

**BARRE UNIFIED UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT  
CURRICULUM COMMITTEE MEETING**  
Spaulding High School Library and Via Video Conference – Google Meet  
April 7, 2022 - 6:00 p.m.

**MINUTES**

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Renee Badeau, Chair (BT) - Chair  
Sarah Pregent (BC) – Vice Chair  
Nancy Leclerc (At-Large)  
Chris Parker (BT)

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:**

**ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT:**

Chris Hennessey, Superintendent  
Erica Pearson, BTMES Principal

**OTHER BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Alice Farrell  
Terry Reil  
Sonya Spaulding

**COMMUNITY MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Rachel Aldrich-Whalen                      James Carpenter                      Karen Fredericks                      Josh Howard                      Sue Paxman

**1. Call to Order**

The Superintendent called the Thursday, April 7, 2022, BUUSD Curriculum Committee meeting to order at 6:00 p.m., which was held at the Spaulding High School Library and via video conference.

**2. Organize**

**2.1 Elect Committee Chair**

Mr. Hennessey requested nominations for the position of Curriculum Committee Chair

**Mrs. Pregent nominated Ms. Badeau for the position of Curriculum Committee Chair. Mrs. Leclerc seconded the motion.**

There were no additional nominations.

**On a motion by Mrs. Pregent, seconded by Mrs. Leclerc, the Committee unanimously voted to elect Ms. Badeau as Chair of the BUUSD Curriculum Committee.**

Ms. Badeau facilitated the remainder of the meeting.

**2.2 Elect Vice Chair**

**Ms. Parker nominated Mrs. Pregent for the position of Curriculum Committee Vice Chair. Mrs. Leclerc seconded the motion.**

There were no additional nominations.

**On a motion by Ms. Parker, seconded by Mrs. Leclerc, the Committee unanimously voted to elect Mrs. Pregent as Vice Chair of the BUUSD Curriculum Committee.**

**3. Additions and/or Deletions to the Agenda**

None.

**4. Public Comment**

None.

## **5. Approval of Minutes -**

### **5.1 January 25, 2022 Curriculum Committee Meeting Minutes**

**On a motion by Mrs. Pregent, seconded by Ms. Parker, the Committee unanimously voted to approve the minutes of the January 25, 2022 BUUSD Curriculum Committee Meeting.**

