



CONFIDENTIAL EXECUTIVE SESSION – 5:30 pm  
VIA TELEPHONE CONFERENCE  
REGULAR PUBLIC MEETING AGENDA – 7:00 pm  
VIA ZOOM WEBINAR  
March 9, 2021

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/94846681804>

Or iPhone one-tap :

US: +13126266799,,94846681804# or +16465189805,,94846681804#

Or Telephone:

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

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

Webinar ID: 948 4668 1804

- 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**

**March 9, 2021**

**The Verona Board of Education of the Township of Verona, in the County of Essex, New Jersey, convened in regular session on March 9, 2021 via ZOOM webinar at 7:04 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 and Mrs. Sara Drappi. Mrs. Pamela Priscoe was absent. Also present was Dr. Rui Dionisio, Superintendent and Mr. Ernest Turner, Acting Board Secretary.**

**There were 176 members of the public present. There was 1 member of the press present.**



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March 9, 2021

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 - Nisivoccia Auditors, Ray Sarinelli
7. Committee Reports
  - Athletic/Co-Curricular - Pamela Priscoe/Timothy Alworth
  - Education - Timothy Alworth/Sara Drappi
  - Facilities - Pamela Priscoe/Jim Day
8. Public Comments on Agenda Action Items to be Approved
9. Discussion Items
10. Roll Call Vote on Resolutions
11. Public Comments

NOTE: The next scheduled Public Meeting will be held on **Tuesday, March 23, 2021** 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 5, 2021. The meeting set forth the schedule of its regular meetings which resolution was within 7 days of passage. The schedule was sent to the Verona Cedar Grove Times, the Star Ledger, the Township of Verona and the VEA. Postings of this meeting setting forth the time location and agenda were posted at the Verona Board of Education Office and on the Verona Public Schools district website. The Verona Board of Education operates under a consent agenda format, any board member has the right to have an item pulled to be voted upon or discussed separately. Copies of tonight's agenda and resolutions have been made available to the public and press.

4. **Roll Call Attendance**

Mr. Alworth	<u>  X  </u>	Mr. Day	<u>  X  </u>
Mrs. Drappi	<u>  X  </u>	Mrs. Freschi	<u>  X  </u>
		Mrs. Priscoe	<u>  Absent  </u>

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

Good evening everyone. There is some good news to report. Governor Murphy announced that educators are now eligible to receive the COVID vaccine. The District is partnered with Vanguard Medical Group in Verona for the employee vaccination program. We have communicated the registration process to our staff so they are ready to receive it when the vaccine becomes available. Vanguard is awaiting notification of vaccine supply delivery as our District is currently in need of 175 vaccinations for all of our remaining staff. Supply is still the issue right now. We are also working with other providers to see if we can access vaccines sooner at other locations or megasite vaccine centers. This is definitely a step in the right direction and we are hopeful looking ahead to September. The Township and District are planning on hosting a forum on the impact of the Coronavirus and the response to the pandemic. In attendance will be representatives from the Montclair Health Department, officials from Essex County, a family physician, and representatives from the school district and Township. The plan will be to solicit questions from the public in advance that will be used to guide this informational town hall meeting. More details will be communicated later this week. While there is much to be hopeful for with vaccine distribution continuing to increase, the recommendations from the health department remains 6 feet of physical distancing. The health department has been very

clear that they will not recommend less than 6 feet even if plexiglass barriers are installed. Plexiglass would be an additional mitigation strategy but not to reduce the distancing. We want our students in every day but the limitation for our District to be able to have more students in school every day is the department of health guidance on maintaining 6 feet of distance in our schools. The 6 feet physical distancing guideline is still what we are following. Therefore, we must plan for the future based on all scenarios. We are planning for the scenario in September where the 6 feet distancing is reduced or relaxed by the NJ Department of Health and that would mean we could bring all of our students back in every day following the mitigation strategies like mask wearing, etc. We will coordinate plans with our staff for what this will look like but we have a high level of confidence in being able to execute this plan with reduced distancing less than 6 feet. We are also planning for what September would look like if the 6 feet of distancing is not reduced by the Department of Health. Since the last Board of Education meeting, the administration and I have had discussions about 2 goals that we are focusing our efforts on:

#1. Exploring what adjustments can be made for this spring to increase in-person learning for students. One of the major areas of focus at this time is the possibility of allowing students to go home for lunch and returning in the afternoon on their designated cohort day. We recognize that is favorable for some families but may pose challenges for others. We have been discussing this possibility with our teachers but it would pose challenges in scheduling. Although no decision has yet been made, we are looking at other options with our staff as well and we will communicate those possibilities to parents once we know more about those plans. We had a meeting with staff today for several hours and another meeting with Education Council scheduled later this week. These meetings are happening weekly.

#2. We are hopeful that in September the health department guidance may be reduced to less than 6 feet of physical distancing which would allow us to bring in students every day. We are planning for that if the 6 feet guideline is relaxed. But in the event it does not, we are looking at all options as we plan for September. One area we are exploring was communicated to families last week on the possibility of restructuring our elementary schools where each school has 1 or perhaps 2 grade levels. This would allow the district to lower typical class sizes under 20 rather than classes of 21-24, thereby allowing us more flexibility in getting more students in school every day. We are also looking at grade level virtual teachers for next year if needed. After discussions with administrators, we decided to share the idea with our community to understand our parent's perspective and willingness for the District to explore this possible option before we engage in in-depth planning of details. While we recognize there will be challenges

with any proposed solution, we want to collect parent feedback prior to investing time in planning such a proposal and working through the details. The survey closes Wednesday and we will then review the results and make a decision as to whether we will move ahead with staff discussions and planning on the idea. We will also continue to look at other options as well for September. That concludes the Superintendent Report.

**6. Presentations** - Nisivoccia Auditors, Ray Sarinelli

**Scott Weston - 6 Peckman Ct.** - Was E-certified this year? Mr. Turner responded - yes

**7. Committee Reports - Athletics** - Mr. Alworth reported - Boys and Girls basketball winding down. Hockey had full season. Swim Team doing well. Volleyball starting, wrestling starting.

**Education** - Mrs. Drappi reported - Policies were updated. AP tests.

**Facilities** - Mr. Day reported - window project at HBW is complete. FN Brown is 75% complete, re-keying 00% complete. Playgrounds being examined. HVAC contracts have been signed. Bi-Polar ionization as an add on to the ventilation system

**8. Public Comments on Agenda Action Items to be Approved** - NONE

**9. Discussion Items**

**10. Roll Call Vote on Resolutions**

**11. Public Comments**

**Jodi Brown - 158 Franklin St.** - Has senior in high school that hesitates going to school. Teachers are teaching remotely in the classrooms. Dr. Dionisio responded.

**Jackie Fricke - 65 Grove Ave.** - Concerned about long-term effect it will have on the kids.

**Lisa Freedman - 54 Woodland Ave.** - Encouraged everyone to register for vaccine.

**Scott Weston - 6 Peckman Ct.** - Concerned about scheduling with families with students in more than one grade.

**Diana Ferrera - 49 Fells Rd.** - Thanked Mr. Alworth and Mr. Day for attending rally. Questioned the need for the 6ft. rule. Dr. Dionisio answered that this is at

the recommendation of Public Health Officials.

**Ron Mueller - 21 Linden Ave.** - questioned the 6 ft. rule and the resulting scheduling.

**Amy Minier - 4 Valhalla Way** - Can space in the high school be used?

Dr. Dionisio responded - looking at all the options.

**Shawn Marie Haas - 32 West Lincoln St.** - Have students been able to express why they don't come into school. Dr. Dionisio responded.

**Erin Dean - 17 Hathaway Lane** - Questioned configuration of classes.

**Anya Singleton - 33 Brookdale Ave.** - Questioned survey. Can it be reorganized?

**Julia Allen - 116 Elmwood Rd.** - Comments on elementary redistricting plan.

Would a signed waiver allow kids in school?

**Brooke Berardo - 47 E. Reid Pl.** - Has Montclair Board of Health indicated that the 6 ft. rule will be changed?

**Dr. Yen-Tyng Chen - 26 Fellwsood Dr.** - Expressed appreciation.

**Lynn Halsey - 53 Linden Ave.** - Does the Health Dept. take into account mental health issues? Dr. Dionisio responded.

**Kristen Donohue - 31 So. Prospect St.** - Thinks the 6 ft. rule is a fear of litigation not a fear of the virus. Should be about children not adults.

**Mike Dupree - 47 Cypress Ave.** - Thanked Mr. Merkler. Quoted articles suggested less than 6 ft. Harm to children is greater than virus.

**Brenda Herman - 31 Wayland Dr.** - Concerned over redistricting. Questioned students playing sports without masks and near each other. Dr. Dionisio replied.

**Rita Scelfo - 25 Church St.** - Will 6 ft. rule apply when teachers are vaccinated?

**Nancy Ziebert - 40 Birdseye Glen** - Emotional effects on children can last for years. High school students stay home not because of virus but because there is nothing at school.

**Peggy Wood - 143 Elmwood Rd.** - Questioned 6 ft. rule by Montclair Board of Health. Why can they make mandates on Verona BOE? Verona is failing the students.

**Brennan Keeter - 7 Oakridge Rd.** - Questioned mandatory attendance and redistricting.

**Chris Wacha - 85 Lynwood Rd.** - Does the Board attorney give the same advice

to all the school districts they represent? Suggest this Board get another attorney's opinion. Dan Roberts replied.

**Joanna Brietenbach - 14 Woodland Ave.** - Must respect the difficulty position the Board and Dr. Dionisio are in.

**Amanda Bullock - 33 Durrell St.** - Should examine alternatives.

**Dana DeMars - 8 Witherspoon Rd.** - What other school districts does Mr. Roberts represent? Children are having problems.

**Ian MacKenzie - 151 Park Ave.** - Made recommendations for improving surveys.

**Gabrielle Zebrowski - 1 Valhalla Way** - Questioned children getting vaccinated.

**Motion by:** Mr. Day

**Seconded by:** Mr. Alworth

**Be it RESOLVED the approval of Resolutions #1 - 15.**

Mr. Alworth X

Mr. Day X

Mrs. Drappi X

Mrs. Freschi X

Mrs. Priscoe Absent

**VERONA PUBLIC SCHOOLS – BOARD OF EDUCATION**  
**RESOLUTIONS**  
**March 9, 2021**

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

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

Confidential & Regular Public Meeting February 23, 2021

**PERSONNEL**

#2 **RESOLVED** that the Board approve the following 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>Julia Ermatinger</b>	District	Sub Teacher	\$90 per diem	Education	SY 20-21
<b>Julia Ermatinger</b>	District	Permanent Sub Teacher	\$120 per diem	Education	SY 20-21
<b>Margaret DeVivo</b>	LAN	Paraprofessional	\$10,826.20 pro-rated	Education	Mar. 10 - Jun. 25, 2021

**2.2 Leave of Absence**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Reason</b>	<b>Begin Date</b>	<b>Estimated Return Date on or about</b>	<b>Notes</b>
<b>#102814</b>	Maternity Leave of Absence	Feb. 26, 2021	Jan. 1, 2022	RESCIND
<b>#102814</b>	Maternity Leave of Absence	Mar. 5, 2021	Jan. 1, 2022	APPROVE
<b>#102789</b>	Maternity Leave of Absence	May. 17, 2021	Nov. 29, 2021	

**2.3 Resignation**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Reason</b>	<b>Effective on or About</b>
<b>Paula Pineda</b>	VHS	Paraprofessional	Resignation	Mar. 12, 2021

**EDUCATION**

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

**3.1 Attendance at Conference**

<b>Name</b>	<b>School</b>	<b>Event/Location</b>	<b>Cost</b>
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<b>Dana Garcia</b>	Laning	Continuing Education for PT license	\$269.00
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#4 **RESOLVED** that the Board approve the first reading of the following Policies/Regulations:

**A. General Policy and Regulation Guides:**

- P & R 5330.01 Administration of Medical Cannabis (M) (Revised)
- P7425 Lead Testing of Water in Schools (M) (Revised)
- R 7425 Lead Testing of Water in Schools (M) (New)
- P & R 7430 School Safety (M) (Abolished)
- P0145 Board Member Resignation and Removal (M) (Revised);
- P0164.6 Remote Public Board Meetings During A Declared  
Emergency (M) (New);
- R1642 Earned Sick Leave Law (M) (Revised);
- P1643 Family Leave (M) (New);

**B. No Child Left Behind ACT (NCLB) to Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Policy and Regulation Guides:**

- P 2415 Every Student Succeeds Act (M) (Revised);
- P2415.02 Title I
- P 2415.05 Student Surveys, Analysis, and/or Evaluations (M)  
(Revised);
- P&R 2415.20 Every Student Succeeds Act Complaints (M) (Revised);
- P4125 Employment of Support Staff Members (M) (Revised);
- P6360 Political Contributions (M) (Revised);
- P 8330 Student Records (M) (Revised);
- P9713 Recruitment by Special Interest Groups (M) (Revised)

#5 **RESOLVED** that the Board approve the following Policies can be removed after one reading:

- P2415.01 Academic Standards, Academic Assessments, and  
Accountability (M) (Abolished);
- P3431.1 Family Leave (M) (Abolished);
- P4431.1 Family Leave (M) (Abolished);
- P3431.3 New Jersey Family Leave Insurance Program (Abolished);
- P4431.3 New Jersey Family Leave Insurance Program (Abolished);
- P2415.03 Highly Qualified Teachers (M) (Abolished);

#6 **RESOLVED** that the Board approve the following for the 2020-21 school year:

<b>Name</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Stipend</b>
<b>Jeffrey Monacelli</b>	VSEA Program Director	\$8,527
<b>Howard Freund</b>	VSEA Assistant Program Director	\$6,304
<b>Debra Lawrence</b>	VSEA Administrative Assistant	\$2,743

**SPECIAL EDUCATION**

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

**7.1 Home Instructor**

<b>Name</b>
Phyllis Schoenfeld

#8 **RESOLVED** that the Board approve to contract with Phyllis Schoenfeld, dba PKS Educational Consultant, as a LDT-C to conduct Educational Evaluations on an as-needed basis for the 2020 – 2021 school year at the rate of \$70 per hour.

#9 **RESOLVED** that the Board approve to contract with Larissa Labay, Psy.D., of Lifespan Associates on an as-needed basis for the 2020 – 2021 school year.

#10 **RESOLVED** that the Board approve to accept settlement agreement OAL Docket No.: EDS 00601-2021 N, Agency Ref. No. 2021-32401 dated 3/3/21 regarding a special education matter for Student #31304

#11 **RESOLVED** that the Board approve an out-of-district placement for Student #062400 for the remainder of the 2020 – 2021 school year, commencing March 17, 2021, at the approximate cost of \$25,740.

#12 **RESOLVED** that the Board approve an out-of-district placement for Student #052203 for the remainder of the 2020 – 2021 school year, commencing March 10, 2021, at the approximate cost of \$31,865.

**ATHLETICS/CO-CURRICULAR**

#13 **RESOLVED** that the Board approve the Verona High School Drama Club to hold their Spring Musical at an outdoor facility OSPAC/Pleasant Valley Productions in West Orange on May 6-8, 2021 at a cost of \$6,925.00.

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

**14.1 Coaches**

<b>Pete Foster</b>	VHS	Varsity Wrestling	\$10,920.00	3	retroactive to Mar. 1, 2021
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Liam Penberthy	VHS	JV Wrestling	\$6,866.00	3	retroactive to Mar. 1, 2021
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#15 **RESOLVED** that the Board approve the attached list of Spring Coaches for the 2020-2021 school year.

