

**BEDFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF
April 13, 2010**

1. Call to Order

At 7:30 p.m., Mr. Pierce called to order, the meeting of the Bedford School Committee. Other members present included Ms. Bickford, Ms. Seibert, Ms. O’Gara, Mr. Hafer and Anne Dickinson-Meltz, student representative.

2. Comments From Public

None

3. Personnel Report

Dr. LaCroix asked the School Committee to consider approving a reorganization within the Central Office. She explained that during the budget season, the Director of Curriculum position was cut. She asked the School Committee to consider appointing Cyndy Taymore, currently Director of Special Education, to become the Assistant Superintendent.

Ms. Bickford made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the appointment of Cyndy Taymore to the position of Assistant Superintendent effective of July 1, 2010.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. O’Gara

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

Ms. Taymore addressed the School Committee. She said that when she joined Bedford Public Schools last year, she had two goals: 1) to increase the district’s capacity to educate special education students in Bedford and 2) to expand the range of student supports. According to Ms. Taymore, this new position will allow the focus to be on RTI throughout the district and will continue to build supports and interventions needed to bring SPED students back into the district when appropriate.

Ms. Taymore said, “This position enables me to expand the position to look at delivery of services and improvement of learning using a whole child approach.”

Dr. LaCroix asked the School Committee to consider approving several field trips.

Ms. Bickford made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve a trip to Belize on April 15-23, 2011 for 15-20 students with Mr. Griffin and Ms. Larimore as chaperones at no cost to the schools.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. Seibert

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

Dr. LaCroix explained that once these trips have been approved, information will be sent home to parents and students. Other trips planned for next April include China and a

Latin/French trip. Dr. LaCroix said the High School is trying to announce all trips at the same time so students can make appropriate decisions.

Mr. Griffin said the trip may be offered to Environmental Club members and the general student population if necessary.

Ms. Seibert made the following motion:

MOVED: That the school Committee approve a field trip to the New Hampshire White Mountains on May 19-21,2010 for students in the RISE Program at the High School.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. O’Gara

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

Ms. Bickford made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the field trip to New York City on April 26-27, 2010 for freshman and sophomores to compete in the New York Federal Reserve Euro Challenge competition at the New York Federal Reserve Bank at a cost of \$70-100 per student and no cost to the schools.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. O’Gara

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

School Committee discussed that ten students would be attending (five or which are the student researchers) with Mr. Donnelly and that the Schools will not incur any costs related to this trip.

Dr. LaCroix asked the School Committee to approve the following job descriptions, which were reviewed at earlier School Committee meetings:

Elementary Math Instructional Coach

Ms. Bickford made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the job description for Elementary Math Instructional Coach as amended tonight.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. O’Gara

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

Ms. Seibert made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the job description for Behavioral Specialist –Elementary as presented tonight.

MOTION SECONDED by Mr. Hafer

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

Dr. LaCroix also presented two other job descriptions for the School Committee to review (for the first time) this evening. The job description of Special Education Teacher – High School level, Special Education Teacher – Middle School level, and Special Education Teacher – Elementary Level, were reviewed. Edits were given to Dr. LaCroix who in turn will present the final versions for approval at a later date.

Dr. LaCroix noted the following informational items:

Retirements

Janet Brady	Secretary Guidance	High School
Arlene Gelormini	Secretary Guidance/Athletics	High School
<i>Resignations</i>		
Eileen Caves	.65 Family & Consumer Science Teacher	High School
Robert Ard	Teaching Assistant	Middle School
<i>Appointments:</i>		
Nicole O'Toole	Program Director Music Department	System
Megan Salvucci	Teaching Assistant	Middle School

4. SEPAC Presentation

Ms. Vatcher and Ms. Fine, Co-chairs of Bedford's Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC), gave an update to the School Committee. Ms Vatcher began the presentation by congratulating Ms. Taymore and said that it has been a great year and she is so pleased to have Ms. Taymore in Bedford. Ms. Vatcher explained that SEPAC holds monthly meetings and has eighty active members. She did note that all parents with students enrolled in special education are automatically members of the organization.

