



Approved by the Board on November 14, 2017

**BURLINGTON BOARD OF SCHOOL COMMISSIONERS**  
**Board Meeting Minutes**  
**Champlain Elementary Library**  
**October 10, 2017**  
**8 PM**

The meeting was called to order at 8:02 p.m.

**1. Opening Items**

A. Pledge of Allegiance

B. Roll Call

**Commissioners:**

Mark Barlow X, Lauren Berrizbeitia   , Liz Curry X, Susanmarie Harrington X, Anne Judson X, David Kirk   , Kat Kleman X, 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     
Nathan Lavery, Senior Director of Finance X  
Marty Spaulding, Property Services Director     
Erik Wells, Communications Specialist     
Megan McDonough, Principal of Edmunds Middle School X  
Fieh Chan, Vice Principal of Edmunds Middle School X  
Tracy Racicot, Principal of Burlington High School X  
Victor Prussack, Assistant Director of Curriculum/K-8 Registration Coordinator X  
Bonnie Johnson-Aten, District Lead Principal 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*

**Cultivating caring, creative, and  
courageous people. Join the journey!**



*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**

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

None were discussed.

- B. Approval of Agenda

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

*Unanimous approval*

**3. Public Comment**

- A. Comments/Questions from the Public

**Fran Brock-** Testimony placed on file with the Burlington School District.

- B. Board Reflection

Commissioner Curry mentioned the Vermont Digger article that same day indicating that some legislators are predicting an \$80 M gap in education fund \. Curry recommended to audience that this is a good time to contact legislators and mentioned the unique needs of the school district compared to other districts across the state and the disproportionate impact this gap will have on Burlington schools.

Commissioner McLaren thanked the community and Board for supporting him while he has been away for the last 6 months. He is happy to be back and serving the community.

**4. Focus on Learning**

Superintendent Obeng described the goals of this new section of the Board agenda called “Focus on Learning.” He described the importance of sharing with the Board the positive work that the School District has been doing. It is an opportunity to highlight successes and recognize the solid foundation that the Burlington School District has.

Superintendent Obeng shared the bios of Principal Megan McDonough and Assistant principal Fieh Chan which can be found at:

<http://ems.bsdt.org/category/news/from-the-principal/>

- A. Edmunds Middle School Update (2)

Principal Megan McDonough and Vice Principal Fieh Chan gave a presentation to the Board. Please visit [Board Docs](#) to view the presentation.

Cultivating caring, creative, and  
courageous people. Join the journey!



Commissioner Curry stated that historically students have arrived at the high school having different outcomes at from their middle school experience, where approaches to education have differed and asked how this is being addressed.

Superintendent Obeng stated that schedules are now aligned and restorative practice work is consistent in a systematic way that creates a system of support between each middle school. Each school has a similar process for referrals, approaches to conflict, and systems of tracking. They aren't quite the same yet but both middle schools are headed in the same direction.

Commissioner Olwell asked if the two middle schools are demographically similar.

Superintendent Obeng identified that Hunt Middle School has higher needs, but Hunt Middle School has been able to mitigate those challenges better than in previous years.

Commissioner Olwell wondered if there is an approach to create more demographic balance in the School District.

Superintendent Obeng described that no matter the scenario the school district is increasingly prepared to best serve any student population.

Principal Megan McDonough and Vice Principal Fieh Chan have been regularly meeting with HMS principals and soon they will have their first Professional Learning Community together, which they are very excited about.

#### B. BHS Update (1)

BHS Principal Tracy Racicot gives a presentation. Please visit [Board Docs](#) to view the presentation.

Superintendent Obeng highlighted that staff has been added, not decreased contrary to some messages out in the community, as follows:

- Added academic interventionist who worked with EL students in Europe
- Added .2 in Latin and .2 in Chinese - based on course survey data from Jan-Feb 2017
- BTC doing pre-tech program for first time - tech centers are only for 11-12 grade Pre-tech program housed in Maker-Space
- Added digital media and computer programming
- Adding staff strategically, based on teacher leadership team recommendations - would next like to add interventionists in specific subject areas

Cultivating caring, creative, and  
courageous people. Join the journey!



Commissioner Curry reminded the Board that staff were cut because of Act 46. The school district has strategically added staff since that time to rebuild where the most serious gaps were.

Commissioner Olwell asked about whether a new drug and alcohol coordinator has been hired.

