

Colchester School Board

Meeting Agenda and Packet

November 5, 2024

**Colchester School District
Board of Education Meeting Agenda
November 5, 2024 - 7:00 P.M.
Colchester High School Library**

Agenda

- I. Call to Order
- II. Citizen Participation*
- III. First Reading of Student Freedom of Expression in School-sponsored Media Policy: F36 Action
- IV. First Reading of Reporting Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect Policy: F10 Action
- V. Approval of Consent Agenda Action
- VI. Approval of Meeting Minutes Action
 - October 12, 2024
 - October 15, 2024
 - October 29, 2024
- VII. Board/Administration Communication, Correspondence, Committee Reports Information
- VIII. Future Agenda Items Information
- IX. Executive Session to Discuss Contract Negotiations Action
- X. Adjournment

***Meeting Participation and Viewing Options**

Meetings are open to the public unless warned otherwise. Colchester citizens have an opportunity to speak or comment on any items listed on the agenda. For topics not listed on the agenda, public comment can be made during the Citizen's Participation agenda item. Please review the Public Comment Rules listed at www.csdvt.org/schoolboard prior to the meeting. If not attending in person, citizens may also participate in the meeting by emailing a prerecorded message to schoolboard@colchesters.org with "Citizens Participation" listed in the subject line. It must be received by noon on the day of the meeting, include your full name and phone number, and follow the Public Comment Rules. LCATV will provide live stream coverage via: www.lcatv.org/live-stream-3.

COLCHESTER SCHOOL DISTRICT

POLICY: STUDENT FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION IN SCHOOL-SPONSORED MEDIA

DATE ADOPTED: October 2, 2018

POLICY STATEMENT

Freedom of expression is a fundamental principle in a democratic society that provides all citizens, including students, with the right to engage in a robust discussion of ideas. It is the policy of the Colchester School District to ensure that students enjoy free speech and free press protections related to school-sponsored media, and to encourage students to become educated, informed, and responsible members of society.

I. DEFINITIONS

For purposes of this policy, administrative rules, and procedures developed pursuant to this policy:

- A. Media advisor** means a person employed, appointed, or designated by the district to provide instruction relating to school-sponsored media.
- B. School-sponsored media** means any material prepared, written, published, or broadcast as part of a school-supported program or activity by a student journalist that is distributed or generally made available as part of a school-supported program or activity to an audience beyond the classroom in which the material is produced.
- C. Student journalist** means a student enrolled in the district who gathers, compiles, writes, edits, photographs, records or prepares information for dissemination in school-sponsored media.
- D. Student supervisor** means a student who is responsible for editing school-sponsored media.

II. IMPLEMENTATION

Subject only to the conditions A-F below, a student journalist may exercise freedom of speech and freedom of the press in school-sponsored media. Student supervisors of school-sponsored media are responsible for determining the content of their respective media.

Date Warned: September 15, 2018
 First Reading: September 18, 2018
 Second Reading: October 2, 2018

Legal Reference: 16 V.S.A. § 1623

This policy does not authorize or protect content of school-sponsored media that:

- A. Is libelous or slanderous;
- B. Constitutes an unwarranted invasion of privacy;
- C. May be defined as obscene, gratuitously profane, threatening or intimidating;
- D. May be defined as harassment, hazing, or bullying under Title 16 § 11;
- E. Violates federal or state law; or
- F. Creates the imminent danger of materially or substantially disrupting the ability of the school to perform its educational mission.

District Staff may restrain the distribution of content in school-sponsored media that can be demonstrated to violate any of the conditions A-F above.

Content in school-sponsored media will not be restrained solely because it involves political or controversial subject matter, or is critical of the school or its administration.

A student journalist may not be disciplined for acting in accordance with this policy.

A media advisor may not be disciplined for taking reasonable and appropriate action to protect a student journalist in conduct protected by this policy or for refusing to infringe on conduct that is protected by this policy, by the first amendment to the U.S. Constitution, or by the Vermont Constitution.

