TOWN OF BURLINGTON  
Meeting Posting  
Notice of Public Meeting – (As required by G.L. c. 30A, c §18-25) 

DEPT./BOARD: School Committee  
DATE: May 14, 2019  
TIME: 7:00 p.m.  
PLACE: School Committee Room, 123 Cambridge Street, Burlington, MA  

AGENDA* 

1. Approval of Minutes 4/23/19  
2. Approval of Warrant  
3. Public Participation  

4. Information/Reports  
   a). Student Representative - SCAB Committee  
   b). Subcommittee Reports  
   c). Ways/Means  

5 Instruction/Technology (7:15 – 8:00 estimated time)  
   a). Marshall Simonds Middle School Students - National History Day Finals  
   b). MSMS Proposed New 2019-20 Student Schedule - Approval  

6. Communication (8:00 – 8:15 estimated time)  
   a). Innovation Pathways Grant  
   b). New Victory Garden Manager  
   c). Proposed School Committee Summer Meeting Schedule  

7. Old Business  

8. New Business (8:15 – 9:00 estimated time)  
   a). FY19 Financial Update  
   b). Elementary Student Report Cards – Approval  
   c). Administration of Medication – First Reading  
   d). Automatic External Defibrillator Procedures & Protocols  

9. Public Participation  

10. Executive  
    a). Approval of Executive Minutes of 4/23/19  
    b). Contract Negotiations  

11. Adjournment  

*Agenda subject to change
Vice Chairman Monaco called this meeting of the School Committee to order at 7:00 p.m. in the School Committee Room, Administration Offices, 123 Cambridge Street, Burlington, Massachusetts. Present: Mr. Thomas F. Murphy, Jr., Mrs. Christine Monaco and Mrs. Kristin Russo. Superintendent Eric Conti, Asst. Superintendent Patrick Larkin, and Director of Operations Bob Cunha also present. Mr. Stephen Nelson, Chairman Simon, and Business Manager Nichole Coscia absent.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES
Moved by Mr. Murphy and seconded by Mrs. Russo to approve minutes of 4/23/19; motion carried 3-0-0.

APPROVAL OF WARRANT
Moved by Mr. Murphy and seconded by Mrs. Russo to approve the warrant; motion carried 2-0-1; Mr. Murphy abstained.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION
Two Fox Hill parents of students in grade 2 expressed concern that a 3rd grade classroom is being eliminated next year, referenced increased class sizes, and questioned equitable education across schools. They suggested the possibility of portable classrooms as well as reprioritizing next year’s budget to allow for an extra section of grade 3 with the teacher to follow students until grade 5. Dr. Conti explained that it’s a matter of space as well as budget; Principal Rosenblatt has requested a guidance counselor for Fox Hill as a first priority. The Superintendent distributed an elementary enrollment table that showed comparisons for each class and grade at the four elementary schools. He explained there is also a bulge at Francis Wyman with 6 sections of grade 2 which will be reduced to 5 sections in grade 3 resulting in a higher class size. Mr. Murphy stated that portable classrooms would only be a short-term, expensive solution that wouldn’t have enough lead time to order. Vice Chairman Monaco commented that it’s the School Committee goal to keep elementary enrollments under 20 per class while also considering space and budget. Dr. Conti was requested to confer with Principal Rosenblatt and Principal McDonald to review the possibility of an additional class for grade 3 next year including possibly shifting larger class sizes to the upper grades.

INFORMATION/REPORTS
Student Representative – SCAB Committee
No student SCAB members were in attendance. Riya Karmani reported the prom went well at the Double Tree in Danvers and seniors are finishing up their student internships this week.

Subcommittee Reports
Mr. Murphy reported that representatives of the Recreation Commission inspected the Francis Wyman playground for potential repairs/replacements. Mr. Cunha further commented that between recreation and the school department, repairs will be done and then a plan will be created for the additional projects and associated funding will be identified.

Ways/Means
Members in attendance: Sue Harrigan and John Iler.

INSTRUCTION/TECHNOLOGY
MSMS Students – National History Day Finals
Social Studies teacher Barbara Sturtevant and four of her middle school students were in attendance to talk about their project entries and upcoming participation in the National History Day competition to be held in Maryland in June. Thirty students initially participated in the project and four students were chosen to move on to the National Competition in June. The School Committee thanked Ms. Sturtevant and offered congratulations to the student participants.

MSMS Proposed New 2019-20 Student Schedule
Dr. Conti explained that Principal Perchase and Mr. Murphy have spent the last 10 months developing relationships, getting to know teachers, and looking at the middle school schedule. He further explained that course scheduling is about compromises and choices to fit everything into the school curriculum and recommended the School Committee use the proposed new schedule as a first reading and vote on it at the next meeting. Parents may also want to speak about the proposed changes tonight.

