

**BARRE UNIFIED UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT
CURRICULUM COMMITTEE MEETING**
Barre Town Middle and Elementary School Library
January 28, 2020 - 5:30 p.m.

MINUTES

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Victoria Pompei, Chair (BT)

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:

Gina Akley, Vice-Chair (BT)

Tim Boltin (BC)

Anthony Folland (BC)

ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT:

Penny Chamberlin, Director (CVCC)

Chris Hennessey, Principal (CEMS)

Brenda Waterhouse, Principal (SHS)

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Sue Brennan

Lindy Johnson

1. Call to Order

The Chair, Mrs. Pompei, called the Tuesday, January 28, 2020, BUUSD Curriculum Committee meeting to order at 5:35 p.m., which was held at the Barre Town Middle and Elementary School Library

2. Additions and/or Deletions to the Agenda

None.

3. Public Comment

None.

4. Approval of Minutes - December 11, 2019 BUUSD Curriculum Committee Meeting

The Committee agreed by consensus to approve the minutes of the December 11, 2019 BUUSD Curriculum Committee Meeting.

5. New Business

5.1 PK – 12 Literacy Curriculum and Assessment Presentation and Discussion

A document titled BUUSD Curriculum Committee Presentation – SHS English Department (dated 01/28/20) was distributed. Sue Brennan, SHS English Department Chair addressed the Committee. Ms. Brennan provided an overview of her experience (as SHS English Department Chair since 2012), and in other various capacities at SHS which includes working as a classroom teacher, and being an Advisor for both Drama Club and Vermont Young Playwrights. Ms. Brennan advised regarding teaching staff; eleven teachers and one individual for AP Language and intervention. The staff list includes World Language instructors as well as Humanities instructors. English department standards are based on the Common Core State Standards, with five standards being assessed at each grade level (reading, writing, speaking/listening, presentation, and language). Ms. Brennan provided examples of standards scoring criteria and examples of performance indicators. The department has been working to standardize grading practices. It was noted that literacy skills require repeated practice prior to assessment and that literacy skills “spiral” and are continually built upon. Performance indicators assessed in grades 9 and 10, are reassessed in grades 11 and 12, with increased expectations for level of complexity. Ms. Brennan advised regarding course progression for grades 9 and 10. Courses offered in grade 9 include classes with imbedded honors, an intervention course, and Read 180 (a Flexible Pathways program). Read 180 supports reading, but writing skills are being added to assist with helping students meet the writing standards. Tenth grade courses include sophomore English with an embedded honors option, as well as the sophomore English intervention course. Course progression through 11th and 12th grade includes weighted options; AP courses and Community College of Vermont Courses (taught at the high school), Seminar options (which vary from year to year), and intervention options. It was noted that students who attend early college, are not included in the SHS student count. For the CCV classes, students must pass the class to get high school (and college) credit. With AP classes, there is a fee for tests, and not all colleges will accept the credits. It is hoped that every core area will eventually have CCV courses taught at the high school. Teachers must meet CVC requirements and be accepted to teach. Ms. Brennan provided an overview of the highlights of improvements that have been made over time, including; the introduction of Seminar choices, development of the literacy team, curriculum mapping (to Common Core), development of close readings and common writing prompts, proficiency-based instruction and grading, professional development (with Great Schools Partnership), introduction of embedded honors, Flexible Pathways, and the recent implementation of the Humanities Team approach. Ms. Brennan provided an overview of interventions

currently in place, and advised regarding enrichment opportunities for students who excel. Ms. Brennan provided additional information relating to professional development including; literacy work with Joey Hawkins (grant funded), the Writing Revolution study group (vertical teaming with middle school teachers), and work with Great Schools Partnership. Ms. Brennan advised regarding individual staff members' professional development (accomplished and in progress). Ms. Brennan provided a brief overview of assessment scores (PSAT and SBAC), advising that SHS is on par with the state average for SBAC assessments. SBAC was previously administered to 11th grade students, but is now being administered to students in 9th grade (only) for ELA. Ms. Brennan advised regarding possible summer work (for ELA curriculum), and her belief that the budget is sufficient for most ELA needs, but that she would like to see funding for relevant field trips. Ms. Brennan advised that Humanities, intervention, and Junior-Senior Pathways are areas of focus for curriculum improvement. In response to a query regarding determining proficiency in writing skills, Ms. Johnson advised that she does not feel that SBAC assessments are a good way to determine proficiency. Ms. Johnson believes local assessments are the best way to assess writing skills/proficiency. Brief discussion was held regarding students who are not meeting proficiency, and the 'next steps' for those students. The Committee was advised that though some students need to repeat a course, many times, students are provided with interventions that allow them to improve and become proficient on the limited set of standards on which they are not proficient.

