

COLCHESTER SCHOOL DISTRICT

Board of Education Meeting
Colchester High School Library

Tuesday, September 21, 2021
7:00 p.m.

MINUTES (General Session)

The Colchester Board of Education held a regular board meeting on Tuesday, September 21, 2021, in the Colchester High School Library. Board members in attendance were Board Chair Craig Kieny, Directors Lindsey Cox, Laurie Kigonya, Ben Yousey-Hindes, and Student Board Member Gloria Kigonya. District administrators in attendance included Superintendent Amy Minor, Business and Operations Manager George Trieb, Director of Student Support Services Carrie Lutz, and Director of Curriculum Gwendolyn Carmolli. CSD Elementary Teachers Anne Rayner-Cyr and Stephanie Miller, Elementary Special Education Teacher Katie McIntyre, and High School English Learner Teacher Susan Rosato were also in attendance.

I. Call to Order & Pledge of Allegiance

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

II. Citizen Participation

An email submitted to the board from resident Genna Barnaby was read aloud. She outlined seven items. They included a request to revise a portion of the approved meeting minutes from August 17, a suggestion for the frequency of mask breaks in schools, noted comments made by Dr. Coleman at the September 7 board meeting, questions regarding the structure of the district's COVID Response Team, questions about vaccine exemptions and objections if a vaccine is mandated in the future, request for a new policy regarding public access to documents submitted to the board, and confirmation of the timeline to remove the Black Live Matter flag.

III. Summer School Presentation

Information

Director of Student Support Services, Carrie Lutz, provided a recap of the expanded summer school program provided to students in July. CSD Elementary Teachers Anne Rayner-Cyr and Stephanie Miller, Elementary Special Education Teacher Katie McIntyre, and High School English Learner Teacher Susan Rosato presented on the various curriculum, skill-based improvements, and social-emotional learning opportunities that took place. The half-day program operated in each of the three elementary schools for students identified as needing extra support in grades K-5. Each school had a site coordinator and a classroom at each grade level with a maximum of 20 students per class. Transportation and meals were provided. Additionally, Mrs. Rosato ran a one-week summer program for English Learner students that focused on social-emotional learning and connections. All of the teachers shared positive feedback from parents and students who participated in the program.

Director Laurie Kigonya asked what the summer school program looked like before this year. Ms. Lutz stated the program had been steadily growing over the past six years, however, was limited since it was funded exclusively through special education. The additional funding from the state and federal level allowed the district to make some expansions to the program earlier than anticipated.

Director Yousey-Hindes asked how the district collects data to track outcomes. Ms. Lutz stated they are looking at some of the academic data they collected, and they have a plan to collect more data next year. The teachers shared anecdotal feedback confirming advancement in literacy. They also noted widespread improvement in behavior that has continued into the regular school year.

Director Cox asked about future connections and partnerships in the community. The teachers expressed that they would like to mix classes again to have older students mentoring younger ones. Classes did not mix as a COVID-19 mitigation measure. In the future, they look forward to partnering with neighboring businesses and farms, as well as inviting in some guest speakers.

Board Chair Kieny asked about attendance and participation. They stated there was a little room to add a few more students in some classes. Ms. Lutz stated that some families declined the offer for their student to participate because they needed full day care and the summer school program was only half day. Superintendent Amy Minor stated they have been talking with Colchester Parks and Recreation to hopefully offer a joint program that will allow full day care so more families can take advantage of the summer school program next year.

Student Board member Gloria Kigonya asked if the lack of grading impacted the student's commitment or willingness to learn. The teachers confirmed that there were no tests or assessments and said for many, that encouraged them to take more risks in their learning. The program focused on having fun, getting to know each other, and moving forward in their skills.

Superintendent Minor acknowledged the team of teachers, support staff, and administrators who stepped up to create and provide the program, particularly after a difficult and unusual school year.

IV. Year End Financial Report

Information

Business and Operations Manager, George Trieb, provided the board with the year-end financial report. The district ended the year with a surplus of \$2,255,141. He explained that the primary reasons for the surplus were unexpected revenue resulting from additional tuition students, earned interest due to a reduction in rates by People's United Bank, and higher than anticipated special education reimbursement.

