



# VIRGINIA BEACH CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS CHARTING THE COURSE

## School Board Services

**Beverly M. Anderson**  
At-Large

**Sharon R. Felton**  
District 6 – Beach

**Jennifer S. Franklin**  
District 2 – Kempsville

**Dorothy M. Holtz**  
At-Large

**Laura K. Hughes**  
At-Large

**Victoria C. Manning**  
At-Large

**Kimberly A. Melnyk**  
District 7 – Princess Anne

**Jessica L. Owens**  
District 3 – Rose Hall

**Trenace B. Riggs**  
District 1 – Centerville

**Carolyn T. Rye**  
District 5 - Lynnhaven

**Carolyn D. Weems**  
District 4 - Bayside

**Aaron C. Spence, Ed.D.**  
Superintendent

### **School Board Organizational / Regular Meeting MINUTES**

**Tuesday, January 12, 2021**

School Administration Building #6, Municipal Center  
2512 George Mason Drive  
Virginia Beach, VA 23456

### **INFORMAL MEETING**

- 1. Convene School Board Workshop:** Chairwoman Rye convened the School Board workshop at 4:02 p.m. on the 12<sup>th</sup> day of January 2023<sup>1</sup> and announced pursuant to the State of Emergency related to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Governor’s Executive Orders, the Virginia Freedom of Information Act as amended by the Virginia General Assembly and the School Board’s April 7, 2020 Emergency Resolution, the School Board and selected staff members will meet in person at the School Administration Building; however, at this time, it is impractical and unsafe to allow other persons to attend the School Board Meeting due to physical distancing and safety precautions related to the pandemic. Members of the public will be able to observe the School Board Meeting through livestreaming on [www.vbschools.com](http://www.vbschools.com), broadcast on VBT Channel 47, and on Zoom.

It is the School Board’s protocol to break at 5:30 p.m. to prepare for the Regular School Board Meeting to begin at 6:00 p.m. At 5:30 p.m., the School Board will conclude its Informal Meeting unless the School Board votes to continue the Informal Meeting until 5:45 p.m. The Informal Session will conclude no later than 5:45 p.m. in order to allow the School Board and the School Administration to prepare for the Regular School Board Meeting at 6:00 p.m.

Chairwoman Rye noted that during formal meeting there would be a slight revision to the agenda due to the number of speakers.

The following School Board members were present in the School Board chambers: Chairwoman Rye, Ms. Anderson, Ms. Felton, Ms. Holtz, Ms. Hughes, Ms. Manning, Ms. Owens, Ms. Riggs, and Ms. Weems. The following School Board members were attending via Zoom: Ms. Franklin (illness) and Ms. Melnyk (illness).

- A. 2020-21 Plan Updates:** Marc A. Bergin, Ed.D., Chief of Staff introduced the presentation; Dr. Demetria Lindsay from the Virginia Beach Department of Public Health joined the meeting via Zoom; Dr. Lindsay shared an update on COVID 19 disease activity in the region; reviewed previous numbers of cases from September through December; July surge and number of cases; vaccines; patience and perseverance in mitigation efforts; minority populations and COVID; contact tracing stress on public health and student health services capacity to effectively respond; importance of in person learning in an environment that is safe for children, staff and families; recognize the need to balance learning, physical emotional and mental health, and safety; public health serves in a advisory

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capacity to VBCPS regarding public health concerns; recommended the timing for in-person instruction be postponed until community transmission levels have decreased below substantial or at least stabilized, when in-person instruction resumes allow a 3-4 week period a minimum of 2 weeks before transitioning to the next phase of opening to prevent adequate time for the impact of each stage to evolve and to be assessed by student health services and public health officials; noted that elementary school children are deemed as lower risk of transmission of disease; agree with a strong focus on mitigation strategies and with Superintendent's plan to start compliance review teams; VDH recommends that schools use the CDC indicators to assess school transmission and risk along with other factors such as adherence to mitigation strategies, consideration of school impact and local impact to inform decision making regarding reopening; recommend close monitoring of internal measures (case and outbreak data, staff absenteeism, staff capacity); case investigation and contact tracing remain a major means of reducing potential transmission in schools; current resources will not permit optimum performance for case investigation and contact tracing in schools if in-person learning is resumed at this time; vaccinations – the state of Virginia has chosen to include teachers and direct staff into the 1b priority group of essential workers for vaccination; vaccination will not eliminate the need for other mitigation strategies.

