

BEDFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE
January 24, 2018
Bedford High School – Large Group Instruction Room

1. Call to Order

At 7:35 p.m., Mr. McAllister called to order the meeting of the Bedford School Committee. Other members present included Mr. Brosgol, Ms. Santiago, Ms. Scoville and Ms. Guay. Miss Tracie Lewis and Miss Leslie Yan, student representatives, were also in attendance.

2. Comments from Public

None

3. Personnel Report

Mr. Sills asked the School Committee to approve an out-of-state field trip request from Bedford High School staff members Sandy Arena and Lydia Patkay. The teachers would like to take 19 students from grades 9-12 to Vermont to tour Vermont cheese making and maple sugaring. The trip will be on March 23-25, 2018 and will cost approximately \$150 dollars per student and no cost to the school department. Students will miss approximately 2 hours of school on Friday.

Mr. Brosgol made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the field trip for 19 grade 9-12 students to travel to Vermont to tour dairy farms and maple sugar shacks on March 23-25, 2018 at a cost of approximately \$150 per student and no cost to the school department.

MOTION SECONDED by Joanne Santiago

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

Mr. Sills announced the following:

Resignations:

Michelle Williamson	Food Services	High School
Amy Barnes	Special Ed Teacher	High School

Appointments:

Lynne Sheth	Special Ed Teaching Assistant/Behaviorist	Davis
Sarah Jane Nelson	Special Ed Teaching Assistant SAIL program	High School
Hannah D'Alessandro	Special Education Teacher SAIL program	Lane
Allison Budnick	Special Education Adjustment Counselor	JGMS

4. District Calendar Proposal

Mr. Sills presented the School Committee with a proposed school calendar for 2018-2019. However, the School Committee asked Mr. Sills to review the November professional day to possibly coincide with Election Day in Massachusetts. Mr. Sills agreed and will present the updated calendar at the next meeting.

5. Presentation: Senior English at Bedford High School

Ms. Liz Marcotte, English Program Administrator, and Heather Galante, Principal, made a presentation to the School Committee proposing to make all senior English classes unlevelled. Ms. Marcotte explained that this proposal has been studied for the past three years.

Ms. Marcotte explained that students have been interested in taking English minors and that the Asian American and African American studies courses have become very popular since being introduced two years ago. Ms. Marcotte said that topic based classes tend to attract students who are truly engaged because of their interest in the subject.

The proposal to have all senior English classes unlevelled also includes offering a skills based English class (College Prep Literature and Comprehension) in order to appeal to the students who still need to develop key skills.

Other proposed changes included adding an AP Literature and Comprehension class for juniors. Ms. Marcotte believes that offering this AP class during junior year makes sense. She also noted that this particular AP class still allows teachers to use their own literature and creativity while teaching the material. Ms. Galante noted that English teachers are on board with this AP offering.

Overall, Ms. Galante and Ms. Marcotte believe that offering heterogeneous courses for all senior English options will broaden students' perspectives and opportunities to learn from a variety of their peers. The heterogeneous courses will also allow students to pursue an area which they are curious or passionate about without experiencing the added pressure of a level.

The college profile will be reframed so colleges will understand the change.

Ms. Marcotte reported that the English department will continue to calibrate common assessment work and will monitor the new college prep class in Literature & Comprehension so that it meets all students' needs on a yearly basis.

Leslie Yan, Student Representative, said that she is in the Asian American class and finds it a very rewarding experience. She was unsure at first about the heterogeneous level, but this only lasted about one week. She said that it seems like a college class because a wide range of topics is covered and a lot of discussion happens. She said it was very important to her identity.

Tracie Lewis, Student Representative, said that she is in the African American class. Her class has tons of discussions too and allows students a chance to talk about uncomfortable but important conversations. She also noted that during her interview at University of San Francisco, the college representative was fascinated by the course.

Ms. Guay said that the fact the Asian American and African American courses have seen increased enrollment since it was initially offered two years ago "speaks volumes". She also appreciates hearing about Ms. Yan and Ms. Lewis's experiences. She asked what other school districts offer classes like these.

