

BEDFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE
February 26, 2019
Bedford High School – Large Group Instruction Room

1. Call to Order

At 7:30 p.m., Mr. Brosgol called to order the meeting of the Bedford School Committee. Other members present included Ms. Santiago, Ms. Scoville, Ms. Guay, and Mr. McAllister. Samantha Gallant, Mia Federico and Alex Oleksinski, Student Representatives, were also in attendance.

2. Comments from Public

None

3. Personnel Report

Mr. Sills asked the School Committee to consider approving a field trip request from Ms. Justine Flora, Business Teacher at the high school. Ms. Flora will be taking students to attend the annual DECA state championship on March 7-9th at the Marriott Copley and Hynes Convention Center in Boston, MA. There are approximately 13 students attending and each family will provide transportation. Mr. Sills noted that he has approved Jim Sullivan, a Business teacher from Tewksbury High School to be the Bedford male chaperone on an as needed basis.

Ms. Santiago made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the field trip request by Ms. Flora for 13 high school students to attend the annual DECA state championship on March 7-9, 2019 in Boston, MA at a cost of \$430 per student and no cost to the school department.

MOTION SECONDED by Mr. McAllister

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

Mr. Sills also asked the School Committee to approve a field trip request from Ms. Nicole O'Toole, Program Administrator for Music, to attend the Massachusetts All State Festival on February 28-March 2, 2019 at Symphony Hall in Boston, MA. Student TJ Zovko was accepted to the 2019 Chorus. TJ's family will provide transportation. The cost to the student is \$325 and no cost to the schools.

Ms. Santiago made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the field trip request by Ms. O'Toole for TJ Zovko and several high school music teachers to attend the Massachusetts All State Festival on February 28, 2019 through March 2, 2019 at Symphony Hall in Boston at no cost to the schools.

MOTION SECONDED by Mr. McAllister

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

Mr. Sills presented the final field trip request for approval. This trip is from Mr. Ken Mierz, ROTC instructor. He is asking for permission to attend the AFJROTC Instructor Certification Course in Montgomery, AL on June 11-21, 2019. This course will complete his professional certification from the Airforce to teach AFJROTC. The course is only offered once per year. All fees, travel and expenses are covered by the Airforce.

Ms. Scoville made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve Mr. Ken Mierz's attendance at the AFJROTC Instructor Certification Course to be held on June 11-21, 2019 in Montgomery, AL at no cost to the school department.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. Santiago

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

Mr. Sills announced the following personnel updates:

- Sheryl Poor resigned from Food Services at the Lane School
- Robin Talkowski was appointed Reading Specialist at the Lane School (as a replacement teacher for LOA)
- Andrea Crowley was appointed .5 Teaching Assistant at the Preschool.

Special Education Department Reorganization

Mr. Sills explained that since the Preschool will be moving to Davis School next year, he and Ms. Vines, Special Education Director, have reorganized the Special Education Department for 2019-2020 as follows:

- There will be a Program Administrator for Special Education PreK-2 at the Davis School
- An Out-of-District Coordinator Program Administrator position will be created and will manage all out-of-district placements and the Early Intervention children. This position will also manage evaluations of specialists such as OT, PT and Speech.
- The preschool program will fall under the Davis School administration

As a result of this reorganization, Mr. Sills presented two new job descriptions for the School Committee to review – “Program Administrator for Special Education Grades PreK-2” and “Out of District Program Administrator PreK-12”. The School Committee agreed to review these descriptions and review for approval at a later meeting.

Ms. Guay asked Mr. Sills to verify who will be monitoring and tracking the Early Intervention children and Bedford children attending private preschools.

Ms. Santiago expressed concern that the expectations for one person to be liaison for PreK children and older, out-of-district children may be too much.

4. English Language Learner Presentation

Carrie Powers, ELL Director and Teacher, gave a presentation on the English Language Education Program in Bedford. She noted that 52 different languages are spoken in Bedford public schools. *(Please note English as a Second Language ESL and English Language Learners ELL are used interchangeably at this time.)*

Ms. Powers defined an English Learner as student who does not speak English and cannot do ordinary classroom work in English. The student is identified through the Home Language Survey given at the time of enrollment and then assessed by the ESL teacher.

Massachusetts is part of the WIDA consortium so students take the WIDA Access tests to determine which ESL level of service is needed. Students are identified as being in levels 1.0 through 6.0 – the WIDA Access levels. Access is administered annually and is now part of the MA DESE accountability along with MCAS.