Three additional documents were distributed; a copy of the literacy presentation, a copy of the BUUSD Literacy Assessment Calendar for 2019, and a document titled Renaissance Star Screening Report – Star Reading Enterprise Assessment (generated on 02/28/20). Lindy Johnson, Literacy Curriculum Coordinator for grades Pre-K – 8 introduced herself to the Committee, and advised regarding her experience at the BUUSD. Ms. Johnson advised regarding literacy personnel, advising of interventionists at both BCEMS (5) and BTMES (3.5). It was noted that at BCEMS, four of the positions are grant funded. Two Coach positions were added for the 2019 – 2020 academic year, one which is grant funded, one which is a combination of grant funding and local funding. Literacy Interventionists see students in small groups, Coaches work with teachers to support strategies based on goals set by the teachers. Time is also spent in classrooms and working one-on-one in meetings with teachers. Literacy curriculum is based on Common Core State Standards. The Common Core Standards provide clear and consistent learning goals to assist students with learning what is expected at each grade level. If students become proficient in each of the grade level standards, it is expected that they will be prepared for college, career, and life. Curriculum is designed to ensure that students learn each of the standards as they progress through the grades. Common Core ELA Standards encompass reading, writing, speaking & listening, language, and range, quality, and text complexity. Ms. Johnson advised regarding how curriculum is based for the different grades levels; Pre-K curriculum is guided by Vermont Early Learning Standards (VELS), Lucy Calkins Units of Study in Reading and Writing are used in grades K – 8 to assist students with achieving proficiency of the Common Core Standards. Each Lucy Calkins unit provides learning targets, instructional sequences, and assessments. Lower grades, K – 2 focus on guided reading small group instruction to assist students learn the fundamentals of reading. Grades 3 – 8, use a workshop model that involves more conferencing and collaborative reading, with only some small reading group instruction. Foundational skills for K – 1 include print concepts and phonological awareness. Phonics and fluency is included in grades K – 5. Types of writing skills include opinion/argumentative, informational, and narrative. Writing curriculum includes components for organization, editing, revising, and use of technology. Curriculum also includes researching topics, citing evidence, and summarizing in written work. Speaking and listening skills are addressed through many content areas, and includes; collaborative discussions, responding, presenting, and morning meetings. Meeting language standards involves teaching of conventions of grammar and usage, both spoken and written. Vocabulary instruction involves many components, some of which are comprehension, affixes, prefixes, and context clues. Literacy assessment involves many types of assessments; formative, summative, local, and SBAC. SBAC tests are computer adapted assessments. Because SBAC assessments are performed on computers, results may not always be accurate, as a student may be very proficient at reading and writing, but have difficulty using computers. It is believed that local assessments provide a better picture of student progress. In addition to SBAC assessments, another large scale assessment is performed using Star 360. This assessment is new for the 2019 – 2020 academic year and is replacing Gates-McGinitie. Ms. Johnson provided an overview of the Renaissance Star Reading Report document, which showed results based on one classroom, and results on a student. Committee Members were provided with a brief overview of the Assessment Calendar that outlines the assessment schedule by grade. Ms. Johnson reiterated that middle school teachers are collaborating with high school teachers and Joey Hawkins to learn instructional techniques. Summer Reading Book Clubs seem to be popular, with students choosing from a selection of books. Many staff, not just teachers, participate in the Summer Reading Book Clubs. Ms. Johnson reported on recent professional development, and would like professional development for Literacy Coaches. Math Coaches attended training last year, but there was no funding for Literacy Coaches to attend.

6. Old Business

6.1 Ongoing Feedback on Curriculum Presentations – as needed

No discussion.

7. Other Business

None.

8. Items for Future Agendas – see Annual Work Plan

Physical Education and Wellness

9. Next Meeting Date

The next meeting date is to be determined.

10. Adjournment

The Committee Agreed by consensus to adjourn at 7:11 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Andrea Poulin