

# BURLINGTON SCHOOL BOARD

## BUILDING BURLINGTON'S FUTURE

### Public engagement

The District is seeking public input on the Task Force report and next steps. Please look for meeting dates and other information at [www.bsdtv.org](http://www.bsdtv.org) or by calling 865.5332.

### Overview of the Task Force

- The task force was appointed in January 2006. It met on 13 evenings at schools throughout the city and completed its work in June 2006.
- Composition: 15 members (5 each of parents, community members and educators) and 3 ex-officio members from the School Board.
- Charge: To develop a new approach or combination of approaches to further the achievement of students from low-income families.
- Process: Reviewed the school district's existing model, developed principles that defined success and applied those principles to current model and to alternative possibilities.
- Recommendations: Voted unanimously that the Burlington School District should socio-economically integrate all its schools. It suggested six strategies.
- Report: Submitted to the school board a 40-page report that includes findings and recommendations. This report is available online at [www.bsdtv.org](http://www.bsdtv.org) or by calling 865-5332.

### Burlington schools population and support to families who are low-income

- Burlington's schools are the most diverse in Chittenden County and Vermont. Students speak 28 languages other than English. About 47% of Burlington elementary school students qualify for free and reduced-price meals, a federal measure of poverty, compared with 27% statewide. About 80% of students are white, compared with 95% statewide.
- The District partners with more than a dozen state, federal and nonprofit organizations to help deliver services to students, including some programs aimed at those from low-income families. Services include health and dental clinics, academic tutoring, comprehensive after-school programs, family assistance and behavioral and mental health services.
- The Burlington School District devotes more resources to high-poverty schools than to socio-economically mixed schools, including lower class sizes, more personnel and increased professional development.

### Principles adopted by the Task Force *For more, please see the Task Force report page 6.*

- The schools need community partnerships.
- Diversity is a key strength in Burlington's schools.
- The School district must create an environment to attract and support quality teaching.
- The District should provide opportunities and resources for each child to reach his/her potential.
- District facilities must be strategically utilized.

### Related information

- **The federal definition of free and reduced-priced meals:** A household of four must earn less than \$25,155 a year for children to qualify for free meals and less than \$35,798 a year for reduced-price meals.
- **The number of students who qualify for free and reduced-price meals has increased** from 1,130 in 2000-2001 to 1,293 in 2005-2006, despite declining overall enrollment during those years.

## Challenges identified with Burlington’s current model

- **Cultural diversity** is a key strength in our schools that is unevenly shared. All students should have an equal opportunity to learn from, and with, those unlike themselves.
- **Uneven distribution of students** from low-income families in District elementary schools. At Barnes and Wheeler schools, more than 90% of students qualify for free and reduced lunch as compared with 35-47% in the other four elementary schools.
- **Uneven distribution of resources:** The cost per elementary student is lowest at Edmunds Elementary and highest at Wheeler.

Elementary school	2006 cost / student	Cost / student for core teaching staff	Elementary school	2006 cost / student	Cost / student for core teaching staff
Barnes	\$13,162	\$6,149	Flynn	\$7,622	\$4,284
Champlain	\$7,794	\$3,805	Smith	\$8,929	\$4,013
Edmunds	\$7,190	\$3,724	Wheeler	\$14,248	\$6,293

Despite additional resources, no significant or sustainable increases in student achievement have occurred at Barnes or Wheeler. The state’s standardized tests show disparities between students who live in poverty and those who do not. Disparities in test scores are an increased concern because of the provisions of the No Child Left Behind law.

- **Uneven distribution of challenges.** Lack of socio-economic integration means unequal opportunities for success and a more difficult transition to the city’s integrated middle schools.
- **“Neighborhood schools” needs definition.** Six elementary schools have closed in the last 30 years. New neighborhoods have been created that are far from the schools. Fewer elementary children walk or bike to school than travel by car, bus or other means.
- **Decreased enrollment and therefore decreased state funds:** 1975 overall district enrollment: 6293. 2005: 3524. Projected loss of 300 more students by 2010. Every student brings nearly \$8,000 of state funds to the District.

## Task Force conclusions and recommendations on school restructuring

“We need a school system that will position us as a city for the 21st century  
--a successful, vibrant, attractive, multi-cultural city.”

