

**BARRE UNIFIED UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT  
REGULAR BOARD MEETING**

September 23, 2021 at 5:30 p.m.

**In-Person Option:** Barre City Elementary & Middle School James Taffel Library  
50 Parkside Terrace, Barre, VT 05641

**Virtual Option:** Click this link to join the meeting remotely:  
Meeting ID: [meet.google.com/vxi-arvi-mgb](https://meet.google.com/vxi-arvi-mgb)  
Phone Numbers: (US)+1 929-777-4801 PIN: 769 689 006#

**Please Note:** If you attend the meeting remotely you must state your name for the record to satisfy the Open Meeting Law

**AGENDA**

- 5:30 1. Call to Order
- 5:35 2. Additions or Deletions with Motion to Approve the Agenda
- 5:37 3. Comments for Items Not on the Agenda
  - 3.1. Public Comment
  - 3.2. Student Voice
- 5:42 4. Consent Agenda
  - 4.1. Meeting Minutes -September 9, 2021
- 5:44 5. Current Business
  - 5.1. New Hires **[ACTION]**
  - 5.2. Resign/Retire
  - 5.3. MOU Regarding Payroll 2021-2022 **[ACTION]**
  - 5.4. Recommendation on Policy (F20) Fiscal Management and General Financial Accountability **[ACTION]**
  - 5.5. First Reading Student Attendance (C7) **[ACTION]**
  - 5.6. Committee Structure
  - 5.7. COVID Update
- 7:00 6. Old Business
  - 6.1. Finalize Board Engagement Document
  - 6.2. Superintendent Timeline Search Update
    - 6.2.1. AOE Request to Open Search Request **[ACTION]**
    - 6.2.2. Review and Approval of Superintendent Job Description **[ACTION]**
- 7:20 7. Other Business/Round Table
- 7:30 8. Future Agenda Items
  - 8.1. Listening Session regarding Surplus Funds October 14, 2021
- 7:40 9. Next Meeting Date: Regular Board Meeting, October 14, 2021 at 5:30 pm
- 7:42 10. Executive Session
  - 10.1. Employee Compensation
  - 10.2. Employee Contract Issue
- 11. Adjournment

## **PARKING LOT OF ITEMS**

- Surplus Funds
- Enrollment Update
- Breakage Report
- Evaluation: Staffing, Enrollment, Facilities, etc.
- Building Capacity at each building
- Committee Structure
- Critical Race Theory
- Anti-Racism Policy
- Legal Counsel Review - Policy (B20) Personnel Recruitment, Selection, Appointment and Background Check
- Use of Facilities: Consistent Fee Schedule and Rental Application Form
- Change in Articles of Agreement
- Negotiations/Personnel Committee

## **MEETING NORMS**

1. Keep the best interest of the school and children in mind, while balancing the needs of the taxpayers
2. Make decisions based on clear information
3. Honor the board's decisions
4. Keep meetings short and on time
5. Stick to the agenda
6. Keep remarks short and to the point
7. Everyone gets a chance to talk before people take a second turn
8. Respect others and their ideas

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## BARRE UNIFIED UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD MEETING

BUUSD Central Office and Via Video Conference – Google Meet  
September 9, 2021 - 5:30 p.m.

### MINUTES

#### **BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Sonya Spaulding (BC) – Chair  
Alice Farrell (BT) – Vice Chair  
Guy Isabelle (At-Large) - Clerk  
Gina Akley (BT)  
Renee Badeau (BT)  
Tim Boltin (BC)  
Chris Parker (BT)  
Sarah Pregent (BC)  
Abigayle Smith (BC)

#### **BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:**

#### **ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT:**

Chris Hennessey, Superintendent  
Jody Emerson, Director Central Vermont Career Center  
Carol Marold, Director of Human Resources  
Lisa Perreault, Business Manager  
Mary Ellen Simmons, Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment  
Brenda Waterhouse, SHS Principal

#### **GUESTS PRESENT:**

Dave Delcore – Times Argus	Nora Duane	Josh Howard	Prudence Krasofski	Colleen Kresco
Dave Lawrence	Allison Mills	Terry Reil	Brian Wilkin	

**As the meeting was held via video conferencing, a roll-call vote was taken for each action item. Each Board Member was individually polled and voted to approve all motions that are listed as unanimously approved.**

#### **1. Call to Order**

The Chair, Mrs. Spaulding, called the Thursday, September 9, 2021, Regular meeting to order at 5:34 p.m., which was held at the BUUSD Central Office and via video conference.

It was announced that due to internet issue, the physical location of the meeting was moved from BCEMS to the BUUSD Central Office. Mrs. Spaulding provided an overview of Meeting Norms and Participation Guidelines.

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

Add 5.9 COVID Update – this will be a recurring Agenda item.

Delete 11.1 – Compensation of Personnel (will be kept as a placeholder).

It was noted that the next Communications Committee Meeting has been moved from 10/07/21 to 10/06/21.

**On a motion by Mrs. Pregent, seconded by Ms. Parker, the Board unanimously voted to approve the Agenda as amended. Mrs. Farrell and Ms. Smith were not present for the vote.**

#### **3. Public Comment for Items Not on the Agenda**

##### **3.1 Public Comment**

A community member commented regarding community members' participation on Committees.

A community member expressed concern regarding students not being allowed to use seatbelts on buses and the reasons behind the decision for students not to use seatbelts. Mrs. Spaulding advised that Committee structure will be discussed at a Board Meeting in the near future, and advised that she or Mr. Hennessey will respond to the community member regarding seat belt concerns.

##### **3.2 Student Voice**

None.

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## 4. Consent Agenda

### 4.1 Approval of Minutes – August 26, 2021 Regular Meeting

**On a motion by Mr. Isabelle, seconded by Mrs. Akley, the Board unanimously voted to approve the Minutes of the August 26, 2021 Regular Meeting. Ms. Smith was not present for the vote.**

## 5. Current Business

### 5.1 New Hires

The resume and BUUSD Notification of Employment Status Form for Kathryn Matthews (BCEMS Nurse) was distributed. There were no questions from the Board.

