

**BEDFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
MINUTES OF  
May 27, 2014  
Bedford High School - Large Group Instruction Room**

**1. Call to Order**

At 7:40 p.m., Mr. Pierce called to order the meeting of the Bedford School Committee. Other members present included Mr. McAllister, Ms. Guay, and Ms. Seibert. Mr. Hafer was absent.

**2. Comments**

None

**3. Personnel Report**

The School Committee voted to approve a field trip for BHS winners of the Massachusetts History Day Competition to travel to Maryland on June 15-19, 2014 in order to compete in the National History Day Competition. Mr. Sills explained that students would miss school those days but would take finals while away. The exams will be supervised. He noted that this had been done in the past. The cost is \$495 per student.

Ms. Seibert made the following motion:

**MOVED: That the School Committee approve the field trip request for 13 BHS students to travel to University of Maryland in College Park, MD to compete in the National History Day competition on June 15 – June 19, 2014 at no cost to the school department.**

**MOTION SECONDED by Ms. Guay**

**MOTION APPROVED: 4-0**

Mr. Sills announced the following:

- Resignation of Nikki Lua as Secretary at Lane School
- Julie Sutton, Davis School, will become the .5 RTI Interventionist at Davis for the 2014-2015 school year.
- Patricia White, Davis School, will move from the .5 RTI Interventionist to a 1.0 ELL teacher.
- Lisa Fontaine-Rainen, Gifted and Talented Teacher at JGMS, will be on a leave of absence.
- Amie Capodanno has been appointed Program Administrator of Guidance at the High School.
- Maryellen Schissler has been appointed a .4 BHS Preschool teacher
- Anna Ginzburg has been appointed a .6 BHS Preschool teacher.
- Stephen McCarthy has been appointed a .6 English teacher at the high school
- Julia Herman has been appointed as a replacement elementary teacher at Lane
- Celia Oppedisano has moved from a TA position at Davis to a Kindergarten teacher.
- Alli Lua has moved from a TA position at Davis to a second grade teacher.
- Kainatbanu Khalifu will be a grade 1 teacher at Davis.
- Kassidy Meck will be a Physics teacher at the high school.

**4. JGMS Handbook Presentation**

Mr. Tracey, Principal, and Mr. Mehler, Assistant Principal, presented the proposed changes to the 2014-2015 JGMS Student/Parent Handbook.

Mr. Mehler had distributed a detailed change memo dated May 21, 2014 to the School Committee members. His presentation focused only on the major changes and any questions the School Committee members had.

According to Mr. Mehler, the major changes focused on

- Programming updates including those in the new Skills Center and Academic Intervention
- Introducing the JGMS Honor Code
- Refining the Code of Conduct – changed it from being punitive to a restorative justice approach whenever appropriate.

The School Committee members commented that they truly appreciate the changes made to the Code of Conduct and are pleased to see a more reasonable approach that allows students to make mistakes and to recover and learn from these mistakes. They did not have any concerns with the proposed changes outlined in the memo.

Ms. Seibert made the following motion:

**MOVED: That the School Committee approve the revisions to the 2014-2015 JGMS Student/Parent Handbook as discussed and outlined in the memo dated May 21, 2014.**

**MOTION SECONDED by Ms. Guay**

**MOTION APPROVED: 4-0**

## **5. JGMS School Improvement Plan 2014-2015 presentation**

Mr. Tracey said that the 2014-2015 plan is similar to last year's plan and is just as ambitious. He said many of the goals are long-term goals but he wants to continue showing them year-to-year. Mr. Tracey thanked the members of the School Council for helping prepare the plan. He thanked the students who helped as well.

Major goals for 2014-2015 include:

### **Governance and Leadership Goals**

- Continue to maximize the effectiveness of the professional development model (Wednesday collaboration time) and student success

### **Curriculum and Instruction Goals**

- Continue with identifying and implementing best instructional practices. Mr. Tracey and all of the departments have been working on curriculum.
- Continue to foster a positive school culture – building character education into Advisory, stress-reduction activities, and build civic awareness.
- Continue to try to maximize effectiveness of the schedule to meet needs of all students.
- Find ways to increase student voice in leadership.
- Continue with school-wide data team and analysis to address inequity documents as a first step in this goal. He hopes the curriculum documents will be ready for posting on the website in the fall. He noted that the Social Studies department has been working on curriculum that will include government and civics (which will be a nice tie into the Washington DC trip.)
- Focus on technology as an instructional tool. Professional development needs to step up in this area.

### **Assessment Goals**

- Need to review the assessment “lens” at the school. “Are we using and developing higher order thinking?”

### **Student Support Goals**

- Mr. Tracey noted that the teacher at the Skills Center (Ms. Naylor) has done great work. He will be adding a Teaching Assistant to work in the Skills Center next year.
- The Bridge space is inadequate for the thirty students so Mr. Tracey will be making some changes.

Mr. McAllister complimented Mr. Tracey on his goals and thought that his changes are all driven to build programs that are geared to meeting the unique needs of middle school students. He did note that the goals are very ambitious and he is pleased that Mr. Tracey views them as long-term goals.

Ms. Seibert was excited to learn about efforts underway to reduce stress and that social-emotional goals have all students in mind.

Mr. Pierce asked Mr. Tracey if the school was doing an appropriate job with the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade leveling. Mr. Tracey said he is listening to the teachers and recognizes that it is important for students to move up when they can. He will be revisiting this issue.

Mr. Pierce said he would like to understand the JGMS Technology vision more. Mr. Tracey said he would continue to develop this vision.

