



APPROVED BY BOARD ON 09/13/2018

Burlington Board of School Commissioners Meeting Minutes

**Burlington High School Cafeteria
August 14, 2018, 6:00 PM**

Attending Board Members: Liz Curry, Jeff Wick, Clare Wool, Mike Fisher, Monika Ivancic, Stephen Carey, Martine Gulick, Mark Barlow, Eric Gorman

Attending District Staff: Yaw Obeng, Karsen Woods, Stacie Curtis, Victor Prussak, Nathan Lavery, Stephanie Philips, Meghan McDonough, Colleen Cowell, Marty Spaulding

1. Opening Items

A. Welcome

2. Agenda

A. Approval of the Agenda

Commissioner Wick proposed additional section 10.B. to discuss preparation for collective bargaining. Seconded by Fisher

Unanimously approved

3. Public Comment

A. Comments/Questions from the Public

Kate Stein

B. Board Reflection

Stephen Carey reflected on the time he has spent as the co-chair of the curriculum committee and recognized the complexity the board faces moving forward. He would like to generally recognize the hard work as the district.

4. Focus on Learning

Focus on learning has been a standing agenda item so that we are able to focus on the complexities that Commissioner Carey reflected upon.

A. Pre-K Update: 2018-2019

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Director Curtis provided an updated on the status of the commencement of the school year through pre-k.

Commissioner Curry inquired about the extended-day grant and what benefits/cost affect is for the district. Two full day classrooms are funded, so with the loss of that funding our waitlist would increase by roughly 32 students. Two classrooms would have to close. There would be an absorption for the remaining 4 classrooms. This is a direct relationship between the predictions that the State would no longer fund pre-k and classrooms would have to be funded by the general fund and therefore absorb by the taxpayers. \$3,148 per pre-k slot is lost by the State.

In response to Commissioner Ivancic's inquiry about maintaining inner-community based centers, Director Curtis informed the Board that we (pre-k classrooms) are being asked to leave our community schools like Flynn. It is not sustainable for the District to continue to have a widely dispersed pre-k campus. Budgetary pressures also warrant a centralized pre-k center as more fiscally responsible. The consideration of families that hope to walk their children to pre-k is not actually equitable as many of our families are unable to participate in that at this point.

B. Elementary Staffing Update

Director Prussak gave update, including student to homeroom teacher ratios for each school.

Commissioner Carey questioned about the use of the BSD Equity Index. Explanation by Director Prussak, Director Lavery and Superintendent Obeng that the BSD Equity Index is different from state Equalized Pupil formula. BSD Equity Index does not factor in students on IEPs or English Learners; those are handled by resource/staff allocation by Directors of Special Education and EL. Request by Commissioner Carey to have the Equity Index documented and shared with the board, Director Prussak agreed.

Equity allocations:

1. SA kept 1 equity allocation FTE from 17/18
2. Allocating 1 FTE to IAA based on equity index and highest homeroom class size
3. Waiting for final numbers until mid-September, giving real data and input of Principals

Commissioner Fisher questioned how decisions for headcount are actually made: using the Equity Index, or by administrators/principals. Superintendent Obeng explained that in the case of IAA, the equity index said IAA should get 2 FTEs, but the principal said he

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only needed 1, which the superintendent supports. Equity Index informs the decision, but the Principals and the Superintendent make the final decision.

Commissioner Wick questioned how the mid-September additions work. Director Prussak explained that the additions are usually portions of FTEs across schools. Superintendent Obeng said that adding a classroom teacher is possible but rare.

Commissioner Carey questioned the use of the Equity Index and actual enrollments. According to figures he presented, SA has the most needs, more than IAA. Director Prussak and Superintendent Obeng questioned where Commissioner Carey received the data and how it was formulated. This was referred to the Personnel & Curriculum Committee.

5. Chair's Report

Appreciation for district staff working over the summer: food services, business office, summer programming, and in preparing for the beginning of the school year. The discussions of the board will shift to the committees, please be patient while we adjust.

6. Superintendent's Report

A. Curriculum Programming Update

Director Philips, Principal McDonough and Colleen Cowell presented on the Coaching model. Gave refresh on the model and its implementation.

The model we are fully implementing now is one that the District has aimed to implement since Superintendent Howard Smith.

Commissioner Curry suggested that the Personnel & Curriculum committee take this up in terms of measuring outcomes. Asked whether Edmunds and Hunt Middle Schools are implementing the same program.

Director Philips said that the Edmunds and Hunt coaches will be coordinating.

Commissioner Barlow requested that the presentation be attached to the agenda so the board can review it in advance.

Commissioner Carey spoke to the cost of having experienced coaches not delivering services directly to students. Cowell spoke to the effectiveness of the coaching model.

Commissioner Wick asked about whether the coaching model and the interventionist model can co-exist. Superintendent Obeng explained that coaching should be the first step before interventions. Commissioner Curry spoke to the usage of paraeducators being unique to Vermont.

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B. Capital Plan

Director Spaulding gave presentation on current and upcoming capital projects.

Commissioner Barlow asked if the accessible main entrance for Edmunds would be part of phase 1. Director Spaulding explained it is not part of the scope of phase 2.

Additionally, BTC/BHS access control will still be intact should a new building come to fruition.

Commissioner Curry inquired about the preschool plans moving forward since the Board has halted preschool construction. The Chair explained that the Superintendent will bring a recommendation moving forward.

Director Spaulding will next work with the finance and facility sub committee to look at options and clarify the message moving forward. The first update will likely be in October.

C. BHS renovation update

Director Spaulding and John Hemmelgarn from Black River Design gave presentation on proposed BHS renovation design.

Prior to the finance portion of this presentation, the Board opted to asked questions about infrastructure and facilities.

Commissioner Fisher inquired about staff and community input at this level of design. Director Spaulding responded that a great deal of input and contribution was made by staff, community, and the organized committee for this conceptual phase of the project. There would be an even more intimate and deeper dive into specific classroom and space designs after the bond is passed and we move into our next design phase.

Commissioner Barlow wondered if the CHPS certification and energy efficiency also has an impact on long term costs. The CHPS building certification creates better learning environments through energy efficient designs.

Commissioner Curry recommended initiating a conversation with Burlington Electric by way of a power purchase grid. This is something the District has contemplated before which could mean that groundwork already in place.

Commissioner Barlow wondered if a 30 year bond is the longest lifetime for a bond available to Burlington School District. Director Lavery explained it is possible but not standard. Commissioner Curry added that there are energy efficiency bonds that might be available under the scope of this work. She also explained that meetings with President Wright, Chair Wool, and Superintendent Obeng would be more appropriate when discussing alignment in capital goals and investments.

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Director Lavery explained that the longer you bond for, the more you will be required to payback, just as in any other large purchase. There are still conversations to be had down the road regarding prospective funding sources and avenues for fundraising.

Director Lavery would recommend that we use the 30 year figure to present moving forward. The 30 year approach lightens the impact on the budget impacts from year to year.

Commissioner Curry requested a more detailed graphic about the finance variables.

Commissioner Curry elaborated that the building we currently have is out of accessibility compliance, inefficient, and inequitable. We need to consider the next generation and the asset to the City. The impact of taxes is important to discuss, but this conversation is about students and families. We should figure out where we all stand personally on these issues. Maybe the ReEnvisioning Committee has already discussed this, but we will need to engage the community on how we will convey the importance and timeliness of this project.

The Board will resume this conversation next week. The Superintendent wondered what area specifics the Board will request before the next convening.

Commissioner Guilick asked the Superintendent to look at the economic benefits of a new high school in a growing city.

Director Spaulding raised attention to the many links within the presentation to elaborate further.

Commissioner Curry asked that Black River Design be available at our upcoming meetings. She also wondered if there would be drastic site changes. Director Spaulding informed her that it will likely evolve as the building design develops.

Superintendent Obeng encouraged the Board to generate their questions through the Chair as a directive for upcoming conversations.

D. Good News

Superintendent Obeng spoke on an event to commemorate an exchange program with Baltimore schools. He also spoke about the Chinese student exchange program this summer.

Commissioner Fisher questioned whether the planning was sufficient, that sending out request for host families with 10 days notice was poor and reflected poorly.

7. Motion Re: Personnel & Positions

A. District Personnel Data

Commissioner Carey spoke about work by Commissioner Olwell and he to gather information about BSD staffing. Received nine separate lists from HR department of

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employees. Lists have different sets of information, such as school/physical location. Job descriptions are not tied to titles.

Discussion about the purpose of the board gathering this information.

Chair Wool spoke about the past requests for this info, asking for the board's support to gather this information.

Commissioner Carey spoke that this info is baseline information, which is required to understand the staffing.

Commissioner Barlow asked what is the functional purpose of a personnel committee and how is it helping with student outcomes? Codify in policy. This is not a good use of staff time at this time in the year.

Commissioner Fisher spoke to the ability of committees to request information from the Superintendent. Suggested to leverage Policy Governance by making this a requested report by the Superintendent, and then the board receives it every year.

Commissioner Wick supports this request for information and spoke that if the district can't produce an organizational chart, that represents institutional incompetence.

Commissioner Curry stated that the cause of this was poor transition between the prior HR Director and the current one. She would support a consultant to come in and produce data, but there has to be a trade off for regular duties performed and expected and the additional work the Board and its committee to produce something of this magnitude. If the Board has a goal and is trying to define something, all you have to do is ask us so we can produce that.

Superintendent Obeng supports codifying this in policy, he does feel that this is good use of staff time at the beginning of the school year. The board can specify what it wants, and then district staff can deliver it in the same format every year. He and his staff work to support the board, and will provide the information.

Commissioner Fisher inquired about ad-hoc reports. Superintendent Obeng pointed out that district staff has been providing ad-hoc reports, but his concern is managing his staff's workload. If the request will be onerous to produce, he wants to ensure the full board supports the request.

Commissioner Carey was surprised that a clear list of employees, where they work and what they do was not available.

B. Flynn & SA Teaching/Interventionists

Commissioner Carey spoke about proposal to restore positions at Flynn and SA. The board should be adding personnel every year.

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Commissioner Wick supports the sentiments, including getting rid of multiage classrooms.

Commissioner Ivancic supports getting rid of multiage classrooms.

Commissioner Curry understands the experience of hearing from staff and parents about staffing changes that negatively impact them. Encourages the Personnel & Curriculum Committee to get the data. Her personal experience with her son and multiage / looping was positive.

Commissioner Fisher is concerned with the board deliberating individual staffing positions. Asked Commissioner Carey to work on this issue in committee.

Superintendent Obeng said that if the Board wants to get rid of multi age classrooms, they need to do this across the District through the budgeting process. Systemic approach is needed. This route will disenfranchise our administrators who should have the ultimate say regarding the allocations in their buildings.

8. Consent Agenda

- A. Routine Financial Reports (2.3)
- B. Licensed Employment Contracts
- C. June 12, 2018 Minutes
- D. June 26, 2018 Minutes
- E. June 29, 2018 Minutes
- F. June 30, 2018 Minutes
- G. July 2, 2018 Minutes
- H. D&E Minutes July 17, 2018

Commissioner Wick pulled item A. Director Lavery explained the purpose of the Warrants.

Motion for approval of items A-H.

Fisher/Curry

Motion passed unanimously

9. Committee Reports

- A. DE&I

Commissioner Curry suggested that board members review the minutes. The conversation included topics not specific to DE&I.

10. Executive Session

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A. Motion to consider Executive Session under 1 V.S.A. 313 (a) (1) (A), (B), (C), (E) and (F) because pre-mature general public knowledge would put the District at a substantial disadvantage to discuss the following: one or more personnel matters

Fisher/Wick

Motion passed unanimously

11. Adjournment

A. Motion to Adjourn

Fisher/Curry

Motion passed unanimously

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