



APPROVED BY THE BOARD ON MARCH 21, 2017

**BURLINGTON BOARD OF SCHOOL COMMISSIONERS MEETING MINUTES  
Hunt Middle School Library  
February 14, 2017**

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m.

**1. Opening Items**

A. Pledge of Allegiance

B. Roll Call

**Commissioners:**

Mark Barlow , Lauren Berrizbeitia , Brian Cina ,  
Liz Curry , Susanmarie Harrington , Anne Judson , David Kirk ,  
Kat Kleman , Kathy Olwell , Mark Porter , Stephanie Seguíno ,  
Miriam Stoll

**Student Representatives:**

Jacob Bucci   
Isabella Weston

**Administration:**

Yaw Obeng, Superintendent   
Minute Recorder, Executive Assistant Brittany Nevins   
Stephanie Phillips, Senior Director Teaching & Learning   
Nikki Fuller, Senior Director Human Resources & Equity Affairs   
Paul Irish, Senior Director Infrastructure & Technology   
Nathan Lavery, Senior Director of Finance   
Elizabeth Atkins, Accounting Manager   
Henri Sparks, Director of Equity   
Miriam Ehtesham-Cating, Director of EL   
Doug Davis, Director of Food Service   
Marty Spaulding, Property Services Director

*The Board wishes to recognize, welcome and thank those that are providing language interpretation of the Board proceedings. The Board's commitment that all children receive equitable academic services must ensure that New American parents are welcome and can attend meetings, understand the process and be actively engaged. Interpretation of proceedings honors, respects and values our New American parents and students. The Board asks the public and media to respect and understand the importance of this interpretation.*

## 2. Approval of Agenda

*Motion (Commissioner Barlow/ Commissioner Orwell) to approve agenda  
Passed Unanimously*

## 3. Public Comments/Questions

### A. Public Comment

- Olivia Hunt- Junior at BHS, Read and Submitted the following statement:

*“My name is Olivia Hunt and I am a current junior at BHS. I am concerned about the schedule for next year. I feel that it will detract from the quality of my class time.*

*I feel that switching to a seven block schedule with a “block zero” at the beginning of the day will lead to students being more tired, and less productive. Many studies have shown that school start time should be pushed backwards, instead of brought forward. I know that for myself, I want to take eight classes, but I am receptive in the morning. The administration recently told my class that “block zero” was put in the beginning of the day to allow students to go home earlier, thus letting them get their homework done faster, and go to bed earlier. However, student athletics practices and game times as I understand it, will not be changed, so if a student has an away game and does not get home until 10:00 or 11:00, as has sometimes happened, they would not be able to be productive at 7:00 in the morning having not gotten enough sleep.*

*I also feel that there is an issue of transportation with the new schedule. For example, if I was to take the bus to school for 7 o'clock I would need to catch the bus at 6:30, the earliest the bus comes, making it nearly impossible for me to get to class on time. I feel that this issue of the block being so early, and there not being adequate transportation to get to school will discourage students from taking eight classes, and getting the most out of their high school education. So one of my questions is, will transportation be provided for for all students to get to school for these early hours.*

*The other issue I have with the new schedule is the Friday classes. It is proposed that on Fridays the blocks will be only 35 minutes each, and that we will get out of school at 12:45. I feel that a 35 minute block is not long enough to be productive. In all of my classes it takes at least ten minutes for everyone to settle in, the teacher to explain what we are doing, and everyone to get started. This would mean that we would only have 25 minutes left, definitely not enough time to do anything. I am also concerned with the fact that I would have eight classes on one day, I don't have room to bring all of the items I need for eight classes in my backpack, leading for some materials to be left at home. I feel that these Friday classes will end up as wasted time.*

*I understand that we will be spending the same amount of time in classes next year, as we do this year. But I feel that it is the quality of the class time that counts, not the quantity.”*

- Karen Ruben- PTO representative, gave thanks for the community event on Saturday. She said it was a great event and appreciated the opportunity to strategize with legislators.

