



School Board Service

Mark Bohenstiel
District 3

David Culpepper
District 8

Sharon R. Felton
At-Large

Melinda J. Rogers
District 5

Kathleen Brown
District 10

Matt W. Cummings
District 7

Dr. Alveta J. Green
District 4

Carolyn D. Weems
District 9

Michael Callan
District 6

Rose M. Dwyer
District 1

Kimberly A. Melnyk
District 2

Donald E. Robertson, Ph.D.
Superintendent

School Board Organizational / Regular Meeting MINUTES
Tuesday, January 14, 2025

School Administration Building #6, Municipal Center

2512 George Mason Drive
P.O. Box 6038
Virginia Beach, VA 23456
(757) 263-1000

- 1. *Administrative, Informal, and Workshop:*** Chair Melnyk convened the Administrative, Informal, and Workshop session at 4:00 p.m. on the 14th day of January 2025.

In addition to Superintendent Robertson, the following School Board Members were present in the School Administration Building #6, School Board Chamber: Chair Melnyk, Mr. Bohenstiel, Ms. Brown, Mr. Callan, Mr. Culpepper (arrived at 4:05 p.m.), Ms. Dwyer, Ms. Felton, Dr. Green, Ms. Rogers, and Ms. Weems. The following School Board Member attended via Zoom: Mr. Cummings (family medical/out of town – Indiana).

- A. **School Board Administrative Matters and Reports:** Superintendent Robertson mentioned the list of school adoptions, assignment of schools to the new School Board Members, and the need for direction. Chair Melnyk mentioned the upcoming election of the new Chair and Vice Chair at the formal meeting, and new committee assignments. The January sign-up sheets for meetings with the Superintendent and school visits with the Superintendent were passed to the School Board Members.
- B. **Budget Process Overview:** Crystal Pate, chief financial officer, provided the School Board information regarding the budget process. The topics reviewed were budget basics, budget calendar, school funding revenue, VBCPS internal budget work, state budget calendar and process, and process for handling School Board Member questions. During the budget basics, a comparison was made between a household budget and school division budget with similarities and differences. Key dates were reviewed from the budget calendar, an overview of school funding revenue sources and internal budget work (budgeting for personnel and fringe benefits costs, non-FTE and other expenses). The state budget calendar and process were reviewed along with key budget dates (dates are tentative pending approval of the 2025 Session procedural resolution). The Standards of Quality (SOQ) and Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission (JLARC) findings and recommendations were shared. A brief overview of Federal Grants (Title 1, Part A; Title II, Part A; Title IV, Part A; IDEA – Title VI, Part B, Section 611; and IDEA – Title VI, Part B, Section 619) was shared. The process for handling School Board Members questions was provided.

The presentation continued with questions and comments regarding the budget process and new School Board Members asking questions; Virginia's budget process; sample staffing standards; students with disabilities; support cap, support positions; funding formula; grants; Department of Education; and items funded with grants.

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- C. **Middle School Master Schedule:** James J. Smith, Ed.D., senior executive director of middle schools, presented information to the School Board of potential changes to the middle school master schedule for the 2025-26 school year. In response to the Virginia Department of Education School Performance and Support Framework and to provide greater flexibility and maximize student opportunities, the middle school master schedule was reviewed. The proposed changes aim to: enhance academic opportunities, improve support structures, preserve elective access, and uniformity. The presentation covered the following items: reviewed components of the current schedule, shared guiding questions, discussed action steps, outlined recommended changes, shared Thrive Time opportunities, provided sample student and teacher schedules, and shared next steps. The next steps included continued collaboration with principals, school-based teams, and key central administration departments on the components of Thrive Time, present topic for information at the January 28, School Board meeting, and present topic for action at the February 11, School Board meeting.

The presentation continued with questions and comments from the School Board regarding Department of Education, mastery and growth; opportunities to provide student supports, Thrive Time, how long is Thrive Time; physical education, percentage of students who opt-out, importance of health and physical education; electives; schedules for Old Donation School (ODS) and Plaza Middle School; academic supports at ODS and Plaza Middle School; master schedule, parental understanding between academic support and Thrive Time; sample schedules; meeting the needs of all students; and collaboration effort for creating middle school schedule.

