

**BARRE UNIFIED UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT
POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING**
Via Video Conference – Google Meet
May 17, 2021 – 5:30 p.m.

MINUTES

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Chris Parker, Chair (BT)
Abigayle Smith, Vice-Chair (BC)
Tim Boltin (BC)
Andrew McMichael (BC Community Member)
Jon Valsangiacomo – (BT Community Member)

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:

OTHER BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

ADMINISTRATORS AND STAFF PRESENT:

David Wells, Superintendent
Mary Ellen Simmons, Assistant Superintendent of Instruction
Luke Aither, SHS Assistant Principal
Pierre Laflamme, BCEMS Assistant Principal
Erica Pearson, BTMES Principal

GUESTS:

| | | | |
|-----------------|------------------------|---------------|-------------------|
| Norman Carter | Colin Crawford-Stemple | Mary Gaudreau | Stefanie Kingzett |
| Yoko Kishishita | Milo Loranger | | |

1. Call to Order

The Chair, Ms. Parker, called the Monday, May 17, 2021, meeting to order at 5:34 p.m., which was held via video conference – Google Meet.

2. Additions and/or Deletions to the Agenda

The Committee agreed to discuss Agenda Item 5.4.3 Policy (C43) out of order (after Agenda Item 5.3).

3. Public Comment

Student Milo Loranger, addressed the Board, requesting permission to raise a Black Lives Matter flag on school property. Mr. Loranger advised regarding why he believes it is important to raise a Black Lives Matter flag, advising of his experience when he participated in the Equity Webinars, noting that some of the discussion was hard to watch/listen to. Mr. Loranger believes there should be no racism in the schools and that students should feel safe. Ms. Parker advised that because raising a BLM flag is not related to policy, she will bring this matter to the Board.

4. Approval of Minutes

4.1 Approval of Minutes – March 15, 2021 Policy Committee Meeting

Mrs. Poulin has reviewed the video of the March 15, 2021 meeting, and advised that she will amend the minutes to include more information relating to policies which were to be forwarded to the Superintendent for legal vetting. Additionally, Mrs. Poulin advised regarding misinformation (that not all policies adopted in 06/2019 had necessarily reviewed) that was on the video, and which has been shared at multiple meetings. It was clarified that the large batch of policies that were adopted by the Board in June 2019, was the result of a planned, well thought out, thorough and meticulous review process of all policies. Mrs. Poulin read an excerpt from the 05/09/2019 Board Meeting Minutes, where it was noted that the BSU was in a good position (policy-wise) for the upcoming consolidation of the District, and Mr. Pandolfo was lauded for spearheading this effort.

On a motion by Mr. McMichael, seconded by Mr. Boltin, the Committee unanimously voted to approve as amended, the Minutes of the March 15, 2021 Policy Committee Meeting, and to approve as presented, the Minutes of the April 26, 2021 Policy Committee Meeting.

4.2 Approval of Minutes – April 26, 2021 Policy Committee Meeting

Approved under Agenda Item 4.1.

5. New Business

5.1 Policy Edits

No discussion.

5.2 Review of BUUSD Policy Manual Index

A copy of the BUUSD Policy Manual Index (dated 05/12/21) was distributed.

The Superintendent advised that other than what is noted on the Index, there is nothing new to discuss.

5.3 VSBA Model Policies

A copy of the VSBA Model Policy Index was distributed.

The Superintendent noted there was nothing new to discuss.

5.4 Policies to Discuss

5.4.1 District Equity Policy (C29) (Recommended)

A copy of the draft policy was distributed.

Mr. Aither advised that this policy is recommended for adoption by the VSBA. Mr. Aither would like to discuss the implementation section, (advising that it is general enough that it can be left in), and the 'monthly status report'. After brief discussion, the Committee agreed that 'monthly' should be changed to 'quarterly'. Mr. Carter advised that he believes this policy is critical, and that he is aware of many instances that have occurred that have negatively impacted students and staff. Ms. Kishishita echoed Mr. Carter's sentiment advising that she is very happy to see that this policy will be put in place. Mr. Crawford-Stemple echoed sentiments expressed by Mr. Carter and Ms. Kishishita, and he thanked those involved in implementing this policy.

On a motion by Ms. Smith, seconded by Mr. Boltin, the Committee unanimously voted to amend policy C29 as discussed and to present the amended policy (C29) to the Board for approval of a First Reading. Mr. McMichael was not present for the vote.

5.4.2 Anti-Racism Policy (C44) (New Local Policy)

A copy of Draft 2 of the Anti-Racism Policy was distributed.

A copy of Draft Anti-Racism Procedures was distributed.

Ms. Simmons provided an overview of the process involved in bringing this draft policy to the Policy Committee. The process involved holding three community forums which included a very diverse group of individuals. Approximately 50 individuals were involved, with the majority believing this draft policy was appropriate. The draft presented tonight is draft 2, and includes amendments based on feedback. Mr. Wells stressed the great amount of community involvement in the crafting of this policy. Members of the SHS Equity Team are very pleased that this policy has been created and will be presented to the Board.

