

**BEDFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE**  
**MINUTES OF**  
**April 23, 2013**  
**Bedford High School - Large Instruction Room**

**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 Mr. Hafer, Mr. McAllister, Ms. Seibert and Ms. Guay. Mr. Ben Driscoll, student representative, was also in attendance.

**2. Comments from Public**

None

**3. Personnel Report**

Mr. Sills announced the following:

- Joshua Myler appointed Grade 4 teacher at Lane School
- Beth Reilly appointed Grade 3 teacher at Lane School
- Nicole Stewart appointed Special Education Teacher at the High School.

Mr. Sills noted that the Motor Vehicle Idling Policy discussion will be postponed until the next School Committee meeting.

**4. Presentation: P.E. Health & FAMCO Visiting Team Report**

Ms. Jackie Supprise, Director of Physical Education/Family and Consumer Sciences K-12 and Ms. Claudia Brown, Curriculum Coordinator for Health and Wellness at North Reading Public Schools presented a report from the Visiting Team on their recent evaluation of Bedford's P.E./Family Consumer Science Program.

The team consisted of four health and wellness coordinators from nearby districts. They met with Bedford's staff, parents and students to evaluate our P.E. and Family Consumer Science programs. Overall, the team felt that:

- facilities are well maintained to support a healthy environment for growing and learning
- the curriculum is well developed using appropriate milestones
- faculty's focus is on the "whole child" and is enthusiastic and engaged
- administration supports wellness staff and curriculum

Ms. Brown had some positive comments and suggestions for growth on each school in Bedford.

**Davis School**

- age appropriate curriculum
- good reinforcement of critical learning skills
- good gym set up which allowed minimal loss of activity time
- the class schedule of once a week does not meet the standard practice
- parents were concerned about lack of communication from Administration
- Administration and parents struggle with understanding the difference between physical education and physical activity (i.e. trained instructors and curriculum v. movement)

**Lane School**

- PE staff is very enthusiastic and knowledgeable of student skill levels and importance of movement and learning values.
- Project Adventure is supported with pride by staff and students.
- Focus is centered on emotional and social development though skill development is evident too.
- Assessments need to be developed.

**Middle School**

- Offerings are varied from year-to-year which is great for students.
- Students know routines and warm-ups with minimal instruction and are on task with no discipline issues.
- It is great that there is a fitness center available at this school.
- Good use of technology in assessment and teaching.
- Additional scheduling of health education would be beneficial.
- Health Education needs a home-base.
- The fitness room needs equipment to be repaired and/or replaced.

**High School**

- Great variety of courses and enthusiastic delivery of material.
- Dance program is enthusiastically supported and well-equipped.
- Students reported a positive impact of the health, PE, and Family Consumer Science classes.
- Teachers are very collegial and collaborative.
- Fitness equipment should be repaired or replaced.
- PE teachers should post objectives.
- Add “instant activities” to energize students as they enter gym.
- Include PE, Health and Consumer Family Science in the IEP process.

Ms. Brown was noted that Ms. Supprise “demonstrates the willingness to grow, to learn and to facilitate the development of healthy students across the district.”

Ms. Guay asked if other districts have PE classes more often than Bedford. Ms. Brown said North Reading does at their elementary level but said that this is a common problem.

Ms. Guay asked if Ms. Brown saw any adaptive PE in Bedford. Ms. Brown said no and Ms. Supprise said that this has been phased out over recent years. Students can get additional time with their Teaching Assistant if needed.

Mr. McAllister asked why Health did not have a “home” at JGMS. Ms. Supprise said that there was not a classroom available due to high enrollments.

Mr. McAllister asked if the team met with any regular education teachers. Ms. Brown said no, but that the PE/Famco staff felt that they were connected to others in the building.

Ms. Seibert said that the fact that PE is different than physical activity is not clear to most people and therefore it is important to remind parents, students and administration that PE has a curriculum.

Ms. Seibert asked Ms. Suprise if there was any money to fix the fitness center equipment at the high and middle schools. Ms. Suprise said that the equipment that was purchased did not last and to replace something like a cardio machine, it would cost about \$2-3,000, which is the entire budget.

Ms. Seibert asked what was new for next year. Ms. Suprise said at the high school, there will be a new class titled "Healthy Behaviors". It will focus on yoga, stress management, and healthy eating. It will replace the Athletic Training class. She thinks students will be more interested in this new class.

Mr. Hafer asked why students can't opt out of PE if they participate in after school sports. Ms. Suprise said that coaches do not know the PE piece. Seniors who play two sports are able to opt out of PE but not many students do so.

Mr. Hafer suggested doing a capital request for replacement of the fitness center equipment.

Mr. Pierce encouraged Ms. Suprise to price out her desired upgrades so this could be put on the Capital Project priority list for future considerations.

