

(UNAPPROVED)

VOLUNTOWN BOARD OF EDUCATION
195 Main Street, Voluntown, CT 06384
Phone: (860) 376-9167 www.voluntownct.org

Superintendent of Schools: Scott Feder

MEETING MINUTES

January 15 at 6:00 p.m. in the Central Office

This meeting was open to the public and viewable (within 24 hours of the meeting's conclusion) on the Voluntown School YouTube channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC3I7dQmnXMxoTINHzaSZ1zw>
Citizens were welcome to attend in person to share their comments.

I. OPENING ACTIVITIES

A. CALL TO ORDER - Chairperson Kate Beauparlant called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

ROLL CALL

Present: Kate Beauparlant (Chairperson)
Meagan Wicks (Vice Chair)
Cathy Grant (Secretary)
Arikka Kalwara
Valerie Muschiano
Suzann Miller
Rachel Ricard

Also Present: Scott Feder (Superintendent)
Amy Suffoletto (Principal)
Lloyd Johnson (Director of Student Services)
Dee Dee Jackman (BOE Clerk)
Jason Hartling (Superintendent, Ledyard Public Schools)
Amanda Fagan (Principal, Ledyard Public Schools)
Nick Caruso (CABE)

The BOE Mission Statement was read.

B. PUBLIC COMMENTS / CORRESPONDENCE: None

II. GUEST PRESENTATIONS

Representatives from Ledyard Public Schools (Jason Hartling, Superintendent, and Amanda Fagan, Principal) came to share their many high school academics, arts, trades, AgriScience and extra curricular offerings.

Nick Caruso (CABE Associate Executive Director for Field Services) provided a professional development presentation covering Board Member Roles and Responsibilities, Ethics training and Q&A session.

This training, along with their attendance at November's CABE Conference, fulfills the new board member mandatory training within one year of taking office.

MOTION # 1 (1/15/26) was made (Grant/Kalwara) to enter a brief recess to fix a technical issue; all in favor; motion passes.

III. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Approval of each of the following:

- BOE Minutes from December 11, 2025
- Bills/Disbursements for December 2025
- Function Object Report for December 2025
- Food Services Report for December 2025

- B. Appoint Kayla Beausoleil and Valerie Lord as TEAM Mentors
- C. Approve the Annual Meaningful Notice and Vendor List

MOTION # 2 (1/15/26) was made (Grant/Kalwara) for the Board to approve the Consent Agenda as presented; all in favor; motion passes.

IV. REPORTS / UPDATES

A. Superintendent (Presented by Scott Feder)

- Negotiations with our Non-Cert Association will begin this half of the year.
- Budget Discussion
 - Scott is researching how we can manage the budget while improving education for all students.
 - Darlena and Scott met with the LEARN representatives, Chuck and Rachel, to discuss operational management within the budget and district. Key areas were outlined that include grant submissions, opening a 2% Non-lapsing account, E-rate grant and creating SOP's (Standard Operating Procedures) throughout business operations.
 - We are in the throes of the budget right now identifying specific line items that need to be addressed after a roll-over of the budget.
 - Scott reviewed some challenges including special education placements at the HS level, health insurance premiums/costs, general expense increases and grant uncertainty.
 - Some positives that were shared included beginning the grant process for E-rate where we will now receive an approximate 30% discount on technology infrastructure purchases, a grant for facilities/operations (DRIP) for over \$40,000, the creation of a 2% non-lapsing account, and other areas we are working through to determine savings without loss or disruption of programming for students.

The following items were provided to the Board in their packet:

- There has been \$10,245 returned to the Town of Voluntown Undesignated Fund from grants, rebates, etc.
- The District Enrollment report noted that there are 210 students in grades PreK to 8 and 119 high school students.
- CABE Liaison Newsletter from January 2026
- Annual Meaningful Notice and Vendor List
- CABE Legislative Breakfast info (January 14 7:30 - 9:00 am at Kelly Middle School in Norwich)
- CABE Policy Highlights from December 19, 2025 (Annual Report of the Connecticut Commission for Educational Technology - Artificial Intelligence guidance)

