

**BARRE UNIFIED UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT
POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING**

Via Zoom Conference
April 20, 2020 – 5:30 p.m.

MINUTES

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Giuliano Cecchinelli, Chair - (BC)
J. Guy Isabelle, Vice-Chair - (At-Large)
Emel Cambel (BC)
Andrew McMichael (BC Community Member)

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:

OTHER BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Paul Malone

ADMINISTRATORS AND STAFF PRESENT:

John Pandolfo, Superintendent
Luke Aither, SHS Assistant Principal
Scott Griggs, CVCC Assistant Director

GUESTS:

Dave Delcore, Times Argus

1. Call to Order

The Board Chair, Mr. Malone, called the Monday, April 20, 2020, meeting to order at 5:30 p.m., which was held via Zoom Conference.

2. Organize

Mr. Malone advised regarding organization of the Committee, and asked for nominations for the position of Committee Chair.

Mr. Isabelle nominated Mr. Cecchinelli for the position of Committee Chair, seconded by Ms. Cambel.

The Committee agreed by consensus to appoint Mr. Cecchinelli as the Policy Committee Chair.

Mr. Cecchinelli chaired the remainder of the meeting.

Ms. Cambel nominated Mr. Isabelle for the position of Committee Vice-Chair, seconded by Mr. McMichael.

The Committee agreed by consensus to appoint Mr. Isabelle as the Policy Committee Vice-Chair.

3. Additions and/or Deletions to the Agenda

None.

4. Public Comment

None.

5. Approval of Minutes

5.1 Approval of Minutes – December 16, 2019 Policy Committee Meeting

The Committee agreed by consensus to approve the Minutes the December 16, 2019 Policy Committee Meeting.

6. New Business

6.1 Review of BUUSD Policy Manual Index

A copy of the BUUSD Policy Manual Index (dated 03/16/20) was distributed. Mr. Pandolfo advised that he reviewed the VSBA policies prior to the March meeting that was cancelled. The VSBA policies will be reviewed prior to the next meeting. VSBA has been very busy on other matters and most likely has not had much time to work on policies. It is probably likely that VSBA won't have many new policies or policy revisions until July or August. Mr. Pandolfo feels good about the policies the BUUSD currently has in place. The Acceptable Use of Electronics Policy (D3), seems to be working well with remote learning under COVID-19 restrictions, and will be revisited after the conclusion of remote learning. Mrs. Perreault developed reimbursement procedures a while back and there are concerns relating to time studies that were performed. This issue will be revisited after COVID-19 'closure'. In response to a query regarding the timeframe for VSBA to develop new policies (e.g. field trips, etc....), Mr. Pandolfo advised that though some policies could probably be written fairly quickly, that is not always the case, and policies relating to more complex issues will usually involve a longer process. Mr. Aither advised that he asked VSBA years ago, for guidance on gender issues, a complex

issue that involves legalities, and he was advised to follow the law. Mr. Pandolfo advised that relating to gender issues; the landscape is changing a lot, so VSBA feels it's best to hold off on writing policy. It will be necessary to see that any policy that is created, does not conflict with the law. Mr. Aither reported that one of the current known challenges relates to student records and permanent records. The school must honor the student's preference for gender, but sometimes the student's preference is in conflict with the parents' preference. There is also the issue of unintentionally 'outing' a student, by posting the gender on Infinite Campus which parents have access to. This is a very complicated issue.

6.2 Discuss Removing Legal References

Mr. Pandolfo advised that VSBA recommends removing legal references from policies. Legal counsel supports the removal. Clarification has been received that removal of legal references does not constitute a substantive change, and does not require Board approval of each policy. Mr. Pandolfo will have Tina Gilbert begin updating policies.

6.3 Policies to Review

Copies of policies referenced in Agenda Items 6.3.1 through 6.3.4

6.3.1 C9 – Child Nutrition Act Wellness Policy

Mr. Aither advised that a subtle change needs to be made to the policy. Though the change is subtle, it is a substantive change and will require Board approval. The proposed amendment to the policy would remove the word 'offered' and replace it with "sold". This amendment to the policy is necessary because of the 'food shelf' at Spaulding. All foods are donated and it would not be practical to have every donated food item reviewed to see that it meets Federal Food Guidelines. The SHAC Committee supports this change. The Committee agreed to submit a first reading of the amended policy to the Board.

