

BEDFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE MINUTES OF

September 29, 2009

1. Call to Order

At 6:30 p.m., Mr. Pierce called to order, the meeting of the Bedford School Committee. Other Members present included Ms. Bickford, Ms. Seibert, Ms. O’Gara and Mr. Hafer.

Ms. Bickford made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee move to Executive Session.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. Seibert

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

2. Adjournment

Ms. Bickford made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee adjourn from Executive Session and return to Open Session.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. Seibert

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

3. Return to Open Session:

At 7:30 Mr. Pierce called to order, the meeting of the Bedford School Committee. Other members present included Ms. Bickford, Ms. Seibert, Ms. O’Gara and Mr. Hafer.

4. Comments From Public

None

5. Personnel Report

Dr. LaCroix announced the resignation of Mr. Richard Stephenson, a math teacher at the High School.

Dr. LaCroix also reported the following extracurricular appointments at the Middle School:

Marilyn Bemis	Honor Society Co-Advisor
Pat Stephen	Honor Society Co-Advisor
Libbey Beinert Hunnewell	Yearbook Advisor
Amy Budka	Musical Theater Director
Lisa Rainen	Musical Theater Assistant Director
Catherine Martin	Musical Theater Conductor
Jennifer Scott	Musical Theater Choreographer
Amy Budka	Vocal Advisor
Nicole O’Toole	Instrumental Advisor
Amy Budka	Jazz Band Advisor
Lauren Noferi	Science Club Co-Advisor
Nadine Coletta	Science Club Co-Advisor
Renee Anderson	Peer Mediation Co-Advisor

Roseanne Ham	Peer Mediation Co-Advisor
Joe Casey	Washington DC Trip Coordinator
Lisa Rainen	Mathematics League Advisor
Libbey Beinert Hunnewell	School Council Co-Advisor
Lauren Noferi	School Council Co-Advisor
Ken Lord	Web Page Director

6. Appointment of School Attendance Officer

(Mr. Pierce decided to change the order of the Agenda due to some technical difficulties with the Visual Art Department's presentation)

Ms. Bickford made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the appointment of Jeff Wardwell and Michael Reed as School Attendance Officers for the 2009-2010 school year.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. O'Gara

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

7. Approval of Minutes

Ms. Bickford made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the minutes of the April 14, 2009 School Committee meeting as amended.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. O'Gara

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

8. Presentation: Visual Art Department K-12

Ms. Aleta Devaney, Program Administrator, presented an update on the K-12 art program to the School Committee.

Ms. Devaney introduced the staff members in the Department – Larry Sheinfeld, Whitney Davis, Eileen Wagner, Paul Harrington, Candace Banks, Catherine Johnstone, and Jill Frazier.

She explained that the common purpose of the department is to encourage respect for aesthetic values, individual expression and personal responsibility for creating and preserving original art. Ms. Devaney explained that it is a balancing act to be an art teacher. One needs to teach the students skills but also give them a chance to express themselves.

Ms. Devaney then showed the School Committee an award winning painting completed by one of the High School students.

Ms. Devaney reviewed some other accomplishments of the department. They included the NEASC Review, Tile projects at Lane and Davis schools, level 4/5 interdisciplinary offerings, open studios, field trips and the K-12 Art Show.

Ms. Devaney also highlighted the professional developments efforts taken by the staff. They include Teacher As Scholars, Primary Source, and EDCO.

Ms. Devaney explained that all of the art classes and lessons are guided by state curriculum frameworks. At Davis School, students have art once a week for 45 minutes while at Lane, students meet for 50 minutes.

Ms. Devaney also noted that the K-12 Art Show, a major event, will be April 30 – May 2nd. She showed examples of students' work and exhibits. She was especially pleased to show some of the Senior installations (a compilation of all of their artwork while in school). She noted that the new High School was a very nice venue to display all of this work, especially the beautiful lobby.

Ms. Devaney continued with a list of accomplishments. They include:

- Teacher web pages
- Blogging
- Art as Communications – a new course at the High School
- Relationship with Artlink, a community organization
- Newly designed art courses at the middle school (for the 6x6 schedule)

Going forward, Ms. Devaney hopes to involve more High School students in the planning of the K-12 Art Exhibit, establish a K-12 Department web page, and to review the K-12 art curriculum in preparation of the Art Program Review in 2010-2012.

Ms. Devaney also mentioned that there are conversations underway at the State level to see if there is a way to rate schools on opportunities for students to be creative.

Ms. O'Gara commented that she is pleased to see how technology is used in the Art Department. Ms. Devaney said that Mrs. Collins has been very helpful with this and is a great resource.

Ms. O'Gara asked Ms. Devaney to comment on the Middle School schedule. Ms. Devaney said that the Middle School art teachers say it has been a very good change. However, there have been some scheduling problems as a result of students having more choices.