B. Principal's Report (Presented by Amy Suffoletto)

- Amy reported that there has been a lot of illness.
- Teachers and Paras will be receiving Professional Development on Friday.
- **Winter Concerts:** A big congratulations to our musicians from grades K-8 this year and their wonderful musical performances. The time and dedication under the direction of Amanda Gould, VES music teacher, has shown how talented our students are!
- **High School Selections:** Students have made their high school selections and applications.
- **Benchmark Testing Mid-Year:** Taking place from 1/5 to 1/23. Data team meetings commence in Feb.
- **Basketball/Cheerleading** season is wrapping up. Volleyball will be starting next.
- **NJHS:** Our NJHS members are working on a variety of service items as part of their contributions to VES. They handle all birthday books and certificates, preschool support, selling ala carte items as well as selling items at basketball games.
- **Alice in Wonderland** is the drama production this year for grades 2-5! Stay tuned for upcoming dates.

- **Eagle Study Circle:** ESC is offered on Tuesdays and Thursdays for students in grades 6-8. Our middle team rotates instruction on these days and students can receive support on work.

January Highlights:

January 5, 2026 School Resumes

January 6, 2026 6-8 grade study circle resumes T/TH

January 16, 2026 Progress Reports and Early Dismissal - Professional Day

January 20, 2026 Martin Luther King Day - No School

January 5-23, 2026 Winter Benchmark Testing Window

C. Director of Student Services Report (presented by Lloyd Johnson, PhD)

- The SEED grant funds will be received and equipment, training, and materials are being purchased for special education students. Lloyd also reported that a new assessment tool is being used to help teachers correct scoring. Eighth grade students with disabilities have applied to their schools of choice. Budget implications for 2026-27 of these selections are being developed.

V. OLD BUSINESS

A. Budget for 2026-2027 (This item was discussed under the Superintendent's Report above.)

B. Policy Updates (2nd reading)

1. Policy, Regulation and Forms # 5131.911 on School Climate

MOTION # 3 (1/15/26) was made (Muschiano/Grant) to approve Policy, Regulation and Forms #5131.911 on School Climate as presented. All in favor; motion passes.

2. Policy and Regulation # 5141.25 on Students with Special Health Care Needs

MOTION # 4 (1/15/26) was made (Grant/Wicks) to approve Policy and Regulation # 5141.25 on Students with Special Health Care Needs as presented. All in favor; motion passes.

3. Bylaw and Appendixes # 9222 on the Resignation/Removal of a Board Officer/Censure

MOTION # 5 (1/15/26) was made (Kalwara/Grant) to approve Bylaw and Appendixes # 9222 on the Resignation/Removal of a Board Officer/Censure as presented. All in favor; motion passes.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

A. Policy Updates (First reading) The Board reviewed following policies which were both tabled for a second reading.

1. 1312 - Public Complaints (Policy and Form)
2. 3171.1 - Non-Lapsing Educational Fund

B. School Calendar for 2026-2027 - Some items highlighted in the upcoming school year's calendar were:

- The first day of school for students is August 26th. Anticipated last day is June 10th.
- Change of Thanksgiving Wednesday from a half-day to a full day closed. This aligns with three of our High School partners; Wheeler, NFA, and Ledyard (possibly others).
- Parent/Teacher conferences will be held on Election Day.

MOTION # 6 (1/15/26) was made (Wicks/Muschiano) for the Board to approve the School Calendar for 2026-2027 as amended; all in favor; motion passes.

C. Personnel - A letter was received from Karen Britt announcing her retirement. The Board thanked her for her 26 years of teaching at VES.

MOTION # 7 (1/15/26) was made with regrets (Grant/Kalwara) to accept the retirement of Karen Britt effective June 30, 2026; all in favor; motion passes.

VII. UPCOMING MEETINGS AND ADJOURNMENT

- Regular BOE Meeting to be held on February 19, 2026 at 6:00 p.m. in the Central Office
- Items for the next meeting:
 - Budget for 2026-2027
 - Policy & Regulation Updates as 1st and 2nd readings
 - BOE and Superintendent Evaluation Forms

MOTION # 8 (1/15/26) was made (Wicks/Kalwara) to adjourn at 9:21 p.m.; all in favor; motion passed.

Respectfully submitted by,
Dee Dee Jackman
Board of Education Clerk

Witness _____ Date _____ Attest _____ Date _____

APPROVED AT THE BOE MEETING

DSJ/KB