

**PUBLIC MEETING**

**January 4, 2022**

**The Verona Board of Education of the Township of Verona, in the County of Essex, New Jersey, convened in regular session on January 4, 2022 at 7:03 p.m.**

**The meeting was called to order by Mr. Jorge Cruz. 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, Mrs. Pamela Priscoe, Vice President, Mrs. Sara Drappi, Mr. Christopher Wacha, and Mr. Day. Also present was Dr. Lydia Furnari, Interim Superintendent and Mr. Jorge Cruz, School Business Administrator/Board Secretary**

**There were 24 members of the public present. There were 0 members of the press present.**



CONFIDENTIAL EXECUTIVE SESSION – 5:30 pm  
REGULAR PUBLIC MEETING AGENDA – 7:00 pm  
VERONA HIGH SCHOOL AUDITORIUM  
January 4, 2022

1. Call to order
2. Pledge of Allegiance
3. Election Results
  - Pamela Priscoe - 3,357
  - Christopher Wacha - 2,730
  - Ron Mueller - 1,994
4. Swearing in of Board Members
5. Reading of Meeting Notice
6. Roll Call Attendance
7. Election of Board President
8. Election of Board Vice President
9. Superintendent Report - Dr. Lydia E. Furnari, Interim Superintendent of Schools
10. Presentations - None
11. Committee Reports
  - Athletics
  - Community Resources
12. Public Comments on Agenda Action Items to be Approved
13. Discussion Items
14. Roll Call Vote on Resolutions
15. Public Comments

NOTE: There will be a Special Meeting held on **Thursday, January 20, 2022 at 6:00 PM** for the Board to review potential candidates for the Superintendent of Schools. The meeting will be held in the Verona High School Learning Commons..

The next scheduled Public Meeting will be held on **Tuesday, January 25, 2022** beginning with a Confidential Session at 5:30 pm and 7:00 pm Public Session in the Verona High School Auditorium.

- 1. Call to Order**
- 2. Pledge of Allegiance**
- 3. Election Results**
- 4. Swearing in of Board Members**
- 5. 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 4, 2022. 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.

**6. Roll Call Attendance**

Mrs. Freschi   X                        Mr. Day   X    
Mrs. Drappi   X                        Mrs. Priscoe   X    
Mr. Wacha   X  

**7. Election of Board President**

Mrs. Freschi was nominated by Mrs. Drappi for Board President.

**Motion by:** Mrs. Priscoe

**Second by:** Mr. Day

Mrs. Freschi   X                        Mr. Day   X    
Mrs. Drappi   X                        Mrs. Priscoe   X    
Mr. Wacha   No

**8. Election of Board Vice President**

Mrs. Priscoe was nominated by Mr. Day for Board Vice President.

**Motion by:** Mrs. Drappi

Mrs. Freschi   X                        Mr. Day              X  

Mrs. Drappi   X                        Mrs. Priscoe   X  

Mr. Wacha   X  

**9. Superintendent Report - Dr. Lydia E. Furnari, Interim Superintendent of Schools**

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Mrs. Priscoe and Mr. Wacha on their successful election to the Board of Education, and to congratulate Mrs. Freschi and Mrs. Priscoe on their election to the positions of Board President and Vice President. The role of Board Member is important to the well-being of the District. These volunteer positions can be challenging as well as deeply rewarding. As your Interim Superintendent, I can say that the Board/Superintendent relationship is critical to our attainment of goals now and into the future. Thank you to all around this table for your dedication.

I would like to remind our school community that I will be sending out an update on our planned return to full days of instruction by the afternoon of January 6, 2022. As of today, January 4th, there are 170 positive cases of COVID-19 reported by individuals who were not in school during a contagious period. Another 4 cases were reported by individuals who were in school during a contagious period. There are also 71 individuals currently in quarantine. This information and a breakdown by school is located on the District Website under COVID-19 Updates / COVID Dashboard. I have received and replied to questions from the school community regarding the reasons for use of an abbreviated day schedule this week. The primary reasons include the elimination of time during the day when the wearing of well-fitting masks for extended periods of time, such as lunchtime, is not possible, coupled with the fact that the reporting of exposure to COVID-19 positive individuals or of positive test results during the holiday break was not readily available to us, meaning that we did not have a clear picture of it's full impact before the start of school on January 3rd. Much of that information has come in yesterday and today. Our

