

BUUSD COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS NEWSLETTER

October 2025

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Dear Members of the Barre Town and City Communities,

I am pleased to introduce the first edition of our new Community Connections Newsletter, a publication designed to keep you informed, engaged, and connected to the great work happening across our schools. We hope to publish 3-4 times a year. Strong schools thrive when there is open communication and collaboration with the community, and this newsletter is one way we are deepening that partnership.

Each edition will include a combination of key initiatives, celebrations of student and staff achievements, and updates on district goals and upcoming events. Our hope is that this newsletter serves as both an informative and inspiring look at the collective effort that makes BUUSD a great place to learn and grow.

Thank you for your ongoing support of our students, teachers, and schools. Together, we continue to build a district centered on excellence, equity, and opportunity for every learner.

With appreciation,

JoAn Canning, BUUSD Superintendent of Schools



SUPERINTENDENT NEWS AND NOTES

In October we celebrate Custodian Day, National Boss's Day, National Principals' Month, World Occupational Therapy Day, and Bus Safety Day. Thank you to all of the talented and dedicated staff!

We are also recognizing two teachers of the year as voted in by their peers: Alicia Tosi - Spaulding High School, and Natasha Lincoln - Barre Town Middle and Elementary School. A formal recognition will occur on the University of Vermont campus on October 27, 2025.

REDISTRICTING COMMITTEE

You may be aware that after the passing of Act 73 (H.454) of 2025 last Spring an act relating to transforming Vermont's education governance, quality, and finance systems, a Vermont Redistricting Task Force was formed with an 11-member body created to recommend new school district boundaries to the state's General Assembly. The task force aims to consolidate Vermont's more than 100 school districts into fewer, larger ones to address educational quality and high costs.

Goals: The proposed maps will consolidate the state's 119 existing school districts, which are managed by 52 supervisory unions, into 10 to 25 larger districts. Each new district is required to serve between 4,000 and 8,000 students, though task force members are weighing the difficulties of applying this evenly across the state.

At the School Board Meeting on October 6th, 2025, the BUUSD School Board discussed the redistricting plan and sent **this letter** to the Committee for feedback. For additional information related to redistricting you may email the committee members at ADM.Redistricting@vermont.gov or JoAn Canning, Superintendent of Schools at jcannbsu@buusd.org

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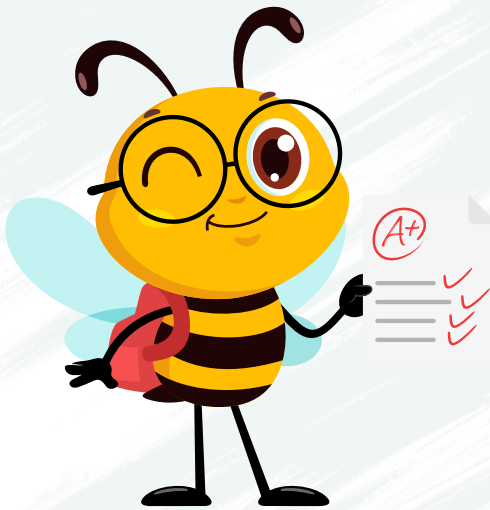
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UNDERSTANDING YOUR STUDENT'S REPORT CARD

Over the past school year, all K-8 teachers completed an intentional process revising and aligning our K-8 Math and ELA Proficiency Scales and Reporting Standards with the Common Core Standards! The high school will be continuing this work in Grades 9-12 this year.

Proficiency Scales are clear, easy-to-understand tools used by teachers, students, and caregivers to track progress toward a specific learning goal or skill. They provide a detailed, four-level roadmap for mastery:



- **1.0 (Beginning):** The student can show only partial success with the basic information or skills, even with significant help from the teacher.
- **2.0 (Developing):** The student understands the simpler content, which includes prerequisite vocabulary and foundational skills necessary to begin the grade-level standard.
- **3.0 (Proficient):** This is the target goal—the student demonstrates full understanding and is able to apply the grade-level knowledge and skills independently.
- **4.0 (Exceeding):** The student has mastered the standard and can apply their knowledge in complex ways or transfer it to new, unique situations, going beyond the grade-level expectation.

Reporting Standards are how student progress tracked through Proficiency Scales is communicated on quarterly student report cards. Each Reporting Standard is aligned to a specific Proficiency Scale so as caregivers you will be able to understand the specific skills associated with concepts like decoding in ELA and addition/subtraction in Math.