Principal Tracy Racicot responded that the position is now posted.

Commissioner McLaren referred to a point in the presentation and asked what the academic interventionist position entails?

Principal Racicot replied that students are referred to them based on academic need. It is an elective credit-based service.

## **5. Board Report**

### **A. Recognition of School Board Member**

Chair Porter recognized Commissioner McLaren and welcomed him back to the Board.

Chair Porter also welcomed Isaac Jenemann as our new student representative to the Board.

Chair Porter announced that Commissioner Berrizbeitia has resigned as she moved out of Burlington. Though she is absent at the meeting, Chair Porter thanked her for her work in Diversity & Equity Committee in particular. She will hopefully be back in November for a final farewell. Commissioner Harrington is the new chair of the Diversity & Equity Committee.

### **B. Presentation of Board Calendar**

Commissioner Seguino asked what the process for amending the calendar is.

Chair Porter clarified that the calendar is an ongoing process. Monitoring reports are established for each month. If Board members desire additional items, a request should be sent to Chair Porter.

Commissioner Curry mentioned that there is also an agenda policy, which goes hand-in-hand with the monitoring calendar. If there are monitoring reports that are missing they should be added to the calendar. Commissioner Curry requested a list of monitoring reports associated with each Policy for the School Board, which will be created by executive assistant Brittany Nevins.

Cultivating caring, creative, and  
courageous people. Join the journey!



Commissioner McLaren suggests a standing item that could be an opportunity where Board members could recommend an item for a future Board meeting.

*Motion to adopt monitoring plan (Commissioner Harrington/Commissioner McLaren)*

*Passes unanimously*

#### C. Diversity & Equity Update

Commissioner Harrington shared that the first meeting she will call as chair will be on Thursday, October 12. The point will be to get caught up on work, particularly community engagement work.

#### D. Negotiations Update

Commissioner Seguino stated that we the contract with the BEA is finalized. Very happy to have a two year contract.

Commissioner McLaren asked when the paraeducator contract begins and Superintendent Obeng responded that it is already in progress.

Chair Porter gave special recognition to Director Nathan Lavery. The District has gone two years without having to dip into our line of credit.

### 6. **Student Commissioners report**

Student Representative Weston shares the following:

Boys Varsity soccer game tonight- We won!  
Spirit week is this week at BHS.  
Senior games are happening in all of our fall sports.  
A new social justice union has started.  
There is also a refugee outreach club that has started.

Student Representative Jenemann shares the following:

First quarter is ending and students are working hard.  
Jacqueline Woodson will be speaking at BHS on Oct. 23.

Commissioner Curry mentioned the great work of the BHS register (<http://bhsregister.com/>) and recommended that all Board members subscribe to it.

### 7. **Superintendent's Report**

#### A. BSD 2016-17 School Year Data (1.1)

Cultivating caring, creative, and  
courageous people. Join the journey!



Assistant Director of Curriculum and K-8 Registration Coordinator Victor Prussack gave a presentation on. Please visit [Board Docs](#) to view the presentation. Prussack specifically wanted Board members to be aware of a link to State Data, which is on the last slide of the presentation. The presentation reflects Annual Report on State Testing - SBAC Data and ESSA - replacement for NCLB.

Victor shared that it is important to always keep in mind context with any data. For example, demographics are not factored into this data., which is important to keep in mind.

Commissioner Barlow requested that the presentation be put up on the website.

Commissioner Seguíno asked what Board members should be aware of when comparing between the state proficiency numbers and Burlington's numbers.

Victor shared that Burlington looks very different from the state numbers because we have specific needs as a school district that are unique compared to the rest of the state.

Curry asked about rationale for looking at data now - Prussack explained that data is available in Sept from state. Also available from state data web page by school

BSD attrition rate is avg 12% annually but gain about 12% annually - data can't be congruous this way - Data represents a growth model

Olwell asked: Can't the data from new kids be removed from data being analyzed?

Victor explained that presence of student for three years becomes part of analyzed data

Superintendent Obeng added that Ontario assigned a number to each kid so they can be tracked all the way through student career. State has supposedly be implementing this concept for 5 years but it's not active yet.

Superintendent Obeng mentioned that the AOE has been trying to provide a data collection tool, but it hasn't been produced yet. This would be very helpful for showing the longitudinal picture and helping to see progress over time.