A first reading of the amended policy will be presented to the BUUSD Board at the 04/23/2020 meeting.

6.3.2 D30 – Field Trips

Mr. Aither advised that during consolidation of the district various policies (from the district schools) were combined. Tonight it is being proposed that the Field Trips policy be amended by deleting provision #2 which requires Board approval for all overnight or out of state field trips. This provision was present only in the BTMES policy and had never been part of SHS or BCEMS policies. In response to a query regarding keeping the Board apprised of these types of field trips, it was noted that they will most likely be reported in the Building Reports submitted by administrators.

A first reading of the amended policy will be presented to the BUUSD Board at the 04/23/2020 meeting.

Additional discussion was held regarding overnight field trips and the complexities involved relating to gender identification and sexual preference. Mr. Malone stressed that the BUUSD has a responsibility to the community to assure that we are not put in a litigious situation. The VSBA does not currently have a policy relating to these issues. Though counsel has advised that the easiest solution is to not have any overnight field trips, this route would be detrimental to students. Mr. Aither advised that he has consulted with other districts, and there are many different variations between schools. It was noted that every possible solution has about 3 "What ifs" associated with it. Mr. Aither advised that SHS administrators, teachers, other staff members, and students have all been actively involved in discussion of this issue and that administrators and teachers, based on discussions, are writing procedures to help give direction. Mr. Aither stressed that everyone is working together, blending the perspectives of all parties, as they work to develop procedures. Mr. Pandolfo stressed that there is no "one size fits all", and that issues are being addressed on a case by case basis. Mr. Pandolfo cautioned that to eliminate field trips could cause its own issues, and reminded the committee that the school deals with gender identity and sexual preference issues on a daily basis, for non-fieldtrip related issues. This issue should be brought to the Board at some time in the future. It will be important for the Board to hear perspectives from all involved parties. These issues are constantly evolving. Ms. Cambel advised that she would like to discuss ongoing education so that information is constantly being disseminated. It was agreed that discussions and education should be ongoing and that it might be overwhelming to try to present everything at one time. Mr. Aither believes the community would welcome discussion with the Board.

6.3.3 D6 – Class Size Policy

Mr. Pandolfo advised that this policy plays into the Intra-District School Transfer policy, and advised that what is contained in the Class Size Policy is guidelines for class size, not a strict policy. Mr. Pandolfo provided an overview of the policies and their purpose. Mr. Pandolfo believes that minor wording revisions should be made to the policies to provide clarification that the policies contain guidelines, not hard defined class size minimums and maximums. Many different factors are involved. An overview was provided regarding possible scenarios that could occur, e.g., a new student to the district may be added to a class, resulting in a number of students that exceeds the maximum number listed in the policy, or a student may drop out of a class, or leave the district, causing the class number to fall below the minimum number listed on the policy. Neither of these scenarios would be good cause to hire a new teacher (for one student), or cancel a class (detrimental to the other students who are taking the class). It was reiterated that the proposed wording changes help clarify that the numbers listed are guidelines and allow for flexibility. In order to meet student needs, it is necessary to have flexible guidelines in place. Mr. Pandolfo is comfortable with the process currently in place for intra-district school transfers and stressed that these policies allow flexibility to make sound decisions. Mr. Pandolfo advised that discussion of

class size and inter-district school transfers will be part transitioning in the new superintendent. Mr. Pandolfo advised regarding the number of intra-district transfer requests received this year (requests from 4 families, totaling 5 – 10 students). Mr. Pandolfo will amend the policies to clarify that they are used as guidelines and allow for flexibility.

First readings of the amended policies (D6 and C41) will be presented to the BUUSD Board at the 04/23/2020 meeting.

6.3.4 C41 – Intra District School Transfer

This item was discussed under Agenda Item 6.3.3.

7. Old Business

None.

8. Other Business

None.

9. Future Agenda Items

Review of VSBA Model Policies – identify those with substantive changes.

Mr. Pandolfo advised that the first 45 minutes of the meeting did not get recorded, and asked that participants give him a reminder in future meetings.

10. Next Meeting Date

The next meeting is Monday, May 18, 2020 at 5:30 p.m. via Video Conference (Zoom platform).

11. Adjournment

The Committee agreed by consensus to adjourn at 6:48 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Andrea Poulin