

**BARRE UNIFIED UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT
POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING**

Spaulding High School Library and Via Video Conference – Google Meet
September 20, 2023 – 6:00 p.m.

MINUTES

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Chris Parker, Chair (BT)
Emily Reynolds, Vice Chair (BT)
Michael Boutin (BC)
Thomas Kelly (BC Community Member)
Jon Valsangiacomo – (BT Community Member)

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:

OTHER BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Giuliano Cecchinelli, II
Nancy Leclerc

ADMINISTRATORS AND STAFF PRESENT:

Chris Hennessey, Superintendent
Luke Aither, SHS Co-Principal

GUESTS:

Jody Emerson Hannah Leland

1. Call to Order

The Chair, Ms. Parker, called the Wednesday, September 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

Take Agenda Item 5.8 out of order.

On a motion by Mr. Boutin, seconded by Mr. Kelly, the Committee unanimously voted to approve the agenda as amended.

3. Public Comment

None.

4. Approval of Minutes

4.1 Approval of Minutes –June 21, 2023 Policy Committee Meeting

On a motion by Mr. Boutin, seconded by Mr. Valsangiacomo, the Committee voted 3 to 0 to approve the Minutes of the June 21, 2023 Policy Committee Meeting.

Mr. Boutin, Ms. Reynolds, and Mr. Valsangiacomo voted for the Motion. Mr. Kelly abstained.

Discussion moved to Agenda Item 5.8

5. New Business

5.1 Review of BUUSD Policy Manual Index

A copy of the BUUSD Policy Manual Index (dated 09/15/23) was distributed.

Ms. Parker advised that the document has been updated to reflect procedural updates and also includes information to reflect policies that VSBA has recently changed or is working on. There was no discussion.

5.2 VSBA Policy Notes

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

Ms. Parker advised that Mrs. Gilbert has documented VSBA changes in the distributed document. Given the number of policies that VSBA has changed, Ms. Parker has selected a portion of those to be reviewed at this evening’s meeting. There was no discussion.

5.3 Board Member Conflict of Interest Policy (A1) (Required)

Copies of the VSBA and BUUSD policies were distributed.

Ms. Parker provided a brief overview of the changes. Discussion included, but was not limited to; why VSBA is removing verbiage “engage in”, how “give the impression” is defined/proved, changing verbiage “he or she” with “they”, and a query regarding VSBA formatting changes. Mr. Kelly feels strongly that the verbiage “he or she” remain in the policy and he will not endorse using the verbiage “they”. It was noted that VSBA is trying to make policies more ‘inclusive’. Additional discussion included review of a portion of the statute, a suggestion that the District seek clarification from VSBA, a suggestion to keep the verbiage “engage in or”, and lengthy discussion of line by line changes. Mr. Kelly reiterated his objection to changing “he or she” with the use of singular “they”.

The Committee agreed to have Ms. Parker send changes to Mrs. Gilbert, who will make the amendments, and add the policy to the October Policy Committee Agenda.

5.4 Volunteers and Work Study Students Policy (B2) (Required)

Copies of the VSBA and BUUSD policies were distributed.

Brief discussion was held and Mr. Kelly reiterated his objection to changing the verbiage “he or she” to “they”,

On a motion by Mr. Boutin, seconded by Ms. Reynolds, the Committee voted 3 to 1 to send the Volunteers and Work Study Students Policy (B2), as presented, to the Board, for a First Reading.

**Mr. Boutin, Ms. Reynolds, and Mr. Valsangiacomo voted for the motion.
Mr. Kelly voted against the motion.**

5.5 Drug and Alcohol Testing of Transportation Employees Policy (B4) (Required)

Copies of the VSBA and BUUSD policies were distributed.

Brief discussion was held, with Mr. Kelly stating for the record, that he is consistent regarding his belief that ‘his/her’ is appropriate, but does not see an issue with this policy as “his/her” is being replaced with “or designee”.

On a motion by Mr. Boutin, seconded by Mr. Kelly, the Committee unanimously voted to approve as amended, and send the Drug and Alcohol Testing of Transportation Employees Policy (B4) to the Board, for a First Reading.

5.6 Tobacco Prohibition Policy (B7) (Required)

Copies of the VSBA and BUUSD policies were distributed.

Ms. Parker provided an overview of the policy changes. Discussion included a query regarding the title change, a query regarding the definitions (as stated in statute), use of non-tobacco smoking devices (covered under a different policy), and use of nicotine patches and gum (only with a doctor’s prescription).

On a motion by Mr. Boutin, seconded by Mr. Kelly, the Committee unanimously voted to approve the policy as presented and to send the Tobacco Prohibition Policy (B7) to the Board, for a First Reading.

5.7 Transportation Policy (C3) (Required)

Copies of the VSBA and BUUSD policies were distributed.