2. **Closed Session:** There was no Closed Session during the Administrative, Informal, and Workshop session.
3. **School Board Recess:** Chair Melnyk adjourned the Administrative, Informal, and Workshop Session at 5:29 pm.
4. **Formal Meeting (School Administration Building #6 – School Board Room) 6:00 p.m.**
5. **Call to Order and Roll Call:** Superintendent, Donald E. Robertson, Ph.D., serving as Chair pro-tem called the School Board Annual Organizational meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. on the 14th day of January 2025. The following School Board members were present in the School Administration Building #6, School Board Chamber: Mr. Bohenstiel, Ms. Brown, Mr. Callan, Mr. Culpepper, Ms. Dwyer, Ms. Felton, Dr. Green, Ms. Melnyk, Ms. Rogers, and Ms. Weems. The following School Board Member attended via Zoom: Mr. Cummings (family medical/out of town – Indiana).
6. **Moment of Silence followed by the Pledge of Allegiance**
7. **School Board Organizational Matters:** After reviewing the nomination and voting procedures to be used for the election of School Board Chair and Vice Chair, and without any objections, motions, or questions, Superintendent, Dr. Robertson called for nominations in the election of School Board Chair.
 - A. **Election of School Board Chair:** Ms. Weems nominated Ms. Kathleen Brown for School Board Chair. Ms. Rogers nominated Ms. Kimberly Melnyk for School Board Chair. Ms. Melnyk declined the nomination. There being no other nominations for School Board Chair, votes were cast with the following results: Ms. Brown received six (6) votes: Mr. Bohenstiel, Ms. Brown, Mr. Callan, Mr. Culpepper, Ms. Dwyer, and Ms. Weems. The following School Board Members abstained: Mr. Cummings, Ms. Felton, Dr. Green, Ms. Melnyk, and Ms. Rogers. Superintendent Robertson announced Ms. Kathleen Brown was elected Chair by majority vote and declared the School Board Chair for the 2025 calendar year. Superintendent Robertson passed the gavel to Chair Brown to proceed with the meeting.
 - B. **Election of School Board Vice Chair:** Chair Brown called for nominations for School Board Vice Chair. Mr. Culpepper nominated Ms. Carolyn Weems for School Board Vice Chair. Ms. Rogers nominated Mr. Michael Callan for School Board Vice Chair. Mr. Callan declined the nomination. There being no other nominations for School Board Vice Chair, votes were cast with the following results: Ms. Weems received six (6) votes: Mr. Bohenstiel, Ms. Brown, Mr. Callan, Mr. Culpepper, Ms. Dwyer, and Ms. Weems. The following School Board Members abstained: Mr. Cummings, Ms. Felton, Dr. Green, Ms. Melnyk, and Ms. Rogers. Chair Brown announced Ms. Carolyn Weems was elected Vice Chair. Chair Brown took a point of personal privilege and shared comments about being the School Board Chair.

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- C. Appointment of Clerk and Deputy Clerk: Chair Brown called for a motion to approve the Superintendent's recommendation to appoint Regina M. Toneatto as Clerk of the School Board and Nina Wadowski as Deputy Clerk of the School Board for the 2025 calendar year. Ms. Rogers made the motion, seconded by Mr. Callan. Without discussion, Chair Brown called for a vote. The School Board Clerk announced there were eleven (11) ayes in favor of the motion to approve the Superintendent's recommendation to appoint Regina M. Toneatto as Clerk of the School Board and Nina Wadowski as Deputy Clerk of the School Board for the 2025 calendar year. The motion passed unanimously, 11-0-0.
- D. Schedule of Meetings: January 2025 through June 2026: Chair Brown called for a motion to approve the schedule of School Board meetings through June 30, 2026, as presented. Dr. Green made the motion, seconded by Vice Chair Weems. There was a discussion regarding the meeting dates; correction to change the date of Monday, June 22, 2026 to Tuesday, June 23, 2026; suggestion to change the meeting day from Tuesday to another day, as to not conflict with City Council meeting. Ms. Rogers made a substitute motion to look at a different day of the week that does not conflict with City Council meetings, so that constituents can attend our meetings and City Council meetings – to send back to the Superintendent to propose a possible calendar for a different day of the week. Ms. Melnyk seconded the motion. A brief discussion followed regarding the substitute motion; good suggestion but to look at next year, need to further discuss the topic; and plans made for the year based on meeting calendar.

