

**BARRE UNIFIED UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT  
POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING**  
Spaulding High School Library and Via Video Conference – Google Meet  
February 20, 2023 – 6:00 p.m.

**MINUTES**

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Chris Parker, Chair (BT)  
Giuliano Cecchinelli, II, Vice Chair (BC)  
Tim Boltin (BC)  
Alice Farrell (BT)  
Thomas Kelly (BC Community Member)

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Jon Valsangiacomo – (BT Community Member)

**OTHER BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Nancy Leclerc  
Terry Reil  
Sonya Spaulding

**ADMINISTRATORS AND STAFF PRESENT:**

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

**GUESTS:**

**1. Call to Order**

The Vice-Chair, Mrs. Farrell, called the Monday, February 20, 2023, meeting to order at 6:00 p.m., which was held at the Spaulding High School Library and via video conference - Google Meet.

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

On a motion by Ms. Parker, seconded by Mr. Kelly the Committee unanimously voted to approve the Agenda as presented.

**3. Public Comment**

It was noted that a new 'OWL' is being used this evening.

**4. Approval of Minutes**

**4.1 Approval of Minutes – January 30, 2023 Policy Committee Meeting**

On a motion by Mr. Cecchinelli, seconded by Mr. Boltin, the Committee unanimously voted to approve the Minutes of the January 30, 2023 Policy Committee Meeting.

**5. New Business**

**5.1 Review of BUUSD Policy Manual Index**

A copy of the BUUSD Policy Manual Index (dated 02/20/23) was distributed.

Mrs. Farrell noted that there were no significant changes to the document. Mr. Hennessey advised that the Special Education Procedural Manual is almost complete and the document will be updated. Links to these procedures will be added to the web site. Mr. Aither advised that he has performed research on procedures and believes there are more formally documented procedures (for SHS) than he had originally thought. Mr. Aither will also be making updates to this document.

**5.2 VSBA Policy Notes**

A document titled 'VSBA Policy Notes – BUUSD Policy Committee' was distributed.

Mrs. Farrell advised that the document has been updated to include an enhanced 'edits key'. Mrs. Gilbert was thanked for her efforts to update the document.

### **5.3 Selection of Instructional Materials Policy (D23) Recommended**

A copy of the policy was distributed.

It was noted that the areas of the policy related to sensitive issues, have been deleted. Lengthy discussion was held regarding this policy, including; significant discussion on whether or not sensitive issues should be removed from the policy, and a belief that the District should continue to address teaching of, and instructional materials for, sensitive issues. Mr. Aither provided a brief overview of how sensitive materials was added to the District's current policy. Mr. Aither suggests that if the District adopts the VSBA version of the policy, the District should create a local policy dealing with sensitive issues. It is not known if VSBA plans to address the teaching of sensitive issues. Mr. Kelly feels strongly that sensitive issues should remain in the policy the District is considering adopting (D23). Mr. Aither suggested recoding D32 to D40, and removing the portions of the policy that do not pertain to sensitive/controversial issues. A new local policy (D40) dealing with sensitive issues, should be legally vetted prior to presentation to the Board.

**On a motion by Mr. Cecchinelli, seconded by Ms. Parker, the Committee voted 3 to 1 to present the Board with a First Reading of the Selection of Instructional Materials Policy (D23) and to add Teaching and Instructional Materials for Sensitive Issues to the March Agenda, for creation of a new local policy (D40). Mr. Boltin, Mr. Cecchinelli, and Ms. Parker voted for the motion. Mr. Kelly voted against the motion.**

Mr. Hennessey will take the lead on crafting a new local policy (D40) and will have it legally vetted prior to presentation to the Committee in March.

### **5.4 Rescind Selection of Instructional Materials and Sensitive Issues Policy (D32)**

A copy of the policy was distributed.

VSBA deleted this policy because it is no longer aligned with statute. Mrs. Farrell advised that she has not heard back from VSBA regarding the specific reasons that D32 no longer aligns with statute. Brief discussion was held regarding whether or not 'something would be lost' if this policy was rescinded prior to adoption of Policy D23. Mr. Kelly noted that the VSBA has never weighed in on the topic of sensitive issues. The options are to keep a policy known not to align with statute (until D23 and D40 are adopted), or to rescind policy D32 prior to adoption of D23 and D40).

**On a motion by Mr. Cecchinelli, seconded by Ms. Parker, the Committee voted 3 to 1 to recommend that the Board rescind the Selection of Instructional Materials and Sensitive Issues Policy (D32). Mr. Boltin, Mr. Cecchinelli, and Ms. Parker voted for the motion. Mr. Kelly voted against the motion.**

## **6. Old Business**

### **6.1 Personnel Recruitment, Selection, Appointment, and Background Checks Policy (B20) Recommended**

A copy of the policy was distributed.

The Committee is revisiting this policy regarding concerns over the 'Optional' section pertaining to non-discrimination, bias, and anti-racism training. Mr. Kelly does not believe this section should be added to the policy being considered for presentation to the Board. **Mr. Kelly moved to remove the section labeled 'Optional' (in Policy B20).** It was noted that it has not been the practice of the Committee to make motions for alterations/amendments the Committee is working on. Proposed alterations and amendments are generally discussed by the Committee and agreed upon prior to making motions to present First Readings to the Board. Mr. Kelly provided an overview of his concerns related to mandatory training, including the imposition of a specific 'point of view' that might be implied by the training. Ms. Parker noted that the policy does not in any way refer to gender, transgender individuals, and gender dysphoria. Ms. Parker advised that this policy is on the agenda for consideration of feedback from legal counsel. Mr. Hennessey advised that the policy has been reviewed by legal counsel and they recommend that the 'Optional' section be included in the District's policy. Mr. Kelly, after reading notes from a prior meeting, advised that he does not believe legal counsel is making a specific recommendation regarding this matter. Mrs. Farrell queried regarding whether or not the 'Optional' section is more of a procedural issue rather than policy. Mrs. Farrell polled the Committee regarding preferences for the 'Optional' section of the policy. Ms. Parker provided an overview of legal counsel's comments relating to various abuse registries. Mr. Kelly believes that if the District would not hire anyone who is on other specific registries, those registries should be added to the policy. The policy will be referred back to legal counsel for an opinion regarding including other specific registries. Brief discussion was held regarding the portion of the policy that refers to outside contractors. Mr. Aither advised regarding a question posed at the last meeting by Mr. Valsangiacomo; under the section titled 'Recruitment', #4. Mr. Aither recalls that this section was supposed to be reviewed by legal counsel.

**The Committee agreed by consensus to send this policy (B20) back to legal counsel for further review/opinion regarding the possible addition of 2 more registries and review of Recruitment #4.** Mr. Hennessey and Mrs. Gilbert will take the lead on contacting legal counsel.

## **7. Other Business**

Both Mr. Kelly and Mr. Valsangiacomo have agreed to serve on the Policy Committee for an additional year.

#### **8. Future Agenda Items**

- Selection of Instructional Materials and Sensitive Issues Policy (possible new local policy D40)
- B20 - Personnel Recruitment, Selection, Appointment, and Background Checks Policy (Recommended)

Additional items may be added based on new information/updates received by VSBA.

#### **9. Next Meeting Date**

The next meeting is Monday, March 20, 2023 at 6:00 p.m. at the Spaulding High School Library and via video conference.

#### **10. Adjournment**

**On a motion by Ms. Parker, seconded by Mr. Cecchinelli, the Committee unanimously voted to adjourn at 7:37 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,

*Andrea Poulin*