

PUBLIC MEETING

February 14, 2023

The Verona Board of Education of the Township of Verona, in the County of Essex, New Jersey, convened in regular session on February 14, 2022 at 7:07 p.m.

The meeting was called to order by Jorge Cruz, Board Secretary.

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. Pamela Priscoe, President, Mrs. Diana Ferrera, Vice President, Mrs. Lisa Freschi, Mr. Christopher Wacha, and Mrs. Denise Verzella. Also present was Diane DiGiuseppe, Superintendent and Mr. Jorge Cruz, School Business Administrator.

There were 19 members of the public present. There were 0 members of the press present.



CONFIDENTIAL EXECUTIVE SESSION –6:00 pm
REGULAR PUBLIC MEETING AGENDA – 7:00 pm
VERONA HIGH SCHOOL LEARNING COMMONS
February 14, 2023

1. Call to order
2. Pledge of Allegiance
3. Reading of Meeting Notice
4. Roll Call Attendance
5. Presentation - **Joseph D’Arco** - Verona Township Manager - Police Headquarters
Dr. Charles Miller, Julia Peter, Glen Stevenson - Dept. of
Curriculum, Instruction, & Assessment - Start Strong Assessment Result
6. Superintendent Report - **Diane DiGiuseppe**
7. Student Representative Report - **Reese Sahadow**
8. Committee Reports -
 - Athletics
 - Governance and Policy
9. Public Comments on Agenda Action Items
10. Discussion Items
11. Roll Call Vote on Resolutions
12. Public Comments

Live streaming link: <https://youtube.com/live/bxBqoA8jPwo?feature=share>

The next scheduled Public Meeting will be held on **Tuesday, February 28, 2023** beginning with a Confidential Session at 6:00 pm and 7:00 pm Public Session in the Verona High School Learning Commons.

1. Call to Order

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. Reading of Meeting Notice

This meeting is being conducted in compliance with the open meeting session that the Verona Board of Education passed a resolution at its annual reorganization meeting held on January 3, 2023. 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. Copies of tonight's agenda and resolutions have been made available to the public and press.

4. Roll Call Attendance

Mr. Wacha X

Mrs. Verzella X

Mrs. Ferrera X

Mrs. Priscoe X

Mrs. Freschi X

5. Presentation Joseph D'Arco - Verona Township Manager - Police Headquarters

Mr. D'Arco provided a history of the Police Headquarters and the need for a new adequate building. One of the Board of Education properties was identified as an option. Athletics field will have access to bathrooms for athletes. Drainage issues will be addressed in the concerns of relocating the recreational courts. This a Board decision and the township council has not made a decision on this proposal.

Mr. Wacha asked if the renovation of the Verona High School central administrative space to classroom space be covered by the township. Mr. D'Arco confirmed that the township won't cover the cost of converting the space at Verona High School.

Mrs. Priscoe stated that the Board did not want to take any action on the proposal

Dr. Charles Miller, Julia Peter, Glen Stevenson - Dept. of Curriculum, Instruction, & Assessment - Start Strong Assessment Results

6. Public Comments on Agenda Action Items

Motion by: Mrs. Freschi

Seconded by: Mrs. Ferrera

Mr. Wacha No Mrs. Verzella X

Mrs. Ferrera X Mrs. Priscoe X

Mrs. Freschi X

Mike Boone - 24 Mountain View Rd. - Asked Mr. D'Arco why the Ever property was removed by the township as a viable location. Mr. D'Arco responded that he would share that information offline.

Will Basette - Shared the need to collaborate with the township to find an adequate property, but the HBW location is not ideal for a 100 year plan.

Jean Laprody - Track Coach - advocating for the athletics program and more than 80 students that use the track. Shared a history of the HBW expansion and the construction impact on the track.

7. Superintendent Report - Diane DiGiuseppe -

The district administrators were provided a full day of professional development on the instructional components of the Teacher Evaluation System Model and began a discussion to move to the most recent model, we are using a 2011 version, and there is a 2019 version that is easier to use and would provide better feedback to staff.

We are looking to make that change in September 2024 after we train administrators and staff across the 2023-2024 school year.

