

REGULAR MEETING OF THE SOUTH BURLINGTON SCHOOL BOARD

Wednesday, January 21, 2026

Regular Session at 6:00 pm

South Burlington School District Administrative Office

577 Dorset Street, South Burlington, VT

REGULAR MEETING / COMMUNITY FORUM

Present

Seamus Abshire, Laura Williams, Jennifer Lawrence, Dan Boyer, Emilee Hoffman, Austin Smith, Ally Leduc, Momin Waqar

Administration/Staff

Dr. Joe Clark, Jean Marie Clark, Daisy Brayton, Nick Bocchino, Lisa Barron, Holly Russell-Vroegop, Deirdre Phalon, Nicole Carter

Guests

1 guest in person

5 online

Call Regular Meeting to Order

Seamus Abshire called the meeting to order at 6:05 pm.

Pledge of Allegiance was previously said at the Steering Committee meeting so was not repeated.

Announcements

In February, the School Board will be talking about the Williston Road standpoint projects of the city, which involves transferring land from the back of Rick Marcotte Central School to the city for sidewalk widening.

If you are interested in running for School Board, go to the City Clerk's office for more information; there are four seats available.

Austin Smith announced that he will not be running for School Board this term.

Amendments to the Agenda

Seamus Abshire requests that the School Board vote again on the FY27 budget – there was no interest in re-discussing this.

Comments from the public

Sarah Pineda, nurse leader and a resident of South Burlington, spoke to note that while the district is remaining within state recommendations of nurse to student ratios; the approved budget does represent a reduction in nursing capacity, which has implications for health services and chronic absenteeism.

Focus on Student Learning**Student Representative Report**

Ally Leduc and Momin Waqar presented the following information:

- January 28th is a late start for middle and high school.
- 8th graders visited South Burlington High School to experience 9th grade.
- The high school will host an 8th-grade academic information night at 7 p.m. tomorrow.
- A post-secondary information session for juniors will be held on Thursday, January 29th, at 6:30 p.m. More info will be sent via email.

There was discussion about student voter registration and student budget presentation. Students plan to give a budget presentation to seniors and juniors and have a voter registration table during lunch.

Community Forum**VT School District Redistricting**

- This is not about school consolidation or redistricting within the district, but about statewide redistricting.
- One proposal would combine Burlington, Colchester, Milton, South Burlington, and Winooski into one district.
- The state legislature will make the final determination on redistricting.
- The South Burlington Business office is having a brainstorming conversation with the Burlington School District Business office about ways to partner that would make them more efficient.
 - One idea is to bring Burlington under South Burlington's transportation umbrella.

Action Items**Vermont School District Redistricting statement**

Does the School Board wish to make a public statement about school district redistricting, as other School Boards have done?

A motion was read by Seamus Abshire:

To state publicly that the South Burlington School Board supports frank discussion and prompt action to address cost and academic proficiency concerns and specifically is open to the idea of consolidation with other school districts and authorized the chair to release a press release to this effect. Austin Smith so moves, Jen Lawrence seconds. Joe Clark supported the board making a statement, and some discussion ensued. All were in favor, **motion passed**.

Vote on FY 2027 Annual School District Meeting Warning

Laura Williams read the official warning,

The legal voters of the City of South Burlington School District are hereby notified and warned to meet at their respective polling places at the Frederick H. Tuttle Middle School at 500 Dorset Street, the Orchard School at 2 Baldwin Avenue, the Gertrude Chamberlin School at 262 White Street, and the Kevin Dorn Senior Center in South Burlington City Hall at 180 Market Street on Tuesday, March 3, 2026, at 7:00 o'clock in the morning, at which time the polls will open, until 7:00 o'clock in the evening, at which time the polls will close, to vote by Australian ballot on the following articles:

ARTICLE I
ELECTION OF OFFICERS

On the first Tuesday in March, 2026, the voters of the city shall elect, from among the legal residents of the city, one member for the remaining two years of a three-year term, one member for a three-year term, and two members for two-year terms. Thereafter, the election of school directors shall be for the length of the term of the member whose term is expiring.

ARTICLE II
BUDGET

Shall the voters of the South Burlington School District approve the School Board to expend Seventy-Three Million Nine Hundred Thirty-Nine Thousand One Hundred Twenty-One and 00/100 Dollars (\$73,939,121.00), which is the amount the School Board has determined to be necessary for the ensuing fiscal year?

The South Burlington School District estimates that this proposed budget, if approved, will result in per pupil education spending of \$15,696.08, which is 8.52% higher than per pupil education spending for the current year.

ARTICLE III
ADDITIONAL APPROPRIATION TO DISTRICT'S
CAPITAL RESERVE FUND AUTHORIZED

Shall the South Burlington School District's Board of Directors (Board) be authorized to allocate the audited surplus funds from the 2025 fiscal year in the amount of \$2,554,157.57 to the District's Capital Reserve Fund which, in combination with funds previously allocated or allocated in the future, may be expended for future capital improvements as determined by such Board and detailed in the District's Facilities Stewardship Plan as the same may be amended from time to time in accordance with the requirements of 24 V.S.A. 2804?

Polling places are at the Frederick H. Tuttle Middle School at 500 Dorset Street, the Orchard School at 2 Baldwin Avenue, the Gertrude Chamberlin School at 262 White Street, and the Kevin Dorn Senior Center in South Burlington City Hall at 180 Market Street. Voters are to go to the polling place in their respective District.