Cultivating caring, creative, and  
courageous people. Join the journey!



## B. Equity & Inclusion Data Report (1.1, 2.1)

District Lead Principal Bonnie Johnson-Aten presented on the Equity & Inclusion Data Report. Please visit [Board Docs](#) to view the report.

Superintendent Obeng highlighted the importance of the Executive Summary, which is an addition to previous years. This section shows the main highlights of the report.

It is important to note the Connection to the Achievement Gap section and Moving Forward section as well. These are added sections for the first time.

Superintendent Obeng drew the Board's Attention to the Suspension summaries and progress made in specific cohorts.

Chair Porter mentioned the increase in male population and is wondering why this has occurred?

Superintendent Obeng stated that males have always been disproportionately high, which is a national challenge.

Principle Johnson-Aten explained that the approach to restorative practices will help in staff reaction to male behavior challenges which will help reduce suspensions for that cohort. They are focusing on principals as Instructional Leaders. Priority is for First Best Instruction with teachers in the classroom. Adding in trauma-informed classrooms and other behavior supports and are seeing a more positive trend in behavior overall.

Commissioner Curry is asked about the attendance data. Was there an issue?

Bonnie hypothesized that the increase in school-related anxiety and the Opioid crisis could be possible factors for this data.

Superintendent Obeng drew attention to the data that the District hopes to capture in future reports, which is in the "Moving Forward" section. For example, the number of students who complete Burlington Technical Center Programs is an area that the District hopes to measure for future reports.

Commissioner Seguíno give feedback that this is a clear and thoughtful report.

## C. BHS Renovations Update (1)

Cultivating caring, creative, and  
courageous people. [Join the journey!](#)



BHS Steering Committee Chair Kate Stein shared the latest work in the BHS ReEnvisioning work. Please visit [Board Docs](#) to view the event flyer.

Kate shared that they are at the point where the committee would like to see community input. There will be about a half hour presentation informing the community about the work so far and then 1.5 hour community input activity. The input sessions will be at three different locations in the community.

Commissioner McLaren asked how detailed the work is.

Kate stated that these are design concepts based on design directives that have been developed over time.

Superintendent Obeng thanked the committee and Brittany Nevins and Marty Spaulding for their time on this work.

Commissioner Barlow shared his experience attending these committee meetings and recommended that every Board member attend a community forum.

#### D. Budget Timelines Presentation (2.4)

Director of Finance Nathan Lavery presented budget development timeline and passed around a flyer for three upcoming public meetings. Please visit [Board Docs](#) to view the timeline and flyer.

Superintendent Obeng asked that staff and the community think about what strategies they might have for cost savings.

Chair Porter stated that the City Council budget presentation should perhaps come after the Board vote. There was no decision about this.

Nate explained that, although the presentation goes to City Council prior to the Board's vote, there are pros to having the presentation ahead of the budget vote. It has been a courtesy to provide this presentation before the School Board votes in case the City Council has questions or feedback.

Commissioner Barlow asked how we are getting the word out about the community budget forums. Nevins answered - social media and website; also important to know that targeted community meetings will use networks in place thru multilingual liaisons and special ed network. Principals will also distribute in best way they know.

Commissioner Barlow recommended using robo calls to get the word out about the budget meetings.

Cultivating caring, creative, and  
courageous people. Join the journey!



E. Good News- Busing for Students

Nathan Lavery shared that the City will provide additional funding to help the school District utilize Green Mountain Transit for additional routes. The additional cost is in the \$18,000 range, which is ½ of the additional cost that the City will be assessed by GMT for the additional hours.

The City's participation ensures that we will be able to provide that additional level of service without incurring additional costs. This sets the District up to add a bus route that goes from the north to south of the City to help with demographic imbalances. iStaff worked with GMT on routes they are providing already to free up \$\$/service in future to meet District's needs better.

There is a memo on this from the [August Board meeting](#) that school board members can refer back to.

