

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

Via Video Conference (Zoom)
June 23, 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)
Brenda Waterhouse, Principal (SHS)

COMMUNITY MEMBERS PRESENT:

David Wells, Incoming Superintendent

1. Call to Order

The Chair, Mrs. Pompei, called the Tuesday, June 23, 2020, BUUSD Curriculum Committee meeting to order at 5:30 p.m., which was held via video conference (Zoom).

2. Additions and/or Deletions to the Agenda

None.

3. Public Comment

None.

4. Approval of Minutes - May 26, 2020 BUUSD Curriculum Committee Meeting

The Committee agreed by consensus to approve the minutes of the May 26, 2020 BUUSD Curriculum Committee Meeting.

5. New Business

5.1 Debriefing of Remote Learning

Agenda Item 5.2 was discussed prior to Agenda Item 5.1

Ms. Chamberlin advised that much of the CVCC in-person learning is taught in the beginning of the school year and that the review process begins in April to prepare students for Certificate and License exams. CVCC was fortunate to have completed much of the hands-on type learning before remote learning started. During on-line learning, some students were delivered materials and kits to perform hands-on work at home. Teachers began remote learning planning, by reviewing standards, and identifying standards that had not been met yet. If remote learning were to have started early in the year, it would have been much more difficult and costly. Ms. Chamberlin advised that cosmetology students were able to take their on-line and in-person assessments. Cosmetology students took home all of their supplies and tools for remote learning and all supplies and tools were returned in excellent condition. All students passed the test. Plumbing and Electrical students also had a similar testing outcomes. Emergency Services students are still testing.

Mrs. Waterhouse advised that much planning is going into social/emotional well-being of students for the start of the upcoming year. Student connectivity is critical. Some students' classes were changed under remote learning so that they did not have to begin a new 4th quarter class with a teacher they were unfamiliar with. Some students needed specific classes to graduate and did have to take a course with a teacher that was new to them.

Mr. Hennessey advised that planning for the start of school includes limiting the amount of big changes that students will experience when they return. It is planned that transitioning into the new academic year, may involve keeping students with their previous teacher, possibly for the first two weeks. There are various scenarios being considered. It will be important that students have a connection and contact with their previous teachers.

In response to a query regarding attendance data, Ms. Barewicz advised she will check with Mr. Pandolfo regarding that information.

Mrs. Farrell queried regarding knowledge of the number of students that may not be able to return to in-person learning due to health issues. Ms. Barewicz does not have student counts and is hoping that the State will provide guidance regarding this matter.

Ms. Chamberlin queried regarding whether a decision has been made regarding having remote learning as an option (for those students who do not have a medical reason not to attend in-person). If there is an either/or option, there is a question of how those services will be delivered with the limited number of staff. Mrs. Pompei advised that brief discussion has been held regarding whether or not utilizing immunosuppressed teachers for remote learning is a possibility. It is preferred that the district not lose students to 'homeschooling'. Ms. Chamberlin looks forward to receiving guidance relating to this matter. Mr. Wells advised that the BUUSD continues to receive guidance from the State and that last week the State provided information regarding a safe and healthy start of school. Mr. Wells attended VSBIT training today regarding planning for re-entry into school. Questions relating to students, who are not able to return to school, have not been answered yet. Planning will have to include steps to take for students and staff members who are not able to return to in-person learning/teaching. Mr. Wells cautioned that options should not be provided to students or staff until planning has been completed.

Ms. Chamberlin advised that CVCC is more of a hands-on learning environment, and though remote learning began quite a while into the school year, she was encouraged by how students were able to take on projects remotely. CVCC attendance was 96% per day.

5.2 Remote Learning Survey Results

A document titled 'First Look at Remote Learning Survey Results 2019 – 20' was e-mailed to Committee Members just prior to the meeting. It was noted that documents for meetings should be sent out with the Agenda, or shortly thereafter as an addendum. This standard protocol allows for participants to review information and adequately prepare for meetings. Mrs. Barewicz advised that survey end dates (student survey 06/12/20 and teacher survey 06/19/20) did not allow for sufficient time to prepare for the meeting in advance. (The agreed upon deadline for student surveys was 06/10/20). Documentation will need to be sent to Mrs. Gilbert, for posting on-line as back-up to the Agenda. In response to a query regarding a breakdown of paper survey responses vs. on-line responses, Mrs. Barewicz advised that no paper surveys were distributed based on a decision from the Instructional Leadership Team. (At the suggestion of Mrs. Nye, and agreed upon by other building principals and the Committee, paper surveys were to be delivered to meal sites). Mrs. Pompei expressed concern that there are individuals who are known to have internet issues and/or are not tech savvy, and therefore, their input will not be received, resulting in skewed data. Mrs. Barewicz advised that parent surveys are not due until 06/30/20.

Review of the presentation (of student and staff surveys) began. Mrs. Barewicz asked that while reviewing the survey data, Committee Members identify areas to celebrate, areas of concern/surprise, and any specific implications they identify based on the results.

The review started with the Student Survey. It was noted that approximately 19% of students responded. A breakdown of respondents by grade was displayed. Approximately 1/3 of responses were received from each school. Committee Members took time to review the results displayed. Ms. Chamberlin queried regarding disaggregation of data (by grade and CVCC). From the results provided, Ms. Chamberlin is not able to determine responses that pertain to CVCC. It was noted that a breakdown by grade is most beneficial, as responses may vary greatly between the grades (e.g. high school students vs. middle school or elementary school). It was noted that some responses seem to show some contradiction (almost 70% reported self-management of time as a positive aspect, but almost 41% advised that managing time was difficult).

