



Barre Unified Union School District



# 2021

# ANNUAL REPORT

TO THE COMMUNITY



# VOTING DAY

**VOTING DAY - Tuesday, May 11**  
**7:00 AM to 7:00 PM**

- City Resident Voting Location:  
Barre Civic Center Auditorium
- Town Resident Voting Location:  
Barre Town Middle & Elementary  
School

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## **VOTE EARLY!**

Visit the State of Vermont's "My Voter Page" at [mvp.vermont.gov](https://mvp.vermont.gov) and request a ballot to be mailed to you.

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## **VOTER REGISTRATION**

There is no deadline to register to vote. You can register ahead of time or at the polls on the day of the vote.





# FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

## WELCOME TO THE BARRE SCHOOLS!

My first year as Superintendent has been filled with enthusiasm even as we deal with everything the COVID-19 pandemic has thrown our way. Like districts across Vermont, we started with all of our grades operating remotely and have built back up to having K-6 students attend fully in-person while following safety protocols. More than anything else, these struggles have revealed the many strengths of Barre schools.

The teachers and staff have done great work as they have adapted their instruction to meet the needs of students with in-person classes, while also providing instruction to students who are learning remotely. Technology has played a huge role in instruction this year. BUUSD is very fortunate to have invested in its technology infrastructure in previous years and was able to move all of its students to 1:1 learning with digital devices by last April. We expanded on this capability over the summer and fall by providing upgraded devices to our students that were funded by coronavirus relief funds. This expanded use of technology will provide a lasting benefit to Barre students as they use these tools in future years to learn lifelong skills.

Our ability to work together as a district has helped us meet the challenges of this pandemic in other ways as well. For example, we focused our professional development on engaging learners,

focusing on key concepts and skills, and will now turn our attention on assessing our progress and mapping out a plan for future student achievement. Our ability to collaborate also helped us meet the needs of remote learners. We were able to share staff and resources to create the Barre Virtual Academy this summer for students in Barre City and Barre Town who needed a fully remote option. Teachers at Spaulding High School and the Central Vermont Career Center adapted their teaching schedules to reach our fully remote learners while also teaching in-person. Another one of our challenges was solved through the creative use of resources when we shared buses across the district to bring K-6 students back to school for more in-person learning.

Our district has continued to show fiscal responsibility during this challenging time. Prudent management, along with the use of coronavirus relief funds, has allowed us to keep our current fiscal year spending on track while meeting the needs of our students. Administration across the district made reductions to keep our spending increase to 4.14% for FY22. Of this increase, 3.5% comes from salaries, wages, and benefits. Barre and districts across Vermont have been impacted by new statewide health plans with increased costs for health reimbursement payments and premium increases ranging from 8.3%-18.5%. Even with these salary and benefit costs, our

careful budgeting has kept projected per-pupil spending in Barre to \$15,881 which is one of the lowest in Vermont and well below the current estimated state average of \$17,330. Even with our very efficient per-pupil spending, we are still delivering quality education to Barre's students. We are committed to the tradition of making the most of our taxpayer dollars.

As we reach the halfway point in our school year, our attention is turning to addressing the achievement and social-emotional gaps that this pandemic has brought upon our students. We will be building on the coordinated efforts of our teachers to specifically address student needs starting this spring and moving on through the summer and coming fall. We move forward with a great sense of urgency and hope as we serve the students of Barre.

Sincerely,

David Wells  
Superintendent of Schools





# ALUMNI NOTES



## REUBEN STONE & MARK BROWNING

### CLASS OF 2009

The Barre School System set Reuben and me up for success in many ways. Without the compassion and support from the entire Barre School community, we would not be where we are today. We began our Real Estate/Property Management Company, Stone & Browning, back in 2014. Fresh out of undergraduate school, we used many life skills from not only college but from High School and Middle School as well. The relationships that were built through the school system and the memories will forever be a reason for our success. We learned how to be leaders, have initiative, and most importantly, live life to its fullest. Thank you Barre School System!

## TRANSFORMATION OF INSTRUCTION

Throughout the history of public schools, the role of a teacher has evolved in many ways, but this year's teachers are having to adapt to entirely new approaches that consistently challenge them in new ways. One thing that has not changed is their dedication to serving their students, even if it means stepping way beyond their comfort zone and completely transforming the way they teach.

In addition to instruction, teachers update students and families on missing assignments, where to find those assignments online, and problem-solving tech issues. Teachers have had no choice but to become tech-savvy in order to keep students engaged both virtually and in-person.