- Ken Shelton will be in the district working with students, staff, and parents/community members on February 15-16. Mr. Shelton holds an M.A. in Education with a specialization in Educational Technology and New Media Design and Production. He has worked as an Educator for about 22 years and spent most of his classroom practitioner time teaching technology at the middle school and high school levels. As a part of his active involvement within the Educational Technology community, Ken is an Apple Distinguished Educator, a Google Certified Innovator, and a Microsoft Innovative Educator Expert. Mr. Shelton has worked extensively at the policy level and was named to the California State Superintendent of Public Instruction's Education Technology Task Force.

- Mr. Shelton regularly gives keynotes, and presentations, provides consulting and advisement support and leads workshops covering various Educational Technology, Equity and Inclusion, Anti-Bias/Anti-Racist, Multimedia Literacy, Cultural intelligence, Visual Storytelling, and Instructional Design topics.
- Mr. Shelton has also provided and continues to provide consulting support to many companies, State Departments of Education, Ministries of Education, school districts/systems nationally and internationally, as well as non-profits such as the California Emerging Technology Fund's School2Home program, which is designed to support closing the achievement gap and digital divide at low-performing California middle schools.
- Mr. Shelton serves on the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Board for several tech companies and non-profits. His Board services include advisement, platform analysis, policy analysis, and outreach, in addition to the development of both equitable and inclusive internal recruitment and retention programs.

The DEO Coordinator and Facilitators have recommended DEI work based on the Grand River Solutions Final Report; Ms. DIGiuseppe will provide those to the Board for discussion at the next BOE meeting.

8. Student Representative Report - Reese Sahadow

A. Diversity Equity and Inclusion surveys with Dr. Ken Shelton

1. Community wide event on Wednesday, Feb 15 at 6:30
2. Student survey- Dr. Shelton requested about 45 students participate
 - a) From the students whose parents gave consent, 45 were randomly drawn. The students' consent was also given
 - b) Will be from 8:15 to 9:15 in the LC on Thursday, Feb 16
3. Forms were sent out on Genesis parent portal. Leading up to the event, the DEI committee sent out information to parent emails using Parent Square. The students whose parents consented had the event explained in a meeting with administrators. The students' consent will be required for participation.

B. Black History Month: The Black in Verona club has worked with teachers to create displays throughout the school highlighting Black achievements. Each hallway is coordinated to match the historical figures to the subject (ex. Black writers in the English wing).

1. The Black in Verona club has also worked with the Student Council to deliver biographies Black historical figures over the morning announcements.

2. Field trip to HBW to work with 5th grade history classes learning about Black history
- C. Student council dance: Scheduled

Mrs. Ferrera asked if the district shared updates and announcements via social media. Mrs. DiGiuseppe confirmed that the district does have a LinkedIn account and recently began a Verona Facebook and Twitter account. Going forward messages from ParentSquare will automatically be feed to these social media platforms.

9. Committee Reports

- Athletics -
 - Mrs. Priscoe reported on Athletics and updates from their meeting with Mrs. Palmarezzi. Winter Sports - all had their Senior Night and DECA trip in on March 10th. Fall Sport stipends positions are available for application submission.
 - Mr. Wacha thanked the volunteers' parents for their participation in the booster clubs.
- Governance and Policy
 - Mrs. Verzella shared the policy updates on #0152 which allows to options to elect a Board Officer. Board recommendation is to go with option 2, which requires a full quorum of the board to elect a Board Officer.
 - Mrs. Freschi shared that Mrs. DiGiuseppe and Mrs. Verzella prepared a spreadsheet to thoroughly review our board policy and update as needed.
 - Mrs. Ferrera asked how are we deciding which policy needs to be revised.
 - Mrs. DiGiuseppe shared that the policies are reviewed based on the last date the policy was revised along with the policy database at Strauss Esmay.
 - Mrs. Freschi shared the importance of the policy committee.
 - Miss. Sahadow asked about a policy and the role of a “disciplinarian”. Also can you elaborate on the section about consequences.

- Mrs. DiGiuseppe shared that the disciplinarian is the school principal or assistant principal. The policy is from the state and the board is able to make revisions before adoption of the policy.

