

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

Via Video Conference
April 28, 2020 - 5:30 p.m.

MINUTES

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Victoria Pompei, Chair (BT)
Tim Boltin, Vice-Chair (BC)
Alice Farrell (BC)

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:

ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT:

Jessica Barewicz, Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment
Penny Chamberlin, Director (CVCC)
Chris Hennessey, Principal (BCEMS)
Jennifer Nye, Principal (BTMES)
Brenda Waterhouse, Principal (SHS)

OTHER BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Paul Malone

GUESTS:

Venus Dean Lindy Johnson

1. Call to Order

Paul Malone called the Tuesday, April 28, 2020, BUUSD Curriculum Committee meeting to order at 5:30 p.m., which was held via video conference.

2. Organize

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

**Mr. Boltin nominated Victoria Pompei for the position of Committee Chair, seconded by Mr. Malone.
The Committee agreed by consensus to appoint Mrs. Pompei as the Curriculum Committee Chair.**

Mrs. Pompei chaired the remainder of the meeting.

**Mrs. Pompei nominated Tim Boltin for the position of Committee Vice-Chair, seconded by Mr. Malone.
The Committee agreed by consensus to appoint Mr. Boltin as the Curriculum Committee Vice-Chair.**

3. Additions and/or Deletions to the Agenda

None.

4. Public Comment

None.

5. Approval of Minutes - January 28, 2020 Curriculum Committee Meeting

The Committee agreed by consensus to approve the minutes of the January 28, 2020 BUUSD Curriculum Committee Meeting.

6. New Business

6.1 Review and Discuss Continuity of Learning Plan

A document from the Vermont AOE titled 'Continuity of Learning Plan Tool' was distributed. Mrs. Barewicz advised that building administrators would be providing an overview of plans (during remote learning) for each building, and that Lindy Johnson and Venus Dean would provide additional information as needed.

BCEMS - Mr. Hennessey advised that remote learning has been an enormous undertaking for administrators and staff and lauded Mr. Pandolfo for providing steady, calming leadership to the leadership team. Focus has been on the safety of students as well as academics. Mr. Hennessey showed a sample calendar (for 6th grade), and displayed a document titled 'Pride', which is the 6th grade remote learning plan, with daily expectations, including daily sign in, which includes an area for students to communicate how things

are going for them. There is a 'check-in time' schedule (including office hours and check-ins). Learning plans include much detail and specific expectations. Students are expected to do no more than 2 to 3 hours per day, and there is the expectation that students will do one "Special" per day. Mr. Hennessey advised that there is a very concerted focus on making daily connections with students, as much as possible, and to document all contact. Ms. Dean advised that the use of canned programs assures that all students are getting the same instruction. Mrs. Pompei advised that she tried to access BCEMS learning plans today, and was not able to do so. Mr. Hennessey advised that assignments are sent to students via e-mails which include website links. Mr. Hennessey knows that the links were working last Friday, and he will look into this matter more to assure that all is still working. E-mail is the main way of communicating with students.

BTMES – Mrs. Nye advised that BTMES had a bumpy start because some teachers live in very remote places, with unreliable internet. Much work had to be put into scheduling because some families have limited devices available, but have multiple students, and parents who are also working from home on devices. Many Chromebooks have been distributed, including replacement Chromebooks, for those that broke down. Staff members provide daily updates. Communication to families was on Tuesdays and Thursdays, and recently changed to Fridays. Pre-school students, including pre-school students who normally attend outside programs, are being assigned family friendly type activities. This is necessary due to equity issues. Mrs. Nye advised that staff members are in communication with students in grades k – 5, and that assignments are on a shared document. There is follow-up for students who are not in regular contact with staff. Mrs. Van Orman developed a web site which includes lesson plans, weekly activities, and extra activities for students who would like additional work. Mrs. Nye advised that on-line learning includes the use of software, some of which are; Zern, Freckle, Khan Academy, and various ELA on-line platforms. On-line platforms offer consistency and equity for students. Staff meets once per week to support each other and plan for the upcoming week. Support staff members are working with Special Educators. In response to a query regarding how students are adapting to technology, Mrs. Nye reported that more needs to be done to promote learning sites; she feels everyone is learning much during this process, and she would like to be able to get devices to students in kindergarten and pre-school. Mrs. Nye advised that some parents are contacting the school regarding how/when they can pick up their students' personal belongings. Some parents are struggling with coordinating their work schedules with their students' learning schedules. Some students do not have internet access, and are being provided paper packets.

