

BARRE UNIFIED UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT
POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING
Spaulding High School Library and Via Video Conference – Google Meet
December 19, 2022 – 6:00 p.m.

MINUTES

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Chris Parker, Chair (BT)
Giuliano Cecchinelli, II, Vice Chair (BC)
Alice Farrell (BT)
Thomas Kelly (BC Community Member)
Jon Valsangiacomo – (BT Community Member)

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:

Tim Boltin (BC)

OTHER BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Nancy Leclerc
Terry Reil

ADMINISTRATORS AND STAFF PRESENT:

Chris Hennessey, Superintendent
Luke Aither, SHS Co-Principal
Ted Mills, BTMES Assistant Principal

GUESTS:

Andrew McMichael

1. Call to Order

The Chair, Ms. Parker, called the Monday, December 19, 2022, meeting to order at 6:05 p.m., which was held at the Spaulding High School Library and via video conference.

2. Additions and/or Deletions to the Agenda

None.

3. Public Comment

None.

4. Approval of Minutes

4.1 Approval of Minutes – November 21, 2022 Policy Committee Meeting

On a motion by Mr. Cecchinelli, seconded by Mr. Valsangiacomo the Committee unanimously agreed to approve the Minutes of the November 21, 2022 Policy Committee Meeting.

5. New Business

5.1 Review of BUUSD Policy Manual Index

A copy of the BUUSD Policy Manual Index (dated 12/19/22) was distributed.

Ms. Parker advised regarding changes to the Index and noted that the plan is to try using only the local Policy Index at meetings. The document now includes columns for procedures (operational and formal written procedures) for each building. Mr. Aither advised that the SHS/SEA column will be split (a separate column for each campus). Mr. Aither wanted to clarify the definition of 'formally documented', his interpretation is that formally documented means the procedure is on the web site 'tied' to the policy. Ms. Parker advised that she believes there was discussion held regarding linking handbooks to the policy section of the website. Mr. Aither advised that SHS has operational procedures for all policies, but not all procedures are formally documented. It was noted that Policy C10 is formally documented (C10-P) and should be checked off. Discussion was held regarding whether or not procedures in handbooks should be listed as formally documented. Mr. Hennessey recommends putting a link to the handbook on the policy/procedure section of the website. Brief discussion was held regarding color coding. Ms. Parker noted that Policy code D22 is now Selection of Library Materials, but is listed as 'Modes of Instruction During State of Emergency Due To COVID-19 Pandemic'. It is believed this policy was rescinded and the policy number has been reassigned. The rescinded policy D22 needs to be added to the section labeled 'Rescinded/Not Adopted Policies'.

5.2 VSBA Policy Notes

A document titled 'VSBA Policy Notes – BUUSD Policy Committee – 2022 – 23 (12/19/22 meeting)' was distributed. Ms. Parker provided a brief overview of the document that is included in the packet. In response to a query from Mr. Valsangiacomo, it was noted that the 'equity consultant' referred to in the document is a VSBA consultant. Mr. Valsangiacomo advised that with the information provided, he is not able to determine which amendments are based on statutory changes and which are suggested changes from the equity consultant. Mr. Kelly suggested that the Committee know in advance which changes are required (statutory) and which ones are not. Mr. Hennessey suggested that he and Mrs. Gilbert review the changes to make that determination.

5.3 Student Conduct and Discipline Policy (C15) – Required – VSBA Change 11/15/22 – Currently C20

Copies of the VSBA Policy and the Draft BUUSD Policy were distributed.

Ms. Parker provided a brief overview of the action taken by VSBA on this policy (amendments). Mrs. Farrell noted the difficulty in defining these types of policies which tend to change frequently. There were no questions from the Committee

On a motion by Mr. Valsangiacomo, seconded by Mr. Cecchinelli, the Committee unanimously voted to present the Board with a First Reading of the amended Student Conduct and Discipline Policy (C15).

5.4 Personnel Recruitment, Selection, Appointment, and Background Check Policy (B20) – Recommended – VSBA Change 11/01/22

Copies of the VSBA Policy and the Draft BUUSD Policy were distributed.

Ms. Parker provided a brief overview of the action taken by VSBA on this policy (amendments). Brief discussion was held, including; a query regarding when/if training occurs and if this sentence should remain in the policy, a query regarding the removal of 'contractors' from the policy, what constitutes a 'reasonable effort' (in paragraph 1), a query regarding why the policy specifically lists 'hate crimes', clarification that the abuse registry is not part of criminal records, and a query regarding the definition of 'report checks'. It is believed that grammatical errors are causing confusion relating to the 'report checks'. Wording changes will need to be finalized for the section labeled 'Selection'. Brief discussion was held regarding the Recruitment section (#4) referring to 'historical inequity', which is subjective, and under the section 'Appointment', #4 relating to records (retaining and destroying). Mr. Hennessey will contact legal counsel regarding some of the questions posed.

After discussion the Committee agreed to work to refine the wording and seek additional legal advice, and return the policy (B20) to Committee.

5.5 Student Drugs and Alcohol Policy (C2) – Required – VSBA Change 11/01/22

Copies of the VSBA Policy and the Draft BUUSD Policy were distributed.