Ms. Powers explained that 80% of the work done by the ESL teachers is focused on teaching cultural competency. She noted that the United States has a culture that focuses on the self (individualism) and values the written word. Our culture and Western European culture emphasizes personal achievement rather than group goals. Many of our students come from cultures that are collectivist in nature. The needs of a group or community are extremely important. Oral traditions are often valued rather than writing.

Ms. Powers said that this distinction and basic understanding of other cultures (and our own) is key to helping our ELL students acclimate to our school. Students who maintain their cultural identity and language do better academically and socially in school than students who abandon their native culture and language. The ESL teachers teach more than communication skills. They truly help with cultural competency. They are liaison with classroom teachers and parents and a resource for social connections. They ensure the students have a safe place to share their stories and build confidence. The ESL classroom is an authentic opportunity for students to practice language.

Ms. Powers shared a video of two high school students who expressed how helpful the ESL classroom is to their education. It allows them to participate in education and take risks in a safe environment. She also shared a video from an ESL parent who offered her support of Bedford's ELL programs.

Ms. Powers noted that Dual-Language Programs offer the greatest academic success in long term studies for ESL students. Bedford does not have enough ESL students to warrant such a program.

Ms. Powers noted that the ESL teachers are now offering –for free – adult ESL classes. They just started and are held on Tuesday nights at the high school. So far, fifty adults are enrolled and 17 are on the waiting list. The teachers volunteer their time.

Ms. Powers introduced some of the ESL teachers in the audience – Matt Brennan, Laura Villarroel and Amy O'Shea. She thanked all of the ELL teachers for their hard work helping Bedford's ELL students.

Student Representatives Alex, Mia and Samantha all were impressed that ESL classes spend a lot of time on cultural understanding rather than just language development.

Mr. McAllister agreed that it is quite impressive that ESL teachers teach so much more than language.

Ms. Guay asked how we are able to translate for parents to understand. Ms. Powers said that we use EDCO translation services.

Ms. Guay asked if any ELL students are on IEPs. Ms. Powers said yes but said it is difficult to separate language from learning disabilities.

Ms. Guay asked if there is an ELL summer program. Ms. Powers said yes and it is about 4-5 weeks long.

Ms. Guay asked if there was a PreK class. Ms. Powers said no but she does screen pre-k students. They then monitor the students and offer support to the teachers who have ELL students.

Ms. Scoville asked if there was an ELL Curriculum. Ms. Powers said there is a newcomers curriculum and that the teachers are always adapting and changing their lessons based on the individual student.

Ms. Scoville asked if high school ELL students take a second language. Mr. Brennan, high school teacher, said there is flexibility at the high school with this requirement – based on the individual.

Ms. Santiago asked if the town of Bedford has any support services to help them orient to our town for families that do not speak English. Ms. Powers said no but it is a good idea. Mr. Sills said he will raise this concern with Parent Advisory groups.

School Committee members thanked Ms. Powers and the teachers for an informative presentation.

5. Policy - Audio/Video Recordings at Meetings

Mr. Sills presented a policy on audio or video recordings of meetings. The School Committee needs to review this proposal because parents have on occasion, asked to record an IEP or Discipline meeting. Mr. Sills said that regular practice at the schools is to say no.

Mr. Sills said he has proposed a new policy to codify the district's practice. He noted however, that there will be exceptions.

Mr. McAllister said that he sees both sides of the argument and hopes that co-recording (both schools and parents) is an option.

Ms. Guay asked if a lot of parents request this. Mr. Sills said no, only one or two. Ms. Guay said she feels that those who ask may do so because they do not have the resources to fully participate/understand the meetings. She hopes that there is an appeal process if the Special Education Director or Principal say no.

Ms. Santiago asked about a scenario where a parent in the meeting has a disability themselves. Mr. Sills said he hopes this is an instance when are flexible and allow recording.

Mr. Brosgol suggested that Mr. Sills define if this policy is only for IEP and Discipline meetings or is it for ALL?

Mr. Sills agreed to review and make changes.

6. Bus Transportation Policy

Mr. Coelho is recommending that the School Committee award the 2020-2022 student transportation contract to Bedford Charter for in-district regular and special education and METCO transportation.

Mr. Coelho explained that the total amount of the contract came in at approximately \$30,000 less than the number used for the FY'20 budget request.

The new contract is for three years with an option to renew after the 2nd year at the sole discretion of the school district.

Ms. Santiago made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee award the contract for in-district day student bus transportation, late bus and special education transportation for the Bedford Public Schools for the school years 2019-2020 through 2021-2022 inclusive to Bedford Charter Service at an estimated first year annual cost of \$1,254,507.

