



**Burlington High School/Burlington Technical Center PCB Updates  
School Year 2021-22  
(The majority of these updates come from  
Superintendent Flanagan's Community Updates)**

**June 15**

**BSD Seeks Suggestions for Sites for New BHS/BTC Campus** - We have entered Phase 1 of our search for a new combined campus for Burlington High School and Burlington Technical Center. In Phase 1, our consultants at White + Burke will [evaluate various properties across the city](#) to see which sites show the most promise for this project. Properties already on our list include:

- The current property at 52 Institute Road, including building where the current school is located, in any space up to North Ave, or across the street on the baseball field.
- The building currently being used to host Downtown BHS (i.e. the old Macy's)
- The Pit
- The Super Block, including Memorial Auditorium
- The North 40 (area North of the Moran Plant)

We also want to hear from you in this process. Do you know of places outside of those listed above that would work for our new campus? [Please enter them on this Google form for review.](#)

Thank you for your continued engagement.

**June 7**

**BHS & BTC New Building** - We continue to build out the timeline for the construction of a new BHS and BTC campus. As I mentioned previously, we know we will need to come back to voters with a request for additional bonding authorization. While we initially thought this could be as early as this November, based on discussions with our real estate advisors and our consulting architect, we have determined that the most realistic approach would be to direct our efforts toward a March 2022 bond vote. That goal is ambitious but achievable if we move through the site search process quickly. Our team has also been hard at work developing a more thorough timeline. The following is a high level and aggressive timeline, with dates that are approximate:

*Phase 1* – Site search and evaluation, identify priority sites: 5/21 – 7/21 (2 months)

*Phase 2* – Preliminary due diligence/conceptual site design/high-level cost estimating, identify priority site: 7/21 – 11/21 (4 months)

*Phase 3* – Secure site through option agreement if needed, perform detailed due diligence, design, and permitting: 12/21 – 6/23 (18 months)

*Phase 4* – Construction docs, bidding, construction, occupancy: 6/23 – 9/24 (15 months)



#### **May 21**

**New BHS/BTC Location** - This week, we selected local real estate development consultants White + Burke to complete Phase 1 of our site selection process. Phase 1 will involve a search and high-level evaluation for sites throughout the city that could potentially host a new high school and tech center. The consultants will meet with select staff, including the BHS Principal and BTC Director, to discuss possible criteria for the evaluation of candidate sites. Conversations with school board members will also be scheduled, with the goal of bringing forward proposed evaluation criteria at the June 15 school board meeting for public review and discussion. At the August 3 school board meeting, a high-level evaluation of potential sites will be shared with the board with a recommendation to proceed to a more detailed site assessment of the most viable locations.

**PCBs on Institute Road** - We are preparing for another round of indoor air sampling in A building to ensure that we can continue to occupy and use some of the spaces in A building (such as the gymnasium and kitchen). This round of air testing is expected to occur during the first week of June, with results by the end of the month.

#### **May 4**

**Board Meeting Vote to End ReEnvisioning Project** - On Tuesday, May 4, the Board voted to accept [Superintendent Flanagan's recommendation](#) to end the current plan and begin planning in earnest to build a new high school in Burlington. BSD now plans to move quickly on a new project, with the hope of being in a new building before our 3.5 year lease for Downtown BHS expires, if not soon after. Superintendent Flanagan has tasked the BSD team with identifying options and conducting site assessments as soon as possible, and they are already having conversations and beginning this work. In order to deliver on a new building in a short time, we will seek feedback from stakeholders and also draw on the wealth of information that has been collected over the past five years. While it is too soon to discuss total cost, or the potential location, of a new building, we will be transparent through this process and communicate updates frequently. Please stay engaged!

#### **April 13**

**Board Meeting PCB Update** - On April 13, Superintendent Flanagan [gave an update to the Burlington Board of School Commissioners](#) noting increasing concerns regarding the extent of PCB contamination. The Board then participated in a robust conversation, [recorded by Media Factory](#), regarding the feasibility of continuing forward with the ReEnvisioning plan at 52 Institute Road, or if we need to begin considering other possibilities including, but not limited to, looking at additional spaces.

#### **March 26, 2021**

**BHS ReEnvisioning & PCBs** – While work on ReEnvisioning the BHS Campus on Institute Road continues, it is important to note that the news on the extent of PCB contamination continues to worsen. I am gearing up for the possibility that we may need to explore options outside of our current ReEnvisioning plan. Right now we are solidifying a PCB Pilot Remediation Project at the old High School, which is intended to provide the District with enough information to make an informed decision about the fate of the project. We are likely to have the results in mid-to late-August. At that time, I anticipate a robust discussion about how to advance the project.

#### **March 12, 2021**



**BHS PCBs Update** - [In my last update](#), I shared that due to the high levels of PCB's found in the glue used to secure floor tiles to the underlying concrete slab, additional testing would need to be done on the concrete slabs to determine if the PCB's migrated into the substrate materials. Slab sampling lab results have returned, and so far are indicating that we do have some PCB contamination in the concrete slabs as deep as three-quarters of an inch. The team is exploring the complex implications of this finding. More sampling and analysis may be required, as will consultation with the structural engineering team. The risk presented by this finding is that removal of a portion of the concrete slab is, at a minimum, expensive, and potentially impossible without compromising the structural integrity of the slab. The team is also exploring an alternative to slab removal that would encapsulate the contaminated material..