CODE C11
Required^[1]

STUDENT FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION IN SCHOOL-SPONSORED MEDIA

ADOPTION NOTES – This text box and the disclaimer should be removed prior to adoption.

(a) General – As with all model policies, VSBA recommends that each board carefully review this model prior to adoption to assure suitability with the district’s own specific circumstances, internal coding system, current policies, and organizational structures. Highlighted language or blank, underscored spaces indicate areas which Boards must change/complete to reflect local personnel titles, policy references, duty assignments etc.

(b) Legal references are listed for convenience, but do not need to be included in the policy as adopted.

(c) Any model policies listed under “cross-reference” indicate a reference to another related VSBA model policy. A district should check its own current policies to assure internal consistency.

(d) Withdrawn and earlier versions of revised policies should be maintained separately as part of the permanent records of the District.

Policy

Freedom of expression is a fundamental principle in a democratic society that provides all citizens, including students, with the right to engage in a robust discussion of ideas. It is the policy of the _____ School District (District) to ensure that students enjoy free speech and free press protections related to school-sponsored media, and to encourage students to become educated, informed, and responsible members of society.

No expression made by students in school-sponsored media shall be deemed to be an expression of school policy.

Definitions

1. **Media advisor** means a person employed, appointed, or designated by the district/supervisory union to provide instruction relating to school-sponsored media.
2. **School-sponsored media** means any material prepared, written, published, or broadcast as part of a school-supported program or activity by a student journalist that is distributed or generally made available as part of a school-supported program or activity to an audience beyond the classroom in which the material is produced.
3. **Student journalist** means a student enrolled in the district/supervisory union who gathers, compiles, writes, edits, photographs, records or prepares information for dissemination in school-sponsored media.
4. **Student supervisor** means a student who is responsible for editing school-sponsored media.

Implementation

Subject only to the conditions 1-6 below, a student journalist may exercise freedom of speech and freedom of the press in school-sponsored media. Student supervisors of school-sponsored media are responsible for determining the content of their respective media.

This policy does not authorize or protect content of school-sponsored media that:

1. Is libelous or slanderous;
2. Constitutes an unwarranted invasion of privacy;
3. May be defined as obscene, gratuitously profane, threatening or intimidating;
4. May be defined as harassment, hazing, or bullying under Title 16 § 11;
5. Violates federal or state law; or
6. Creates the imminent danger of materially or substantially disrupting the ability of the school to perform its educational mission.

District staff may restrain the distribution of content in school-sponsored media that can be demonstrated to violate any of the conditions 1-6 above.

Content in school-sponsored media will not be restrained solely because it involves political or controversial subject matter, or is critical of the school or its administration.

A student journalist may not be disciplined for acting in accordance with this policy.

A media advisor may not be disciplined for taking reasonable and appropriate action to protect a student journalist in conduct protected by this policy or for refusing to infringe on conduct that is protected by this policy, by the first amendment to the U.S. Constitution, or by the Vermont Constitution.

[1] 16 V.S.A. § 1623(i) states that each school or its governing body shall adopt a written policy consistent with the provisions of 16 V.S.A. § 1623.

<i>VSBA Review:</i>	<i>October 3, 2022</i>
<i>Date Warned:</i>	
<i>Date Adopted:</i>	
<i>Legal Reference(s):</i>	<i>16 V.S.A. § 1623</i>
<i>Cross Reference(s):</i>	<i>Student Distribution of Literature</i>

DISCLAIMER: This model policy has been prepared by the Vermont School Boards Association for the sole and exclusive use of VSBA members, as a resource to assist member school boards with their policy development. School Districts should consult with legal counsel and revise model policies to address local facts and circumstances prior to adoption, unless the model policy states otherwise. VSBA continually makes revisions based on school districts' needs and local, state and federal laws, regulations and court decisions, and other relevant education activity.

