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BARRE UNIFIED UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT
CURRICULUM COMMITTEE MEETING
Via Video Conference – Google Meet
December 1, 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:

David Wells, Superintendent
Mary Ellen Simmons, Assistant Superintendent of Instruction
Emmanuel Ajanma, Director of Technology
Lauren May, Director of Early Education

OTHER BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

COMMUNITY MEMBERS PRESENT:

Venus Dean
Jean Haeger
Christine Farnham
Karen Fredericks
Ben Matthews
Mike Martin
Andrea Moore

1. Call to Order

The Chair, Mrs. Pompei, called the Tuesday, December 1, 2020, BUUSD Curriculum Committee meeting to order at 5:30 p.m., which was held at the via video conference.

2. Additions and/or Deletions to the Agenda

None.

3. Public Comment

None.

4. Approval of Minutes -

4.1 Meeting Minutes of October 27, 2020

The Committee agreed by consensus to approve the minutes of the October 27, 2020 BUUSD Curriculum Committee Meeting.

5. New Business

5.1 Introduction of New Assistant Superintendent of Instruction

Ms. Simmons introduced herself and provided a brief overview of her background and experience.

5.2 Review of Fall Assessments

A document titled BUUSD Data Review – Fall 2020 – Mathematics and Literacy was distributed. The document was displayed on-screen for presentation. Ms. Farnham advised that assessment data includes both growth and performance. The overview began with math assessment results, and it was noted that one of the goals was to assess how students fared going into this academic year, based on comparisons from their base in January 2020. Mid-year assessments were performed in January 2020, prior to the switch to remote learning. Due to remote learning, Post Assessments (normally administered in June) were not performed. The June Post Assessments were administered this past fall and results of that data are being presented this evening. Ms. Farnham provided a brief overview of the types of math assessments (PNOA – Primary Number Observation Assessment for grades K – 1, and CCSS-M standards for grades 2 – 8).

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Ms. Dean will provide an overview of math results and Ms. Fredericks will provide an overview of literacy results. Ms. Dean provided a brief overview of the subcategories of PNOA testing. Ms. Dean provided clarification that the assessments administered in the fall of 2020, are the assessments that would have been administered in June, thus 1st grade students were given the Post Assessment for Kindergarten, 2nd graders were given the Post Assessment for 1st grade, etc... The exception to this is for 5th grade students. There was no post assessment for 4th graders going into 5th grade. Those students received the 'beginning' fraction assessment. As pre and post assessment data is not available for these students, there is no data reporting for that cohort. Ms. Dean reviewed the data, by grade, noting information relating to gains and losses per grade. Ms. Dean believes most of the data is close to what was anticipated. It was noted that the data being presented represents only those students who were assessed in January and in the fall of 2020 (any student who did not participate in both assessments, has been removed from the data). In response to a query, Ms. Dean advised that the assessments were the standard assessments given every year. Additionally, in response to a query, Ms. Dean reported that this data has not been compared to the assessments from the previous year (a comparison that could have identified progress during a full in-person year vs. progress during COVID). Ms. Fredericks provided an overview of Literacy Assessments, including assessment schedules for reading and writing for grades K – 8, as well as the types of assessments (Primary Observation Assessments, Fountas and Pinnell, Renaissance: Star 360, sentence dictation, and writing prompts). The presentation included data by grade for the fall assessments, and a year-to-year comparison (2019 – 2020 vs. 2020 – 2021), with the most remarkable difference being with the 6th grade cohort, that had significantly more students in the 'below standard' range. The 8th grade cohort shows a slight increase in proficiency. Mrs. Pompei queried regarding interventions being put in place to assist students with improving proficiency. Ms. Fredericks advised that it is hoped that mid-year literacy assessments will show that interventions are working. Ms. Dean advised that math intervention is struggling, and it is believed that participation by students was lacking. Ms. Dean advised that they are currently only hearing back from 50% of those students who are being offered intervention. Of those who have responded, not many are opting not to participate. Ms. Dean advised that there are also scheduling difficulties. Mr. Wells queried regarding how intervention is provided for students found to be significantly below grade level. Ms. Fredericks advised that targeted literacy assessments help identify the focus skills that students are struggling with the most. Teachers, interventionists, and IEP teachers make efforts to support students in learning the most crucial focus skills, to assist students with gaining ground. Ms. Farnham advised that for math, students are supposed to receive both on-grade level instruction, and 'just-right' level instruction, and are trying to make changes to assure that both of these levels of instruction are provided, though under hybrid instruction, it has become more difficult. It was noted that standards are not lowered because of the hybrid learning environment.

