



NOT FINAL UNTIL APPROVED BY THE BOARD

**BURLINGTON BOARD OF SCHOOL COMMISSIONERS**  
**Board Meeting Minutes**  
**Hunt Middle School Library**  
**November 14, 2017**  
**6 PM**

The meeting was called to order at 6:04 p.m.

**1. Opening Items**

A. Pledge of Allegiance

B. Roll Call

**Commissioners:**

Mark Barlow X, Lauren Berrizbeitia X, Liz Curry X,  
Susanmarie Harrington X, Anne Judson X, David Kirk   , Kat  
Kleman   , Mark Porter X, Stephanie Seguino X, Jeff Wick X,  
Ryan McLaren X, Kathy Olwell X

**Student Representatives:**

Isabella Weston X  
Isaac Jeneman X

**Administration:**

Yaw Obeng, Superintendent X  
Brittany Nevins, Minute Recorder, Executive Assistant X  
Stephanie Phillips, Senior Director Teaching & Learning     
Nikki Fuller, Senior Director Human Resources & Equity Affairs X  
Nathan Lavery, Senior Director of Finance X  
Marty Spaulding, Property Services Director X  
Miriam Ehtesham-Cating, Director of English Learners Program X  
Kim Fankhauser, EL Teacher at BTC/BHS X

*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*

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*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**

- A. Chair Porter asked commissioners if anything on the consent agenda needs to be discussed.

Commissioner Seguíno asked that the Woodchip proposal (8C) be removed from the consent agenda.

Chair Porter made a recommendation to move 8C to 7D under the Superintendent Report and move 7D (Good News) to 7E.

Commissioner Wick asked that 8B (Financial Reports) be moved from consent agenda. Chair Porter Recommends that 8B be moved to 7E and 7E (Good News) will become 7F.

Chair Porter asked to remove 5E (Negotiations Update) and 12A (Executive Session).

- B. Approval of Agenda

*Motion to approve agenda (Commissioner Harrington/Judson)*

*Passes Unanimously*

**3. Public Comment**

- A. Comments/Questions from the Public

Stephanie Waite: Mother of first grade son in the school district. Provides ideas for reducing the achievement gap. Testimony placed on file with the Burlington School District.

Andrew Styles: 5th grade teacher at Edmunds Elementary and Vice-President of the BEA. Testimony placed on file with the Burlington School District.

Kolby LaMarche: 10th grader at HMS described challenges with forming a Junior republicans committee. The student approached high school administration on where to post posters and thanked Principal Racicot for helping to retain the right to free speech.

**4. Focus on Learning**

- A. English Learners Data Update (1)

Director of English Learning Miriam Ehtesham-Cating and Kim Fankhauser, a EL Teacher at BTC and BHS gave a presentation. Please visit [Board Docs](#) to view the presentation.

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Commissioner Barlow asks if other school districts have multilingual liaisons? Miriam responded saying yes in Winooski, but not a widespread practice amongst other schools.

Superintendent Obeng summarized and stated that the District is committed to a data-driven approach to systems.

**5. Board Report**

**A. Board Plaque Presentation for Honorable Mention by the VSBA**

Superintendent Obeng presented a statement that was read at the awards dinner.

*The Burlington School Board also deserves recognition and is being acknowledged as this year's Honorable Mention. Two significant accomplishments were dominant in the nomination materials: equity and fiscal management. Student performance has been a major emphasis for the board, focusing on bridging the achievement gap and celebrating the Burlington's unique diversity. Suspensions have declined dramatically, having been largely replaced by restorative practices. On the financial side, the board has pulled itself from a legacy of consistent budget shortfalls to achieving multiple deficit-free years with clean audits. And they've accomplished all of this while reassessing and remodeling governance, creating new mission/vision/core beliefs statements, and designing and implementing a strategic plan. During their difficult negotiations, the Board maintained its focus on assuring the best possible education for Burlington students, ultimately holding the line on the most important contract terms.*

Former Burlington School Board Commissioners Kyle Dodson and Miriam Stoll were involved in the nomination process for the award. They were part of a small team that recommended the School Board for the award and were in attendance at the Board Meeting for this portion of the agenda.

