



NOT FINAL UNTIL APPROVED BY THE BOARD.

**BURLINGTON BOARD OF SCHOOL COMMISSIONERS MEETING
MINUTES**

Hunt Middle School Library

May 9, 2017

7 PM

The meeting was called to order at 7:10 p.m.

1. Opening Items

A. Pledge of Allegiance

B. Roll Call

Commissioners:

Mark Barlow X, Lauren Berrizbeitia X,
Liz Curry X, Susanmarie Harrington X, Anne Judson X, David
Kirk X, Kat Kleman X, Mark Porter , Stephanie Seguino X, Jeff
Wick X, Ryan McLaren X, Kathy Olwell X

Student Representatives:

Isabella Weston
Jacob Bucci 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 X
Paul Irish, Senior Director Infrastructure & Technology
Nathan Lavery, Senior Director of Finance X
Marty Spaulding, Property Services Director X
Erik Wells, Communications Specialist

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.

2. Approval of Agenda

Motion (Commissioner Berrizbeitia/ Commissioner Marlow) to approve agenda

Chair Porter moves to move the Ends Policy (4C) to June Retreat and replaced with Discussion regarding publication of meeting

Motion Passes, 1 opposed

3. Public Comment

A. Comments/Questions from the Public

Olivia Young Ah Maher

See testimony attached.

Fran Brock

See testimony attached.

Commissioner Wick Speaks on Behalf of Rob Foley

See testimony attached.

Carolyn Hanson

Parent, shares concerns regarding Edmunds Elementary and Edmunds Middle Schools. Would like to have an opportunity for parents to meet the principals. Would like there to be more teacher and student input as well. Need plan for retaining good teachers.

Olivia Wolf

See testimony attached.

Gracie Harvey

See testimony attached.

B. Board Reflection

Commissioner Barlow thanks Olivia for coming and speaking with the group, recognizing that it isn't easy and that he believes Olivia.

Commissioner Harrington thanks particularly Olivia and the two UVM students for coming and sharing and for the ways in which we are thinking about these issues.

Commissioner Wick recognizes Carolyn's remarks and shares the importance of the Board to be aware of issues she raised. Additionally he appreciates Fran Brocks comments regarding NEASC recommendations.

Commissioner Olwell asks if the administration could have a document of sorts or an organizational chart to help understand who is in each building and their roles.

Commissioner Judson mentions that staff directories can be found on each school's website.

3. Board Report

A. Student Report

- Student representative to the Board Jacob Bucci gives a student update.
- BHS Register won All New England Award.
- Prom is this weekend.
- Mentions that this will be his last School Board Meeting and that there will be a new representative to the Board soon.

B. Discuss Moving the Start Time to 6 PM for Board Meetings

Commissioner Kleman asks if there is history to show that this might impact community turn out.

Chair Porter shares that South Burlington has their meetings at 5 PM and there have not been identified issues there.

Commissioner Curry recommends that there be a trial run.

Chair Porter suggests a 6 month trial run.

The Board will start this practice at the June Regular Board Meeting

C. Discussion regarding publication of meeting

Commissioner Barlow mentions that postings aren't always posted on the City Calendar and that this should be reviewed.

Superintendent Reminds the Board that Communications Specialist Erik Wells has sent a google form to the Board to get feedback. Chair Porter asks the Board to please send feedback to Erik.

Commissioner Wick mentions the 48 Hour Open Board Warn of meetings and states that posting with 48 hours notice is not enough time for the community to plan.

Board members share that this is according to open meeting law and generally regular Board meetings occur on the second Tuesday of every month.

D. Motion to Adopt Travel Policy as Proposed

(Chair Porter, Commissioner Kirk)

Commissioner Curry asks that there be a report back when the procedures are done.

Unanimously Passes

BURLINGTON SCHOOL DISTRICT TRAVEL REIMBURSEMENT Travel Reimbursement Policy It is the policy of the Burlington School District to reimburse the reasonable expenses for travel for school business on a mileage basis for miles traveled and an actual cost basis for other travel expenses incurred by its employees and school board members, to the extent that budgeted funds permit. Reimbursement will be only for those expenses that are reasonable and necessary for the activities of the Burlington School District. The method of reimbursement will be consistent whether expenses are incurred in furtherance of federally funded or non-federally funded activities. Prior approval from the superintendent or his or her designee will be required. Pursuant to this policy and consistent with relevant collective bargaining agreements, the superintendent or his or her designee will establish written procedures to govern the reimbursement and method of prior approval for the following: air/rail travel, meals, lodging, and mileage.

4. Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Obeng moves item B in front of item A (see www.boarddocs.com for original agenda).

A. Presentation on Burlington High School Capital Planning

Presentation by Director of Property Services Marty Spaulding and Black River Design Architects (see presentation in www.boarddocs.com).