Learning in a virtual environment certainly presents its challenges and it's more difficult to keep students engaged. Our teachers do their best to provide engaging lessons while students are learning at home because being home can present a lot of distractions. The resiliency we've seen from students to not allow those distractions to interfere

with their learning has been truly inspiring to witness. Barre's students, staff, and families continuously rise to the challenge.

## EXPANDING ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION

Thanks to our community's continuous support, we were able to begin the construction of a new alternative educational facility known as Spaulding Educational Alternatives (SEA) located on Allen Street in Barre. Construction began on October 15, 2020. Our students with the highest needs are as deserving of quality education as all other students. SEA will greatly increase the quality of education that these students receive.

We asked some of our students how they felt about the creation of SEA: "It looks so big and has everything we need!" "It will be better to be in a bigger space that we can do our own thing without the other businesses that we have here." "I can learn to cook!" "Being able to go outside would be beneficial. Fresh air helps me to focus or it can help if I need to get away from people for a minute."

SEA staff and administration are working with experts around the state and beyond to develop a cutting edge academic and social/emotional support delivery system. This new model will support students' social-emotional needs to allow them to better access academics and build community. Academics will be based on the same proficiencies as SHS but will be delivered through project-based learning and other alternative educational opportunities to move students toward graduation and a meaningful transition to adulthood and further learning.

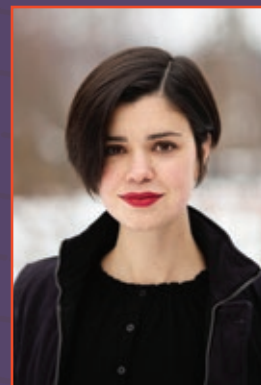


Once complete this summer, the SEA facility will allow us to increase the number of students we can serve, immediately offsetting the increased cost, as well as continuing to save money down the road ahead while providing a higher quality in-house education. We expect to have our first class of SEA





# ALUMNI NOTES



## SHANNON ALEXANDER CLASS OF 2002

My love for photography began in the Central Vermont Career Center. Experiencing different forms of photography that I wouldn't otherwise have had the opportunity to, made a lasting impression on me. My time spent in the Barre school system also helped give me a sense of community which I enjoy in a lot of the work I do today. I'll always appreciate the bonds I made with devoted staff and faculty and am very grateful knowing my children will also make those lifelong connections here in Barre. I welcome you to take a look at my portfolio at [shannonalexanderphotography.com](http://shannonalexanderphotography.com)



students learning in the new facility beginning in August.

### UNITING TO FEED THE CHILDREN OF BARRE

On March 15, 2020, BUUSD announced it would begin implementing Governor Scott's Continuity of Education order, developed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. To ensure our students would still have access to food while at home, our Food Services team worked tirelessly to develop a daily meal distribution plan providing breakfasts and lunches. This program aligned with the summer meal program in which any individual in Barre ages 18 and under were able to participate.

The meals were produced in our schools' kitchens and then distributed to multiple locations throughout the city and town. Our food service team pivoted on a dime and had re-written menus, re-engineered the kitchen production area, and utilized many of our support staff and transportation coordinators to help box and deliver meals.

Through the efforts of many of our staff, **83,432 meals** were distributed by mid-June. Our Food Services

team continues to remain extremely flexible as they plan for the unplannable in the face of this pandemic. The needs of our students have inspired our Food Service team to go above and beyond no matter the situation and to be tremendously creative in their distribution methods.

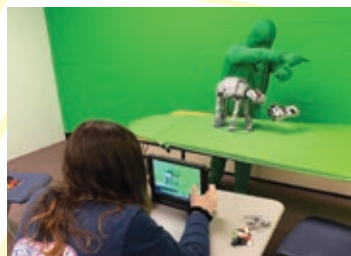
### TECHNOLOGY

When COVID-19 made us close our doors last March, it wasn't long after we realized that education as we knew it would forever be changed. One of the largest changes included the implementation of virtual options for teaching and learning.

BUUSD swiftly moved to a dedicated 1:1 technology program for students, which provided every student with an assigned Chromebook for learning. After some strong efforts by our Technology Department in March 2020, we were able to have a device in every student's hands at home.

With everyone connected, it has broken down barriers, and students can now make a request to their teacher and receive feedback in real-time. Teachers now have the ability to proactively communicate class announcements without

needing to wait until the next class session. Having technology in each student's hands has provided more equitable opportunities for all students' learning.