COLCHESTER SCHOOL DISTRICT**POLICY: REPORTING SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE OR NEGLECT****DATE ADOPTED:** November 19, 2019**POLICY STATEMENT**

It is the policy of the Colchester School District to ensure that all employees report suspected child abuse and/or neglect as required by law.

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to protect children whose health and welfare may be jeopardized by abuse or neglect. It is further the purpose of this policy to make clear to all district employees and school officials that it is not their role to investigate, prove or disprove suspected abuse or neglect. Rather, it is the role of district employees to be faithful and timely reporters of suspected abuse or neglect so that allegations can be brought to the attention of objective, trained and experienced investigators. According to Chapter 49, Subchapter 2, of VSA Title 33, any school employee, physician, or concerned person who has reasonable cause to believe a child has been abused or neglected must report their suspicions regarding this abuse in accordance with the provisions of this statute. Also protected under this policy are vulnerable adults included in Chapter 69, Subchapter 1, of VSA Title 33 (Section 6902).

II. RELATIVE TERMS

- A. Mandatory Reporter** is any individual who is employed by the school district or who is contracted and paid by the school district to provide student services, including but not limited to any superintendent, principal, teacher, student teacher, librarian, school counselor, social worker, mental health professional, or school resource officer. Any mandated reporter who reasonably suspects abuse or neglect of a child shall report it to a building level administrator within 24 hours of the time the information regarding the suspected abuse or neglect was first received or observed. A Child Protection Team will be convened.
- B.** Each school will organize and maintain a **Child Protection Team (CPT)**. The CPT will include, but not be limited to, a building administrator, nurse, guidance counselor, the child's teacher and the reporting person if they are not a regular member of this team. Minutes of each CPT meeting will be taken and maintained in a confidential file within the school. The CPT's role is to determine if there is a reasonable cause for suspicion of abuse or neglect. If it is determined that one exists, a report will be made to the Department of Children and Families (DCF) within 24 hours. In reporting a case of suspected child abuse or neglect, district procedures do not negate any employee's right or responsibility to make an independent, confidential report to DCF. A Child Protection Team cannot substitute its judgment for that of the reporter. If the Child Protection Team does not make a report to DCF, any employee who has reasonable cause to believe that a

Last Reviewed: October 21, 2003
Date Warned: November 1, 2019
First Reading: November 5, 2019
Second Reading: November 19, 2019

child has been abused or neglected retains the right and responsibility to make such a report.

- C. **Suspected** means the school district employee reasonably believes abuse or neglect occurred. This does not mean that the employee must be convinced the abuse or neglect occurred. Further, the employee shall not refrain from making a report under this policy for the reason that there may be retaliation against the child because the employee has a confidential relationship with the child, or for any other reason no matter how well-intentioned.
- D. **Report** means an oral or written description of the suspected abuse or neglect. If the report is made orally, the reporter should note in writing the person to whom the report was made and when the report was made. That information should then be provided to the CPT.
- E. **Abused or neglected child** means a child under the age of eighteen whose physical or mental health, or welfare is harmed or at substantial risk of harm by the acts or omissions of the child's parent or other individual who may be responsible for the child's welfare (e.g. guardian, foster parent, stepparent, teacher, etc.), or in the case of sexual abuse, of any individual. Harm can be caused by physical injury or emotional maltreatment, by allowing such harm to occur, by failing to provide the child with adequate food, clothing, shelter or health care, or by abandonment of the child.
- F. **Sexual abuse** as defined by Title 33, Chapter 49 § 4912, means any act by a person involving sexual molestation or exploitation of a child including but not limited to incest, prostitution, rape, sodomy, or any lewd and lascivious conduct involving a child. Sexual abuse also includes the aiding, abetting, counseling, hiring, or procuring of a child to perform or participate in any photograph, motion picture, exhibition, show, representation, or other presentation which, in whole or in part, depicts sexual conduct, sexual excitement or sadomasochistic abuse involving a child.

