

BEDFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE MINUTES OF

January 26, 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 and Mr. Hafer. Ms. Anne Dickinson Meltz, student representative, was also present.

2. Comments From Public

None.

3. Personnel Report

Dr. LaCroix reported the following information items:

Resignations

Megan Last	Social Studies Teacher	Bedford High School
John Espejo	Elementary Teacher	Lane School
Andrea Gabriel-Jabbour	Teaching Assistant	Lane School

Returning from Leave (2010-2011)

Melina Rosecan	.6 Social Studies Teacher	Bedford High School
----------------	---------------------------	---------------------

Appointments

Bryan Tonini	.9 Teaching Assistant	Middle School
Ashley MacDonald	Teaching Assistant	Lane School

4: Presentation: Athletic Department

Keith Mangan, Director of Athletics, gave a program review on the Athletics programs at the High and Middle Schools.

Mr. Mangan reviewed the goals of the department:

- Strengthen the connection between Academics and Athletics
- Promote strong scholastic and athletic value
- Build the capacity of our programs through feeder programs (sub varsity, middle school and recreation)
- Promote opportunities for personal and professional growth.

Mr. Mangan said that last year, 64% of students participated in at least one sport. This year, the participation rate is expected to be 73%. Mr. Mangan said this number is above the state average. He further explained that there are 19 sport offerings. Twelve teams are boys and 13 are girls’ teams. Indoor track, ice hockey, golf and swimming are mixed gender.

Mr. Mangan said that there are three program levels. In general, the program levels are designed to focus on sportsmanship and fair play. The three goals used to determine level of play are:

- To emphasize the development of basic skills, appropriate attitudes, values and teach concepts

- To allow as many students as possible to participate
- To compete competitively

Mr. Mangan explained that in the Middle School, the programs are competitive but the focus is on skill development. Cross-country is offered to all middle school students and the 7th and 8th grade program consists of soccer, basketball, softball, baseball, football and field hockey.

Mr. Mangan then described the emphasis on the three high school levels of sports:

Freshman level

- Development of fundamental skills and learning of the rules of the game
- Equal practice opportunities
- The amount of game time is determined by the coach's evaluation of attitude, skills, team role and working toward equitable playing time
- Development of an orientation toward team effort by each athlete
- Development of the ambition to achieve the next level of competition

Junior Varsity level

- Reinforcement and refinement of fundamental skills and rules of the game
- The amount of game time is determined by the coach's evaluation of attitude, skills and team role
- More sophisticated athletic strategies
- Specific definition of the athlete's role within the team concept
- Greater emphasis is given to the concepts of commitment and team play
- Emphasis on physical conditioning and development
- Development of ambition to play at the next level

Varsity level

- High proficiency in physical skills
- The amount of game time is determined by coach
- Strategy, situation analysis and all mental aspects of the sport
- Maximum commitment to the athletic team
- Physical conditioning components of one's sport
- Individual sacrifice for the good of the team

Mr. Mangan shared the recent records with the School Committee. Last year, the boys' teams' record was 82-83-6 which is a .479% and girls' teams were 60-116-6 which is a .329%. He also reviewed the many program honors and awards that have been given to Bedford High School athletes.

Mr. Mangan reviewed his budget drivers. Coach's stipends, game officials, contracted services (such as facility rentals, transportation, police details) are the primary expense drivers. Other expenses include League dues, appointment of League Commissioners stipends, travel and equipment.

Mr. Mangan described what's new:

- Implementing new evaluations for Head and Assistant coaches
- Updated Athletic Handbooks for Student Athletes.

- Fine-tuned registration paperwork/form process for students
- Captains will run a community service project
- Speakers will be brought in for the annual parent/athlete meetings
- Reorganizing the Bedford Athletic Association
- Adding Girls Cross Country team

Mr. Mangan also spoke about the fact that Arlington will be leaving the Dual County league. He said this will unfortunately hurt us because Arlington was a good match. Tyngsboro has also applied to the MIAA to leave the league as well. These changes won't be effective until July 2011.

Mr. Mangan is considering a few more additions. Girls Indoor Track, Boys Swimming, Boys Volleyball, Wrestling (on a cooperative basis) and Girls Ice Hockey are all being reviewed for sustainability and feasibility.

Looking ahead, Mr. Mangan's wish list is to add uniform replacements back into his budget and to restore the Assistant Football Coach for freshmen. He would also like to see freshmen Swim Coach, a weight room supervisor, a full time Athletic Trainer who could teach and/or an equipment manager. Mr. Mangan however, is thankful for the support he does get for the program.

Ms. O'Gara thanked Mr. Mangan for a comprehensive presentation. She is especially pleased to hear about the coaching evaluations. She also thinks the program aspirations are reasonable and based on safety concerns.

