

**BEDFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF
January 29 2013
Bedford High School - Large Instruction Room**

1. Call to Order

At 6:45 p.m., Ms Bickford called to order the meeting of the Bedford School Committee. Other members present included Mr. Hafer, Ms. O’Gara, Mr. Pierce, and Ms. Seibert.

2. Adjournment

Ms. O’Gara made the following motion:

MOVED: Motion to adjourn to Executive Session at 6:45.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. Seibert

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

3. Return to Open Session

At 7:50 p.m., Ms Bickford called to order the meeting of the Bedford School Committee. Other members present included Mr. Hafer, Ms. O’Gara, Mr. Pierce, and Ms. Seibert. Ben Driscoll, student representative was also in attendance.

4. Comments from Public

None

5. Security Plans

Mr. Sills said that there was a change to last week’s proposal on security measures. The current proposals are:

JGMS

The proposal is to now create a window on the outside wall rather than change in the vestibule and to reorganize the office. This will decrease the costs to \$11,250. Last week, the School Committee voted to apply \$1,747 from the building renovation fund.

Davis

The proposal is to add a new window to the office (in the hallway) to improve sight lines from the office to the front door and also add an intercom box in the vestibule, new locks and access controls in the office. The total cost is now estimated to be \$16,460. Last week, the School Committee approved spending \$2,000 on design with funds coming from the building renovation fund.

Lane

At Lane, it is estimated to cost \$8,750 to update the door hardware, add an intercom box, add office access system and signage. No vote was taken last week on this.

BHS

Mr. Jones explained that a camera and software is needed along with some cabling and signage. The School Committee agreed last week to use \$12,000 from building renovation funds for this part of the project.

Mr. Jones explained that approximately \$40,000 will be needed to upgrade the access system to monitor the door positions through out the high school building. Mr. Sills and Mr. Jones feel that this is a longer-term project and should be further analyzed by the security task force. Mr. Jones noted that a year or so ago, the Town Meeting voted to have \$102,590 in a capital maintenance fund which included security. He believes that money from this line item can be used for these immediate security measures.

Ms. Seibert made the following motion:

MOTION: Moved that the School Committee allocate up to \$32,750 from school line item #8992 to be used for identified building security measures at JGMS, Lane, Davis in 2013.

MOTION SECONDED by Mr. Hafer

MOTION APPROVED: 4-0

Mr. Sills noted that the security task force will continue to meet and to plan on longer-term security measures.

Ms. Bickford asked for assurance that the required behavior changes as a result of these new security measures be clearly communicated to parents and staff.

6. Facilities Work Vehicle Discussion

Postponed until the next School Committee meeting.

7. BHS Program of Studies

Mr. Henry Turner thanked Kristen Vogel, Assistant Principal and the Program Directors at the high school for their hard work on updating the Program of Studies for the 2013-2014 school year.

Mr. Turner explained that there are a few additions and a few clarifications in course descriptions. He also noted that none of the recommended additions would entail adding personnel. Additions are either offset by deletions or they are offered as elective choices, and if run, will result in an equal displacement of another elective or section.

A few changes discussed were:

- Theater Production is a new class that is being created by the Music Department. It will complement the Drama club and course and other extra curricular activities. The Drama class will also now fall under the Theater and Musical Arts Department, though taught by an English teacher. It will fulfill music credit.
- An iPad Support class has also been added to the Technology offerings. This will replace Keyboarding.
- The Physical Education Department is dropping Athletic Training and replacing it with a new class titled, "Healthy Behaviors". This course was created as a result of the Youth Survey indicating that high school students are under a lot of stress. It will offer a unique approach to adopting and maintaining a healthy lifestyle.
- The Math Department is changing the name of the Continuing Algebra Level 4 course to Pre-Calculus and Continuing Algebra. This will allow students, who are willing to do summer work to move into Calculus. The change also reflects more accurately what topics are covered in the course.
- Add ESL courses to the Program of Studies. This will allow a place for ESL course and a new course "Making a Difference: High School Tutors for English

Language Learners”. Students will work with JGMS ELL students as a tutor under the guidance of the ESL teacher.

Ms. Seibert asked Mr. Turner why Keyboarding is being dropped. She believes some students really get a lot of value from the class.

Mr. Turner said that this was a difficult decision. He said many students who take the course get some value from it. However, many others do not. He would like to offer a technology related course that is more technical and strategic.

Ms. Bickford voiced her concern as well about deleting this course. She did say that the bigger question is whether Keyboarding is still a valuable course.

Mr. Turner said he believes it is a course on a downward spiral.

Ms. Bickford suggested Mr. Turner think of ways to incorporate keyboarding skills in other, more creative ways. Mr. Turner thought this was a good idea.

Ben Driscoll said that he believes many students are in the class because they cannot get into any other class. He was in it this year and it was all freshman. He changed into something else.