As part of the breakdown of survey results, Mrs. Pompei requested a breakdown by school and grade for students who wish to continue with remote learning. Mrs. Waterhouse would like the data broken down further to indicate students who want full-time remote learning vs. those who want a mixture of in-person and on-line learning. Learning expectations in planned on-line learning will most likely differ from the emergency remote learning and that may impact students' preferences. Mrs. Pompei believes that time spent planning for remote learning should focus on those grades/students who most want or need it (immunosuppressed students), rather than spend a tremendous amount of time planning for students who don't want the option.

Celebrations to be noted:

Mr. Hennessey is encouraged that 2/3 of students responded that they felt connected to school.

Mrs. Waterhouse advised that much was accomplished 'overnight' in setting up remote learning under an emergency situation. Additionally, Mrs. Waterhouse is pleased that there was a great amount of communication with parents and that parents may now be more aware of the work their children are performing in school.

Mr. Boltin believes this recent remote learning experience could be a game changer, and that remote learning could be used in the future. Mrs. Pompei noted that 30% of students felt they learned better, and that 35% of students advised that they felt safe learning from home. Mrs. Pompei is also encouraged that students were able to become more tech savvy during remote learning, especially younger students who have had very limited technical experience.

Mr. Wells is encouraged by the number of students who reported enjoying independence and flexibility of assignments. Mr. Wells would like to explore how independence and flexibility can be worked into in-person teaching.

Concerns or Surprises:

32% did not feel connected to school. Perhaps 'connection' needs to be better defined, e.g. connected with teachers, peers. Social/emotional connections – the importance of students seeing teachers on a daily basis – how to achieve that going forward, especially with remote learning.

Reading body language was lost during remote learning.

Mrs. Waterhouse commented an observation she has made: remote learning has 'expanded our tool box' but doesn't believe it is an either/or situation. Much was learned that could benefit students, but neither an "all in-person", nor "all remote" setting will meet the needs of students. Blending learning experiences more, might be the most optimal way to teach students.

Implications:

Ms. Chamberlin would like to see the data broken down so that she can focus on the top areas that CVCC needs to look at. It is difficult to conceptualize numbers in the large scope they are being reported in.

The Committee agreed that a breakdown of data would be very beneficial. Ms. Chamberlin is encouraged that only 12% of responders reported difficulty with internet services. Mrs. Pompei advised that since paper surveys were not distributed, the survey results to this question may very well be skewed.

Mr. Wells believes that distance learning should not look like traditional homework, and traditional homework shouldn't look like traditional homework, it should be more like remote learning, more engaging and interactive.

Mrs. Barewicz believes the survey may be beneficial in determining the different tech tools that are most commonly used by staff. Ms. Chamberlin would like to see actual respondent numbers and grades associated with each technical tool.

Educator Survey:

The survey was distributed to teachers and para-educators. In response to a query, Ms. Barewicz advised that she will need to check her e-mail to provide the date on which surveys were sent to staff. Ms. Barewicz will need to breakdown data based on a teacher/para split. Barre Town staff account for almost 50% of the respondents. Mrs. Waterhouse queried regarding the different technical tools that will be available at no charge in the future. Ms. Barewicz does not know what platforms will remain available at no cost. Mrs. Pompei advised that not all of the tools are commonly used amongst all of the grades, e.g. Khan Academy is used in middle school, where Freckle is used by elementary school students only. It was noted that Google and YouTube will continue to be used at no charge. As 62% of staff indicated that providing direct instruction was one of the biggest challenges, Mrs. Pompei would like information on how that challenge is reflected in what students actually learned. Mr. Wells advised that scheduling contact with students can be very challenging. Mrs. Waterhouse advised that teachers reported that it was difficult to manage group discussions.

Celebrations to be noted:

Mrs. Waterhouse advised that high school math teachers collaborated with math teachers from other states in their effort to transform instruction to best assist students. Teaching staff were recognized for researching additional teaching tools on-line.

Concerns or Surprises:

If remote learning needs to be continued, are we ready to do so?

Much time that would have been spent on Professional Development, will be spent working on remote learning plans and learning technology.

The impact of combination learning (remote and in-person) and how to manage those two very different approaches to learning, and the impact course offerings.

Implications:

Remote learning should be added to the work-plan for next year.

Could the BUUSD look into holding 'regional' classes? Ms. Chamberlin advised that she and Mrs. Waterhouse have been in discussions with other districts regarding this topic.

6. Old Business

None.

7. Other Business

None.

8. Items for Future Agendas

Anti-racism Curriculum in Our Schools – including plans for an equity audit

Remote Learning Survey Results – Including Disaggregated Information for Student, Staff, and Parent Surveys

Re-work of Annual Work Plan

As the data may have an impact on planning for the upcoming year, Ms. Barewicz will send out survey data well before the August meeting so that Committee Members will have time to review the data.

9. Next Meeting

There is no meeting in July.

The next meeting is Tuesday, August 25, 2020 at 5:30 p.m.

10. Adjournment

The Committee Agreed by consensus to adjourn at 6:44 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Andrea Poulin