

Colchester School Board

Meeting Agenda and Packet

April 7, 2020

**Colchester School District
Board of Education Meeting
April 7, 2020
7:00 P.M.
Remote Meeting
Citizen Participation Instructions Listed Below**

AGENDA

- | | |
|---|----------------------|
| I. Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance | |
| II. Citizen Participation* | |
| III. COVID-19 School Closure Status Update | Informational |
| IV. First Reading of Fraud Policy: E9 | Action |
| V. Approval of Personnel Consent Agenda | Action |
| VI. Approval of General Meeting Minutes: March 17, 2020 | Action |
| VII. Board/Administration Communication, Correspondence, Committee Reports | Information |
| VIII. Future Agenda Items | Information |
| IX. Executive Session to Discuss Contract Negotiations | Action |
| X. Adjournment | |

COVID-19 Meeting Participation

On March 30, 2020 Governor Scott signed H.681 into law, making temporary changes to Vermont's Open Meeting Law. These changes will remain in effect during the declared state of emergency due to COVID-19.

As part of those changes, meetings of the Colchester School Board will be held remotely with no designated meeting location. LCATV will provide coverage through live stream which can be accessed here: <https://lcatv.org/live-stream-3>. Citizens may participate in the meeting by emailing questions or statements to meghan.baule@colchestersd.org or by calling (802) 264-5988 while the meeting is in session.

COLCHESTER SCHOOL DISTRICT

POLICY: FRAUD

DATE ADOPTED: Draft

POLICY STATEMENT

The purpose of this policy is to establish certain principles and expectations for the school district in order to prevent fraud, investigate and provide consequences for engaging in any manner of fraud, and to heighten awareness of possible fraud. All board members, employees, vendors, contractors, agents, consultants, volunteers and any other parties who are involved in the district's financial transactions shall act with integrity and diligence in duties involving the district's financial resources. The district will not tolerate fraud or the concealment of fraud. These activities could result in criminal prosecution and disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. Acts of fraud, waste, and abuse will not be tolerated and will be reported to appropriate government and criminal authorities whenever there is a reasonable basis to believe, following investigation, that such conduct has occurred or is occurring.

I. DEFINITIONS

Fraud is defined as a deception deliberately practiced to secure unfair or unlawful gain. The term includes such acts as bribery, deception, embezzlement, extortion, false representation, forgery, the concealment of material facts, the misappropriation of money or assets and collusion or conspiracy to commit any or all of the above acts.

Fraud and financial impropriety shall include but not be limited to:

- A.** Forgery or unauthorized alteration of any document or account belonging to the district.
- B.** Forgery or unauthorized alteration of a check, bank draft, or any other financial document.
- C.** Misappropriation of funds, securities, supplies, or other district assets, including employee time.
- D.** Impropriety in the handling of money or reporting of district financial transactions.
- E.** Profiteering as a result of insider knowledge of district information or activities.
- F.** Unauthorized disclosure of confidential or proprietary information to outside parties.
- G.** Unauthorized disclosure of investment activities engaged in or contemplated by the district.
- H.** Inappropriately destroying, removing, or using records, furniture, fixtures, or equipment.
- I.** Failure to disclose conflicts of interest as required by law or district policy.
- J.** Any other dishonest act regarding the finances of the district.

Date Warned: April 3, 2020
 First Reading: April 7, 2020
 Second Reading:

II. FINANCIAL CONTROLS AND OVERSIGHT

Each employee who supervises or prepares district financial reports or transactions shall set an example of honest and ethical behavior and shall actively monitor his or her area of responsibility for fraud and financial impropriety. The superintendent or designee shall maintain a system of internal controls to deter and monitor for fraud or financial impropriety in the district.

III. FRAUD REPORTING

Any individual who has reasonable cause to believe that the fiscal practices or actions (wrongful conduct) of an employee or school board member violates any local, state, federal law or rule and regulation relating to the financial practices of the district shall make a report using the Fraud Report Form. This form shall be submitted to the superintendent of schools or the school board chair if the complaint is regarding the superintendent or business and operations manager.