school nurses have been working very hard to gather and analyze the data, and conduct contact tracing, in addition to tending to the needs of our students and staff while in school. I want to publicly thank our nurses and Mr. Merkler, who serves as our COVID-19 Coordinator, for their hard work regarding the health emergency. Our administrators, teachers, para professionals, custodians and all of our staff members are constantly adjusting plans based on available space, available staffing, and other elements of our approved School Re-Opening Plan created for the start of the school year. It should be noted that the designation of a very high transmission rate in our area is also taken into consideration. We are optimistic that next week will find us able to return to full days of instruction. I understand how difficult these changes in plans are for our families. Please know that we are doing everything we can to ensure that our students have what they need academically, socially and emotionally to the greatest extent possible. Look for my communication on the afternoon of January 6, 2022.

Finally, I would like to provide an update on our progress with the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion initiative that I presented to you at the December 7th Board of Education meeting.

During that the creation of a Request for Proposal (RFP) to help us identify a consultant or consultants to help us move forward. I am happy to report that Dr. Miller and the DEI Facilitators created the RFP and that it was released and posted on our District website just before the holiday break. Thank you to Dr. Miller and the DEI leadership team. We have already received 5 or 6 inquiries from potential applicants. Additionally, I indicated that we were fortunate enough to have been approved for participation in the New Jersey Consortia for Excellence through Equity, Northeast. NJCEE is an initiative led by the UPenn School of Graduate Education and the New Jersey School Administrators Association. Our DEI leadership team members attended the first session in December. I also spoke with Dr. Jarvis, Co-Director of NJDEE about our RFP and he will share it with his colleagues who may be interested in applying. The deadline to submit a proposal is January 21, 2022. Dr. Miller has also sent a letter to members of the 6 DEI sub-groups to share the presentation and to let them know the status of our plan. We hope these group members will continue to participate. If anyone is no longer able to join us, please encourage others to do so.

Mr. Wacha thanked Dr. Furnari for keeping schools open and our students safe during this time.

Mrs. Drappi asked for an update on the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) RFP.

**10. Presentations - None**

**11. Committee Reports -**

- Athletics - Mrs. Priscoe provided an update of athletics events and games along with the busing challenges. Field Trips are in discussion for February. No one signed up for Winter Cheer.
- Community Relations - Mr. Day provided an update on the Superintendent search process. The Board will be meeting with HYA on 1/20/22 to move forward with the next steps in the process. Update on Friday Folder and online presence with updates to our website. Mr. Wacha asked Dr. Miller to provide additional details about the Tabletop Game club at HBW. Dr. Mauriello shared health and wellness resources with the upcoming workshop for parents on Jan 26, 2022 at 7 PM, in the VHS auditorium.

**12. Public Comments on Agenda Action Items to be Approved - none**

**13. Discussion Items**

Mrs. Freschi raised for discussion the structure of the board consent agenda format.

Mr. Wacha mentioned various board policies that are outdated and will need revision from the Board.

Mrs. Drappi agreed that the Committee Reports should come before the public comments and suggested that the Ed Committee should look into updating the policy.

**14. Roll Call Vote on Resolutions**

**15. Public Comments**

**Adam Bell - 23 Hamilton Rd** - Supports the DEI work and the RFP process by the Board is doing because we need to prepare our students for life outside Verona. Also are there plans for Covid testing at school?

**Leonard Luciano - Essex County Commissioner** - Congratulated Mr. Wacha and Mrs. Priscoe on their election to the Board of Education seats.

**Mike Dupree - 47 Cypress Ave.** - Congratulated Mr. Wacha and Mrs. Priscoe on the election win and commitment to Verona. Requested future change of schedule to be shared with additional details and keep the community informed.

Dr. Furnari offered to respond to Mr. Dupree directly offline.

**Genelle Gutierrez - 8 Morningside Rd.** - shared support for DEI and the RFP process shared in the Superintendent report. This is something that our students need.

**Gina Signorelli - 26 Valleyview Rd** - raised concern for students with anxiety and mental health issues of the negative impact of changing the school day structure. What will be the plan going forward?

**George Kozachuk - 100 Morningside Rd.** - raised concern about the DEI Committee and their decision making for Verona. Requested to know who will be the superintendent candidate before the Board makes the hiring decision.

**Joe Vallone - 10 Windemere Rd** - raised concerns of the negative impact on students because of Covid restrictions.

**Joe Haggerty - 44 Morningside Rd.** - shared support to keep sports and recreation going during this time since it's so important to our students' development.