The discussion continued regarding vaccine distribution; where to find data on transmission – VDH website; Mary Shaw, Coordinator of Health Services discussed contact tracing progress in Virginia Beach Schools; do not have the capacity to meet the contact tracing needs in the division; the discussion continued contact tracing; training for contact tracers; working to increase capacity; what ways can the public help; contact tracing is a challenge; Superintendent Spence shared recommendation to delay the proposed return of students: February 1 – Elementary (PK-5), Grade 6, and self-contained special education (K-12) return for in-person instruction; February 22 – Middle (7-8) and High (9-12) return for in-person instruction on hybrid model; Superintendent Spence also recommended the School Board grant him authority to consult with our internal health staff and the health department to determine if the timeline will allow us to provide assurance that we can sufficiently meet the CDC's fifth mitigation measure of contact tracing and, if not, to delay further with sufficient notice to the Board and community; Mr. Jack Freeman, Chief Operations Officer, provided a vaccination update – coordinating with Virginia Department of Health and the City, schools are in the Phase 1B group, communication to employees, point of distribution is the Convention Center, timeline between vaccine doses.

The discussion continued regarding contact tracing; school nurses helping with vaccines; number of vaccines available; working on priority list of staff for vaccine; school nurses and clinical assistants were moved up to Phase 1A; positively rate.

The workshop adjourned at 5:34 p.m.

#### **FORMAL MEETING**

- 2. *Call to Order and Verbal Roll Call:*** Acting as School Board Chair pro-tem for the election of the School Board Chair, Superintendent Spence called the formal meeting to order at 6:01 p.m. on the 12<sup>th</sup> day of January 2021 and announced pursuant to the State of Emergency related to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Governor's Executive Orders, the Virginia Freedom of Information Act as amended by the Virginia General Assembly and the School Board's April 7, 2020 Emergency Resolution, the School Board and selected staff members will meet in person at the School Administration Building; however, at this this time, it is impractical and unsafe to allow other persons to attend the School Board Meeting due to physical distancing and safety precautions related to the pandemic. Members of the public will be able to observe the School Board Meeting through livestreaming on [www.vbschools.com](http://www.vbschools.com), broadcast on VBTV Channel 47, and on Zoom.

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The following School Board members were present in the School Board chambers: Chairwoman Rye, Ms. Anderson, Ms. Felton, Ms. Holtz, Ms. Hughes, Ms. Manning, Ms. Owens, Ms. Riggs, and Ms. Weems. The following School Board members were attending via Zoom: Ms. Franklin (illness) and Ms. Melnyk (illness).

**3. *Moment of Silence followed by the Pledge of Allegiance***

**4. *School Board Organizational Matters:*** After describing the nomination and voting procedures to be used for the election for School Board Chair and Vice Chair, without any objections, motions, or questions, Superintendent Spence called for nominations in the election of School Board Chair.

- A. Election of School Board Chair: Ms. Riggs nominated Ms. Rye; and Ms. Manning nominated Ms. Weems to serve as School Board Chair for the 2021 calendar year. After a period of School Board members speaking to the nominations, and there being no further comments or additional nominations, votes were cast with Ms. Weems receiving 3 votes – Ms. Hughes, Ms. Manning and Ms. Weems; Ms. Rye receiving 8 votes – Ms. Anderson, Ms. Felton, Ms. Franklin, Ms. Holtz, Ms. Melnyk, Ms. Owens, Ms. Riggs, and Ms. Rye. Ms. Rye obtained the majority vote and declared School Board Chair for the 2021 calendar year. Superintendent Spence he turned the meeting over for Chairwoman Rye to proceed with meeting. Chairwoman Rye thanked the board for the honor and their confidence.
- B. Election of School Board Vice Chair: Ms. Anderson nominated Ms. Melnyk; and Ms. Franklin nominated Ms. Weems to serve as School Board Vice Chair for the 2021 calendar year. At the conclusion of School Board members speaking to the nominations, votes were cast with Ms. Weems receiving 4 votes – Ms. Franklin, Ms. Hughes, Ms. Manning and Ms. Weems; Ms. Melnyk receiving 7 votes – Ms. Anderson, Ms. Felton, Ms. Holtz, Ms. Melnyk, Ms. Owens, Ms. Riggs, and Ms. Rye. Ms. Melnyk obtained the majority vote and declared School Board Vice Chair for the 2021 calendar year. Ms. Melnyk thanked the School Board and Ms. Weems congratulated both Ms. Rye and Ms. Melnyk.
- C. Appointment of Clerk and Deputy Clerk: Ms. Manning made a motion, seconded by Ms. Riggs that the School Board approve the Superintendent’s recommendation to appoint Regina M. Toneatto as Clerk of the School Board, and Susan L. Keipe as Deputy Clerk for the 2021 calendar year. Several School Board members spoke in support of the recommendation prior to the motion being unanimously approved.
- D. School Board Bylaws Appendix B – Standing Rules Review: It was noted that the Bylaws Appendix B was recently amended. Ms. Riggs made a motion, seconded by Ms. Felton. Without further discussion, Chairwoman Rye called for a vote. The School Board Clerk announce the motion passed unanimously.
- E. School Board Committee Assignment Review for Term Ending January 31, 2021: Chairwoman Rye discussed the School Board Committee Assignment Review, School Board members to contact Chair and School Board Clerk regarding interest in committee positions by end of week. The Chair will send an email to the School Board members.
- F. Schedule of Meetings: January 2021 through June 2022: Chairwoman Rye discussed the list of School Board meetings to reaffirm dates through June 2021 and list of proposed meeting from July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2022. Ms. Manning made a motion, seconded by Ms. Anderson. Without further discussion, Chairwoman Rye called for a vote. The School Board Clerk announced the motion passed unanimously.