Ms. Vatcher said that the organization has been very busy this year with various networking opportunities for parents and holding numerous special programs and speakers. She also thanked Bedford Cable for airing many of the special events and feels that this has been very helpful to Bedford families. SEPAC also meets regularly with Ms. Taymore to exchange information and news.

Ms. Vatcher highlighted the goals from last year and this year.

2009-2010

- Activated Bedford Day subcommittee in order to raise awareness and funds.
- Met with neighboring SEPACs to expand and consolidate programs.
- Established routine meetings with Cyndy Taymore
- Expanded morning coffee networking opportunities
- Conducted a survey and 37 people responded. Information gathered will help plan special events.
- Sarah Ward from the Center for Executive Function Skill Development spoke in March regarding time management theories.
- Dr. Ross Green spoke in January on collaborative problem solving for the behaviorally challenged child.
- Dr. Peg Dawson spoke in November about executive function problems in adolescents.

2010-2011

- Continue with speaker series on Executive Function, ADHD, Sensory Integration and other topics of interest.
- Will expand networking opportunities to some evenings.
- Will partner with other SEPAC organizations to offer a "Basic Rights" presentation.
- Initiate a new SEPAC website.

Ms. Vatcher explained that funding continues to be a challenge for SEPAC. She would like to raise money so they can continue the successful speaker program. This year, each speaker brought in approximately 60-100 attendees. Ms. Vatcher also explained that they would like to have a Davis School liaison position filled, as it has been vacant for a year or so.

Ms. O’Gara commented that it is remarkable how successful Bedford’s SEPAC has become and also thanked BCAT for their support of the special events. Ms. O’Gara also commented that the Nickerson Collection in the public library is a great resource for parents interested in special education.

Ms. Bickford thanked Ms. Vatcher and Ms. Fine for the time and energy they pour into SEPAC. She believes the network is very valuable to families.

Mr. Hafer asked Ms. Taymore how she feels about SEPAC’s advisory role. Ms. Taymore said that the monthly meetings are very valuable and that the dialogue is helpful to both the Administration and the parents.

Mr. Pierce said that he is surprised to hear that there is not a lot of interest in a Basic Right’s seminar. Ms. Vatcher said it could be that parents are initially overwhelmed or that parents may be getting information they need upfront.

Ms. Taymore said that the elementary special educators do a great job walking the parents through the process. She also said that there is a wealth of information online.

5. Science Program Review Report

Janet Kresl Moffat, Chair of the Visiting Team from Weston High School, presented highlights from the Final Report on Bedford Public School’s science curriculum review for grades K-12.

Ms. Kresl Moffat explained that the Visiting Team consisted of herself, John Papadonis from Burlington Public Schools, Tara Fernandez from Concord Middle School and Timothy Reed from the Groton School. The team spent three days (February 1-3, 2010) visiting and observing classes and interviewing groups of parents, teachers, students, administrators, and Special Education staff. The visit was the second part of a three part curriculum review process. The priority of the Team was to gather evidence and make recommendations pertinent to the essential questions posed by Bedford’s Science Self Study Committee.

Ms. Kresl Moffat noted the dedication of Bedford’s science faculty and staff and said everyone was actively engaged at all levels. She also said the new High School facility is amazing as are the quantity and quality of science related extracurricular activities.

All in all, the Visiting Team felt that Bedford’s Self Study “accurately identified the strengths and weaknesses of the program and reflected the commitment of the faculty to the development of their students and to the practice of good teaching.”

