

**Addendum**  
**BUUSD Board Meeting**  
**March 9, 2026**

School Board Meeting March 9, 2026

## Briefing Memo

**From: JoAn Canning, Superintendent of Schools**  
**Information for the budget debrief**

At the Board Meeting Monday night we will debrief the budget vote. I would like to share with you some of my thoughts for further discussion when we meet.

The municipal votes will happen in both Barre City and Barre Town on May 12, 2026. We should plan to hold the school district revote at that time as well. This means we need to have an adopted budget the week of April 6, 2026. The vote on this date should bring out more people.

At this time, residents need to request absentee ballots. I would like to ask a board member from Barre City and Barre Town to reach out to the Town Clerks and or city officials to ask how and if we could get an absentee ballot to all residents without having individuals request them. I am not sure we can do this, but a conversation is worth a try. In our communications, we will emphasize the date that this request must be made.

I would like to send out a community survey with the questions below. This survey will go out on FPF and through Infinite Campus on Tuesday, March 9, 2026, with your approval. We can use this information to guide our budget decisions.

1. How did you vote for the budget? YES NO I did not vote
2. What additional information sites would have helped you understand the budget or to reference in decision-making?

Email  
Website  
Community Forums  
Social Media  
Mail  
Local Media  
Other

3. What was the primary influencer in your vote?

Taxes too high  
More information needed  
Reduce spending

Other

4. What is your preference for a revised budget?

Smaller budget

More information

Similar budget but better communication plan

Reduced tax rate

Other

5. There is \$978,000 in the School District Tax Stabilization Fund. Should the School Board use some of these funds to reduce the budget and lower the tax rate.

YES

NO

Maybe

I would also like to work with a subgroup of you to create public messages that we can send out.

FACTS: Eighty percent of school votes passed, with 19 districts failing. Most of the districts that passed had increases of over 4% and tax rate increases of 10% and over. Our budget increase was 3.3% increasing the tax rate in the town by 19% and in the city by about 4%. If we continue to cut spending, our budget creates more of an equity gap. Interesting that our budget increase last year was a little over 5% resulting in a tax decrease for both the city and the town. **The education funding formula needs to change!**

NOTES:

As you know, our proposed budget included summer school programming. We cannot possibly plan and implement a summer school program at this late date, not knowing what the next step is for the budget.

I think the school board should reconsider the use of our tax stabilization money, as this is the purpose of the funds. I am pushing hard for the audit report. As of today, I do not have it.

As you remember, each penny on the tax rate is a budget reduction of about \$560,000.

We could increase the CLA and show a tax reduction in the city.

If you have any other thoughts, please send them to me.



# ***BUUSD***

***Barre Unified Union School District***

**ACTION ITEM BRIEFING MEMO  
BUUSD BOARD MEETING AGENDA ITEM  
BUUSD BOARD MEETING AGENDA: March 9, 2026**

**Consent Item No.:**        **Discussion Item No.**        **Action Item No.** 6.1.a

**AGENDA ITEM DESCRIPTION(How the item shall appear on the agenda):** Request for Universal Vote by Mail for Active Voters in BUUSD district

**SUBJECT(Explain what the item is):** Asking the board chair to send a letter to the town selectboard and city council with a request for them to add an agenda item to a future meeting to approve the BUUSD mailing ballots to all active voters in the district.

**SUBMITTING STAFF PERSON or COMMITTEE MEMBER:** Emily Reynolds

**RESOURCES NEEDED INCLUDING STAFF TIME:**

**STAFF RECCOMENDATION:**

**DESIRED OUTCOME (What is the purpose of this item):** Expand access to all active voters in the district

**BACKGROUND/SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION (If there is a background/history regarding it please advise):**

**LINK(S):**

**ATTACHMENTS:** draft letter from Washington Central for reference

**INTERESTED/AFFECTED PARTIES:** BUUSD Board Members and members of the public

**RECOMMENDED ACTION/MOTION:** move to authorize the board chair to draft and send a letter to the Barre Town Select Board and Town Manager and the Barre City Council and City Manager to make a request relative to the handling of the BUUSD ballots.

# Washington Central Unified Union School District

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*WCUUSD exists to nurture and inspire in all students the passion, creativity and power to contribute to their local and global communities.*

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1130 Gallison Hill Road  
Montpelier, VT 05602  
Phone (802) 229-0553  
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Steven Dellinger-Pate  
Superintendent

Nov 21, 2025

Dear Select Boards of Berlin, Calais, East Montpelier, Middlesex and Worcester,

As we approach our respective annual meetings, the Washington Central Unified Union School Board (WCUUSD) wishes to make their annual request relative to handling of school district ballots. As you are aware, all towns are required to distribute school district ballots ***in the same way*** to ensure that the vote is fair and equitable. This is best accomplished when all towns mail school district ballots to their active-registered voters. The WCUUSD Board kindly requests that you add this request as an action item to your next Selectboard Meeting agenda.

*Proposed language for motion:*

***I move that the town of \_\_\_\_\_ allow the Washington Central Unified Union School District to distribute ballots for the WCUUSD Annual Meeting via U.S.P.S. mail to all active-not challenged registered voters on our town checklist***

As in past years, the WCUUSD will pay/reimburse the cost of sending the school ballots, including printing and postage. A reimbursement form will be provided to all Town Clerks in advance of the mailing for this purpose.

Since the School Board cannot vote to take this step until after receiving approval from all member towns, we request that you approve this request in advance of the December 17th School Board Meeting.

For reference, I've provided the statute for your review:

*(1) The legislative body of a town, city, or village may vote to mail a ballot to all active registered voters in the town, city, or village.*

*(2) A school board may, after receiving the approval of the legislative body of each member town in the district, vote to mail its annual meeting ballot to all active registered voters in the district. In such case, the town clerk and election officials in the member towns shall be responsible for the mailing of the ballots but all costs associated with the mailing of ballots shall be borne by the school district.*

*(3) Ballots shall be mailed not less than 20 days before the election, or as soon as they are available.*

The board appreciates your assistance in ensuring that all voters have the same opportunity to vote on the School District's officers and budget. I am happy to respond to any questions you may have regarding this request.

Respectfully,

Flor Diaz Smith, Chair

## Expands Access to Voting

Not everyone can show up in person on Election Day people with disabilities, work shifts, caregiving responsibilities, transportation issues, illness, or those living far from polling places.

Mail-in voting lets more eligible citizens participate, so the electorate better reflects the whole population.

### 2. Reduces Barriers and Stress

Long lines, limited polling locations, or bad weather can discourage people from voting. A mail-in option removes those barriers and makes voting more convenient.

### 3. Increases Turnout

Research shows that when voting becomes easier and more flexible, more people vote—especially the elderly, students, military personnel, and rural residents.

### 4. Gives Voters More Time

Mail-in ballots allow people to research candidates and issues at home instead of rushing through decisions at a voting booth. That often leads to more thoughtful participation.

### 5. Strengthens Democratic Participation

Democracy depends on broad and fair participation. When more people vote, the results better represent the will of the people—making the system *more* democratic.

### 6. Helps Elections Run Smoothly

Mail voting spreads participation over weeks instead of a single day. This can reduce crowding, staffing pressure, and errors at polling places.