

BEDFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE

June 11, 2020

Live Virtual Online Meeting using Zoom™ Audio/Video Conference Software

*** Due to the Covid-19 Crisis, this meeting was live-streamed over the internet using Zoom™ video/audio conferencing software in order to adhere with social distancing measures put in place by Governor Baker. This meeting was open to the public for live chat during Public Comment.*

1. Executive Session for the Purpose of Non-Union and Union Contract Negotiations

2. Call to Order

After Executive Session, at 7:38 p.m., Ms. Santiago called to order the meeting of the Bedford School Committee. Other members present included Mr. Brosgol, Mr. Morrison, Ms. Scoville and Ms. Guay. There was no student representative present.

3. Public Comment

Public comment is available through the webinar feature of Zoom™. Participants are instructed to use the “raise hand” function in the software and add their name using the “chat” function. Mr. Sills will invite the panelist into the webinar and each person is allowed five minutes to comment.

*Mr. Ran Yaniv
Wilson Road*

Mr. Yaniv found the budget cut outline to be confusing.

*Mr. David Kimmell
Concord Road*

Mr. Kimmel wondered about changes to the Gifted and Talented program and he believes that parents should not have to seek out other programs to supplement any cuts.

*Mr. Michael Dunn
Taylor Pond Lane*

Mr. Dunn wondered if any of programs that were cut or eliminated may be reinstated later.

*Ms. Liping Chen
Shawsheen Road*

Ms. Chen had concerns about the possible cuts to Gifted and Talented program and concerned that those students would not be challenged enough in the classroom.

*Mr. Joseph Bullard
Winchester Drive*

Mr. Bullard agrees that the Gifted and Talented students may not be challenged enough in class.

*Mr. Richard Daugherty
Elm Street*

Mr. Daugherty had questions about the process and the voting as written on the agenda and wondered if the source of the reductions of the operating budget may be taken out of another area of the Town budget instead.

*Ms. Erica Callahan
Woodmoor Drive*

Ms. Callahan understands that children in the special education program are having a particularly hard time with the close and asked that the Special Education Behavior Techs be taken of the list of potential cuts.

*Ms. Yan Zhang
Lorraine Drive*

Ms. Zhang would like the Gifted and Talented program to remain in place. She believes that hiring a private tutor to supplement any cuts is not affordable for everyone.

*Ms. Erica Liu
Selfridge Road*

Ms. Liu observes the benefits of the Gifted and Talented program through her son. She noted that the students in the Gifted and Talented program work to help other students, which is a benefit for other Bedford students.

*Mr. Mark Bailey and Ms. Heather Black
Woodland Road*

Mr. Bailey and Ms. Black support the World Language program and believes that it is important to teach students to reach across cultures.

*Ms. Sarah Dorer
Former teacher, BPS*

Ms. Dorer said that students of the Gifted and Talented program often become bored in school and would like to see a staff member who can relate to the Gifted and Talented students, speak at a future School Committee meeting.

*Ms. Gretchen Heid
Ruben Duren Way*

Ms. Heid echoed the concerns with the Gifted and Talented program cuts and does not want the students to lose their desire to learn.

*Mr. Aaron Carpenter and Mrs. Angela Carpenter
Clarke Road*

Mr. and Mrs. Carpenter stated that they believe that enrichment is important.

*Ms. Erin Sandler-Raffee
Hume Road*

Ms. Sandler-Raffee also supports the Gifted and Talented program. She believes that more resources are spent on students who are behind and believes that funds should be allocated equally to all students to meet them where

*Ms. Patti Carluccio
Washington Street*

Ms. Carluccio also supports the Gifted and Talented program. She believes it has a social impact with the students where they can form relationships with other students who have similar interests.

*Mr. Angel Pettit
North Road*

Mr. Pettitt had difficulty finding the posted School Committee videos and had questions about the School Committee meeting minutes.

*Ms. Annie Kim
Kendall Court*

Ms. Kim supports the Gifted and Talented program and she mentioned that the program has been great for her son.

*Mr. Michael Kao
Birchwood Drive*

Mr. Kao believes that the Gifted and Talented program has been helpful to his daughter and feels that it is fair to address all students with needs.

*Ms. Lily Younger
Sweeney Ridge Road*

Ms. Younger wanted to show support for the Special Education Teaching Assistants. She said that the students in the Special Education program are in need of the most support.

*Mr. John Brandt and Mrs. Melissa Brandt
Orchard Road*

Mr. and Mrs. Brandt support the Special Education teachers and believe that they deliver what is needed for the students of Special Education in Bedford.

