

**BARRE UNIFIED UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT
CURRICULUM COMMITTEE MEETING**
BUUSD Central Office and Via Video Conference – Google Meet
January 25, 2022 - 5:30 p.m.

MINUTES

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Renee Badeau, Chair (BT)
Alice Farrell, Vice-Chair (BC)
Tim Boltin, (BC)

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:

ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT:

Chris Hennessey, Superintendent
Carol Marold, Director of Human Resources

OTHER BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Sonya Spaulding

COMMUNITY MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mike Deering, II	Karen Fredericks	Carol Hebert	Josh Howard	Nancy Leclerc
Sue Paxman	Terry Reil			

1. Call to Order

The Chair, Ms. Badeau, called the Tuesday, January 25 , 2022, BUUSD Curriculum Committee meeting to order at 5:31 p.m., which was held at the BUUSD Central Office and via video conference.

2. Additions and/or Deletions to the Agenda

Agenda Item 5.2 will be taken out of order (prior to 5.1).

3. Public Comment

None.

4. Approval of Minutes -

4.1 November 16, 2021 Curriculum Committee Meeting Minutes

On a motion by Mr. Boltin, seconded by Mrs. Farrell, the Committee unanimously voted to approve the minutes of the November 16, 2021 BUUSD Curriculum Committee Meeting.

5. New Business

5.1 Review of Fall Assessment Results (Math, ELA)

A document titled ‘Mid-year Literacy and Math Assessment Data – January 25, 2022’ was distributed.

A document titled ‘BUUSD Curriculum Work and Development Request Form’ was distributed.

Mr. Hennessey provided a brief overview of state-wide assessments (SBACs), noting that data across the state shows that students have lost ground under COVID. It is believed that SBAC data for the last 2 years is flawed and its usefulness is questioned, thus the State has embargoed SBAC assessment data. This embargo means that though schools may look at the data, it cannot be shared with the public. Mr. Hennessey introduced Ms. Fredericks and provided an overview of her experience in the District. Ms. Fredericks began the presentation titled ‘Mid-year Literacy and Math Assessment Data’. The presentation included information on; STAR 360 Assessments (District benchmark assessments (for grades 3 – 9) in ELA and Math), how assessment data is used, Reading data (33% of students tested fall in the proficient or above range), reporting on student growth (reading), an overview of benchmark categories (reading), longitudinal data (reading), Math assessment data (37% of students fall in the proficient or above proficient range), math growth percentages, math benchmark categories, longitudinal data for math, use of data in informing instruction, how work intersects with data (intentional groupings, literacy & math menu decisions, instructional coaching, professional development, allocation of resources, and prioritization of efforts related to the Recovery Plan. Ms. Fredericks provided an overview of the District’s Curriculum Work and Development Request Form. It was noted that longitudinal data informs on students who have 3 years’ worth of test data. Mrs. Farrell is very concerned regarding years-long reporting that indicates student learning is ‘flat lined’. Mrs. Farrell advised that years’ worth of data indicates that students are not showing growth, including in foundational skills (e.g. times tables). Mrs. Farrell reiterated that the issues have been ongoing for years and predate COVID. It was noted that the District currently has 2 curriculum coaches (1 ELA and 1 Math). Mrs. Farrell believes that if teachers are skilled, they should not need to wait for curriculum coaches to tell them how to improve their teaching. Concerns were raised that behavior issues in classrooms contribute to loss in learning. It was noted that because all students receive free lunches, not all parents are submitting the Free/Reduced Lunch

paperwork. Without that paperwork, not all students who live in poverty are identified. It is believed that poverty levels have an impact on learning. There are also other factors in students' lives that can impact their ability to optimally access education. Mr. Hennessey advised that on 01/25/22 a meeting was held with pre-k through 12 behavior specialists, counselors, and interventionists to review data on social/emotional learning and other related concerns. A survey was sent to all faculty members last week, requesting input on staff concerns relating to academic concerns, and 'how students are doing as people'. There were close to 200 responses, most of which were very thoughtful and detailed, including concerns regarding how 'available' students are to learn. It was noted that in addition to disruptions in classrooms, many students have 'disruption' in their personal lives, which also impacts their learning. The District is trying to put measures in place to assist students with issues they are dealing with (both in and outside of school). Mrs. Spaulding advised that the fact that the District has the lowest cost per pupil in the state may have a negative impact on learning. It was noted that the data being present includes students who qualify for special education. It was noted that teachers do a 'deep dive' at least once per quarter to assist with determining where students need to be placed in the next quarter. A community member raised concern that many children face issues in their home lives, and she believes that parents need to be held more accountable. A community member suggested that community members be involved in working on curriculum related matters. Ms. Badeau queried regarding classroom observations and mechanisms that may be in place to assist teachers with growth and improvement. It was noted that the roles of schools and staff members has changed drastically over the years, with schools now providing counseling, food, staff members having to help fill parenting roles etc. Mr. Hennessey noted that keeping the schools open (during covid) has been one of his greatest concerns, and he is very proud that the District has been able to remain open despite the huge number of absences and work involved with contact tracing. Mr. Hennessey noted that in addition to students, social/emotional issues are also impacting staff and parents.