**On a motion by Mr. Boltin, seconded by Mrs. Farrell, the Board unanimously voted to approve the hiring of Kathryn Matthews. Ms. Smith was not present for the vote.**

### 5.2 Resignations/Retirements

A letter of resignation from Charles ‘Chad’ Olivieri was distributed. Mr. Hennessey advised that this recently hired candidate rescinded his letter of acceptance and will be working in another district.

### 5.3 SHS Assistant Coaches

Mr. Hennessey advised regarding the decision not to pay assistant coaches. Difficult choices were made when drafting a budget for the third vote. The amount of the budget reduction is \$18,000. Mr. Hennessey advised that many districts do not pay assistant coaches, but that assistant coaches are valued individuals. This budget cut impacts three sports (Girls Hockey, Boys Hockey, and Football – a total of five positions) at SHS. Mrs. Spaulding read a letter to the Board from Diane Solomon, who has strong thoughts regarding paying assistant coaches, and given the anticipated surplus, would like to see pay reinstated for assistant coaches. A community member expressed concern regarding difficulty finding individuals to serve in assistant coaching positions, noting that there is a very large time commitment involved, and he has safety concerns, as well as concerns that valuable ice time cannot be used efficiently unless an assistant coach is present. Lengthy discussion was held including: concern that some assistant coaches have been paid, and some were volunteers, possible loss of student participation in sports, safety concerns, concern that coaches and assistant coaches were not part of budget discussions when the decision was made to remove this item from the budget, concern that assistant coaches were not directly notified (by school personnel) of this budget reduction, a suggestion that assistant coaches be paid this year and that this issue be revisited for the FY23 budget, a query regarding whether or not assistant coaches are considered paid employees (W2, or 1099MISC), whether or not the Master Agreement has information pertaining to assistant coaches (Appendix B addresses this matter), equity, and a fair pay structure for all assistant coaches. It was reiterated that the budget reduction does not signify that these positions are not wanted or needed. Assistant coaches are necessary and valued. It was noted that this item is on tonight’s Agenda for discussion purposes only and that no action will be taken this evening.

### 5.4 Superintendent Search Timeline

A document titled ‘Superintendent Search Timeline’ was distributed.

The document is a basic timeline (13 weeks), and is not definitive as far as the dates listed. If the search starts by mid-October, the hiring cycle could be completed before the end of the year. This Superintendent Search is a general ‘new’ search. The Board agreed to take the first formal steps in September. The two required steps are; 1. To approve the ‘charge’ and 2. To seek Board approval for the Board Chair to sign a letter to the Secretary of Education (requesting permission to open a Superintendent Search). This item will be added to the September 23, 2021 Agenda.

### 5.5 Food Service Renewal Approval

A copy of a letter from George Carone (Lexington Independents) to Lisa Perreault (dated 08/24/21) was distributed.

Mrs. Perreault advised that the Food Service contract needs to be renewed annually. Board approval is required. Mrs. Perreault advised that the District does not contribute to the Food Service Program, which is self-supporting, and has actually resulted in a profit in recent years.

**On a motion by Mrs. Farrell, seconded by Mrs. Pregent, the Board unanimously voted to approve the annual renewal of the Lexington Independents food contract, and the meal increases as proposed.**

### 5.6 Woodchip Contract RFP Recommendation

A document titled ‘BUUSD Woodchip RFP Results, 2-yr. contract’ was distributed. It is the Superintendent’s recommendation to contract with LimLaw’s Pulpwood, Inc. Mr. Hennessey provided a brief overview of the recommendation and answered questions from the Board.

**On a motion by Mr. Isabelle, seconded by Mrs. Akley, the Board unanimously voted to accept the Superintendent’s recommendation and agreed to contract with LimLaw’s Pulpwood, Inc. for woodchip acquisition.**

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## 5.7 Fuel Oil/Propane RFP Recommendation

A document titled 'BUUSD Fuel Oil and Propane' was distributed. It is the Superintendent's recommendation to contract with Irving. Mr. Hennessey provided a brief overview of the recommendation.

**On a motion by Mr. Isabelle, seconded by Mrs. Akley, the Board unanimously voted to accept the Superintendent's recommendation and agreed to contract with Irving as the District's vendor for fuel oil and propane.**

## 5.8 Board Engagement Document

A document titled 'How to Engage with the BUUSD Board' was distributed.

Mrs. Farrell advised that the Communications Committee discussed the document and did not have any significant changes. The document is being provided to the Board for feedback. Mrs. Spaulding advised regarding the reason this document is being created. Mrs. Spaulding requested that Board Members provide input/feedback to herself or Mrs. Farrell. Mr. Allen will be advised regarding updates to the document and the document will be presented for approval at a future meeting.

## 5.9 COVID Update

Mr. Hennessey provided an overview of 'where we are', and actions anticipated for the future. Mr. Hennessey noted that the decision to close BTMES on 09/08/21 was a difficult decision, and he appreciates the hardship it puts on parents. The decision was made in the best interest of students and staff. Contact tracing is very complex. There were three positive cases and almost 200 'close contacts'. The Department of Health has provided contact tracing guidelines, which are quite specific. The number of statewide cases in schools is much higher than it was last year at this time (81 vs. 5). The District's goal is to be up and running for full time in-person learning, with as few restrictions as possible. This year, no COVID guidelines have been provided by the AOE, and it is not anticipated that they will be issuing any guidelines soon. Secretary French and Governor Scott made it clear in a recent press conference, that there is no move towards recognizing remote learning options. Remote options were only approved last year because a State of Emergency had been declared. In response to a query, it was noted that any school closures will need to be made up (the same as with 'snow days'), even if remote instruction is provided on those days. With no State of Emergency, attendance must follow statute. Frustration was voiced regarding perceived inflexibility and lack of guidance from State Government, and that there is no State of Emergency in place. School closures or needing to keep students home (because of exposure) is causing great hardships for families/parents. Mr. Hennessey encourages individuals to reach out to governmental representatives. Mrs. Spaulding advised that given the current climate, she recommends continuing virtual meetings, with the required in-person portion of all Board and Committee meetings held at the BUUSD Central Office (rather than in any of the schools). Based on the number of school closure days at each school, it is possible that the 'last day of school' will differ for each school. Concern was raised regarding teacher contracts, which dictate the number of teaching days. If teachers are asked to teach remotely (during closures) and the remote days do 'not count', teachers will be asked to work more days than they are contractually obligated to.

