

**BARRE SUPERVISORY UNION
CURRICULUM COMMITTEE MEETING**
Spaulding High School Library
October 23, 2017 - 5:30 p.m.

MINUTES

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Tyler Smith (BC) - Chair
Ed Rousse (SHS) – Vice Chair
Joe Blakely (SHS) – arrived at 5:54 p.m.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:

Kristin McCarthy (BT),
Sarah Pregent (BC)

ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT:

John Pandolfo, Superintendent
Michael Dreiblatt, Principal (BCEMS)
Scott Griggs, Principal (BTMES)
Donald McMahon, Director of Special Services
Jennifer Nye, Principal (BTMES)
Jacquelyn Ramsey-Tolman, Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment
Jim Taffel, Principal, (BCEMS)
Diane Stacy, Director of Technology
Brenda Waterhouse, Principal (SHS)

GUESTS PRESENT:

Venus Dean Jean Haeger (GSP) Karen Heath Lindy Johnson

Mr. Smith called the Monday, October 23, 2017, meeting to order at 5:32 p.m., which was held at the Spaulding High School Library.

1. Review and approve Minutes of the September 25, 2017 BSU Curriculum Committee Minutes

The Committee agreed by consensus to approve the Minutes of the September 25, 2017 BSU Curriculum Committee Minutes.

2. Additions and/or Deletions to the Agenda

Agenda Item #4 – **Change from ‘Elementary Homework Policies’ to ‘BTMES Homework Policies’**

Agenda Item #5 – **Change from ‘Middle School Homework Policies’ to ‘BCEMS Homework Policies’**

Mrs. Tolman introduced Jean Haeger from Great Schools Partnership. Meeting attendees and Committee Members introduced themselves.

3. Technology Systems Update

A document titled ‘Barre Supervisory Union “Technology” Status Report’ (dated 10/23/17) was distributed. Ms. Stacy advised of the common goals, which are to have the SU stay up to date with technology and increase student access to technology. It was noted that the AOE will abandon the digital learning plan requirement, but encourages all schools to try to meet the requirements. Technology Action Steps are aligned to mesh with the Theory of Action Plan (School Improvement Plan). Ms. Stacy proceeded to provide an overview of the report, which included documentation of devices and software, as well as a flow chart of technology staff.

Ms. Stacy advised that she plans to increase the number of temporary staff and reduce one technologist position. Page 3 of the report lists the technology hardware and software so that the Committee has a better understanding of the scope of what requires daily support. Page 4 of the report documents the increase in the number of Chromebooks within the SU. In FY14 the SU had 240 Chromebooks. That number has increased to 1752 for FY18. The Chromebooks are available to approximately 2044 students in grades 2 through 12, and CVCC. Younger students have access to iPads. 500 more Chromebooks would need to be purchased to allow for each student to have one. This number includes adding 10% more Chromebooks to allow for devices that are being repaired or have been not been returned to school by students. The current number of Chromebooks seems to be sufficient as not all students need to utilize them at the same time. Chromebooks are stored in locked, movable, charging carts. The Acceptable Use Policy does not allow students to use personal devices, as to support the devices would be very expensive and would pose security issues. Chromebooks are utilized for SBAC testing. Ms. Stacy advised regarding the shelf life and replacement cost of the devices (\$239 each for 14” screen HP models). The school is able to take advantage of the State’s bidding list to receive the price of \$239. It was noted that older Chromebooks are no longer supported by Google and are being ‘sun-setted’.

4. BTMES Homework Policies

Screen prints from the Power Point Presentation ‘Current Homework Practices at BTMES PreK – 8’ (October 23, 2017) was distributed. Mrs. Nye started the presentation with an overview of the 7 Guiding Questions from previous years, and noted that she has seen some inconsistencies. Mrs. Nye and Mr. Griggs reviewed, by grade, the amount of time students are expected to work on homework. Mrs. Nye distributed a copy of the ‘Monthly Calendar Homework’ document (Kindergarten only). Mrs. Nye and Mr. Griggs continued the presentation, advising of the types of homework that are assigned, assessment of homework, the impact to final grades, consequences for not completing homework and support for students who are struggling. Mr. Griggs advised regarding ‘Saturday School’ (and the steps leading to its attendance for students who are falling too far behind in both in-school work and/or homework). Supports vary by grade and include teacher assistance before and after school, during study hall, lunch and recess times. Support is also provided in the classroom via modeling, examples, practice and notes. The after school Homework Club is also available to students. It was noted that homework is practice work designed as an extension of what was learned during the day. Under Proficiency Based Learning/Grading, completion of homework is reported as one of the ‘Habits of Work’, rather than part of the final class grade. Mrs. Nye provided an overview of the feedback received from teachers in grades K – 4, regarding their opinion and preferences on homework. Mrs. Nye would like to see a universal homework policy. Mr. Smith feels there needs to be more consistency between grades and that homework should be assigned based on research based information.