**5. *Student, Employee and Public Awards and Recognitions - NONE***

**6. *Adoption of the Agenda:*** Chairwoman Rye ask for a motion to suspend the order of business in Appendix B and amend the agenda as follows: defer all information items to the January 26 meeting, standing committee reports – information can be emailed to the Chair, Consent be moved ahead of Hearing of Citizens and Delegations on Agenda Items; defer items 12 and 13 to the January 26 meeting; move up consent agenda items in which in-persons will be heard first under item number 9 when the in-person speakers are concluded then take the consent agenda items A and B then return to the remote speakers under Hearing of Citizens and Delegations on Agenda Items then proceed with the rest of the agenda; Ms. Manning asked for clarification regarding all policy recommendations and inquired

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about the policy recommendations under Action; defer Action Items B1 and B2 to the January 26 meeting. Ms. Riggs made a motion, seconded by Ms. Anderson to adopt the agenda as amended. Without further discussion, Chairwoman Rye called for a vote. The School Board Clerk announced the motion passed unanimously.

- 7. Superintendent's Report:** Superintendent Spence shared the following information: 1) Reminder, Monday January 18, the division will be closed in observance of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day; 2) Extension of application deadline for all high school academy programs to January 18, the Technical and Career Education Center will offer a Virtual Open House on February 3, and program information for the Environmental Studies Program and application can be found on vbschools.com; 3) Diamond Springs Elementary held a live YouTube book reading and literacy event. Students were provided with a copy of the book; *The Day You Begin*; 4) The Holiday Connection program delivered gifts, clothes, blankets, hygiene kits and gift cards directly to 350 students' home. The Virginia Beach Education Foundation received \$10,000 from the Hansen Family Foundation to help families as needs arise in the next several months; and 5) Chef Brittan Garcia from Green Run High School has had virtual Zoom culinary lessons. Virtual cooking lessons included two guest presenters from the Foodbank of Southeastern Virginia and the Eastern Shore.
- 8. Approval of Meeting Minutes:** December 15, 2020 Regular School Board Meeting: Without any modifications, Chairwoman Rye called for a motion to approve. Ms. Felton made a motion, seconded by Ms. Owens. Without any discussion, Chairwoman Rye called for a vote. The School Board Clerk announced there were ten (10) ayes in favor and one (1) abstention from Ms. Manning since she did not attend the December 15, 2020 meeting. The motion passed with 10 votes.

It was noted that the minutes from the January 5, 2021 Special Meeting will be part of the approval of minutes at the January 26, 2021 meeting.

- 9. Hearing of Citizens and Delegations on Agenda Items:** Chairwoman Rye announced the School Board will now hear comments on Agenda Items from citizens and delegations who signed up with our Clerk prior to this meeting. In-person speakers will be called first followed by speakers participating through Zoom or by telephone. It is not necessary for speakers to ask if they can be heard. Speakers should begin speaking once their name is called. As a reminder, each speaker has four minutes to present and will be given a thirty-second warning before time expires. Once the speaker's time has expired, the speaker should stop making remarks and the next speaker will be cued to speak. Please keep in mind, the School Board invites the public to also submit comments through our group e-mail account which can be found on our website.