10. Discussion Items -

Mr. Wacha asked about the 50 overtime hours under resolution #2 in Personnel. Mrs. DiGiuseppe confirmed that it's for our IT department since they are covering the work for a vacant position in the department.

11. Roll Call Vote on Resolutions

12. Public Comments -

Please note that the public participation portion of the meeting affords an opportunity for the public to share thoughts and comments about school related topics. By law, administrators and Board of Education members are not permitted to publicly discuss personnel matters, student discipline, or other issues requiring confidentiality. While we may not respond to comments during the meeting, all input that is shared with the Board of Education is taken very seriously, and helps inform future deliberations and work by the Board and its committees. Answers appear in many forms including, but not limited to: email, Superintendent/ Committee reports, Board statements, FAQs on website, or after public comment is closed. We appreciate and thank all members of the public for your input.

VERONA PUBLIC SCHOOLS – BOARD OF EDUCATION

RESOLUTIONS
February 14, 2023

I. ROUTINE MATTERS

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

- #1 **RESOLVED** that the Board, upon on the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the minutes of the following meetings:

Confidential & Regular Public Meeting January 24, 2023

- #2 **RESOLVED** that the Board approved the revised Board of Education meeting Calendar for 2023.

Motion by: Mrs. Verzella

Seconded by: Mrs. Freschi

Be it RESOLVED the approval of Routine Matters Resolutions #1 - 2

Mr. Wacha X Mrs. Verzella X

Mrs. Ferrera X Mrs. Priscoe X

Mrs. Freschi X

II. PERSONNEL

- #1 **RESOLVED** that the Board, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the following:

- 1.1 **New Hires** -pending successful completion of pre-employment paperwork.

Name	Location	Position	Salary	Committee	Term of Employment on or about
Sofia Tavera	District	Sub Teacher	\$110/per diem	Education	SY 22-23
Barbara Piercy	District	Sub Teacher	\$110/per diem	Education	SY 22-23
Robert Cashill	District	Sub Teacher	\$110/per diem	Education	SY 22-23

Christine Boyd	Elem.	Sub Teacher	\$110/per diem	Education	SY 22-23
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1.2 Permanent Substitute Teachers

Name	Location	Position	Salary	Committee	Term of Employment on or about
Kathy Belcastro	FNB	Permanent Sub Teacher	\$125/per diem	Education	Feb. 15 - Jun. 22, 2023
Kaitlyn Heun	HBW	Permanent Sub Teacher	\$125/per diem	Education	Feb. 1 - Jun. 22, 2023

1.3 Leave of Absence

Name	Reason	Begin Date	Estimated Return Date on or about
#105707	Maternity Leave of Absence	Apr. 20, 2023	Sept. 25, 2023

1.4 Without Pay

Name	Date/s	No. of Days/Reason
#105701	Jan. 27, 30, 31, 2023	3 Days/Unpaid Sick
#105597	Jan. 30, 31, Feb. 1, 2, 3, 10, 2023	6 Days/Unpaid Sick
#105532	Feb. 10, 2023	1 Day/Unpaid

1.5 Retirement

Name	Position	Location	Reason	Effective Date of Retirement
Raymond Bowes	Physical Education Teacher	HBW	Retirement	Jul. 1, 2023

#2 RESOLVED that the Board approve, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, the following for up to 50 additional hours of overtime for IT network:

Elnor Zeqiri = \$55.40/hr.
Bilal Genc = \$53.70/hr.

#3 **RESOLVED** that the Board approve Verona Board of Education Trustee Denise Verzella as the Verona Board of Education representative to the New Jersey School Board’s Delegate Assembly for 2023.

