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Doing whatever it takes to ensure success for every child.

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July 9, 2020

TO: Members of the Barre Unified Union School District Board.

RE: Central Office Report

Please accept the following report to the BUUSD Board:

1. Superintendent's Office:

- a. Wednesday marks my first week as the Superintendent for BUUSD. I am pleased with how welcoming the Central Office staff have been. In addition to meeting Central Office staff in person, I have begun to visit administrators at their schools starting with a tour of Barre Town Elementary and Middle School.
- b. I have taken advantage of many training opportunities offered to Superintendents in the past few weeks with particular emphasis on COVID-19 planning and school finance. The training included: Introduction to Education Finance presented by the VSA with our own Lisa Perreault as one of the presenters, Planning to Re-Occupy School presented by VISBT, and Health and Safety Guidance presented by the VSA.
- c. The VSBA and the VSA announced their joint virtual conference *Leading Vermont Public Education in a New Era* which will be held on Tuesday, July 21 and Wednesday, July 22. Two main areas of focus for this conference will be equity and school finance. We have the opportunity to register as a team including myself, school board members, and any other school leaders designated by the Superintendent to participate for a fee of \$250. I highly recommend that School Board members take advantage of this opportunity. The draft program can be found at: <https://tinyurl.com/y7q8xxpu>
- d. I lead the BUUSD Administrative Team on a half-day virtual retreat on June 25th and will follow up with two more days of work on July 27th & 28th. Some of the many topics discussed include FY21 budget guidance with an eye towards cost savings, plans for the reopening of school, examining our approaches to equity, and developing a vision and goals for the Administrative Team itself.
- e. Natalie Soffen, Brenda Waterhouse and I met to discuss restarting athletics this summer. We expect the VPA to provide guidance on high school athletics by mid-August. Natalie presented a plan where our teams could safely start conditioning work by July 6th. These activities will adhere to the District's COVID-19 Safety Plan. The activities will solely take place outdoors and will not

involve person to person contact. We feel our students will greatly benefit from participating in athletics again.

- f. I continue to meet weekly with John Pandolfo to aid in the transition between Superintendents. It is strongly recommended that new Superintendents work with a mentor during their first year. I am fortunate to have David Wolk serving as my mentor. David Wolk has over 40 years of experience as an educator including serving as a Principal and Superintendent in Rutland, serving as Vermont's Commissioner of Education, and serving as the President of Castleton University.

2. Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment: As summer is a time for bigger projects and planning ahead, much of the update from the last report continues to apply.

- a. The CFP grant, McKinney-Vento Homelessness grant, and BEST/ACT 230 grant were all submitted at the end of June. These grants now and historically include many positions, student supports, professional development, and resources for instructional materials we would otherwise go without were it not for grant funds. A significant focus of all three grant sources was social/emotional learning supports.
- b. I continue to work on the Covid Planning Committee. While the early focus is facilities and safety protocols, the work will soon shift to how best instruction can happen within the confines of those protocols and facilities limitations. The focus on inservice time to start the year will be collaborating to realign curriculum and plan assessments given the changes to instruction this spring, implementing COVID safety procedures, technology training, and school-based work to reconnect as school communities.
- c. I've begun planning for new teacher orientation which will look much different this year. It'll be important to support this cohort of new teachers (and all teachers) in unique ways given our current context.
- d. I've been working with our Great Schools Partnership consultant to pull school-specific data from our remote learning surveys to provide principals information directly about their students and teachers.

3. Communications:

- a. July is always a big month for updating our websites, making sure all information is current for the new fiscal year, including meeting minutes, staff directories, new forms, etc. It's a tedious process, but we're getting closer every day. I am also still in the process of migrating some of our external websites under our own umbrella.
- b. I've recently become a member of the National School Public Relations Association. This provides me with a ton of professional development opportunities around school communication and public relations, and I'll be using this community as a tool going forward.
- c. I've been doing a lot of research and planning on community engagement and trying to build efforts around re-educating the public about education. It's critical for our community to know more about our schools, what we offer, and how we are adapting to these rapidly changing times.

