

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

Via Video Conference - Zoom  
May 26, 2020 - 5:30 p.m.

**MINUTES**

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:**

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

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Alice Farrell (BC)

**ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT:**

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

**OTHER BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:**

**COMMUNITY MEMBERS PRESENT:**

**1. Call to Order**

The Chair, Mrs. Pompei, called the Tuesday, May 26, 2020, BUUSD Curriculum Committee meeting to order at 5:32 p.m., which was held via video conference (Zoom).

**2. Additions and/or Deletions to the Agenda**

Delete 8.1 Debriefing of Remote Learning – this item will be on the June Agenda  
Discuss Agenda Item 5.2 out of order – before Agenda Item 5.1

**3. Public Comment**

None.

**4. Approval of Minutes - April 28, 2020 Meeting**

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

**5. New Business**

**5.1 Review Draft Survey for Families on Remote Learning**

A document titled 'Remote Learning Family Survey' (draft survey) was distributed (via a link). Mrs. Barewicz advised that the draft survey is a "mash-up" of a survey provided by the Great Schools Partnership and other area schools and also includes input from individuals. The survey was displayed. The start-up of school may involve some remote learning, so it will be important to receive input from parents. The current learning was an emergency situation, but if remote learning is used in the fall, it can be more planned out and intentional. Mrs. Barewicz provided a brief overview of the draft survey.

Mrs. Pompei suggested adding a question such as "Do parents feel the work being assigned is meaningful? It was agreed that this type of question should be added.

Mrs. Pompei suggested that a notation be added to the beginning of the survey, advising that a separate survey should be completed for each child in the family. The Committee agreed to this addition.

Mrs. Pompei also suggested that a question be added regarding software applications. Parents should respond regarding software applications that were useful, and those that didn't work well for their student(s). The Committee agreed that this information would be helpful and should be added to the survey.

The instructional leadership team will review the survey and provide their input on Monday (06/01/20). Surveys will be distributed more towards the end of the school year. There will also be a survey for teachers and support staff, to receive feedback on what they feel would assist with remote learning/teaching.

It was agreed that a Student Survey should also be created.

Mrs. Nye suggested distributing paper copies of student/parent surveys with the meals that are being delivered. The Committee agreed to this additional form of survey distribution. The student survey will have a submission deadline of 06/10/2020.

## **5.2 Discussion: Meeting Social and Emotional Needs Remotely**

Mr. Aither displayed a presentation titled 'BUUSD Curriculum Committee Presentation Guidelines'. Mr. Aither introduced himself and advised regarding his tenure at SHS (currently in his 7<sup>th</sup> year as Assistant Principal, and previously 3 years as a Behavioral Specialist). Mr. Aither began his presentation with an overview of the curricular area of Social and Emotional learning, advising that it is a soft skill that is always developing. There is no specific course on this topic, but rather there are various units included in courses (k-12), as well as targeted interventions. Content meets students 'where they are'. Curriculum is sometimes driven by outside factors, including; trauma, socio-economic factors, life experiences, and social media. The Vermont AEO considers Social/Emotional skills as transferable skills and have identified 5 specific skills, the two most important ones being (#2) Self Direction and (#4) Responsible and Involved Citizenship. Mr. Aither advised regarding various curricular components that are in place. S/E skills are taught in units in various courses, including; Grade 9 Wellness, Grades 11 – 12 Health, Grade 10 - iGen Citizenship (a companion course to Driver's Ed), and Core Values Education (The CoVE – a Special Education Program – available only to those on IEPs). The CoVE program is an intervention level program. iGen Citizenship includes HHB topics (Hazing, Harassment, and Bullying). Mindfulness Morning Meditation is also available. Mindfulness Morning Meditation is continuing during remote learning. Intervention level supports (for when an issue has occurred) are comprised of 'reflective discussions' (facilitated discussions), 'restorative practices', and use of 'Honor Code' (by Everfi – an online interactive program sponsored by Norwich University). Intervention level supports may involve many different individuals, including; administrators, guidance, the ACCESS Coordinator, Student Assistance Professionals, EST Case Managers, school social workers, special educators, and therapists. The Honor Code software is used to educate students who have been involved in, or leaning towards, behavior that involves hazing, harassment, or bullying. The software educates students from three perspectives; those who have experienced bullying, those who have bullied someone else, and those who have been bystanders. The ACCESS Program is an intentional focused space used to help students identify the reasons for specific behaviors, and assist students with devising plans to help them overcome disruptive behaviors. Mrs. Waterhouse advised that the SHS ACCESS Program, which was implemented a number of years ago, has been very successful, and other entities have approached SHS seeking information related to setting up similar programs in other schools. Distance Learning supports include; guidance, special educators, the school social worker, EST case managers, administrators, advisors, and teachers. SHS is providing resources to families (phone numbers for various types of assistance) and reporting concerns to DCF and/or the police (when students have been out of contact for more than 10 days). Mrs. Waterhouse advised that the school receives alerts when a student who is signed into their Google account, makes any form of concerning statement(s) or searches. These alerts go directly to cell phones and e-mail alerts are also sent.