Community Planning Committee meeting tentatively schedule for May 24, 7 PM in the BHS Cafeteria.

Superintendent Obeng shares that this is a meeting to develop a Committee to help drive the process moving forward.

Commissioner Judson asked what the plan is for involving staff in the planning process.

Marty Spaulding shares that there is still much work to be done and there will be input moving forward.

Superintendent Obeng shares that the intent of this presentation today is to update the Board that the work is starting. There will continue to be updates brought forward.

Commissioner Curry asks if there is a plan to address potential future needs.

Architect John shares that there is flexibility in design and there will be a plan to have variety in space to allow for changing practices over time.

Commissioner Curry suggests that there be attention made to opportunities to create revenue sources.

Superintendent Obeng shares that there is some money to start to address accessibility needs in the coming year.

Commissioner Barlow is particularly happy to see that there has been much work on behalf of Marty and Black River to be able to have an option that can be pitched to taxpayers.

Commissioner Barlow asks how the membership of the Committee will be determined.

Superintendent Obeng shares that there is a list that has been generated at a variety of public events where folks have signed up if they are interested. The administration will be reaching out to those individuals to invite them to the meeting. It is a public meeting where others can join if they are interested in being a part of the committee.

B. Annual School Board Work Calendar Discussion

Superintendent Obeng shares a sample annual School Board Work Calendar with the Board. The document includes potential monitoring dates and presentations that would be given during those future meetings. Also included is a column on Board learning opportunities.

Commissioner Curry addresses that perhaps column titles could be altered to provide more clarity for the Board.

Commissioner Olwell mentions that there isn't a column around community outreach.

Superintendent Obeng mentions that this is not a final tool, but will be worked on at the June retreat. This addresses some of Commissioner Wick's previous concerns around giving the Community more notice around Board meetings.

Superintendent Obeng also states that this tool will help staff better prepare for their work.

Commissioner Curry asks that the sample calendar be posted on the Website under the Board/Policy Governance section.

C. Good News

Senior Director of Finance shares that an extension at no additional cost has been given with the company that has been doing audits with the school. The administration wanted to share this with the Board.

6. Consent Agenda

Motion to Approve Consent Agenda

*(Commissioner Judson/Commissioner Curry)
Unanimously Passed*

7. 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 and also to consider pending or probable civil litigation

(Commissioner Seguino/Commissioner)

*Motion to leave exec session
(Commissioner/Commissioner)
All in favor*

9. Adjournment

A. *Motion to adjourn*

*(Commissioner / Commissioner)
All in favor*

Respectfully Submitted by Brittany Nevins

Olivia's board speech

Hello. My name is Olivia Young Ah Maher. I am a lifelong resident of Burlington and along with my 3 brothers, have been a student at Flynn, Hunt and BHS. I'm here to share an experience I had in a freshman honor's class last November and in doing so hopefully demonstrate the need for a logical and long overdue change.

I am the victim of a false plagiarism accusation. It was levied against me not with basis or merit but solely on a teacher's vague memory and a font change on my paper. I stand accused of getting my hands on a paper from a previous student, putting my name on it and handing it in as my own. I did not do this. I was told that it was the best paper my teacher had ever received for the assignment and that it was not my work. It rattled me to my personal and academic cores because my previous teachers with whom I have formed wonderful and lasting relationships had always commended me on my honesty, hard work and leadership qualities. Their belief in me as a young person and dedicated student allowed me to learn freely and to confidently set lofty academic goals for myself. Simply put, until that day, I loved school and school loved me back.

Despite providing indisputable proof as to my innocence, my former teacher would not and has not acknowledged her mistake. I exist under a dark cloud of suspicion, ever wondering which of my present and future teachers and coaches are aware that I have been labeled a cheater. Labels are suffocating and my unearned plagiarist label makes me wonder if I can really achieve my goals during the next 3 years at BHS. It is very hard to succeed where you are not believed.

In going through this 6 month ordeal, it has come to light that there are no set of common sense parameters or guidelines in place that a teacher must adhere to in accusing a student of the highest form of academic impropriety that exists. Creating and Implementing such a policy would protect students from the shame and heartache I have experienced. I took it upon myself to discredit her accusation and doing so was quick and definitive. I put my paper through 3 independent plagiarism detection search engines, all of which determined my paper to be between 99 and 100% unique. I was also easily able to show that I had an 81 minute revision history on my Chromebook for my paper. My paper was mine and mine alone. I did not do what I was accused of, seemingly on a whim.

It seems to me that had these technological tools, available at our fingertips, been utilized by my teacher before she accused me, she never would have done so. Utilizing these tools certainly would have been cause for pause in moving forward with her very specific accusation. It would have prevented her from making such a terrible mistake which we all make from time to time because we are human.