While being a 1:1 district doesn't necessarily mean guaranteed increased learning, how we integrate technology with our curriculum does have a powerful impact over time. Teachers that had never previously used Google Classroom, a Promethean Board, or launched a virtual meeting are now doing just that, class by class and day by day. When you got your first cellphone, there was no way to predict how it would change the way we interact with the world. Now that our students and teachers have the technology tools they need, they will be used to further learning in ways we cannot yet imagine.







On **March 25**, the Barre Unified Union School District School Board approved a budget of **\$50,372,954** for fiscal year 2022. The approved budget represents an increase of **3.41%** over the current year's spending plan. Approval by voters would permit the school board and administrators to support student needs, advance academic planning, and maintain the district's facilities and grounds used by students and the Barre community.

*All these numbers are subject to change when Equalized Pupils, Common Level of Appraisal (CLA), and Property Yield values have been determined.*

Since the majority of this year's increases to our spending plan are out of our control and impacting most districts, we still are spending much less per equalized pupil than the other districts in the surrounding area.

Our proposed budget is still **8.5%** below the estimated statewide average cost per equalized pupil. If we asked for you to spend the equivalence to the statewide average on our **2,395 students**, we would be asking you to spend another **\$3.5 million**.

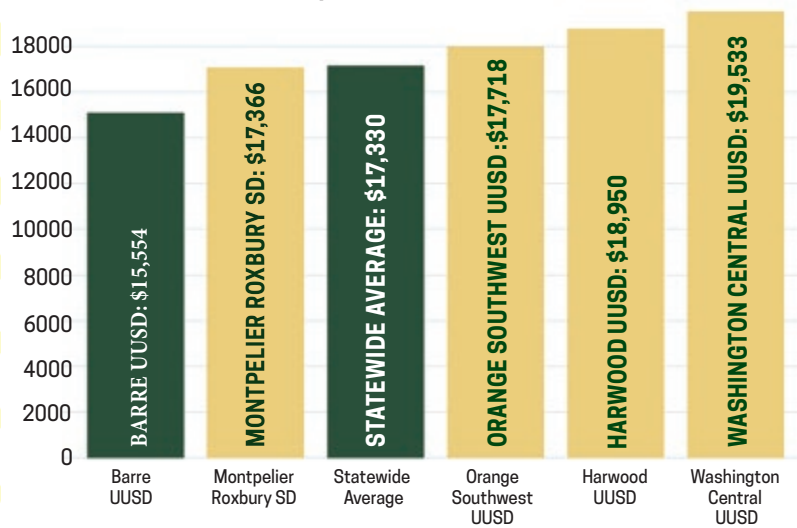
Assessed Property Value	FY 2021 Current Year		FY 2022 Proposed Budget		Annual Difference		Difference as a monthly rate	
\$100,000	\$1,437	\$1,659	\$1,520	\$1,444	\$83	-\$215	\$6.92/mo	-\$17.92/mo
\$200,000	\$2,874	\$3,312	\$3,040	\$2,888	\$166	-\$424	\$13.83/mo	-\$35.33/mo
\$300,000	\$4,311	\$4,977	\$4,560	\$4,332	\$249	-\$645	\$20.75/mo	-\$53.75/mo
\$400,000	\$5,748	\$6,636	\$6,080	\$5,776	\$332	-\$860	\$27.66/mo	-\$71.66/mo

Barre City = **Blue** (94.97% CLA)

Barre Town = **Green**

(Assuming Barre Town will have 100% CLA after their reappraisal)

### SPENDING PER EQUALIZED PUPIL BY DISTRICT



# 2021 BUDGET



# VOTING ON THE BUDGET

## HOW DOES VT PROPERTY TAX CREDIT WORK?

Vermont Property Tax Credit is a form of tax assistance that allows homeowners to pay property taxes based on their income, rather than the value of their home.

Approximately **63%** of Barre homeowners will receive property tax assistance in 2021, so for most Barre homeowners, you won't actually pay the full amount you see in the table to the left.

## WHY DOES BARRE CITY HAVE A HIGHER TAX RATE THAN BARRE TOWN?

Barre City has a higher tax rate than Barre Town because Barre City has a lower Common Level of Appraisal (CLA). This is due to Barre Town's assessed home values being closer to market values than Barre City's assessed home values. Barre Town will soon have completed a reappraisal, resulting in assessed home values being nearly equivalent to market value. This will result in an anticipated 100% CLA for Barre Town this spring.

