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## SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

**DATE:** Tuesday, September 26, 2023

**TIME:** 7:00 pm

**LOCATION:** 123 Cambridge Street, Burlington, MA 01803  
Administrative Offices, School Committee Room

### ATTENDEES

**MEMBER(S) PRESENT:** Chair, Ms. Martha Simon, Vice Chair Ms. Melissa Massardo, Ms. Chris Monaco, Ms. Katherine Bond, Mr. Jeremy Brooks, Superintendent Dr. Eric Conti, Assistant Superintendent Dr. Lisa Chen, Finance Director Ms. Nichole Coscia, Director of Operations Mr. Bob Cunha, and BHS Student Representative Mr. Matt Shannon

**MEMBER(S) REMOTE:** None

**MEMBER(S) ABSENT:** None

**GUEST(S) PRESENT:** Ways and Means Mr. Steve Morin

**GUEST(S) REMOTE:** Ways and Means Mr. Roger Riggs

**PUBLIC PRESENT:** Mr. Ed Parsons, Mr. David Cozzens, Mr. Adam Senesi and Ms. Sara Eshelman

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION REMOTE:** Parent Mr. David Cozzens

### CALL TO ORDER

Chair Simon called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m., and read the following statement: The public can also access this meeting via WebEx Technology. The Burlington School Committee will hear public comment in person and virtually. Meetings are also broadcast live on Burlington Cable Access TV (BCAT) as usual. Chair Simon reminded participants that comments and statements are limited to 3 minutes each. Meeting Access Code: Meeting number (access code): 2357 205 5156 | Password: Tuesday.

### EQUITY STATEMENT

Educational equity means **that every child belongs and receives whatever support he/she/they need to develop his/her/their full academic, emotional, and social potential to learn and thrive every day.** This begins with kindness and valuing the humanity of every child or individual.

### APPROVAL of WARRANT

**Ms. Monaco made a motion to approve the warrant as submitted; seconded by Ms. Bond.**

**Ms. Monaco - aye, Mr. Brooks - aye, Ms. Massardo - aye, Ms. Bond - aye, Ms. Simon - aye.**

**Motion Carried 5:0:0.**

### APPROVAL of MINUTES

**Ms. Monaco made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of 9/12/23; seconded by Mr. Brooks.**

**Ms. Monaco - aye, Mr. Brooks - aye, Ms. Massardo - aye, Ms. Bond - aye, Ms. Simon - aye.**

**Motion Carried 5:0:0.**

### PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Mr. Edward Parsons stated that the feasibility study phase is underway to consider two options; rebuild the Fox Hill School or consolidate the Fox Hill and Pine Glen Schools. The consolidation is being considered because the School Committee, school district and Town agreed to consider it in May 2020. This consolidation is unpopular and both options shrink the Fox Hill School from 450 to 325 students. Mr. Parsons suggested considering a third option for comparison; withdrawing from the MSBA process and build a four classroom grade school that would better serve the school district.

Resident Mr. Adam Senesi stated he agrees with Mr. Parsons' suggestion to consider a third option.

Mr. David Cozzens is a parent of an elementary school student and wanted to address the COVID-19 protocols that were sent out this past week. It appears we are going back to more restrictive COVID policies for the children that include testing for cold symptoms, a 5 to 10-day quarantine and whether a child would choose to wear a mask. Mr. Cozzens proposes treating COVID like any other illness and using a 24-hour fever free time frame to return to school.

Dr. Conti explained that there have not been any changes made to the existing COVID protocols and practices from the prior year. COVID is a virus that will be primarily managed from home.

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### INFORMATION / REPORTS

#### Student Report

Mr. Shannon reported that the DECA students are interested in attending the Leadership Conference in Austin, TX. These students are looking for financial support and have partnered with True North Café for a fundraiser on Thursday, September 28, 2023, from 6 -11 a.m., True North will commit a percentage of sales to the DECA fund. Mr. Shannon noted that all the sports teams are excelling; the girls' volleyball team, the boys football team won their latest game and gave a shout out to the girls' field hockey team.

#### Subcommittee Reports

None.

#### Ways and Means Report

Mr. Steve Morin has no report at this time.

Mr. Roger Riggs stated he and Mr. John Iler will report on the funding options for the new school buildings at the next School Committee meeting on October 10, 2023.

