area #12 \$7,817.22
 Deduct Change Order for HVAC scope removal (\$37,921.02)
 Total Change Order No. 004 (\$22,525.94)

FINANCE

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

<u>Amount</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Check Register Date</u>
\$3,514,517.33	Vendor Checks	November 20, 2020
\$1,007,563.66	Referendum Checks	November 20, 2020

CONFIDENTIAL SESSION IF NECESSARY

- Legal matters
- Student matters

Motion to return to confidential session - 10:01 pm

Motioned by: Mr. Day
Second by: Mrs. Drappi
All in Favor: AYE
All Opposed: None

RESOLUTION TO ADJOURN

#9 **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. Day
Second by: Mrs. Drappi

All in Favor: AYE
All Opposed: None

This meeting is adjourned at (TIME) 10:00 P.M.

NOTE: The next scheduled Public Meeting will be held on Tuesday, December 8, 2020 beginning with a Confidential Session at 5:30 pm and 7:00 pm Public Session via ZOOM webinar pending the evolving nature of COVID-19.

VERONA PUBLIC SCHOOLS – BOARD OF EDUCATION
ADDENDUM RESOLUTIONS
November 24, 2020

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

Motion by: Mr. Day

Seconded by: Mrs. Priscoe

Be it RESOLVED the approval of Addenda Resolutions #1 - 3.

Mr. Alworth X Mr. Day X

Mrs. Drappi X Mrs. Freschi X

Mrs. Priscoe X

PERSONNEL

#1 RESOLVED that the Board approve the following:

1.1 Leave of Absence

Name	Reason	Begin Date on or about	Estimated Return Date on or about
#100704	Extension of Leave of Absence	Sept. 14, 2020	Feb. 1, 2021

1.2 Resignation

Name	Location	Position	Reason	Effective on or About
Lakendar McFadden	VHS	Anti-Bullying Specialist	Resignation	Jan. 21, 2021

CO-CURRICULAR

#2 RESOLVED that the Board approve the following

2.1 Clubs

Advisor	Club Name	Location	Stipend	Term of Employment
Casey Harris	Gardening Club	VHS	Volunteer	SY 20-21
Chrissy Sciacchitano	Italian Club	VHS	Volunteer	SY 20-21
Chrissy Sciacchitano	Design Club	VHS	Volunteer	SY 20-21
Helene McLaughlin	Fashion Club	VHS	Volunteer	SY 20-21
Melissa Wallerstein	Friday's for Future	VHS	Volunteer	SY 20-21

EDUCATION

#3 RESOLVED that the Board approve the first reading of the following regulation:

R 6220 Budget Preparation