SHS – Mrs. Waterhouse advised that flexibility is critical. Every student must check in with their TA every day. There are various ways students can achieve check-in. TAs are entering attendance into Infinite Campus and para-educators and support staff follow up with parents if there has been no check in. One goal is to get students out of bed earlier. Students who are staying in bed all day, are struggling with mental health issues. If there is no student contact in 5 days, guidance counselors are contacted. A few students have moved out of state. Each Monday morning, students are provided with a weekly outline for each course. The outline includes tasks, tests, assignments, and Zoom meetings. All outlines are in Google Classroom, and are accessible to both students and parents. 'Office Hours' are held on Wednesdays. Students can set meeting times with staff to get extra help during these hours. Progress reports continue to be generated every 3 weeks. There have been some conflicts (bandwidth issues) due to parents having business meetings (on line) at the same time their students need to be on line. There has been some difficulty scheduling SPED meetings with families, and administrators are trying to be very flexible. Some students feel much pressure working from home. The school is trying to be flexible. Students are expected to perform 2 to 3 hours of work per day. One to one devices are in place, though some students are having connectivity issues. For students with internet issues that can't be resolved, there is a system in place, where packets of information are mailed to students, and include a return label with postage pre-paid. There is also a drop-box at the front office. There is a system in place for when students and families can pick up and drop off materials, including computers. The ceramics teacher is dropping off materials (at each home) on Monday, and picking up materials on Friday. The teacher is then firing all materials over the weekend. Graduation requirements are still in place. SHS has moved to a different grading structure and there will be no GPA issued for this semester. This change was put in place due to equity concerns. All information that has been sent out is available on line. There has been much communication going out to students and parents. In response to a query regarding the possibility of students losing ground during remote learning, Mrs. Waterhouse advised that there will be some, but she believes that school will be able to proceed in the fall, with students making up 'lost' education as part of the start of school. It is believed that there will be a multi-year impact, and that early intervention is critical. In response to a query regarding the impact for students taking AP courses, Mrs. Waterhouse advised that lessons are being triaged, and staff are prioritizing what needs to happen to assist students in succeeding. AP exams are being altered this year in response to learning changes due to COVID-19. Ms. Dean advised that in the lower grades, some end of year modules are being moved to the start of next year. Mrs. Barewicz advised that start of year assessments will be very informative. Mrs. Waterhouse stressed that students will need much emotional support when they return.

CVCC – Ms. Chamberlin advised that there have been some challenges, as students used to attend CVCC for 4 hours each day. Each teacher is evaluating where students were (course-wise), and what is left to teach. In May, students are usually finishing up and getting ready for end of year credentialing. Many students have 'essential worker' jobs. Much work is involved with coordinating students' work and academic schedules. Students are expected to spend 1 to 2 hours a day on CVCC work, and then still need to do some high school work. Students check in with teachers daily. There has been 100% tracking of CVCC students. All teachers are on Google Classroom. All students have Chromebooks, text books, and materials. Ms. Chamberlin advised regarding various software being utilized, noting that it is difficult to perform assessments, as most assessments are performance based. It has been challenging trying to work with 5 supervisory unions and 8 different high schools. There has been difficulty joining other schools' Google Classrooms. CVCC has been staying in contact with various State agencies and colleges. Slack.com is being used for weekly staff