#### Other Announcements

Dr. Conti recognized the passing of Mr. Charlie Lyons, the former Superintendent of Shawsheen Valley Technical School. Dr. Conti stated that Mr. Lyons was generous with his time, a legend of superintendents, a strong advocate for children and will be sorely missed. Dr. Conti expressed his deepest condolences to the Lyons family. There was a moment of silence for Mr. Lyons.

Ms. Monaco stated that Mr. Lyons' twin brother, Mr. Jack Lyons, served as a School Committee member for several years and expressed her condolences to Jack.

Ms. Simon stated that the Diwali Celebration was postponed until next Sunday, October 1<sup>st</sup> from 2-6 p.m.

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### LEARNING, EQUITY, THRIVING

#### Out-of-State Field Trip for DECA Students

Dr. Conti stated that the DECA Advisors, Ms. Krista Anderson and Ms. Danielle Trouve, are requesting approval for an Out-of-State DECA trip to Austin TX, to attend a Leadership Conference that takes place this November 17-19, 2023. There will be 20 students going with 2 teachers. The trip is self-funded by the students at the cost of approximately \$800. The plan is to fly out of Logan to Austin and stay overnight at the DECA-designated hotel in Austin. Students will attend workshops during the day and participate in some sightseeing in the evening.

**Ms. Monaco motioned to approve the out-of-state trip for the DECA Students to attend the Leadership Conference in Austin, TX; seconded by Ms. Bond.**

**Ms. Monaco - aye, Mr. Brooks – aye, Ms. Massardo – aye, Ms. Bond – aye, Ms. Simon – aye.**

**Motion Carried 5:0:0.**

#### Out-of-State Field Trip for Band, Chorus, Guard, and Orchestra Students

Dr. Conti noted that Mr. Middleton-Cox is requesting School Committee approval for the Band, Chorus, Guard and Orchestra students to attend the World Strides Heritage Festival from April 10 - 14, 2024 in Orlando, Florida. The cost of the trip includes buses, hotel, performance, on-stage clinic, recordings, awards, a gala awards ceremony and dinner as well as park tickets for Disney World and Universal Studios. The total cost would be the responsibility of the individual students and their families. BPAPA would provide many fundraising opportunities to help defray the cost to support families who are having financial hardship. The daily activities will be well structured and chaperoned.

**Ms. Monaco made a motion to approve the out-of-state trip for the Band, Chorus, Guard and Orchestra Students to attend the WorldStrides Heritage Festival in Orland Florida; seconded by Mr. Brooks.**

**Ms. Monaco - aye, Mr. Brooks – aye, Ms. Massardo – aye, Ms. Bond – aye, Ms. Simon – aye.**

**Motion Carried 5:0:0.**

#### MSMS Stipend Drama Club

Dr. Conti explained that Dr. Cari Perchase requested approval for a stipend for a Drama Club at Marshall Simonds Middle School led by Ms. Abby Lingberg, MA/CAS, NCSP. The number of students would be 20-30 and it can run with as few as 4 students and as many as 50, based on an inventory of middle-aged plays available on-line. While we would be able to fundraise to financially support the drama club in

producing plays, funding through the district would also be needed. Dr. Conti recommended the committee approve the stipend for the Drama Club at MSMS.

**Ms. Monaco motioned to approve a stipend for the MSMS Drama Club; seconded by Ms. Bond.  
Ms. Monaco - aye, Mr. Brooks – aye, Ms. Massardo – aye, Ms. Bond – aye, Ms. Simon – aye.  
Motion Carried 5:0:0.**

### **Family/Homeless Liaison Position**

Dr. Conti explained this is to request an additional position be added to the district outside of the budget, which is a bilingual family community engagement social worker. There are now 30-50 homeless students, which requires much more time than just a few students and they usually have a language need. Dr. Conti stressed this not just for families living in the hotels, this is for families that have been displaced and are staying with other families and for Burlington families that are finding themselves in a homeless situation.

Director of Mental Health, Ms. Christine Conceison, stated that this position can assist any family, i.e., homeless families, multi-lingual families, or disadvantage families in need of additional support. This will help both, at the local level and working with state agencies, to help families that need support.

Ms. Simon clarified that the McKenney-Vento Act is a Massachusetts State Law regarding support services and the rights of children of families that are homeless.