## 6. Old Business

### 6.1 Surplus Funds

A document titled 'Superintendent's Recommendation for Use of Surplus Funds – Revised 08/26/21' was distributed.

A community member requested that a public forum be held for the purpose of discussing use of surplus funds.

Mrs. Spaulding stressed that in the past, surplus monies have been allocated to specific funds, not specific projects.

Conversations/decisions on surplus funds have stalled (no action) because discussion centers on specific projects, not the allocation to specific funds. Mrs. Spaulding would like the Board to make a decision regarding where funds should be moved, and hold discussions on specific projects at a later date. It was noted that when monies are allocated to the Capital Improvement fund, those funds must be used for Capital Improvements. Lengthy discussion was held, including; the possibility of moving more funds to the Tax Stabilization Fund, an overview of how the Tax Stabilization Funds are utilized (funds are put towards revenue, to off-set expenses, not used for 'new' budget lines), the recommendation to put \$2.4 million dollars (of the projected \$3.2 million dollar surplus) into the Capital Improvement Fund, concern that having a large surplus may prove problematic during negotiations, factors that need to be considered (possible HVAC improvements, and the current Expense Note, which expires on 12/17/21), the possibility of holding a public forum, the importance of using surplus funds for 'one time' expenses, not expenses that cannot be sustained in the future, the feasibility of hiring an independent financial consultant to assist with determining how to use surplus funds, a potential recommendation from auditor Tyler Kimberly (next week), and results from next week's Facilities Committee meeting. This item will continue to be on the Agenda until a decision can be made. A 'listening session' may be added to a future Board meeting (for the purpose of receiving public feedback on this matter).

### 6.2 Enrollment

A document titled 'September 2021 District Enrollment/Staffing' was distributed.

A document titled 'Home Study Report (AOE provided data)' was distributed.

Mr. Hennessey advised regarding some errors on the staffing report (grades 5 – 8 have 4 teachers each, not 6 or 7).

A community member queried regarding the reasons behind declining enrollment (students going to private schools, home schooling, moving?). It was noted that student counts have been declining over the years. Sometime in the future, Mrs. Spaulding would like to

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hold discussions with Mrs. Perreault and Mrs. Pregent regarding the impact declining enrollment has on the budget. It will be important to convey this information to community members. Mr. Hennessey noted that there has been a significant increase in home schooling, which is a direct result of COVID. The schools are currently in the process of enrolling students. BCEMS currently has no registrar. The BTMES registrar has been assisting BCEMS. It was announced at a recent Superintendent's meeting, that schools around the state are dealing with three common issues; condition of facilities, the COVID crisis, and declining enrollment. These three issues are having a huge impact on school finances across the state. It was noted that CVCC has the highest enrollment in its history. Mr. Hennessey answered questions from the Board, and confirmed that there are only 2 outside placed students from BCEMS. This reduction in outside placements is the direct result of the implementation of Restorative Classrooms at BCEMS. Mr. Hennessey is very proud of this program, which has changed the culture at the school and has allowed students to remain within the BCEMS community.

## **7. Committee Reports**

### **7.1 Superintendent Report**

A copy of the Superintendent's Report (dated 09/03/21) was distributed.

Mr. Hennessey had nothing to add to his report, other than to stress his concerns over 'bullet #3', regarding staffing shortages. There were no questions from the Board.

### **7.2 Building Reports: SHS, CVCC, BCEMS, and BTMES**

Building Reports from SHS, CVCC, BCEMS, and BTMES were distributed.

A CVCC Governance Meeting was held on September 7, 2021. Discussion included shifting the timeline to accommodate a vote in March of 2022 (Town Meeting Day), for a change in governance structure (to a new district effective July 1, 2022). It will be important to educate the Barre community, as well as the other sending school communities.

Brief discussion was held regarding whether or not principals should be in attendance at Board meetings. Mr. Hennessey advised that the goal is to review the nature of the meetings, let the reports speak for themselves, avoid controversy, and address matters in a planned way (by allowing administrators to prepare in advance – to answer questions on specific topics). Mr. Hennessey advised that only 2 of the 10 school districts in the Winooski Valley Superintendent's Group have administrators come to meetings. One of those two districts is looking to change that practice. Mr. Hennessey advised that if he cannot answer questions from the Board, he will contact administrators for additional information. Mrs. Spaulding believes the VSBA also agrees with not having administrators at meetings.

### **7.3 Communications Committee**

The Committee met on September 2, 2021. Discussion centered mainly on discussion of strengthening communication with all community members, including those who do not have direct contact/involvement with the schools. Additional discussion included 'back to school' communication and a review of the Communication with the Board document.

The Thursday, October 7, 2021 meeting has been rescheduled.

The next meeting is Wednesday, October 6, 2021 at 5:30 p.m. at the BUUSD Central Office and via video conference.

### **7.4 Finance Committee**

The Committee met on September 7, 2021. Discussion included an update on ESSER Funds, including the survey and public forum, FY21 year-end projections, a review of an updated Comparative Tax Calculation Report, and an update on the State mandated PowerSchool e-Finance system. Districts who have converted to this system report that it is inefficient and lacks necessary features. The next meeting will include FY23 budget development.

The next meeting is Tuesday, October 5, 2021 at 5:30 p.m. at the BUUSD Central Office and via video conference.

### **7.5 Facilities & Transportation Committee**

The Committee met on August 11, 2021.

The next meeting is Monday, September 13, 2021 at 5:30 p.m. at the BUUSD Central Office and via video conference.