Ms. Bickford said that it is important that the School Committee remember that art helps students be creative and that this is important even though it cannot be measured. Therefore, Ms. Bickford appreciates the teachers keeping students on the creative path, especially in this test/measurement era.

Ms. Seibert said that she is proud that Bedford values art programs. Ms. Devaney agreed.

Ms. Seibert asked Ms. Devaney what she would like to see expanded in the Art Department. Ms. Devaney said time. She said that Bedford High School is such a small school with art major and minors but teachers figure out a way to help all.

Mr. Hafer said he really enjoys the art show. He asked what is expected in the upcoming curriculum review. Ms. Devaney said she really did not know.

Mr. Hafer asked how many students are art majors. Ms. Devaney said about 30.

Mr. Hafer asked how supplies have been managed. Ms. Devaney said fine and no shortages yet. She will work with Mr. Coelho to get certain supplies on the State bid list.

Mr. Pierce thanked Ms. Devaney and commented that it is important, in his opinion, to offer the students a well-rounded education and that creative arts do affect the business economy.

Ms. Devaney agreed and said that art classes often give students “a place to shine”. She is also pleased that Bedford’s classes attract a variety of students – athletes, academics, theater, etc. All types and all ages participate.

9. Presentation: MCAS

Before Dr. Cindy Crimmin presented MCAS results, Dr. LaCroix took a minute to remind everyone to keep the MCAS results in perspective. She said that it is important to know that Bedford does take MCAS very seriously, but it is just one piece of the whole academic picture.

Dr. Crimmin echoed this sentiment. She began the presentation by reviewing graduation requirements for the Class of 2010. Dr. Crimmin explained that all students, starting with the Class of 2010, must earn a Proficient or Advanced level in English Language Arts and Math or complete an Educational Proficiency Plan before graduating. All students must now pass a science MCAS exam with a minimum score of “Needs Improvement”. Currently, Bedford will be holding a Biology exam in February. Students who join BHS after February may apply for a waiver.

Dr. Crimmin went on to discuss reporting of MCAS scores. She explained that the State reports scores by District and by Schools. The District scores provide information on the aggregate and identified subgroups and includes all students enrolled in the district, including those in out-of-district public schools. School scores also provide information for the aggregate and identified subgroups. However, the scores include only students enrolled in Bedford schools.

Dr. Crimmin said that AYP (Adequate Yearly Progress) is established yearly to ensure 100% of students reach Advanced or Proficient by 2014. AYP is reported for both School and District.

Overall, Dr. Crimmin said that Bedford scored very high/on target on English Language Arts and high/on target for mathematics. She further explained that in 2008, JGMS was identified as Needs Improvement for Year 1 for the subgroups of Special Education and Low Income in math and Needs Improvement Year 1 status for subgroups individually for Lane, JGMS, and BHS of Special Education and Low Income in ELA.

Dr. Crimmin said that Grade 10 is really our primary focus, as it should be. She reported that 100% of the Class of 2010 (as of last spring) has already met the State’s new graduation requirements. Also, 98% of the Class of 2011 has met MCAS requirements.

Dr. Crimmin showed the School Committee some specific Grade 10 performance history in Math, ELA and Science. She said that there is a concern for high school students that transferred from out of state. For example in Grade 11, there are eleven students who

need to take MCAS in ELA, Math and Science. Also, in Grade 12, there are three new students who need to take the Biology, ELA, and Math MCAS exams in order to graduate.

Dr. Crimmin presented Grades 3-8 highlights. She noted the need for JGMS to maintain AYP targets in SPED Math for one more year. She also said that many neighboring communities have a similar concern with middle school scores. In fact, 76% of middle schools in the State have an AYP "status". She noted that there are areas of concern in student performance in grades 3-8. The main concern is that on balance, the improvement has not been that strong and certain subgroups continue to under perform.

Dr. Crimmin also introduced to the School Committee the new "Value Added/Growth Model". This new model recognizes that each year, the grouping of students taking MCAS exams are different. Dr. Crimmin said she thinks this new thought process has great potential because the new models will follow students over time. It will allow schools to compare students with similar scores over time. It may identify districts with programs to model.

Dr. Crimmin explained the next steps.

- Continue to use the Data Warehouse and Aspen to review performance.
- Add RTI strategies to support ALL students.
- Use the new growth model to identify successful strategies.
- Continue coordination of support services and regular education instruction.
- Continue teacher collaborations to examine and enhance curriculum and instruction.
- Continue communication with parents to support student learning.

Ms. O'Gara thanked Dr. Crimmin for a very thorough presentation. She asked if applying for a waiver was a new option. Dr. Crimmin said yes and she hopes the waivers will be granted to those students who move in after the February science test.

Ms. O'Gara said that Bedford is in an unusual situation given the fact that students from Hanscom can and do move in to school through out the year and may not be ready to pass MCAS requirements.