Ms. Seibert made the following motion:

**MOVED: That the School Committee approve the JGMS 2014-2015 School Improvement Plan.**

**MOTION SECONDED by Ms. Guay**

**MOTION APPROVED: 4-0**

### **5. Remote Participation in Board or Committee Meetings**

Mr. Pierce explained that the Selectmen were looking for feedback from each town committee on the idea that it may be acceptable, under a handful of circumstances, to hold meetings with members remotely. A draft of a proposed policy (written by the town of Lincoln) was given to the School Committee to review.

Mr. McAllister said he listened to the Finance Committee discussion on this issue and they determined that members really should be present for a meeting. The Finance Committee, and Mr. McAllister, feel that it is not a compelling problem for Bedford.

Ms. Guay said that the proposal to allow remote participation could be useful but agrees that Bedford does not really have a need for it.

Mr. Pierce said he did not think the policy would be appropriate for the School Committee. He would like to tell the Selectmen that they could vote on adopting the provision to hold a meeting

with remote participation, but he does not think the School Committee should use this option. Other School Committee members agreed with Mr. Pierce.

## **6. PARCC v. MCAS State Testing Discussion**

Mr. Sills reported that Bedford has to decide whether to go with PARCC assessments rather than MCAS for the 2014-2015 school year. Mr. Sills noted that 10<sup>th</sup> graders, for the next two years, will remain with MCAS testing. (9th grade science too.)

Mr. Sills noted some feedback he has learned about PARCC:

- 74% of those tested liked the online version rather than paper
- Many felt that the questions related to things students learned in school
- Many felt the test was difficult
- Most students took the test on paper

The DESE feels that school districts should adopt the PARCC in 2014-2015 in order to get an extra year in taking the test before everyone has to use it in 2015-2016. School districts who opt to use it in 2014-2015 will do so with no risk to student growth accountability.

Mr. Sills said that Bedford needs to decide by June 30<sup>th</sup>. His leadership team is leaning towards adopting PARCC for next year. They believe the students will do better if they are exposed to the new way of taking tests and answering difficult questions. Online testing would occur at BHS and JGMS but Lane School will use paper. Mr. Sills said he expects scores to plummet especially in the elementary schools because our students are just getting introduced to the new common core curriculum. Mr. Sills said it is unrealistic to teach a new curriculum and to test in new format all in the same year.

Ms. Guay said parents will need a lot of information to understand these changes and the likely drop in testing scores.

Mr. McAllister said it really does not seem like Bedford has a true choice. The only compelling point is if we decide to adopt PARCC for 2014-2015 we will have an extra year to “warm up”.

Mr. McAllister asked why Bedford is not opting out of the common core curriculum. Mr. Sills responded by explaining that states, not districts are opting out. He noted that some feel that the Common Core is an example of government intruding on education. Others feel that it is not developmentally appropriate.

The School Committee agreed that community members need to understand the state of today’s education and that the committee needs to figure out how best explain it all to families.

Mr. McAllister said he believes PARCC will end up being a better test than MCAS. He believes it is good to continue to raise expectations. PARCC is an opportunity to keep public education moving forward.

## **8. Superintendent’s Report**

Mr. Sills asked for approval to appoint new staff for 2014-2015. He explained that funding would come from savings from out-of-district tuition and transportation.

There is a need for:

- A new Kindergarten teacher (9<sup>th</sup> classroom)

- Two additional Teaching Assistants for three students coming to kindergarten from out of district placement.
- Possibly restore a 9<sup>th</sup> Education Assistant position, depending on final numbers.

Ms. Seibert made the following motion:

**MOVED: That the School Committee approve the addition of one Kindergarten teacher and two Teaching Assistant positions at Davis School for the 2014-2015 school year due to enrollment in kindergarten and the return of students to kindergarten from special education out-of-district placements.**

**MOTION SECONDED by Ms. Guay**

**MOTION APPROVED: 4-0**

Mr. Sills reported the BHS Best Buddies Chapter was awarded the #1 Chapter in the State.

### **9. Liaison Reports**

Ms. Guay said the Pay it Forward event occurred with 400 volunteers getting together to package 12, 600 meals!

Ms. Seibert said that the Capital Expenditures Committee meeting will be on Wednesday May 28<sup>th</sup> and they will be discussing changing the capital expense planning calendar as part of long term planning strategy.

### **10. Minutes**

Ms. Seibert made the following motion:

**MOVED: That the School Committee approve the minutes of the January 28, 2014 School Committee meeting as amended.**

**MOTION SECONDED by Mr. McAllister**

**MOTION APPROVED: 4-0**

Ms. Seibert made the following motion:

**MOVED: That the School Committee approve the minutes of the February 4, 2014 School Committee meeting as amended.**

**MOTION SECONDED by Ms. Guay**

**MOTION APPROVED: 4-0**

### **11. Adjournment**

Ms. Seibert made the following motion.

**MOVED: Motion to adjourn at 10:25 p.m. to Executive Session to discuss collective bargaining for the Para-Professional contract.**

**MOTION SECONDED by Ms. Guay**

**MOTION APPROVED: 4-0**

**Roll Call Vote:**

<b>Mr. Pierce</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Mr. Hafer</b>	<b>absent</b>
<b>Ms. Seibert</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Mr. McAllister</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Ms. Guay</b>	<b>Yes</b>

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School Committee Secretary

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Date

**BEDFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

**May 27, 2014**

**Exhibits/Document**

- Memorandum from Matt Mehler to Mr. Sills dated May 21, 2014 regarding proposed changes to the JGMS 2014-2015 Student/Parent Handbook.
- Presentation – JGMS FY15 School Improvement Plan
- Memo from Richard Reed, Town Manager to Town Committees regarding remote participation in Board or Committee Meetings dated May 5, 2014.
- Draft of minutes from January 28, 2014 School Committee meeting
- Draft of minutes from February 4, 2014 School Committee meeting

**BEDFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE**  
**Executive Session**  
May 27, 2014