5.2 Director of Curriculum Hiring Process

A Draft document titled 'BUUSD Director of Curriculum Search Process and Timeline' (updated 01/18/22) was distributed. Mr. Hennessey noted that it is important to note that in the past 5 years, the District has had 4 different Curriculum Directors, with the latest one, resigning in November 2021. The District is currently without a Curriculum Director. It will be important to hire an individual who fits well in the District and provides consistent leadership in the role of Curriculum Director. Mrs. Marold advised that the District is early in the hiring process; the job posting closes on 02/14/22 (the Committee will be in place by that date). A copy of the known Committee Members is included in the packet. Mrs. Marold is currently waiting for the names of two SHS teachers. The Committee is intentionally 'teacher heavy'. Given the turnover in this position, it will be very important to have teachers' opinions (including a survey that will go out to the whole school community). There are not normally 14 individuals on hiring committees. The staff and administrator survey will go out next week. Mrs. Marold hopes to hold an organizational meeting the week of 01/31/22. The Committee will be working through the month of February, and hope to have a candidate or candidates to the Superintendent in early March. The target date for presentation to the Board is March 10, 2022. The schedule for the Committee will be finalized after the Committee meets. There are currently ten candidates. In the past, Special Educators were not on the Committee, but are this time. Additionally, curriculum coaches have also been added to the committee. A community member queried regarding why there are no community members on the committee. It was noted that community members are not usually on hiring committees for these types of director positions. Community members are usually only on hiring committees for principal and superintendent positions. It was noted that the position will be effective for the 2022/2023 academic year. The Board had discussed the hiring for this position and decided that rather than hire an interim Curriculum Director mid-year, when the candidate pool is very small, it would be best to post the position during the 'normal' hiring season. There is concern that given the number of openings in the state and throughout the United States, it will be a very challenging hiring year. It was suggested that post-hiring, the Curriculum Director hold a public forum to gather input from the community. Mrs. Spaulding clarified that during the academic year, the pool of candidates is very limited because those who already hold positions in other districts (currently under contract), can't be hired (for the current year) by another district. In response to a query, it was noted that grant management (usually performed by the Curriculum Director), is being performed by other District employees. Discussion ensued relating to how the District is covering Curriculum Director responsibilities as well as dealing with the many staff shortages (resulting from the pandemic). Mrs. Poulin advised that the discussion taking place is not in compliance with Robert's Rules, as it is not part of the Agenda Item under discussion, is not on the Agenda, and hasn't been warned. In accordance with Roberts Rules, discussion needs to return to the warned Agenda Item under discussion. Mrs. Farrell suggested that the unwarned topic being discussed, be added to a future Board Meeting Agenda. Mrs. Farrell reiterated her request that the individual hired for the Curriculum Director position be required to hold a public forum. Mr. Hennessey strongly recommends that individuals applying for the position watch the video of this evening's meeting.

6. Old Business

None.

7. Other Business

None.

8. Items for Future Agendas

In response to a query, it was noted that community members who have agenda ideas, should share their ideas with the Committee Chair, who will work with the Superintendent to determine if the item should be added to a future agenda. Additionally, it was noted that items not on the agenda, can be brought up under 'Public Comment', which is the agenda item for bringing up topics that are not on the agenda.

9. Next Meeting Date

The next meeting is Tuesday, February 22, 2022 at 5:30 p.m. at the BUUSD Central Office and via video conference.

10. Adjournment

On a motion by Mrs. Farrell, seconded by Mr. Boltin, the Committee unanimously voted to adjourn at 7:36 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Andrea Poulin