III. IMPLEMENTATION

Any school district employee or school official shall report suspected child abuse or neglect to the building principal, or their designee, and then to DCF as required by state law. If the building principal or designee is the person suspected of child abuse or the person who suspects the abuse or neglect, the report shall be made to the superintendent of schools.

IV. TRAINING

Once each school year, all employees shall receive training in reporting suspected child abuse and neglect. Such training shall include assistance in recognizing the signs and symptoms of abuse and neglect.

V. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

Those looking for additional information on mandated reporters should visit the Department of Children and Families (DCF) website at: <https://dcf.vermont.gov/>. To make a report, call DCF at (800) 649-5285, 24 hours a day – 7 days a week. If the child is in immediate danger, call 9-1-1 or your local police first, then call DCF to make a report.

COLCHESTER SCHOOL DISTRICT

Board of Education Meeting
Colchester High School Performing Arts Center

Saturday, October 12, 2024
10:00 a.m.

MINUTES

The Colchester Board of Education held a Special Board Meeting on Saturday, October 12, 2024 to give a community presentation on the facilities bond item that voters will consider on the November 5 election ballot. Board members in attendance were Board Chair Lindsey Cox, and Directors Laurie Kigonya, and Jennifer Fath. District administrators in attendance included Superintendent Amy Minor, Business and Operations Manager George Trieb, and Director of Curriculum and Instruction Gwen Carmolli. Architect John Hemmelgarn from Black River Design Architects was also in attendance to answer questions.

I. Call to Order

Board Chair Lindsey Cox called the meeting to order at 10:01 a.m.

II. Community Presentation and Q&A on the Proposed Facilities Bond Information

School board members, administrators, and architects provided a comprehensive presentation for community members outlining the proposed facilities bond on the November 5 ballot. The bond will fund enhancements to safety, upgrades to infrastructure, and improvements to learning spaces through renovating existing facilities and constructing new additions at schools in the district. While all five schools will see some level of updates, most of the funds will go to Porters Point School, Union Memorial School, and Colchester Middle School. Following the presentation, community members were invited to make statements or ask questions.

John Powell of Powell Beach Lane thanked the board for their commitment to a comprehensive, long-term approach to school facilities. He expressed his support for the facilities bond. Mr. Powell also voiced concern about the upcoming tax increase coming from the State.

George Verdon of Timberlake Drive requested clarification on the school's annual operational budget as pertaining to the capital and operational funds, and if those funds could cover any of the renovations presented in the proposed facilities bond. Business and Operations Manager George Trieb explained how the district's budget funds a targeted project each year versus the scope of the current needs of the facilities and the costs associated with major renovation. Mr. Verdon also asked if the school is considered a separate entity from the town and how the new recreational center funds and services can be utilized. Superintendent Amy Minor stated that the school is a separate municipality from the town and does not have access to the funds approved for the recreational center project.

Sarita Austin of Crooked Creek Road stated she is on the House Committee on Education in the Vermont Legislature, and she supports the facilities bond. She encouraged the school board and architects to engage the students when planning the design of the proposed buildings and spaces.

Chrisine Powell of Powell Beach Lane commented on her experience of the overcrowded parking at Union Memorial School. She asked if the school board had inquired about the costs of building a parking garage to alleviate the issue. Superintendent Minor stated that alternative parking options were part of the research that went into the proposed facilities bond.

George Verdon made a second comment, looking for clarification about the process of determining how the annual operational budget gets divided into the programs offered by the schools. Board Chair Lindsey Cox responded that she would be happy to go over the specifics of the school's budget with Mr. Verdon outside of the facilities bond meeting.

III. Adjournment

Board Chair Cox moved to adjourn the meeting at 11:31 a.m.

Recorder:

Gabrielle Brooks
Recording Secretary

Board Clerk:

Ben Yousey-Hindes
Board Clerk

DRAFT

COLCHESTER SCHOOL DISTRICT

Board of Education Meeting
Colchester High School Media Center

Tuesday, October 15, 2024
7:00 p.m.