Ms. Parker provided a brief overview of the action taken by VSBA on this policy (amendments).

Brief discussion was held and it was recommended that the 'optional' Notification section remain in the policy. It was clarified that sharing the information electronically meets the requirement to give copies/distribute standards of conduct. Mr. Hennessey will amend the document to provide clarity regarding distribution of information. In response to a query, it was noted that 'Immediate Procedures' and 'Emergency Procedures' exist in Staff Handbooks.

On a motion by Mr. Valsangiacomo, seconded by Mrs. Farrell, the Committee unanimously voted to present the Board with a First Reading of the amended Student Drugs and Alcohol Policy (C2).

5.6 Student Athletics, Clubs, and Activities Policy (C22) – Recommended – VSBA Change 11/01/22 – Replaces C23 & C24 – Rescind after adoption

Copies of the VSBA Policy C22 and existing BUUSD Policies C23, and C24 were distributed. A draft BUUSD C22 policy was also distributed.

Ms. Parker provided a brief overview of the action taken by VSBA on this policy (amendments), noting that VSBA worked with VPA for amendments to this policy. Mr. Cecchinelli queried regarding whether or not the new Leadership Program (Council – athletic related) at SHS is covered by this policy. Mr. Aither provided a brief overview of what the Leadership Program involves and noted that the Program is monitored by staff. Mrs. Farrell believes the single combined policy is more complicated and harder to understand than the three separate policies. Brief discussion was held regarding the added verbiage, the recommendation from VSBA to combine the 3 policies, who the intended 'audience' for this policy is, and concern over verbiage that was removed.

After discussion, the Committee agreed to keep Policy C22 at the Committee level and to revisit it in January.

5.7 Selection of Instructional Materials Policy (D23) Recommended – VSBA Change 11/01/22 – Replaces D32 – Rescind after adoption.

Copies of VSBA Policy D23 and BUUSD existing policy D32 (with proposed amendments) were distributed.

Ms. Parker provided a brief overview of the action taken by VSBA on this policy (amendments), and advised that if this policy is adopted, policy D32 will need to be rescinded. Mr. Aither advised regarding crafting of the original policy (D32), noting that much discussion was put into adding verbiage related to teaching about controversial/sensitive issues. The VSBA model policy removes that verbiage. Mr. Aither noted that there is a difference between materials and teaching practices, and suggested the District may wish to deal with materials and teaching practices in two different policies, using a local policy for teaching practices. Mr. Hennessey will contact VSBA regarding when they anticipate having Model Procedures written.

After discussion, the Committee agreed to put this policy on hold until after VSBA has written Model Procedures.

This policy will be added to the Parking Lot.

6. Old Business

6.1 Title I, Part A: Parent and Family Engagement Policy (E1) – Required – VSBA Changed 09/24/21

Copies of the VSBA Policy and an unamended version of the BUUSD Draft Policy E1 were distributed.

Mr. Hennessey advised that he, Mr. Aither, and Ms. Fredericks have been reviewing this policy, including looking at other districts to see what they have done. Mr. Hennessey recommends that this policy be put on hold until more work can be performed to complete the highlighted areas. Ms. Parker queried regarding what direction may have been given regarding any sanctions for districts that have not adopted this legally required policy. It was noted that a statewide Family Engagement Committee was recently established and may assist with completing this policy.

Policy (E1) will remain in the Parking Lot.

6.2 Students Who Are Homeless Policy (C13) – Required – VSBA Changed 09/12/22

A copy of the BUUSD policy (amended) was distributed.

Ms. Parker advised that the policy needs additional amendments to assure consistency of using all 'first person' language.

Ms. Parker provided an overview of edits she believes need to be made. Brief discussion was held and a few additional amendments were agreed upon.

On a motion by Mrs. Farrell, seconded by Mr. Valsangiacomo, the Committee unanimously voted to make the agreed upon amendments and to present the Board with a First Reading of the Students Who Are Homeless Policy (C13), as amended.

7. Other Business

None.

8. Future Agenda Items

January Meeting:

- C4 – English Learners (Parking Lot C) – Required VSBA changed 12/05/22
- B20 - Personnel Recruitment, Selection, Appointment, and Background Check Policy – Recommended – VSBA changed 11/01/22
- C22 - Student Athletics, Clubs, and Activities Policy – Recommended – VSBA Change 11/01/22 – Replaces C23 & C24 – Rescind after adoption

Parking Lot:

Add: Selection of Instructional Materials Policy (D23) Recommended – VSBA Change 11/01/22 – Replaces D32 – Rescind after adoption. (added 12/2022 by Committee)

Add: Title I, Part A: Parent and Family Engagement Policy (E1) – Required – VSBA Changed 09/24/21 (added 12/2022 by Committee).

9. Next Meeting Date

The January 16, 2023 meeting is cancelled.

The next meeting is Monday, January 30, 2023 at 6:00 p.m. at the Spaulding High School Library and via video conference.

10. Adjournment

On a motion by Mrs. Farrell, seconded by Mr. Cecchinelli, the Committee unanimously agreed to adjourn at 7:41 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Andrea Poulin