Ms. Rogers withdrew the substitute motion and Ms. Melnyk concurred. Without further discussion, Chair Brown called for a vote on the School Board meetings through June 30, 2026. The School Board Clerk announced there were eleven (11) ayes in favor of the schedule of School Board meetings through June 30, 2026. The motion passed unanimously, 11-0-0.

8. *Student, Employee and Public Awards and Recognition*

- A. VHSL Class 5A State Cross Country Champions – Ocean Lakes High School: The School Board recognized the Ocean Lakes High School cross country team as the VHSL Class 5 State Cross Country Champions. In November, the 12 best cross-country teams in Virginia ran at the challenging and historic Oatlands Plantation in Leesburg. Ocean Lakes High School tallied a two-point victory.
- B. VHSL Class 5A State Boys Volleyball Champions – Kellam High School: The School Board recognized the Kellam High School boys volleyball team as the 2024 VHSL Class 5 State Volleyball Champions. The team finished with a record of 28-1 and ranked as the No. 1 high school volleyball team in the nation by Max Preps. The team was also the Region 5A champion.

9. ***Adoption of the Agenda***: Chair Brown called for any modifications to the agenda as presented. Hearing none, Chair Brown called for a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Mr. Callan made the motion, seconded by Mr. Culpepper. Without discussion, Chair Brown called for a vote. The School Board Clerk announced there were eleven (11) ayes in favor of the motion to approve the agenda as presented. The motion passed unanimously, 11-0-0.

10. ***Superintendent's Report (second monthly meeting) and recognitions (first and second monthly meetings)***: There was no Superintendent's Report presented at the meeting.

Administrative Recognition: Superintendent Robertson introduced the following appointment, which was approved at the December 10, 2024, School Board meeting: Casey L. Conger, coordinator, health and physical education, Department of Teaching and Learning, as principal for Creeds Elementary School.

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11. Approval of Meeting Minutes

- A. December 10, 2024 Regular School Board Meeting: Chair Brown called for any modifications to the December 10, 2024 regular School Board meeting minutes as presented. Hearing none, Chair Brown called for a motion to approve the December 10, 2024, as presented. Mr. Callan made the motion, seconded by Ms. Rogers. There was a brief discussion regarding the new School Board members being able to vote on the meeting minutes. Without further discussion, Chair Brown called for a vote. The School Board Clerk announced there were eleven (11) ayes in favor of the motion to approve the December 10, 2024, meeting minutes as presented. The motion passed unanimously, 11-0-0.

12. Public Comments (until 8:00 p.m.)

There were seven (7) in-person speakers and two (2) online speakers. The topics included the new School Board; DEI; overcoming challenges; educating all students; Oath of Office; representing the educational institution; library policy; support for the Recovery School; educational excellence; chaplains in schools; National Chaplain Program; parents' rights; ODS and the budget; gifted schools; 5-Year Gifted Plan; Harbor Hope Center; and recovery program.

The Public Comments concluded at 7:07 p.m.

Note: School Board Member, Mr. Culpepper left the meeting at approximately 7:15 p.m.

13. Information

- A. Sustainable Schools: Ryan Hersey, sustainability officer, provided the School Board an update on the Sustainable Schools Committee, considering initiatives, goals, partnerships, and student connections. The following items were reviewed the triple bottom line (social, environmental, and economic), *Compass to 2025* Strategic Framework (Goals 1, 3, 5, and 6), Sustainable Schools Committee, the Great Outdoors Learning Project, composting at Arrowhead Elementary School, and zero energy building at Ocean Lakes Elementary School. Data was shared regarding the electricity used over time at Ocean Lakes Elementary School. Information was shared regarding the installation of solar panels, scratch cooking, serving lines and HVAC, augmented reality sandboxes, and the welding lab at the Technical Career and Education Center.

The presentation continued with questions and comments regarding welding lab and Renaissance Academy; number of seats available for the welding lab; sustainably at schools; creative funding for programs; composting at schools; budget and priorities; and workforce development.