On the upcoming 25-26 K-8 Report Cards, caregivers will see these updated Reporting Standards in Math & ELA Grades K through 8. More information will be coming explaining the updated Reporting Standards and Proficiency Scales to caregivers by grade level. It is important to note our curriculum and learning standards have not changed! We are now just able to report student progress in a clearer, more thoroughly aligned manner to the Math & ELA Common Core Standards.

It is also important to note that a student is only beginning their journey at the start of the school year. Therefore, earning a **2.0 in the first grading period is perfectly normal!** A 2.0 indicates that your child has learned the foundational vocabulary and prerequisite skills, which is exactly what teachers focus on first. This score means they have the building blocks necessary to receive instruction and progress toward the target score of 3.0 by the end of the school year.

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A MESSAGE ABOUT THE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

As a school community, we value open communication and strong partnerships between families, staff, and district leaders. Our shared goal is to ensure every student has a safe, supportive, and successful learning experience.

In recent months, we have noticed an increase in the use of social media to express frustrations or concerns about school matters. While social media can be an easy way to share opinions, it is not the most effective or appropriate way to address individual or district concerns. These public posts can sometimes spread misinformation, harm reputations, and create division within our community.

We want to remind families that there are clear and responsive channels for voicing questions, concerns, or complaints. We encourage you to:

- **Contact your child's teacher or school administrator directly** — Most issues can be resolved quickly through direct communication.
- **Reach out to the district office** — If your concern is not resolved at the school level, our district team is available to assist and can be reached at 802-476-5011.
- **Use our formal complaint or feedback process** — Information on how to do so is available on our [district website](#).

We are committed to listening and responding with respect, transparency, and care. Working together—through conversation rather than social media—helps us maintain trust, protect privacy, and focus on what truly matters: supporting our students.

Thank you for your continued partnership and for helping us keep our communication productive, respectful, and student-centered.

With Appreciation,
JoAn Canning, BUUSD Superintendent of Schools

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BUUSD DEPARTMENT UPDATES

SPECIAL SERVICES

Our Special Services team has been focused on creating teaching schedules that ensure services are delivered consistently and effectively. Our goal is to support special educators in dedicating their time to specially designed instruction that meets each student's individualized needs.

We continue to find opportunities for close collaboration with classroom teachers to make sure accommodations and modifications are embedded in general instruction. This work helps ensure that students with disabilities have full access to universal learning opportunities across all grade levels.

We appreciate the ongoing teamwork and communication between staff and families as we work together to support every learner's success.

On Wednesday, October 22nd, our team hosted this year's first Special Services Community Forum. The forum's focus was on re-sharing the recommendations from the Agency of Education and Dr. Meagan Roy, and diving into a deeper discussion of the district's response including the steps already initiated. The presentation and corresponding slides are available online at buusd.org/departments/special-services.

HUMAN RESOURCES

One of the many ways we nurture our staff's wellbeing is with fun, interactive, and informative initiatives through our PATH health and wellness program. This program provides opportunities for staff to challenge themselves and work towards their personal health and wellness goals.

HUMAN RESOURCES (CONT)

Additionally, as cold and flu season approaches, we are further working to support our team by providing on-site Flu and COVID vaccine clinics that are accessible to staff within the schools.

While we have been successful in filling many positions, we do have some remaining vacancies. If you or anyone you know may be interested in a Paraeducator, Permanent Substitute, Behavior Interventionist, or on-call Substitute position, we welcome your applications!

Our current vacancies can be viewed here: buusd.org/careers

BUSINESS OFFICE

The business office team has been busy behind the scenes helping our schools to run smoothly while also preparing for the year ahead. Our annual financial audit is going very well, with early results showing strong financial practices and careful management of district resources. Our team has also been working to simplify and improve day-to-day processes, so staff can get what they need more quickly and efficiently.

As we begin planning for development of the FY27 budget, we are focused on being clear, thoughtful, and responsible in how we plan for the future—always keeping student learning at the center of every decision.

We appreciate our community's partnership and look forward to sharing updates throughout the year!