7:14 Comment Section closed

#### B. Board Reflections

- Commissioner Stoll- Thank you Olivia for raising your points. Your comment about having too much weight to carry in your backpack was particularly telling. She was also concerned that the start time was being pushed up. What helps is going to bed later and starting later. According to research, this is more optimal for learning.
- Student Representative Isabella Weston- There is a bit of a loss if you do not take the class.
- Student Representative Jacob Bucci- Students are frustrated and feel like they have not had opportunities to provide input. Students are looking for more input in the process. Students want to come to school and learn and have a schedule that allows them to learn the best.
- Commissioner Cina- It is great to hear from students directly to speak to the board. It is important to have the message told directly to the board rather than go through layers of administrative communications. Additionally, he is a social worker, and agrees with previous comments that Commissioner Stoll put forward around brain research.
- Commissioner Curry- As a parent, she is concerned about the potential issues of this schedule change. She is worried regarding this block of time on Friday and students not having close supervision during this time. She has heard that a barrier has been transportation not having a delayed pickup. She worked for CCTA before. It is not impossible. She hopes this isn't an excuse for start time. It is important to be customer centric.
- Commissioner Klemen- Agree comments. Concerned that she will not be able to bring her daughter to school that early.
- Superintendent Obeng- The administration hasn't received a final proposal. There will be a forum on February 20th for parents to be able to come and ask questions.
- Commissioner Barlow- When is the community forum? At this time Superintendent Obeng announced that the forum is still being scheduled. Since the meeting a communication has gone out by the Burlington High School with the following invitation:

***Invitation to BHS Course Scheduling Process***

## ***Community Input Meeting***

*BHS is considering changes to the student schedule next year in order to provide improved opportunities and experiences for all students at the high school. Our teaching staff have been working the past few months on developing proposals for the new course schedule. Student input has already been gathered through student advisory groups and through innovation classes. This meeting will be an opportunity for students, parents, community members, and staff to give further input before final decisions are made and presented to the administration.*

***Time:*** 6:00 - 7:30 PM

***Date:*** Monday, February 20, 2017

***Location:*** Burlington High School Cafeteria

*The intention of this meeting is to share, to learn and to add to our information pool before decisions are made. We hope you can join us.*

*Childcare and refreshments will be provided.*

*Please RSVP your childcare needs to [csulliva@bsdvt.org](mailto:csulliva@bsdvt.org) or 802-864-8411*

## **4. Board Report**

### **A. Student Report**

Student Representative Bucci has been attending student council meetings across the district. At Hunt, they are hoping to start a school store, plan a school dance, a talent show, and find ways to celebrate their sports teams. At Edmunds they are working on transforming library into a Makerspace and design art projects for new space. They are having a school wide rock paper scissors content and plan an elementary field trip.

Student Representative Weston described that there was a run down of the proposed new schedule at school and playoffs are coming up.

### **B. Policy Governance Update**

The Burlington School District Model Policies Document is going to finance committee on Feb 21st (Consultant Michael Healy is attending). Commissioners Harrington and Curry are meeting with Michael Healy again on Feb. 23. On February 28 there will be a Governance, Policy, and Advocacy Committee Meeting to go through the full document. During the March 13th Full Board meeting there will be a proposal to approve the final document.

C. Negotiations with Paraeducators Update

Should progress through this shortly Chair Mark Porter states. Meetings have taken place and the public should receive an update soon.

D. Summary on February 11, 2017 Education Forum

About 12 legislators were in attendance at the Community Forum. Chair Mark Porter expresses thanks to Commissioner Cina and Superintendent Obeng. There was a great turnout and robust conversations occurred. About 50+ people were present Chair Mark Porter believes.

