

BURLINGTON U.S.D. NO. 244 BOARD OF EDUCATION
Linkage Meeting – Teachers
April 13, 2026

Minutes

A linkage meeting of the 2025-2026 Board of Education of Burlington USD 244 was held at the Burlington High School Multimedia Room at 6:00 p.m. on April 13, 2026. The following board members were present James Higgins, Lucas Allen, Johnny Hernandez, Nolan Strawder, Ron Hess, and Selena King. Also in attendance were Superintendent Craig Marshall, Clerk of the Board Christy Hess, Cindy Doebele, Cierra Harrison, Bryan Bruening, Maddie Wilson, and Damon Schmidt.

1. Opening Items

1.A. Call to Order

Selena King called the March 9, 2026, linkage meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

1.B. Introductions

Staff across Burlington Elementary, Middle, and High School participated in the Teacher Linkage meeting to provide feedback on strengths and areas of need throughout the district.

2. Review of 2025-2026 Success and 2026-2027 Focus/Transition Areas

2.A. Burlington Elementary School –

Administration and staff shared several strengths and areas of concern regarding the current school year.

Positives highlighted included strong administrative support—particularly with student behavior—effective collaboration through PLC time, and a positive, team-oriented staff culture. The after-school program continues to be well-attended and beneficial to students. The building has also been fortunate to secure qualified long-term substitutes when needed.

Key concerns focused on staffing and student support. Teachers expressed a need for additional paraprofessional support, including reinstating full-time aides at each grade level and improving para retention. Concerns were also raised about increasing class sizes, particularly for incoming kindergarten students with behavioral needs, and limited time for PLC/SIT collaboration. Additional issues included classroom temperature inconsistencies, playground safety, bathroom maintenance, and reduced lunch time for kindergarten students due to scheduling and staffing challenges in food service.

Preschool program updates noted several positives, including the addition of a new classroom teacher and the implementation of an itinerant special education role, which has improved early intervention efforts. However, the potential loss of a grant-funded support position and increasing preschool class sizes were identified as concerns. Staff emphasized that larger class sizes may impact the program's ability to meet the diverse academic and social-emotional needs of students.

Overall, the BES feedback reflects a strong, collaborative staff and successful programming, while emphasizing the need for continued attention to staffing levels, student support, and facility-related concerns.

2.B. Burlington Middle School –

Burlington Middle School staff shared feedback identifying key strengths and areas of concern within the building.

Areas of Strength:

Staff emphasized a strong, family-like culture among employees, with teachers who build meaningful connections with students and demonstrate flexibility and collaboration. Support staff, including technology, counseling, paraprofessionals, and food service, were recognized as valuable contributors to the school environment. Students were noted for positive behavior, strong achievement, and respectful interactions with one another, with team-based activities across grade levels enhancing engagement and school climate. Staff also reported that they generally receive the resources requested to support instruction, and leadership actively encourages participation in professional development opportunities, including impactful training experiences.

Areas of Concern:

A primary concern is the absence of a reading interventionist, as staff believe this role is critical in supporting students who are near proficiency. Teachers noted that interventions improve student achievement, confidence, and overall growth, while also reducing the burden on classroom teachers. Concerns were also raised regarding the 5th grade ELA curriculum, particularly its emphasis on writing over reading comprehension, as well as challenges for both new and veteran teachers in navigating curriculum expectations. Additionally, staff identified safety concerns related to classroom door locking mechanisms, noting inconsistencies in functionality and visibility when locked, particularly in 5th grade classrooms. Staff expressed interest in exploring additional safety solutions to better secure classrooms.

Overall, BMS staff feedback reflects a positive and collaborative school culture with strong student relationships and support systems, while highlighting the need for targeted academic interventions, curriculum refinement, and enhanced safety measures.

2.C. Burlington High School –

Burlington High School staff shared feedback highlighting both strengths and areas for growth across several key domains.

Student Achievement and Learning:

Staff noted positive student engagement in scholarship applications, extracurricular activities, and hands-on learning opportunities. The credit recovery program continues to support students in staying on track for graduation, and access to mental health services has been beneficial. However, concerns were raised about inconsistent student motivation, limited use of available academic supports, large math class sizes due to staffing shortages, and challenges in promoting reading engagement and effective data use.

Curriculum and Instruction:

The district's work with curriculum development (CLI) and the strength of overall curriculum offerings were recognized. Areas for improvement include increasing student effort on assessments, providing additional support and training for teachers in curriculum writing, and addressing challenges in recruiting and retaining high-quality staff.

