

COLCHESTER SCHOOL DISTRICT

Board of Education Meeting
Colchester High School Media Center

Tuesday, December 19, 2023
7:00 p.m.

MINUTES (General Session)

The Colchester Board of Education held a regular board meeting on Tuesday, December 19, 2023, in the Colchester High School Media Center. Board members in attendance were Board Chair Lindsey Cox, Board Directors Nic Longo, Ben Yousey-Hindes, Felix Anderson, and Student Representative Phoebe Richardson. District administrators and employees in attendance included Superintendent Amy Minor, Business and Operations Manager George Trieb, Director of Curriculum Gwen Carmolli, Director of Student Support Services Carrie Lutz, and Principal Carolyn Millham.

I. Call to Order

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

II. Citizen Participation

None.

III. Porters Point School Report

Information

Principal Carolyn Millham provided an overview of enrollment, staffing, academic and behavior data, and the culture and learning environments at Porters Point School. She shared how the school is working towards several goals that will improve outcomes for all students and reduce gaps for students in disaggregated groups. She also outlined some of the facility needs for the school which include updating the playground so it is better suited for K-2, and adding more parking and adult bathrooms. She also noted the general need for space, adding that one-on-one work with students often happens in hallways. The board discussed trends noted during the presentation and asked some follow-up questions.

IV. FY'25 Budget Discussion

Information

Superintendent Amy Minor began the presentation with the enrollment forecast from McKibben Demographics which expects enrollment to remain steady through the year 2030. She noted that classrooms throughout the district are currently at or just below the recommended class size outlined by the Vermont Education Quality Standards (EQS). She reviewed the comparison charts from the past two fiscal years regarding spending per equalized pupil by district. In both years, Colchester spent less per pupil than any other district in Chittenden County. She acknowledged that it has been very important to the board to remain fiscally conservative by finding ways to provide high-quality education in a way that honors money provided by taxpayers.

Superintendent Minor summarized the six school report presentations provided at school board meetings over the past two months. Strengths included the commitment and dedication of employees, strong student enrollment, class sizes that are close to the EQS, academic data close to or above the state average in many areas, and added support for behavior and mental health. She

went on to list areas that the district is actively working to improve including closing the achievement gap for all students, expanding multilingual and new American services to mirror the increase in the number of students who are arriving in the country and beginning to learn English, adjusting special education caseloads and mitigating the challenges such as waitlists that students experience when accessing individualized programming for behavioral, mental health, and medical needs, and increasing the opportunities for students in grades 6-12 to engage outside of the classroom, especially after the school day ends.

Superintendent Minor gave a repeat overview of changes to the State's education funding formula and the impact of Act 127, which was designed to improve student equity by adjusting the school funding formula which subsequently influences the weighted pupil counts in districts. She then shared the FY'25 educational tax components that are known to date, noting that the district has not been given the Common Level of Appraisal (CLA) by the State, which is a key component in the funding formula that generates the estimated local tax rate. Business and Manager George Trieb showed how the FY'25 numbers compare to last year but pointed out that the comparison is less meaningful than in previous years because this is the first year of the new funding formula.

Balancing the expectation that the new formula will have an increased impact on taxpayers, Superintendent Minor stated that ultimately, the top-level priority outlined by both the district and school level is to maintain the existing levels of professional staffing. However, Superintendent Minor recognized that there is still a significant need to increase the layers of support and opportunities for students. Board Chair Lindsey Cox asked for the leadership to come to the next board meeting with a list of additions to address those needs and what impact the additions would have on the estimated tax rate with the new tax caps. Board Chair Cox highlighted the importance of the board hearing what those needs are, even if they can not meet them in this upcoming budget cycle. The board asked some clarifying questions regarding the new funding formula and tax caps.

V. Second and Final Reading of Student Health Policy: F8 **Action**

There were no requested edits to the policy.

Director Longo moved to approve the second and final reading of the Student Health Policy: F8. The motion passed unanimously.

VI. Approval of Consent Agenda **Action**

The following consent agenda was reviewed by the board.

Director Yousey-Hindes moved to approve the consent agenda as provided. The motion passed unanimously.

VII. Approval of Meeting Minutes Action
• December 5, 2023

Director Anderson moved to approve the minutes from the meetings held on December 5, 2023. The motion passed unanimously.

VIII. Board/Administration Communication, Correspondence, Committee Reports Information

- Upcoming engagement sessions for long-term facilities.
- Superintendent Minor recognized Director of Communications Meghan Baule for being named a Front-Runner by the National School Public Relations Association. Each year, four Front-Runners are identified from across the country as emerging leaders who are doing outstanding work for their schools.

IX. Future Agenda Items Information

- Continuation of the Policy Review Cycle
- FY'25 budget discussion

X. Adjournment

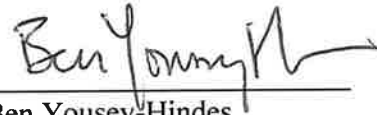
Director Yousey-Hindes moved to adjourn at 8:49 p.m. The motion passed unanimously.

Recorder:



Meghan Baule
Recording Secretary

Board Clerk:



Ben Yousey-Hindes
Board Clerk