**B. Commissioner Berrizbeitia recognition and farewell**

Commissioner Judson shares remarks from some Board members regarding Commissioner Berrizbeitia who is moving outside of the District and resigning in her role.

*From the Burlington School Board  
November 14, 2017*

*The following are words from various Board members.*

*Lauren has opened her heart and her home to so many people. She's helped welcome countless New Americans to our city and our district; she's modeled for the rest of us what it means to build relationships that help bring out the best in*

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*everyone. She has worked hard, persisting through difficult times, always keeping her eye on the most important priorities, the marvelous potential of all Burlington's children. (Susanmarie Harrington)*

*Lauren was an active member of the Diversity and Equity committee. She was a clear and unequivocal voice in support of New American students and those from marginalized groups. She was a moral voice that urged us to do better, and to embrace the goal of serving all of our students. (Stephanie Sequino)*

*Thank you Lauren for being a persistent and powerful voice for our New American community and for all your work on the board, especially the Diversity and Equity Committee! Best of luck in Winooski. They are lucky to have you! (Kathy Olwell)*

*Lauren was the "family support person" for one new American family many years ago. She refers to the children this family's children as her grandchildren. The family has grown, so Lauren now has great-grandchildren. One example of going above and beyond to help our New American population is enrolling preschoolers at the Sara Holbrook Center and then driving them daily to school. She is determined to make sure her grandchildren and great-grandchildren receive high quality preschool education before entering the Burlington Schools. And that has made a difference in those children being Kindergarten ready to learn. (Anne Judson)*

*Thank you for everything you have done for our Burlington students.*

Commissioner Porter and Commissioner Curry also shared brief remarks acknowledging Commissioner Berrizbeitia's service to the Board.

C. Report on VSBA Annual Meeting

Chair Porter and Commissioner Judson attended the VSBA Annual meeting. On Thursday there was a training and vote on resolutions. The innovative center resolution was not approved. There were about 45 school districts that were represented there. Commissioner Judson also shared observations around tensions that seemed to exist between some participants at the conference and the VSBA.

Commissioner Olwell stated that no resolutions came from a Vermont School District which is very concerning to her. The resolutions themselves were concerning to her and she was concerned that the Board did not discuss the resolutions before voting on them.

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Commissioner Curry requested that from here on out we have Board delegation on votes like these. There needs to be an agreement as a Board on whether or not the School Board is going to represent a position. Commissioner Curry wanted to know the ways in which policy governance interacts with this.

Commissioner Harrington suggested that a discussion in September of the future Board work plan occur on the topic of “preparation for VSBA.”

Commissioner Seguíno recalled discussing this over the summer. She reminded the Board that there was a recommendation by Commissioner Olwell that the Board appoint a liaison to the VSBA.

Commissioner Seguíno supported Commissioner Olwell’s concerns and supported this idea.

Commissioner Barlow stated that it is unclear on how these resolutions came to be proposed to the VSBA. Commissioner Barlow stated that this process is an opportunity to create and pass resolutions that the VSBA can put forward. He suggested that perhaps the VSBA liaison could help coordinate this.

Commissioner Olwell clarified that the VSBA stated that they didn’t get any proposals so the VSBA chose to select other recommendations.

#### D. Diversity & Equity Update

Commissioner Harrington gave an update on the community forums that occurred over the last month. The committee has yet to review the input from those but will review that information soon.

Commissioner Harrington met with the Superintendent of Bellingham and gave a report to the Board on lessons learned:

- They have a program by which each of their 5 board members gets assigned points of connection with their 22 schools plus 3 administrative areas (such as the school food program). So each board member might be assigned, say, 5 schools, and each of those schools would invite the board member to 1 or 2 events during the year (say, a concert, an assembly, whatever). It's a way for the board to stay a little connected to what goes on in schools, and provides a way for schools to invite a board member to come. Sometimes a board member might spend half a day in the school and the principal/super would help coordinate the schedule.
- They also have school visits, once a month, 7:30-8:30. At 7:15 people can arrive at the school, have some refreshments, and then the school hosts the board for an hour of learning. Point is to have engagement, not a lecture;super helps the

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principals choose 2-3 things to highlight. Sometimes students are involved, sometimes parents or teachers too. Lots of flexibility in format. The super helps the school tell its story to the board.