Mr. Hafer asked Mr. Turner his thoughts on the high school’s course selection in general. Mr. Turner said that the course selection is very deep especially given the size of the school. He said the Program of Studies is an example of how the high school tries to meet the needs of our students. He thinks it is highly competitive with other districts.

Mr. Pierce said he agrees that Keyboarding does not fit in with the high school curriculum but thinks it is an important skill and wonders where it should fit in.

Mr. Pierce asked why the pre-requisite for level 5 in a foreign language went up from an 85 to a 90. Mr. Turner said he was not sure, but assumed it was based on a level of desired fluency. He will double-check the rationale. Mr. Pierce said it was important to be consistent with other departments.

Ms. Bickford was sorry to hear that “Self and Society” was being dropped since the Adjustment Counselor needs more time to meet with students individually. She knows that many students get a lot out of this class.

Ms. Bickford also noted that if students in the Continuing Algebra II class need to do summer work in order to get into Calculus, then the Program of Studies needs to be very clear about this fact.

Ms. Bickford is very pleased with the changes in the Drama and Theater Production classes.

Ms. Bickford suggested adding more rigor the ESL course description. She also wanted to see more description in the Physic class descriptions.

Ms. Bickford and Ms. Seibert said that the AP process needs to be more structured than simply sending an email to the head of the department. Mr. Turner agreed.

Ben Driscoll commented that the Healthy Behaviors class will really improve the atmosphere at the high school.

Mr. Pierce made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the 2013-2014 Program of Studies with discussed changes.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. Seibert

MOTION APPROVED: 4-0

8. JGMS Choice Class Discussion

Mr. Tracey, Principal of JGMS, began his presentation by noting that Keyboarding is not going away at the middle school. It will be offered in some format.

He was here tonight, however, to discuss proposed changes to the Choice Class offerings. Mr. Tracey said that when he accepted the position of Principal, Dr. LaCroix asked him to look at these classes. Also, many parents asked him why the school calls them “choice” when so few students end up with their choice class. Also, the Art Wellness teachers believed that the classes should be changed in a way that enriched the existing classes. They suggested taking what is offered in class and make the choice class more of an exploration.

Mr. Tracey therefore created more robust courses that expanded arts, fitness, technology and music. The classes will be half-year classes and students must take a course with a different focus for the second semester.

For example, Grade 6 students can opt to take:

Grade 6 Explorations in Art

Grade 6 Stay Active

Grade 6 Technology Education Exploration (this is where Mr. Tracey hopes to incorporate keyboarding skills)

Ms. Seibert said that she was very impressed with the creativity in developing these new exploratory choice classes.

Mr. Hafer likes the approach.

Ms. Bickford said she is glad that these classes are still offered, given the strains of the middle school schedule. She said that these students do not get recess and that they need time to relax in some classes and have fun.

Ms. Bickford asked if students are graded in these classes. Mr. Tracey said yes but he plans on evaluating a change to pass/fail.

9. FY'14 School Budget Update

Ms. Bickford reported that the School Committee presented the proposed FY'14 School Budget to the Finance Committee last Thursday. Next Thursday, the Finance Committee will make recommendations for the warrant.

10. Superintendent's Report

Mr. Sills complimented all the JGMS and BHS students who competed in the Boston Globe Scholastic Art competition. He said our students did very well.

Mr. Sills also noted that the Davis School Principal site visit went very well today. A great exchange. The next candidate visits Wednesday and Thursday to meet with staff and parents.

Mr. Sills also noted that the Physical Education Department is finishing its self-study. The visiting team will be here next week.

Mr. Sills also noted that JGMS and the MSPA raised \$7,300 for scholarships for the Washington D.C. trip.

11. Liaison Reports

Ms. Seibert noted that the EDCO Legislative meeting was last Friday.

Ms. Bickford reported that the Fiscal Planning Committee met last night and discussed the financial model.

12. Minutes

Ms. Seibert made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the minutes of the December 4, 2012 meeting as amended.

MOTION SECONDED by Mr. Hafer

MOTION APPROVED: 4-0

13. Future Agenda

None

14. Adjournment

Ms. Seibert made the following motion:

MOVED: Motion to adjourn at 10:30 p.m. to Executive Session to discuss personnel contract matters, not to re-open.

MOTION SECONDED by Mr. Hafer

MOTION APPROVED: 4-0

Roll Call Vote:

Ms. Bickford	Yes
Mr. Hafer	Yes
Mr. Pierce	Yes
Ms. Seibert	Yes

School Committee Secretary

Date

BEDFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE

January 29, 2013

Exhibits/Documents

- Memo from Henry Turner to Jon Sills dated January 24, 2013 regarding proposed changes to Program of Studies for 2013-2014
- Drafts of minutes from School Committee meetings dated December 4, 2012.

BEDFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Executive Session
January 22, 2013