### **7.6 Policy Committee**

The Committee met on August 16, 2021. Discussion included a review of the Policy Index, an overview of policies that have been automatically rescinded as of the end of the COVID State of Emergency, and review of Policy F20 - Fiscal Management and General Financial Accountability. This policy, in part relates to the threshold for expenses/projects that need to go out to bid (old threshold \$15,000, new threshold \$40,000). The Committee is recommending that the threshold requiring Board approval remain at \$15,000 (which differs from the threshold that requires bids). The law pertains only to the threshold for bids. Boards determine the threshold for projects they wish to approve. The recommendation to keep the policy as is will be presented at a future Board meeting. Additional discussion included a review of a draft Electronic Surveillance policy.

The next meeting is Monday, September 20, 2021 at 5:30 p.m. at the BUUSD Central Office and via video conference.

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## 7.7 Curriculum Committee

The Committee met on August 17, 2021. Discussion included the FY21 / FY22 Work Plan, grant expenditures, and alignment of curriculum (vertically and horizontally)

The next meeting is Tuesday, September 28, 2021 at 5:30 p.m. at the BUUSD Central Office and via video conference.

## 7.8 Negotiations Committee

Negotiation sessions will resume next week. The next Committee meeting date is to be determined.

## 8. Other Business/Round Table

Mr. Isabelle advised that some Boards are making decisions to require vaccination of all students and staff. Though Mr. Isabelle is an advocate for vaccines, he does not want the BUUSD to mandate them at this time.

Mrs. Farrell believes that Barre is becoming a very diverse community, and may soon receive new community members. Mrs. Farrell thinks it would be a great opportunity for the school and students, to work with new community members.

Mrs. Spaulding reminded the Board that the VSBA Regional Meeting will be held on 10/07/21. The meeting will most likely be held virtually. Mrs. Spaulding encourages all Board Members to attend.

Mr. Hennessey thanked the Board for their support, noting that it is much appreciated.

## 9. Future Agenda Items

- COVID Update (recurring until further notice)
- Board Engagement
- Policy F20 - Fiscal Management and General Financial Accountability
- Committee Structure
- Superintendent Search Update
- Executive Session for Compensation of Personnel
  
- Student Enrollment (Parking Lot - TBD)
- Surplus Funds – Parking Lot – TBD)

## 10. Next Meeting Date

The next Regular meeting is Thursday, September 23, 2021 at 5:30 p.m. at the BUUSD Central Office and via video conference.

## 11. Executive Session as Needed

### ~~11.1 Compensation of Personnel~~

No items were proposed for discussion in Executive Session.

## 12. Adjournment

**On a motion by Mr. Isabelle, seconded by Mr. Boltin, the Board unanimously voted to adjourn at 8:25 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,  
*Andrea Poulin*

**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN BARRE UNIFIED UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT AND BARRE EDUCATORS ASSOCIATION REGARDING PAYROLL for 2021-2022**

Barre Unified Union **School District (“District”)** and Barre Educators Association (“Association”) enter this Memorandum of Understanding (“MOU”) regarding issues related to (“payroll for 2021-2022”) for licensed professionals.

The parties agree to the following:

1. For 2021-2022, teachers shall be paid by electronic deposit every other Thursday for a total of twenty-seven (27) equal pay periods.
2. Deductions shall occur in 26 of the 27 pay periods, with the last check in December 2021 being the check without deductions.

**Nothing in this MOU is intended to either diminish or enlarge any rights of the Association or the District.**

This MOU shall be operational upon signing by both represented parties and ratification by voting unit members **and approval by the District’s Board of School Directors**. This MOU will expire in full without precedent on June 30, 2022, unless extended by mutual written agreement.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
For the Association

\_\_\_\_\_  
For the District



**1<sup>ST</sup> READING: 5/9/2019  
2<sup>ND</sup> READING: 6/13/2019  
ADOPTED: 6/13/2019**

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## **FISCAL MANAGEMENT AND GENERAL FINANCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY**

### **1. POLICY**

It is the policy of the Barre Unified Union School District (BUUSD) (Barre Town, Barre City and Spaulding High School Union Districts, and Central Vermont Career Center) to manage its financial affairs using generally accepted accounting practices, providing appropriate accountability, and assuring compliance with guidelines published by the Agency of Education.

### **2. ADMINISTRATIVE RESPONSIBILITIES**

With the advice and consent of the Auditor of Accounts and the Secretary of Education, the Superintendent shall establish and maintain an accrual system of accounting for the proper control and reporting of school district finances and for stating the financial condition of the School Districts.

#### **Guidelines**

1. The approved budget will be the spending plan for the year. The Superintendent or his or her designee is authorized to make commitments on behalf of the organization. Expenditures in excess of \$15,000 require approval by the Board. The Superintendent shall assure that the district does not materially deviate from the approved spending plan, and shall notify the Board of significant overages in spending or significant reduction in revenue that might threaten adherence to the annual budget plan for the year.
2. The Superintendent or designee shall arrange with the BUUSD Board an annual audit of accounts by a certified public accountant.
3. The Superintendent shall be responsible for establishing a system of appropriate internal controls for the handling of all financial obligations and all funds and accounts.
4. The Superintendent or designee shall provide regular information to the board regarding the status of the organization relative to expenses and revenues according to a schedule established by the Board.
5. The Board shall, annually, authorize the Superintendent or his/her designee to “examine claims against the district for school expenses and draw orders for such as shall be allowed by it payable to the party entitles thereto.”
6. The bidding requirements of 16 V.S.A. §559 will be followed by the Board and its designees.

**BARRE UNIFIED UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT #097  
POLICY**

**CODE: C 7**

**1<sup>ST</sup> READING: 09/23/2021**

**2<sup>ND</sup> READING:**

**ADOPTED:**

## **STUDENT ATTENDANCE**

### **Policy**

It is the policy of the Barre Unified Union School District (BUUSD) to set high expectations for consistent student school attendance in accordance with Vermont law in order to facilitate and enhance student learning. Legal pupils between the ages of 6 and 16 and who are residents of the school district and non-resident pupils who enroll in school district schools are required to attend school for the full number of days that school is held unless they are excused from attendance as provided in state law. Students who are over the age of 16 are required to attend school continually for the full number of the school days for which they are enrolled, unless they are mentally or physically unable to continue, or are excused by the superintendent in writing.

Annually, the superintendent shall ensure that the school board appoints one or more individuals to serve as the truant officer, and shall ensure that appointment is recorded with the clerk of the school district.

