

COLCHESTER SCHOOL DISTRICT

Board of Education Meeting
Colchester High School Media Center

Tuesday, December 17, 2019
7:00 p.m.

MINUTES (General Session)

The Colchester Board of Education held a regular board meeting on Tuesday, December 17, 2019, at the Colchester High School Media Center. Those in attendance were Board Chair Mike Rogers; Directors: Craig Kieny, Lindsey Cox, Lincoln White and Curt Taylor; Student Board Member Mitch Gadapee; Superintendent Amy Minor; Director of Curriculum Gwendolyn Carmolli, Director of Student Support Services Carrie Lutz; Principals Chris Antonicci, Carolyn Millham, and Jordan Burke. There were no audience members.

I. Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance

Board Chair Mike Rogers called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m. and led in the Pledge of Allegiance.

II. Citizen Participation

None.

III. Report from Building Principals

Informational

All three elementary school principals were in attendance, they shared some holiday themed events taking place in their buildings and also spoke to a successful professional development session during the early release day at the beginning of the month. The faculty from each building came together to have rare face-to-face time which allowed them to collaborate and develop curriculum continuity. Porters Point School Principal Carolyn Millham shared some of the Hour of Code activities that took place in her building during Computer Science Education Week. In addition to learning the technological basics of coding, students focused on the meaning of coding and how they can use it to communicate. Teachers created challenging tasks to push their thinking into analysis and evaluation. Malletts Bay School Principal Jordan Burke shared an exciting new partnership that they developed with the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department. Third grade students visited the department's fish hatchery in Grand Isle which connects to their study of life and ecosystems in science.

IV. Vermont Science Assessment Presentation

Informational

Director of Curriculum and Instruction, Gwen Carmolli, provided the board with information on the Vermont Science Assessment (VTSA). This assessment is administered to students in grades 5, 8, and 11 and is required by the Every Student Succeeds Act. The VTSA replaces the New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP). Students in Colchester first took the VTSA two years ago. Director Carmolli showed several examples of questions from the assessment. The questions are scenario based and require students to develop claims and provide rationale and reasoning for their claims. Director Carmolli then provided score data from both the district and the state. The board reviewed the achievement gaps for students with disabilities and students experiencing poverty. They asked what can be done to close the achievement gap. Both Director Caromlli and

PPS Principal Carolyn Millham pointed to removing barriers to accelerate learning and adjusting instruction to meet the needs of each learner. They emphasized that this is why the district puts a priority on really getting to know each student.

Director Taylor expressed concerned that the statewide average of students meeting the assessment standard is below 50%. Director Carmolli reminded the board that the assessment is very rigorous and requires a lot of reading, math, complex thinking and engineering design. Director Cox pointed out that this assessment is a snapshot of one moment in time and is just a single measurement of learning. She said that this type of assessment is not traditionally how science is experienced in the real world, which is generally collaborative and hands-on. She also pointed out that there are no incentives for students to take this type of assessment. Student Board Member Mitch Gadapee echoed Director Cox's statements. He said sometimes the format can be difficult to understand because it is not administrated like other assessments they take in school. He also agreed with the lack of incentives, explaining that since the test is given in the spring, students are often more focused on work for their CHS courses.

Director Kieny asked if the state factors in anything besides the test when they assess the district as a whole. Director Carmolli advised that they do not, however, science is only attributed to 2% of the district's overall score. Literacy and math are weighted much more heavily. Director Kieny questioned if a single assessment is the best way to illustrate how the district is performing. Superintendent Amy Minor shared that there are several groups around the state that have expressed concern with the assessment structure and there are conversations happening at the State Board of Education level. She stated that the assessment scores are an important tool, as long as they are used as one element in a comprehensive approach.

V. FY'21 Budget Presentation and Discussion

Informational

Superintendent Amy Minor provided the board with another summary of enrollment numbers, class sizes, and projections for next school year. Enrollment is currently strong and steady. She then spent the rest of the presentation elaborating on the district's top priorities for the 2020-21 school year along with the rationale and recommendations for those priorities.