Ms. O'Gara asked what the consequences were for the 76% of middle schools that have an AYP status. Dr. Crimmin said that the State is focusing on the schools that are truly in trouble. Dr. LaCroix said that "AYP Status" has different levels and the State gets involved in those with very low level status. Dr. Crimmin commented that the State does know which schools need attention and that Bedford is not one of them.

Ms. O'Gara thanked Dr. Crimmin for pointing out areas where Bedford's performance is flat. "This will help us focus."

Ms. Bickford said that she is not sure, personally, if efforts in Grades 3 and 4 warrant a lot of focus. She said developmentally, students at these grades are very diverse. She thinks it is important to not focus too much time on helping students in Grades 3-5 improve scores.

Dr. LaCroix said she agrees with Ms. Bickford but thinks MCAS is a good test preparation. Dr. Crimmin also agrees, but she does see a benefit to help with open response questions.

Ms. Seibert said that she is pleased with the growth trends and hopes that overall, there is a lot of cross referencing with other data. She said that the State makes it seem like MCAS is the only important assessment. She hopes that teachers and students have a sense of the balance with assessments and that MCAS is only one piece of data.

Mr. Hafer commented that this presentation always stirs up a lot of questions. For example, how are the subgroups determined. Dr. LaCroix said DESE database is used for this.

Overall, Mr. Hafer said he is impressed with the MCAS reports that go home to the parents, that they contain a lot of information.

Mr. Hafer agrees with the others, that it is important to keep MCAS scores in perspective.

Mr. Pierce asked if District scores include student choice schools. Dr. LaCroix said no.

10. Approval of Superintendent's Goals for 2009-2010

Dr. LaCroix explained that in the final document, one goal changed. The handwriting review is now a K-5 goal. She also added three new goals regarding energy monitoring. She said that Mr. Jones, Facility Director, would determine how to measure these new goals. Also, a few other changes were made since last week's discussion. Dr. LaCroix said that these were in red.

Ms. Bickford made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the Superintendent's goals for the 2009-2010 school year as amended.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. O'Gara

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

11. Budget Revote

Mr. Coelho presented a memo regarding FY10 budget revisions. Mr. Coelho explained that based on current salary and non-salary projections and inclusive of all personnel and payroll updates, the current allocation of the FY10 budget as revised at the August 3, 2009 Special Town Meeting is as follows:

Salary	\$21,901,575
Non Salary	\$ 9,128,917
Total	\$31,030,492

Mr. Coelho said that through the hiring process, the budget has been able to absorb the additional Kindergarten teaching position and transfer \$31,788 into the School Committee Reserve. Mr. Coelho said that he would wait until the end of the year to see if there is a need for a reserve fund transfer to cover transportation cost deficiencies.

Ms. Bickford made the motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee revote the FY'10 operating budgets in the following manner:

\$21,901,575 salaries

\$ 9,128,917 non salaries

\$31,030,492 Total

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. O'Gara

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

12. Superintendent's Report

On the recent early release day, the following occurred:

- The High School staff focused on the NEASC visit. Dr. LaCroix said that the entire faculty is ready for the team.
- Science and math departments worked on curriculum.
- Social Studies faculty from the middle and high school worked together on curriculum. The Social Studies teachers will be joining the English department to work on writing at JGMS.
- Guidance K-12 focused on the achievement gap. All agree that the Excel Program is a good example on how to address achievement gap and the hope is to offer this at JGMS someday.
- METCO hopes to put in a mentoring program at the middle school.

Dr. LaCroix said that overall, the Program Review process has taken roots in the entire system and that this has created a more opportunities for reflection throughout our school system.

Dr. LaCroix also reported sad news. Ray Bohn, former Special Education Director in Bedford for many years, recently passed away. She said that many Bedford families will be saddened to hear about this loss. Mr. Bohn helped many families here in town.

13. Minutes for Review (continued from earlier)

Ms. Bickford made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the minutes of the April 28, 2009 meeting as amended.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. O'Gara

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

14. Future Agenda

Class size report is due next meeting.

The enrollment study is also due.

Ms. Seibert asked if there were any signs that the H1N1 was hitting Bedford. Dr. LaCroix said not yet. She also noted that the Board of Health is making plans on holding a flu clinic for both seasonal and H1N1. The schools will help with the communication. Dr. LaCroix said she is tracking student and teacher illness.

Dr. LaCroix said that the School Committee will soon have to vote to take over the BHS Renovation Project. The project is winding down and the Building Committee will soon be ready to turn it over to the School Committee.

15. Adjournment

Ms O’Gara made the following motion:

MOVED: Motion to adjourn at 9:45.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. Seibert

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Pierce	Yes
Ms. Seibert	Yes
Mr. Hafer	Yes
Ms. Bickford	Yes
Ms. O’Gara	Yes

School Committee Secretary

Date

BEDFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE

**EXECUTIVE SEESION
MINUTES OF**

September 29, 2009