*Ms. Anne Caron
North Road*

Ms. Caron believes that the number one priority is to maintain every staff member that interacts with students and that the staff are the front lines of support for all students.

*Ms. Pam Nelson
Liberty Road*

Ms. Nelson recognized the difficult job of the School Committee during these challenging times. She stated that she strongly advocates reducing any school cuts and suggested that other resources for funding should be explored.

*Ms. Stephanie Keep
Great Road*

Ms. Keep would not like to see any cuts, noted that her children are already suffering setbacks from the school closure, and believes that all resources are needed for the students when they return.

*Ms. Christie Martin
Selfridge Road*

Ms. Martin would like to see funds taken from another area of the town instead of the schools. She is concerned about the potential elimination of some of the Teaching Assistants and does not think there should be any staff cuts.

*Ms. Maureen Lally
Davis Road*

Ms. Lally expressed her support for the third grade World Language program and she believes that it adds dimension to the curriculum.

*Mr. Juan Gao
Anderson Road*

Mr. Gao advocated for the World Language program and asked if fundraising or donations had been considered.

*Ms. Nina Tate
Glenridge Road*

Ms. Tate called to express her support for the Special Education program. She believes that it is vital not to cut any staff.

*Mr. Bill Rabinowitz and Ms. Christine Rabinowitz
Noreen Drive*

Mr. Rabinowitz suggested the delay of large capital items in lieu of cutting programs and staff members.

*Ms. Sheila Mehta-Green
Glenora Drive*

Ms. Mehta-Green wondered how students with the most needs will be helped if cuts are made. She asked if there was a plan in place to help all students.

Public comment was closed at 8:26 p.m.

4. Personnel Report

Postponed

5. K-5 Director of Student Achievement; Tiered Intervention

Ms. Audrey Jackson, the K-5 Director of Student Achievement gave a presentation to the School Committee outlining her strategies to enhance student learning.

In her presentation, Ms. Jackson discussed:

- An in-house data base system which is used to identify:
 - Patterns by student, class, grade, cohort and subgroups
 - Trends to help students where needs are presented

She has also developed:

- Student support teams (SST) to ensure that all students are thriving
- 504 Plans to ensure more consistency in 504 language, resources for parents and continuity for information sharing.

Ms. Jackson answered some questions for the School Committee:

- What is the time breakout during the week working with data, staff and parents?
 - Data ebbs and flows but can take 25% of the time during the week, schedules can be adjusted, time is made for in classroom observations, to meet with
- How will the Student Achievement program look different in years to come?
 - Next year will have more data sources
 - More interactive assessment with students
 - More comprehensive and aligned with K-5
 - Will track and analyze data to see where a student needs help
- How is communication initiated with parents?
 - Communication with parents is initiated through email and phone calls

- A referral form has been set up for teachers to track communication and for follow up plans
- Goal is clear transparent letter to parents to let them know what Student Support is all about
- Are parents using outside testing for 504s or do they rely on school system testing?
 - Roughly two thirds of the parents that they have interacted with have had prior outside testing
- What will the program look like four to five years out
 - Having just started in March, the goal is to have 50 students on 504s –

Ms. Jackson noted that teachers want to ensure consistency. She said that data would be tracked and analyzed to see where students may need help and that systems and strategies will be adjusted to get best outcome for kids. She would like students to learn to be self-aware and self-advocate and she prides herself on helping each student grow from where they are.

Comments on World Language and Reading K-5:

At 9:18 p.m., the head of the BPS World Language program, Ms. Dana Curran, called in to advocate for her program and ask the School Committee to reconsider the potential cut for to the program for FY21.

Mr. Sills thanked Ms. Curran and noted that he was happy that she could clarify her position.

Ms. Andrea Salipante, head of the Reading program for grades K-5 called in to ask the School Committee to consider the time freed up by the WL program be used towards reading intervention for Lane students.

The School Committee members discussed the issue further stating that the WL program builds cultural proficiency yet they also agree that some students would benefit from the reading intervention. They were surprised to hear that between forty and fifty percent of students will be behind in reading but also view that cutting the WL program as a very dire choice and believe that WL may help increase literacy in some cases. Members of the School Committee spoke about the value of the WL program and they were concerned about the impact on the language department. It was mentioned that more the progress had been made than expected regarding the overall financial picture for the upcoming school year and these programs may be able to be added back or may not have to be at all.