The legal voters of the City of South Burlington School District are further warned and notified that a public information meeting will be held to discuss Articles I, II and III on Monday, March 2, 2026, at 6:30 p.m. at City Hall Auditorium, 180 Market Street. The legal voters of the City of South Burlington School District are further notified that voter qualification, registration, and absentee voting relative to said annual meeting shall be as provided in Chapters 43, 51 and 55 of Title 17, Vermont Statutes Annotated.

Jen Lawrence moved to approve the fiscal year 2027 annual school district meeting warning as presented in the board materials for this meeting and read in this meeting by Laura Williams. Emilee Hoffman seconds, no public discussion, all in favor - **motion passed.**

FY 2027 Public High School Choice Capacity – Title 16, Section 822(a)

This topic is around accepting number of students with no funding to the South Burlington School District.

Dan Boyer moved to approve the fiscal year 2027, public high school choice capacity, Title 16, Section 822A recommendation of one, as presented in the board packet. Austin Smith seconds. Some Board members asked clarifying questions. All in favor, **motion passed**.

Video Surveillance - Revision to Executive Limitation 2.1

Third Reading and fifth discussion at a Board Meeting. This discussion is around allowing principals and administrators more access to video surveillance as presented in the board materials.

Laura Williams moved to approve the revision to Executive Limitation 2.1, regarding video surveillance as presented in the board materials. Austin Smith seconds, no discussion. All in favor, **motion passed**.

Discussion Item - FY 2027 Budget Communication Plan

Some discussion around updating the SBSD website, social media, Front Porch Forum.

Additional discussion around Board members' personal feelings about the budget vs. their responsibilities as a Board member.

Also discussed was the impact of the budget increase to homeowners of South Burlington and how to communicate that to residents. Jean-Marie Clark reported on potential costs for a mailer.

It was determined to form a committee for budget communication.

Laura Williams moves to charge a Budget Communication Committee comprised of Emilee Hoffman, Jen Lawrence, and Laura Williams, Momin Waqar and Ally Leduc; whose task will end when they have reported back to the board the necessary actions steps for the Board to take on the budget communication plans. Emilee Hoffman seconds, no discussion. All in favor, **motion passed**.

Planning for updating Ends Policy

The Board will discuss updating the Ends Policy on March 4, 2026.

Superintendent's Report - Dr. Clark wrapped up the 3Q process, which included 33 meetings with 316 participants.

Dr. Clark used AI to identify the most common themes from the feedback:

- **What people like most about South Burlington schools:** dedicated staff, rich diversity, special education innovation, extracurriculars, strong sense of community, academic rigor, supportive social-emotional learning, positive transitions, intellectual freedom, safe environment.
- **What can be done better:** improve academic rigor, address behavioral issues, ensure special education compliance, enhance budget transparency, modernize facilities, strengthen communication, optimize transportation, provide better staff training, standardize resources, improve student accountability.
- **What is expected of Dr. Clark:** maintain high visibility, prioritize transparency, foster collaboration, develop a long-term plan, ensure accountability, oversee special education, advocate for marginalized students, continue effective communication, restore community pride, listen and respond to feedback.
- Dr. Clark sent out a survey to parents and staff asking them to select their top three priorities for each category and identify the highest priority among those three.
- Dr. Clark wants to ensure that people other than just families and staff members complete the survey.
- Dr. Clark plans to follow up with the strategic planning process and the new Ends policy.
 - After that, Dr. Clark plans to have at least an annual re-gathering, possibly a Superintendent town hall.

CONSENT AGENDA

Approve minutes of January 7, 2026

Approve Account Payables (AP) § Value > \$50K: Orders:

1306 for \$852.28
1307 for \$4,090.34
1308 for 1,291,908.13
1309 for \$1,629.24
1319 for \$275.31
1320 for \$448.00
1321 for \$342.95
1322 for \$12,839.98
1323 for \$95,443.45
1332 for \$293,071.52
1335 for \$382,090.75
1336 for \$6,305.96
1337 for \$9,541.90
1338 for \$120.00

AP Payroll Warrant #14

Approve AP Voucher Checks

Approve AP Voucher Check to Howard Center Inc. in the amount of \$162,445.57.

Dan Boyer moved to approve the AP Voucher check to Howard Center on the consent agenda as presented, Emilee Hoffman seconded. Some discussion about how they can monitor the Howard Center work. All in favor; **motion passed**.

Approve AP Voucher Check to Vermont Mechanical Inc. in the amount of \$162,366.60.

Dan Boyer moved to approve the AP Voucher check to Vermont Mechanical Inc., Laura Williams seconded. Some discussion about the voucher containing information about what work was done. All in favor; **motion passed**.

Leaves of Absence

- Kat Ahrens, 1.0 FTE Mathematics Teacher at SBHS for the 2026-2027 school year
- Julia DiFerdinando, .80 FTE CAS for VAPA and Visual Arts Teacher at SBHS for the 2026-2027 school year

All items moved for approval by Dan Boyer, seconded by Emilee Hoffman, no discussion. **Motion passed**.

Agenda Planning – The board reviewed the agenda for the February 4th school board meeting. Action items – Monitor 2.10, Curriculum Development and Review, 2.4 Financial Conditions and Activities.

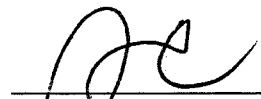
Discussion items, the Williston Road Right-of-Way request and the budget communication plan.

Parking Lot

Possible agenda items: professional development. March 4th, trades update and Ends Policy.

Adjournment

Seamus Abshere called for a motion to adjourn the regular meeting. Laura Williams moved and Austin Smith seconded. No discussion. The motion was approved and the meeting was adjourned at 8:23 pm.



Seamus Abshere, Chair

~~Laura Williams, Clerk~~
Austin Smith