



Barre Unified Union School District

**Spaulding High School
Central Vermont Career Center
Barre City Elementary and Middle School
Barre Town Middle and Elementary School**

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A rock solid education for a lifetime of discovery

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Dear BUUSD School Board,

There have been questions coming from the community concerning how employees in the BUUSD are compensated, and we thought it would be helpful to take the opportunity to provide a summary of how salaries and wages are set in our district. For clarity, we're going to break this down into specific categories of positions and how each of these categories is compensated.

Collectively Bargained Contracts

The first three categories are fairly straightforward as they are all part of negotiated collective bargaining agreements. These salaries and hourly wages are negotiated between the school board and each bargaining unit. The three categories are:

American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME)

This bargaining unit consists primarily of our custodial and maintenance staff, though there are a few others who fall into this contract as well. I can report that these folks received wage increases in last summer's negotiations, and their new contract is good through 2026.

BUUSD Para Educators

The school board is in the middle of negotiations with our para educators now. Their current contract expires in June, and these folks are our lowest paid employees in the district. We anticipate that negotiations will result in more competitive wages for our paras that bring them in line with our neighbors and provide them with a more livable wage. Again, those negotiations are ongoing.

BUUSD Teachers

The school board is also in the middle of negotiations with our teachers, and their contract is also expiring in June. By "teachers," we mean all professional faculty who require an educators license to hold their position. In addition to teachers, this category includes counselors,

academic interventionists, nurses, and various other licensed positions. Historically, our teacher's salaries have not been competitively in line with those of our neighbors.

Non-Contracted Staff and BUUSD Administration

The next three categories are less straightforward, and their salaries and wages are not negotiated by the board and instead are set by the superintendent (with the exception of the superintendent salary, which is set by the school board.) Historically, these salaries and wages have not been competitive in relation to our neighbors, and there have been inconsistencies within each category as well. In addition to the challenge of recruiting new employees, there was a fairness issue. Because BUUSD rates did not keep up with the standard rates, we were hiring people that made as much or more than our existing staff. We have made significant progress in making these positions more competitively and fairly compensated in the last year. The three categories are:

Non Contracted Hourly Staff

This category covers a wide variety of positions with different levels of skills and experience needed to be successful in the job. None of these positions fall under any of the Collective Bargaining Agreements. As such, these wages are set by the superintendent. We now have this category broken down into an hourly wage hiring metric with five sub categories, with category A being the lowest and category E being the highest.

We discovered that there were inconsistencies in terms of how people were being paid in these non contracted positions, and we set out to make the new wage metric fair and easy to understand. For example, if a person's position fell into Category C and they had five years related experience, they would be set at a rate of \$23.01 per hour. We discovered that some people's wages were about where they should be, and others were off and needed to be increased. As a result, some folks in this category got additional increases last year, and some did not. This metric made things clear and fair for all, and made setting salaries upon hiring a much more objective process. Additionally, this wage metric puts these essential positions in the range of how similar positions are paid in our neighboring districts.

Non Contracted Salaried Staff

This category also covers a fairly wide variety of positions, and the salary schedule for them is similar to that of the teachers contract. Employees in these professional positions do not require an educator's license to be in them, but the requirements of the position require a specific skill set unique to the job. Many people in these positions have training and backgrounds that go beyond the traditional bachelors/masters degree path typically needed to be a professional educator. Like the hourly positions above, we discovered discrepancies in fairness and in terms of how similar positions were paid in other districts and outside agencies. As a result, some folks in this category got additional increases last year, and some did not. Though people in this category get similar benefits to those found in the teacher CBA, it's important to note that they do not qualify for contributions to the Vermont State Teachers Retirement System.

BUUSD Administration

Much like our non-contracted employees, we discovered that BUUSD administrative salaries were both inconsistent and too often not in a competitive place in relation to our neighbors. A salary metric based on administrative responsibilities and years of experience was put in place to correct this. Some administrators did indeed get additional increases for FY23, and many did not. This topic had been discussed in the district for many years, and the current competitive nature of finding school leaders in Vermont and across the country forced us to no longer be able to kick this one down the road.

Salaries were compared to other similar positions within school districts in our region. In addition, the VT Department of Labor comparisons were used for those positions not directly related to academics (facilities, human resources, communications, finance, etc.). The BUUSD currently has administrative salaries at least in the ballpark of where our neighbors are for most positions, but not all.

Included in the packet are copies of salary/wage schedules from our current Collective Bargaining Agreements and the salary/wage metrics for our non-contracted employees and administrators. We hope this information is helpful. If you have any other questions or would like more information, please let me know.

Chris