6. Budget Reduction Discussion

Mr. Sills addressed the School Committee and asked if there could be a delay on a budget reduction decision this evening and would prefer to revisit the final vote on the next School Committee meeting on Tuesday, June 16th. He also said that he would like to have more time for discussion with the heads of both Reading and World Language.

Mr. Sills proposed several possible scenarios for budget reduction:

Scenario I

<i>Restore 1.0 FTE Grade 3 TA</i>	<i>\$26,686.00</i>
<i>Restore 2.0 Behavioral Tech TAs</i>	<i>\$57,373.00</i>
<i>Reduce Special Ed PA for Out of District</i>	<i>-\$42,535.00</i>
<i>Reduce non-Personnel Expense – adjust rental offset</i>	<i>-\$30,890.00</i>
<i>Increase use of Impact Aid Offset</i>	<i>-\$10,364.00</i>

Scenario II

<i>Add 1.0 FTE Grade 3 Professional Teacher</i>	<i>\$64,094.00</i>
<i>Restore 1.0 FTE Behavioral Tech TA</i>	<i>\$28,686.00</i>
<i>Reduce 0.4 FTE Special Ed PA for Out of District</i>	<i>-\$42,535.00</i>
<i>Reduce non-Personnel Expense – adjust rental offset</i>	<i>-\$50,245.00</i>

Scenario III

<i>Add 1.0 FTE Grade 3 Professional Teacher</i>	<i>\$64,094.00</i>
<i>Restore 1.0 FTE Behavioral Tech TA</i>	<i>\$28,686.00</i>
<i>Restore 0.8 FTE Grade 3 World Language</i>	<i>\$51,275.00</i>
<i>Reduce 0.4 FTE Special Ed PA for Out of District</i>	<i>-\$42,535.00</i>
<i>Reduce non-Personnel Expense – adjust rental offset</i>	<i>-\$64,630.00</i>
<i>Increase use of Impact Aid Offset</i>	

Scenario IV

<i>Add 1.0 FTE Grade 3 Professional Teacher</i>	<i>\$26,686.00</i>
<i>Restore 1.0 FTE Behavioral Tech TA</i>	<i>\$28,686.00</i>
<i>Restore 0.8 FTE Grade 3 World Language</i>	<i>\$51,275.00</i>
<i>Reduce 0.4 FTE Special Ed PA for Out of District</i>	<i>-\$42,535.00</i>
<i>Reduce non-Personnel Expense – adjust rental offset</i>	<i>-\$36,890.00</i>
<i>Increase use of Impact Aid Offset</i>	<i>-\$27,222.00</i>

Several of the School Committee members voiced their preference for Scenario III and agreed that a more detailed discussion may be necessary before a decision could be made. They hoped that funds may be found to support the Gifted and Talented program, World Language as well as more support for students in the Special Education program and expressed the importance of keeping teaching staff in place. There were also deep concerns about how far along the children will be with their learning in September and that concrete strategies and interventions will be needed as well as finding more time for literacy. Mr. Sills said that he made a strong attempt to request to other Town leaders to bring down the amount of the budget that must be reduced. Ms. Julie Kirrane, the Director of Finance said that we could not be sure that we will receive the full amount of Impact Aid this year and that there is a risk that it may be lowered. She said that she expects to tighten spending in the supply line of the budget and cautions on the dependency on reserves.

After a straw poll, the School Committee decided to wait to hold the vote until the next meeting on June 16, 2020.

7. Superintendent's Report/EDCO Update/School Reopening Information

Mr. Sills explained that the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) has yet to put out detailed guidelines to address the reopening of schools. He said that the Center for Disease Control (CDC) guidelines are clear and that the reopening of school will look much different in the upcoming year and that he is would continue to work to get more information for the next meeting.

8. Minutes

Postponed

9. Adjournment

Mr. Morrison made the following motion:

MOVED: Motion to adjourn at 11:13 p.m., not to reopen.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. Scoville

MOTION APPROVED 5-0-0

Mr. Brosgol Yes

Ms. Santiago Yes

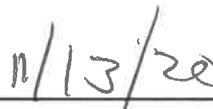
Ms. Scoville Yes

Ms. Guay Yes

Mr. Morrison Yes



School Committee Secretary



Date

BEDFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE
June 11, 2020
Exhibits/Documents

- Personnel Report
 - Job Description – BHS Counselor
- Presentation K-5 Director of Student Achievement; Tiered Intervention
- Presentation Budget Reduction
- Minutes
 - March 20, 2020
 - March 25, 2020
 - April 9, 2020