meetings. All CVCC teachers are working from 8:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. Some students are asking for additional work. Non-teaching staff (e.g. lab assistants), have been assigned to a program instructor and are being ‘cross-trained’. Mr. Griggs is in the building every Wednesday. Recently there was some vandalism to the building (broken windows), and Ms. Chamberlin is hoping that having more of a presence in the building, will discourage this type of activity. Mrs. Waterhouse noted that vandalism occurred in numerous places along Ayers Street. Ms. Chamberlin advised that staff have been packaging students’ personal belongings and tools that need to be lent out. CVCC is trying to be creative with how to assist students with obtaining licenses. Some students stayed in contact with the instructors during April vacation. In response to a query regarding any State action relating to augmenting student learning (because of lack of hands-on experience during remote learning), Ms. Chamberlin reported that there has been no State action, but there has been discussion of students coming in over the summer to obtain certification. Due to contractual issues, this may not be possible. The cost for ‘summer learning’ is approximately \$34,000 per week. Ms. Chamberlin has advised the State regarding the cost.

Mr. Malone suggested that in light of the recent vandalism, the school may wish to purchase additional cameras (approximately \$400 each). The videos will be reviewed to see what may have been caught on camera.

In response to a query regarding progress reports for middle and elementary school, Mrs. Nye advised that BTMES is not doing progress reports, but the end of year ‘report cards’, will be more narrative this year. BTMES and BCEMS will try to coordinate end of year reporting. In response to concern that parents be notified when their students are having difficulty, Mrs. Nye advised that notifying parents when students are struggling is common all year, and is even greater now under remote learning. In response to a query, it was noted that there are no known cases where parents declined an IEP for distance learning. Some DLPs are being developed. Ms. Johnson advised that she has been part of discussions regarding ELA assessments (upon return to school), and the planning includes having more intensive testing, to assist with identifying students who will need additional help. Ms. Dean advised that math assessments will continue in the usual fashion, and that staff will want to pay extra attention to those students who did not access Zern. Extra assistance will be put in place for students who are identified as needing help. Mrs. Nye advised that the CLP is a working document, and is being changed continually. Mrs. Nye and Ms. Pearson have been very flexible and are assisting students whenever they ask for help. In response to a query regarding holding classes via Zoom, Mrs. Waterhouse advised that Zoom can be very ‘clunky’ when there are too many individuals joining a meeting. It was also noted that some teachers have Wi-Fi issues. Some staff members are holding mini-groups and creating videos for students to watch. Mrs. Nye advised that sometimes the start of Zoom meetings is very distracting to students, as they are viewing many faces (people and pets), backgrounds etc, at once. Mrs. Barewicz noted that studies have shown that Zoom is very cognitively stressful.

It was noted that next week is Teacher Appreciation Week.

7. Old Business

7.1 Review Work Plan for Remainder of Year

A document titled ‘Curriculum Committee FY20 Annual Work Plan (revised 12/11/19) was distributed.

The Committee would like the May Agenda to include social and emotional supports during remote learning and an update on assessments and curriculum going into next year. Mr. Boltin suggested that administrators rethink Standards and that perhaps remote learning might be better for some students. Mrs. Barewicz is concerned regarding what might be going on in other venues. Mrs. Farrell questioned whether the BUUSD might begin losing students to on-line schools.

8. Other Business

In response to a query, Mrs. Waterhouse reported that no decision has been made relating to possible graduation ceremonies, and that the State will be providing guidance/mandates on 05/08/20. Mrs. Waterhouse advised that some sort of celebration will take place.

9. Items for Future Agendas

Discussion held under Agenda Item 7.1 (Review of Work Plan for Remainder of Year).

The June Agenda will include a debriefing on remote learning (what worked, what didn’t).

10. Next Meeting Date

The next meeting is Tuesday, May 26, 2020 at 5:30 p.m.

11. Adjournment

The Committee Agreed by consensus to adjourn at 7:06 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Andrea Poulin