- Study sessions: they identify 3-4 topics the board wants to learn more about and build those into the schedule; super helps plan them. For example they recently did an hour with the district lawyer on legislative changes that affect them. It is a strategy for avoiding lots of random questions through the year.
- He told me more about their community linkage sessions.

E. Negotiations Update

*This item was removed from the agenda (see notes from 2A)*

**6. Student Commissioners report**

Student Representative Isaac Jenemann shared that the school play will be starting soon.

Student Representative Bella Weston shared that Senator Sanders is coming to talk about opioid treatment with BHS students on Friday November 17, 2017. She stated that she and Isaac will be reporting on the budget during Senior Lavery's presentation (7C).

Commissioner Harrington asked about the dress code and if that issue had been resolved.

Bella responded that there is a focus group that is working on changing procedure in the BHS handbook.

**7. Superintendent's Report**

A. Capital Planning Presentation (1)

Director of Property Services Marty Spaulding gave a presentation to the Board. Please visit [Board Docs](#) to view the presentation.

Commissioner Wick- Do we own IRA Central Offices? Marty responded, "yes."

Commissioner Curry- Is there an energy efficiency consultant? Marty responded that they have not yet done so and are not at that stage in the projects yet.

Commissioner Curry responded that it is very important to focus on this soon in the process. She recommended that when the District does energy projections to ask for building energy modeling to see savings potential captured.

Commissioner Curry- Would the South Union street entrance at Edmunds Middle School not be used? Marty responded that it would be used, but would not be a primary entrance.

Commissioner Curry- Is there a plan for accessibility to the cafeteria? Marty responded that this is part of the proposal.

Would plan B with North and South Pre-K Centers improve transportation costs? Marty said yes.

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Commissioner Curry summarizes that the presentation has a great vision, a lot of work has been done, and that this information is exciting.

Commissioner Barlow- Great job. Seems like using IRA as a swing space is a very obvious purpose. Could we sell IRA Allen after all capital projects occur? Marty responded that this could be a possibility.

Commissioner Olwell- Where will Central Office staff go?

Marty responded that the District is proposing keeping staff at IRA Allen in the meantime.

Chair Porter: What is the curriculum impact of removing gym from cafeteria?

Marty responded that currently there is an inadequate overflow for gym space when gym is in use and this has negative learning impacts.

Chair Porter asks if the District is working on opportunities for public/private use?

Superintendent Obeng talked about how we want to utilize space for alternative programming. This is an opportunity for collaborating with community partners.

Commissioner McLaren asks where Central Office staff would go in Plan A.

Marty responded that Central Office staff would need to lease space.

#### B. Student Demographic Info (2.1)

Superintendent Obeng shared Demographic Student Info with the Board.

Please visit [Board Docs](#) to view the Document.

Superintendent Obeng shared that the District used all November numbers so the comparison is consistent. The special education number is likely not a true reflection of the needs that the District has. There are many students who are not represented in this report who do not have the higher level designation of services required.

The push for student information this fall was important for quality data and reflecting existing need for funding.

Commissioner Judson asks if first graph includes Pre-K Numbers? Superintendent Obeng said no.

Commissioner Barlow - Does the BHS number include BTC? Superintendent Obeng said yes.

Commissioner Curry- Does the state have a methodology for enrollment projections? Superintendent Obeng stated that he is not sure what the specific methodology is but staff feel it is not always accurate.

Commissioner Seguino asked if the District was looking at trends in schools across the data.

Superintendent Obeng stated that there is a balance challenge between Hunt and Edmunds middle schools and that the District has worked on measures to alleviate this, such as transportation solutions.

Commissioner Seguino suggested that it could be looked at from an equalized-pupil perspective. How would it look from a needs-based perspective?

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Commissioner Wick- Is there any predictability around english language learners coming in down the road? Superintendent Obeng stated that the District is in touch with the Refugee Resettlement Program but there is no way to entirely predict the future on this topic.

C. Budget Process Update

Director of Finance Nathan Lavery presented to the Board. Please visit [Board Docs](#) to view the presentation.

Student Representative Bella Weston stated that students had a bit of trouble with this process as there is not a broader understanding of the budget process. She and student Representative Isaac Jenemann stated that they received feedback from students that classroom supplies were needed as well as an increase in direct teacher and student contact. Textbooks are also needed. When considering high school renovations, Energy efficiency gender-neutral bathrooms should be included.

