

REGULAR MEETING OF THE SOUTH BURLINGTON SCHOOL BOARD

Wednesday, September 2, 2026

Executive Session at 5:00 pm

Regular Session at 6:00 pm

South Burlington School District Administrative Office

577 Dorset Street, South Burlington, VT

REGULAR MEETING

PRESENT

Seamus Abshire, Dan Boyer, Michelle Boyer, Elissa Galvez, Emilee Hoffman

ADMINISTRATION/STAFF

Dr. Joe Clark, Daisy Brayton, Nick Bocchino

GUESTS

None

Call Regular meeting to order

Seamus Abshire called the meeting to order at 5:25 p.m.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

The Board convened in Executive Session at 5:26 p.m.

Seamus Abshire called for a motion to enter Executive Session at 5:26 p.m. to discuss employment of a public officer or employee, labor negotiations, and receiving confidential attorney-client communication for the purpose of providing legal services to the Board as permitted under Vermont law and added that it would be significantly disadvantageous to the district not to do so in Executive Session.

Emilee Hoffman moved, and Dan Boyer seconded. All were in favor, the motion passed.

Discuss labor negotiations, employment of a public officer, and receive confidential attorney-client communication for the purpose of providing legal services to the Board.

IN: 5:26 p.m.

OUT: 6:05 p.m.

Dan Boyer moved to adjourn the Executive Session at 6:05 p.m. Emilee Hoffman seconded. All were in favor, and the Executive Session adjourned at 6:05 p.m.

The Board returned to the regular meeting at 6:05 p.m.

REGULAR MEETING**PRESENT**

Seamus Abshire, Dan Boyer, Michelle Boyer, Thomas Chittenden, Elissa Galvez, Emilee Hoffman, Oliver Kunz, Momin Waqar

ADMINISTRATION/STAFF

Dr. Joe Clark, Daisy Brayton, Nicole Carter, Nick Bocchino, Olivia Kane, Lissa McDonald, Kat Yun

GUESTS

Gerry Silverstein (*online*), Deirdre Phalon (*online*)

Call Regular Meeting to Order

Chair Seamus Abshire called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was said.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND AMENDMENTS TO THE AGENDA**Announcements**

Seamus Abshire announced that New York City public schools recently put strict limitations on AI and technology use in K-8 classrooms, and he would like to hear more about that.

Comments and Questions

No public comments were received.

Focus on Student Learning

Momin Waqar mentioned how all schools are back in session, and, to kick off the new school year, the seniors had the opportunity to paint a high school parking spot. He invited the Board members to look for the student designs if they visit the high school.

Oliver Kunz announced that on September 3, there would be a pre-K open house from 8:30-9:15 a.m. at Gertrude Chamberlin School, and that Tuesday, September 8 is the first day of preschool. He mentioned Picture Day would be coming up soon and the website would have more of those details. He also noted that Labor Day was coming up this weekend, and students and educators would have Friday through Monday off.

Seamus Abshire asked if there were any questions for the student representatives. There were no questions.

COMMUNITY FORUM ITEMS**Ends Policy Update (Second Reading)**

Seamus Abshire explained how the concept of a community forum, which was introduced about a year ago, is an opportunity for community members to dialogue with the Board. He noted how it was the only time for discussion with community members at normal board meetings.

Seamus Abshire provided a brief overview of the Ends Policy and its importance to the school district. He noted that since the last meeting there was a change to Section 1.0, drawing attention to the goal of students positively contributing to their communities and successfully navigating their chosen paths in adult life. He mentioned how they received feedback on Section 1.1.3 around multilingual student outcomes continuous improvement. Seamus Abshire continued with Section 1.2, explaining how originally the idea was well-rounded education, but the Board felt that 'real life' skills was a clearer description. He informed the Board that during the process, one of the first middle schoolers said they wanted more real life skills, so 'real life,' 'relevant,' and 'modern' skills were added based on feedback from the last meeting.

Emilee Hoffman asked about input from community members or staff. She pointed out that this was the second reading and there would only be one more. Seamus Abshire answered how staff feedback had been received and said that at the September 16 meeting, the Board would not need to take action if they did not want to. Seamus Abshire mentioned that the digital ads the Board authorized are now running to further notify the community that a decision will be made on September 16. The Board could decide to not take action, but this is the final push to solicit participation. Seamus Abshire felt public outreach had been maximized, but would support listening to any input. He said that it would not make sense to rush it on September 16 and reminded the Board that, if they did not want to vote on September 16, it could be pushed to the next meeting, allowing for more feedback. He stated how there was no hard deadline.

Dr. Joe Clark mentioned how he wanted the Ends Policy finished before working on the strategic plan but a strategic plan consultant had been selected and there was enough collected data for the consultant to get started prior to the Ends Policy being finalized. He encouraged getting more feedback rather than rushing to finish on September 16. Thomas Chittenden reminded the Board how the Ends Policy was a living document that could be amended at any time.

Dr. Joe Clark said that ideally the strategic plan would be done in November and could be used for the budget. He stated how the selected consultant believed it could be done by November.

Momin Waqar stated that he was still trying to understand policy governance and the line between jurisdiction versus the educators and felt the current wording was a little close to that line, compared to something broader. He suggested 'students will demonstrate an age

appropriate understanding of what it means to be a responsible student and community member.' Seamus Abshire shared his perspective saying that the Board's responsibility, no matter the self-imposed government structure, was to maintain the legitimacy of public education. The Board was not meant to be made up of education administrators, but common community members that do not impose their professional opinions. He stated that Momin Waqar was right to point that out as an area of potential overreach, but they needed to balance the legitimacy with educational administration governance.

Emilee Hoffman shared how she was impressed with Momin Waqar's knowledge of policy governance. She indicated that she liked the idea of leaving it more open-ended, but the way it was currently written was not nebulous and provided clarity around baseline expectations. Thomas Chittenden asked if written feedback would be accepted; Seamus Abshire said yes, that there was an option to do that and that staff feedback on this list was received, and how more was always welcome.

Lissa McDonald thanked the Board for inviting her again. She shared how the feedback she gave last time was very similar to the students' feedback today. She looked at another way that this might be addressed and believed there was a bit of an overreach into the operational area. She asked Momin Waqar to restate how he worded it previously, and he repeated it to the Board. Lissa McDonald suggested that the bulleted list should be: academic responsibility and readiness; civic and social engagement; and self-management and digital citizenship. She thought that the teachers and administrators at each school should determine what that means at each level. Her understanding of an Ends Policy was that it was not vague, but specific to an expectation with the opportunity for the experts to weigh in. Seamus Abshire shared that he did not believe this restricts educators from defining each bullet point; each student has their own needs, and a teacher defines what it means for each individual.

Dr. Joe Clark reminded the Board that the Superintendent was the one that interprets the Ends Policy and provides a reasonable interpretation to the Board of what is happening. He was comfortable with the bullets either way. Emilee Hoffman wondered about combining the two. Thomas Chittenden liked the suggestions provided by Lissa McDonald and having that as an overarching framework, as well as examples that would fit rather than an inclusive list, so that all would feel heard.

Seamus Abshire asked Lissa McDonald to share her idea again, which she did. Seamus Abshire revised the document to include the suggestions, which he believed were an improvement, stating that he would not object to the new revision.

There was some discussion about the report written by the consultant who supported the collection of data and feedback.

Seamus Abshire continued with section 1.3 and stated how the real life skills section was separate from readiness for adult life and explained how one was achieving the skills, while the other was demonstrating age appropriate steps toward career entry apprenticeship. For monitoring, he suggested looking at how many students were in apprenticeships and career entry, and tracking where students end up. He stated how testing the community was missing from the last Ends Policy and that one of the final outcomes in the new policy was the expectation that the Superintendent would show improved ratings provided by representative groups of community members.

Seamus Abshire asked if there were any comments. There were no additional comments.

Dr. Joe Clark mentioned that he was looking forward to the results and thought the Board members have done great work.

Seamus Abshire reminded the Board that the third Ends Policy reading was scheduled for September 16 and that there was a large campaign to solicit more feedback, and if the Board was not confident moving forward, Dr. Joe Clark had given some flexibility to extend the deadline.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Revised Executive Limitation 2.4 Financial Condition and Activities (Second Reading)

Seamus Abshire mentioned that in the meeting agenda, this discussion item was mistakenly listed as an action item. Dr. Joe Clark stated that this was worked on with the Finance office and that there were not many changes. He explained the budget for a single unbudgeted purchase or financial commitment without prior Board approval was raised from \$25,000 to \$40,000. The Superintendent or the Superintendent's designee could sign contracts. Seamus Abshire mentioned that if there was anything that the Board sees in the VSBA model policy, that they might want to bring that up with Dr. Joe Clark before the final meeting.

Seamus Abshire was satisfied with the end result. He asked if there were any comments; there were no comments.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Dr. Joe Clark presented the new district website updates and mentioned how he had been doing all the changes, so any updates or edits that need to be done could be sent to him. He explained how the switchover to the new website had not occurred yet, but it could happen whenever

they are ready. Dr. Joe Clark provided an overview of the changes made so far; such as better graphics and locations of buttons and information. He explained how everything on the website, other than the homepages, would be carried over and how it would also be searchable and have ChatBot capabilities. He expected revisions to be done in a couple of weeks. Dr. Joe Clark noted that in this time of increased school safety, he also added a prominent button to report a threat. He pointed out a new page he created for community organization and resources, with links to housing and homelessness, recreation, disability services, etc. There were some questions regarding Reading Mode, using chatbots, and documents being 508 compliant. Dr. Joe Clark was still updating the site and planned to check on these.