**5. Superintendent's Report**

A. Black History Month Recognition

Superintendent Obeng told his story of receiving a Ghanaian “Kente Cloth” from his Great Aunt that he has been wearing this month in meetings and in schools to celebrate Black History Month. He expressed the need for an inclusive approach, stating that it isn't about just a month of recognition but ongoing, intentional recognition of diversity. Superintendent Obeng also shared a framed picture of an event that occurred in his previous work in Canada that the Nelson Mandela Children's Fund put on. At this special event Nelson Mandela went around a shook hands with many students, which was a beautiful and powerful exchange.

B. ESSA State Plan

Stephanie Phillips, Senior Director Teaching & Learning - ESSA was passed into law in 2015. A template has been put together with the hope that schools would be able to draft their own plans together with key themes in mind. Vermont finished their draft plan in December 2016, then there was an open comment period. The window for public comment closed on February 11, 2017. The Agency of Education is looking at this feedback and on April 3rd, 2017 they will be submitting a proposal to the federal government. Next month Stephanie will be giving a more in depth presentation to the board, and upon Commissioner Curry's request, will include administration concerns regarding ESSA state plans.

### C. Report on Superintendent Goals for February

Report documents can be found at [www.boarddocs.com](http://www.boarddocs.com) embedded within 2/14/17 Board of Commissioners Meeting Agenda.

#### **Superintendent Goal 2: Develop a Comprehensive Plan to Promote and Include a Welcoming District**

- Commissioner Cina had question regarding use of the word “anti-semitic” and not using other terms as well, specifically religious terms, regarding other matters of discrimination. Curry clarified that “semitic” is not always a religious term.
- Commissioner Orwell had a question regarding socio-economic discrimination and whether that will be considered in this plan moving forward. Superintendent Obeng said they will consider that.

#### **Burlington School District Communications Plan**

- Commissioner Curry had some suggestions/requests she would like to put forward. Superintendent Obeng stated that part of the plan will include board feedback opportunities and that the administration will communicate with them around when that will be.

### D. Budget Document

The budget document can be found at [www.boarddocs.com](http://www.boarddocs.com) embedded within 2/14/17 Board of Commissioners Meeting Agenda.

After a brief presentation on the document by Superintendent Obeng, the administration received a standing applause by the board.

- Commissioner Cina acknowledges that this is a very impressive document. He gave feedback that many public questions have been addressed in the document and it is truly a great model.
- Commissioner Harrington echoes what other colleagues have said. She sees a lot of real listening and real thinking about how to move forward with a lot of feedback considered. She sees meaningful attempts to gather feedback from people who cannot always make it, to consider who isn't always present. She sees great work here. She is grateful to those who have made that engagement possible.

- Chair Porter recognizes the clarity of the document and it could be an understandable document to the public. He asked if the board and administration could steer the public to this particular document, while still having other documents to date archived. Superintendent Obeng agrees and would like to have one document that can be updated over time that can be a strong resource for the public.
- Commissioner Curry recognizes Senior Director of Finance Nathan Lavery for his hard work on this document and appreciates the per pupil data in particular.

#### E. Resolution Honoring Boards

Executive Assistant to the Superintendent, Brittany Nevins, read H.C. R. 2016 to honor school boards for their work. The resolution can be found at [www.boarddocs.com](http://www.boarddocs.com) embedded within 2/14/17 Board of Commissioners Meeting Agenda. Commissioner Cina pointed out that there is a law that had been passed already with a similar resolution, which can be found [here](#).

Superintendent's Report closed at 7:56 PM.

### 6. Committee Reports

#### 1. D&E Report

Commissioner Stoll- D and E minutes are posted and Board members are directed there for more details. Reviewed recurring agenda items (Monthly District Suspension Report and Report on Special Education issues). Meeting primarily devoted to discussion of possibility of the Board developing a public statement in support of our commitment to education of ALL Burlington children regardless of immigration status. All Board members present were in favor of the Board coming out with a statement that reiterates our commitment and also outlines the existing District policies and procedures that support this and Federal laws addressing education that prohibit us sharing protected information. Board members want the public to know that we do not collect information on immigration status. Superintendent Obeng and his staff will draft a statement to be reviewed by the D & E committee at the March meeting.