Commissioner Curry thinks that the \$1.5 M gap referred to in Marty Spaulding's presentation could be made up through energy efficiency. Having that payback calculation would be helpful.

Commissioner Barlow stated that the Board would like to do a meeting with community and legislators in December. It would be helpful to have information prepared on the base tax rate prior to that meeting. Perhaps a one pager could be created for this.

Commissioner McLaren applauded the work to assign teachers to meet enrollment need that is based on student need. This is empowering and a great practice.

Chair Porter reminded the Board that the budget process is coming up and more meetings might be required in the coming months.

D. Wood Chip Bid (Moved here- see 2A notes)

Commissioner Seguino asks: would the Board want to have more requirements on bid approval, such as livable wages, etc.?  
Discussion will be tabled to a future meeting.

*Motion to award the bid to our previous year supplier Cousineau Forest Products at \$60.00 per ton. (Commissioner Curry/Commissioner Olwell)  
Passes unanimously*

E. Financial Reports (Moved here- see 2A notes)

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Commissioner Wick: Why were some aspects highlighted to be monitored more closely?

Director of Finance described this nuance on the report. Please visit [Board Docs](#) to view the reports.

Commissioner McLaren applauded administration for financial position and not dipping into that line of credit.

D. Good News

Superintendent Obeng invited parent Kate Stein to share good news. The BHS Scholars team and the Hunt Middle School A Team placed very high in recent competitions. The Hunt A team was undefeated.

**8. Consent Agenda**

A. Licensed Employment Contracts

~~B. Routine financial Reports (removed from consent agenda- see 2A notes)~~

~~C. Wood Chip Bid (removed from consent agenda- see 2A notes)~~

*~~The Administration recommends: Motion to award the bid to our previous year supplier Cousineau Forest Products at \$60.00 per ton.~~*

D. DRAFT June 12, 2017 Policy Governance Subcommittee Minutes

E. DRAFT August 8, 2017 Board of Commissioners Meeting Minutes

F. DRAFT August 21, 2017 Negotiations Committee Minutes

G. DRAFT October 10, 2017 Board of Commissioners Meeting Minutes

H. DRAFT October 12, 2017 Diversity & Equity Committee Minutes

I. DRAFT October 24, 2017 Special Board Meeting Minutes

J. DRAFT November 7, 2017 Board Training Retreat Minutes

*Motion to approve to approve consent agenda (Commissioner Seguino/Commissioner Wick)*

*Passes unanimously*

**9. Board Monitoring of Superintendent-Prepared Reports**

A. Board Approval of October Monitoring Reports

*Motion to accept Superintendent's findings of "in compliance" in agreement with Policy 2.6 (Commissioner Seguino/Commissioner Wick)*

*Unanimous approval*

*Motion to accept Superintendent's findings of "in compliance" in agreement with Policy 2.8 (Commissioner Harrington/ Commissioner Seguino)*

*Unanimous approval*

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B. 2.2 Hiring and Treatment of Staff

Superintendent Obeng and Director of Human Resources Nikki Fuller presented the 2.2. Monitoring Report to the Board. Please visit [Board Docs](#) to view the Document.

Commissioner Judson asks how many Certified staff we have in the District and if turnover is represented in the report. Director of Human Resources Nikki Fuller stated that there were about 450 certified positions total. Superintendent Obeng stated that a report can have an analysis of turnover in the future.

Commissioner Seguíno recommended having trend data in the future.

Commissioner Barlow: Are applicants external or internal? Director of Human Resources Nikki Fuller stated that there are both represented in the data.

Commissioner Curry stated that reports like these have come very far over the last few years. She stated concern regarding expansion of the definition of diversity and how this impacts trend data. Recommended having a conversation around “diversity” goals and having a clear baseline definition and metrics that will be used.

Commissioner Harrington recommended possibly adding policy language on policy 2.2.5. to address this

Chair Porter recommended tabling discussion to future agenda.

*Motion to accept Superintendent's findings of “in compliance” in agreement with Policy 2.2 (Commissioner McLaren/Judson)*

Commissioner Curry questioned compliance on number 1 in policy 2.2.