Ms. Simmons provided a historical accounting of the meetings held as part of this initiative. Ms. Pearson queried regarding whether or not the defined procedures override the State mandate for HHB (Hazing, Harassment, and Bullying), and asked if the draft policy has been vetted by legal counsel. Mr. Wells noted that this draft has not been vetted by legal counsel. Vetting of the policy is slated for after the Committee has reviewed the policy and provided feedback. Additionally, Mr. Wells advised that it would be beneficial to cross-walk this policy with other policies, e.g. the HHB Policy. It was confirmed that a digital community forum was held (for the review of drafts 1 and 2). Ms. Simmons advised that she is in possession of the feedback submitted digitally. Some of the feedback could be considered sensitive and/or confidential. Ms. Simmons will redact personally identifiable information prior to sharing feedback. Mr. Valsangiacomo noted that the policy contains many footnotes, which is contrary to a previous decision to remove footnotes from policies. Additionally, Mr. Valsangiacomo noted that this policy is being drafted utilizing a non-standard process (involving outside consultants and a separate committee), and questioned the timing on having the draft vetted by legal counsel. Mr. Valsangiacomo recommends that the BUUSD attorney review the draft as soon as possible, prior to lengthy discussion.

Ms. Parker advised that Mrs. Spaulding has contacted her with questions related to this policy draft. Mr. Aither advised that there are some overlaps between this policy and the Equity Policy. Ms. Smith suggested that someone review this policy against existing policies to assure that this policy can be adopted/implemented smoothly, without overlap or being contradictory to other existing policies. Ms. Simmons volunteered to complete this comparison work. Mr. Wells will ask legal counsel to compare this policy to other existing policies. Mr. Wells advised that the Board should be provided ample time to review the 'final' draft policy, prior to discussion at a Board meeting. Mr. Aither suggested that the policy include references to other policies when appropriate (e.g. a complaint about perceived racist instructional materials, may need to be addressed under the Complaints Against Instructional Materials Policy). Ms. Parker advised that Mrs. Spaulding wants the training portion of the policy/procedures to include Board training. Mrs. Spaulding has also requested that the policy/procedures be modified such that the Superintendent reports-out annually rather than every two years. Mr. Aither suggested reporting be quarterly to align with the Equity Policy.

On a motion by Ms. Smith, seconded by Mr. Boltin, the Committee unanimously voted to direct the Superintendent to have the draft policy legally vetted prior to being returned to the Committee.

5.4.3 Sexually Transmitted Infection (STI) and Pregnancy Prevention Equity Policy (C43)

A copy of the policy was distributed. Mr. Aither advised that a law going into effect on 07/01/21 (Title 16, Section 132) will require that a minor change be made to the second paragraph of the policy. Mr. Aither read a portion of the law, which is in conflict with the

policy. Mr. Aither suggested that three words be added (to specify that parents of middle school students can elect to withdraw permission for their children to receive condoms). The policy pertains to middle and high school only. The proposed change will put the policy in compliance with the law. This policy was written/adopted in 2017 based on a letter received from Harry Chen, MD (Commissioner, Department of Health) and Rebecca Holcombe (Secretary of Education). Mr. Valsangiacomo recalls when the policy was written, the BSU was advised that there was a high number of STIs in the state. Ms. Pearson advised that the BUUSD identifies middle school as grades 5 – 8, and she believes the policy pertains to grades 7 – 12. Mr. Wells advised that results from the most recent Youth Risk Behavior Survey indicate that the BUUSD has a statistically higher number of students who are sexually active.

On a motion Mr. Boltin, seconded by Ms. Smith, the Committee unanimously voted to approve the language changes as presented and agreed to present the amended policy (C43) to the Board for approval of a First Reading.

6. Old Business

Ms. Parker advised of discussion that occurred at the 04/26/21 meeting, and queried regarding the status of the policies that were amended and forwarded to Mr. Wells for legal vetting. Mr. Wells advised that he has no update at this time, but he will have the policies (F26, C23, and B22) vetted by legal counsel prior to the next Policy Committee Meeting. It was also noted that the Policy Committee has not addressed 'retaliation' in Policy B22 (as requested by the Board). Policy B22 – Complaints About Personnel, will be added to the June agenda, for discussion of the possibility of adding a section relating to retaliation. Legal vetting of this policy will be postponed until after that discussion is held.

7. Other Business

None.

8. Future Agenda Items

- B5 – Employee Unlawful Harassment (Required)
- B21 – Professional Development (Recommended)
- B22 – Complaints About Personnel (Recommended) – discuss retaliation, then send to legal
- D32 – Selection of Instruction Materials and Sensitive Issues (Consider)
- F26 – Security Cameras (Recommended)
- Review of Prioritization List

9. Next Meeting Date

The next meeting is Monday, June 21, 2021 at 5:30 p.m. via video conference.

10. Adjournment

On a motion by Mr. McMichael, seconded by Mr. Boltin the Committee unanimously agreed to adjourn at 6:43 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Andrea Poulin