APPROVED ON MAY 6, 2026

REGULAR MEETING OF THE SOUTH BURLINGTON SCHOOL BOARD
Wednesday, April 15, 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

EXECUTIVE MEETING

PRESENT
Seamus Abshere, Jennifer Lawrence, Emilee Hoffman, Elissa Galvez, Dan Boyer, Michelle Boyer, Laura Williams

ADMINISTRATION/STAFF
Dr. Joe Clark, Monica Desrochers, Jean-Marie Clark, Nick Bocchino

GUESTS
Officer Greg Short, District Council Michael Leddy of McNeil, Leddy & Sheahan

Call Regular meeting to order
Seamus Abshere called the meeting to order at 5:05 pm.

EXECUTIVE SESSION
Seamus Abshere called for a motion to enter executive session at 5:07 pm to discuss safety of persons or the security of public property, discussing non-public protocols related to crisis response, employment of a public officer or employee, labor negotiations and real estate, and to receive confidential attorney client communications for the purpose of providing legal services to the board and added that it would be significantly disadvantageous to the district not to do so in executive session. Emilee Hoffman moved, and Laura Williams seconded. The motion passes.

IN: 5:07 pm
OUT: 6:05 pm

Laura Williams moved to adjourn the executive session at 6:05 pm. Jennifer Lawrence seconded. All were in favor, and the executive session was adjourned at 6:05 pm.

The board returned to the regular meeting at 6:08 pm.

REGULAR MEETING
Present
Seamus Abshere, Laura Williams, Jennifer Lawrence, Dan Boyer, Michelle Boyer, Emilee Hoffman, Elissa Galvez, Ally Leduc, Momin Waqar

Administration/Staff
Dr. Joe Clark, Nicole Carter, Monica Desrochers, Jean Marie Clark, Nick Bocchino

Guests
7 in person
11 online

Call to Order
Chair Seamus Abshere called the meeting to order at 6:08 pm. The Pledge of Allegiance was said.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND AMENDMENTS TO THE AGENDA
There were no announcements.

Amendments to the Agenda
- 2026 school calendar discussion moved to the Superintendent's report
- Jean-Marie Clark will talk about financial planning and child nutrition funding at the same time.
- Superintendent evaluation discussion moved to before child nutrition funding
- Charged Legislative Advocacy Committee was removed, to be moved to another meeting in the future.

Comments from the public
Public comment was received during the Community Forum on the Ends Policy revision. Community members commented on the district's current Ends language and suggested updates to better reflect life skills, financial literacy, skilled trades, and other post-secondary pathways. Several speakers emphasized the importance of student voice and encouraged the board to use advisory councils, teacher referrals, study halls, advisory periods, and other school-day opportunities to broaden participation. Speakers also expressed concern about the timing of the process and noted that spring is a difficult period for families and students to engage fully because of AP exams, spring athletics, and end-of-year obligations. Additional comments stressed the importance of allowing sufficient time for thoughtful input because the Ends Policy informs strategic planning, resource allocation, and related district work.

Student Representative Report
- Schools are closed April 20-24, 2026 for April break. Students return April 27, 2026.
- Monday, April 13th, HS Guidance Dept hosted representatives from 16 different colleges from Canada.
- South Burlington School District Fine Arts Night is tonight, April 15th at 6:30.
- High School Green Team has been running a battery bonanza for the past week and a half. Drop off any kind of battery in the high school lobby until Friday, April 17th.
- Elementary schools are holding spring concerts, fun runs and a lot of other events, so be sure to check your school newsletters and calendars to find out what's happening.

Discussion Item

Student time in classes
Dr. Clark talked about the feedback he received from the 3Q meetings. He said that he has heard that students are not challenged enough, there are too many study halls, too much time to spend outside of direct instruction and office hours are not always accessible.

Dr. Clark reviewed anonymized student schedules from 9th grade to 12th grade for the Board.

Some discussion about two questions: are we making the best use of student time for learning, challenge and support? And how can we reduce the number of students who have unassigned blocks in their schedule?

Community Forum

Community Forum on Ends Policy Revision
The board reviewed the current Ends Policy and invited community feedback on whether the language still reflects district priorities. Momin Waqar and Ally Leduc read the current Ends policy.

The board discussed the fact that the Ends Policy has not been updated in approximately 12 years and that the review is intended to inform the Superintendent's later strategic planning work.

Community members spoke about the current Ends policy, why it should be updated and what changes might be helpful. Community members and board members also discussed how to engage the broadest possible range of stakeholders, including students who are less likely to participate in formal board meetings. Suggestions included reaching students through classes, advisory periods, clubs, study halls, and trusted adults. Some discussion also addressed the tight timeline of completing this work.

2026 Calendar Discussion
The superintendent reviewed the 2026-27 school calendar and explained that the calendar would be adjusted to recognize Yom Kippur as a non-school day and to restore Eid and Diwali as non-student, non-staff days following community feedback and a waiver request. Dr. Clark mentioned that the calendar was tight and there is the possibility of extending the school year in June 2027 if there were any snow days.

Superintendent Evaluation
The board discussed the superintendent evaluation process for the current year and reviewed the option of using the Vermont School Boards Association to facilitate the evaluation rather than relying solely on the board's internal process. Board members noted that a more structured evaluation process could provide greater consistency, clearer documentation, and broader perspective in assessing the superintendent's work.