Commissioner Curry brought up an instance on August 8, 2016 and stated that the Superintendent had not presented a report that the Board has asked for.

Chair Porter recommended that there is further inquiry about the grievance

Commissioner Curry is referring to.

*Motion passes unanimously*

C. 2.4 Planning and Budgeting

Superintendent Obeng and Director of Finance Nathan Lavery presented Monitoring Report 2.4 to the Board. Please visit [Board Docs](#) to view the Document.

Commissioner Olwell asked when when the Board is going to see the strategic plan. Superintendent Obeng stated that there are a variety of updates on the Strategic Plan presented throughout the Board Calendar. Commissioner Curry also stated that the Strategic Plan is on the website.

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Chair Porter recommended that a future agenda item be regarding how the strategic plan is presented.

*Motion to accept Superintendent's findings of "in compliance" in agreement with Policy 2.2 (Commissioner Barlow/Commissioner Curry)  
Passes unanimously*

D. Discussion of Non-Compliance/Compliance

Superintendent Obeng gave a brief update on his conversation with Policy Governance consultant Michael Healy. He shared that he is going to have Michael Healy come and speak at a future meeting. Superintendent Obeng stated that the Board needed to make space in agendas to have these conversations regarding Policy Governance.

**10. Board Monitoring on its own policies**

A. Recommended Policy Change for Policy 4.3.2

*4.3.2: Board meeting agendas will be determined by the Board Chair, and may be modified at the meeting by a majority vote of the Board.*

*(a) ~~A Board member may recommend or request an item for Board discussion by submitting the item to the Chair no later than five days before the agenda is to be warned.~~ No later than five days prior to warning an agenda, the Chair shall solicit agenda items from other commissioners*

*(b) ~~Only the majority of the Board can remove an item from the consent agenda for discussion.~~*

*Items may be moved out of the consent agenda section at the request of any commissioner prior to approval of the agenda. No motion or vote of the board is required with respect to a request to move an item out of the consent agenda.*

*When a member of the board requests that an item be moved out of the consent agenda, the Chair shall decide where to place that item on the agenda.*

*Move to accept proposed changes (Commissioner Harrington/Commissioner Curry)*

*Unanimous Approval*

B. 4.2 Board Job Description

Commissioner Barlow stated that the Board was at that point at hour 4 and that this section was a very important section of the agenda. Recommended tabling this item to a future meeting where it can be discussed more fully.

Commissioner Olwell agreed that this is a very important agenda item.

Chair Porter mentioned that the Board should remember that they are only three months past the adoption of policy governance and that the Board is still in a transition period.

Chair Porter recommended this item go to a future agenda.

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## 11. Meeting Evaluation and Follow Up

### A. Review and Evaluate Meeting

Commissioner Harrington: Too much reporting, not enough discussion

Commissioner Wick: Interesting and helpful information given to the Board

Commissioner Judson: Presentations were informative, but could have been shorter to allow for more discussion

Chair Porter: Presentations shouldn't go longer than 15 minutes. Would like to think more about monitoring report section. Likes new structure overall.

Commissioner Curry: Getting back on track. Liked students speaking up more.

Didn't like that negotiations update was taken down. This would have helped to clarify misinformation. The Board has information that the public would have liked to hear.

Commissioner Barlow: Liked presentations. Liked direction of Data.

Commissioner Olwell: Liked all the presentations, but would have liked more discussion.

Commissioner McLaren: Liked commitment to using data to drive decision making as well. Need continued professional development around policy governance. Then the space will open up for conversation and deliberation.

### B. Future Agenda Item Suggestions

- Staff/student ratios
- Board review of 4.1 policy governance
- Round 2 of 2018 scheduling process
- Audit results
- Superintendent Evaluation
- Contract Award Criteria
- Discussion on narrowing discussion of "Diversity"
- How strategic plan will be presented
- Discussion on compliance
- 4.2 is deferred to a later date

## 12. ~~Executive Session (See 2A on Removal of 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 and to consider personnel matter.~~

~~Motion to leave exec session (Commissioner / Commissioner)~~

## 13. Adjournment

*Motion to adjourn (Commissioner Wick/Commissioner Olwell)*

*Passes unanimously*

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