The superintendent shall develop administrative rules and procedures to ensure the implementation of this policy.

### **Administrative Rules and Procedures**

The procedures will address the following issues and may include others as well:

- A. written excuses;
- B. tardiness;
- C. notification of parents/guardian;
- D. signing out of school;
- E. excessive absenteeism;
- F. homebound and hospitalized students;
- G. early dismissals;
- ~~H. homework assignments;~~
- ~~I. making up work~~

### **Administrative Responsibilities**

1. The principal is responsible for maintaining accurate and up-to-date records of student attendance.

2. The principal is responsible for assuring that the school has the appropriate family information that allows the school to contact the parent(s) or guardian(s) of all students whenever necessary.

# How to Engage with the BUUSD Board

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The BUUSD School Board members care deeply about public education and the well-being of our students, faculty, administrators, and community members. We recognize that there will be times when members of the public hope to share their opinion or understanding of the situation for our consideration. Below is an overview of avenues to reach out to the School Board -- and what to expect in terms of outcomes.

## **A few notes about the way the Board works...**

The School Board is a public body and is governed by many laws to assure that our work is both ethical and responsive to our community. A few of the biggest guiding principles include:

- [Open Meeting Law](#) -- which assures that all deliberation and decision-making occurs in the public eye -- at publicly warned meetings. This can slow things down -- since work can't get done behind the scenes -- but it also ensures that the Board's work and processes are transparent and that members can be held accountable.
- [Robert's Rules of Order](#) -- is the general procedural approach taken to run our meetings and conduct our business. This internationally recognized protocol creates a level of formality that can take some getting used to but is very effective in ensuring that the decisions of the Board reflect the will of the membership's majority.
- **State deadlines and rules** -- Drafting a budget for the district is one of the biggest charges of any school board, but deadlines and the detailed algorithms that will determine our local taxes are set by the state. Ironically, the state of Vermont rarely provides the local school boards with many of those details until well after they have legally required us to pass a budget!

## **Many types of communication**

This document is intended to provide guidance to those who are wishing to interact with the BUUSD Board so that they can choose the best course of action based on their desired outcome, and understand what to expect from the Board along the way. We have observed that there are four broad categories of interaction:

1. [Complaints](#)
2. [Feedback/Input](#)
3. [Requests for Information](#)
4. [Dialog](#)

Our hope is that by focusing on each type of interaction, community members will be able to figure out the best course of action to take for their needs.

# 1. Complaints

Alas, it is human nature to fall short of perfection, despite our aspirations otherwise. Over time, the district has developed a [Complaint procedure](#) to handle these issues. The basic gist is to first get in touch with the person closest to the situation. For example, if you would like to complain about something that happened to your child, reach out to your child's teacher first. If, after discussion, you can not resolve the situation to your satisfaction, then consider reaching out to their immediate supervisor -- in this case, the building principal; if it is still not resolved to your satisfaction, then you would reach out to the superintendent. At the other end of the spectrum, complaints about district-level decisions should be registered directly to the superintendent. If you are not sure who to contact regarding your complaint, a member of the Board might be able to advise you where to start or where to go next.

Although the Board cares deeply about the concerns of our constituents, it is inappropriate for individual Board members, or the Board as a whole, to get involved at the beginning of the complaint process. The primary reason for this (other than a general belief that those closest to a problem are the best equipped to deal with it) is that the Board is required to act in a quasi-judicial capacity in the event that complaints move through the process and are appealed to the Board. Getting involved in the complaint process too early limits (or sometimes eliminates entirely) our ability to act in this capacity as it may compromise our impartiality.

# 2. Feedback / Input

Community members often have opinions about matters under consideration by the Board and would like to share their perceptions, experiences, or ideas with Board members. Much of the time, sharing the input is enough of an action -- the community member is not in need of a response or major discussion, they just want to know the Board heard their statement. There are two primary means for this type of valuable, one-way interaction:

## A) E-mail

These days, email is one of the easiest ways to share your thoughts with the Board. You can email [individual members](#) or send a letter to all members at [buusd-board@buusd.org](mailto:buusd-board@buusd.org).

The Board distribution list is, in general, a one-way communication path designed for distributing information or feedback to the Board. The Board's standing procedure is that the Chair will respond to emails from constituents within 2 business days.

You may also get a response from an individual Board member after communicating in this way. It is important to remember that responses from individual Board members represent only that

one Board member's thoughts. Communicating with one Board member is not the same as communicating with the full Board.

Email is one of the areas where Board member activity can unwittingly bump up against the Open Meeting Law. As a practice, we work to avoid substantive conversations about Board business through email because the format takes it outside the public eye. So, while email is a great way to be heard by the Board, it is not an effective way to engage in dialog or to generate action from the Board (both of which need to take place in public). The Board can only act when it meets and is able to speak as a whole.

## B) Public Comment

Each Board meeting provides time for Public Comment at the beginning of the meeting for items not on the agenda or time for public comment during a specific agenda item. The Board's procedure allows up to 2 minutes per person.

Some people opt for public comment in addition to email and some opt for it instead of email. If you'd prefer to provide feedback or input to the Board verbally or in person or to have your opinion recorded as part of the meeting video, public comment is an effective way to do that.

Public comment is essentially a one-way communication channel. Board members will listen to public comment as it is offered, but won't respond to it during the meeting or engage in dialog or back and forth as part of the public comment process. This lack of response can feel impersonal or distant. However, there are important practical reasons that, over many discussions, the Board has elected to continue this approach: we have seen too many instances where an effort to respond to public comment ends up not only with many ruffled feathers but also derailing the agenda previously determined by the Board -- the agenda that was publicly warned and that our community expects us to follow in order to carry out the business of the district.

The Board's existing policy regarding public comment can be found [HERE](#); day-to-day procedures regarding public comment can be found [here](#).

## 3. Requests for Information

We typically see two broad types of requests for information, Public Records or Freedom of Information (FOI) requests and general information requests.