- B. Renaissance Academy Alternative Education Program: Year-Two Implementation Evaluation: Noel Williams, Ph.D., program evaluation specialist, provided the School Board the Renaissance Academy Alternative Education Program: Year-Two Implementation Evaluation Report and administration's recommendations. The Renaissance Academy Alternative Education Program seeks to meet the needs of students who are not experiencing success in regular middle and high school settings. The program offers students support to meet their behavioral, academic, and social-emotional needs.

The year-two implementation evaluation during 2023-2024 focused on the operational components of the program, student characteristics, referral and transition processes to and from Renaissance Academy, staff characteristics and professional learning, and family involvement. The evaluation also included data related to student outcome goals and objectives, stakeholder perceptions, and the cost of the program to the division. Recommendations were included based on the results of the evaluation. The following recommendations were shared – Recommendation #1: continue the Renaissance Academy middle and high school alternative education program with modifications; Recommendation #2: continue working on the recommendation from the year-one evaluation focused on implementing strategies to improve students' relationship skills, self-management skills, and responsible decision-making skills; Recommendation #3: continue working on the

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recommendations from the year-one evaluation to strengthen the transition process from Renaissance Academy to the students' home school; and Recommendation #4: continue working on the recommendation from the year-one evaluation to enhance instructional strategies and academic opportunities. The administration's response was provided by Walter Brower, Jr., Ed.D., senior executive director of high schools. The administration concurred with the recommendations from the program evaluation and will continue the program while addressing the recommendation areas.

The presentation continued with questions and comments regarding chronic absenteeism; transition days; enrollment of students, parental involvement; student characteristics; long and short term enrollment; leadership at Renaissance Academy; mental health providers; parental supports; social workers and school counselors; transition to home school; mentors; graduation and postgraduation plans; attendance, self-discipline; budget; academics and behavior; smaller class sizes; evaluating student process; and request for data on students requesting to staying at Renaissance Academy.

- C. Regional Recovery School Program: Note, a recovery school update was provided to the School Board on December 10, 2024 during the administrative, informal, and workshop session. Robert Jamison, executive director, Office of Student Support Services, provided the School Board information on the Region II Recovery School program proposal and the work of the Region II Steering Committee. The presentation included responses to questions posed by School Board members, a timeline of the completed tasks, information from the program proposal, and final details for the proposed regional recovery school. The following items were reviewed during the presentation: Steering Committee timeline, rationale for Harbor Hope Center, purpose and mission, program description, goals and objectives, staffing, operational hours, calendar, and tentative daily schedule.

An overview of the budget was provided which included projected first year program costs, transportation costs, projected revenue, VOAA (Virginia Opioid Abatement Authority) direct funding and Coordinated Partnership Grant, and shared funding formula. The next steps were shared. The presentation continued with questions and comments regarding program coordinator and staffing; graduating; school districts providing funding; student ratio; number of seats available for students; balancing recovery needs and academic needs; working with community, leveraging resources; revenue; need for recovery school; expansion of recovery schools; monthly updates; and support for the Recovery School.

- D. 403(b) Oversight Committee Revised Charter: Crystal Pate, chief financial officer, provided the School Board information regarding the updated language to the 403(b) Oversight Committee Revised Charter. The 403(b) Oversight Committee was established in February 2020. At its inception, the committee included the Chief Financial Officer, Legal Counsel for the School Board, Director of Consolidated Benefits, Director of Business Services, Chief Human Resources Officer, Data Specialist, Human Resources Specialist, teacher, principal, a School Board member, as well as other key employees involved in supporting the welfare of our staff through the benefits office. The original charter did not account for a retired school board employee. However, since one of the members retired, the board decided to amend the charter to allow for the inclusion of a retired member on the committee.

- 14. Return to public comments if needed:** As noted under Agenda Item #12, the Public Comments concluded at 7:07 p.m.

- 15. Consent Agenda:** Chair Brown read the following items on the Consent Agenda:

- A. Policy Review Committee (PRC) Recommendations: Recommended that the School Board approve Policy Review Committee (PRC) recommendations regarding the amendment of certain policies as recommended by the PRC at its November 21, 2024 meeting.