Ms. Bickford said that she learned a lot tonight. She asked Mr. Mangan to expand on the athletic/academic link. Mr. Mangan said that athletics is an extension of the classroom and that the athletes learn a lot of life lessons both on the field and in the classroom. He also noted that athletes tend to do better in academics when in season. He also said that students can build strong relationships with coaches and teachers. He also noted that it is great to see that in Bedford, students can be an athlete, a musician and a strong student – many students cross activities and do this well.

Ms. Bickford asked how the number of coaches needed is determined. Mr. Mangan said that Varsity always has a head and an assistant coach and the rest is based on numbers. Also, the type of sport determines need as well. For example, football is a contact sport and requires a lot of adults.

Ms. Bickford asked how the Bedford Athletic Association supports the programs. Mr. Mangan said he reviews any fundraising needs/efforts. In turn the coaches should be communicating where the funds are used.

Ms. Bickford asked how Mr. Mangan chooses volunteers. Mr. Mangan said that he interviews volunteers just like any paid position.

Ms. Seibert said she is impressed with the professionalism of the program.

Ms. Seibert asked Mr. Mangan to talk more about his future aspirations. Mr. Mangan said he would really like to add more sports. However, he did say that he is very

thankful that Bedford has not instituted fees. He is very glad that our athletes don't have to "pay to play".

Ms. Seibert asked how the coaches are trained. Mr. Mangan said that Varsity coaches are trained and that solid references are very important. He said there is a lot of on-staff training. Also, coaches are first aid certified.

Ms. Seibert asked about Middle School participation rates. Mr. Mangan said the rate is about 40% for this year.

Ms. Seibert asked if there was any communication with the Recreation Department. Mr. Mangan said yes, that there is a good relationship with all of the town organizations. In fact, he said there is a new group starting, a Field Usage Committee. He said together, he will work with Recreation, DPW, etc to figure out ways to preserve the fields and maximize area usage.

Mr. Hafer said sports are a great part of our town and he thinks we have great participation numbers. He also thinks we have great viewership too.

Mr. Hafer asked if Mr. Mangan had any ideas on how to increase revenue. Mr. Mangan said that ticket prices increased this year and that all the money goes back to the programs. But unfortunately, there are not a lot of other areas to raise revenues.

Mr. Hafer asked how the town was doing with the infrastructures (capital expenditures). Mr. Mangan said some changes have been made. For example, the permanent soccer goals are being removed and some of the fields will be reconfigured. The scoreboards do need to be updated.

Mr. Pierce asked if Mr. Mangan would ever consider student athlete evaluations. Mr. Pierce thought this would be good, especially at the freshmen level. He thinks it would help the students who don't play understand what types of skills they need to work on. Mr. Mangan said he works on this with coaches all the time. Captains will do evaluations on the season. Also, he plans on doing "exit" interviews with the senior athletes.

Mr. Pierce asked if using the remote fields was a consideration. Mr. Mangan said yes they have been considered but logistics is difficult and often the field sizes are smaller.

Ms. Picciuto, a parent in the audience, spoke. She thanked the School Committee for supporting the athletic programs especially the Middle School interscholastic expansion. She also thanked Mr. Mangan for an informative presentation. She is especially pleased to hear about the Field Usage Committee being formed.

Ms. Picciuto asked if there was a head coach hiring process. Mr. Mangan said there is a small committee and that the Principal has the final OK.

Ms. Picciuto also asked if there was a corporate sponsorship policy. Mr. Mangan said no but that large donations have to go through the Finance Department and/or the School Committee.

Ms. Picciuto suggested using the Web page as a way to publish a “wish list”. Mr. Mangan said that the BAA would be a good place to start.

Mr. Kenney, Finance Committee member, asked what other nearby schools do or do not charge user fees. Mr. Mangan said Waltham, Boston Latin, Weston do not charge fees. Tyngsboro charges \$500 per student per sport and it drastically affects participation.

5. Presentation: Bedford High School Program of Studies 2010-2011

Mr. Sills presented the proposed changes to the Program Of Studies for 2010-2011. He presented all of the changes to the School Committee in a memorandum dated January 22, 2010. At the meeting, he summarized the major changes. He did note that none of the recommended changes entail adding any FTE. Additions are offset by deletions or will run as an elective and will displace another elective or section.

Mr. Sills thanked Mr. Tracy for his work on updating the Program of Studies.

Some minor changes presented include:

- Mr. Sills explained that the period to change courses has been extended.
- Some Air Force ROTC courses will be offered as minors.
- English placement may change. GRADE tests may no longer be used as criteria for levels. The final change will be brought to the School Committee’s attention at a later meeting and publicized in an addendum.
- Some changes and clarifications have been made to the music levels.
- Changes have been made to the AP Physics pre-requisites.

Mr. Sills went into further detail about the changes proposed to the Foreign Language offerings. In French, there will be a return to a non-level scope and sequence. The limited offerings are driven by declining numbers of French students. Also, the teachers find that they need to do five or six preparations for all of the levels and they cannot sustain this type of preparation.