#### 2. Finance Report

Commissioner Cina- Finance minutes are posted and Board members are directed there for more details. Previous minutes have been clarified and the committee reviewed the budget timeline. They also reviewed business office reports and received the annual report. The board will receive a copy in the near future.

### 3. GPA Report

*Motion to Approve Revised Mission/Vision/Core Beliefs ([www.boarddocs.com](http://www.boarddocs.com) 6C, GPA Report, motion embedded within), Seconded by Chair Porter  
Passed Unanimously*

Revise to:

*The mission of the Burlington School District is to graduate students who:*

- Value different cultures
- Engage with the community
- Communicate effectively
- Think creatively
- Skillfully solve problems
- Achieve at their highest academic, intellectual and personal potential

*Vision:*

**Burlington School District: Cultivating caring, creative, and courageous people - join the journey!**

*We believe:*

- Every child can succeed
- Families and community are partners in educating our children
- Diversity and inclusion promote strong schools and communities
- A welcoming, supportive climate fosters learning
- Self-reflection and accountability improve our practices

Governance, Policy, and Advocacy minutes are posted and Board members are directed there for more details. Commissioner Curry asks that board members email her with ideas for including the public in legislative advocacy.

Superintendent Obeng shared that about 50 people signed up at the Community Forum on Public Education Funding expressing that they were interested in legislative advocacy.

### 4. ITC Report

Infrastructure and Technology minutes are posted and Board members are directed there for more details.

- Commissioner Stoll- Is there still a plan to develop a committee to discuss Burlington High School building options?
- Commissioner Barlow answered- First we need to figure out where the district is at in terms of needs and reconvene a committee in the near future.
- Superintendent Obeng- Staff is meeting with architects to understand costs and options to be able to intelligently engage meaningfully with the public to receive input.
- Commissioner Stoll suggests that the district reach out to those who have expressed interest to give a tentative timeline.

#### 5. Curriculum

Curriculum minutes are now posted on the website (DRAFT January 10, 2017) and Board members are directed there for more details.

Commissioner Harrington- Looked at different ways in which the Partnership for Change has worked with the district. Looking as well at the high school in terms of internships, etc. needed.

- Stoll- Has heard concerns about math and difficulty for children to make it to calculus.
- Superintendent Obeng and Senior Director of Curriculum Stephanie Phillips clarified these concerns, saying that there is indeed a path to calculus and that Algebra will be offered again.

### 7. Approval of Consent Agenda Items

#### A. *Consent Agenda*

B. Special Board Meeting Minutes of January 8, 2017

*C. Motion (Commissioner Kleman / Commissioner Berrizbeitia) to approve Consent Motion made by Commissioner Harrington to remove Curriculum minutes from agenda (Agenda Item C) to bring forward at next meeting (Commissioner Curry/Commissioner Stoll).*

D. Full Board Meeting Minutes of January 10, 2017

E. Infrastructure and Technology Committee Minutes of January 17, 2017

- F. Finance Committee Minutes of January 17, 2017
- G. Governance, Policy, and Advocacy Committee Minutes of January 24, 2017
- H. Special Board Meeting Minutes of January 24, 2017
- I. Special Board Meeting Minutes of January 31, 2017
- J. Planning Committee Minutes of February 7, 2017
- K. Diversity and Equity Committee Minutes of February 7, 2017

**8. Executive Session**

- A. Motion to consider Executive Session to discuss Contract Negotiations where premature disclosure to the public could put the District at a disadvantage.

*(Commissioner Curry/Commissioner Cina) to enter into executive session  
Passed unanimously*

**9. Adjournment**

- A. Motion (Commissioner \_\_/ Commissioner \_\_) to adjourn at \_\_ p.m.

*Minutes will be updated with Adjournment motion.*