There were 19 in-person speakers and 67 on-line speakers discussing the 2020-21 Plan Updates and the return of students to face-to-face learning. After the last in-person speaker, as per the amended adoption of the agenda, Chairwoman Rye moved to the Consent portion of the agenda. (See Consent Agenda Item 10A – 10B1-3)

- 10. Consent Agenda:** Chairwoman Rye read the following items for Consent.
- A. Schoology: Comprehensive Evaluation Recommendations
  - B. Policy Review Committee (PRC) Recommendations
    - 1. Policy 2-59/ Outside Legal Counsel
    - 2. Policy 4-17/ Suspension of Work of Teachers or Classified Employees
    - 3. Policy 4-39/ Employee Professional Development and Growth in Job Skills

Without modifications, Chairwoman Rye called for a motion. Ms. Riggs made a motion, seconded by Ms. Anderson. Chairwoman Rye called for a vote. The School Board Clerk announced the motion passed unanimously.

- 11. Action**
- A. Personnel Report / Administrative Appointment(s): Ms. Holtz made a motion, seconded by Ms. Owens that the School Board approve the appointments and accept the resignations, retirements, and other employment actions as presented on the January 12, 2021 Personnel Report along with administrative appointments as recommended by the Superintendent. Without discussion, Chairwoman Rye called for a vote. The School Board Clerk announced the motion passed

unanimously. Superintendent Spence introduced the following: Shampriest S. Bevel, Assistant Principal, Great Neck Middle School as Principal, Bayside Sixth Grade Campus.

The School Board took a break at 8:02 p.m. The School Board reconvened at 8:12 p.m. The School Board then listened to on-line speaker to 10:20 p.m. The School Board took a break and reconvened at 10:31 p.m. to hear the remaining on-line speakers.

- B. Policy Review Committee (PRC) Recommendations – (Deferred to January 26, 2021 meeting)
  - 1. Bylaw 1-36/ Opening Meetings and Closed Meetings
  - 2. Bylaw 1-38/ Regular Meetings, Time, Place, Order of Business, Recessed Meetings, Work Sessions/Public Hearing
  
- C. 2020-21 Plan Updates: Superintendent Spence briefly recapped information from the workshop; stated recommended change is a delay in the start time we propose to begin bringing students back to school in phases: February 1 – Elementary (PK-5), Grade 6, and self-contained special education (K-12) return for in-person instruction; February 22 – Middle (7-8) and High (9-12) return for in-person instruction on hybrid model; delay based on information from internal health team and contact tracing, and Dr. Lindsay not being able to provide optimum support for contact tracing; contact tracing is one of the five strategies recommended by the CDC; seeking authority to consult with our internal health staff and the health department to determine if the timeline will allow us to provide assurance that we can sufficiently meet the CDC's fifth mitigation measure of contact tracing and, if not, to delay further with sufficient notice to the Board and community – Superintendent Spence clarified this intention;  
In order to proceed with discussion, Chairwoman Rye called for a motion. Ms. Riggs made a motion, seconded by Ms. Melnyk. Chairwoman Rye opened the floor for discussion.

The discussion continue regarding clarification of authority and delaying the start of schools; Superintendent Spence read the language – recommending that rather than continue to return for additional votes on the matter the school board grant me authority to consult with our internal health staff and the heath department to determine if this timeline three weeks from today for a return will allow us to provide assurances that we can sufficiently meet contact tracing requirements and if not to delay further with sufficient notice to the board and community. The discussion regarding vaccinations of teachers; transmission rates; mitigation standards; CDC metrics; recapped some speakers comments;

Ms. Manning made a substitute motion that we approve Dr. Spence's proposal that was made to the school board last week to return our students back to school first group on January the 19, the second group on February 8 along with the additional metrics that he requested to use school related transmission rates and for him to have the authority to shut down classrooms or schools as seen fit in conjunction with consultation by the Virginia Department of Health; Ms. Hughes seconded the motion.