Ms. Parker provided a brief overview of the changes and noted one typo. Brief discussion was held and a few additional typographical/grammatical amendments were agreed to.

On a motion by Mr. Boutin, seconded by Mr. Kelly, the Committee unanimously voted to approve the policy as amended, and to send the Transportation Policy (C3) to the Board, for a First Reading.

5.8 Electronic Surveillance Policy (F26)

A copy of the BUUSD policy was distributed.

Ms. Emerson advised that when CVCCSD separated from the BUUSD, CVCCSD was granted limited live viewing to only specific areas of the building (areas supervised by CVCCSD). CVCCSD was not granted access to review the recorded footage. When issues arise, CVCCSD administrators need to meet with SHS administrators to review, and ‘clip’ footage (when necessary). CVCCSD is requesting that the policy be amended to allow CVCCSD administrators to view recordings of areas supervised by CVCCSD. Ms. Emerson and Mr. Aither have discussed this matter. Mr. Aither advised that he has discussed proposed policy changes with legal counsel and they do not see an issue with the changes as long as the changes are clearly documented in the policy. The proposed change allows CVCCSD administrators only, to view video recordings of CVCCSD supervised areas and still requires working with SHS administrators for viewing recordings of other areas of the building. Brief discussion was held, which included discussion of concern that access to footage of SHS students can constitute a FERPA violation, a suggestion that the Committee review the amended version prior to it being sent to the Board, and a reminder that in the past, the practice has been to have the proposed changes

in the draft presented at the Policy Committee meeting. The Committee discussed and agreed to wording changes which will be made by Mrs. Gilbert and be reviewed by Mr. Aither and Ms. Emerson prior to being presented to the Board for a First Reading.

On a motion by Mr. Boutin, seconded by Mr. Kelly, the Committee unanimously voted to send an amended version of the Electronic Surveillance Policy (F26) to the Board, for a First Reading.

Discussion moved to agenda item 5.1

6. Old Business

6.1 Policy Audit Follow-up

A copy of an email from Cara Zimmerman to Mr. Hennessey (dated 08/21/23) was distributed.

Mr. Hennessey and Ms. Parker provided a brief overview of the conversation with Ms. Zimmerman, and advised regarding the options to (in lieu of an audit), consider board training on roles and responsibilities pertaining to policy development. Mr. Hennessey recommends that the training option be presented to the Board. There were no questions from the Committee. Mr. Valsangiacomo reiterated his belief that an audit is not necessary. Mr. Valsangiacomo and Mr. Kelly advised that they do not believe they are in a position to weigh in on whether or not the board should engage in training. Ms. Parker advised that she could bring this item to the Board under Round Table, an agenda item, or during committee reports. It was noted that the Committee normally makes official recommendations to the Board.

Mr. Boutin moved to make a recommendation to the Board that the Board not proceed with an audit and that the Board consider the other options that were presented. Ms. Reynolds seconded the motion.

Discussion included reluctance on the part of Mr. Kelly and Mr. Valsangiacomo to weigh in on this matter via a vote. Mr. Valsangiacomo noted that as this matter is not policy related, he does not feel comfortable voting on a recommendation.

Mr. Boutin withdrew the motion.

7. Future Agenda Items

Brief discussion was held regarding adding a Drivers' Education Policy to an agenda. Mr. Aither believes this matter is covered under procedures.

Brief discussion was held regarding VSBIT Model Procedures, and whether or not those should be reviewed (but not by the Policy Committee). Ms. Parker will send the procedures link to Mr. Aither.

Mr. Boutin queried regarding the possibility of the Committee considering a policy on cell phones. It was noted that this matter is currently being explored by some other districts. It was suggested that perhaps a policy recently adopted by Essex be reviewed. Mr. Aither is concerned that discussion of this matter is 'opening Pandora's Box'. Mr. Valsangiacomo will perform research regarding what other districts are doing. This item will be added to the Parking Lot

Brief discussion was held regarding priority being given to required policies.

October meeting:

- Board Member Conflict of Interest Policy (A1) (Required)
- Title One Comparability Policy (D4) (Required) – Parking Lot Item A
- Animal Dissection Policy (D5) (Required) – Parking Lot Item B
- Class Size Policy (D6) (Required) – Parking Lot Item C
- Travel Reimbursement Policy (F1) (Required) – Parking Lot Item D
- Home Study Students Policy (C6) (Required) – Parking Lot Item E

Add to Parking Lot:

- Cell Phone Policy Research (added by Committee 09/2023) – Add to November Agenda (Check with Mr. Boutin first)

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8. Next Meeting Date

The next meeting is Wednesday, October 18, 2023 at 6:00 p.m. at the Spaulding High School Library and via video conference.

9. Adjournment

On a motion by Mr. Boutin, seconded by Mr. Kelly the Committee unanimously agreed to adjourn at 7:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Andrea Poulin