I'm here tonight to ask that my unnecessary suffering be a springboard for positive change. I've sadly let go of the hope that I'll ever be vindicated and told that I am believed. Instead I am purposely shifting my focus to the many BHS students who will come after me. I want to ensure that their integrity, credibility and moral character can't be called into question without a teacher doing his or her due diligence before a plagiarism accusation can be brought about. I want to advocate for parental pre-notification and for the presence of an administrator during accusations as specific as my teacher's was. I would suggest that something so damaging never be levied against a student during the school day because it makes an innocent student unable to be a focused learner for the rest of the day. I would hope that a teacher found to be incorrect with an accusation would

have to acknowledge the mistake to the devastated student. The creation of these parameters would be very empowering and healing for me because there is nothing more admirable than advocating for others. To know that my suffering will prevent others from the same fate would be a giant leap down the road to recovery. Even more empowering would be if I and maybe a few other students, parents, teachers and administrators could work together on a committee to develop such a policy. I would welcome the opportunity to be part of such a process and hope I will be invited to do so. In closing, I'd like to thank you for the chance to be heard tonite. Reliving my experience by sharing it is not comfortable for me to do. I hope I have been clear in describing the direction I hope to see my school go with it. I hope that you will discuss my request and determine it to be one worthy of engaging in future conversation about.

Thank you

May 9, 2017

Good evening,

As President of the BEA, let me share with you two issues of particular concern to teachers.

As of yesterday, your Board consent agenda included a teacher renewal list that indicates 248 teachers have returned their letters of intent. This leaves 160 teachers; or nearly 40% of Burlington's teachers have either resigned, retired, asked for an extension or have unresolved contract issues. I understand that a second list will be part of your June consent agenda.

As teachers leave, past practice has been to conduct exit interviews. I hope that interviews are conducted and the Board is apprised of the reasons behind the departures. Honest dialogue about such issues should help inform Board policies and direct the administration.

My second concern is with the NEASC accreditation report, which is now circulating. It is good news to know that the NEASC commission granted accreditation for BHS. It is important, however, to focus on the recommendations made in the report to help guide necessary changes at the high school in order to insure that we are meeting the educational needs of

all students.

In addition to the recommendations noted in the District's press release, let me draw your attention to the following recommendations:

- **Provide a certified, licensed, library/media specialist for the school to ensure that library/media services are integrated into curriculum and instructional practices throughout the school**
- **Provide time for teachers, special educators, ELL teachers and student support staff to collaborate regarding student needs and support**
- **Provide additional support staff to ensure a full range of services for identified students and to effectively and consistently collaborate with teachers**
- **Provide and ensure that meaningful curriculum coordination exists between the middle schools and the high school**
- **Ensure resource allocations support the implementation of a proficiency based curricular model**
- **Develop and implement a more collaborative and transparent building-wide decision-making process**
- **Develop a plan by which administration and teaching staff address**

professional climate to ensure positive professional discourse between teaching staff and administration

- **Ensure that the school board, superintendent and principal are collaborative, reflective, and constructive in establishing goals for the school with a focus on the school's 21st century learning expectations**

These recommendations are not trivial; meeting student needs on these terms would transform our schools. I encourage each of you to read the full report to better understand what is being done well at BHS, but also what needs to be addressed so our students have access to the high-quality education they deserve.

Thank you

For decades, educators have sought to achieve 100% literacy. Most would agree that literacy is necessary for academic and lifetime success, while illiteracy greatly reduces the odds of success.

Because of changes in technology and in the economy, literacy is no longer sufficient to ensure our children's long term success. Our children must learn another language if they want to be successful as adults.

This language is the 'Computer Language'. That is to say: computer science, coding and programming.

The 'Computer Language' is easier to learn than any other language. Because of its simplicity and utility, it has grown exponentially around the world. It may be the fastest growing language ever. It has equalized the playing field for children everywhere, and will likely change our concept of literacy.

We can no longer afford to marginalize the Computer Language to a 30 minute 'technology lesson' every other week. Our children must be taught the specifics of information science, coding, and programming daily.

We must elevate information science, coding, and programming to a level on par with math, and the traditional sciences, in our K-12 curriculum.

If we fail to embrace the Computer Language as part of our core curriculum, we will jeopardize our children's ability to compete and be successful.

of ADHD may be because of the fact that children no longer have enough opportunities to play.” And if this study and journal was published in 2003, just think about how since then, our society has become even more obsessed with test scores and medical diagnoses and continues views recess as a waste of time.