### A) Freedom of Information (FOI) Requests

Public Records requests (also referred to commonly as FOI Requests or FOIA requests) follow strict legal protocols and go through the Superintendent. If you are seeking public records related to *any* district matter, no matter which building it took place in or which employee or

volunteer it involves, the request procedure begins with a specific request sent to the Superintendent. Please note that these requests can only be made for existing documents and correspondence; new documents or reports will not be created for an FOI request.

## B) General Information Requests

Most requests that we receive are much more general and do not require public records requests. These are times when constituents would like to know more about a specific topic or more about specific actions the Board has taken. It is appropriate for community members to reach out to the Board -- not district staff -- to get this information, and the Chair will reply, usually within 2 business days.

So, if you have a specific question,

- The Chair will try to ascertain if your question has already been answered within work that has already been completed and if so, send you a link to that document. We find that the vast majority of questions have already been answered and posted on our website, but sometimes they are hard to find or were presented in an unexpected format. We'll connect you to the source -- you might have to watch a video or wade through a spreadsheet -- to answer your question.
- If we do not already have that information, neither the Board nor district staff will be able to provide it, unless the Board Chair or the Board as a whole tasks the administration or an outside contractor (say, our attorneys) to do so through an approved motion.
- Even if we do not have an answer and do not act to provide an answer, your questions or comments are included in our thinking, especially before we make decisions, whether we take obvious action or not. If you have a critique about a data point, for example, board members will consider whether they think your critique is valid or not and whether it is relevant or not prior to making any decisions.
- We are starting to incorporate answers to questions we hear many times into FAQ documents on the website. These evolve over time and are a great place to start!

## 4. Dialogue

There will be times when you will feel like registering your opinion with the Board is not enough. There are two major ways to engage at a deeper level: participate in community engagement events or work to get a topic on the Board's agenda.

### A) Community Engagement Activities

Prior to our merger in 2019, the nature of our small school districts made it easy for community members to feel like they were "engaging" with their school board. Since merging, one of the challenges we have been trying to address is how to -- not just hear from community members, but -- dialogue with them about matters of import to our district, and to do so while we are in the

process of shaping the Board's thinking and direction. Our policy on community engagement can be found [here](#).

At this time, there are several avenues we are using to try to work with the community to shape both our understandings in a more back-and-forth way: more frequent updates to Front Porch Forum and school newsletters about Board actions; improvements to the website so community members can easily find minutes, documents, etc.; brief surveys to check the pulse of the community about an issue; Q&A sessions to clarify information and/or figure out where better communication is needed; community conversations to sit down and hear multiple perspectives from many stakeholders.

Community engagement is useful in a number of ways to the Board. For example, public comments and emails to Board members often help us realize (among other things) points in our discussion or work that need further clarification and lead us to update our website, write an op-ed or host a Q&A event. We have used short surveys to enable us to hear from many people quickly and about a general topic and the results of the survey are available to all Board members as a point of reference as we explore that topic more deeply. Small group events help us to understand the nuance of perspectives (that on the surface might seem) either different from or similar to our own. We use community engagement in all its forms to deepen both our knowledge of and understanding about our larger community, knowing that many of our constituents may not choose to engage directly with the Board.

## B) Getting an item on the agenda

Using Roberts' Rules of Order, the work of the Board is established in its agenda. If an item is not on the agenda for a meeting, it will not be considered for discussion or action by the Board. This aligns well with the Open Meeting Law, too -- it means that the group will not be taking action on matters about which the public hasn't been warned.

In the broadest terms, most of what will go on the agenda is determined during Board retreats, when the group identifies and votes on its main focus areas for the year ahead.

Meeting agendas are put together by the Chair, following the Board's approved goals and work plan. One of the Chair's primary duties is to organize meetings and work to assure that the Board meets its approved goals. Specific meeting agendas are published 7 days prior to a meeting.

Under Robert's Rules, once the meeting has started, the order of items that will be taken up can be rearranged without a vote. Also, as the first order of business, any member of the Board can move to add or delete an agenda item at the beginning of a meeting. Such a motion must be approved by a majority vote in order to occur. Technically, a Board member may also move to add or delete an agenda item later in the meeting, but this requires a  $\frac{2}{3}$  majority vote to pass.



Last-minute changes are discouraged because they do make it harder for the Board to complete its previously agreed-upon work.

On an ongoing basis, the Chair reviews “parking lot” or future agenda items at the end of each board meeting. The Chair will add items to the parking lot when board members make suggestions to items that need to be considered at a later date.

If there is an item that you feel should be on the Board agenda, there are two ways to go about making that happen:

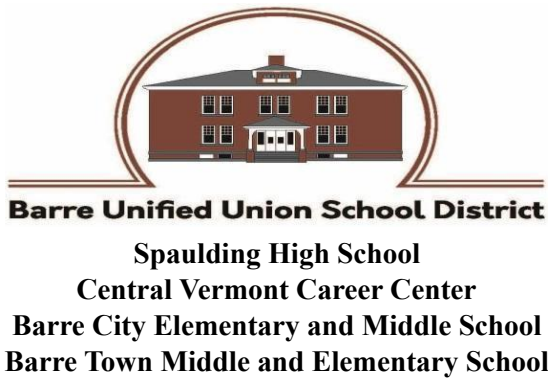
1. Reach out to the [Chair](#) directly. This is probably the simplest and most effective way to achieve your goal. The Chair will talk to you to understand more about what you are hoping to achieve, offer suggestions about whether starting at the Board level makes sense, and add your idea to our list for consideration.
2. Reach out to an individual Board member and ask them to move that your idea be added to the agenda. If they agree, they would move to add or delete an agenda item during the meeting and it would be voted on by the Board. This method depends on being able to convince a Board member to take up your cause as well as utilizes a pathway that we try to save for only occasional use.

The BUUSD Board is dedicated to providing the best possible educational experience to our community. We welcome ongoing involvement and engagement from all of our constituents. If you have suggestions about how to improve our processes or our communication about them, we look forward to hearing from you.

Thank you!