The discussion continued regarding vaccines for teachers; contact tracing and transmission rates; meeting mitigation standards; community rates; returning students to school; mental health issues; how to help getting contact tracers; weighting risks; comparison to other school districts/private schools; Ms. Melnyk called to question; a brief discussion followed regarding call to question; Ms. Riggs made a second; there was a vote on call to question; there were five (5) School Board members voted yes (aye): Ms. Anderson, Ms. Felton, Ms. Holtz, Ms. Melnyk, and Ms. Riggs; the School Board Clerk asked Ms. Franklin for her vote and she voted no (nay); the discussion continued.

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The discussion continued regarding contact tracing and the Department of Health; concerns about virtual classes and sizes; Chairwoman Rye called for a vote on Ms. Manning's substitute motion; the School Board Clerk announced there were four (4) ayes in favor of the substitute motion: Ms. Franklin, Ms. Hughes, Ms. Manning and Ms. Weems and there were seven (7) nays opposed of the substitute motion: Ms. Anderson, Ms. Felton, Ms. Holtz, Ms. Melnyk, Ms. Owens; Ms. Riggs and Ms. Rye. The substitute motion did not pass.

School Board Legal Counsel suggested to Chairwoman Rye to consider putting a motion on the floor to amend the plan without Dr. Spence authority as previously stated; Ms. Weems made the substitute motion to accept Dr. Spence's recommendation to phase the return of students on February 1<sup>st</sup> elementary through six and self-contained special education and also on February 22 for other students to include giving him the authority to close individual schools but to not give him authority to make a decision to delay the opening, that has to come before the board; Ms. Manning seconded the motion; a brief discussion followed clarifying the motion by Ms. Weems;

Ms. Owens made a second substitute motion; the substitute motion that I'd like to make would be that we move forward with Dr. Spence's plan of February 1st goal to get the elementary and pre-K grade six, self-contained, as written there. If the community positivity rate shows a decline for seven days or after the first week that we see a decline for seven days, and all mitigation standards are met and then that next group would come in either on February 22nd if the February first one starts on time or whenever three weeks after the first group started .

The second substitute motion was re-read as follows: my substitute motion is that we move forward with Dr. Spence's plan that he's put for the first group to start February 1st if the community positivity rate shows a decline for seven days or after the first week that we see a decline for seven days, and all mitigation standards are met, and then that next group, the February 22nd group, can start February 22nd if the February 1st timing worked out. If the February 1st group ended up being delayed, then the next group would start three weeks after as long as things were showing the way we expected them to.

Ms. Anderson seconded the motion.

A brief discussion followed regarding the timeline, decline of metrics, safety mitigations; clarification on the motion on the floor; Chairwoman Rye called for a vote on the Ms. Owens' second substitute motion; the School Board Clerk announced there were six (6) ayes in favor of the second substitute motion: Ms. Anderson, Ms. Felton, Ms. Holtz, Ms. Melnyk, Ms. Owens, and Ms. Riggs; there were five (5) nays opposed to the second substitute motion: Chairwoman Rye, Ms. Franklin, Ms. Hughes, Ms. Manning, and Ms. Weems. The motion passed 6-5.

**12. Information** – Information items deferred to the January 26, 2021 meeting.

- A. New Courses:
  - 1. Dual Enrollment (DE)
    - a. BUS100 – DE Introduction to Business
    - b. BUS117 – DE Leadership Development
  - 2. African American History Elective
- B. Textbook Adoptions:
  - 1. AP French Language and Culture
  - 2. AP German Language and Culture
  - 3. AP Spanish Language and Culture

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4. AP Spanish Literature and Culture
  5. AP Biology
  6. AP Physics 1 and 2
  - C. Policy Review Committee (PRC) Recommendations:
    1. Bylaw 1-28/ Committees, Organizations and Boards – School Board Member Assignments
    2. Bylaw 1-39/ Agenda Preparation
    3. Policy 4-36/ Payroll Deductions
    4. Policy 4-32/ Employee Associations
    5. Appendix C
  - 13. *Standing Committee Reports*** – Deferred, contact Chairwoman Rye with any information or updates via email.
  - 14. *Conclusion of Formal Meeting***
  - 15. *Hearing of Citizens and Delegations on Non-Agenda Items: None.***
  - 16. *Workshop*** (as needed)
  - 17. *Closed Meeting*** (as needed)
  - 18. *Vote on Remaining Action Items*** (as needed)
  - 19. *Adjournment:*** The School Board meeting adjourned at 2:24 a.m., Wednesday, January 13, 2021.

Respectfully submitted:

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Regina M. Toneatto, Clerk of the School Board

Approved:

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Carolyn T. Rye, School Board Chair