## **6. New Business**

### **6.1 PSTL Program Discussion (from 03/10/22 Board Meeting – J. Carpenter)**

Mr. Hennessey advised that the PSTL Program had existed for many years and it was recommended that it become more of an intervention program, and that there may be some misconceptions regarding what the program provided in the past. This item is on the agenda for discussion to provide clarification regarding what the program offered and how the District would like to move forward regarding providing intervention for students of all skill sets. Mr. Carpenter provided an overview of the PSTL Program (Problem Solving Through Literacy). PSTL started in the mid 90's as a grant funded program. It was originally titled as a program for gifted and talented students, to allow for them to excel in reading and writing. The program was then tied to community service, where students identified real life problems, conducted research, and proposed solutions. At one point the Program had two instructors, one for the ELA portion and one for the community service portion. In the early 2000's, after one of the instructors left, the Program was led by one instructor and shifted to more of a reading enrichment program. When Mr. Carpenter took over the Program, he took steps to connect the Program back to the community service aspect. Students were selected based on localized and standardized State testing (5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> graders) as well as teacher recommendations. In 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade, the PSTL Program was the students' full time ELA Program. Students read high level texts and worked on group and individual community service projects. Over time, students identified their roles as community members and reading/writing strengths and worked to enact positive change. Mrs. Pregent advised that she has testimonials from a number of PSTL Program alumni, and advised that she was also in the PSTL Program. Mrs. Pregent read a testimonial (from Anna Grearson), advising of the positive impact the Program had on her life and her request that the Program be reinstated. Mrs. Pregent also read a testimonial from Tiffany McAllister, who also noted the positive impact this Program had on her life, and her request that the Program be reinstated. It was noted that the Program allows students to grow in many ways, not just in reading and writing. Mrs. Pregent noted the positive impact this Program had on her life. Mrs. Pregent believes it would be very beneficial to reinstate the Program or to at least incorporate some of its components into a new program. The Program was in place until COVID. Mrs. Pregent noted that there have been many inquiries regarding why this Program was cut. It was noted that BCEMS students have a program that provides an additional layer of support for students who excel. Mr. Hennessey believes the key thing to understand, is that the District keep the community service aspect, and project based work, but to accomplish that goal within an intervention or enrichment block. It was noted that BCEMS also has a program called Students on the Move (for community service type projects). Concern was raised that current efforts are more towards assisting students who need extra help and that students who excel are not receiving what they need to assist them with growth. Mrs. Farrell suggested that COVID funds be utilized to reinstate some sort of program to assist students who excel. Ms. Parker would like assurance that the WIN block (What I Need), addresses both students who need assistance catching up as well as addressing the needs of students who excel and need extra challenges. It is Ms. Parker's understanding that the PSTL Program was stopped, as the instructor was needed to teach other classes. Ms. Parker does not want remediation for those who need extra help, to prevent those that excel from getting what they need. Ms. Parker would like to see that equitable services are provided at both BCEMS and BTMES (similar opportunities for growth). Mr. Carpenter noted that if current SHS students (who participated in the PSTL Program) were asked, they would echo the sentiments express by the testimonials, and he advised that there is something very powerful about a program that brings students together for four years, pushes them to a higher level than they their regular classes, and teaches them ways in which to give back to their community. Mr. Carpenter requests that the Board take an appreciative look into this rich program, which includes a high level, deep thinking, and reading program. Mr. Carpenter advised that he has been teaching 7<sup>th</sup> grade the past few years and is seeing students who are missing out on the high level reading and the 'connection' to school. Testimonials from past students, who participated in this program over 20 years ago, stress the positive impact this Program has. Ms. Badeau queried regarding if this discussion is to determine that the PSTL Program that was cut during COVID can be reinstated? Ms. Fredericks advised that students should be getting their needs met through instructional practices at the first wave of instruction and that all students (those that struggle and those that excel) should be able to get their needs met and have an extra layer of opportunities through service learning, deep engagement, and complicated texts and discussions. Mrs. Badeau noted that not all teachers have the same skill level in providing differentiation. Ms. Badeau queried regarding why the PSTL Program would not be allowed to be reinstated. Mr. Hennessey advised that it is his understanding that the PSTL Program was a separate program for 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students. Ms. Pearson clarified that the position for a literacy enrichment instructor has never been taken out of the budget, but it is currently unfilled. Ms. Pearson noted that one of the issues with having PSTL as a core class for 7<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> graders is that it 'tracks' students. Ms. Pearson believes services for those who struggle and those who excel are equally important, but advised that enrichment for students who excel will not be a core class. Mr. Carpenter advised that the 'push in' method for special education students, also tracks students and that eliminating PSTL did not eliminate tracking of students. Mr. Carpenter does not believe that having students who excel in the PSTL Program, tracks students any more than students who are put in an extra literacy class (WIN) because they need extra support. Mr. Hennessey believes the key is to identify how to provide extra services for students who excel, while keeping them with their peers. Mr. Hennessey believes the best way to accomplish this goal is to provide the services in enrichment classes. Ms. Badeau queried regarding a guarantee that students who excel would continue to receive the services they need, if for example, they needed to leave the ELA enrichment class to spend some time in a different class because they have fallen a bit behind in another subject (e.g. math). Ms. Badeau is concerned that the level of

success of an enrichment program would be diminished if students needed to take time away from that class for intervention in other subjects. Ms. Fredericks advised that enrichment classes rotate on a quarterly basis, and placement is based on student need. Mr. Carpenter advised that at the 5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> grade level, students would be pulled for other interventions (if necessary), but he kept students informed on what the PSTL class was doing, so that they could keep up and be level when they rejoined. It was noted that enrichment blocks are held daily. Mr. Carpenter reiterated that he will always advocate for a 4 year program, as he believes that is most beneficial, though the program could be changed to a ‘push-in’ model. Mr. Hennessey advised that administrators will start looking at an equitable approach that could be implemented next year. It was noted that there should not be a budget impact, as there is a budgeted position. It is Ms. Badeau ‘s understanding that there are many positive aspects of the PSTL Program, and that next steps will involve discussion at the building and District levels to see that some of these positive components can be reinstated.

