

COLCHESTER SCHOOL DISTRICT

Board of Education Meeting
Colchester High School Library

Tuesday, December 7, 2021
7:00 p.m.

MINUTES (General Session)

The Colchester Board of Education held a regular board meeting on Tuesday, December 7, 2021, in the Colchester High School Library. Board members in attendance were Board Chair Craig Kieny, Directors Lindsey Cox, Nic Longo, Laurie Kigonya, and Ben Yousey-Hindes. District administrators in attendance included 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 & 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

Colchester resident, Genna Barnaby, provided a video statement asking for a response to questions she posed at a previous meeting. She also requested the number of staff members employed, an update on the social justice work regarding the BLM flag, and asked the school board to end the requirement of mask-wearing in schools.

III. First Reading of the Comprehensive Student Transportation Policy: F12a Action

This policy was adopted in 2003 and was reviewed as part of the normal policy revision cycle. Superintendent Amy Minor anticipates bringing some recommended changes at a future reading of the policy after the district gathers more data and finishes assessing how the policy is currently working for schools and families. Business and Operations Manager George Trieb also gave the board an update on the transportation contract which is set to expire next year.

Director Yousey-Hindes moved to approve the first reading of the Comprehensive Student Transportation Policy: F12a. The motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

IV. Out-of-District Placement Presentation Information

Director of Student Support Services Carrie Lutz gave an overview of how students are supported in CSD schools and at what point a decision to place a student in an alternative program is determined. She explained who makes the placement decision and what variables they consider, as well as the alternative programs used by the district and the services they provide. Out of district alternative programs are a significant cost to the district, however, some expenses get reimbursed. She explained the funding sources for special education and how it may change in the future. The board asked some general questions about funding and enrollment trends. For several years now, special education directors in Chittenden County have recognized an increased need for alternative programs. There are waitlists and often a student is determined to need an alternative placement but there are no available spots.

Student Representative Gloria Kigonya stated she has witnessed some of her friends struggle with their mental health during the pandemic and asked Ms. Lutz if she predicts a rise in the number of students needing services. Ms. Lutz stated that they do predict an increased need for services and the district is working to be proactive at the school level by identifying specific student needs for social-emotional learning and addressing them by building skills through activities and curriculum. There are also support teams, social workers, and social-emotional learning committees embedded at each school to help students engage. She summarized that while the district is expecting a rise, they are hoping that the interventions and supports they are providing now will help curb the need.

V. FY'23 Budget Discussion: State Factors and School Requests **Information**

After collaborating with building principals and administrators at Central Office, Superintendent Amy Minor presented three overarching recommendations for the FY'23 budget. First and foremost, it was recommended to maintain the current level of staffing and programming throughout the district. Second, it was recommended to continue investing in early literacy competency by adding 1.0 FTE for a reading teacher at MBS. Lastly, a growing number of students have been identified as needing speech-language services, so it was recommended to add 1.0 FTE for a preschool and elementary speech-language pathologist. Superintendent Minor also went over long-term staffing needs that did not make the immediate list and noted that the board should be aware of what may be needed in the future. The board discussed class size as well as space and facility constraints.

Business and Operations Manager, George Trieb, presented information regarding the education tax components for the upcoming budget. He addressed a letter sent to districts from the State Tax Commissioner which he noted as highly unusual. The letter indicated that there is a surplus in the state's education fund, and it would appear they will use it to lower education property taxes. However, he noted that the final amount would be dependent on other variables such as the Common Level of Appraisal and may not ultimately result in a substantial reduction in taxes. Those determining components will become available to districts in the next few weeks. Mr. Trieb also shared the first draft of the baseline budget which shows a 3.72% increase over the current year; this increase is mostly driven by salaries and benefits.

At the next meeting, Central Office administrators will go over ESSER funds and provide more information and rationale on why the reading teacher and the speech-language pathologist are needed.

VI. Approval of Consent Agenda **Action**

The following Consent Agenda was reviewed by the board.

CONSENT AGENDA

Board Meeting Date: December 7, 2021

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), Board Approval Required										
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
Co-Curricular	Sam	Pollock	New Hire	Head Alpine Ski Coach		CHS	Notice of Hire	Kevin Ose	Yes	Yes
Support Staff	Heather	Jenkins	New Hire	Paraeducator	32.5	PPS	Notice of Hire	Emily Ryan	Yes	Yes
Support Staff	Charlton	Whitney	New Hire	Test to Stay Assistant	15	DW	Notice of Hire	New Position	Yes	Yes
Support Staff	Courtney	Dennison	New Hire	Behavioral Interventionist	35	MBS	Notice of Hire	Open Position	Yes	Yes
Support Staff	Haylee	Patch	New Hire	Paraeducator	22.5	UMS	Notice of Hire	Open Position	Yes	Yes
Co-Curricular	Emily	Kopacz	New Hire	Head Nordic Ski Coach		CMS	Notice of Hire	Jess Frank	Yes	Yes
Support Staff	Kevin	Kane	Resignation	Lead Custodian	40	MBS	Notice of Resignation		Yes	Yes

Director L. Kigonya moved to approve the Consent Agenda for December 7, 2021. The motion passed unanimously.

VII. Approval of Meeting Minutes: November 16, 2021 Action

Two typos were corrected.

Director Longo moved to approve the amended minutes from the meeting held on November 16, 2021. The motion passed unanimously.

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

- Superintendent Minor thanked the employees helping with the Test to Stay program. Overall, the program is going well, and families are very appreciative of the effort to keep healthy students in school during quarantine. She provided an update for the CAP/Central Office facility transition. She shared that CHS Principal Heather Baron will be leaving the district at the end of the school year. She shared her appreciation for her work and dedication to the school. The position is now open for applicants and she will continue to provide the community with an update on the search process.

IX. Future Agenda Items Informational

- FY'23 Budget
- Citizens Participation Discussion
- Facilities Information
- Policy Work

X. Executive Session to Discuss Confidential/Identifying Student Information, Contract Negotiations, and a Potential Real Estate Opportunity. Action

Director Cox moved to enter executive session at 8:34 p.m. to discuss confidential student matters, contract negotiations, and a potential real estate opportunity. The motion passed unanimously.

Director Yousey-Hindes moved to exit executive session at 9:43 p.m. The motion passed unanimously.

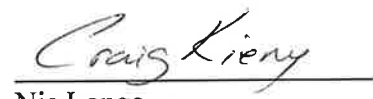
XI. Adjournment

Director L. Kigonya moved to adjourn at 9:44 p.m. The motion passed unanimously.

Recorder:


Meghan Baule
Recording Secretary

Board Clerk:


Nie Longo
Board Clerk *Chair*