5. BCEMS Homework Policies

Screen prints from the Power Point Presentation ‘Current Practices Around Homework PreK – 8 at BCEMS’ (October 23, 2017) was distributed. Mr. Taffel started the presentation advising of the Homework Policy which was adopted in 1996, and the 7 Guiding Questions. Mr. Taffel and Mr. Dreiblatt reviewed, by grade, the amount of time students are expected to work on homework. Middle School homework focuses on Math, Reading and Writing, though sometimes a project is involved. Mr. Dreiblatt advised that he found a difference between what teachers reported and what is actually happening. It was noted that homework is practice to reinforce classroom learning and does not include new material. Mr. Taffel and Mr. Dreiblatt continued the presentation, advising of the types of homework that are assigned, assessment of homework, the impact to final grades, consequences for not completing homework and support for students who are struggling. It was noted that homework is corrected and feedback is given to students, though homework does not impact final grades. Under Proficiency Based Learning, less homework is being assigned in grades 5 – 8. In response to a query from Mr. Blakely, it was noted that students who would like extra work assigned, should request the work from their classroom teachers. Consequences for not completing homework vary by grade, ranging from no consequences, parental notification, Friday afternoon make-up time, staying after school, loss of privileges, and lower Habits of Work scores.

Supports vary by grade and include teacher assistance during the school day, before and after school tutoring, study hall time/support, enrichment class time, Friday afternoon support, daily reminders, and IEP accommodations.

Mr. Smith voiced concern regarding inconsistencies in expectations and consequences for grades 5/6 and 6/5. Mrs. Tolman believes there needs to be improvement with consistency, but acknowledges that it will take time to implement changes. Ms. Dean advised that the Engaged New York program has lots of homework, but that it is no longer assigned. Mrs. Waterhouse stressed attendance issues at the high school that are having a negative impact on learning and stressed that parents need to be accountable and support their children’s learning. It was noted that homework is a reinforcement of classroom learning and helps to build skills and discipline.

6. High School Homework Policies

Screen prints from the Power Point Presentation ‘Curriculum Committee - October 23, 2017 - Homework’ was distributed. Mrs. Waterhouse advised that homework has been a topic of discussion (at SHS) for 5 years. The number of students that have challenges has been increasing. As the school becomes more informed regarding Trauma Informed Learning, more students are being identified as coming from non-supportive homes. Homework is referred to as ‘learning tasks’ and discussions have been held with parents regarding keeping students on task (modifying behavior and eliminating distractions) in an effort to help them become more successful at completing assignments. Homework is used more for observational purposes and building solid habits of work. The focus is more on completion than accuracy. Homework completion is reported as a ‘habit of work’, rather than an academic grade. The Power Point Presentation for Spaulding High School, provided information broken down by subject, rather than grade. Information was provided for Math, English, Unified Arts, Unified Electives, and Science. Information was provided regarding homework time, and it was noted that homework at the high school level consists of both practice/reinforcement and new learning. Assessment varies and includes observation (to confirm work was attempted), students’ self-correcting work, and observation of preparedness for class (new learning). Assessment sometimes includes quizzes, discussion, in class reviews, writing pieces and feedback. Some assignments are assessed using a rubric. Homework accomplishment is mainly reported in the Habits of Work section, but sometimes impacts the quality of in-class work and the quality of portfolios, which are part of the final grade. Consequences for not completing homework include; being less prepared for class, lower Habits of Work scores, difficulty meeting standards, loss of participation in athletics (based on HOW scores), parental notification via academic alerts, and requirements to attend before/after school, or TA time to make up work. Supports include; teacher support (before/after school, in class, and during TA time), tutoring services, evening time e-mail support, and the provision of equipment (mainly for Unified Arts).

Some students have reported that they have received too much 'busy work'. Learning tasks should be assigned with purpose and with intentional learning targets identified. It is a goal to make learning tasks somewhat enjoyable. Some students struggle with time management and good work habits. Some more advanced students receive 'next level' learning tasks, while those who struggle continue with the practice learning tasks.

Discussion continued regarding trying to balance home and school life, and various philosophies ranging from the belief that no homework should be assigned, to looking for a deeper, richer meaning, proficiency in learning, and the belief that homework and hard work helps to raise individuals who are prepared to do well later on in life.

7. Next Steps

Work towards goal of more consistency.

Next Meeting: Monday, November 27, 2017 at 5:30 p.m. in the SHS Library.

Science curriculum will be the focus of this meeting.

8. Adjournment

On a motion by Mr. Rousse, seconded by Mr. Blakely, the Committee unanimously voted to adjourn at 7:31 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Andrea Poulin