Dr. Joe Clark provided an update on the beginning of the school year, stating that it was off to a great start. He mentioned how there were a few issues, such as the Wi-Fi being impacted at the middle school during construction and the elevator problem at 577 Dorset Street, but the teams in place were great. The elevator still needed to be repaired but the parking lot was almost done. He appreciated the hard work the maintenance team, custodial staff, and Jean-Marie's team provided. He also mentioned the great work School's Out did over the summer. He continued to say how Convocation went very well, and that it was great to see David Young come back to honor Delina Gilroy and Meg Collins, who are both retiring in December.

Dr. Joe Clark explained how Nicole Carter and her team have been working hard with a focus on the Continuous Improvement Plan and Special Education. He mentioned how Daisy Brayton had been hiring many new staff members and had organized the new staff orientation. He continued to say how all the principals were fantastic and how Kat Yun, new to the District, had hit the ground running and that he had loved the work she had been doing. He mentioned how on the first day of school he visited every classroom in every building and how he was proud of the students, staff, and administrative team. He also appreciated starting the school year at the beginning since last year he started on September 12, after the school year began.

Momin Waqar was asked about the SLAM (Student Led Advisory Meeting) program. Momin said Juniors who want to be SLAM leaders in their senior year take a leadership class, so that during senior year they can mentor groups of incoming freshmen and how the groups stay together for the next four years, which helps them to get to know each other, the school, etc. Dr. Joe Clark invited Lissa McDonald to give feedback as well, and noted that it had been great having her at the high school. Lissa McDonald provided the definition of SLAM.

Emilee Hoffman shared that Orchard School got a new sign towards the end of last year and how there was a sign on the side of the school, but a large tree partially covered it, so another sign was added by the front door.

Dr. Joe Clark shared that there have been many compliments on the high school's second floor ladies restroom and was grateful to Jean-Marie Clark's team for getting it updated and mentioned how staff and students were also thankful.

Seamus Abshire asked if there were any comments or questions; there were none.

CONSENT AGENDA & PLANNING (Policy 4.3.3)

Seamus Abshire presented the Consent Agenda for Board consideration. Items approved included:

Approve minutes of August 12 and August 19, 2026.

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

- 1004 for \$1,421.24
- 1005 for \$5,104.90
- 1006 for \$1,421.24
- 1007 for \$5,104.90
- 1008 for \$1,421.24
- 1009 for \$5,104.90
- 1104 for \$2,826.01
- 1105 for \$28,128.06
- 1106 for \$4,275.38
- 1107 for \$907,889.53
- 1086 for \$8,804.94
- 1087 for \$2,818.61
- 1088 for \$2,648.05
- 1089 for \$1,283,381.24
- 1600 for \$9,563.00
- 1601 for \$70,754.07
- 1602 for \$99.34
- 1603 for \$9,542.13

Approve Payroll Warrant #'s: 2.1, 3, 3.1, 4, 26.3 and 26.4

Seamus Abshire moved to approve A/P checks to Vermont Mechanical Inc. in the amount of \$156,116.87; to Environmental Hazards Management, Inc. in the amount of \$77,574.00; to Goldfield Construction Management, Inc. in the amount of \$113,610.00; and to New England Floor Covering in the amount of \$67,580.50. Emilee Hoffman moved, and Elissa Galvez seconded the motion. There were no comments or objections. All were in favor and the motion passed.

Seamus Abshire asked if there were any objections to the minutes, Account Payables, or the Payroll Warrants. Hearing no objection, agenda was passed by consent.

AGENDA FOR NEXT MEETING

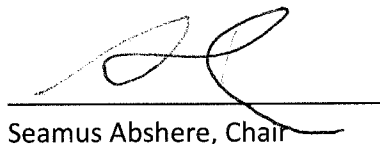
Set agenda for September 16, 2026, regular meeting and review future agenda items/parking lot. Added the following items to the September 16 agenda:

- Focus on Student Learning (Student Presentation, Student Representative Report)
- Monthly 2.4 Financial Condition and Activities Review (Discussion Item)
- Ends Policy Update (Third Reading, Action Item)
- Monitoring Report 2.3 Treatment of Community (Action Item)
- Revised Executive Limitation 2.4 Financial Condition and Activities (Third Reading, Action Item)
- Designate Board Member to vote at VSBIT Annual Meeting
- Designate Board Member to vote at VSBA Annual Meeting
- Designate 3rd Board Member for Act 170 Merger Committee
- Superintendent's Report - Cell Phone Policy Compliance

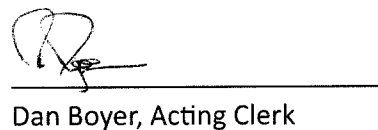
There was some discussion whether the Treatment of Community Monitoring Report should be done externally or internally. Seamus Abshere and Thomas Chittenden will work with Dr. Joe Clark to determine who should work on this. Dr. Joe Clark could have it ready in two weeks if asked to report on it.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Seamus Abshere called for a motion to adjourn. Thomas Chittenden moved and Elissa Galvez seconded. Motion carried unanimously and the meeting adjourned at 7:15 p.m.



Seamus Abshere, Chair



Dan Boyer, Acting Clerk