MINUTES (General Session)

The Colchester Board of Education held a regular board meeting on Tuesday, October 15, 2024, in the Colchester High School Media Center. Board members in attendance were Board Chair Lindsey Cox, Directors Nic Longo, Ben Yousey-Hindes, Laurie Kigonya and Student Board Member Rylee Friend. District administrators and employees in attendance included Superintendent Amy Minor, Business and Operations Manager George Trieb, Director of Curriculum and Instruction Gwen Carmolli and Director of Student Support Services Carrie Lutz. There was one audience member.

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

Doug Bishop from Oak Circle posed a question in advance of an agenda item. Considering the upcoming legislative session, he asked how the school board accommodates the fluid nature of decisions made in Montpelier as they are building the annual operational budget. Board Chair Cox thanked him for his question and said they will address it during the corresponding agenda item.

III. Hear Update on District facilities Renovation Bond Proposal

Information

A bond for \$115 million to renovate and expand school facilities is on the November 5 ballot. The bond will fund various infrastructure, safety, and learning space improvements at all five schools in the district. Most of the funds will go towards Porters Point School, Union Memorial School, and Colchester Middle School with smaller projects at Malletts Bay School and Colchester High School. Administrators, board members, and architects have given formal presentations at previous board meetings and dedicated community meetings with Q&A sessions that covered the needs and scope of the proposal. Superintendent Amy Minor provided an update on the communication efforts underway to inform the community of the proposed bond. There is a dedicated website (csdbond.org) with an FAQ section that is regularly updated based on questions asked by the community. An informational postcard with details of the website and dates for community presentations and public building tours was mailed to all households in Colchester in September. An 8-page booklet giving an overview of the facility needs and proposed floor plans was delivered to all households in early October. Administrators and school board members have attended open houses, faculty meetings, and the town-wide autumn market. There is one more public presentation and Q&A scheduled for Tuesday, October 29 at 7 pm in the CHS Performing Arts Center

IV. Hear Quarterly Financial Update

Information

Business and Operations Manager George Trieb gave the first quarterly financial update for the FY'25 school year. Revenue and expenditures are tracking mostly as expected. He noted that if the current spending trend were to continue, the district could expect a slight surplus of \$1,772.

V. Second and Final Reading of Continuous Improvement Plan Policy: G8 **Information**

This policy was reviewed as part of the annual cycle. There is a federal requirement for schools to have a policy related to continuous improvement plans. There was one change to the draft to be more specific that the policy only pertains to CSD schools.

Director Kigonya moved to approve the second and final reading of the Continuous Improvement Plan Policy: G8. The motion passed unanimously.

VI. Hear FY26 Budget Timeline **Information**

Superintendent Amy Minor and Business and Operations Manager George Tribe gave an overview of the timeline for developing the FY26 budget. They emphasized that this timeline serves as a blueprint for initial planning. They acknowledged the ongoing developments at the state level that could impact decisions at the local level. The board's final decision to when the budget will ideally occur by January 21 to allow sufficient time for preparing, printing, and mailing informational materials to residents ahead of Town Meeting Day. Superintendent Minor noted that the budget cycle for FY25 was one of the most unpredictable in recent years. The board adapted by being flexible and understanding that information may change frequently and were willing to add extra meetings to stay current. Mr. Tribe echoed those statements and added that while the budget is voted on in March, final numbers aren't solidified at the state level until May. The process remains fluid throughout and there are a lot of variables. Board Chair Lindsey Cox stated the goal is to provide a quality education while maintaining programs and services, with most of the budget dedicated to staffing, benefits, and transportation, some of which are beyond the board's control. She concurred that the board will continue to be adaptable to accommodate evolving information.

VII. Approval of Consent Agenda **Action**

The board reviewed the following consent agenda.