Mr. Aither advised regarding the Youth Risk Behavior Survey, which assists with identifying possible risky types of behavior that students are engaging in. The survey, which is taken every two years, is anonymous. Mr. Aither advised regarding some of the statistics learned from the survey taken 2 years ago.

Mrs. Waterhouse advised that she is working with the Curriculum Director regarding providing training to faculty members on the topic of supporting LGBT students.

Mr. Aither advised regarding statistics that indicate there is a strong correlation linking trauma and adverse childhood experiences (ACES) to long term health issues and age of death. Discussions are being held regarding how to mindfully and intentionally deliver this information to students. There is also encouraging information that indicates positive relationships with teachers, staff, and other caring adults, can help students lessen or overcome issues related to ACES.

Mr. Aither advised regarding 'Character Play Book' for students in grades 7 – 9 and 'Mental Wellness Basics' for grades 8 – 12. It was noted that these two programs are not sponsored, and are not free for the school to use. These programs are at a 'cost per license'.

It was noted that there is trauma related to COVID, and that students who were in crisis before COVID, are having a more difficult time. The media has been reporting a rise in domestic violence issues. As students are not physically at the school, it can be difficult to identify those that may be suffering from domestic violence or other issues. For many students, school was their safe space, a place where they were supported, warm and fed. School has been 'an escape'. Administrators and staff are very concerned with student welfare during remote learning, and it will be challenging to prepare students to return to school.

Mr. Hennessy reiterated the concern for student welfare, advising that he has been performing wellness checks on students for the past two weeks. Mr. Hennessy has been performing wellness checks at homes and today, spent 45 minutes with students at Currier Park, where some middle students have been congregating and getting into some trouble. The behavior teams have been meeting to discuss students who have 'disappeared'. Currently, student welfare is the priority over academics.

Mrs. Nye agrees with the information that has been shared thus far. Mrs. Nye advised that a behavior intervention called CICO (check-in/check-out) was used for only a handful of students in March. Currently the list of students using this intervention has quadrupled. Some students are experiencing issues at home, which has been contributing to their lack of attendance. Staff and administrators will need to discuss how to support these students upon their return in the fall. Mrs. Waterhouse advised that there are many administrators and staff who are not trained in managing these types of issues. Mrs. Nye advised that there are Dave Melnick training sessions (videos) that staff can watch. Mr. Melnick is a licensed clinical social worker with NFI. His training relates to trauma informed practices and anyone can join and watch the videos. Training with Mr. Melnick had been previously scheduled, but weather and COVID prevented it from occurring. Mrs. Barewicz reiterated need to train staff to deal with the stress.