Ms. Galante said that Concord, Lexington, and Acton-Boxborough offer unlevelled classes like these.

Ms. Guay said she would like to see an AP offering in Humanities too.

Ms. Scoville said that junior year seems like a perfect time to offer an AP English Lit & Comp. course.

Ms. Santiago said that some current junior parents may feel like their kids (who will be seniors next year) are missing out on the AP opportunity. She suggested that Ms. Galante and Ms. Marcotte be mindful of this when communicating.

Mr. Brosgol said that all of these proposed changes sound sensible to him.

Mr. McAllister said that this proposal is another great opportunity for students provided by Bedford High School.

Mr. Sills noted that lots of students now take the English AP exam and do well. Ms. Marcotte agreed and said she will be reaching out to help any student interested in taking the AP exam this year.

Ms. Galante thanked Ms. Marcotte and the English Department for working on this change. She also thanked student representatives too for their testimonials. She also thanked the School Committee for supporting the change.

6. Davis School Update

Mr. Sills asked Mr. Tassir Alani to report to the School Committee on the state of the Davis School roof and the benefits of replacing it during the Davis School expansion project. He hopes this information will help the School Committee decide on whether to endorse the idea of replacing the roof as part of the project as an additional alternative or related FY'19 project.

Mr. Sills said that the total roof replacement project was not included in the final FY'19 capital list but the Selectmen have asked the School Committee to take a position to advocate for it to be done in FY'19.

Mr. Alani said that the Davis School roof does have some leaks but many have been fixed. Overall the condition has been deemed "good" and is predicted to last another 5 years. The quote to replace the roof as a stand-alone project came in at \$1.3 million. However, if the roof was to be replaced during the upcoming project, the cost to do so will be reduced to \$1 million due to construction efficiencies. He said the cost will likely increase to \$1.6 million in 2023 due to expected inflation in construction costs.

Mr. Alani explained that standard roofing material used today is different than it was when the Davis School roof was originally done. Therefore, we may encounter some extra work needed during the renovation project so that the two roofing materials will work together.

Ms. Guay asked if the Davis roof could accommodate solar panels. Mr. Alani said solar panels would require the entire roof to be redone. Solar panels cannot be placed on a roof that has less than 10 years of life remaining.

Mr. Alani said he personally recommends replacing the entire roof during the Davis school project as long as doing this does not impact the Davis School project in anyway.

Mr. Brosgol said that it simply makes sense to replace the roof today because it will cost an additional \$600,000 to do it in five years.

Ms. Santiago agreed with Mr. Brosgol and also noted that there is a risk for new leaks to occur where the new and old roof materials meet.

Mr. Sills said that he does not see replacing the roof now as an issue related to school programming but he thinks that it does make financial sense to do it now rather than later. He said that the School Committee can give the Finance Committee their opinion on when to replace the Davis School roof.

Mr. McAllister agreed that the School Committee should lay out its thoughts on the Davis School roof replacement in a letter. School Committee members agreed that the letter should state that the School Committee feels that it is fiscally prudent to move forward with the roof replacement now as long as it does not impact school programs or the Davis School project.

Mr. Sills also reported that the Building Committee decided to go with the metal cladding on the second story in order to break up the monotony of brick and to include as an "add alt", two additional classrooms and an expanded pod space.

7. FY'19 Budget Presentation

Mr. Sills said that two weeks ago, he presented a FY'19 budget request that was 4.31% increase which is \$317,999 over the Finance Committee's FY'19 guideline. Since this presentation School Committee members have asked for additional information as well as a new proposal that meets the guideline of 3.5%. Mr. Sills presented all of this tonight.

Highlights of the information Mr. Sills prepared include:

- Enrollment over the last 10 years grew 13.70%
- In-house Special Education programs have increased 16%
- FTE (full time employment) has grown 9.9% to meet enrollment
- FTE has grown 79.6% to meet the needs of the in-house special education programs
- Administrative FTE has also changed due to increased responsibilities.

