**Colchester School District**

Board of Education Meeting — Tuesday, October 20, 2026
Colchester High School Library — 7:00 p.m.

**Meeting Minutes**

The Colchester Board of Education held a regular board meeting on Tuesday, October 20, 2026, in the Colchester High School Library Media Center. Board Directors in attendance were Lindsey Cox, Nic Longo, Ben Yousey-Hindes, Laurie Kigonya and Student Representative Jack LaChance. Board Member Ben Yousey-Hindes attended virtually. Administrators and employees in attendance were Superintendent Amy Minor, Chief Financial and Operations Officer George Trieb, Director of Curriculum and Instruction Gwen Carmolli, and Director of Student Support Services Carrie Lutz. There were two audience members present.

## 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. Citizens Participation*

None.

## III. Hear VT Comprehensive Assessment Program (VTCAP) Presentation — Informational

Director of Curriculum and Instruction Gwen Carmolli presented an informational overview of the Vermont Comprehensive Assessment Program (VTCAP) results, highlighting encouraging gains across the district. Overall scores increased by 2 percentage points in English Language Arts (ELA), 6 percentage points in Math, and 1 percentage point in Science, with achievements outperforming statewide averages and showing positive growth across every equity cohort. Crucially, the district achieved these higher results while simultaneously shrinking achievement gaps in nearly all content areas and sub-groups without lowering academic standards. In addition to academic performance, Carmolli shared insights from the DESSA social-emotional learning assessment, which uses teacher evaluations or student self-assessments depending on grade level, noting strong growth in self-awareness and social awareness, alongside areas for future development in self-management, optimism, and decision-making. The district attributed these successes to early literacy initiatives, instructional coaching, evidence-based instruction, data teams, and robust systems of support. Looking ahead, the district aims to focus on ELA writing and literary reading, math expressions and equations, and scientific modeling, grounding its next steps in three core pillars: instruction, systems of support, and learning engagement.

In response to audience member Doug Bishop's question regarding how the VTCAP compares to tests in other states, Ms. Carmolli explained that state assessment systems nationwide range from light, surface-level tests to deep comprehension evaluations based on individual state education requirements. She noted that Vermont's testing model leans toward the deeper side, placing a greater emphasis on measuring depth of knowledge and application skills rather than basic recall.

When asked by Board Chair Cox to identify the biggest surprise from the latest assessment data, Ms. Carmolli highlighted the remarkable "clean sweep" in student progress across the district. She shared that the most exciting outcome was seeing simultaneous achievement gains across every content area

alongside a consistent narrowing of achievement gaps in every equity cohort, reflecting widespread growth while maintaining elevated academic standards.

**IV. Hear Quarterly Financial Report** **Informational**

Chief Financial and Operations Officer George Trieb gave the first quarterly financial update for FY'27. Revenue and expenditures are tracking mostly as expected, and if the current trend continues, he expects a surplus of $23,032. Overall, the district's total commitments to date are very much in line with last year's spending.

**V. Hear FY'28 Budget Timeline** **Informational**

Superintendent Amy Minor gave an overview of the timeline for developing the FY'28 budget. They emphasized that this timeline serves as a blueprint for initial planning and community engagement. They acknowledged ongoing state-level developments that could affect local decisions. The board's final decision to warn the budget should occur in January, allowing sufficient time to prepare, print, and mail informational materials to residents ahead of Town Meeting Day.

**VI. Approval of the CEA Support Staff Unit Contract Agreement** **Action**

Board Director Ben Yousey-Hindes shared that the Board and the Support Staff bargaining unit of the Colchester Education Association reached an agreement that reflects a shared effort to maintain a stable, qualified support staff workforce while remaining mindful of the financial pressures facing Colchester taxpayers. Focusing on recruitment and retention in a highly competitive labor market, the agreement includes annual wage increases of 6.5% over each of the next three years. The agreement also includes three paid days during the February school recess and updates language throughout the agreement to align it with other employee/union agreements in the district.

***Director Kigonya moved to approve the collective bargaining agreement with the Colchester Educational Association Support Staff Unit for 2026-2029 as outlined. Director Longo recused himself due to a conflict of interest. The motion passed, 3-0.***

**VII. First Reading of School Board Policies** **Action**

**F8: Firearms**
**F9: Weapons**
**H11: Facility Usage and Rental**

The board reviewed these three policies after the neighboring Hazeletts property instituted a controlled employee hunting program on its land. Although hunting has always been prohibited on school district property, administrators recommended adding explicit language to all three policies to formally reinforce this ban. No changes were requested or made to the initial drafts.

