

BEDFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF

June 16, 2009

1. Call to Order

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

2. Comments From Public

None

3. Personnel Report

Action Item

Dr. LaCroix asked the School Committee if they were ready to approve the job description for the English Language Learner Coordinator, as discussed last week.

Ms. Seibert made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the job description of ELL Coordinator as presented at the June 9, 2009 School Committee meeting.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. Bickford

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

Dr. LaCroix announced the following informational items:

Appointments:

Laurie Zucker-Conde	ELL Coordinator/Title I Director	System
Donna Sarti	Deaf Educator	Davis
Jaclyn Doran	Special Education Teacher	High School

4. Textbook Adoption

Dr. LaCroix asked the School Committee to approve the Law Textbooks that were reviewed and discussed at the last School Committee meeting.

Ms. Bickford made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the purchase of 30 texts entitled “Law 101” by Jay Feinman at a total cost of \$889.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. Seibert

MOTION APPROVED: 4-0-1

5. Textbook Presentation

Mr. Mike Griffin, Science Program Administrator, presented two Physics textbooks that he would like the School Committee to consider.

The first book, “Physics a First Course”, is an especially good book for levels 2 and 3. Mr. Griffin said the book is challenging but at the right level. The text book purchase will include workbooks and a CD version of the text. The school will get credit towards supplemental resources too.

The next book, "Physics Matters: An Introduction to Conceptual Physics" will be used for Level 4 classes. It is more comprehensive and presents challenges, which are missing in the current text. An online version, CDs and supplementary program material will be part of this purchase. All in all, 110 licenses (same as the number of texts) will be purchased.

Ms. Bickford asked if the biggest change was in Level 4? Mr. Griffin said yes, the new text is less distracting and has more challenging materials. The readability is geared toward the more independent learner.

Ms Seibert asked if the High School was moving away from texts now that so much online material is available. Mr. Griffin said no because online material should be used as an option and end to the excuse of "I forgot my book."

Mr. Griffin said that the plan is to send texts home and use online and other materials at school.

Ms. Seibert said she liked the lay out of both books.

Mr. Hafer asked if both books covered all of the basics. Mr. Griffin said yes.

Ms. Bickford asked if students can do problems and check answers as a way to study. Mr. Griffin said yes. The online sites are especially good at this. He said teachers will provide the answers by creating their own worksheets too.

The School Committee decided to vote on this request tonight so Mr. Griffin can move forward with the purchase.

Ms. Bickford made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the procurement of the following texts at a cost not to exceed \$24,425:

Physics, A First Course by Tom Hsu Phd. – for grade 9 level 2/3

Physics Matters – An Introduction to Conceptual Physics, by James Trifel – for grade 9 level 4.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. Seibert

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

6. School Security

Dr. LaCroix reviewed the school security activities that were completed over the last couple of years. She noted that the District is always working on security issues and it is something that is considered critical and is always ongoing.

Dr. LaCroix reported that this past year, all schools conducted security surveys with teachers, parents and high school students. The results were discussed and presented by Principals. The results were a point of discussion at many meetings and especially at last winter's Community Forum.

These discussions included security and financial and school climate impacts. Also, a community member with a security background worked with the Community Forum team.

Several things were implemented as a result of these discussions. For example at Davis School:

- A safety curriculum was developed and is taught to the K-2 population.
- As a matter of practice, all doors are locked except the main entrance.
- All visitors must sign in and wear a badge. (The staff is politely vigilant about this practice.)
- Lunch and Recess monitors have been trained.
- Safety practices are shared with parents.
- Pick up procedures have been reconfigured and tightened.

Safety implementation examples at the Lane School include:

- Provide safety education to students.
- All doors are locked except the main entrance.
- Considering reconfiguration of the office to be more effective.
- Visitor sign-in and badges are now required.
- Lock downs are practiced.

Safety implementation examples at the Middle School include:

- Safety education provided to students.
- Doors are locked except the front. (This will require a change in the Superintendent's Office entrance. This entrance will now be moved to the back, by the loading dock.)
- Visitors must sign in and wear a badge.
- More supervision at the arrival and dismissal times.

Safety measures at Bedford High School include:

- Expanded programs such as Peer Mediation/Restorative Justice Programs help get problems solved at the high school.
- Teachers use swipe cards to enter.
- Visitors must sign-in and wear a badge.
- After school activities are restricted to certain areas that are supervised.
- Supervision in halls and cafeteria are more visible.