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1. Policy 6-33/Special Education: The PRC recommends making changes that align with current practices in identifying and evaluating students for special education services, removing the Editor's Notes, and adding referenced documents in the Editor's Notes to the related links.
2. Policy 6-63/Copyrighted Materials: The PRC recommends minor scrivener's changes and adding language that aligns with recent changes to other policies.
3. Policy 6-72/Student Evaluation and Grading: The PRC recommends minor scrivener's changes and removing the reference to the 2017-18 school year.
- B. Cooke Elementary School HVAC Improvements: Recommended that the School Board approve a motion authorizing the Superintendent to execute a contract with Comfort Systems of Virginia for the Cooke Elementary School HVAC Replacements in the amount of \$7,946,555.
- C. Alanton Elementary School Kitchen/Dining HVAC and Scratch Cooking Improvements: Recommended that the School Board approve a motion authorizing the Superintendent to execute a contract with VIRTEXCO for the Alanton Elementary School Kitchen/Dining HVAC & Scratch Cooking Improvements in the amount of \$1,975,000.
- D. Princess Anne Elementary School Kitchen HVAC & Scratch Cooking Improvements: Recommended that the School Board approve a motion authorizing the Superintendent to execute a contract with Spacemakers, Inc for the Princess Anne Elementary School Kitchen HVAC & Scratch Cooking Improvements in the amount of \$855,194.
- E. 411 Integrity Way / Old Seatack Elementary School Temporary Construction Easement: Recommended that the School Board approve the Chair to grant a temporary construction easement at 411 Integrity Way / old Seatack ES for use by the City of Virginia Beach and its contractors in order to improve wetland and floodplain conditions of the Lynnhaven River and its tributaries.
- F. Canvas: Year-Two Comprehensive Evaluation Recommendations: Recommended that the School Board approve the administration's recommendations that were proposed in response to the Canvas: Year-Two Comprehensive Evaluation.

After reading the items on the Consent Agenda, Chair Brown asked if there were any objections to voting on the Consent Agenda as presented. Hearing none, Chair Brown called for a motion to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. Dr. Green made the motion, seconded by Ms. Melnyk. Chair Brown called for a vote. The School Board Clerk announced there were ten (10) ayes in favor of the motion to approve the Consent Agenda as presented: Chair Brown, Vice Chair Weems, Mr. Bohenstiel, Mr. Callan, Mr. Cummings, Ms. Dwyer, Ms. Felton, Dr. Green, Ms. Melnyk, and Ms. Rogers. The motion passed, 10-0-0.

16. Action

- A. Personnel Report / Administrative Appointments: Chair Brown called for a motion to approve the January 14, 2025, personnel report and administrative appointments. Ms. Melnyk made the motion, seconded by Ms. Rogers, that the School Board approve the appointments, and the acceptance of the resignations, retirements and other employment actions as listed on the January 14, 2025, personnel report along with the administrative appointment as recommended by the Superintendent. Without discussion, Chair Brown called for a vote. The School Board Clerk announced there were ten (10) ayes in favor of the motion to approve the January 14, 2025, personnel report and administrative appointments: Chair Brown, Vice Chair Weems, Mr. Bohenstiel, Mr. Callan, Mr. Cummings, Ms. Dwyer, Ms. Felton, Dr. Green, Ms. Melnyk, and Ms. Rogers. The motion passed, 10-0-0.

There were no administrative appointments.