**Ms. Monaco motioned to approve the position of a Family/Homeless Liaison; seconded by Ms. Massardo.  
Ms. Monaco - aye, Mr. Brooks – aye, Ms. Massardo – aye, Ms. Bond – aye, Ms. Simon – aye.  
Motion Carried 5:0:0.**

### **Brief MCAS Statement**

Dr. Conti stated he will be providing a more in-depth statement later next month. He explained there are two Burlington schools that made the warning list, BHS and Fox Hill. Dr. Conti stated this is not for performance issues, it is due to low participation. He further explained that if a school falls below 95% of student participation then it is put on the list. Dr. Conti reiterated it's not performance on the MCAS, it is participation. Even though we do not have an opt-out choice, there are parents who do not want their children to participate.

Discussion ensued.

### **Elementary School/Classroom Enrollment**

Dr. Conti reported on the elementary school classroom enrollment numbers. This report is informational, only.

Discussion ensued relative to posting on the website.

### **Equity Audit Update**

Dr. Conti stated his final meeting with equity auditor was last week. The auditor now has all information and as soon as he has the final report it will be shared publicly.

### **Journey to C.A.R.E.S. Update**

Dr. Chen stated that C.A.R.E.S. means **caring** as we cultivate a caring community; we **accept** others for who they are, we **respect** all human differences, we build **excellence** for all and we **strive** for students' success every day. It's a journey and that is where the 1.0 comes in because it is a continuous process. Dr. Chen continued with her presentation updating the committee on activities within the district.

### **MASC Policy Sections I – 1st Reading**

Dr. Conti discussed MASC Policies Section I, as a first reading.

Mr. Brooks suggested stronger language in the social media policy and referred to Franklin Public School's Policy # IJNDD, as a good example.

Dr. Conti will obtain a copy of Franklin's policy #IJNDD for the committee to review.

### **MASC Policy Section J – 2nd Reading**

Dr. Conti stated this Policy Section J, is a second reading. Dr. Conti reminded the committee that #JICFB Bullying Prevention, was approved as a second reading at the last meeting on 9/12/23.

Discussion ensued relative to File #JEB, and the date a child must reach five years old in order to enter school. The committee decided to approve Section J, with the exception of File #JEB School Attendance Age, to allow time for further discussion.

**Ms. Monaco made a motion to approve the MASC Policies Section J, as a second reading, without File #JEB; Ms. Bond seconded the motion.**

**Ms. Monaco - aye, Mr. Brooks – aye, Ms. Massardo – aye, Ms. Bond – aye, Ms. Simon – aye.**

**Motion Carried 5:0:0.**

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**FACILITIES / FINANCE**

**Fox Hill School Building Committee**

Dr. Conti reported that there was a community meeting and the Thought Exchange is open until 9/29/23. The next meeting is scheduled for 10/3/23. At Town Meeting on 9/27/23, there will be a video update that was created by the designer and OPM, which will be played during the start of Town Meeting. The designer and OPM will be available to answer questions, as well.

**BHS Update**

Dr. Conti reported that there was a first meeting of the BHS Building Committee and the most significant agenda item was the approval of the RFP for the OPM.

Ms. Coscia confirmed that the RFP opens tomorrow and the proposals are due back by 10/16/23.

**Pine Glen**

Mr. Cunha stated that at Pine Glen two new office spaces were constructed, the DPW completed the paving in front of the walkway, and they restriped the parking lot spaces.

Mr. Cunha updated on other projects:

- The old Francis Wyman playground equipment has been removed and there is a construction crew doing the design prep for the base structure that is already there. All playground equipment has been delivered and the Recreation Department needs to review the ramp for safety as well as the stairs that are embedded within a hill;
- Mr. Cunha noted that the BHS lower library offices have now been completed;
- Mr. Cunha stated he is working with the Recreation Department to relocate a flag pole to the MSMS. The plan is to remove a flag pole at BHS and relocate it to MSMS;
- Mr. Cunha informed the committee on the BHS parking lot where the police put up a speed sign to alert drivers to slow down on the property;
- Mr. Cunha updated on the committee on the bus requests noting there will be more requests to come.

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**ADJOURNMENT**

**Motion was made by Ms. Monaco to adjourn the meeting at 9:12 p.m.; seconded by Ms. Massardo.**

**Ms. Monaco - aye, Mr. Brooks – aye, Ms. Massardo – aye, Ms. Bond – aye, Ms. Simon – aye.**

**Motion Carried 5:0:0.**

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**SUBMITTED**

Respectfully,  
Marianne Fabbri  
Recording Secretary

Date Submitted: 11/14/23  
Date Approved: 11/14/23