The following recommendations were made:

- Increasing coordination between the schools in Bedford. Teachers should know the curriculum coming before and after their particular grade. The more vertical integration of curriculum the better.
- Hire an Elementary Science Curriculum coordinator to help unify curriculum and focus on essential Massachusetts framework requirements.
- Increase professional development to build a teacher's repertoire of instructional delivery.
- Develop common assessments at the elementary schools to ensure all students have common core information.
- Develop essential vocabulary for each grade in the elementary schools.
- Focus on physical science in 8th grade.
- Lane School needs dedicated storage for equipment and needs more equipment to meet essential standards.
- At the High School, build level 4 curriculum to move students into a successful AP experience. Teach the skills needed to be successful in an AP class.
- Level four classes should have more critical thinking.
- Require students in AP classes to take the AP exam. This will make students work hard and the teachers will get feedback on the quality of their AP instruction.
- All in all, there is a confusing approach to AP classes in Bedford. Need to increase the education of parents and students of the College Board expectations.

Ms. O'Gara thanked Ms. Kresl Moffat and the rest of the Visiting Team for their time and for bringing many of these ideas forward.

Ms. O'Gara said that it was interesting to hear the fact that Bedford is different because it does not require students to take the AP exam. Ms. O'Gara said she realizes that Bedford High School does not have an intense AP culture at the school.

Ms. Bickford thanked Ms. Kresl Moffat too. She said it was interesting to learn that Lane has a space issue too and lacks essential equipment. Ms. Bickford said that the School Committee needs to talk about this and to figure out a way to help.

Ms. Bickford said she is resistant to change the middle school science and to move away from Earth Science at the eighth grade in middle school (students may never see it again). Ms. Kresl Moffat said this was a good debate. However, Physical Science in the 8th grade will help with 9th grade Physics.

Ms. Bickford asked if the parent and community comments from the science program review would be available. Dr. LaCroix said yes, it would be posted on the web.

Ms. Seibert asked how Bedford will accomplish some of the recommendations, especially given the tight financial climate of the town. Mr. Griffin said the Action Plan (the next step in the process) will look at this issue.

Mr. Hafer thanked the Team too and said he looks forward to seeing the Action Plan.

Mr. Pierce asked how one moves toward a more inquiry based curriculum. Ms. Kresl Moffat answered that the best way is to build on exemplary work.

Mr. Pierce asked if science instruction/curriculum was put on the back burner in Bedford since so much of the focus has been on ELA and math. Ms. Kresl Moffat said yes, and teachers fear this is happening. There is a concern at the elementary level of how teachers can get it all done. Also, elementary teachers do not want to move into the middle school departmental teaching model.

Ms. Anne Dickinson Meltz asked how long Bedford has offered science AP classes. Mr. Griffin said for about 20 years.

Ms. Anne Dickinson Meltz also said she did not think blending levels 3 and 4 together in science was a good idea and that it would be difficult for some students as some students really struggle with science.

Ms. Kesl Moffat agreed and said that Level 4 needs to become more distinctive.

Mr. Griffin said level 3 and level 4 courses are only combined for senior electives in order to avoid singletons.

6. Foreign Language Program Review Report

Dr. Cindy Crimmin presented the final report from the Foreign Language Program Review. Dr. Crimmin presented on behalf of Janice Darias of Belmont Public Schools, who was unable to come tonight.

Dr. Crimmin explained that the Visiting Team consisted of Janice Darias Acting Assistant Superintendent of Belmont Public Schools, Timothy Egan from Wellesley Public Schools and Ines Rodriguez-Digon from Concord Middle School. The Visiting Team was at Bedford on March 1, 2 and 4th. She explained that this was the second step in the three-part Program Review Process for Bedford's Foreign Language program.

Dr. Crimmin explained that the Visiting Team met with district and building administrators, foreign language teachers from all three schools, as well as the Foreign Language Program Director, Guidance Counselors, METCO Director, Special Education teachers, parents and middle and high school students.