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- 17. Committee, Organization or Board Reports:** The following items were mentioned, Audit Committee Meeting on January 22; Policy Review Committee vacancies; Committee Assignments and submitting requests to the Chair and Vice Chair; updating the school visits list with new School Board Members; Open House at the Technical and Career Education Center on January 15 from 6 pm to 8 pm; Teacher of the Year event on January 31; reminder to the School Board to complete annual Statement of Economic Interest form; FOIA and COIA training.
- 18. Return to Administrative, Informal, Workshop or Closed Session matters:** At 9:26 p.m., Vice Chair Weems made the following motion, seconded by Ms. Melnyk that the School Board recess into Closed Session in accordance with the exceptions to open meetings law set forth in Code of Virginia §2.2-3711, Part A, Paragraphs 7 and 8 as amended, to deliberate on the following matters:
7. Consultation with legal counsel and briefings by staff members or consultants pertaining to actual or probable litigation, where such consultation or briefing in open meeting would adversely affect the negotiating or litigating posture of the public body. For the purposes of this subdivision, "probable litigation" means litigation that has been specifically threatened or on which the public body or its legal counsel has a reasonable basis to believe will be commenced by or against a known party. Nothing in this subdivision shall be construed to permit the closure of a meeting merely because an attorney representing the public body is in attendance or is consulted on a matter.
 8. Consultation with legal counsel employed or retained by a public body regarding specific legal matters requiring the provision of legal advice by such counsel. Nothing in this subdivision shall be construed to permit the closure of a meeting merely because an attorney representing the public body is in attendance or is consulted on a matter.
- Namely to discuss:
- A. Status of pending litigation or administrative cases.
 - B. Consultation with legal counsel regarding probable litigation and pending litigation matters.

Chair Brown called for a vote. The School Board Clerk announced there were nine (9) ayes in favor of the motion to recess into Closed Session: Chair Brown, Vice Chair Weems, Mr. Bohensiel, Mr. Callan, Ms. Dwyer, Ms. Felton, Dr. Green, Ms. Melnyk, and Ms. Rogers. The motion passed, 9-0-0.

The School Board recessed into Closed Session at 9:30 p.m.

Individuals present for discussion in the order in which matter were discussed:

- A. Status of pending litigation or administrative cases; and
- B. Consultation with legal counsel regarding probable litigation and pending litigation matters: School Board Members: Chair Brown, Vice Chair Weems, Mr. Bohensiel, Mr. Callan, Ms. Dwyer, Ms. Felton, Dr. Green, Ms. Melnyk, and Ms. Rogers; Kamala H. Lannetti, school board attorney; Donald E. Robertson, Jr., Ph.D., superintendent; Cheryl R. Woodhouse, chief of staff; Darnita L. Trotman, Ed.D., chief human resources officer; and Regina M. Toneatto, school board clerk.

Note: School Board Member, Ms. Melnyk left the Closed Session at 9:32 p.m. and returned at 9:34 p.m.

The School Board reconvened at 10:18 p.m.

Certification of Closed Session: Vice Chair Weems read the Certification of Closed Session:

WHEREAS, the School Board of the City of Virginia Beach has convened a closed meeting on this date pursuant to an affirmative recorded vote and in accordance with the provisions of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act; and

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WHEREAS, Section 2.2-3712 (D) of the Code of Virginia requires a certification by this School Board that such closed meeting was conducted in conformity with Virginia law.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the School Board of the City of Virginia Beach hereby certifies that, to the best of each member's knowledge, (i) only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements by Virginia law were discussed in the closed meeting to which this certification applies, and (ii) only such public business matters as were identified in the motion by which the closed meeting was convened were heard, discussed, or considered.

Ms. Melnyk made the motion, seconded by Ms. Dwyer. Without discussion, Chair Brown called for a vote. The School Board Clerk announced there were nine (9) ayes in favor of the motion for Certification of Closed Session: Chair Brown, Vice Chair Weems, Mr. Bohenstiel, Mr. Callan, Ms. Dwyer, Ms. Felton, Dr. Green, Ms. Melnyk, and Ms. Rogers. The motion passed, 9-0-0.

Vice Chair Weems made the following motion – I move that the School Board Attorney is authorized to respond to the Demand for Settlement by M. McIver and that the School Board Attorney is authorized to arrange to join the amicus brief as requested by Fairfax Public Schools. Ms. Melnyk seconded the motion. Chair Brown called for a vote. The School Board Clerk announced there were nine (9) ayes in favor of the motion by Vice Chair Weems: Chair Brown, Vice Chair Weems, Mr. Bohenstiel, Mr. Callan, Ms. Dwyer, Ms. Felton, Dr. Green, Ms. Melnyk, and Ms. Rogers. The motion passed, 9-0-0.

19. Adjournment: Chair Brown adjourned the meeting at 10:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Regina M. Toneatto, Clerk of the School Board

Approved:

Kathleen J. Brown, School Board Chair