

# BTC/BHS Site Update

October 20, 2020



# Agenda

1. **Update on current and expanded in-person learning** - Superintendent Flanagan and Principal Green
2. **Update on the BTC/BHS site** - Superintendent Flanagan and Executive Director Lavery
3. **Review of options for our next steps** - Superintendent Flanagan
4. **Board discussion of BHS decision making**



# BHS is offering significant academic programs and social emotional support; many students are taking advantage of in-person activities.

- Full-day course load in remote learning.
- Principal Green filming daily videos to give information and stay connected.
- Counseling and outreach services happening on individual basis.
- Virtual college tours happening daily, school counselors working with individual students.
- 275 students participating in Fall Sports at BHS.
- 100 students participating in-person music and other activities weekly.
- 50 students per week participating in in-person PE classes (on average).
- 15 students in-person in Burlington City and Lake Semester.
- 9 students at EL Classes at Edmunds MS.
- 15 students from ISN class at four locations, some paras providing home visits
- Students meeting with District/school leaders; received feedback on need to centralize communications and create a new student webpage.

# Expanding In-Person Learning for BHS Students

- Beginning plans to offer expanded in-person options by mid-November.
- Reassigned 2.25 staff to support the BHS Leadership Team with this.
- Surveying families, students, and staff to understand need.



# PCB testing results were below EPA screening levels but significantly above DOH screening levels.

- In September 2020, BSD learned that the BHS/BTC Campus had Polychlorinated Biphenyls (PCBs) in the air significantly above the Vermont Department of Health (DOH) screening value of 15 ng/m<sup>3</sup>.
- All tests in Buildings A-E were below the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) screening level of 500-600 ng/m<sup>3</sup>.
- The District reviewed these results with the DOH and EPA.
- Both agencies explained the screening level is not a hard line, but a point at which further investigation should occur.

# The decision to move to remote learning was made in consultation with State and City leadership, toxicology experts, and regulatory authorities.

- The DOH and EPA recommended students not return to the building until further testing and remediation was conducted.
- Considering the recommendation from the DOH and EPA, BSD decided to:
  - move to remote learning,
  - continue to test and remediate the site,
  - seek alternative sites for in-person instruction in second semester,
  - continue with the planned BTC/BHS ReEnvisioning Project.
- The Secretary of Education, DOH, and EPA supported the decision.

# BSD is aggressively pursuing a pilot testing project and alternate sites for in-person learning in 2020-21

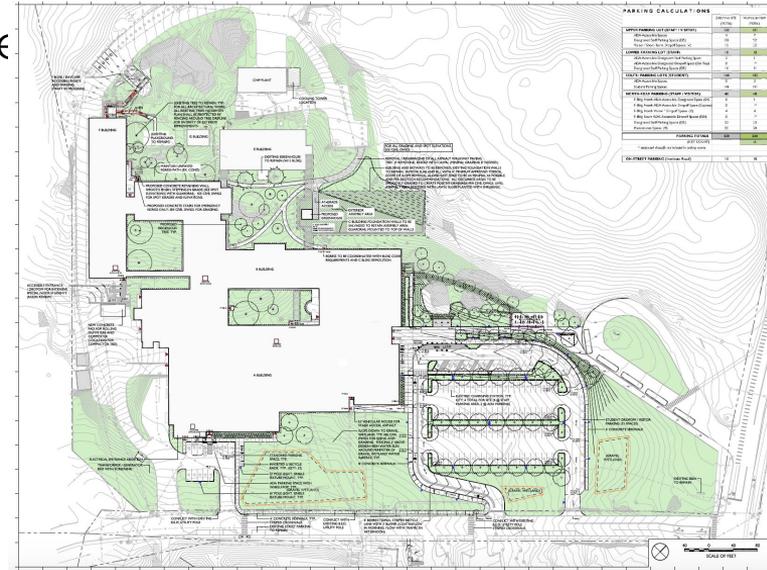
- Our consultant Fuss & O'Neill has begun a pilot project to test the air in the buildings to determine the possibility of remediation of PCBs found in the air.
  - This project timeline currently extends into March 2021.
- We have identified one alternative site for BHS and have:
  - Reviewed the space to ensure it can house a school.
  - Completed drawings to envision the layout of the space.
  - Started working with owners to better understand the cost.

# We have a challenging situation to address with multiple stakeholders to consider.

- Remote learning is challenging for many students and isolation is having a negative impact on some students' mental well-being.
- Considerable advocacy from BHS families to return to buildings A-E
  - Parents questioning if possibility of physical health concerns should outweigh mental health concerns.
- Labor partners, the Burlington Educators Association (BEA) and American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), do not support returning to BHS without further testing and remediation that reduces the airborne PCBs.

# We are quickly approaching an important decision - here are three options.

1. Return to BHS while remediation occurs and the ReEnvisioning Project continues as planned.
2. Move to an alternate location for 2-3 years while remediation and the ReEnvisioning occurs at the BHS site, and move back into BHS after the construction is complete.
3. Move to an alternate location for 2-3 years while building a new high school and tech center at our current site or in a new location.



Current ReEnvisioning Site Plan

# 1. Return to BHS while remediation occurs and the ReEnvisioning Project continues as planned.

## *Strengths:*

- BHS students and staff would be back in the building, a familiar space.
- Reduce isolation and improve mental health.
- Little or no setup needed.

## *Weaknesses:*

- EPA and DOH recommend against returning to the building.
- Labor unions are not in support.
- Renovation may disrupt learning.
- Time and money spent on remediation will take resources away from the ReEnvisioning project.

## 2. Move to alternate location for 2-3 years while remediation and ReEnvisioning occurs at the BHS site - move back into BHS after construction is complete.

### *Strengths:*

- In-person instruction this school year in a building that we can remain in until Fall 2024.
- Allows time to renovate BHS.
- Potentially shorter time-frame for renovation leads to possible cost savings and reduced disruption to learning.
- Alternate site could open possibilities to rethink deep learning partnerships in Burlington.

### *Weaknesses:*

- Significant setup needed.
- Not a traditional school design: no gym/cafeteria, walls do not reach the ceiling, non-traditional doors.
- Significant funding on setup and rent will impact our overall budget, including funds currently allocated for the ReEnvisioning Project.

# 3. Move to an alternate location for 2-3 years while building a new high school and tech center at our current site or in a new location.

## *Strengths:*

- In-person instruction in a building that we can remain in until Fall 2024.
- Time to thoroughly explore possibilities for an alternative long-term plan, including:
  - Demolish current facility and build a new high school and technical center.
  - Rethink renovation of BHS to include other options/expand the project.
- Alternate site could open possibilities to rethink deep learning partnerships in the city.

## *Weaknesses:*

- Significant time and resources already spent on current BHS/BTC ReEnvisioning plan.
  - Scheduled to begin construction in the 2021 construction season.
- No sites previously reviewed met needs for the high school.
- Sets the timeline back significantly for a return to traditional school.
- May require an additional alternative site for the high school beyond 2024.
- The most costly option, would likely need to ask voters for additional bonding.

# Key questions for the board discussion to inform our impending decision making.

- What information will the board need to make a decision on the options presented?
- What are our immediate next steps?