The Team was guided by ten essential questions (determined by Bedford's Self Study) and determined the following commendations:

- High level of support of foreign languages
- Strong departmental leadership and dedication from teachers
- Good travel opportunities to use languages
- Good emphasis on higher order thinking and active learning
- Valuable UBD documentation
- Strong FLES curriculum at Lane School.
- Good use of technology to differentiate and reinforce
- Strong culture of collaboration fostered in all schools

The Team made the following recommendations:

- Review curriculum in grades 6-8 to avoid repetition
- Add more cultural theme units in grades 6-8 incorporating skills learned in Grades 3-5.
- Create placement test to ease transitions (Grades 5 and 8)/Assessments
- Seek more opportunities with language groups outside of schools.
- Ensure consistent availability of technology at Lane and JGMS.
- Consider adding Mandarin at Grade 6.
- Reconsider dual language offerings at Lane School.
- Review policy of allowing students to change language at the Middle School
- Develop protocol for placing ELL at BHS
- Consider offering French Level 1/2 in alternate years at BHS

Ms. O’Gara said many of the recommendations are interesting. She said offering French level 1/2 on alternating years is of interest.

Ms. O’Gara asked if there were any comments or recommendations for supporting Hanscom students at the High School. Dr. Crimmin said no comments, but she feels that Bedford offers a lot of starting point options for Hanscom students.

Ms. Bickford said that the Curriculum Review is a healthy process. She was surprised to read about the Language Lab having equipment issues. Ms. Barnett, Foreign Language Director, said that the equipment from the old high school is in use and is not wireless so technology concerns do pop up frequently.

Ms. Bickford thought that the Foreign Exchange program suggestion was an excellent idea and would be a great enhancement for Bedford.

Ms. Seibert said that the report and presentation makes it obvious that Bedford has a great Foreign Language Program and that it seems to require some fine tuning.

Mr. Hafer said that instituting placement tests at Grade 8 would not ease the transition to the High School but could possibly create fear and stress.

Mr. Pierce said that the uncertainty with French is apparent in this report. He feels the schools really need to consider ramifications if we eliminate French as an option at Lane.

Ms. Anne Dickinson-Meltz said that the Rotary Club is always interested in Foreign Exchange opportunities.

The School Committee thanked Dr. Crimmin, the Visiting Team and all of the Foreign Language Department teachers for coming tonight and for a thorough report.

7. School Lunch Prices

Mr. Coelho presented three different price increase options to the School Committee to consider.

Mr. Coelho said that he and Mr. Whittier, Food Services Director, recommends increasing the cost of school lunch by \$.25 at all four schools in Bedford. This will help

Food Services continue to break even (or make a small profit). Mr. Whittier and Mr. Coelho also recommend increasing adult lunch prices and a la carte items as well.

Mr. Coelho said other options include increasing Davis's lunch prices by a smaller amount (since the serving size is smaller). He also said if prices remain the same, then a \$5,000 loss can be expected.

Mr. Coelho also presented prices of lunch at nearby school districts. Bedford is considerably lower than most. Mr. Coelho also presented a historical review of Bedford's price increases.

Ms. Bickford said she does not feel this recommendation is too much or too soon. But she is sensitive to the fact that we have been in a recession and many families are struggling financially. Overall, she does support a 25-cent increase and she does expect to see a drop in the number of meals served.

Ms. O'Gara asked if there has been a large jump in the numbers of families on free or reduced lunch. Mr. Coelho said that he has seen somewhat of an increase but not a large jump. Mr. Coelho said the biggest problem is getting families to apply year by year and whenever their circumstances change.

Ms. Seibert said that three out of the four schools have a cost per meal higher than the price. She also noted that Bedford is lower priced when compared to school lunch prices at nearby districts. Therefore, she believes it makes sense to increase the price.

Mr. Hafer agrees that it is time to increase the price and favors the recommendation.

Ms. Bickford made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the price increase of 25 cents for the 2010-2011 school lunch price at Davis, Lane, JGMS and BHS as outlined in the memorandum dated April 9, 2010 as "Option 3".

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. O'Gara

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

8. Administration Reorganization

Dr. LaCroix said that with the appointment of Cyndy Taymore to Assistant Superintendent, she is recommending a re-organization within the Special Education Department in which we will have two Assistant Directors. One will be the Assistant Director of SPED – ODD and the other will be Assistant Director of SPED – In district. The In district position is new and needs to be approved by the School Committee. Dr. LaCroix explained that the job description will be drafted and presented to the School Committee at a later date. She also assured the School Committee that the cost of this reorganization will be within the approved FY'11 budget.