One of the needs is to improve literacy outcomes in the district's early elementary grades. Data shows that 59% of students in grades K-2 are meeting the literacy standard; which equates to 882 students who have been identified as struggling readers. To improve student literacy outcomes, Superintendent Minor recommends adding 2 FTEs for reading teachers, one at UMS and PPS. Many classrooms are at or slightly above the state's recommended size of 20 students which means that group work consists of more students than what best practice recommends. Director Cox asked UMS Principal Chris Antonicci if he would want another classroom teacher to lower class sizes or a reading teacher. He answered that there is physically no room for another classroom. Adding a reading teacher allows that teacher to go into classrooms or pull students out for individualized instruction. Current reading teachers have a high caseload and limited time to work on comprehension. The high caseload also means that only first and second graders receive literacy services. Adding an additional reading teacher in each building would allow kindergarteners to also receive services. Systemically providing literacy interventions early on would help close the achievement gap. Director Cox asked what kind of advanced training a reading teacher has that a classroom teacher may not. Director of Curriculum and Instruction Gwen Carmolli indicated that they have many but mainly, they have specialized training with instructional approaches to meet the individualized need of the learner.

Another priority is to round out the English Learning (EL) faculty by adding .5 FTE to an existing EL teaching position. Over the years, the district has seen increased enrollment and needs of students who are learning English and the department was severely understaffed. In the past two budget cycles the district has added a total of 1 FTE and this final .5 FTE addition would fill out the department to a total of 3.5 FTEs.

Another priority is in the special education department. General and special education enrollment has increased at CMS, which lead to the addition of two general education teachers during the last budget cycle. With the additional students, also comes an increase in student needs and the intensity of those needs. Director of Student Support Services, Carrie Lutz, explained the role of a special educator. With the combination of increased student need and the model of service being focused around collaborative teaching in addition to case management, they are recommending the addition of 1 FTE for a special educator at CMS. This will allow each team at CMS to have an assigned special educator.

The last priority identified was coaching for faculty in grades 6-12. Director of Curriculum Gwen Carmolli outlined the benefits that coaching provides to increase engagement and achievement for all students. She showed data regarding achievement gaps for students with disabilities or experiencing poverty. Currently, the district has two coaches who work primarily with grades K-5 and are paid for by federal funds. The request for next year's voter budget would be an additional coach to add support for grades 6-12.

Superintendent Minor stated that she will have costs of each priority and the overall estimated tax impacts at the next meeting.

VI. Second and Final Reading of Custodial, Joint Custodial and Non-custodial Parental Rights and Responsibilities Policy: F6A **Action**

No changes requested.

Director Cox moved to approve the second and final reading of the Custodial, Joint Custodial and Non-custodial Parental Rights and Responsibilities Policy: F6A, seconded by Director Kieny. The motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

VII. Approval of Personnel Consent Agenda **Action**

The following Personnel Consent Agenda was presented for December 17, 2019.

PERSONNEL CONSENT AGENDA

Board Date: December 17, 2019

REVISED

Licensed Employees (Teacher/Administrator)

Contract Type	First Name	Last Name	Category	Position	FTE/Hours	Building	Agenda Information	Person Replacing	Budgeted	Admin Support

Non-Licensed Employees (Support Staff), *Informational*

Contract Type	First Name	Last Name	Category	Position	FTE/Hours	Building	Agenda Information	Person Replacing	Budgeted	Admin Support
Support Staff	Mirela	Pasic	End of Employment	Intensive Needs Interventionist	35	CMS	Notice of End of Employment		Yes	Yes
Support Staff	Kathryn	Couillard	End of Employment	IT Systems Administrator	40	CHS	Notice of End of Employment		Yes	Yes
Support Staff	Darlene	Lamphier	Transfer	Fixed Asset/Accounting Clerk	24	CO	Notice of Transfer		Yes	Yes
Support Staff	Rebecca	Cote	Transfer	Intensive Needs Interventionist	37	CMS	Notice of Transfer		Yes	Yes

There were no licensed professionals on the Personnel Consent Agenda therefore a motion was not required.

VIII. Approval of Minutes: December 3, 2019

Action

Director Kieny moved to approve the minutes from the general session held on December 3, 2019, seconded by Director Cox. The motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

IX. Board/Administration Communication, Correspondence, Committee Reports Informational

- Superintendent shared a CMS/CHS Viewbook that was created to share with prospective tuition students.
- Superintendent Minor shared an updated about the recent healthcare arbitration decision.
- Director Taylor shared that he recently attended a concert and helped judge a high school debate. Following these experiences, he encouraged community members, especially if they do not have kids in the schools, to attend any type of school event with students. His recent attendance helped him to more fully understand what goes on in the schools and what it is all about.

X. Future Agenda Items

Informational

- Continued Policy Work
- PPS School Report
- FY'21 Budget Discussions
- Science Test Scores
- Early Education Center


XI. Adjournment

Director Cox made a motion to adjourn at 9:02 p.m. seconded by Director Kieny. The motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

Recorder:


Meghan Baule
Recording Secretary

Board Clerk:


Lindsey Cox
Board Clerk