Motion by: Mrs. Fererra

Seconded by: Mrs. Freschi

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

Mr. Wacha X Mrs. Verzella X

Mrs. Ferrera X Mrs. Priscoe X

Mrs. Freschi X

III. EDUCATION

#1 **RESOLVED** that the Board, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the following:

1.1 Attendance at Conference

Name	School	Event/Location	Date	Cost
Tania Symmons	Board Office	NJPSA/FEA Women's Leadership Conference	Mar. 27-28, 2023	Registration \$409.00 Mileage \$55.50 Total \$464.51
Tamara Gesario	District	Two-Day Instructional Coach Institute	Mar. 27-28, 2023	Registration \$595.00
Steve Cannon	Verona High School	Foreign Language Educators of NJ Annual Conference	Mar. 20, 2023	\$0.00

1.2 Student Observer

Name	School	School/Teacher/ Grade	Duration	Assignment
Lauren Marks	Cald. Univ.	VHS/Sciacchitano/ Carvajal/McLaughlin	Feb. 15 - May 12, 2023	Student Observer

#2 **RESOLVED** that the Board, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the following:

2.1 Student Home Instruction

Student #	School	Grade	Hrs./Week/Duration	Beginning on or about
#240418	VHS	11	10 hrs./wk./2-4 wks.	Jan. 23, 3023
#333234	FNB	2	10 hrs./wk./6-8 wks.	Feb. 7, 2023

#3 **RESOLVED** that the Board, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve Norma Palmer to provide nursing coverage in accordance with the Individual Health Plan (IHP) for student 301883 during extra curricular activities at her calculated hourly rate (\$42.58) for the 2022-2023 school year as needed.

#4 **RESOLVED** that the Board, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve Elevate Education to provide professional development and consulting services not to exceed \$14,000 at no cost to the district (ESSR Grant).

Motion by: Mrs. Freschi
Seconded by: Mrs. Ferrera

Be it RESOLVED the approval of Education Resolutions 1 - 4.

Mr. Wacha X Mrs. Verzella X
 Mrs. Ferrera X Mrs. Priscoe X
 Mrs. Freschi X

IV. ATHLETICS/CO-CURRICULAR

#1 **RESOLVED** that the Board, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the following:

1.1 Field Trip

Name	School	Club/Destination	Date of Field Trip
Robert Orr	VHS	DECA/Atlantic City, NJ	Feb. 27 to Mar. 1, 2023
Brian Wenzel	VHS	History Club/Museum of the American Revolution/Phila.,PA	Mar. 10, 2023

Motion by: Mrs. Ferrera

Seconded by: Mrs. Verzella

Be it RESOLVED the approval of Athletics/CoCurricular Resolution #1.

Mr. Wacha X Mrs. Verzella X
 Mrs. Ferrera X Mrs. Priscoe X
 Mrs. Freschi X

V. FINANCE

#1 **RESOLVED** that the Board, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the enclosed checklist(s) in the following amounts based on the recommendation of the Superintendent:

<u>Amount</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Check Register Date</u>
\$7,982.50	Chromebooks	February 14, 2023
\$1,506,474.45	General/Athletics	February 14, 2023
\$ 396.27	HBW	February 14, 2023
\$1,791.31	VHS	February 14, 2023

#2 **RESOLVED** that the Board, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, accept a donation of two guitars and two amplifiers from Mr. Ralph Betcher at an estimated value of \$500.

#3 **RESOLVED** that the Board, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve summer work compensation for Pamela Burke five hours rendered on 6/26-7/2/20, totaling \$254.13.

#4 **RESOLVED** that the Board, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the revised calendar for the 2023-2024 Budget.

#5 **RESOLVED** Whereas, The Board of Education of Verona Public School District in the County of Essex, New Jersey, desires to proceed with a school facilities project generally consisting of:

HVAC Upgrades at Brookdale Avenue School

SP#:5370-070-13-5370

HVAC Upgrades at F.N. Brown Elementary School

SP#5370-080-13-5370

HVAC Upgrades at Forest Avenue School

SP#5370-090-13-5370

HVAC Upgrades at Laning Avenue School

SP#5370-100-13-5370

HVAC Upgrades at Verona High School

SP#5370-050-13-5370

Whereas, the Board now seeks to take the initial steps in order to proceed with the Project:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE VERONA PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF EDUCATION, IN THE COUNTY OF ESSEX, STATE OF NEW JERSEY, as follows:

Section 1. In accordance with the requirements of Section 6A:26-3 of the New Jersey Administrative Code, the Board hereby approves the Schematic Plans prepared in connection with the Project and the Board further authorizes the submission of same to the Essex County Superintendent of Schools and the New Jersey Department of Education for approval.