4. Business Office:

- a. The business office team is hard at work preparing for the preliminary audit. Auditors will be on-site July 7-9.
- b. FY20 grants have been finalized and FY21 grants have been submitted for approval by the AOE.
- c. When procuring contracts for FY21, I have been incorporating a force majeure clause. This language allows cancellation/termination by written notice by either party.
- d. FY20 budget projected deficit is looking more favorable than in past months.
- e. At the VASBO meeting on Friday, July 10th, the executive committee will request specific details from the AOE regarding COVID-19 relief funding allocations, procurement requirements, etc.

5. Special Education:

- a. Extended School Year (ESY) Services for students who qualify based on Vermont Special Education Regulations, began for some students on June 29th. Others are beginning the week of

July 6th. Services provided by BUUSD staff are being offered remotely, while some local alternative schools are providing in person services following Vermont AOE and Department of Health guidelines.

Number of students who were eligible and ESY services were offered to: 287

Number of students who are receiving remote BUUSD services: 171

Number of students receiving services in person via alternative schools or contracted service providers: 51

- b. BUUSD recently received its [Local Annual Performance Report](#) for the **2017-18** school year.
- c. IDEA Basic and IDEA Pre-K grant application has been submitted. Included in the grant applications are: Salaries and benefits for 3 Behavioral Interventionists, 4 paraeducators, 3 SLPs and 2 Pre-K special educators; laptops for special education staff; professional development funds; lease for the SEA program; Docusped program annual fees and transportation for students on IEPs.

6. Technology:

- a. The technology team will have several members of our cleaning crew working at all of our schools. They will be working in the computer labs and cleaning/inventorying/checking Chromebooks and carts. They will play a key role in ensuring our Chromebooks and iPads are clean and organized for the coming school year.
- b. This summer, we extended an online learning opportunity for teachers to earn their Google Educator Level 1 Certification. The training (which is optional) will help expand their skill level with Google tools and its application for student learning. Teachers are to complete it at their own pace and take the Google Educator Level 1 exam. Data review of students' internet activities during remote learning shows that Google tools were the most used. So teachers who choose to take this training will be valuable to the students.
- c. We are consolidating all the different technology software accounts used in our schools into one district account. This practice is helping us to be more efficient and, in some cases, cost-effective.

7. Early Education:

- a. Lauren May continues to work with the Covid Planning Committee to determine what prekindergarten options will look like in the fall. Families will be receiving an update by mail the week of July 6th, letting them know where we stand in the planning process as we continue to process new information as it comes out from the Agency of Education and Agency of Health and Human Services (Child Development Division).

8. Human Resources:

- a. The Human Resources department continues to gather information and work with our counterparts across the state to develop expanded leave procedures. We have been advised that it will be beneficial to all districts in the state to be as consistent as possible when determining procedures. We have therefore reached out to VSBIT to see if they could assist with the facilitation of the process to include the VSA, VSBA, etc.
- b. Most administrative office employees have returned to their buildings (central office and all schools). We are working well under the VOSHA guidelines (temperature checks, face coverings, etc.). We have tried to limit traffic, and in some cases stagger hours, as we continue to modify our spaces where needed to address safety concerns.

9. Facilities:

- a. Summer cleaning is underway at all of the buildings. A deep cleaning of all buildings is ongoing while awaiting further information from the state for the opening of the schools in the fall.
- b. Summer construction projects have all been bid out with start dates beginning in the next couple weeks. The last bid to be reviewed is the replacement of the underground heating lines at SHS/CVCC. The bids were received by July 6th and are currently being reviewed. A recommendation will be made to the superintendent to be brought to the board for the board meeting on July 9, 2020.

- c. Work continues with the Safety COVID Team to create a plan for the opening of school in the fall.

Respectfully submitted,

David Wells

Superintendent of Schools

on behalf of the Barre UUSD Central Office Administrative Team