### The Task Force unanimously voted to recommend socioeconomic integration in all District schools.

Socioeconomic integration means that every school in the district has an equal share of both the city’s rich cultural resources and its challenges. This can be accomplished by equalizing the percentages of students qualifying for free and reduced lunch at all schools to within 5% of the district average (47%).

The task force recommended the following implementation strategies that could be used to integrate student populations:

1. **Replace neighborhood K-5 schools** with K-2 and 3-5 schools drawn from larger, and more mixed, geographic areas.
2. **Redistrict:** “Neighborhoods” would be redrawn through a more deliberate and technologically-informed system to achieve integration.
3. **Magnet schools:** One, some or all elementary schools would shift from a general to a focused curricula such as arts, sciences or Montessori. Parents would choose the theme and/or approach that best suited their children. Student assignment would consider factors such as free and reduced-price meal eligibility.

The Task Force also recommended three strategies to overcome barriers to academic success that would be combined with socioeconomic integration:

1. **Expanded preschool.**
2. **Expanded community schools** featuring programs for parents and caregivers
3. **Extended school hours.**

## School diversity and elementary performance on state standardized tests

School	Students of color		Free & reduced price meal		English Language Learners		NECAP scores Reading in grades				NECAP scores Math in grades				NECAP score writing	
	#	Percent	#	Percent	#	Percent	3	4	5	6	3	4	5	6	Grade 5	
							Percent of students meeting or exceeding the test standards.									
Barnes	64	40%	N/A	90%+	29	19.1%	29	58	40	39	34	43	64	28	34	
Champlain	45	15%	129	44%	33	11.3%	83	86	79	66	77	72	73	69	76	
Edmunds Elem.	34	12%	90	31%	16	5.6%	77	71	81	86	75	64	65	77	60	
Flynn	61	19%	183	54.3%	87	25.8%	64	78	51	57	60	71	55	58	30	
Smith	41	15%	87	31.3%	28	10.1%	80	74	70	65	70	65	68	53	58	
Wheeler	71	38%	N/A	90%+	63	27.4%	35	37	53	29	26	11	28	33	24	
Edmunds Middle	78	21%	192	51.6%	44	11.8%										
Hunt	65	15%	217	49.1%	58	13.1%										
Burlington High	153	13%	466	39.3%	150	12.6%										
District	620	17.4	1784	49%	415	11.4%										

*All data is from the 2005-06 academic year except race data, which is from 2004-05.*

## BURLINGTON SCHOOL DISTRICT ENROLLMENT HISTORY

School		1965	1975	1985	1995	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Adams		306	186	<i>School closed</i>								
Barnes	k	414	308	248	193	200	191	183	156	155	164	161
Champlain	k	238	458	255	307	289	293	284	283	287	278	295
Converse		243	<i>School closed</i>									
EES	k	0	75	249	216	266	292	288	306	303	280	293
Flynn	k	426	585	335	451	403	370	359	344	328	323	329
Ira Allen		207	118	<i>School closed</i>								
Smith	k	424	320	267	336	331	348	321	305	292	277	280
Taft		281	191	<i>School closed</i>								
Thayer - new		244	498	205	<i>School closed</i>							
Thayer - old		240	<i>School closed</i>									
Wheeler	k	424	409	257	248	270	257	255	235	224	221	188
Edmunds Middle	*	834	779	263	386	356	384	376	380	371	382	373
Hunt Middle	*	504	651	278	436	465	456	463	472	468	436	442
High School	*	1287	1715	1323	1092	1031	998	1071	1105	1137	1160	1163
<b>Totals</b>		<b>6072</b>	<b>6293</b>	<b>3680</b>	<b>3665</b>	<b>3611</b>	<b>3589</b>	<b>3600</b>	<b>3586</b>	<b>3565</b>	<b>3521</b>	<b>3524</b>

6072   3.64%   -41.5%   -0.41%   1.47%   0.61%   0.31%   0.39%   0.59%   1.23%   0.09%

*The transition to add 9<sup>th</sup> grade to the high school began in the 1977-78 school year. Hunt 9<sup>th</sup> graders attended BHS while Edmunds 9<sup>th</sup> graders did not move to the high school until*

*\* the 1978-79 academic year.*

*K Smith, Champlain, Flynn and Edmunds Elementary went to fulltime Kindergarten in FY03.*

*k Barnes went to fulltime Kindergarten in FY01, Wheeler went in FY99.*