

COLCHESTER SCHOOL DISTRICT

Board of Education Meeting
Colchester High School Media Center

Tuesday, May 21, 2024
7:00 pm

MINUTES (General Session)

The Colchester Board of Education held a regular board meeting on Tuesday, May 21, 2024, in the Colchester High School Media Center. Board members in attendance were Board Chair Lindsey Cox, Directors Ben Yousey-Hindes, Laurie Kigonya, Jennifer Fath, and Student Representative Phoebe Richardson. District administrators and employees in attendance included Superintendent Amy Minor, Director of Curriculum Gwen Carmolli, Director of Student Support Services Carrie Lutz, Director of Instructional Support Services Jean Shea, and CHS Principal Andrew Conforti. There was one community member in the audience.

I. Call to Order

Board Chair Lindsey Cox called the meeting to order at 7:04 pm and led in the Pledge of Allegiance.

II. Citizen Participation

Andrew Champagne from Essex Junction addressed the board regarding bullying between students and a lack of social skills, particularly at the middle school where his niece attends. He criticized the district's policies and procedures regarding bullying and emphasized that the schools should teach students about dating and relationships. He compared the lack of skills in these areas with the school district's operating budget and expressed dismay that the district wasn't doing an adequate job given the size of the budget.

III. Hear Presentation: Community Eligibility Provision (CEP)

Information

Director of Food and Nutrition Services Steve Davis gave the board an overview of the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP). The district became eligible for the CEP a few months ago through a combination of the increased percentage of students experiencing poverty, currently at 31%, and the state lowering the qualification threshold to 25%. Being a CEP district will allow the district to use more federal funds than state funds, helping reduce property taxes. The state now directly certifies students through other statewide systems, such as Medicaid, absolving families from needing to provide the school with a secondary application. The direct certification makes the district's data more accurate and removes the barrier and stigma for families to apply with the school. The district will no longer need to process Free and Reduced Meal Applications, reducing the administrative burden.

IV. First Reading of Wellness Policy: F34

Action

CHS Principal Andrew Conforti and MBS Assistant Principal Brooke King gave an overview of the committee's work reviewing the district's current Wellness Policy. The committee included employees, families, and students. Based on that feedback, they suggested a handful of edits, which the board accepted.

Director Yousey-Hindes moved to approve the first reading of the Wellness Policy: F34. The motion passed unanimously.

V. Hear Presentation: DEI Year-End Overview

Information

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Coordinator Jamilah Vogel shared highlights from the current school year. She noted the adoption of a districtwide equity policy, increased professional development and onboarding for support staff employees like kitchen staff and bus drivers, and work to strengthen the approaches available to provide support that meets the needs of families for things like attendance, language translation, and food insecurity. She shared examples of some new and existing inclusive school celebrations, how schools are continuing to amplify student voice, including opportunities for peer-to-peer connection across schools and grade levels, and how the district has been examining the available texts in the classroom to infuse more high-quality offerings that increase positive and affirming representation. The board asked some follow-up questions regarding employee professional development, leadership opportunities for students, interfacing with community members, and efforts to stay current on the changing landscape.

VI. Hear Presentation: Special Education Needs

Information

Leaders in the Support Services Department reviewed the services that the district is providing for students who struggle with traditional school. Throughout the presentation, the team identified the needs and offered a potential solution for the high school level. Director of Student Support Services Carrie Lutz and Director of Instruction Support Services Jean Shea presented data showing the increase of students on IEPs, 504s, placed in an out-of-district program, or otherwise receiving professional services. They highlighted some of the external and internal behaviors that lead special education students to not be successful in the general education environment and highlighted the barriers to obtaining support for them. Special Educators from CHS, Dave Sharkey and Dana Visser, expanded on the current continuum of support at the different schools in the district from elementary to high school. They shared that the primary barrier is the lack of a reliable and consistent alternative system for students in the Chittenden County area that can meet their needs.

They then presented their vision for developing a system specifically at CHS that would expand options given the significant regional shortage of out-of-district placements for students. They suggested the creation of a self-contained classroom in the CHS building that would be designed to meet the needs of students who are coming to school every day but are exhibiting internalizing behaviors such as avoidance, withdrawal, or an inability to engage and sustain attention. They shared that a growing population of students are not passing, making progress, or earning credits in their general education classes despite regular attendance and differentiation, accommodation, modification, and additional academic support. The class would have a social-emotional learning and project-based learning focus with lots of opportunities for self-regulation. It would be run by a special educator with support from general education teachers, behavior specialists, and social workers. To implement the program for the upcoming school year, the team requested the addition of a special educator at CHS. Ms. Lutz provided an overview of the expenditures associated with the current model of sending students to out-of-district placements, including enrollment and transportation costs. She recommended funding this proposed additional position through a combination of Medicaid and IDEA-B grant funding. The board discussed the proposed program with the presenting team and asked clarifying questions before offering their initial support, recognizing the significant need and the existing funding.

