

**COLCHESTER SCHOOL DISTRICT**

Board of Education Meeting  
Colchester High School Media Center

Tuesday, January 2, 2024  
7:00 p.m.

**MINUTES  
(General Session)**

The Colchester Board of Education held a regular board meeting on Tuesday, January 2, 2024, 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, Laurie Kigonya 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 Social Emotional Learning Coordinator Jayme Gaudet.

**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. FY'25 Budget Discussion**

**Information**

*Because of information received just before the meeting that would impact the discussion, Director Longo made a motion to move this agenda item to later in the meeting, after item VI. The motion passed unanimously.*

**IV. Approval of Colchester School District Announced Tuition Rates**

**Action**

Each year, districts are required by law to announce their anticipated tuition for students attending Colchester Schools from other districts that do not have a high school or middle school. The majority of tuition students attending CSD are from the Grand Isle Supervisory Union and the town of Georgia.

*Director Anderson moved to approve the announced tuition rates for FY'2025 at \$16,100 for elementary grades (K-6) and \$21,200 for secondary grades (7-12). The motion passed unanimously.*

**V. First Reading of Restrictive Behavioral Intervention Policy: F35**

**Action**

This policy was last reviewed in 2011. The updated draft version includes requirements from the Vermont State Board of Education Rule 4500, which outlines the use of restraint and seclusion in schools and suggests changing the title of the policy to "Use of Restraint and Seclusion". The Vermont School Board Association recommends that districts have this policy in place with the suggested title. The board also reviewed the accompanying set of procedures and heard from Jayme Gaudet the district's social emotional learning coordinator who works directly with behavior

interventionists in the district. She explained that staff are trained in de-escalation tactics and skills and restraint or seclusion are used only as last resort options. She also provided an overview of how they track and report the use of restraint and seclusion.

***Director Yousey-Hindes moved to approve the first reading of the Restrictive Behavioral Intervention Policy: F35. The motion passed unanimously.***

**VI. First Reading of Child Find Policy: F32**

**Action**

This policy was last updated in 2017. The purpose of the Child Find process is to locate and identify students who have a disability and to determine eligibility for support and protection through the Special Education or Section 504 rules. The Child Find process is required by law for all school districts and because of that, the Vermont School Board Association does not have a Child Find policy in their model policy manual. A majority of Vermont districts have the Child Find process outlined in a procedural document, not as a policy.

In March of 2022, the Colchester School Board approved the Special Education Policy: G2. This policy states that the district will use the guidelines developed by the Vermont Agency of Education in the Vermont Special Education Procedures and Practices Manual. This manual clearly outlines the requirement and procedures for Child Find compliance. District administrators acknowledged the redundancy and recommended eliminating this policy from the CSD policy manual.

***Director Kigonya moved to approve the first reading of the Child Find Policy: F32. The motion passed unanimously.***

**VII. FY '25 Budget Discussion (moved from item III)**

**Information**

Superintendent Amy Minor and Business and Operations Manager George Trieb shared some of the state's education funding formula variables that have been announced since the last meeting. Notice of the town's Common Level of Appraisal (CLA) was received as the meeting was beginning. With that information, they provided three examples of FY'25 budgets to explain how the new funding formula, known as Act 127, and explained at previous meetings, would impact the estimated tax rate and per pupil spending. The various scenarios revealed how the components and the new funding formula kept the estimated education tax increase at the same percentage, regardless of how much money was added or removed from the baseline budget. Mr. Trieb noted that all of the examples provided are for taxpayers who make above the household income threshold for the property tax credit, which in Colchester is about 30% of taxpayers. The other 70% of taxpayers receive a tax credit and pay taxes based on their income, not their property value. He stated they will still see a significant increase in taxes, but still will pay at a discounted rate.

The board discussed how the new funding formula and the CLA worked together to create a significant tax impact regardless of changes to the actual school budget and in light of Act 127 offering a 5% tax cap.

Superintendent Minor stressed that balancing the impact of the new funding formula on taxpayers and the responsibility of the school district to meet the needs of its students is very difficult this year. Administrators are still focused on academic and social emotional initiatives to support closing achievement gaps for disadvantaged or historically marginalized students. They are also preparing

for an increase of new Americans from the refugee resettlement program and keeping an eye on how that will impact the availability of services.

The board agreed that they would like an additional meeting to discuss the new components of the FY'25 budget and scheduled a special meeting for Tuesday, January 9<sup>th</sup>.

**VIII. Approval of Consent Agenda Action**

There were no items on the Consent Agenda and no motion made.

**IX. Approval of Meeting Minutes Action**

- December 19, 2023 (special)
- December 19, 2023 (general)

*Director Anderson moved to approve the minutes from the meetings held on December 19, 2023. The motion passed unanimously.*

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

- Adding budget meeting on January 9
- Preparation for the LCATV Informational Budget Video

**XI. Future Agenda Items Information**

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

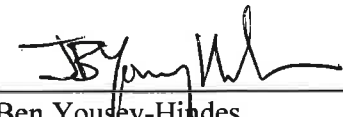
**XII. Adjournment**

*Director Kigonya moved to adjourn at 8:12 p.m. The motion passed unanimously.*

Recorder:

  
Meghan Baule  
Recording Secretary

Board Clerk:

  
Ben Yousey-Hindes  
Board Clerk