Mr. Pierce was surprised to learn that PE classes were reduced at Davis School. He would like to get back to students meeting twice a week.

#### **5. Presentation: Grade 8 Social Studies text purchase.**

Ms. Christine Butler, Social Studies Coordinator for 6-12, recommends purchasing a new textbook for 8<sup>th</sup> grade social studies. She and Mr. Casey, an 8<sup>th</sup> grade Social Studies teacher, recommend buying "Discovering Our Past: A History of the World". No text book is currently used.

Ms. Butler said that the text was selected because it has good visuals and has a readability level for grades 7-9. The cost is \$19,985, which is within the \$22,000 budget. Mr. Casey noted that the teachers loved the book and he sees that it will be easily migrated to iPads because it has an online component.

Mr. Casey noted that some students used the book as part of a trial. They enjoyed it. Mr. Casey also thinks that the book will help the teachers reach the diverse population of the 8<sup>th</sup> grade social studies classroom.

Mr. McAllister asked if there are any professional development opportunities. Mr. Casey said yes that representatives will be available in June to help the staff walk through the text and other materials.

Mr. Hafer asked if the readability level was too low. Mr. Casey said no that this purchase is an entire program and that top-level students will have plenty of places to go online to extend the curriculum.

Mr. Hafer said that the book was very heavy and asked about the plan for distribution. Mr. Casey said he hopes the online access will help with this problem and that the Social Studies team will figure out the best plan.

Mr. Driscoll asked if the Special Education teachers reviewed the text. Mr. Casey said that they did.

Mr. Pierce said that the School Committee will vote on this purchase at the next School Committee meeting, which is customary practice with regards to textbook purchases.

#### **6. Facilities Department – Computer Server Room/Air Conditioning Units**

Mr. Sills reported that the Network Consultant recommends going forward with upgrading the air conditioning in the server room as soon as possible. Mr. Sills recommends moving forward with the purchase and to use a portion of the \$68,500 balance remaining in the building renovation fund.

Ms. Seibert made the following motion:

**MOVED: That the School Committee approve spending up to \$14,000 from the high school building renovation fund to add air conditioning to the server room at the high school.**

**MOTION SECONDED by Mr. Hafer**

**MOTION APPROVED: 5-0**

#### **7. Presentation: School Lunch Program**

Mr. Ken Whittier, Director of Food Services, reported on the status of the Food Lunch Program. Mr. Whittier noted that due to new federal and state regulations, coupled with family economics the food program has changed a lot. The current program has a significant loss (\$44,000). Mr. Whittier noted that this loss includes a carry-over from last year. He also noted that the number of meals served is down significantly.

The new regulations have many negative effects. Some include:

- Inability to sell ala carte items at the high school.
- Reduced serving sizes.
- Requirement to offer more expensive items that are not always appealing to students.
- Schools cannot sell foods students want to eat.
- Students do not see school lunches as a good value because they are smaller and must contain items they may not want to eat.

Mr. Whittier plans on reducing labor and food costs as much as possible and recommends raising lunch prices since Bedford's price is on the lower end when compared to nearby districts. Mr. Whittier recommends the following actions:

- Eliminating USDA foods diverted to manufacturers for convenience.
- Reducing food costs to 38% from 40%
- Cut back on labor costs by 15 minutes per person per day.
- Increase "super" lunch prices by an additional \$1.50.
- Increase lunch prices at Davis and Lane to \$2.50 because these schools have higher costs.

If these actions are taken, Mr. Whittier projects that the loss for 2013-2014 will be reduced to \$11,000.

Ms. Guay asked if any surveys have been conducted with parents. Mr. Whittier said no, but he has met with parent boards and has tried to answer their concerns. He thinks this is a good idea.

Ms. Guay said that it seems that cafeteria employees will be affected significantly with a cut in hours.

Ms. Guay said she thinks it would be better to raise prices across the board and not just at the elementary schools. Mr. Whittier said he is concerned about seeing a reduction in lunches served across the board as a result of an increase. The elementary schools have the most room for a small increase.

Mr. McAllister said that Mr. Whittier has tried to save money any where he can.

Mr. McAllister asked about any unpaid debit card balances. Mr. Coelho said that there is about \$1,200 in outstanding receivables.

Ms. Seibert asked if installing swipe cards in all cafeterias would help. Mr. Whittier said that it is an expensive implementation but it would allow the students to move through the lines quicker. Receivables would become a bigger problem.

Mr. Hafer said he would like to see a deeper analysis before agreeing to change the lunch prices. Mr. Pierce agreed.

Mr. Sills commented that the new regulations have been discussed with our state representative and he will gather data from other Superintendents. But for now, we are stuck with managing through the burdensome regulations.