The board also discussed the value of gathering additional input as part of the process, rather than limiting the evaluation to the board members alone. Fees this year are $2,000 and next year will be $2,500.

Seamus asked the Board to transition this item from a discussion item to an action item.

Laura Williams moved to authorize the Board Chair to sign the superintendent evaluation contract with the Vermont School Boards Association. Elissa Galvez seconded. All were in favor and the motion passed.

Child Nutrition Funding
Jean-Marie Clark reported on Monitoring Report 2.4 along with Child Nutrition Funding as a part of this discussion item.

The board heard from Jean-Marie Clark on child nutrition funding. The superintendent reviewed the program's financial history, current staffing, food costs, and the possibility that the program may require general fund support. The board discussed the need to monitor the nutrition program's fiscal condition while meeting applicable state requirements. Jean-Marie Clark reviewed the excess funds in the child nutrition funding (1,000,000 dollars) and how they had a spend down plan. It was realized that there were $300,000 in fixed assets, not spendable funds. After auditing Jean-Marie Clark advised that this was not factored in the budget so the nutrition dept is now $300,000 short.

Rhonda Ketner, director of Nutrition Services, discussed this topic and reviewed the history of the spending in the nutrition department.

Action Item

Monitoring Report 2.4 Financial Planning and Budgeting
Jean-Marie Clark reported on the Monitoring Report 2.4 along with Child Nutrition Funding as a part of this action item.

She went over the Purchase Order process and guidelines, showing the financial information as of 4/6/26 to illustrate current state. There was some discussion about auditing, special education funds, and timing of putting in purchase orders and using funds.

Seamus called for a motion to monitor 2.4 Financial Planning & Budgeting using the metric that the board has used before. Motion failed.
Seamus called for a motion to monitor 2.4 Financial Planning & Budgeting using the metric that the board has in the board materials.

Dan Boyer motioned, Laura Williams seconded. There was some discussion about the documentation, and the board rating rubric. All were in favor and the motion passed.

Monitoring Report 2.9 Communication and Support to the Board

Seamus reviewed the policy and read some of it to the board. He reviewed the interpretation of it as well.

Seamus discussed his and Michelle Boyer's findings, including how the board is currently kept informed. i.e. board packets.

It was agreed to have Dr. Clark, Ally Leduc and Momin Waqar to rate the report as a non-binding vote.

Seamus called for a motion to monitor 2.9 Communication and Support to the Board using the rubric provided in the board materials.

Laura Williams moved, Jennifer Lawrence seconded. All were in favor and the motion passed.

Employee Severance Plan
The board considered the Employee Severance Plan (ESP) tied to resignations and retirements. The superintendent presented the plan, noting it addresses staffing transitions for the coming year, including the actual action of accepting specific employee resignations listed in the plan. A middle-school teacher provided public comment raising concerns about replacing a specialized band/music position and the broader challenge of maintaining continuity in unique roles.

Board discussion emphasized the importance of thoughtful transition planning, recruitment timelines, and minimizing disruptions to programs and students.

Katy Rose provided a post-summary including results of the employee severance plan. 17 certified professional employees elected to participate, and 9 classified employees elected to participate. Some employees have delayed exits but most will exit South Burlington on 6/30/26.

Estimated savings based on 23.5 replacements for the 26 staff members were $6.2 million over 8 years.

There was some discussion about attrition as well as issues that could happen with re-staffing. Seamus entertained a motion to approve the employee severance plan. Motion failed.

Seamus entertained a motion to approve the resignation of the 26 employees named in the employee severance plan who are retiring. Michelle Boyer moved and Laura Williams seconded. There was some discussion about the delayed exiting of some employees. Rhonda Ketner asked about her staff and whether she could keep her employees longer.

All were in favor and the motion passed.

Charge Legislative Advocacy Committee – moved to a future meeting

CONSENT AGENDA

Approve School Board Minutes - The minutes of March 31, 2026, were approved as presented.

Approve Account Payables Vouchers (AP):

1441 for $292,487.55
1442 for $5309.61
1443 for $4,470.14
1444 for $45.47
1445 for $121,778.55

Approve Payroll Warrant #20

Approve AP Voucher Check to Howard Center Inc. in the amount of $77,031.65.
Laura Williams moved to approve the AP Voucher check to Vermont Mechanical Inc., Emilee Hoffman seconded. All were in favor and the motion passes.

Bid
Minivan for the Transportation Department

Laura Williams motioned, based on a recommendation from the school district, to buy a 2026 Honda Odyssey from 802 Honda for $42,597, Emilee Hoffman seconded. No discussion, all in favor. Motion passes.

Hires

Amanda Macfadden, 1.0 FTE Elementary Teacher at Orchard School. Amanda is replacing Marguerite Adams who resigned.

Resignation(s)/Retirement(s) - effective on June 30, 2026

Lori Centerbar, 1.0 FTE English Language Arts Teacher, Frederick H. Tuttle Middle School
Jess Wisloski, 1.0 FTE Library Media Center Specialist, Orchard School

Agenda Planning – The board reviewed the agenda for the April 29 school board meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

Seamus Abshere called for a motion to adjourn the regular meeting. Laura Williams moved and Emilee Hoffman seconded. The motion was approved and the meeting was adjourned at 9:08 pm.

Seamus Abshere, Chair

Laura Williams, Clerk