

Spotlight

NEWS FROM THE BURLINGTON SCHOOLS



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Superintendent's Message



Greetings all,

As we face another big storm, let me remind you that Burlington seldom calls snow days. For about half of our kids, the school provides a warm building with food and adult coverage that they would not have at home. Also, because we are a city school, busses can run and we don't have to contend with the dirt roads that our neighbors do. For those of you who live out of town, this may mean getting up a bit earlier, assessing the safety of your trip yourself, and calling your principal for a discretion day if you feel you cannot make it in safely. I cannot make that call for you, I am afraid. I do appreciate hearing from people (before 6 a.m.) in different parts of town about road conditions. I try to make the call at 6 a.m. if at all possible, in case that helps you plan your snowy mornings. It is a nice perk to have AlertNow reach everyone almost simultaneously! If your contact information has recently changed, be sure to check in with your school administrative assistant with these updates.

Budget time! It is important that all teachers be up to speed on the budget for next year. We successfully were able to say no to cutting \$3M for Challenges for Change and to keep our current class sizes and all support services, including the SAP that was on the cut list. We also are looking at adding one teacher for elementary and two ELL teachers at secondary levels. We need to get the word out about what IS in the budget, with a modest increase of 2.8%. Please direct parents to our budget page on the District website and encourage parents to get out and vote. Early voting begins on February 9th, and absentee ballots are also easy to obtain. As school employees, we cannot tell people HOW to vote but we can give them the facts and encourage them TO vote. Please help get this word out and support your schools.

Jeanné

Connecting to Community Final Celebration

Last Friday, 7th and 8th grade students on the Navigator Team at Edmunds Middle School presented and explained the videos they created to promote the mission of some 23 local non-profits in the Burlington area. Groups of students were stationed around the EMS library with laptops ready to show the video created for their non-profit and to explain the process that went into producing it.

In this learning model, students are asked to address real-world problems and their solutions. They are also given the opportunity to take on authentic professional roles. In this project, students formed their own ad agencies, complete with business names, logos, slogans, and business cards, and were challenged to interview local non-profit representatives in order to create a video meeting the non-profit's needs. The video was required to identify the mission of the non-profit, the need it addressed, how the non-profit tried to meet the need, and how the audience could help.

Task Force to Strategize Diversity & Equity

The Burlington School Board has created a Task Force on Diversity & Equity for the purpose of promoting student achievement in the District through greater cultural competence and understanding of diversity. The Task Force will review the District's efforts in these areas: socioeconomic integration; curriculum and instruction; the Hallmarks of Excellence initiative; affirmative recruitment, hiring, and retention; the Equity Council; staff cultural competency, including professional development opportunities and evaluation procedures; school climate; and family and community engagement. The Task Force also will identify areas of need and research strategies for improvement.

The Task Force has met several times as a group and also in sub-committee groups. The next meeting will be held tonight at 6 p.m. in the Board Room at Ira Allen. All meetings are open to the public. More information at:

<http://www.bsdyt.org/diversity/taskforce>

EXTREME COLD WEATHER SAFETY TIPS

- Wear a hat, hood, or scarf, as most heat is lost through the head. Keep fingertips, earlobes, and noses covered if you go outside.
- Avoid overexertion. Cold weather puts an added strain on the heart. Unfamiliar exercise, such as shoveling snow or pushing a car, can bring on a heart attack or make other medical conditions worse. Take frequent rest breaks, and drink plenty of fluids to avoid dehydration.
- Maintain an awareness of utilities when shoveling. Do not cover heat exhaust pipes or fire hydrants with snow when clearing sidewalks and driveways.
- Augment your car's emergency supply kit with a shovel, windshield scraper and blankets.
- Maintain at least a half tank of gas during the winter season.
- Confusion, dizziness, exhaustion and shivering are signs of hypothermia.
- Gray, white or yellow skin discoloration, numbness or waxy skin are symptoms of frostbite.

Tech Byte - Edutopia

Founded by the George Lucas Foundation, Edutopia is a valuable resource for all educators, addressing all aspects of best practice in K-12 education. "Our vision is of a new world of learning, a place where students and parents, teachers and administrators, policy makers and the people they serve are all empowered to change education for the better; where schools provide rigorous project-based learning, social-emotional learning, and access to new technologies; where innovation is the rule, not the exception; and where students become lifelong learners and develop 21st century skills, especially in information literacy, so they can do the following:

- Find, assess, and use information effectively and creatively.
- Work cooperatively and constructively with others.
- Use their strengths and talents to become empowered, productive citizens in our democratic society and the world at large."

Visit <http://www.edutopia.org> for "Tech Makeovers", weekly videos, classroom tips, stories from the field, recommendations for district-wide change and more. Sign up for the weekly e-mail newsletter and be advised of valuable resources such as the Home-to-School Connections Guide: Tips, Tech Tools, and Strategies for Improving Family-to-School Communication:

<http://www.edutopia.org/home-to-school-connections-guide>



Greater Burlington Jazzercise (located on Pine Street) would like to extend a special offer to District employees: Unlimited Jazzercise for \$38/month (three-month contract required) with 20 classes offered a week using EFT and no joining fee. Please view our schedule at www.greaterburlingtonjazz.net and come try a class for free to see if you love Jazzercise. Jazzercise is a fusion of jazz dance, yoga, pilates and kickboxing, for a fun and fast 60-minute workout that burns up to 600 calories. Email Joanna Edenfield at joannae3@comcast.net or call 881-9282 with any questions.



Family-School Partnership Update

All of our schools are creating family-school partnership teams. These teams will be made up of about 8-10 people, including a diverse representation of families and at least two teachers and the principal. In addition to family representatives who volunteer, we will recruit representatives that reflect our student body.

Teams in Formation: Nancy Knox is helping to form the BHS Team. Amy Chambers at Edmunds Middle and Jennifer Sutton at Hunt Middle are helping form and support the middle school teams. The principals at Flynn, Smith, SA, IAA and EES are also in the process of forming new teams. Champlain will expand their current community partnership team.

Team Training March 9th: Teachers, parents and principals on each school team will participate in team-building activities, learn about effective family-school partnerships, inventory current activities and draft a plan to bring back to faculty, families and PTO. A key step is developing clear, shared priorities. Some recent family engagement highlights:

*At IAA, family-school coffee connections are held Monday mornings, supported by Champlain College students. EES and SA have also been hosting coffee connections for families.

*Champlain hosted a screening of "Including Samuel" on January 13th, with childcare and inclusion events for kids as well as a dialogue about what it means to create a school where everyone truly belongs.

*BHS hosted a well-attended student-family dialogue night on January 26th. That same night, EMS hosted a parent workshop.

*Smith hosted its first "Community Connection", inviting all Smith neighbors to spend some time in our schools on January 28th.

Adult Spelling Bee at IAA on February 10th:
<http://ptocouncil.wordpress.com>

