



APPROVED BY THE BOARD 9/13/16

BURLINGTON BOARD OF SCHOOL COMMISSIONERS MEETING MINUTES
Ira Allen Administration Building Board Room
August 9, 2016

The meeting was called to order at 6:02 p.m.

1. Opening Items

A. Pledge of Allegiance

B. Roll Call

Commissioners:

Mark Barlow , Lauren Berrizbeitia , Brian Cina , Liz Curry ,
Susanmarie Harrington , Anne Judson , David Kirk ,
Kat Kleman , Mark Porter , Stephanie Seguino ,
Miriam Stoll

Student Representatives:

Jacob Bucci
Isabella Weston

Administration:

Yaw Obeng, Superintendent
Stephanie Phillips, Senior Director Teaching
& Learning
Nikki Fuller, Senior Director Human Resources &
Equity Affairs
Paul Irish, Senior Director Infrastructure & Technology
Nathan Lavery, Senior Director of Finance
Elizabeth Atkins, Accounting Manager
Henri Sparks, Director of Equity
Miriam Ehtesham-Cating, Director of ELL
Doug Davis, Director of Food Service
Marty Spaulding, Property Service Director

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

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students. The Board asks the public and media to respect and understand the importance of this interpretation.

2. Approval of Agenda

Motion (L. Curry /K. Kleman) to approve agenda.

Pass unanimously

3. Policy Governance Roundtable Discussion with Val Gardner

The meeting continued in another room for this discussion.

4. Public Comments/Questions - 7:05

A. Public Comment

1. Denise Wentz - Library Media Specialist at Williston – Here with group of Librarians around the state. Passed out letters to the Board.
2. Donna MacDonald - shared letter from American Library Association. Concern with library cuts. Studies show that student achievement is higher with Certified School Librarians. Urge you to reinstate these positions.
3. Eileen Gatti – Community College of Vermont, VT Consortium of Academic Libraries – Reinstate library positions. School Library Media Specialists are librarians uniquely trained to act as instructional leaders in collaboration with classroom teachers to teach students important skills to help them become college ready.
4. Heidi Huestis- shared remarks from President of VT Library Association – Spoke in support of professional library staff. In order to implement the Every Student Succeeds Act, you need librarians. Vermont Agency of Education stated Certified Library Media Specialist be made available to students and staff in schools with over 300 students.
5. Judy Kaplan - Packet handed out - encouraged Board to look through packet gives reasoning to reinstate librarians. Concerned we will not meet accreditation standards.
6. Meghan Warda - ELL teacher – spoke on behalf of families and students she works with. School district wants to close achievement gap, librarians are an integral part of this process.
7. Josh Roof - father 2 IAA students - reinstate library positions – spoke as parent and teacher. Librarians play a valuable role in collaboration with teachers. Have a vast array of knowledge - students deserve position be reinstated.

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8. Jill Allen - an after school educator at Smith - need for library positions to be reinstated. We want every student in the district to be a reader. Don't see how that can happen without full time librarians.
9. Signe Daly - Ward 1 resident - reinstate full time librarians. Encouraged Board to move toward policy governance. Can't think of a better model for the Board to be accountable to each other and accountable to constituents and to hold our Superintendent accountable to make it a fair game for everybody. Applaud Board for taking this on.

B. Board Reflections

Commissioner Harrington thanked librarians. She has lots of questions about how information literacy in the curriculum will be working this year. Asked Curriculum Director Phillips to help organize a report to bring to Curriculum Committee in October on issues of library services in the schools this year.

Commissioner Judson - appreciate everyone coming tonight. Questioned how needs will be met - look forward to hearing it.

Commissioner Porter stated this is some of the toughest stuff we have to deal with. We have to work within the confines of a budget. A budget with 63% approved by the voters – doesn't mean we have to like the budget, as it represents some significant cuts. Different schools have different needs and it is hard to meet the needs of all schools in the same way - they function differently. We also suffer from those that are in the most need, don't show up at meetings, we have to go out and try to find that information. We haven't given up - we are listening.

Commissioner Curry expressed appreciation to everyone for coming back. Spoke about the budget process for the last four years. We are in a challenging position. Ask people to recognize that large community group and the Board has faith in Superintendent and his expertise in making decisions. Asked everyone to be patient in hearing directly from administration on what the plan is. We need to operate as one district with nine schools. As Board we lack expertise to evaluate specific cuts and need to move away from advocacy budgeting – have faith the Superintendent will approach successfully.

Commissioner Kleman thanked everyone for coming. She has faith that everything is getting better. We have come a long way - know that we are working and really appreciate your comments.