### **February 19, 2021**

**Important BHS PCB Update** - PCB bulk materials sampling has been completed and we have received results for A & B buildings. One of the building materials that have shown high levels of PCBs is in the floor mastic "glue" under the floor tiles. The results of high levels found in materials such as the mastic will require additional sampling in adjacent substrate materials, which in this case is the concrete slabs under the floor tiles, to determine if the PCBs have migrated into those substrate materials. The additional slab testing will begin within the next week. While it is too early to know the degree to which the concrete slabs contain PBCs, this is an important and concerning development because removing portions of the slab can be expensive and could have implications for the structural integrity of the building.

In addition, a 1,100+ page Site Investigation report for soils has also been completed and will be forwarded to the agencies for review and comment which is expected within the next 45 days. We are anticipating that the agencies may require additional soil testing to be conducted.

It is clear that there will be substantial costs to addressing the PCB issues at BHS. We are still months away from having firmer estimates, but we know enough to say that we will not be able to deliver the high school renovations our community expects and deserves if we rely on the BHS ReEnvisioning budget to pay for addressing the PBC issues. Therefore, as we move forward, we will begin exploring and discussing alternative approaches to paying to remediate or mitigate PCB contamination. Please stay engaged and [visit the website](#) for updates from the project's Building and Construction Oversight Committee.

### **January 11, 2021**

**PCBs & BHS Campus Occupancy** - PCB building material sampling is in full swing on the BHS campus on Institute Road. Environmental consultants are on-site taking hundreds of samples throughout the building. This sampling will continue for the next couple of weeks and will inform the path forward for campus renovations. Once we know the full extent of contamination, we will finalize and begin a pilot program designed to try to remediate certain spaces. This will allow us to know if remediation of the PCBs is really an option and, if so, the project cost associated with going this route. We should have this information this summer, which will allow us, as a community, to make a decision on whether or not we should spend money on a total PCB remediation project or look for alternatives.

In the meantime, the Vermont Department of Health (VDH) has [made formal recommendations allowing us to use some areas of "A" Building](#). These recommendations are based on previous testing that



occurred in September and December. VDH identified some spaces where dust samples did not detect PCBs, such as the kitchen and cafeteria, and thus recommended occupancy of those spaces without limitation. Other important areas, such as the gym, locker rooms, exercise rooms, and auditorium, showed some presence of PCBs but on average were below Vermont's screening values, so VDH has cleared these spaces as suitable to be occupied no more than 30 hours per week by students and staff. This recommendation is important because it allows BSD to proceed safely with activities like indoor athletics. There were some spaces where VDH recommended against occupancy and BSD will not utilize those spaces. You can read the memo above or [see the spaces laid out in our consultant's color-coded map](#).

### **December 11, 2020**

**BHS/BTC Campus Testing and Pilot Program** - We are moving forward with creating a pilot project to determine if remediation of PCBs is a viable solution for returning to the BHS campus in the long run. Over the course of December and January, we will continue to take samples of air, soil, and building materials throughout the campus. Once we complete testing, we will begin removing and remediating materials in specific rooms to see if those efforts lower or remove the presence of PCBs in the air. We anticipate being able to begin this pilot project in March, with follow up results available in June. Once the pilot is complete, we will know whether remediation will be an effective and/or financially viable way to address our air quality concerns. The board and District leadership will then be able to have solid data to help us determine if we should continue with the high school remediation project or seek other long-term solutions. I anticipate those conversations will happen this summer.

In the meantime, this week we expect to provide regulatory agencies results from indoor air tests for portions of A building. Agencies will use this data to determine if we can regain occupancy of additional areas of the BHS campus, such as the gymnasium and auditorium, sooner.

### **October 14, 2020**

**BHS PCB and Space Update** - It is proving to be a complex process to understand the source of PCB contamination and our options for remediation. Our consultants from Fuss & O'Neill returned to the BHS campus to inventory potential PCB contributors in the spaces where air testing was conducted. This is the first step in developing a pilot program to remediate building materials in specific rooms. Once this is complete, they will conduct follow-up air testing to determine a baseline for moving forward. The final stage of the pilot project will be to remove PCB materials in some rooms and then retest to determine if removing such products has an impact on the PCB levels found in the air. After the pilot project, we will be able to better assess our next steps to remediate the PCBs throughout the building.

In the meantime, we are continuing to work hard to find an alternate location for the high school. We have promising options for alternative spaces. Additionally, there is significant energy to return to BHS in buildings A-E based on the argument that the screening levels fall under the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) screening values. We will have a board meeting next Tuesday, October 20, to discuss in more detail.



**September 2, 2020**

**PCBs at BHS** - As you may recall, for the past year we've known that we had found levels of hazardous materials in building materials at the High School, and we communicated to our community this fact and that this would prove to be a substantial cost for the ReEnvisioning project. After notifying regulatory agencies, in June we did additional testing of building materials and soils and our suspicions were confirmed. Now we will begin testing the air quality in the building (beginning today). For more information, please read the [full update on our website](#).