Principal Cari Perchase and Asst. Principal Josh Murphy presented a very detailed version of the proposed new middle school schedule; which the Committee received in their meeting packet. Some of the areas covered from this over one hour presentation included: process & timeline, guiding principles, goals, schedule structure, 6 day schedule rotation, longer class block times, transition time between classes, increased lunch period, change to 3 report cards and 3 progress reports, 4 core subject areas scheduled every day, other courses scheduled for

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1 Elementary Enrollment 5/13/19
either 2 or 3 times per 6 day rotation, reduction in the number of pull outs for band, chorus, and orchestra. She also covered the proposed changes in the areas of World Language, Music Computer & Tech Ed, Consumer Science, and Reading Strategies. Assistant Principal Murphy reviewed current student schedules as well as some of the challenges for creating a new student schedule. Ms. Perchase explained that staff and parent coffee hours, emails, and newsletter communications have been utilized and also noted that feedback is welcome on this proposal.

Some of the questions and comments School Committee members asked about were: In response to Mrs. Russo, Principal Perchase replied that the BEAM program would continue and she also explained the trimester proposal as three marking periods instead of four which will provide more consistent and up to date information and use of online grade books by staff: students will receive 3 report cards and 3 progress reports. In response to Mr. Murphy, Ms. Perchase answered that based on early models, this schedule should not create staffing issues, no additional staff or reduction in staff will be needed, but there may be some fluctuation in class sizes. Mr. Murphy commended administrators for making the effort to compromise, keeping the arts and music in the program schedule, and creating a schedule considering the challenges. Mrs. Monaco complimented the proposed schedule, taking the time to consider everything and requested that they look at two areas: making world language a core subject and meeting more frequently (addressing staff & parental requests) and researching schedules for special education students as she didn’t see a student schedule built around their needs. Principal Perchase stated that designating world language as a core subject may create staffing issues but she’s not opposed to designating it as such. She further explained that special education students are always considered in scheduling, have individual schedules with specialized plans; currently some students are scheduled into development reading for the delivery of services (which students take instead of world language) and she’d welcome additional conversations about the subject. Dr. Conti summarized by noting that time on learning requirements have to be fit into a 6 hour and 20 minute school day with a 20 minute lunch, there is no ideal schedule but administration will create the most robust program with the time, space, and staff we have but there will be some limitations. He suggested adding a Guiding Principle for special education pull outs. Dr. Conti requested Assistant Principal Murphy create a number of example schedules for grades 6, 7, & 8 students, core teacher, allied arts teacher, a pull out service schedule, and an outstanding math and music student schedule.

SEPAC Board members Meghan Nawotchik, Aimee Johnson, Beth Colburn and Elizabeth Melo expressed a number of concerns including: students IEP’s receiving pull out services during specials, as well as special education students having and receiving equal access to the full curriculum including academic, non-academic, and extracurricular activities. They also expressed concern about how the schedule change would affect their children including socially, and noted there are difficult decisions to be made. SEPAC sent a letter to Ms. Perchase & Mr. Murphy requesting a meeting with them to address their concerns and how they would ensure IDEA and FAPE requirements are being provided to middle school students. Principal Perchase explained that they have had many parallel conversations with staff about special education student needs and stated that special education students will be inserted into the proposed schedule first to make sure it meets their needs.

John Iler commented: proposed blocks are reasonable length of time, to keep current staffing levels is amazing, rotating schedule is good for student interest, good number of report cards, the special education scheduling looks like it should be possible and commended the middle school staff on a tremendous job for this challenging task. BHS student Aaron Rippen commented: cool to introduce a new schedule and new way to learn, good idea to figure out long term solutions, appreciated the addition of transition time, and the rotating schedule allows for a different class time each day. BEA President Diana Marcus stated that union members have expressed concern about the speed in which the schedule was put together, they are unsure of what’s coming up, concern about world language classes not meeting enough times per week for students to receive consistent practice time, and have requested that administration research if students could meet more during the 6 day rotation as they will not have the proficiency to move up to the high school for grade 9.

Principal Perchase finished up by explaining that it has been a short timeframe to create a new schedule but it has been a thorough process, they will look at the schedule each year to review what works and what needs adjustment. Vice Chairman Monaco commended Ms.
Peruse and Mr. Murphy on their willingness to listen, appreciated all their hard work, and their responsiveness to set up a meeting with SEPAC parents.

COMMUNICATION
Innovation Pathways Grant

Dr. Conti announced that he had received a letter from DESE Commissioner Jeff Riley awarding Burlington Schools a $50,000 Innovation Pathways Grant for the 2019/20 school year. Burlington is one of only 16 districts to receive this grant. Innovation Pathways are designed to give students coursework and experience in a specific high-demand industry such as IT, engineering, life sciences, etc. The Superintendent thanked Computer Science teacher Shereen Tyrell and other members of the district staff; he will schedule this team to come to a future School Committee meeting to explain the program. The high school is looking at schedule changes and Principal Sullivan is working on this with his faculty.