VII. Second and Final Reading of Tiered System of Supports and Educational Support Team: G7 Action

One edit was suggested at the first reading. That edit was made, and no other changes were requested or made.

Director Kigonya moved to approve the second and final reading of the Tiered System of Supports and Educational Support Team: G7.

VIII. Second and Final Reading of Educational Records: F6 Action

No edits were requested at the first reading.

Director Kigonya moved to approve the second and final reading of Educational Records: F6. The motion passed unanimously.

IX. Approval of Consent Agenda Action

The board reviewed the following consent agenda.

CONSENT AGENDA

Board Meeting Date: May 21, 2024

REVISED

Licensed Employees (Teacher/Administrator)

Contract Type	First Name	Last Name	Category	Position	FTE/Hours	Building	Agenda Information	Person Replacing	Budgeted	Admin Support
Teacher	Amanda	Bonanni	New Hire	Grade 5 Teacher	1.0	MBS	Request to hire	Nichole Hamblet	Yes	Yes
Teacher	Erin	McLaughlin	New Hire	Multilingual Learners Newcomer Teacher	1.0	DW	Request to hire	New Position	Yes	Yes
Teacher	Kathryn	Hughes	New Hire	Special Education Teacher	1.0	MBS	Request to hire	Megan Tighe	Yes	Yes
Teacher	Kelly	Youngberg	New Hire	Elementary Teacher	1.0	PPS	Request to hire	Margaret Hershman	Yes	Yes
Teacher	Jessica	Settles	New Hire	7/8 ELA Teacher	1.0	CMS	Request to hire	Katie Joyce	Yes	Yes
Teacher	Zach	Ziemer	New Hire	1 yr only Science Teacher	1.0	CHS	Request to hire	Kara Lenorovitz	Yes	Yes
Teacher	Kelly	Barrino	New Hire	Special Education Teacher	1.0	CHS	Transfer- From CAP to CHS	Danielle Dubro	Yes	Yes
Teacher	Leslie	Drew	Resignation	Special Education Teacher	1.0	CMS	Request to end employment 06/08/2024			Yes
Teacher	Carrie	Dixon	Resignation	Spanish Teacher	0.8	CHS	Request to end employment 6/30/2024			
Teacher	Kim	Wilson	New Hire	Health Teacher	1.0	CMS	Request to hire	Elizabeth Tansey	Yes	Yes
Teacher	Kaitlin	Scherber	New Hire	Special Education Teacher	1.0	CMS	Request to hire	Leslie Drew	Yes	Yes
Teacher	William	Crowley	New Hire	Special Education Teacher	1.0	CMS	Request to hire	Amber Fitzgerald	Yes	Yes
Teacher	Jocelyn	Fletcher Scheuch	New Hire	6-12 Literacy Instructional Coach	1.0	CMS/CHS	Request to hire	Tara Sharkey	Yes	Yes

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
Individual	Karissa	Shaw	New Hire	Behavior Specialist	1.0		Request to hire	Riley Maarko		

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	Tina	Al-Moody	Leave of Absence	ML Paraeducator	32.5	PPS	Request for LOA (2024-2025 school year)			
Support Staff	Jessica	Phelan	Resignation	HR Manager	30.0	CO	Notice of resignation			
Support Staff	Meghan	Mead	Transfer	Administrative Assistant	1.0	CMS	Notice of transfer (was Admin. Asst. I SPED @ CMS)	Amanda Pariseau		
Support Staff	Sophia	Meimaris	Resignation	Paraeducator	10.0	MBS	Notice of resignation @ end of school year			
Support Staff	Jeffrey	Pickup	Resignation	Paraeducator	32.5	UMS	Notice of resignation @ end of school year			
support Staff	Garielle	Brooks	New Hire	Administrative Assistant II - Athletics & Activities	1.0	CHS	Notice of Hire	Erica Lovejoy		

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

X. Approval of Meeting Minutes: May 7, 2024 **Action**

Director Kigonya moved to approve the May 7, 2024 meeting minutes. The motion passed unanimously.

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

- The district is continuing to work on the long-term facilities plan. Two committee groups have worked with Black River Design to visualize potential renovation plans.

XII. Future Agenda Items **Information**

- Assurances
- Social Emotional Learning Presentation
- Continuation of the Policy Review Cycle

XIII. Adjournment

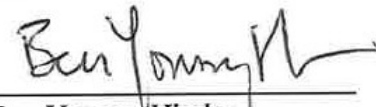
Director Kigonya moved to adjourn at 9:08 pm. The motion passed unanimously.

Recorder:



Meghan Baule
Recording Secretary

Board Clerk:



Ben Yousey-Hindes
Board Clerk