Mrs. Waterhouse advised that she recently received an e-mail regarding a conference titled 'Psychological Trauma in the Age of CORONA Virus'. This conference will be led by Dr. Bessel van der Kolk, the author of the book "The Body Keeps the Score". Mrs. Waterhouse advised that she has read the book and it is one of the most impactful books surrounding trauma. She plans to attend the conference.

Mrs. Pompei asked if Dave Melnick video training can be required as part of mandatory employee training. Mrs. Barewicz advised that training is being planned for para-educators during the last week of school and the Dave Melnick videos are one of the options and can be made mandatory.

Mr. Hennessey advised that BCEMS has set up remote learning using Developmental Design (for building relationships and community building). Students check in with staff daily (as part of remote learning) and staff have continued morning meetings. under remote learning. the Behavior Team has a drop-in feature (The Bull Dog Den) for students who are struggling. Kids are using this voluntary feature. Teams are holding discussions on who needs to be checked in on. Check-ins involve Mr. Hennessey, Mr. Coon, Behavior Support staff, Officer Fleury, and sometimes DCF. BCEMS continues its connections with WCMH.

Mrs. Nye advised that BTMES uses Responsive Classroom and PBIS for elementary students for purpose of connecting with the classroom community. The various (staff) grade level groups meet twice a week, with support staff also attending some of the meetings. The social media alert software is also in place for BTMES and BCEMS. It was noted that the meal delivery sites are very helpful in checking in with students, and the recently started Bobcat Sighting activity has been very well received.

### **5.3 Review Assessment Plans for Start of School Year**

Literacy and Math Assessment Calendars for 2019 were distributed. Mrs. Barewicz reported that the BUUSD has a good, solid local assessment system was in place. Staff and administrators are comfortable with the system. Next steps involve having teachers come together with curriculum leaders regarding timing of assessments. There will most likely be a lot of assessments in pre-k through 8, though assessments work differently at the high school level. At SHS, staff know the pre-requisites, and will embed some of the prerequisite work into the next class. Because of the transient population and different feeding schools, the high school, has to some degree, always had to meet the needs of students 'where the students are at'.

Mrs. Pompei queried regarding any modifications that need to be made to the assessment schedule, which is dated for 2019. Mrs. Barewicz advised that typically, the assessment plan doesn't change much year to year. She hasn't assembled the team yet to identify any specific targets, but feels the assessment plan is very solid and robust. Mrs. Barewicz advised that her greatest concern is with assessing social/emotional needs. Mrs. Pompei queried regarding any plans to test before school starts or as soon as students get into school. Mrs. Barewicz advised that she believes the first few weeks will focus on reconnecting with students and being supportive. No new learning is planned for the first few weeks.

Mr. Hennessey advised that some parents are concerned regarding academics and are questioning whether their children should be held back a grade. Mr. Hennessey is advising elementary school parents know that all students suffered some academically, and there is no need to keep students back.

Mrs. Nye advised that it will be "all hands on deck" to perform student assessments. Mrs. Barewicz reported that with COVID causing school closure, some Special Education evaluations were not able to be completed. Those evaluations will need to be performed as soon as possible. Also, at this point, not enough is known about any summer services. Mrs. Nye advised that face masks will most likely impede testing. Mrs. Waterhouse reported that she has been meeting with area principals, discussing the possible impact of only allowing a limited number of students into the building at the beginning of the school year.

### **6. Old Business**

None.

### **7. Other Business**

None.

## **8. Items for Future Agendas**

In response to a query, it was noted that the Youth Risk Behavior Survey Results are usually presented to the Board (in early fall). This item will not be added as a future agenda item.

Future Agenda Items:

- Debriefing of Remote Learning
- Remote Learning Survey Results (Staff and Student)

## **9. Next Meeting Date**

The next meeting is Tuesday, June 23, 2020 at 5:30 p.m. via Video Conference (Zoom). No meeting will be held in July.

## **10. Adjournment**

**The Committee Agreed by consensus to adjourn at 6:45 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,  
*Andrea Poulin*