IV. CONFIDENTIALITY

Employees involved in the investigation shall be advised to keep information about the investigation confidential. Reports of suspected fraudulent activities shall be investigated in a manner that protects the confidentiality of the parties and avoids unfounded accusations. The district will maintain confidentiality of reports of suspected misconduct and the investigation, to the extent consistent with the conduct of an appropriate investigation and the district's obligations under the Freedom of Information Act. However, absolute confidentiality for reporting witnesses and investigation results cannot be guaranteed. The investigation process, however, may reveal the source of the information, and/or a statement by the individual may be required as part of the evidence. Except as authorized by the superintendent, the reporting witness and others interviewed shall not discuss the allegations or investigation with other district employees or officials, vendors or contractors. Unsubstantiated allegations that are not privileged could harm an innocent individual's reputation and result in potential civil liability.

V. FALSE REPORTING

If an allegation is made in good faith, but is not corroborated by the investigation, no action shall be taken against the person who files the allegation. Suspicious actions that do not constitute fraud must be reported in accordance with district procedures. Individuals who knowingly make a false report of suspected fraud or fraudulent activity shall be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

VI. RETALIATION

The board and all district employees shall not unlawfully retaliate against a person who in good faith reports perceived fraud or financial impropriety. Individuals who, in good faith, report suspected fraudulent activity will not be subject to retaliation as a result of reporting the actual or suspected misconduct. The district shall not tolerate harassment or victimization and shall take action to protect a person who raises a concern in good faith.

VII. INVESTIGATIONS

The superintendent shall have the primary responsibility for investigating all suspected fraud or financial impropriety as defined in this policy. The superintendent may appoint a designated third-party investigator to lead the investigation. The school board may designate the investigation responsibilities if the superintendent or business and operations manager are included in a report of suspected fraud.

An employee shall not attempt to personally conduct investigations and shall not contact the suspected individual in an effort to determine facts or demand restitution. If a preliminary investigation substantiates the occurrence of fraudulent activity, the superintendent or designee shall issue a report to the school board. Upon completion of the investigation, the superintendent shall submit a report of findings to the school board, as appropriate. Final disposition of the matter and any decision to file a criminal complaint or refer the matter to the appropriate law enforcement and/or regulatory agency for independent investigation shall be made in consultation with legal counsel. Results of the investigation shall not be disclosed to or discussed with anyone other than those individuals with a legitimate need to know.

VIII. CORRECTIVE ACTION

If an employee is found to be engaging in or to have been engaged in fraudulent acts, or failed to report fraudulent acts, they shall be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination. Based on the seriousness of the offense, the results may be referred to the appropriate law enforcement and/or regulatory agencies.

**Colchester School District
Fraud Report Form**

Your Name: _____

Address: _____

Email Address: _____ Phone Number: _____

Where did you see the fraud happen?

When did you see the fraud occur (date and time)?

Who was committing an act of fraud? Please list all individuals involved.

Who else witnessed the act of fraud?

Is this the first time you have witnessed the fraud occur? Yes / No

If you answered no above, please describe the other incidents.

Please describe in full detail what you saw.

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for a detailed description of what was observed. The box occupies most of the page below the instruction.

PERSONNEL CONSENT AGENDA

Board Date: April 7, 2020

Licensed Employees (Teacher/Administrator)

Contract Type	First Name	Last Name	Category	Position	FTE/Hours	Building	Agenda Information	Person Replacing	Budgeted	Admin Support
Teacher	Emily	Cooke	New Hire	Speech and Language Pathologist	1.0 FTE	PPS	Notice of Hire	Deborah Kalamasz	Yes	Yes
Teacher	Amber	Fitzgerald	New Hire	Special Education Teacher	1.0 FTE	CMS	Notice of Hire	Marianne Nealy	Yes	Yes
Teacher	Ian	Parker	New Hire	Special Education Teacher	1.0 FTE	CMS	Notice of Hire	New Position	Yes	Yes

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	Jennifer	Berard	New Hire	Behavior Interventionist	35	UMS	Notice of Hire	Jacy Hagy	Yes	Yes

COLCHESTER SCHOOL DISTRICT

Board of Education Meeting
Colchester High School Media Center

Tuesday, March 17, 2020
7:00 p.m.

