

Spotlight

NEWS FROM THE BURLINGTON SCHOOLS

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Superintendent's Message



Greetings all,

Last week, the Board passed the proposed budget in the amount of \$53,391,029. This modest 2.8% increase allows us to keep the services which are closest to the students, and keep class sizes where they are. It also allows us to add one more elementary teacher, and two ELL teachers likely at the middle/high level. Our student population has increased by 3% this past year; thus these positions are critical to be able to serve our students with quality.

The Board worked hard to keep in place the services for at risk students and college bound students, both categories of which fall outside the mandated programs we must provide. The Student Assistance Program remains intact as it has been. Special Education has reduced its anticipated budget by \$150,000 and administration reduced one position from the two alternative programs at Taft, with a plan to restructure alternative education with one director position overseeing both programs.

We anticipate coming out of deficit this school year. Given the economic conditions of the State, and given increasing pressure to reduce school spending, the Board has approved a thoughtful budget that focuses on student achievement and success. Now the District needs your help. We ask that you be as informed as you can be on what is and what is not in the budget and share this information with parents and neighbors as they ask. You are the ambassador of the District, and are in the best position to share the budget information broadly. If you have any questions, please feel free to ask me or talk with your building principal.

We anticipate facing similar pressures next year to keep our costs down and pare the budget further as the State funding stays grim. We are working on some long term savings actions to help us keep our costs down and quality high. For more information, please see our budget page on the District website. Thank you for your commitment to Burlington's students! *Jeanné*

Professional Development Update

BSD middle school, high school and their K-12 art, ELL, music, PE and guidance colleagues started the inservice yesterday meeting at BHS. In order to honor the District *Commitment to Diversity & Equity*, teachers watched a video clip titled "The Danger of a Single Story." In this video clip novelist Chimamanda Adichie tells the story of how she found her authentic cultural voice -- and warns that if we hear only a single story about another person or country, we risk a critical misunderstanding.

Following the video clip teachers received an overview of the new Common Core National Standards and then moved to work in grade level content groups to begin reviewing the standards in more detail.

K-5 teachers met at C.P. Smith to focus on mathematics. Teachers met in grade level groups to discuss progress monitoring assessments and report cards for the remainder of this year as well as working on developing plans for how best to modify the local assessment plan for next year.
Stephanie Phillips, Curriculum Director

Nellie Mae Grant

The Burlington and Winooski School Districts have been selected as one of seven recipients of a one-year, \$200,000 planning grant from the Nellie Mae Education Foundation. With this grant, the Districts and communities will collaboratively design a comprehensive strategy that builds upon current efforts to fully implement a student-centered education system that meets the needs of all learners. More at:

<http://www.bsdt.org/News/NellieMaePressRelease11JAN2011.pdf>

**W-2 Forms were mailed
Wednesday, January 12th
For a replacement form, please email:
sgraves@bsdt.org**

PATH Adventure Begins January 31



This year's PATH (Planned Action Toward Health) Adventure, *Thirty Winks*, begins January 31st. PATH is a program of the Vermont Education Health Initiative and is offered to school districts throughout the state. Participants choose their individual physical activities and health goals, and then embark on a 10-week self-guided

journey of fun and inspiration. Participants are encouraged to get out walking and choose healthy behaviors that support positive lifestyle changes.

If you have enrolled but have not logged into the PATH website lately, be sure to do so and begin your journey. You can take the Healthy Life Survey now and earn **50 points**. You can also solve the monthly calendar puzzles and earn **5 points each**. Other options are available for earning points now. In addition, links are provided to help you access health information you might like to have for yourself or your family. The PATH website is: www.tomypath.com.



The deadline for signing up was in December, however, late registration is accepted for a \$15 fee. Please see your building PATH coordinator for more information.

Tech Byte

Are you Familiar with TED?

The mission of TED (Technology, Entertainment, Design) is spreading ideas. TED believes "passionately in the power of ideas to change attitudes, lives and ultimately, the world." You can access over 700 TEDTalks at: <http://www.ted.com>. TEDTalks are a powerful resource for teaching and learning, for both adults and our students. After you visit TED, check out the following links for ideas on how to use TED in the classroom:

- Teaching with TED Wiki: <http://teachingwithted.pbworks.com/>
- The TEDX Classroom Project: <http://tedxproject.wordpress.com/>
- 15 TEDTalks for Teachers to Watch: <http://www.freetech4teachers.com/2009/12/10-ted-talks-for-teachers-to-watch.html>



Town Hall Meeting: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion



The Diversity & Equity Office and the Equity Council of the Burlington School District invited community members, parents and family members, faculty, staff, and students to the Burlington School District Town Hall Meeting on October 26, 2010 at City Hall. Over 140 people were in attendance for the event to help District officials prioritize their action steps in these identified areas: School Climate, Curriculum and Instruction, Affirmative Recruiting and Hiring, Staff Cultural Competency, and Parent and Family Engagement. Numerous School Board Commissioners, administrators, and the Superintendent were in attendance. Some sample remarks from participants:

***Help teachers and school staff role model inclusion and non-biased talk and actions.**

***Translate all materials and website as a matter of practice.**

***Clearly identify what cultural competency looks like and get community buy-in.**

The Town Hall Meeting Report has been submitted for review to several audiences, including the Burlington School Board of Commissioners, Superintendent, BSD administration, the community at-large, and the newly established Task Force on Equity & Diversity. In order to act on this important community feedback, the Diversity & Equity Office is currently in the process of scheduling meetings with building administrators to review results from the Town Hall Meeting as well as those from last fall's Curriculum and Diversity & Equity survey.

The full report is posted here:

http://www.bsdtv.org/diversity/BSDTownhall_10-26-10.pdf

For more information, please contact the Diversity & Equity Office at 864-8494 or diversity@bsdvt.org.

Leadership and 'Partnership' Conference

Dr. Joyce Epstein, founder of the National Network of Partnership Schools at Johns Hopkins University, is the keynote speaker at this year's Leadership and 'Partnership' Conference. The family-school partnership teams forming at many of our schools are based on Dr. Epstein's 30 years of research on effective family engagement to support student success. The conference is March 30th, 2011 at Vermont Technical Center (cost is \$50) and is sponsored by PIRC-VT, VPA, VSAC and VT NEA. For more information, contact Lindsay DesLauriers, PIRC-VT, at: Lindsay.Deslauriers@vtfn.org.