Mr. Trieb also addressed several anomalies on the expenditure side including some money that the district was unable to spend because of supply chain issues. He noted that the district paid substantially more in unemployment than any previous year. That was an unusual situation where the state asked the district to pay unemployment benefits for individuals who lost secondary jobs, even though they were still employed by the district. Expenditures for compensation were under budget due to unfilled positions throughout the year. Superintendent Amy Minor stated that last year was a hard year and the district is continuing to struggle with staffing. Many of the positions that were unfilled required the district to contract outside providers to ensure required services and needs were being met.

Mr. Trieb noted that a surplus of this size is not typical. The last two years have been very unusual, and he does not recommend making future decisions based on this unusual financial report. Board Chair Kieny confirmed that just because the district was unable to spend the budgeted money, does not mean that it does not need it. As an example, Mr. Trieb explained that roof at the middle school was scheduled to have substantial repairs completed but the vendor could not get the materials and the project was subsequently delayed.

Mr. Trieb stated the surplus will be returned to taxpayers; it cannot be used for another purpose without permission.

V. Third and Final Reading of Policy E10: Donations **Action**

The board approved this policy with no additional edits.

Director Yousey-Hindes moved to approve the third and final reading of policy E10: Donations. The motion passed unanimously.

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

The following Personnel Consent Agenda was reviewed by the board. This district has several positions that are still open and Superintendent Minor encouraged community members looking for employment to visit www.csdvt.org/jobs. Director Yousey-Hindes suggested the district explore a partnership with local colleges and universities to fill open positions with college-aged students. It would provide interested students with real work experience and alleviate some of the low staffing impacts at the district level.

CONSENT AGENDA

Board Meeting Date: September 21, 2021

REVISED

Licensed Employees (Teacher/Administrator)

Contract Type	First Name	Last Name	Category	Position	FTE/Hours	Building	Agenda Information	Person Replacing	Budgeted	Admin Support
Teacher	Heidi	Kelly	Leave of Absence	Teacher	1	UMS	Request Leave of Absence 6/3/22 - 6/10/22 (anticipated last day of school)			
Teacher	Melissa	Fontaine	New Hire	Floating Nurse	0.84	DW	Request to Hire			
Teacher	Alison	Palmer	New Hire	Reading Teacher	0.69	MBS	Request to Hire			

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	Kathleen	O'Keefe	Resignation	Para	32.5	PPS	Notice of Resignation			
Support Staff	Margaret	Brown	New Hire	Para	32.5	UMS	Notice of Hire			
Support Staff	Alexandria	St. Peter	Termination	Para	32.5	UMS	Notice of Termination			

Director Cox moved to approve the Consent Agenda for September 21, 2021. The motion passed unanimously.

VII. Approval of Meeting Minutes: September 7, 2021 Action

Director L. Kigonya moved to approve the minutes from the meeting held on September 7, 2021. The motion passed unanimously.

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

- Superintendent Amy Minor shared some updates regarding COVID-19. She reviewed the primary mitigation measures in place to keep the learning community healthy. One of those layered safety measures is regular surveillance testing for both employees and students. The program was piloted yesterday with just employees. The pilot highlighted successes and challenges. They are working on solutions for staffing and a workable flow to allow testing students without significantly disrupting the normal day-to-day operation of the building. She reminded the community that the next vaccination clinic is Wednesday, September 29 at CMS. The district asked employees to voluntarily attest their vaccinations status. Of the over 410 employees who responded, 98.5% are vaccinated. There have been 17 COVID-19 cases since the school year started, The majority of cases were students.

IX. Future Agenda Items Informational

- Food Service Presentation
- Preschool Presentation
- Facilities Information
- FY'23 Budget Timeline
- BLM Flag Discussion
- Out-of-District Placement Presentation

X. Executive Session to Discuss Contract Negotiations and Potential Real Estate Opportunity Action

Director Yousey-Hindes moved to enter executive session at 8:24 p.m. to discuss contract negotiations and a potential real estate opportunity. The motion passed unanimously.

Director L. Kigonya moved to exit executive session at 9:36 p.m. The motion passed unanimously.

XI. Adjournment

Director Cox moved to adjourn at 9:36 p.m. The motion passed unanimously.

Recorder:


Meghan Baule
Recording Secretary

Board Clerk:


Nic Longo
Board Clerk