5. **Board Report**

A. Negotiations Update

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June 30 fact finding session report delayed until Aug 15 – for 10 day period kept private, opportunity to talk. After 10 days report, report will be released to the public.

- B. Formation of Superintendent Evaluation & Goal Setting Committee
We have formed a Superintendent evaluation and goal setting committee – Commissioners Cina, Harrington and Judson are responsible for establishment of goals and process followed for reviews of the Superintendent.
- C. September 14 Joint Meeting School Board & City Council
Opportunity to sit down and talk about important issues and coordinate
- D. Student Report
Football starts next week. Schedules were released first on PowerSchool and there was a glitch that prevented schedules from conforming with some AP requirements initially. Bugs being worked out.

6. Superintendent's Report

- A. Looking Ahead to Upcoming School Year - Implementation Update
Superintendent Obeng thanked librarians for being very vocal and coming to meetings.
 - We have started the budget cycle - proud of budget and the work our staff has done. This is a foundation to change our budget process and the way we allocate resources.
 - Wants to ensure everyone that BHS is heading in right direction - schedules are ready and students will have courses needed to graduate
 - Enrollment numbers gone down this year from last year
 - Intend to improve scheduling process next year - contemplating changing block schedules and develop schedules based on student needs
Send survey to students in the fall - have these core classes – what electives would you like to take next year?
PowerSchool is a great tool but staff didn't get proper training and supports. BHS Principal Racicot and her staff are looking to develop their skills to support staff.
 - Meeting with librarians on Monday - working on how we offer the best product we can with the services we have. We have a plan for library to be open during school hours. SA and IAA are impacted - sharing librarian working on strategies for access to students and teachers.
 - Discussed Principal support position - conversation with staff and admin and they feel overworked. This position will provide school support and benefit schools. Legislation states we must have a mentor for every

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administrator. We will not have to pay outside person since this person will work with them

- RIF process - out of 24, recalled 21, remaining 3 don't have qualifications or declined
- Rich Amato - retired - had opportunity to contract safety coordinator - substitute principal savings
- Central office \$550,000 total cuts identified to more than meet target
3 position added in HR - had 2 vacancies and 1 impending vacancy
Spoke to \$20,000 in Board legal fees

Superintendent Obeng answered Board questions following the presentation. Question was asked if the libraries will be open same hours they were always open? Superintendent Obeng said he will look into this.

Request to put powerpoint on website.

Student Rep Weston asked question re schedules. Superintendent Obeng said to wait until last week before school begins and look again

B. Capital Plan Progress - Public Meeting Update

Having Community Forum on Wednesday Aug. 17th to get feedback

Bring to community - where should we go - what do you think?

We do not need the entire \$45M in first year

Showed video with Property Services Director Spaulding general perception challenges

C. Good News - Muslim Girls Making Change Performance

Superintendent Obeng introduced Muslim Girls Making Change. They performed their poem "Wake Up America". They recently participated in the International Youth Poetry Festival Brave New Voices.

Superintendent Obeng thanked them for sharing their talents. We need to make some connections to see how we can support them.

7. **Approval of Consent Agenda Items**

- A. *Motion (S. Harrington/S. Seguino) to approve Consent Agenda.*
- B. Strategic Planning Retreat Minutes of July 6, 2016
- C. Board Minutes of July 12, 2016
- D. Curriculum Minutes of July 12, 2016
- E. Strategic Planning Retreat Minutes of July 13, 2016
- F. Governance, Policy & Advocacy Minutes of July 26, 2016
- G. Diversity & Equity Minutes of August 2, 2016
- H. Planning Minutes of August 2, 2016

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All in favor

8. Infrastructure and Technology Committee Report – Did not meet

9. Curriculum Committee Report – Did not meet

10. Diversity & Equity Committee Report

Commissioner Seguino gave the Diversity & Equity Report
Committee discussed how to improve student voice. Commissioner Berrizbeitia has agreed to spend the next month trying to identify ways to get students more involved in diversity and equity. She will be in touch with student reps. Will report to committee in September.

Update on equity and inclusion report - Superintendent will provide in September. We are now able to observe trends since we have several years of data now.

Update on restorative practices work the district is doing – Will have full report in September.

11. Governance, Policy & Advocacy Committee Report

Commissioner Curry gave the Governance, Policy & Advocacy Report

A. Mandatory Reporting of Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect Policy for 2nd Reading – Commissioner Curry asked to table Policy and Procedures until committee can respond to questions – Commissioner Seguino seconded, all approved.