Mr. Sills suggested looking at the problem as a multi-year initiative. He also suggests looking at districts that have more successful programs.

Mr. Pierce asked what would happen if we did not comply with the regulations. Mr. Whittier said that there are three-year reviews and we could get hit with a fine.

Mr. Pierce and Mr. Whittier feel that these new regulations/programs should have been started in the elementary schools (only) so that the younger children can become accustomed to all the changes. The changes are only viewed as a negative to the older students.

## **8. Presentation: PARCC Testing**

Dr. Claire Jackson introduced the School Committee to the new Common Core and MCAS high stake testing, the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers, referred to as “PARCC”.

Dr. Jackson explained the Common Core Curriculum, which Bedford now uses, is quite different from the State frameworks. It is more complex and requires student to use more thinking skills. It focuses on “minds of instruction” and “depth of knowledge”, ideas that Bedford has embraced.

PARCC is the testing component of the Common Core and will likely replace MCAS testing. It is scheduled to begin in the 2014-2015 school year, if Massachusetts chooses to participate. Dr. Jackson said she believes it will be an enormous change for everyone. She does not think it will be a bad thing, but it will be a change and thinks Bedford needs to pay attention to it. She also said that it will require adjustments to our technological infrastructure because it is computer-delivered.

According to Dr. Jackson, the goal of the PARCC tests will determine whether students are ready for college and careers. It will assess a full range of common core strengths and measure a full range of student performance. It will provide data during year to teachers to inform instruction and provide a means of accountability.

Dr. Jackson said that the test questions are very different than the MCAS questions. There will be far fewer questions but they all will require the students to think. The tests will initially be a stretch for all students, even Massachusetts' students who participate in rigorous MCAS tests.

Mr. Sills said he thinks that PARCC is a good idea, but he is concerned about the pace of change. He is very concerned that while we are rolling out a new curriculum (Common Core) we will also have a new type of test. It does not seem like the right thing to do.

Ms. Guay asked how districts that are struggling with MCAS scores can be expected to do well on these new exams. Mr. Sills said higher order thinking is not necessarily harder but schools really cannot move directly into these new tests. Bedford has done a lot of work with higher order thinking but our students are not used to a test that focuses on this skill.

## **9. Superintendent's Report**

### *Front-door security update:*

Mr. Sills said that by the end of the week, all schools and all front doors should be on a buzzer/remote entry system. Davis School will begin construction of a new window this summer to help the office have a better line of site to the front door.

### *Press Box*

Mr. Sills said that according to the Building Inspector, the press box needs a structural review, which will cost approximately \$2,000. The facilities department has this in the budget and will begin the process.

### *Leadership Team*

Mr. Sills and the Leadership Team are creating a one page refinement of the Strategic Plan. When it is ready, he will share it with the School Committee.

The Leadership Team has also spent time looking at and discussing achievement gap causes.

## **10. Liaison Reports**

Ms. Seibert noted that the Assistant Principal search for the middle school is well underway.

Mr. Hafer reported that the BEF funded \$92,000 of projects. He said right now, the group is experiencing "membership fatigue". He hopes the group will find some new volunteers and new energy for the future.

Mr. Hafer also reported that "ORASC" (the Outdoor Field Committee) reported to the Selectmen and suggested that the Selectmen establish a permanent committee in order to identify and follow best practices and to continue to monitor the need and feasibility of additional fields in town.

## **11. Approval of Minutes**

Mr. Hafer made the following motion:

**MOVED: That the School Committee approve the minutes from the February 12, 2003 School Committee minutes.**

**MOTION SECONDED by Ms. Seibert**

**MOTION APPROVED: 3-0-2**

**Roll Call Vote:**

|                       |                  |
|-----------------------|------------------|
| <b>Mr. Hafer</b>      | <b>Yes</b>       |
| <b>Mr. Pierce</b>     | <b>Yes</b>       |
| <b>Ms. Seibert</b>    | <b>Yes</b>       |
| <b>Mr. McAllister</b> | <b>abstained</b> |
| <b>Ms. Guay</b>       | <b>abstained</b> |

## **12. Future Agenda**

School Committee members asked for an end-of-year activity calendar and would like to revisit the Food Services analysis.

## **13. Adjournment**

Ms. Seibert made the following motion:

**MOVED: Motion to adjourn at 10:30 pm, not to reopen.**

**MOTION SECONDED by Mr. Hafer**

**MOTION APPROVED: 5-0**

**Roll Call Vote:**

|                       |            |
|-----------------------|------------|
| <b>Mr. Hafer</b>      | <b>Yes</b> |
| <b>Mr. Pierce</b>     | <b>Yes</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**  
**April 23, 2013**  
**Exhibits/Documents**



**BEDFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE**  
**Executive Session**  
**April 23, 2013**