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
Support Staff	Malcolm	Huesman	Leave of Absence	Behavior Interventionist	35.0	CHS	Request for unpaid LOA Jan 1 - end of 24/25 SY			

Non-Licensed Employees (Support Staff), Informational

Contract Type	First Name	Last Name	Category	Position	FTE/Hours	Building	Agenda Information	Person Replacing	Budgeted	Admin Support
Handbook	Adalia	Williams	New Hire	Tech Specialist I	40.0	District Wide	Notice of Hire	William Bouffard	Yes	Yes
Support Staff	Michael	Holbrook	New Hire	Maintenance	40.0	District Wide	Notice of Hire	Bryan Tandy	Yes	Yes
Support Staff	Kylie	Lussier	New Hire	Paraeducator	32.5	PPS	Notice of Hire	Shauna Knapp	Yes	Yes
Support Staff	Jade	Frechette	New Hire	Paraeducator	32.5	UMS	Notice of Hire	Caitlin Beaupre	Yes	Yes
Support Staff	Amelia	Adams	Resignation	Paraeducator	32.5	MBS	Notice of Resignation			
Support Staff	Kendra	Renz	Resignation	Paraeducator	32.5	PPS	Notice of Resignation			

DRAFT

There was a personnel item on the agenda that the board requested to discuss further in executive session. The motion was held until after that discussion.

VIII. Approval of Meeting Minutes

Action

- **October 1, 2024**

Director Yousey-Hindes moved to approve the minutes from the meeting held on October 1, 2024. The motion passed unanimously.

IX. Board/Administration Communication, Correspondence, Committee Reports

Information

- CHS got preliminary positive feedback from the recent NEASC visit. They are looking forward to reviewing the full report when completed.
- A video of CHS seniors who registered to vote on November 5 was shown. The students shared what it means to vote for the first time and why voting is important.

X. Future Agenda Items

Information

- Facilities Bond Project Update
- School Reports
- Policy Work

XI. Executive Session to Discuss a Personnel Matter and a Student Matter

Action

Director Longo moved to enter executive session at 7:30 p.m. to discuss a personnel matter and a student matter. The motion passed unanimously.

Director Kigonya moved to exit executive session at 7:46 p.m. The motion passed unanimously.

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

XII. Adjournment

Director Longo moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:47 p.m.

Recorder:

Board Clerk:

Meghan Baule
Recording Secretary

Ben Yousey-Hindes
Board Clerk

COLCHESTER SCHOOL DISTRICT

Board of Education Meeting
Colchester High School Performing Arts Center

Tuesday, October 29, 2024
7:00 p.m.

MINUTES

The Colchester Board of Education held a Special Board Meeting on Tuesday, October 29, 2024 to give a community presentation on the facilities bond item that voters will consider on the November 5 election ballot. Board members in attendance were Directors Ben Yousey-Hindes and Jennifer Fath. District administrators in attendance included Superintendent Amy Minor and Business and Operations Manager George Trieb. Architect Polly Wheelock from Black River Design Architects also attended to answer questions.

I. Call to Order

Board Clerk Ben Yousey-Hindes called the meeting to order at 7:07 p.m.

II. Community Presentation and Q&A on the Proposed Facilities Bond Information

School board members, administrators, and architects provided a comprehensive presentation for community members outlining the proposed facilities bond on the November 5 ballot. The bond will fund enhancements to safety, upgrades to infrastructure, and improvements to learning spaces through renovating existing facilities and constructing new additions at schools in the district. While all five schools will see some level of updates, most of the funds will go to Porters Point School, Union Memorial School, and Colchester Middle School. Attendees were invited to make statements or ask questions following the presentation, but no one chose to do so.

III. Adjournment

Board Clerk Ben Yousey-Hindes moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:57 p.m.

Recorder:

Meghan Baule
Recording Secretary

Board Clerk:

Ben Yousey-Hindes
Board Clerk