**Kelly Costa - 47 Derwent Ave** - Congratulated Mrs. Priscoe. Advocated to keep schools open and keep students in for lunch, in a safe manner.

**Nancy Ziebert - 40 Birdseye Glen** - Congratulated Mrs. Priscoe and Mr. Wacha. Expressed concern about the trauma that students have of the memories of remote learning. Requested to keep students in school all day.

**Gabrielle Zebrowski - 1 Valhalla Way** - Congratulated Mrs. Priscoe and Mr. Wacha. Asked on behalf of her son to remove detentions for not keeping his mask above his nose.

**Mohammad Ramadon - Haledon Councilmember** - Congratulated Mr. Wacha and Mrs. Priscoe.

**Motion by:** Mr. Day

**Seconded by:** Mrs. Priscoe

**Be it RESOLVED the approval of Resolutions #1 - 17.**

Mrs. Freschi   X                        Mr. Day                        X  

Mrs. Drappi   X                        Mrs. Priscoe   X  

Mr. Wacha   Abstain on 1,4,5,14-18  

**VERONA PUBLIC SCHOOLS – BOARD OF EDUCATION**  
**RESOLUTIONS**  
**REORGANIZATION MEETING**  
**January 4, 2022**

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      December 7, 2021

**BOARD RENEWAL RESOLUTIONS**

**#2      RESOLVED** that the Verona Board of Education approve the establishment of the following Board of Education Committees. Appointments to the Committees will be made by the Board President:

- **Finance:** Jim Day/Christopher Wacha
- **Facilities/B&G:** Sara Drappi/Jim Day
- **Education/Special Education:** Christopher Wacha/Sara Drappi
- **Community Resources:** Pamela Priscoe/Lisa Freschi
- **Athletics:** Lisa Freschi/Pamela Priscoe

**PERSONNEL**

#3 **RESOLVED** that the Board approve the following pending pre-employment paperwork:

**3.1 New Hires**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Salary</b>	<b>Committee</b>	<b>Term of Employment on or about</b>
<b>Angela Perry-Folk</b>	FNB	Paraprofessional	\$17,832.75	Education	Jan. 3 - Jun. 30, 2022
<b>Angela Perry-Folk</b>	FNB	Sub Teacher	\$100/per diem	Education	SY 21-22
<b>Nicole Folk</b>	LAN	Paraprofessional	\$17,832.72	Education	Jan. 10 - Jun. 30, 2022
<b>Regina Gray</b>	District	Sub Teacher	\$100/per diem	Education	SY 21-22
<b>Holly Montick</b>	District	Sub Teacher	\$100/per diem	Education	SY 21-22
<b>Tiffany Connarazzi</b>	District	Sub Teacher	\$100/per diem	Education	SY 21-22

**3.2 Resignation**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Reason</b>	<b>Effective on or About</b>
<b>Maria Palacio</b>	HBW	PT Custodian	Resignation	Dec. 23, 2021
<b>Emma Franks</b>	FNB	Resource Teacher	Resignation	Feb. 23, 2022

**3.3 Leave of Absence**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Reason</b>	<b>Begin Date</b>	<b>Estimated Return Date on or about</b>
<b>#100998</b>	Extension Medical Leave of Absence	Oct. 26, 2021	Mar. 6, 2022

**3.4 Staff Changes**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Current Location/ Position/Salary</b>	<b>New Location/ Position/Salary</b>	<b>Effective Date on or about</b>
<b>Gina Ballinger</b>	VHS/12 Month Admin. Asst./ Step 15/ \$66,133	HBW/12 Month Admin. Asst./ Step 15/\$66,133	Feb. 1, 2022
<b>Miques Valle</b>	VHS/Head Custodian Step 9/ \$52,272/ Head Custodian Stipend \$13,480/ VHS Custodian Stipend \$937/ Custodian Coordinator Stipend \$11,319	FNB/Head Custodian/ Step 9/ \$52,272/ Head Custodian Stipend \$5,112/ Custodian Coordinator Stipend \$11,319	Jan. 5, 2022
<b>Emerida Radek</b>	Board Office/10 Month Receptionist/Clerk/ \$41,511.96 Degree Stipend \$1,104	Board Office/12 Month Central Office Admin. Asst./ \$51,308 Degree Stipend \$1,132	Jan. 5, 2022
<b>William Neal</b>	VHS Night Custodian/ Step 7/\$49,272/ VHS stipend \$937/ Night Differential/\$2,993	FOR/Head Custodian/ Step 7/\$49,272/Head Custodian Stipend \$4,592	Jan. 5, 2022
<b>Craig Leotta</b>	FOR/Head Custodian/ Step 7/\$49,272/ Head Custodian Stipend \$4,592	VHS/Head Custodian/ Step 7/\$49,272/ Head Custodian Stipend \$13,480/ VHS Custodian Stipend/\$937	Jan. 5, 2022