Ms. Bickford said that she is concerned that some students, who are freshmen Level 3 right now, would be forced to take French Level 4 next year in order to get the two consecutive years of foreign language requirement by colleges. She fears a lot of French Level 3 students will drop French altogether next year since the only offering will be a Level 4 class.

Ms. O’Gara fears that our tradition of focusing on conversing in the language in classes will not prepare students to move into the Level 5 AP class (which has a focus on grammar). Mr. Sills acknowledges that this may be challenging but teachers will help students and will have summer packets.

Members of the School Committee said that overall, they would like to see consistency in the AP courses. They would also like the students who are in the 85-90 range to be encouraged to go for it and not be discouraged.

Mr. Sills agreed that this would be the message especially with the teacher recommendations.

Mr. Sills then described a change to the math descriptions and pre-requisites. He presented a new Calculus course description that allows for more flexibility in the instruction and ability to meet the needs of the students. All in all, he said the prerequisites needed to be clearer about the rigor of the class.

Ms. Seibert asked why a summer packet is necessary for a Pre-calculus Level 4 student moving into Calculus Level 4. Mr. Sills said that summer packet will prepare students for the change that occurs in the Calculus class.

Mr. Sills also proposed offering Environmental Sciences as a level 5 AP only. He said that this change is due to an FTE problem. Ms. Bickford asked that the Level 4 offering continue to be listed in the Program of Studies to see if students are interested in it since it was not offered this year. She thinks some students may want to take it if it was not offered as an AP class. Mr. Sills agreed to keep the Level 4 in the Program of Studies as a placeholder and will survey the students, but he does not think he can run it due to limited resources.

Ms. Bickford said overall, the level 2/3 course descriptions need to be more distinguishable.

Mr. Hafer suggested that the Department Interns help sustain some of the work that may be in jeopardy due to proposed cuts in assistants.

Ms. O'Gara made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the proposed Program Of Studies for the 2010-2011 School Year as amended.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. Bickford

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

Mr. Kenney, member of the Finance Committee, asked who pays for summer courses to meet prerequisites. Mr. Sills said families pay.

6. Approval of FY2011 Budget

Dr. LaCroix reviewed the FY 2011 budget:

Original Request	\$32,781,189
Town Guideline	\$31,743,189
Difference	\$1,038,054

Reductions tentatively approved on January 22, 2010	\$683,274
Current FY11 Budget Request	\$32,097,915

Additional Cuts to meet Guideline	\$354,780
-----------------------------------	-----------

Dr. LaCroix presented her recommendations of the budget reductions that would be needed to meet this \$354,780 figure:

- HS General Supplies \$3,000
- MS Supply Budgets \$6,600
- Lane General Supplies \$3,000
- MS .2 staff in music \$9,479

• System SRO	\$20,000
• HS Library Aid	\$22,241
• MS Library Aid	\$19,064
• MS .4 FTE in Gifted	\$29,642
• Computer replacements	\$36,000
• HS 1 FTE	\$54,578
• Davis FTE in gr. 2	\$51,776
• Additional OOD/Sped	\$85,200
• Davis Instructional supplies	\$10,500
• LIPS training at Davis	\$1,200
• Davis Science kits	\$2,500
Total Reductions	\$354,780

Dr. LaCroix noted that Mr. Sills already referred to the squeeze on teaching resources and these further cuts will make things even tighter with scheduling and offerings.

Dr. LaCroix also noted that the cut in the grade 2 teacher is a big loss due to her ELL training.

Ms. Bickford said that she feels that we need more conversations to truly understand the impact of many of these cuts. She feels like the schools have squeezed as much as possible without impacting the program next year.

Ms. O’Gara is concerned that these cuts are really going too deep and that it will put pressure on the fragile special education students.

Ms. Seibert commented that there is still more information to come from our own Finance Committee and from the State so she cannot justify making these deep cuts right now.

The School Committee analyzed the proposed cuts in the supplies. Ms. Bickford determined that the cuts are really too deep and she did not want to move forward recommending them.

Ms. Bickford made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve for discussion with the Finance Committee the FY2011 budget request of \$32,097,915.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. O’Gara

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

Ms. Deb Picciuto, a member of the audience, said a broader discussion with more stakeholders present may very well support this motion.

Mr. Kenney, a member of the Finance Committee, said the revenue stream to the town is limited and funds used to support this will have to come from other town departments, who are also suffering.

7. Superintendent’s Report

Dr. LaCroix is proud and amazed of the efforts of our students to help the people of Haiti. For example, at Lane School, there was a lunchtime collection of \$4,000 which

was matched by parents. At JGMS, they held "hat day" which raised \$4,000. Davis and the High School have fundraisers in the planning stages.

8. Liaison Reports

Bedford Education Foundation is having a fundraiser at the restaurant, Palio's. It sounds like it will be very successful, according to Mr. Hafer.

9. Minutes for Review

Postponed until next School Committee meeting

10. Adjournment

Ms Bickford made the following motion:

MOVED: Motion to adjourn at 11:30 p.m.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. O'Gara

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**

January 26, 2010