MOTION SECONDED by Mr. McAllister

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

Ms. Santiago also made this motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee award the contract for METCO student bus transportation for the Bedford Public Schools METCO Program for school years 2019-2020 through 2021-2022 inclusive to Bedford Charter Service at an estimated first year annual cost of \$353,800.

MOTION SECONDED by Mr. McAllister

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

7. 2018-2019 District Goals Midyear Update

Mr. Sills reported on his progress so far on meeting the 2018-2019 District Goals.

#1 Coherent, Higher Order Thinking Curriculum/Student-Centered Learning

This year the district wide focus has been on developing all student's abilities to comprehend complex texts – "literacy learning". Accomplishments include:

- Framed the work required and laid out school-based strategic steps to improve literacy learning at all schools.
- The Summer Retreat work refined curriculum leaders work plans and focus in support of literacy learning.
- Provided readings and professional development for teachers, teacher leaders and administrators regarding literacy learning, student ownership and differentiation.
- Curriculum leaders worked with Assistant Superintendent to define K-12 expectations of elements of literacy
- Piloting the use of new data analytic tools to advance this work (Student Insights)

Mr. Sills also shared examples of literacy learning work from each of the schools.

Mr. Sills noted that more work needs to be done including additional professional development in inquiry-based instruction and visiting other schools districts with this practice. District measures also need to be identified to track student growth and achievement.

#2 Equity and Diversity: Teaching All Students

District-wide work includes:

- Social and Emotional Learning to close achievement gaps and strengthen culturally responsive teaching.
- Supporting new Guidance Director's development of grade Pre-k through grade 12 social emotional curriculum and support system.

- Fully implemented an Interracial Parent Advisory Council
- Delivered keynote and workshops on culturally responsive teacher/student connections
- Updated and adopted the District Accommodation Plan
- Emphasizing push in reading and special education and shared responsibilities for struggling students.
- Continue with co-teaching and co-planning days.

Mr. Sills discussed more examples of Equity and Diversity work from each school.

#3 Community Connections and Communications

Some of the district accomplishments so far to date include:

- Letters to families and staff regarding issues of race/racism published.
- Increased use of SeeSaw at Davis school to share student work with families.
- Several parent forums have been held at JGMS, BHS, and Lane.
- Created an adult education program for parents and grandparents of ELL students.
- Continued use of blogs and website.

School Committee members thanked Mr. Sills for this review.

8. Superintendent's Report

Representative Moulton is asking Bedford for information to help with the Impact Aid funding.

9. Minutes

Ms. Santiago made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the minutes from the January 15, 2019

School Committee meeting as amended.

MOTION SECONDED by Mr. McAllister

MOTION APPROVED: 4-0-1 (Mr. McAllister abstained)

Ms. Santiago made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the minutes of the January 22, 2019 School Committee meeting as amended.

MOTION SECONDED by Mr. McAllister

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

10. Future Agenda

- Mr. Sills will bring forward a candidate for the Assistant Superintendent position.
- Mr. Sills will give a Davis School renovation project update.
- There will be an update on Ipad/Technology plan

11. Mr. McAllister's last Meeting

Mr. Brosgol noted that tonight is Mr. McAllister's last School Committee meeting. Each member thanked Mr. McAllister for his invaluable insight and efforts in supporting Bedford Public Schools. Mr. Sills said that Mr. McAllister was a valuable member and Chair and he really helped to form great relationships with other town committees.

Mr. McAllister said that he is so happy that his children attend Bedford Public Schools and he loved working with the School Committee.

12. Adjournment

Mr. McAllister made the following motion:

MOVED: Motion to adjourn at 10:01, not to reopen

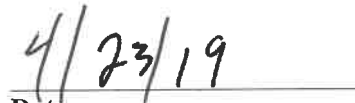
MOTION SECONDED by Ms. Scoville

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Brosgol	Yes
Ms. Santiago	Yes
Ms. Scoville	Yes
Ms. Guay	Yes
Mr. McAllister	Yes


School Committee Secretary


Date

BEDFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE

February 26, 2019

Exhibits/Documents

- Draft of new job description for Program Administrator for Special Education Grades PreK – 2.
- Draft of new job description for Program Administrator for Out of District Program Administrator (Prek-12)
- Presentation: English Language Education Program
- Draft of the Audio/Video Recordings at Meetings Policy
- Presentation: 2018-2019 District Goals Midyear Update
- Draft of minutes from the January 15, 2019 School Committee meeting
- Draft of minutes from the January 22, 2019 School Committee meeting