**EDUCATION**

**#4 RESOLVED** that the Board approve the Superintendent's presentation of HIB first reading report as follows:

<b>1st Readings</b>
VHS225817
HWO225422
FBS225488
HWO226060
HWO225778

- #5 **RESOLVED** that the Board approve the Superintendent’s presentation of HIB second reading report as follows:

<b>2nd Readings</b>
VHS225134
VHS225076
HBO225049
HBO224884
HBO224875
HBC224676
FBS224899
HWO225335

- #6 **RESOLVED** that the Board approve the attached District Statistical Report for the month of November 2021.

- #7 **RESOLVED** that the Board approved the following:

**7.1 Student Observer/Teacher**

<b>Name</b>	<b>School</b>	<b>School/Teacher/ Grade</b>	<b>Duration</b>	<b>Assignment</b>
Tara Barrow	Cald. Univ.	BRK/Cirigliano/Grade 1	Jan. 18 - May 6, 2022 175 hrs.	Student Observer
Stephanie Verdi	Cald. Univ.	LAN/Banta/Grade 2	Jan. 18 - May 6, 2022	Student Teacher
Emily Kincaid	Cald. Univ.	FNB/Amora/4th Grade	Jan. 5 - May 6, 2022 175 hrs.	Student Observer
Bridget Butler	Fairleigh Dickinson Univ.	VHS/Russell/Math	Jan. 5 - Jan. 21, 2022 60 hrs.	Student Observer
Anthony Cherici	Montclair State	FNB/Dr. Lanzo	Jan. 3 - Apr. 24, 2022 300 hrs.	Admin. Intern

- #8 **RESOLVED** that the Board approve the following:

**8.1 Recommendation for Textbook Adoption**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Course</b>	<b>Grade</b>
Champion Red and Blue Level	District	ESL	K-12
Frames on Fluency (Set 1-4 & Set 5-8)	District	ESL	K-12

**SPECIAL EDUCATION**

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

**9.1 Student Home Instruction**

<b>Student #</b>	<b>School</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Hrs./Week/Duration</b>	<b>Beginning on or about</b>
#240882	VHS	9	10 hrs./4-6 wks.	Dec. 21, 2021

**CO-CURRICULAR**

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

**10.1 Co-Curricular**

<b>Advisor</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Club Name</b>	<b>Stipend</b>	<b>Term of Employment</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Elissa Melespina	VHS	Yoga	Volunteer	SY 21-22	
Julia Zambrano	HBW	Maker Club	\$2,000.00	SY 21-22	
Bridget Sullivan	HBW	Maker Club	\$2,000.00	SY 21-22	
Julianne Curro	HBW	SAFE Club	\$401.33	SY 21-22	
Danielle Kelly	HBW	SAFE Club	\$401.33	SY 21-22	
Paul Moschella	HBW	SAFE Club	\$401.33	SY 21-22	
Amy Heckel	HBW	Science	\$602.00	SY 21-22	
Bridget Sullivan	HBW	Science	\$602.00	SY 21-22	
Sandra Freire	HBW	Spanish	\$1,332.00	SY 21-22	
Christopher Haines	HBW	Tabletop Game Design	\$1,204.00	SY 21-22	
Angela Salisbury	VHS	Student Council	\$1,749.50	SY 21-22	RESCIND
Christine Sepcie	VHS	Student Council	\$874.75	SY 21-22	
Angela Salisbury	VHS	Yearbook Asst.	\$2,098.00	SY 21-22	RESCIND
Ashley Enste	VHS	Yearbook Asst.	\$1,049.00	SY 21-22	

**FINANCE**

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

<u>Amount</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Check Register Date</u>
\$920,926.85	Vendor Checks	December 23, 2021

#12 **RESOLVED** that the Board approve a \$500 donation to the Verona High School Toy Drive from Mr. Goor of Commercial Furniture Transport.

#13 **RESOLVED** that the Board approve the attached contract with Caldwell University for the 2022 Verona High School and H. B. Whitehorne Graduations at a cost of \$3,000.00 weather permitting.