6. Old Business

6.1 Update on Curriculum Leadership Roles and Responsibilities

Mr. Wells advised that he, Ms. Simmons, and Mrs. Marold are working on defining the roles & responsibilities, and reviewing the job descriptions. In the future, Mr. Wells will be presenting to the board; models that are more efficient and streamlined, and are based on models other supervisory unions are using.

6.2 Update on DRAFT Annual Work Plan

It was noted that there was no updated draft in the packet. Mr. Wells displayed the current Work Plan. Mrs. Pompei recapped that at the previous meeting it was announced that Mr. Wells and Ms. Simmons would be working on this plan, defining what would be presented and discussed at Curriculum Committee meetings. Mr. Wells queried regarding the topic of Equity. Ms. Simmons advised that she and Mr. Wells have met with two Vermont Law School students (seniors) who are willing to work with the District to develop an equity policy, procedures, professional development, and creation of an Equity/Racial Justice, and Inclusion Task Force. Discussion of this item will probably not occur until January or February, as there is still much work to be performed.

6.2.1 The Barre Writes Contest

Ms. Fredericks provided an update to the committee, advising that she has been assisting with coordination of the Barre Writes Contest, in conjunction with Vermont Reads. Students have been participating in this contest for approximately 10 years. The contest helps students with self-awareness, and self-confidence. Students also have the option of submitting a piece of artwork to go with their written work. Given the hybrid learning environment, Ms. Fredericks is pleased with the number of participants. There is a video of the Awards Ceremony. Mr. Allen is editing the video and it will be posted on the web site.

6.2.2 Vermont Reads

Ms. Fredericks advised that Aldrich Library is also participating in this project and have some grant funded books that students and teachers are able to access.

6.2.3 Technology Use in Hybrid & Remote Instruction

Emmanuel Ajanma, Director of Technology advised that he has data to share with the Committee, and began a presentation titled Technology Tools Usage Data – In Hybrid and Remote Instruction. The presentation was displayed on-screen. A copy of the presentation is included in the meeting packet addendum. Mr. Ajanma advised that usage of technology tools has increased significantly during the pandemic. Mr. Ajanma advised regarding general activity/usage by students, with the most popular days being Mondays and Tuesdays, peaking again on Thursdays and Fridays. The majority of student on-line time is allocated to education, with a small percentage being allocated to 'other activity'. Mr. Ajanma provided comparison data for July through

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November for the years 2018, 2019, and 2020, including the usage of Google Classroom. The total number of Google Classrooms has increased from 366 to 825. Mr. Ajanma provided information relating to district-wide student engagement with Google Tools (Classroom, Meet, Drive, and Docs) for the last 30 days, and advised that the usage should perhaps be higher, though it is noted that younger students utilize different on-line platforms/applications. The data indicates that usage is growing during the 30 day timeframe. Mr. Ajanma also provided data regarding other tools with high usage. Data includes the number of users and sessions. The application Seesaw has seen very impressive use by students and parents. Other high use applications include; Flipgrid, Prodigy Math Game, Freckle Education, Zearn, Cool Math Games, Pear Deck, ck-12, Scratch, and Edpuzzle.

Mike Martin (BCEMS Technology Integrationist) advised that remote instruction is very different than in-person learning, and advised regarding learning goals, objectives, and various ways in which remote instruction is being provided.

Andrea Moore (BTMES Technology Integrationist) advised that students struggle when there are too many different apps to learn. Ms. Moore recommends that teachers select/use just a couple of apps that work well with their curriculum, learn those apps well and stick with using just those few applications.

6.2.4 Math Instruction in Hybrid & Remote Instruction

No Discussion.

7. Other Business

Ms. Farrell provided a brief update on the Mission, Vision, Strategic Planning initiative, and advised that perhaps the Equity Task Force may wish to work collaboratively with the M/V/SP Design Team.

Mrs. Pompei advised that more of the extended remote learning plan will be presented at the Board meeting 12/03/2020

8. Items for Future Agendas

- Update From Regional Advisory Board (CVCC) – January
- Progress Update and Planning for Students Needing Intervention - January
- Vision, Mission, Strategic Planning Group Update - January
- Discussion of Transition from Remote Learning to In-School Learning – Including Assessment and Interventions - January

Mr. Boltin would like to see a very specific plan (with dates – day 1, day 2, etc.) for the transition back to in-person learning, including assessments and implementation of interventions to get students caught up.

- Anti-racism Curriculum in Our Schools – including Plans for an Equity Audit (possibly January or February)

9. Next Meeting Date

The December 22, 2020 meeting has been cancelled.

The next meeting is Tuesday, January 26, 2021 at 5:30 p.m. via video conference - Google Meet.

10. Adjournment

The Committee Agreed by consensus to adjourn at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Andrea Poulin