BUUSD Board

*Updated 9/17/21*



*Chris Hennessey, M.Ed.*  
Superintendent of Schools

*A rock solid education for a lifetime of discovery*

120 Ayers Street, Barre, VT 05641  
Phone: 802-476-5011  
Fax: 802-476-4944 or 802-477-1132  
Website: [www.buusd.org](http://www.buusd.org)

September 24, 2021

Secretary Daniel French  
Vermont Agency of Education  
1 National Life Drive, Davis 5  
Montpelier, VT 05620-2501

Dear Secretary French:

I write this letter on behalf of the Barre Unified Union School District to request permission to begin a search for a new superintendent. Christopher Hennessey, our current superintendent, was hired on July 1, 2021 on an interim basis. We seek approval to open a search for a superintendent to fill this position after the interim school year. This superintendent would begin in this role as of July 1, 2022

Thank you in advance for your attention in this matter.

Sincerely,

Sonya Spaulding  
Board Chair, Barre Unified Union School District

# Needs Board Review for FY22 Search

## Barre Unified Union School District Position Description

**POSITION:** Superintendent

**FLSA:** Exempt/Salary

**REPORTS TO:** Barre Unified Union School Board

**POSITION GOAL:** The Superintendent shall be the chief executive officer of the Board and the administrative head of schools and departments of the district. The Superintendent shall be responsible for the development and implementation of a coordinated and articulated educational program, preschool through adult. The Superintendent may delegate responsibility for the operation of various segments of the district, but shall be responsible to the Board for the results produced.

### **PROFESSIONAL AND CORE/PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES:**

The Superintendent will meet or exceed the following Professional Standards as adopted by the Vermont Standards Board for Professional Educators:

1. Develop, advocate, and enact a shared mission, vision and core values of high-quality education.
  - a. Develop an educational mission for the school to promote the academic success and well-being of each student.
  - b. In collaboration with members of the school and the community and using relevant data, develop and promote a vision for the school on the successful learning and development of each child and on instructional and organizational practices that promote such success.
  - c. Articulate, advocate, and cultivate core values that define the school's culture and stress the imperative of child-centered education; high expectations and student support; equity, inclusiveness, and social justice; openness, caring, and trust; and continuous improvement.
  - d. Strategically develop, implement, and evaluate actions to achieve the vision for the school.
  - e. Review the school's mission and vision and adjust them to changing expectations and opportunities for the school, and changing needs and situations of students.
  - f. Develop shared understanding of and commitment to mission, vision, and core values within the school and the community.
  - g. Model and pursue the school's mission, vision, and core values in all aspects of leadership.
2. Act ethically and professionally in personal conduct according to professional norms.
  - a. Act ethically and professionally in personal conduct, relationships with others, decision-making, stewardship of the school's resources, and all aspects of school leadership.
  - b. Act according to and promote the professional norms of integrity, fairness, transparency, trust, collaboration, perseverance, learning, and continuous improvement.

- c. Place children at the center of education and accept responsibility for each student's academic success and well-being.
    - d. Safeguard and promote the values of democracy, individual freedom and responsibility, equity, social justice, community, and diversity.
    - e. Lead with interpersonal and communication skill, social-emotional insight, and understanding of all students' and staff members' backgrounds and cultures.
    - f. Provide moral direction for the school and promote ethical and professional behavior among faculty and staff.
  3. Strive for equality of educational opportunity and culturally responsive practices.
    - a. Ensure that each student is treated fairly, respectfully, and with an understanding of each student's culture and context.
    - b. Recognize, respect, and employ each student's strengths, diversity, and culture as assets for teaching and learning.
    - c. Ensure that each student has equitable access to effective teachers, learning opportunities, academic and social support, and other resources necessary for success.
    - d. Develop student policies and address student misconduct in a positive, fair, and unbiased manner.
    - e. Address matters of equity and cultural responsiveness in all aspects of leadership.
  4. Develop and support intellectually rigorous and coherent systems of curriculum, instruction, and assessment.
    - a. Implement coherent systems of curriculum, instruction, and assessment that promote the mission, vision, and core values of the school, embody high expectations for student learning, align with academic standards, and are culturally responsive.
    - b. Align and focus systems of curriculum, instruction, and assessment within and across grade levels to promote student academic success, love of learning, the identities and habits of learners, and healthy sense of self.
    - c. Promote instructional practice that is consistent with knowledge of child learning and development, effective pedagogy, and the needs of each student's experiences, recognizes student strengths, and is differentiated and personalized.
    - d. Promote the effective use of technology in the service of teaching and learning.
    - e. Employ valid assessments that are consistent with knowledge of child learning and development and technical standards of measurement.
    - f. Cultivate an inclusive, caring and supportive school community.
    - g. Build and maintain a safe, caring, and healthy school environment that meets the academic, social, emotional, and physical needs of each student.
    - h. Provide coherent systems of academic and social supports, services, extracurricular activities, and accommodations to meet the range of learning needs of each student.
    - i. Promote adult-student, student-peer, and school-community relationships that value and support academic learning and positive social and emotional development.
    - j. Cultivate and reinforce student engagement in school and positive student conduct.
    - k. Infuse the school's learning environment with the cultures and languages of the school's community
  5. Develop the professional capacity and practice of school personnel.
    - a. Recruit, hire, support, develop, and retain effective and caring teachers and other professional staff and form them into an educationally effective faculty.
    - b. Plan for and manage staff turnover and succession, providing opportunities for effective