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

October 2021

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

October 2021

#16 **RESOLVED** that the Board approve the attached list of individual transfers of line items in the 2021-2022 budget for:

October 2021

#17 **RESOLVED** that the Board approve the 2020-2021 ESEA carryovers to the 2021-2022 project year as follows:

<u>Carryover</u>		<u>Updated</u>	
Title IA	\$ 9,059	Title IA	\$106,698
Title IIA	\$38,581	Title IIA	\$ 74,221
Title IVA	\$11,473	Title IVA	\$ 24,854

#13 **Public comments**

**CONFIDENTIAL SESSION IF NECESSARY**

**RESOLUTION TO ADJOURN**

**#18 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. Priscoe

**Second by:**  Mrs. Drappi

**All in Favor:**  Aye

**All Opposed:**  None

**This meeting is adjourned at (TIME)  8:16  P.M.**

**VERONA PUBLIC SCHOOLS – BOARD OF EDUCATION**  
**ADDENDUM RESOLUTIONS**  
**January 4, 2022**

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

**Motion by:**  Mrs. Priscoe

**Seconded by:**  Mrs. Drappi

**Be it RESOLVED the approval of Addenda Resolutions #1 - 4 .**

Mrs. Freschi  X                       Mr. Day  X

Mrs. Drappi  X                       Mr. Wacha  Abstain

Mrs. Priscoe  X

**PERSONNEL**

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

**1.1 New Hires**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Salary</b>	<b>Committee</b>	<b>Term of Employment on or about</b>	<b>Notes</b>
<b>Sally Goodgold</b>	BRK/FNB	LOA Art Teacher	\$240/per diem	Education	Nov. 29, 2021 - Jan. 14, 2022	RESCIND
<b>Sally Goodgold</b>	BRK/FNB	LOA Art Teacher	\$240/per diem	Education	Nov. 29, 2021 - Mar. 4, 2022	APPROVE
<b>Taylor Barrett</b>	FNB	Long Term Sub Admin. Assist.	\$150/per diem	Education	Nov. 29, 2021 - Jan. 21, 2022	RESCIND
<b>Taylor Barrett</b>	FNB	Long Term Sub Admin. Assist.	\$230/per diem	Education	Nov. 29, 2021 - Mar. 11, 2022	APPROVE
<b>Kaitlyn Heun</b>	HBW	Sub Teacher	\$100/per diem	Education	SY 21-22	

**1.2 Leave of Absence**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Reason</b>	<b>Begin Date</b>	<b>Estimated Return Date on or about</b>
<b>#103295</b>	Medical Leave of Absence	Jan. 10, 2022	Feb. 1, 2022
<b>#103301</b>	Extension of Medical Leave of Absence	Dec. 8, 2021	Jan. 24, 2022

**1.3 Leave of Absence Without Pay**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Reason</b>	<b>Begin Date</b>	<b>Estimated Return Date on or about</b>
<b>#100238</b>	Extension of Leave of Absence Without Pay	Jan. 3, 2022	Sept. 1, 2022

**EDUCATION**

#2 **RESOLVED** that the Board approved the second reading of the following policies/regulations:

- P 1648.14 Safety Plan for Healthcare Settings in School Buildings - COVID-19 (M) (New)
- P&R 5751 Sexual Harassment of Students

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

**3.1 Internship**

<b>Name</b>	<b>School</b>	<b>School/Teacher/ Grade</b>	<b>Duration</b>	<b>Assignment</b>
Nicole Stuto	Cald. Univ.	Board Office/Dr. Furnari/ Superintendent	Jan. 18 - May 15, 2022.	Superintendent Internship

**3.2 VFEE Grant**

<b>Grant Recipients</b>	<b>School</b>	<b>Name of Grant</b>	<b>Grant #</b>	<b>Amount of Grant</b>
Elissa Freda	Forest Ave. and Laning Ave.	Novel Effect	2022-01	\$2,300.00

**CO-CURRICULAR/ATHLETICS**

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

**4.1 Clubs**

<b>Advisor</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Club Name</b>	<b>Stipend</b>	<b>Term of Employment</b>
Jacqueline Miskinis	HBW	School Store	\$893.00	SY 21-22

**4.2 Coach**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Stipend</b>	<b>Committee</b>	<b>Employment Date/s</b>
Ed Puchalski	VHS	JV Basketball sub coach	\$75/per practice \$150/per game	Athletics	Jan. 3 - 13, 2022