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BUILDING A STRONGER, HEALTHIER SCHOOL COMMUNITY: AN INTRODUCTION TO PROJECT AWARE & MTSS

You may have heard the terms "Project AWARE" and "MTSS" and wondered what they're all about. In a nutshell, they are a coordinated effort to **ensure every student in our schools feels supported—not just academically, but socially and emotionally, too.**

Think of it as a proactive system to catch challenges early and provide the right help at the right time.

What is MTSS? The Framework for Support (Multi-tiered System of Supports)

The goal of MTSS is simple: **Don't wait for a student to struggle and fail. Identify needs early and support them effectively.**

- **Universal Support (All Students):** This is the foundation. It includes school-wide practices that benefit every student, like teaching all kids about managing emotions, building positive relationships, and using evidence-based effective teaching strategies in every classroom.
- **Targeted Support (Some Students):** For students who need a bit more support, we provide small group interventions.
- **Intensive Support (Few Students):** For students with more significant challenges, we create individualized and intensive plans involving specialized staff, families, and community resources.

So, where does **Project AWARE** fit in? Funded by a federal grant, Project AWARE is the engine that is helping our school district **establish and strengthen** this MTSS framework, with a special focus on mental health. **BUUSD is proud to partner with Washington County Mental Health Services on Project AWARE to embed critical mental health supports directly within our schools, ensuring a stronger, healthier learning community for all our students.**

Project AWARE provides the training, resources, and community partnerships to make our MTSS vision a reality. It's helping us ensure that mental health support is a seamless part of our overall system for student success.

Key Points:

- **It's for EVERY Student:** This isn't just for students in crisis. The foundation is built on universal support that creates a better school environment for all.
- **Early Intervention is Key:** The system is designed to identify academic, social, or emotional needs early and provide help before small challenges become bigger problems.
- **Data Drives Decisions:** We use information like grades, attendance, and behavior to understand student needs and measure what's working.
- **Stronger Community Connections:** Project AWARE helps us partner with local mental health providers to bring more services and expertise directly into our schools.
- **A Team Effort:** Success depends on collaboration between teachers, counselors, administrators, parents, and the community. We're all in this together.

For any questions, please feel free to reach out to the Project AWARE Co-coordinators, Sean McGinnis and Judi Maynard: Sean.mcgininis@wcmhs.org, jmaynbsu@buusd.org.

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OPEN COMMUNITY SEATS ON COMMITTEES

BUUSD FINANCE and FACILITIES COMMITTEES

(Two Vacant Seats For Barre Town - 1 Finance & 1 Facilities), (One Vacant Seat For Barre City - 1 Finance)

Barre Town and Barre City registered voters are needed to fill three vacant committee seats in the Barre Unified Union School District. Community Members may serve on multiple committees, and there are no limits to the number of terms/years a community member may apply and serve. The successful candidate will hold the position until February 28, 2026, when the term ends, and community members will need to reapply for 2-year terms. Review and selection for these open seats will occur at the Barre Unified Union School District Board meeting at 6:00 p.m. on Monday, November 3, 2025. Please submit your interest in writing by mail, email, or in person to Tina Gilbert, Executive Assistant to the Superintendent, by noon on Tuesday, October 28, 2025.

For additional information, please visit this link: [How to Engage with the BUUSD Board](#). It is also available on our website (buusd.org) under the District section, BUUSD Board page.

COMMISSION ON THE FUTURE OF PUBLIC EDUCATION

The Commission on the Future of Public Education has released its [Community Survey](#), and we encourage you to share it widely within your districts. Though the survey is far from perfect, it is important to hear from communities about the evolving needs for education in Vermont. The Commission is also preparing its Interim Report, expected later this month. As mentioned at the All Members' Meeting in September, the VSA Board of Trustees has made the decision to maintain the Association's representation on the Commission through the appointment of the Executive Director given the short timeline until the work sunsets. This follows the thoughtful resignation of the former VSA superintendent appointee.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Curriculum Community Forum

November 12, 5:00pm-6:00pm

Spaulding High School Library

Virtual Option:

meet.google.com/ofu-opop-skg

If you have not yet seen the Times Argus "In the Schools" features, we highly recommend keeping an eye out for their spotlights on local schools districts each Wednesday.

The BUUSD will be featured 4 times this year. Here is a [link](#) to a digital copy of our September feature.

WE WELCOME YOUR FEEDBACK AND WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU. [HERE](#) IS A LINK TO A SURVEY WHERE YOU CAN PROVIDE IDEAS, ASK QUESTIONS, OR SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS.