



Approved on October 10, 2017

**BURLINGTON BOARD OF SCHOOL COMMISSIONERS MEETING  
MINUTES  
Hunt Middle School Library  
July 11, 2017  
6 PM**

The meeting was called to order at 6:06 p.m.

*In Chair Porter's absence, Vice-chair Stephanie Seguino chaired the meeting.*

**1. Opening Items**

A. Pledge of Allegiance

B. Roll Call

**Commissioners:**

Lauren Berrizbeitia \_\_, Liz Curry \_\_x, Susanmarie Harrington \_\_, Anne Judson \_\_, David Kirk \_\_x\_\_, Kat Kleman x\_\_, Mark Porter (via phone) \_\_x\_\_, Stephanie Seguino \_\_x\_\_, Jeff Wick \_\_x\_\_, Ryan McLaren \_\_, Kathy Olwell \_\_, Mark Barlow \_\_x\_\_

**Student Representatives:**

Isabella Weston \_\_x\_\_  
Jacob Bucci \_\_\_\_

**Administration:**

Yaw Obeng, Superintendent x\_\_  
Brittany Nevins, Minute Recorder, Executive Assistant \_\_  
Stephanie Phillips, Senior Director Teaching & Learning \_\_  
Nikki Fuller, Senior Director Human Resources & Equity Affairs \_\_  
Nathan Lavery, Senior Director of Finance \_\_x\_\_

Marty Spaulding, Property Services Director \_\_\_  
Erik Wells, Communications Specialist \_x\_  
Tracy Racicot, BHS Principal \_x\_  
Mario Macias, BHS Guidance Director \_x\_

**Guest:**

Joe McNeill, District Legal Counsel \_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 New American parents and students. The Board asks the public and media to respect and understand the importance of this interpretation.*

Upon the death of a BHS student on Monday, July 10th, Commissioner Seguino offered condolences on behalf of District and Board. She invited BHS building administrators Mario Macias and Tracy Racicot to come up and say a few words about Christian Kibabu. “Christian was the type of student that you wish you had more of,” said Mario Macias, BHS Guidance Director and Christian's advisor. “Christian had a lot of friends and was highly respected by his classmates, faculty and staff at BHS.”

Christian was a hard-worker in the classroom, and was passionate about going to college. He had a 3.0 GPA and was scheduled to take to Advanced Placement (AP) courses his senior year. He was a member of the BHS 2016 Division I State Champion soccer team and also competed in track for the Seahorses.

Superintendent Obeng added that he met with Christian’s family with Guidance Director Macias to show support. A liaison is communicating with the school district and there are a number of things the District would like to do to provide support. At this time, the District is waiting for the family to have time to decide how to proceed and the District will send info out. Many counselors have donated time this week to be available and slotted times are being set up at Flynn, Hunt, and BHS.

Principal Tracy Racicot added that Christian was also was a student at BTC and very connected with the region and is missed beyond the Burlington Community. There is a counselor reaching out to the BTC community as well.

A moment of silence in Christian's memory was observed.

**2. Approval of Agenda**

*Motion to approve agenda with a change to add student report back and remove city council and legislative liaison reports (Commissioner Curry/Commissioner Barlow)*

*Unanimous Approval*

**3. Public Comment**

A. Comments/Questions from the Public  
No public Comment.

B. Board Reflection  
None.

**4. Board Report**

A. Role of Board Members

Commissioner Seguino opened a discussion of the role of Board members, pointing first to the document, "The 7 signs of an effective school board member" document available on [boarddocs.com](http://boarddocs.com). District Legal Counsel Joe McNeil joined to discuss role of the School Board as it pertains to the City Charter, and to address questions about how the regulatory requirements in state statute and City Charter work in tandem with the Policy Governance model recently adopted.

McNeil passed out three components of VT law for discussion and review. City Charter is similar to the Board's role described in all VT municipalities. State Law states that the Board makes policy and the Superintendent implements the policy as the school district's Chief Executive Officer. The Board has a responsibility to approve the hiring of licensed staff but not non-licensed staff.

The City Charter assigns certain responsibilities to the Board, many of which can be delegated to the superintendent. For example, the City Charter states that the Board is responsible for care of school property but it is understood this is not a responsibility carried about by the Board members personally. The Board has ultimate responsibility, but invests that in the Superintendent to hire staff to carry

out accordingly and exercise on behalf of Board, except in the case of mandatory obligations in State Law which are not subject to delegation from the Board to the Superintendent. McNeil said as long as there is care to make sure mandatory roles of Board are performed, there is not a conflict between Policy Governance and City and State governance law.

Commissioner Wick stated that he wants to make sure the Board effectively fulfills its role and that he had come to support Policy Governance, with the understanding the Board would be afforded the information to adequately perform its monitoring function. Commissioners Kirk and Barlow stated the Board should recognize that the Board Policy Governance Policies are a living document that can be adapted to current realities. Commissioner Seguino stated this move helps the Board to be more effective since the entire Board now receives scheduled monitoring reports, providing the data needed to perform our oversight role.

**B. Year in Review**

Commissioner Seguino gave a presentation on the Board's Year in Review. Please see [boarddocs.com](http://boarddocs.com) for the full presentation.

Commissioner Kirk added that the District has found a home for the ON-TOP and Horizons programs at BHS so students are more part of the community.

**C. Student Report**

Student Representative Weston shared update that summer vacation is well under way with some classes taking place during summer. Fall sports start in middle of August and captains practice is starting. Representative Weston expressed condolences to Christian's family on behalf of the student body.

**D. Negotiations Update**

Commissioner Seguino stated that the fact finding report has been delayed and the Board is hoping it will be here on Friday, July 14. Once it arrives, there will be a 10-day period where the report is confidential.

**E. VSBA Decision-Making**

Commissioner Seguino spoke about the possibility of appointing a liaison to VSBA (Vermont School Board Association). She referenced the document posted in [boarddocs.com](http://boarddocs.com). Boards can submit a resolution to influence the policies and positions of the VSBA- July 21 deadline. A Board member could run to represent Chittenden and Grand Isle counties on the VSBA Board. Commissioner

Barlow asked if the Board has to approve a resolution before it is submitted. Commissioner Seguino said if it is sent in name of the full School Board then yes. She indicated that Chair Porter will follow up if anyone is interested in being a representative to VSBA.

## **5. Superintendent Report**

### **A. Report on Black Lives Matter Meeting**

Superintendent Obeng stated that he attended the Black Lives Matter Vermont (BLMVT) meeting along with Commissioner Judson and Commissioner Curry and a couple of other District staff. The group used District data for suspension numbers in their presentation. BLMVT is looking for partnership to support the reduction of suspensions in the District. . Since that June meeting there have been conversations with leaders and established partnerships for programming in schools and continued collaboration. Superintendent Obeng says that the District is looking forward to the partnership.

### **B. Scheduling- Process and Time Frame**

Principal Tracy Racicot and Guidance Director Mario Macias spoke about the many dynamics around scheduling. Schedules were issued on June 19, 2017 compared to late August of last summer. 89% of student requests were issued on June 19th, 2017 compared to 84% on August 22, 2016 when the schedule was released. 83% of the students had schedules without a conflict. 958 students all had their request in Powerschool.

BHS is adding a 1.0 academic interventionist to help support students in guided study halls. This is a certified teacher position. 143 9th grade students out of 257 have a Study Hall and Guided Study Halls. 83 10th grade students out of 250 have a Study Hall and Guided Study Halls. Most of the AP courses, Food and Earth Science, Humanities, PE, Anatomy and Phys., Driver's Ed are over-subscribed.

BHS has added a .5 Music position to accommodate elective requests. Moving forward if they could consider a varsity sport a .5 PE credit, in alignment with other districts in the county, BHS may be able to accommodate more students in PE courses and offer more elective PE courses.

Commissioner Barlow asked how to handle oversubscribed classes. Preferences can come by class, and otherwise are worked out internally by working to shift the schedule of a student around. AP classes have a layer of complexity because

teachers must be trained to provide that instruction. Parents who have concerns should reach out directly. Commissioner Wick stated that the high school is doing a great job with the resources available. Commissioner Wick is concerned that the trend of oversubscribed students will continue and that he will advocate to have enough teachers to meet demand for courses.

Superintendent Obeng stated that the logistics around student/teacher ratio is complicated. This year the District moved to a student-needs approach starting in the fall to see what students are asking for and structuring around need. There is always a balance between under and over subscribed courses. Principal Racicot stated that looking at the student population is going to be critical moving forward. Commissioner Curry stated that in past they used to have more courses and smaller student/teacher ratios, but there were gaps in academic achievement for some groups and the District could no longer afford such small student:teacher ratios. She added that Superintendent Obeng and his staff brought important skills to use a data-driven approach to right-sizing the number of teachers in each school based on enrollment and student:teacher ratios.

Representative Weston stated that she appreciated the fall survey about desired classes, and thought it was a good move to continue in the future. Guidance Director Mario Macias stated that they are working to offer more mid-level math classes. Principal Racicot added that they are looking to improve math alignment with middle schools. Administrators at the high school are able to meet with students in the summer to help with schedule questions. Superintendent Obeng said he is very pleased with progress made at BHS with the scheduling.

Building Administrator proposed shifting dollars to create things like academic interventionist; since coming to district - since looking at fluidity of student population is critical - teachers and resources were moved around to respond to growing and shrinking population and take student need-driven approach.

Student support services support kids at low and high ends of ability. Includes social work, nursing, psychology, special education,, Speech & Language

#### C. Year in review

Superintendent Obeng presented to the Board a District Year in Review, which can be found at [boarddocs.com](http://boarddocs.com).

Commissioner Seguino stated that it's an important moment to think about the context nationally and in the state, one in which there is increased inequality, family stress due to a variety of economic pressures, and an opioid epidemic. In light of these challenging external circumstances, it is very impressive to see what we have been able to do in the district to meet the needs of students even as resources are limited. She also noted that BSD at this critical time has been an innovative organization in meeting challenges and adapting to changing conditions. Commissioner Curry echoed the success, noting the change has been integrative and unifying for the District under one framework. More systems and data driven, with visionary outlook created. Engage people at many different levels.

#### D. Good News

Director of Finance Nathan Lavery provided a brief overview of the new law related to health insurance for school district employees. As a result of this law, the Agency of Education will reduce funding to schools for Fiscal Years 2018 and 2019, however the amount of this reduction assignable to Burlington has yet to be calculated by AOE. This complicates collective bargaining because savings from health insurance changes are now going predominantly to the state, rather than being available to local school boards to support educational programming and settle collective bargaining agreements.

Director of Finance Nathan Lavery also informed the Board that BSD is extending its annual line of credit agreement with KeyBank. Careful cash flow management has allowed the District to reduce the use of the line of credit, which saves the District money.

### 6. **Consent Agenda**

Commissioner Seguino asked if there were any items commissioners would like removed from the consent agenda. Commissioner Wick asked for items A and E to be removed. Commissioner Seguino moved to pass B, C, and D, seconded by Commissioner Curry. The motion passed unanimously. Commissioner Seguino then moved to take up items A and E immediately.

Item A --- licensed contracts. Commissioner Wick asked if the list of hires represented the entire group. Obeng said still hiring going on so more will be added. Seguino moved for approval, Curry seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Item E - Commissioner Wick asked if the report represented all spending attributable to the fiscal year that ended June 30, 2017. Director Lavery responded that the report covers through June 30th, but there remain some substantial expenditures attributable to FY17 not yet posted. By way of example, Director Lavery pointed to city retirement costs that are paid to the City of Burlington during the fiscal year, but are only posted to the expenditure accounts once per year. He also noted that other expenditures that were made in FY17 are not yet posted because invoices have not arrived, and he cautioned that the audit process may reveal necessary additional adjustments.

Commissioner Seguino/Curry moved to accept the routine financial reports. Unanimously approved.

Director LAvery took a minute to remind the Board that there was a \$1.5M revenue component in the FY17 budget that will not automatically be there in the FY18 budget

- A. Licensed Employment Contracts
  - B. May 9, 2017 DRAFT School Board Minutes
  - C. May 10, 2017 DRAFT Diversity & Equity Committee Minutes
  - D. June 13, 2017 DRAFT School Board Minutes
  - E. Routine Financial Reports
- 7. Executive Session**
- A. *Motion to consider personnel matter (Commissioner Seguino/Commissioner Curry)*

*Passed Unanimously*

*Motion to leave executive session (Commissioner Kleman/Commissioner Kirk)*



*B. Motion to consider Executive Session to discuss Contract Negotiations where premature disclosure to the public could put the District at a disadvantage (Commissioner Seguino/Commissioner Curry)*

*Passed Unanimously*

The Board emerged from Executive Session at 9:15pm. Immediately thereafter, Commissioner Seguino made the following motion:

*"I move that the Board endorse the recommendation of the administration to ratify and confirm the negotiated agreement with the District's office personnel as explained by the District's Director of Finance and that the Board Chair and Superintendent be authorized to execute such agreement on behalf of the District in accordance with the terms and conditions explained to the Board."*

The motion was seconded by Commissioner Barlow and unanimously approved by the Board.

**8. Adjournment**

*Motion to adjourn 9:18 p.m. (Commissioner Kirk/Commissioner Barlow)*

*Unanimously Approved*

Respectfully Submitted by Brittany Nevins