- induction and mentoring of new personnel.
  - c. Develop teachers' and staff members' professional knowledge, skills, and practice through differentiated opportunities for learning and growth, guided by understanding of professional and adult learning and development.
  - d. Foster continuous improvement of individual and collective instructional capacity to achieve outcomes envisioned for each student.
  - e. Deliver actionable feedback about instruction and other professional practice through valid, research-anchored systems of supervision and evaluation to support the development of teachers' and staff members' knowledge, skills, and practice.
  - f. Empower and motivate teachers and staff to the highest levels of professional practice and to continuous learning and improvement.
  - g. Develop the capacity, opportunities, and support for teacher leadership and leadership from other members of the school community.
  - h. Promote the personal and professional health, well-being, and work-life balance of faculty and staff.
  - i. Tend to their own learning and effectiveness through reflection, study, and improvement, maintaining a healthy work-life balance.
6. Foster a professional community of teachers and other professional staff maintaining workplace conditions for teachers and other professional staff that promote effective professional development, practice, and student learning.
- a. Empower and entrust teachers and staff with collective responsibility for meeting the academic, social, emotional, and physical needs of each student, pursuant to the mission, vision, and core values of the school.
  - b. Establish and sustain a professional culture of engagement and commitment to shared vision, goals, and objectives pertaining to the education of the whole child; high expectations for professional work; ethical and equitable practice; trust and open communication; collaboration, collective efficacy, and continuous individual and organizational learning and improvement.
  - c. Promote mutual accountability among teachers and other professional staff for each student's success and the effectiveness of the school as a whole.
  - d. Develop and support open, productive, caring, and trusting working relationships among leaders, faculty, and staff to promote professional capacity and the improvement of practice.
  - e. Design and implement job-embedded and other opportunities for professional learning collaboratively with faculty and staff.
  - f. Provide opportunities for collaborative examination of practice, collegial feedback, and collective learning.
7. Engage families and the community in meaningful, reciprocal, and mutually beneficial ways.
- a. Are approachable, accessible, and welcoming to families and members of the community.
  - b. Create and sustain positive, collaborative, and productive relationships with families and the community for the benefit of students.
  - c. Engage in regular and open two-way communication with families and the community about the school, students, needs, problems, and accomplishments.
  - d. Maintain a presence in the community to understand its strengths and needs, develop productive relationships, and engage its resources for the school.

- e. Develop and provide the school as a resource for families and the community.
  - f. Create means for the school community to partner with families to support student learning in and out of school.
  - g. Understand, value, and employ the community's cultural, social, intellectual, and political resources to promote student learning and school improvement.
  - h. Advocate for the school and district, and for the importance of education and student needs and priorities to families and the community.
  - i. Advocate publicly for the needs and priorities of students, families, and the community.
  - j. Build and sustain productive partnerships with public and private sectors to promote school improvement and student learning.
8. Manage school and district operations and resources.
- a. Institute, manage, and monitor operations and administrative systems that promote the mission and vision of the school.
  - b. Strategically manage staff resources, assigning and scheduling teachers and staff to roles and responsibilities that optimize their professional capacity to address each student's learning needs.
  - c. Seek, acquire, and manage fiscal, physical, and other resources to support curriculum, instruction, and assessment; student learning community; professional capacity and community; and family and community engagement.
  - d. Are responsible, ethical, and accountable stewards of the school's monetary and non-monetary resources, engaging in effective budgeting and accounting practices.
  - e. Know, comply with, and help the school community understand local, state, and federal laws, rights, policies, and regulations so as to promote student success.
  - f. Develop and manage productive relationships with the central office and school board.
  - g. Develop and administer systems for fair and equitable management of conflict among students, faculty and staff, leaders, families, and community.
  - h. Manage governance processes and internal and external politics toward achieving the school's mission and vision.
9. Act as an agent of continuous improvement.
- a. Seek to make school more effective for each student, teachers and staff, families, and the community.
  - b. Use methods of continuous improvement to achieve the vision, fulfill the mission, and promote the core values of the school.
  - c. Prepare the school and the community for improvement, promoting readiness, an imperative for improvement, instilling mutual commitment and accountability, and developing the knowledge, skills, and motivation to succeed in improvement.
  - d. Engage others in an ongoing process of evidence-based inquiry, learning, strategic goal setting, planning, implementation, and evaluation for continuous school and classroom improvement.
  - e. Employ situationally-appropriate strategies for improvement, including transformational and incremental, adaptive approaches and attention to different phases of implementation.
  - f. Assess and develop the capacity of staff to assess the value and applicability of emerging educational trends and the findings of research for the school and its improvement.
  - g. Develop technically appropriate systems of data collection, management, analysis, and use, connecting as needed to the district office and external partners for support in planning, implementation, monitoring, feedback, and evaluation.
  - h. Adopt a systems perspective and promote coherence among improvement efforts and all aspects

of school organization, programs, and services.

- i. Manage uncertainty, risk, competing initiatives, and politics of change with courage and perseverance, providing support and encouragement, and openly communicating the need for, process for, and outcomes of improvement efforts.
- j. Develop and promote leadership among teachers and staff for inquiry, experimentation and innovation, and initiating and implementing improvement.

**PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS:**

The Superintendent will meet or exceed the Professional Standards as adopted by the Vermont Standards Board for Professional Educators.

[Professional Standards for Educational Leaders](#)

**SUPERVISORY RESPONSIBILITIES:** All administrative certified and non-certified staff.

**QUALIFICATIONS:** The Superintendent Vermont endorsement 3-90 (Superintendent).

**TOOLS/TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS:** Proficiency in Google Suite and experience and knowledge of computerized database systems. Excellent computerized file management skills.

**PHYSICAL EFFORTS AND STRESS:** In general, a moderate degree of physical stamina is required to perform the essential functions of the job. The employee is regularly required to move around the office. Prolonged periods of sitting in front of a computer, reading, and keyboarding are often necessary. Stress can result from deadlines, conflicts, public scrutiny, and other daily occurrences. The employee frequently reaches with hands and arms, with some bending and twisting to access file cabinets, office machinery and supplies. Close visual acuity is necessary.

**WORK ENVIRONMENT:** Work is normally performed in a climate controlled office environment, with very limited exposure to extreme heat/cold, poor ventilation, fumes, and gases. Noise level is moderate and includes sounds of normal office equipment (computers, telephones, etc.). No known environmental hazards are encountered in normal performance of job duties.

**TERMS OF EMPLOYMENT:** Full Year - 261 Days - Administrator Contract

**EVALUATION:** The Superintendent will be evaluated annually by the Barre Unified Union School District School Board.

***Disclaimer:** The above statements are intended to describe the general nature and level of work being performed by people assigned to this classification. All of the listed functions are important and are in no particular order. This is not an exhaustive list of all responsibilities, duties, and skills required. All employees may be required to perform duties outside of their normal responsibilities from time to time, as needed. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions. This job description is subject to revision at any time by the employer.*

*Updated February 5, 2021*