Mr. Sills provided many new informative charts – Comparative Chart of Districts with High Needs, Growth of Autism diagnosis in Massachusetts, and a history of Bedford's special education numbers (IEPS and 504s). He also provided information on the new ELL law and a description of the Campus Aide position at the high school.

Mr. McAllister and other members of the School Committee thanked Mr. Sills for presenting all of this very detailed and helpful information.

Mr. Sills then presented an FY'19 budget that met the 3.5% guideline. He said he was able to meet this guideline by:

- Applying offsets from CASE transportation savings and LABBB tuition credits (\$158,704)
- Delaying hiring a 1.0 custodian until after the Davis School is complete (\$43,921)
- Using contract services for HVAC work (and not hiring a new HVAC employee \$61,389)
- Deferring the materials, text, and supplies by \$98,170

Mr. Sills also added funding to the budget (\$25,000) in order to increase substitute pay by \$10 per day. Bedford's substitute pay is substantially below neighboring towns and schools have been experiencing difficulty finding subs.

Mr. Sills said that the total FY'19 budget request is now at \$40,428,716.

Miss Yan said she has concerns about reducing the materials and texts budget. Mr. Sills said that every year, the schools end up hiring new teachers at lower salaries compared to those who retire after many years and that resulting savings can be used to purchase materials or text books. He believes that he will have similar flexibility during the 2018-19 school year.

Ms. Santiago said that she personally is uncomfortable with putting off materials and textbook purchases while hiring an orthopedic doctor to attend home football games, one of the proposals left in the FY'19 budget request.

Mr. McAllister asked Mr. Sills if he was comfortable with the new budget request. Mr. Sills said that he and his Administrative team were comfortable.

Ms. Guay made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the FY'19 budget request of \$40,428,716, an increase of 3.51% over FY'18.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. Santiago

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

8. Superintendent's Report

Mr. Sills reported that the Lane School playground, which is closed due to safety concerns, will soon be torn down. The DPW has \$127,000 set aside to create a base line playground. However, Mr. McKinney, Assistant Principal at Lane, will come to the School Committee to request funding for some add-on playground equipment. Mr. Sills said he may ask the School Committee to consider using Mudge Fund money and possibly ask the Recreation Dept. to contribute to cover the costs of these add-ons.

Mr. Sills said that the high school will be rolling out a new suicide prevention program "SOS" to 10th graders. Parent sessions are being offered.

Mr. Sills said that the ELL department is having a social tonight for all ELL families.

Mr. Sills also reported that on Friday, the boys Varsity basketball team will be wearing black sweatshirts with a Martin Luther King quote and "Black Lives Matter" on the back. This was a team decision and the players are wearing it in solidarity.

Mr. Sills also said that Bedford Embraces Diversity held a Martin Luther King breakfast where 9 METCO alumni came and spoke about their experience at Bedford. It was a "moving and informative" session that clearly shows the importance of the METCO program.

9. Minutes

Mr. Brosgol made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the minutes of the December 5, 2017 School Committee meeting.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. Santiago

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

Ms. Santiago made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the minutes of the December 12, 2017 School Committee meeting as amended.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. Scoville

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

10. Adjournment

Ms. Scoville made the following motion.

MOVED: Motion to adjourn at 9:45 P.M. not to reopen.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. Guay

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. McAllister Yes

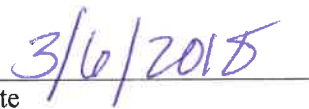
Mr. Brosgol Yes

Ms. Santiago Yes

Ms. Scoville Yes

Ms. Guay Yes


School Committee Secretary


Date

BEDFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE
January 24, 2018
Exhibits/Documents

- Presentation: Senior English at Bedford High School
- FY'19 Budget Proposal Packet - responses and new numbers
- FY'19 Recommended Budget Adjustments
- Draft of December 5, 2017 School Committee minutes
- Draft of December 12, 2017 School Committee minutes