Ms. Bickford made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the elimination of the Director of Special Education position and the creation of a school-year position of Assistant Director of SPED – In district to be effective July 1, 2010.

MOTION SECONDED by Mr. Hafer

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

9. Synthetic Turf Field at BHS Discussion

Mr. Pierce explained that the School Committee received a letter from Town Manager, Rick Reed, asking for the School Committee's concurrence of changing the football field to artificial turf.

He further explained that the Turf Committee raised the amount of funds committed and has turned the money over to the Selectmen so the Selectmen can move to the next step of the project – site design.

Mr. Pierce commented that the town by-laws are unclear in terms of who has jurisdiction and maintenance responsibility of a turf field at the football field.

Ms. Bickford stated her concern. She feels that Mr. Reed's letter asking for concurrence implies that the School Committee will agree to final funding of the project. Ms. Bickford said she is not ready to do this and more information is needed. She does not understand how the project will be funded since CPA funds cannot be used. She is very concerned about securing funds for the schools' operating budget in the near future and believes that the concurrence of this project is not separate from the question of how it will be funded.

Ms. O'Gara is not sure concurrence to the next step, site design, implies concurrence to funding the project.

Ms. Seibert said that it does seem premature to approve this when the Town has not completed an overall field study in town.

Mr. Hafer said he is a proponent for a turf field. He said the field situation in town is "abysmal". However, he agrees that it is strange time to embark on the turf project since next year's operating budget will be extremely tight. He agrees that finances need to be worked out but would like to tell the Turf Committee and Selectmen that the School Committee agrees to change the football field to turf.

Ms. Bickford read the School Committee vote from November 2008 that stated that in keeping with the long standing practice, the School Committee would continue to share the football field with others if the Town decided to convert it to synthetic turf.

Ms. Bickford feels that the question put forth to the School Committee from the Selectmen and Mr. Reed is very different and much more encompassing. She is not ready to answer that question tonight. She does not want to concur to move forward without information on where the money will come from. She is comfortable with reaffirming the November 2008 vote that the Schools will share the turf field with the community.

Ms. Piccuito, a member of the Turf Committee in the audience, explained the funds raised are strictly limited to the design of a turf football field. She said that the Design Phase will address a lot of the School Committee questions and concerns. She also noted that turf design has a long shelf life. Ms. Piccuito strongly urged the School Committee to consider agreeing to move to the next step – design.

Mr. Ron Richter, a member of the Turf Committee also in the audience, said that the School Committee raised legitimate concerns tonight. He said it was important to recognize the importance of the town having good infrastructure for after school activities for students and community members. He said the football field has value to all – lights, concession and central location. He believes that there will be a time when Bedford finds a way to do this project. He also said that the design has a long shelf life while the funding issues are worked out.

Mr. Pierce responded to Mr. Richter and Ms. Piccuito by saying that School Committee is trying to find the right words to convey to Mr. Reed and the Selectmen.

After further discussion, Mr. Hafer made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee acknowledges that the Town has raised the funds for the design of the artificial turf on the Bedford High School football field. The School Committee does not object to the design phase commencing at this time. Furthermore, the School Committee requests to participate in the design process so that all school-related interests may be addressed. The School Committee takes no position regarding the funding and construction of this project at this time.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. O’Gara

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

10. Superintendent’s Report

Nothing tonight

11. Minutes for Approval

Postponed to the next meeting.

12. Liaison Reports

Nothing tonight.

13. Adjournment

Ms O’Gara made the following motion:

MOVED: Motion to adjourn at 11:45 p.m. to Executive Session for contract negotiations, to reopen.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. Bickford

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Pierce	Yes
Ms. Seibert	Yes
Mr. Hafer	Yes
Ms. Bickford	Yes
Ms. O’Gara	Yes

School Committee Secretary

Date

BEDFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE

**EXECUTIVE SEESION
MINUTES OF**

April 13, 2010