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Contract Negotiations Status

Burlington, Vermont —The Board would like to thank community members who reached out to us and to the BEA to urge both parties to re-engage in discussions regarding the teacher contract. Yesterday, the BEA contacted the Board’s negotiating team to extend an invitation to take part in such talks, and last night, we met to discuss this offer. As part of the negotiation process, the two parties engaged the services of an experienced mediator, Ira Lobel, who has developed positive relationships with both parties. He also has an understanding of the areas of commonality and difference that exist, as well as the budget parameters that the District faces. Today, the Board contacted the BEA to indicate a willingness to engage in additional discussions with the Union, should the mediator support this move and believe that meaningful progress is possible.

In order not to create false expectations, the Board also reiterates that it committed all available funding when they enacted the employment policy, based on the budget approved by voters in March. The Board is in a position to engage in discussions, with the understanding that neither budget cuts nor deficit spending are feasible options.

“The Board and the BEA share the goal of ensuring that teachers are compensated fairly and comparably with neighboring districts and both parties are also committed to making decisions that are in the best interest of Burlington’s children for this year and beyond,” stated Board Chair Mark Porter. “The Board looks forward to building on these shared goals and finding common ground that will allow the Board, the Union, and our community to move forward.” In that spirit, last week, the Board contacted the BEA to begin negotiating the next contract.

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