New Victory Garden Manager

Jane McIninch from People Helping People notified Dr. Conti that Peter Lewis will be the new Victory Garden Manager and shared a volunteer schedule for community businesses to work on the garden. Ms. McIninch would like to bring a proposal to an upcoming School Committee meeting to expand the garden by planting fruit trees.

Proposed School Committee
Summer Meeting Schedule

Dr. Conti recommended two summer meetings of July 23 and August 20; which the School Committee was in agreement with.

OLD BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS
FY19 Financial Update

Dr. Conti distributed and reviewed the FY19 Financial Update Year-to-Date\(^2\) as Ms. Coscia was attending a yearly business conference. He stated that the projected year end surplus will be $108,000 for the operating budget and $170,711 for the accommodated budget. He further explained that Ms. Coscia will email the School Committee and the W/M subcommittee the first week of the month the previous month’s financials; a monthly financial update agenda item will be scheduled flexibly for one of the two meetings each month. Mrs. Monaco requested that it was preferred that it be scheduled for the first School Committee meeting of the month. In response to Mr. Iler, Dr. Conti replied that a $70,000 increase in the accommodated budget as compared to the March 5 figures could be a tuition increase, change in services, etc. In response to town meeting member Eileen Sickler, Dr. Conti replied that it was up to the School Committee on how the public gets to see the monthly financials. After a brief discussion, it was recommended that monthly financials be distributed after it has been presented at a School Committee meeting. The School Committee thanked Town Meeting and Ways/Means for passing the FY20 school budget. It was requested that Dr. Conti send out the school accomplishment video to town meeting members.

Elementary Student Report Cards - Approval

At the Committee’s request, Mr. Larkin sent out a survey to parents asking for input on the proposal for two elementary report cards and two parent conferences for the 2019-20 school year. Mr. Larkin stated that 319 responses were received, and 83% supported the proposed change but expressed concern about how a second parent conference would be structured.

A discussion followed with some of the comments: Mrs. Russo voiced concern about the “opportunity for a second parent conference” and the possibility of the 2nd conference being dropped. She explained that conferences build teacher/parent rapport, two conferences should be available for all that want a second conference, and parents should not have to initiate the request for a second conference. Mrs. Monaco stated she didn’t support the decrease to two report cards and parents should be able to have as many conferences as they would like. BEA President Diana Marcus commented that the currently scheduled early fall elementary report card is too early with the Rti structure and early fall student testing. She supports face to face conferences; however, expressed concern with how little planning has been done about how a second conference would be completed. There has been no proposal on how it would be implemented and would there be an expectation for teachers to hold them for a number of evening meetings considering they have approximately 18 students each. Dr. Conti proposed that they pilot for one school year the two elementary report cards and two parent conferences (2nd conference would not be optional), elementary principals will develop a schedule for 2nd conferences and then to review the pilot with principals and staff at the end of the school year.

\(^2\) FY19 Financial Update Year-to-Date
Moved by Mr. Murphy and seconded by Mrs. Russo to approve as suggested the elementary report card distribution and parent conference schedule as described by the Superintendent as a pilot for the 2019-20 school year; motion carried 2-1-0; Mrs. Monaco voted no.

Administration of Medication – First Reading

Mr. Larkin explained that Nurse leader Barbara Conley generated revisions to the Administering Medicine to Students policy, submitted it to the Wellness Committee for review, and then forwarded it to the School Committee for approval. As this is a first reading, the School Committee will take this under advisement and vote on it at the next meeting.

AED Procedures & Protocols

The School Committee was provided with an updated copy of the Automatic External Defibrillator procedures and protocol document in their meeting packet.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Ms. Marcus requested that the BEA be provided with a copy of the plan for piloting two elementary report cards and two parent conferences for next year.

Two parents of rising 3rd graders at Francis Wyman expressed concern regarding the proposed plan to reduce the sections of grade 3 to five for next year. There have been 6 sections for students in this grade from kindergarten due to the number of students. and they were concerned about student equity compared to class sizes in the other three elementary schools. Dr. Conti explained there are 106 projected third graders next year with 5 sections. He commented about the possibility of needing an additional teacher at Fox Hill and at Francis Wyman. Mr. Murphy stated that it will be an ongoing issue for the School Committee to look at the available classroom space and the number of elementary teachers. Vice Chairman Monaco thanked the parents for speaking publicly about the class sizes at Francis Wyman and Fox Hill, noted that there are approximately 130 new students compared to last year, the Superintendent will do the best he can with the budget and space limitations. He will review options with the School Committee over the next couple weeks.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Dr. Conti stated there was not a need for executive session this evening.

ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Mr. Murphy and seconded by Mrs. Russo at 10:00 p.m. to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried 3-0-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon Gilbert
Recording Secretary

Date submitted: 5/28/19
Date approved: 5/28/19