MINUTES (General Session)

The Colchester Board of Education held a regular board meeting on Tuesday, March 17, 2020, at the Colchester High School Media Center. Those in attendance were Board Chair Mike Rogers; Directors: Craig Kieny, Lindsey Cox, Curt Taylor and Nic Long; Student Board Member Mitch Gadapee attended via phone; Superintendent Amy Minor; Business and Operations Manager George Trieb; Director of Curriculum Gwendolyn Carmolli; and Director of Student Support Services Carrie Lutz. There were no audience members.

I. Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance

Board Chair called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and led in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Superintendent Minor requested to add an action agenda item after item IV to address the recent school closure due to COVID-19.

Director Cox moved to authorize COVID-19 as an additional actionable agenda item in between items 4 and 5 of this agenda, seconded by Director Taylor. The motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

II. Citizen Participation

None.

III. Report from Building Principals

Informational

In response to the recent guidance from the Center of Disease Control regarding the number of people gathering, building principals were asked to not attend. No information was reported.

IV. Hear Nominations for School Board Reorganization and Approval of Newspaper of Record

Action

Nominations were held for school board chair, vice chair, and clerk, as well the official newspaper of record.

Director Cox moved to nominate Michael Rogers as Board Chair, seconded by Director Kieny. The motion passed unanimously, 4-0.

Director Cox moved to nominate Craig Kieny as Vice Chair, seconded by Director Taylor. The motion passed unanimously, 4-0.

Director Taylor moved to nominate Lindsey Cox as Board Clerk, seconded by Director Kieny. The motion passed unanimously, 4-0.

Director Cox moved to approve The Colchester Sun as the official newspaper for the district for legal notices, seconded by Director Kieny. The motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

V. Update on Emergency School Closure due to COVID-19 Action

Superintendent Amy Minor provided the board with an update to the action that the district leadership team as taken in response to the order from the Governor Scott for all schools in Vermont to close amid the COVID-19 pandemic. She reviewed the following components in the district's COVID-19 plan and [Governor Scott's directive](#). She emphasized that this is a rapidly evolving situation and the district's response plan is changing as information is updated from the Vermont Department of Health, The Agency of Education, and Governor Scott. During this time, Governor Scotts directs all schools to remain operational for administrators, teachers, and staff to sustain essential services and to plan and implement continuity of education through remote learning. In his press conferences, the Governor made it very clear that all school employees will continue to get paid during the dismissal period. As a result of the Governor's directive, the board made an official motion to solidify their intention regarding salaries and benefits.

Board Chair Rogers moved to authorize the continuation of salaries and benefits for all CSD employees during the dismissal period, seconded by Director Kieny. The motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

Superintendent Minor provided information regarding the district's plan for meal delivery which is starting on Wednesday. Building principals and classroom teachers are developing maintenance of learning plans for students. Director of Student Support Services, Carrie Lutz is waiting on further guidance from the Vermont Agency of Education regarding the requirements for Special Education during school closure. Beginning on Monday, March 23, buildings will be closed to the community. All building use and after school activities have been canceled. The spring sports season has been postponed by the Vermont Principal's Association until further notice. The district will continue to place updates on our website on the COVID-19 page.

Director Cox urged that as the administrators finalize the work plan for employees moving forward that they use telecommunications whenever possible. While the board understands that work needs to continue, especially the planning for the 2020-2021 school year, Director Cox emphasized that people should stay at home whenever possible and for employees to be flexible. Director Kieny echoed Director Cox's statement. Student Board Member Mitch Gadapee expressed his great faith in building leadership and stated students he has spoken with have felt incredibly supported and cared for. He applauded the efforts of the district leadership.