CLA exists to make sure that a Barre Town and Barre City homeowner pay the same amount of total property taxes if their homes have the same market value. Since Barre City has a lower CLA, its tax rate needs to be higher to reflect the true market value.

**At the end of the day, both residents from Barre City and Barre Town that own an equally valued home, pay an equal amount of property taxes to the state.**

## UNDERSTANDING THE BALLOT ON TOWN MEETING DAY

### Ballot

**Instructions:** To vote, fill in the oval ☐ to the right of your choices, like this: ☒  
Use black pen or marker. Do not use pencil.

Shall the voters of the Barre Unified Union School District approve the school board to expend **\$50,372,954**, which is the amount the school board has determined to be necessary for the ensuing fiscal year? It is estimated that the proposed budget, if approved, will result in education spending of **\$15,554 per equalized pupil**. This projected spending per equalized pupil is **3.41%** higher than spending for the current year.

### \$50,372,954

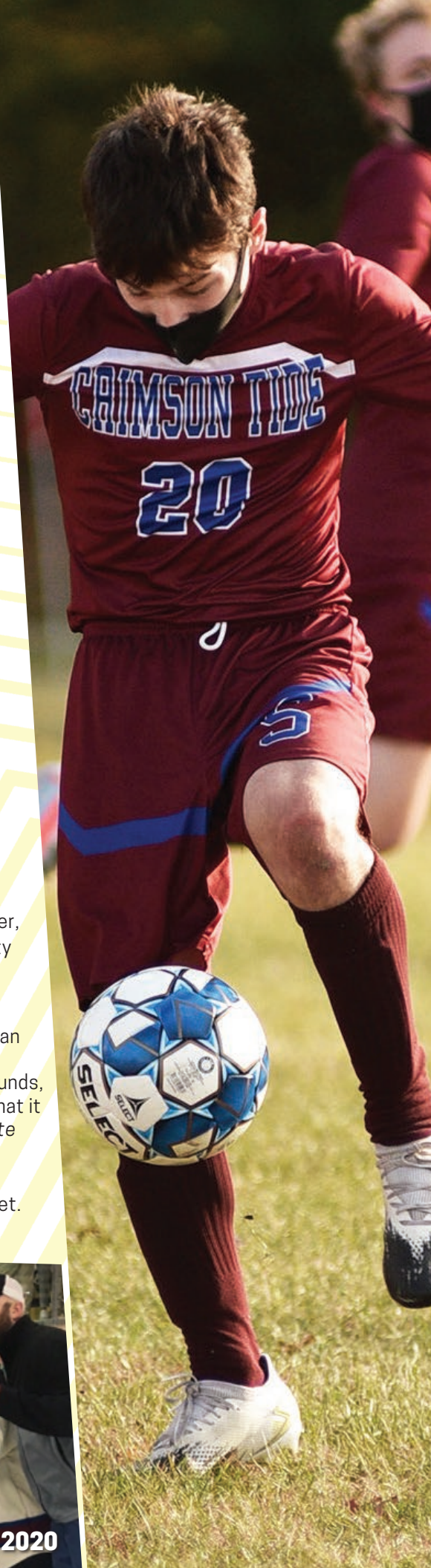
**\$50,372,954** operates 2 elementary & middle schools, a high school, a career center, an alternative school, and a central office. This value provides economical and quality education for approximately **2,400 students**.

### PER EQUALIZED PUPIL

When calculating spending per student, Vermont uses "equalized pupils" rather than an actual headcount. The formula gives less weight to pre-kindergarten pupils and extra weight to students in secondary schools, those from economically deprived backgrounds, and those whose first language is not English. The principle behind the weighting is that it costs more to educate students in certain categories. *Source: Public Assets Institute*

### 3.41% HIGHER

**3.41%** is the percentage increase per equalized pupil as compared to the FY21 budget.



MARCH 9, 2020





**Barre Unified Union School District**  
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U S POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
PERMIT #61  
MONTPELIER, VT  
ECRWSS

***Doing whatever it takes  
to ensure success for  
every child.***

***Barre Unified Union  
School District partnered  
with USPS to deliver  
these reports for only  
\$.09 a household.***

*With special thanks to Shannon  
Alexander Photography and to  
those who submitted photos  
for this report.*

RESIDENTIAL CUSTOMER

***For continuous updates on the proposed budget, please visit our budget webpage at [buusd.org/budget](https://buusd.org/budget)***