**#11 Public comments**

**CONFIDENTIAL SESSION IF NECESSARY**

**RESOLUTION TO ADJOURN**

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

Motion by:  Mrs. Drappi

Seconded by:  Mr. Alworth

Mr. Alworth  X

Mr. Day  X

Mrs. Drappi  X

Mrs. Freschi  X

Mrs. Priscoe -  Absent

All in Favor:  AYE

All Opposed:  NONE

This meeting is adjourned at  11:11 PM.

**VERONA PUBLIC SCHOOLS – BOARD OF EDUCATION  
ADDENDUM RESOLUTIONS  
March 9, 2021**

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

Motion by:  Mrs. Drappi

Seconded by:  Mr. Day

**Be it RESOLVED the approval of Addenda Resolutions #1 - 9.**

Mr. Alworth \_\_\_\_\_ Mr. Day \_\_\_\_\_

Mrs. Drappi \_\_\_\_\_ Mrs. Freschi \_\_\_\_\_

Mrs. Priscoe  Absent

**PERSONNEL**

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

**1.2 Stipend**

Name	School	Stipend	Position	Committee	Employment Date
Steven Schels	Forest	Interim Principal	\$100/per diem	Education	Mar. 8 - 19, 2021

**REFERENDUM**

#2 **RESOLVED** that the Board approve Change Order #002 with Environmental Climate Control, Inc. in the following manner:

Original Contract Amount	\$1,393,500.00
Change Order #002	\$ 8,783.00
Contract sum prior to this change order	\$1,402,283.00
Contract sum will be decreased by this change order	<u>\$ 11,030.00</u>
Total Revised Contract	\$1,391,253.00

#3 **RESOLVED** that the Board approve Change Order #004 with D&LPaving Contractors Inc. in the following manner:

Original Contract Amount	\$404,410.00
Net change by previously authorized change orders	\$ 6,657.16
Contract sum prior to this change order	\$411,067.16

Contract Sum will be increased by this change order	\$ 1,941.50
Total Revised Contract	\$413,008.66

**#4 RESOLVED** that the Board approve Change Order #002 with Northeastern Interior Services LLC in the following manner:

Original Contract Amount	\$1,717,500.00
Net change by previously authorized change orders	\$ 23,881.00
Contract sum prior to this change order	\$1,741,381.00
Contract Sum will be decreased by this change order	<u>\$ 3,198.00</u>
Total Revised Contract	\$1,738,183.00

**#5 RESOLVED** that the Board approve Change Order #005 with Northeastern Interior Services LLC in the following manner:

Original Contract Amount	\$1,717,500.00
Net change by previously authorized change orders	\$ 20,002.00
Contract sum prior to this change order	\$1,737,502.00
Contract Sum will be decreased by this change order	<u>\$ 1,300.00</u>
Total Revised Contract	\$1,736,202.00

**#6 RESOLVED** that the Board approve Change Order #009 with Northeastern Interior Services LLC in the following manner:

Original Contract Amount	\$1,717,500.00
Net change by previously authorized change orders	\$ 70,440.50
Contract sum prior to this change order	\$1,787,940.50
Contract Sum will be increased by this change order	<u>\$ 14,639.00</u>
Total Revised Contract	\$1,802,579.50

**#7 RESOLVED** that the Board approve Change Order #009 with Northeastern Interior Services LLC in the following manner:

Original Contract Amount	\$1,256,500.00
Net change by previously authorized change orders	\$ 59,179.11
Contract sum prior to this change order	\$1,315,679.11
Contract Sum will be increased by this change order	<u>\$ 1,803.20</u>
Total Revised Contract	\$1,317,482.31

**#8 RESOLVED** that the Board approve Change Order #010 with Northeastern Interior Services LLC in the following manner:

Original Contract Amount	\$1,717,500.00
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Net change by previously authorized change orders	\$ 85,079.50
Contract sum prior to this change order	\$1,802,579.50
Contract Sum will be decreased by this change order	<u>\$ 23,000.00</u>
Total Revised Contract	\$1,779,579.50

**FINANCE**

**#9 RESOLVED** that the Board approve a Student Athletic Accident Policy for the Verona Board of Education for the term March 1, 2021 to July 1, 2021 at a cost of \$8,500.00