VI. Approval for Purchase of Chromebooks for CMS and Laptops for CHS Action

Business Manager and Operations Manager George Trieb requested board approval to purchase Chromebooks for CMS and Laptops for CHS. This purchase is a budgeted expenditure that occurs annually as part of the district's annual replacement plan. The district will be purchasing the Chromebooks off the State of Vermont contract.

Director Cox moved to approve the authorize the business and operations manager to purchase the IT equipment as requested, seconded by Director Taylor. The motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

VII. Approval of Recommendation for Teacher Contract Renewals 2020-2021 **Action**

Superintendent Amy Minor provided the board with a memo outlining the contracts that she recommends to renew for the FY'21 school year.

Directory Cox moved to approve the recommended teacher contracts for the 2020-2021 school year, seconded by Director Taylor. The motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

VIII. Approval of School Calendar for 2020-2021 **Action**

Superintendent Amy Minor outlined the draft calendar for next school year. The calendar is based on the contract agreement which indicates there will be 176 student days, 8 in-service days, 1 teacher prep day, and 2 family conference days for a total of 187 days. Also included on the calendar were four early release days. Superintendent Minor stated the early release days continue to be a success for professional development. She also noted that Colchester Parks and Recreation agreed to continue to offer childcare for K-8 students.

The board agreed to the four early release days. Director Cox asked to consider moving the December early release day from the 2nd to the 9th to reduce the disruption for families since they will have just returned from November break.

Director Kieny moved to approve the four early release days in the 2020-2021 calendar as presented, seconded by Director Cox. The motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

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

The following agenda was presented to the school board.

PERSONNEL CONSENT AGENDA**Board Date: March 17, 2020****Licensed Employees (Teacher/Administrator)**

Contract Type	First Name	Last Name	Category	Position	FTE/Hours	Building	Agenda Information	Person Replacing	Budgeted	Admin Support
Teacher	Amy	Contesti	New Hire	Alternative Education Teacher	1.0 FTE	CMS	Notice of Hire	One Year Only, open Position (Perry Nunn)	Yes	Yes
Teacher	Elizabeth	Clapp	New Hire	EL Teacher	.50 FTE	CMS	Notice of Hire	New Position	Yes	Yes
Teacher	Carolyn	Robinson	FTE Decrease	Spanish Teacher	.8 FTE	CHS	Request Permanent Reduction in FTE			Yes

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	Alison	O'Brien	End of Employment	Paraeducator - ELL	32.5 hr	CMS	Notice of End of Employment			Yes
Support Staff	Hilarie	Jones	End of Employment	Paraeducator - Sped	32.5 hr	PPS	Notice of End of Employment			Yes
Support Staff	Jeremie	Paquette	End of Employment	Technology Specialist 1	40	CHS	End Employment effective May 31, 2020			Yes
Support Staff	Jacy	Hagy	End of Employment	Behavior Interventionist	35	UMS	Notice of End of Employment			Yes

Director Taylor moved to approve the Personnel Consent Agenda as provided, seconded by Director Cox. The motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

X. Approval of General Meeting Minutes: March 3, 2020 Action

Director Cox moved to approve the minutes from the meeting held on March 3, 2020, seconded by Director Taylor. The motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

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

Cox request for additional guidance regarding open meeting law given the COVID19 environment. Board members are currently receiving a lot of information via email and she would like guidance as to how they can respond to the emails without violating the law (1 V.S.A. § 312).

XII. Future Agenda Items Informational

- Lead Testing Results
- Rachel Cohen, Rowland Fellow
- CSD Safety Planning
- MBS/CHS Bathroom Renovation Project
- Policies: Fraud, Truancy & Attendance
- Future Facilities Needs Presentation

XIII. Adjournment

Director Cox made a motion to adjourn at 8:29 p.m. seconded by Director Kieny. The motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

Recorder:

Board Clerk:

Meghan Baule
Recording Secretary

Lindsey Cox
Board Clerk