***Director Longo moved to approve second and final readings of policies: F8: Firearms, F9: Weapons, and F11: Facility Usage and Rental. The motion passed unanimously.***

**VIII. Approval of Consent Agenda** **Action**

The board reviewed the following items on the consent agenda.

| CONSENT AGENDA | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Board Meeting Date 10/20/2026 REVISED** | | | | | | | | | | |
| ***Licensed Employees (Teacher/Administrator)*** | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Contract Type** | **First Name** | **Last Name** | **Category** | **Position** | **Hours/Wk** | **Building** | **Agenda Information** | **Person Replacing** | **Budgeted** | **Admin Support** |
| Teacher | Gunnar | Johnson | New Hire | Elementary Teacher LTS 11/2/2026 - 2/17/2027 | 1.0 FTE | MBS | Request to Hire | Ryan Kluk | | Yes |
| Teacher | Forrest | DesLauriers | New Hire | Humanities Teacher LTS 11/16/2026 - 2/15/2027 | 1.0 FTE | CHS | Request to Hire | Martin Burnod | | Yes |
| ***Non-Licensed Employees (Support Staff), Board Approval Required*** | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Contract Type** | **First Name** | **Last Name** | **Category** | **Position** | **Hours/Wk** | **Building** | **Agenda Information** | **Person Replacing** | **Budgeted** | **Admin Support** |
| Support Staff | Katherine | Coakley | Leave Request | Paraeducator | 32.5 | PPS | Request for Leave of Absence 10/19 - 11/6 | | | |
| ***Non-Licensed Employees (Support Staff), Informational*** | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Contract Type** | **First Name** | **Last Name** | **Category** | **Position** | **Hours/Wk** | **Building** | **Agenda Information** | **Person Replacing** | **Budgeted** | **Admin Support** |
| Support Staff | Kayla | Gilman | Resignation | Behavior Interventionist | 35.0 | MBS | Notice of Resignation | | | |
| Support Staff | Taylor | Terry | New Hire | Afternoon Bus Aid | 10.0 | MBS | Notice of Hire | | Yes | |
| Support Staff | Deborah | Gay | Resignation | Paraeducator | 20.0 | CMS | Notice of Resignation | | | |
| Co-Curricular | Sergey | Shpaner | New Hire | Debate Coach | Coach | CHS | Notice of Hire | Oliver Kranichfeld | Yes | Yes |
| | | | | | | | | | | |

The board deferred the motion to discuss a personnel matter in executive session at the end of the meeting.

**IX. Approval of Meeting Minutes** **Action**

***Director Yousey-Hindes moved to approve the October 6 and 12, 2026 meeting minutes. The motion passed unanimously.***

**X. Board/Administration Communication, Correspondence, Committee Reports** **Informational**

- PPS Kindergarten Teacher Allison Donnelly and MBS 4th Grade Teacher Mark Winchester have been named as CSD's Outstanding Educators. They will be formally celebrated at UVM next month with other named educators from across the state.
- Construction Update:
  - The oldest wing at PPS is completely demolished to make way for a full-sized bus loop and parking lot. They are hauling away debris and continuing to renovate the remaining section of the school.
  - Student School Board Representative Jack LaChance has been attending the weekly owner's meetings and gave the construction update for UMS. The basement walls and floor are complete and the steel is being installed.

**XI. Future Agenda Items** **Informational**

- FY'28 Budget Timeline
- Policy and Board Work Plan
- School Reports
- CSD Food Service Report

**XII. Proposed Executive Session to Discuss a Personnel Matter** **Action**

***Director Longo moved to enter executive session at 7:48 p.m. to discuss a personnel matter. The motion passed unanimously.***

***Director Kigonya moved to exit executive session at 8:21 p.m. The motion passed unanimously.***

***Director Kigonya moved to approve the consent agenda as provided. The motion passed unanimously.***

**XIII. Adjournment**

***Director Longo moved to adjourn at 8:23 p.m. The motion passed unanimously.***

Recorder:

Meghan Baule
Recording Secretary

Board Clerk:

Ben Yousey-Hindes
Board Clerk