B. Procedures for Reporting Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect - tabled along with Policy

C. Public Participation Policy for First Reading
Had two policies. We looked at both, revised and consolidated.

Move (L. Curry/S. Harrington) to approve first reading
Pass

12. Finance Committee Report - did not meet

13. Executive Session

A. *Motion (S. Seguino/K. Kleman) to consider Executive Session to discuss contract negotiations where premature disclosure could place the School District at a substantial disadvantage at 8:44 p.m.*

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B. *Motion (K. Kleman/M. Barlow) to consider Executive Session to discuss a civil claim where premature disclosure could place the School District at a substantial disadvantage at 8:44 p.m.*

Motion (M. Barlow/K. Kleman) to leave Executive Session at 10:03 p.m.

14. Possible Discussion/Motion/Action on Executive Session Topics

Motion (Liz Curry/Mark Barlow) to waive the reading and adopt the following resolution as written:

RESOLUTION OF BOARD OF SCHOOL COMMISSIONERS

WHEREAS, on June 2, 2015, the Burlington School Board's Diversity & Equity Committee (DEC) was conducting a scheduled meeting; and

WHEREAS, at such meeting the Committee received a Complaint from three members of the School District's Diversity, Equity and Community Partnership Office (DECPO), namely N. Fuller, Office Director, Henri Sparks, Director of Equity and DaVerne Bell, then Diversity Education Director; and

WHEREAS, the Complaint asserted that the Complainants were treated in a demeaning manner as well as with "outright discrimination and harassment" from their professional colleagues within the District without receiving appropriate support from the District; and

WHEREAS, following an unsuccessful effort by the then Interim Superintendent to address the complaint through a mediation/facilitation process, the matter was contracted out for investigation by a neutral investigator; and

WHEREAS, the investigator's initial report was submitted to the Board on April 26, 2016; and

WHEREAS, following its review of the report, the DEC Chair and membership believed that the report insufficiently reflected multiple perspectives of numerous people identified in the report and requested several amendments that were accepted by the investigator, following which she made several amendments to the report; and

WHEREAS, the Board does not unanimously support some of the specifics of this investigation, but based in part upon its desire for the District to be a place of equal opportunity and inclusion in every aspect of its operations, and also because of previous allegations of similar concerns within the District, this Board is prepared to work pro-

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actively with the report's penultimate conclusions that while there were no specific instances of racially motivated conduct or retaliation found, "there exists a pervasive racism that should be addressed to implement needed changes with regard to changing the culture of the District;" and

WHEREAS, the report notes that in the eyes of the Complainants and many others, there has been much improvement in the culture of the District since the arrival of new Superintendent Yaw Obeng; and

WHEREAS, legal counsel for the Complainants has made a series of demands on the District in order to effectuate a settlement and termination of the claims being asserted; and

WHEREAS, such demands have been discussed by the Board and in detail by DEC.

NOW THEREFORE IT IS RESOLVED BY THIS BOARD AS FOLLOWS:

- 1. That this Board express its absolute abhorrence that racism or any other form of impermissible discrimination in any form remains present in any way in the operations of any segment of the District.*
- 2. That this Board sincerely regrets that any employee, supervisor or manager of the District feels or has felt disrespected in the slightest because of his/her race or other protected characteristic, and especially if it is/was also his/her belief that the District did not take prompt and sustained action of a sufficient magnitude to effectively eliminate these concerns.*
- 3. That this Board directs the Superintendent of Schools, with the assistance of his administrative team and District Counsel, to develop and implement a formal, written District wide Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) and present the same for Board approval, to be made applicable to every office, department, division and building within the District, over the next 12 months, subject to the active oversight of this Board, with the goal/requirement of taking all appropriate steps to achieve the zero tolerance standard that is and has been a part of Board adopted District policies.*
- 4. That the Superintendent formally report to the Board at least semi-annually during the duration of the PIP, and more frequently as he may deem desirable, concerning the PIP's implementation, success and any noted impediments that the Board can assist to eliminate.*
- 5. That the Board specifically directs the Superintendent to meet with the Complainants and all employees significantly mentioned in the investigator's report in order to*

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emphasize the seriousness of the prior tensions, the District's resolve to be an employer of full inclusionary opportunity and to set expectations moving forward.

6. That the Board reserves the right to order the extension of the PIP beyond one year if it is determined that success has not been fully achieved despite the Board's full commitment to do so.

All in favor.

15. Adjournment

A. *Motion (M. Barlow/S. Seguino) to adjourn at 10:05 p.m.*
All in favor

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