## **6.2 Educational Performance Discussion (from 03/10/22 Board Meeting – Mr. Reil)**

A document titled ‘Outline for Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment’ was distributed.

Mr. Reil reiterated that his intent is to have the improvement of students’ academic performance a top priority of the Board, and having a regularly scheduled agenda item with reporting that indicates ‘where we are at, how are students’ doing?, and is the ‘needle moving in the right direction?’. Ms. Fredericks provided an overview of the document distributed in the packet. Ms. Fredericks provided a brief overview of the points outlined in the document, noting that most items are ‘works in-progress’. Performance indicators and scoring criteria have been initiated. Ms. Fredericks advised that one of her focuses (relating to unit development based on district standards) is to see that work being performed supports the Strategic Plan. The District currently has Curriculum Leaders for most areas, but does not have one for K – 4 Social Studies. Ms. Fredericks would like to increase community involvement (e.g. family math and literacy nights). Regarding instruction; Ms. Fredericks advised that instructional improvement (to assure all students are having their needs met) will involve providing teachers (through professional development, administrators, and coaches) with effective practices/strategies to assure that they are meeting the needs of all students. Future professional development will be needs based and goal driven. Local assessments will be revised based on current research. Clarification will be provided on diagnostic assessments, to assist teachers with identifying student needs. Work will also be performed to assist teachers with understanding assessment data, and how it identifies student needs and growth. In response to a query, Ms. Fredericks advised that some of the work has been started and noted that she wants to start data teams at each building to assist with identifying trends. It was noted that there are two full time instructional coaches, and teachers are also coaches. It is important for teaching staff to be flexible with approaches to meeting students’ needs. Ms. Fredericks advised that between 30% and 40% of students are proficient. Those statistics show that there is work to be performed in tier I (regular classroom) instruction. Mr. Reil queried regarding how the District can, in a timely manner, ‘put its finger on the pulse’ of where students are (outside of assessments), and regularly assess the effectiveness of strategies. Ms. Fredericks suggested that ‘snap shot’ data be provided, as well as receiving feedback from teachers on ‘coaching cycles’. Mrs. Spaulding advised that based on discussion (of the Strategic Plan) at the Retreat, there are many factors that impact learning, and that additional information (e.g. statistics on homelessness) will need to be provided so that the Board has a full picture of items impacting students’ ability to access learning. Mr. Hennessey advised that social/emotional well-being plays a big factor and needs to be addressed.

## **7. Old Business**

None.

## **8. Other Business**

None.

## **9. Items for Future Agendas**

Brief discussion was held regarding what items should be placed on the Agenda, including the purpose of the Committee and what it hopes to accomplish. It was noted that the viability of the Committee is not a warned item and should be discussed by the full Board.

Ms. Badeau provided an overview of the Parking Lot items and advised that the following items be removed:

- Local Formative Testing, Including Results
- PE Presentation
- Allied Arts Presentation

Mr. Hennessey advised that an Organizational Flow Chart is currently being worked on.

Ms. Badeau believes that for the Board to understand what is going on at the schools, Board Members need to visit the schools and observe classes. Brief discussion was held.

A community member suggested that Board Members sit in on classes.

Brief discussion was held regarding Proficiency Based Grading/Report Cards. It was noted that this item is not a warned agenda item. A community member advised that there is confusion regarding this matter and how report cards should be interpreted.

May Agenda Items:

- Student Progress/Growth (snap-shot) / Future Plans for Improvement
- Status of District-wide Proficiency Based Grading/Assessment/Reporting

**10. Next Meeting Date**

The next meeting is Thursday, May 5, 2022 at 6:00 p.m.

**11. Adjournment**

**On a motion by Mrs. Pregent, seconded by Ms. Parker, the Committee unanimously voted to adjourn at 7:24 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,

*Andrea Poulin*