When the two girls I mentor at Flynn ~~Elementary~~ told me how much time they are allowed to release the pent up energy that ^{had} ~~has~~ been accumulating all day long, I stopped dead in my tracks. Why do they get so little time to exercise? No wonder kids have a hard time sitting still. We pump them full of unhealthy and sugary food and expect them to sit still for eight hours a day. And when they can't, we punish them or we bring them to a doctor who diagnoses them with a disorder and gives them medication. We call the kids who can't sit still, problem children. Some of these problem children with mental disorders participate in Nature Club at Flynn, and throughout the course of a year, have become better students in the classroom.

There is no doubt that some kids and adults truly do struggle with ADHD, but the number of kids being told they have a disorder has skyrocketed. Studies have found that these two phenomena are directly related. But it doesn't take a PhD to realize that the human body is not made for sitting still. Many adults who lead sedentary work lives, including college students, know the struggle of wanting to get up to stretch, to take a walk outside and a break from their computer. They know that taking breaks throughout the day helps them concentrate. So, my question is, **if we know what sitting inside at a desk all day makes us feel like**, then why are we doing it to our children?

Olivia Wolf
May 4th, 2017
Environmental Policy and Activism

Wordcount: 664

Misdiagnosed Children

My name is Olivia Wolf and I am a 21-year-old senior at the University of Vermont studying Sustainability. I grew up in the Burlington school system and currently mentor two girls through a UVM and Flynn Elementary afterschool nature program.

Eighteen adults and twenty-four elementary school kids sit in a circle for five minutes. **It is 2:00 in the afternoon and they have been forced to sit inside since eight in the morning.** These kids are waiting for those magic words they wait for on every Wednesday afternoon during nature club. Their built-up energy from the day can barely be contained for even five minutes before they hear the words, "Let's go outside!". This is the moment they have been waiting for since last Wednesday, when they had a few hours to run or walk outside.

In recent years, the number of children diagnosed with **Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder** also known as ADHD has increased and the rate at which doctors jump to diagnose the children with this disorder has accelerated. The question is--Why are so many kids being told they have a disorder simply because they cannot sit still? The answer lies in the daily schedules of kids in public schools. At the Flynn Elementary school in the New North End of Burlington the children get a half hour of recess and that includes putting on snow gear in the winter and lining up. at the Malletts Bay School in Colchester the kids get twenty minutes a day for recess.

Twenty years ago, scientists were studying the relationship between children's behavior in the classroom and recess time: the results were the same as studies done today. As stated by a group of researchers in 2003, "...it has been consistently found that children focus more and fidget less when they had recess" and "It has been suggested that an increase in the diagnosis

May 9, 2017

Burlington School District School Board Meeting at Hunt Middle School, 7:00 PM

Good evening. My name is Gracie Harvey, I am 21 years old and a third-year student at the University of Vermont pursuing a degree in Environmental Studies. I previously studied Education and spent a semester working in a preschool classroom. I have worked at a nature center in my hometown of Baltimore, Maryland for three summers, and have spent countless hours engaging with children in natural settings. The awe and excitement I have seen in these children far outweighs any experience I had with students in traditional classroom settings. After attending your last meeting, and reading minutes from previous board meetings, I noticed that you are seeking greater community engagement in the Burlington School District. I would like to propose that BSD schools allow one class period a day to be held outside, engaging students in their surrounding environments and communities.

During my first year at UVM, I volunteered in an afterschool program every week at the Sustainability Academy on North Street. Each week, I would walk with the children to a community garden a few blocks away called the "Avant-garden." The children maintained garden plots, cleared weeds, planted seeds, and decorated the garden with nature-related artwork. The joy I witnessed in these children was overwhelming. One young boy named Damien had a negative attitude and rarely wanted to engage in any of the activities. The afterschool program teacher indicated that his attitude was often like this during school. This changed one afternoon in the garden, when he began digging around in a dirt plot. He became so enthusiastic about the prospect of growing his own plant and designing his own plot. I saw an immediate shift in his attitude, and a deep sense of care and joy that was infectious.

Unfortunately, for many children these types of experiences are difficult to access. According to Richard Louv, author of *Last Child in the Woods*, most children today suffer from a perpetual disconnect from their surrounding natural communities, and a lack of adequate sensory stimulation and sense of place, something he refers to as "nature deficit disorder."¹ As a solution, Louv references programs that engage children with their surrounding environments. He highlights academic excellence in Finnish schools, thanks to consistent breaks outdoors; and discusses classes and programs in natural and community settings in the United States.

Standardized test scores across many subjects in schools around the US show that "environment-based education" leads to higher academic performance.¹ Two Canadian studies from 2005 and 2006 examined Ecoschool programs and found that children that have classes in "diverse natural settings" are healthier, more creative, and demonstrate greater social inclusion regardless of demographics.¹ A study in Chennai, India that asked students about their perception of nature revealed that exposure to nature leads to reduced stress levels, and increased attention span,

¹ Louv, R. *Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children from Nature Deficit Disorder*. (2008). Chapel Hill: Algonquin Books.