**8. Consent Agenda**

- A. Licensed Employment Contracts
- B. Adoption of Wellness Policy (motion within)  
*Motion to adopt the VSBA Model Federal Child Nutrition Act Wellness Policy as proposed.*
- C. Routine financial Reports
- D. May 2, 2017 Special Meeting Minutes
- E. June 12, 2017 Ad Hoc Policy Governance Committee Minutes
- F. June 24, 2017 Special Board Minutes
- G. July 11, 2017 Full Board Minutes
- H. July 19, 2017 Special Board Minutes
- I. July 27, 2017 Special Board Minutes
- J. August 1, 2017 Diversity & Equity Committee Minutes
- K. August 22, 2017 Special Board Minutes
- L. August 31, 2017 Special Board Minutes
- M. September 13, 2017 Emergency Meeting Minutes
- N. September 20, 2017 Emergency Meeting Minutes

*Motion to Approve Consent Agenda (Commissioner Judson/ Commissioner Barlow)  
Unanimous approval*

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

- A. 2.6 Emergency Superintendent Succession

Superintendent Obeng presented the report. Please visit [Board Docs](#) to view the report.

Commissioner Curry asked what the process is for accepting the report.

Cultivating caring, creative, and  
courageous people. Join the journey!



Chair Porter asked Commissioners if there are any ask questions at this time. This will be the process moving forward.

Commissioner Harrington asked a clarifying question about the way the report is broken down.

Superintendent Obeng stated that one of his goals for this report was to show competency of staff should an emergency arise. The report is meant to be a tool for those specific succession members that would rise to the occasion.

#### B. 2.8 Communication and Support to the Board

Superintendent Obeng presented the report. Please visit [Board Docs](#) to view the report.

Commissioner Olwell asked when will more info be available on the strategic plan?

Superintendent Obeng responded that more work is being done with the strategic plan teams and there will be more info on the website when the Administration can focus on it.

### 10. Board Monitoring on its own policies

#### A. 4.3 Agenda Planning

Commissioner Harrington reviewed the survey responses that were completed by Board members on their compliance to policy 4.3.

Given that the Board Calendar was adopted for this meeting there are aspects of the data that don't ring as true following that vote.

Commissioner Harrington drew attention to 4.3.1. This policy needs to be embedded into the Board Calendar.

Commissioner Curry drew attention to the language in the policy around adding items to the agenda. It is important for members to be aware of this.

Commissioner Curry recommended that the chair shall solicit agenda items. This would require policy language change. This has been tabled until the next Board meeting.

It was suggested by Chair Porter that Brittany Nevins will send a reminder to Board members 5 days before the agenda is warned.

Cultivating caring, creative, and  
courageous people. Join the journey!



Commissioner Barlow made the point that Board meetings are usually at the same time every month. Is a reminder really necessary?

This has been tabled until the next Board meeting as agreement was not reached and the Board was facing time constraints.

Commissioner Harrington drew attention to the consent agenda process and Roberts Rules, believing them to be contradictory. Chair Porter states that this is not significant at this time as the expectations for the Board on the consent agenda have been clearly articulated.

*Motion to accept that the board is mostly in compliance to 4.3 policy (Chair Porter/Commissioner Harrington)  
Unanimous Approval*

## **11. Meeting Evaluation and Follow Up**

Chair Porter asked how the Board thought policy governance went during the meeting. Commissioner Curry thought it was a good first run and thought the reports were well done. She also mentioned the importance of having presentations on the website.

Chair Porter liked how the reports were done as well. It helps to feel confident about how things are done.

Commissioner Harrington still wondered about the discussion process of the monitoring reports.

Chair Porter reminded the Board that this meeting was unique in that it included multiple Board meetings in one and that normally there would be more time for discussion.

Commissioner Barlow thought the process went pretty well.

Commissioner Curry believed that the time for questions and discussion is when the reports are submitted to the Board.

Superintendent Obeng agreed that after the monitoring report presentation is a good time to ask questions and have a discussion. He clarified that the meeting evaluation and follow up was also originally intended for evaluating the meeting itself, not just policy governance.

Commissioner Porter was wondering if an informational packet could be mailed to the Board.

Commissioner Olwell suggested getting information earlier would be helpful.

**Cultivating caring, creative, and  
courageous people. Join the journey!**



Commissioner Judson is wondering if there is a way to have the Board face the audience in future meetings.

Commissioner McLaren suggested again to add a section at the end of the agenda for discussion of future agenda items.

## **12. 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 Barlow/ Commissioner Judson)  
Unanimous Approval*
- B. Motion to consider personnel matter.  
Motion to leave exec session Judson/Kleman  
Unanimously approved  
Motion to adjourn (Commissioner Harrington/Commissioner McClaren)  
Unanimously approved*

Cultivating caring, creative, and  
courageous people. Join the journey!