Section 2. The School Administration and such other officers and agents of the Board as are necessary, including the Board attorney, bond counsel and architect, are hereby authorized to perform such other acts, to execute such other documents and to do such other things as are necessary to implement the determinations of the Board set forth in this resolution. This project is "Other Capital" and the BOE will not be seeking state funding. Including the submission of Information to the New Jersey Department of Education as applicable to the proposed Project.

Section 3. This resolution shall take effect immediately.

Motion by: Mrs. Freschi

Seconded by: Mrs. Fererra

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

Mr. Wacha X Mrs. Verzella X
 Mrs. Ferrera X Mrs. Priscoe X
 Mrs. Freschi X

VI. GOVERNANCE & POLICY

#1 RESOLVED that the Board, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve to accept the HIB report for January 2023.

#2 RESOLVED that the Board, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the FIRST READING of the following Board Policies and Regulations:

Policy/Regulation Number	Policy Name
0152	BOARD OFFICERS
0161	CALL, ADJOURNMENT, AND CANCELLATION
0162	NOTICE OF BOARD MEETINGS
1510	AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (M)
2423	BILINGUAL AND ESL EDUCATION (M)
2510	ADOPTION OF TEXTBOOKS
3516	SAFETY AND CIVILITY
5200	ATTENDANCE
5512	HARASSMENT, INTIMIDATION, AND BULLYING (M)
R1510	AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (M)
R2423	BILINGUAL AND ESL EDUCATION (M)
R2425	EMERGENCY VIRTUAL OR REMOTE INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM (M)
R2460	SPECIAL EDUCATION
R5200	ATTENDANCE

R5561	USE OF PHYSICAL RESTRAINT AND SECLUSION TECHNIQUES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES (M)
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#3 RESOLVED that the Board, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the ABOLISHMENT of the following Board Policies and Regulations:

Policy/Regulation Number	Policy Name
1648.11	THE ROAD FORWARD COVID-19 – HEALTH AND SAFETY (M)
1648.13	SCHOOL EMPLOYEE VACCINATION REQUIREMENTS (M)
R5512	HARASSMENT, INTIMIDATION, AND BULLYING (M)

Motion by: Mrs. Priscoe

Seconded by: Mrs. Freschi

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

Mr. Wacha X Mrs. Verzella X

Mrs. Ferrera X Mrs. Priscoe X

Mrs. Freschi X

VII. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Please note that the public participation portion of the meeting affords an opportunity for the public to share thoughts and comments about school related topics. By law, administrators and Board of Education members are not permitted to publicly discuss personnel matters, student discipline, or other issues requiring confidentiality. While we may not respond to comments during the meeting, all input that is shared with the Board of Education is taken very seriously, and helps inform future deliberations and work by the Board and its committees. Answers appear in many forms including, but not limited to: email, Superintendent/ Committee reports, Board statements, FAQs on website, or after public comment is closed. We appreciate and thank all members of the public for your input.

Karen Hill - Representing the Cheer program. Shared that VHS Cheer team history and Cheer for a Cure. Cheer Coach was not rehired because of a complaint but the administration should consider surveying the participating students and parents.

Cara Earhart - Student - was informed that the Cheer Coach was fired and no input was asked from the athletes

Kayla Esposito - Student - Coach Jen is thoughtful and we would like her back as our coach.

Leah Burn - Student - Shared that Coach Jen was professional and ensured the safety of all students.

Ava Evens - Student- Coach Jen's vision and coaching has led us to success.

CONFIDENTIAL SESSION IF NECESSARY

RESOLUTION TO ADJOURN

- #1 **RESOLVED** that the Board meet in private session, from which the public shall be excluded, to discuss the topics of negotiations and personnel or potential litigation which private discussion is being held pursuant to Section 7b and 8 of the Open Public Meeting Act. The matters under discussion will be disclosed to the public as soon as final decisions are made and voted upon.

Motion to adjourn the meeting:

Motion by: Mrs. Freschi

Second by: Mrs. Ferrera

All in Favor: AYE

All Opposed: None

This meeting is adjourned at (TIME) 8:55 P.M.