Dr. LaCroix reviewed security plans for the 2009-2010 school year. They include:

- Davis will continue to revisit pick up procedures.
- Davis will brainstorm for pick up options especially for after school activities.
- All staff will be trained about approaching visitors.
- Lane will upgrade classroom door hardware (not all are able to lock).
- At BHS and JGMS, staff will figure out how to monitor keeping the doors closed and locked during the day.
- The Superintendent's Office will have a new entry way and a reconfigured office.
- At the Middle School, auditorium door and gym door hardware will be replaced.
- Corridor security doors will be installed for security during after school use.
- The BHS Preschool drop off will be reconfigured and possibly a door notification system will be established.

Also, Principals will work with staff to continue practicing emergency drills, especially during break and/or lunch periods.

Dr. LaCroix said that the District Crisis Team will continue to work together.

Dr. LaCroix said that there are no recommendations at this time to install video cameras at any of our schools. Discussions on when/if to implement this endeavor will continue on an ongoing basis.

Ms. Bickford thanked Dr. LaCroix for reviewing the process. She thinks there is the right balance at each school. She is also pleased that other measures are being implemented besides security hardware, such as the High School Peer Mediation efforts.

Ms. Bickford suggested using the remaining Lane School building funds to purchase hardware needed for security measures. She therefore suggests removing the cameras from the Capital Request.

Ms. Seibert asked if staff badges were considered. Dr. LaCroix said that this is discussed, but no agreement has been made yet.

Mr. Hafer said he appreciates integrating the antibullying efforts and the School Resource Officer efforts into security discussions.

Mr. Pierce said that Bedford's approach to school security is very practical and shows a good balance. He is pleased that it will be an ongoing discussion.

Mr. Pierce did ask if Davis School asks for licenses or identification for pick up. Dr. LaCroix said no but the school uses a list and makes sure that the right person is picking up the child. At Davis, the staff quickly learns who is who.

7. Superintendent's Goals – End of Year Report

Dr. LaCroix explained that at the end of February, she presented an extensive update on her goals. Therefore, tonight, Dr. LaCroix will present what has been accomplished since that time.

Dr. LaCroix chose to review accomplishments in three important areas – Leadership and Communications, Curriculum and Instruction and Finance and Facilities Management.

I. Leadership and Communication'

- Appointed a new Davis School Principal, a new Special Education Director and a new ELL Coordinator.
- Addressed transition points. Davis and Lane documented information which will be posted in handbooks. Also staff communications increased at grades 2 to 3 and grades 5 to 6.
- Data Task Force work continues. The hope is to post internal assessments on ASPEN for parents.
- Use of Alert Now was successful during the H1N1 crisis.
- The new BHS Guidance Counselor, who focuses on Hanscom students and families, has been very successful.
- Communications between home and school has improved. For example, Seventy-one percent of BHS teachers post assignments online.
- Continue appropriate use of MCAS results. These are the basis for K-5 Steering Committee, basis for work with Math teachers at JGMS, and the basis for the

MCAS academy at BHS. (Dr. LaCroix noted that school level ELA results will now be released earlier in the year so schools can change classroom practices at the beginning of the school year.)

- LABBB Collaborative will hire a Data Specialist to collect and analyze student achievement data. Federal stimulus money will fund and all five districts in LABBB will share the service.
- Bedford has joined other EDCO communities in addressing the achievement gap in middle school math.
- The BHS Excel Program will be expanded to help more students move up to more challenging classes.
- Program changes include reinstating the Marching Band, BHS Live, and new math programs at JGMS and Davis.
- Curriculum work continues at JGMS as staff learns to figure out how to measure when students are ready to leave reading support programs.
- The High School math leveling rubric will be piloted.
- Writing processes will be examined K-12.
- Graduation requirements will be revised and presented to the School Committee.
- Mandarin Chinese may be offered as another foreign language option.
- Full Day Kindergarten implementation will be contingent on a state grant.
- External program reviews will be extensive (NEASC process is underway at the High School, Science and Foreign Language documents will be reviewed, and ELA, Reading, and Social Studies will begin)
- Technology specialists and teachers will continue to integrate 21st Century skills.
- The Global focus will be expanded in our curriculum.

II. Professional Development

- K-5 teachers will continue learning about the six traits in writing
- Understanding Executive Function issues will continue
- Differentiated instruction will be a focus of training
- Response to Intervention strategies will be taught for special education.
- District Curriculum accommodation plans revised at each school.

III. Finance and Facilities

- An energy audit will be completed at Davis, Lane and JGMS.
- Contracts have been finalized with custodians, secretaries, and transportation. Food Services contract negotiations are underway.
- Work continues with the Massachusetts School Building Authority. The minimum reimbursement will be 45.9%.
- Work continues on Hanscom funding initiative on state and federal levels.

Ms. Seibert thanked Dr. LaCroix and noted that “a lot of great work gets done!”

Ms. Bickford thanked Dr. LaCroix for a good school year and that we accomplished a lot.

Ms. Bickford did ask if the LABBB data person would only analyze LABBB students. Dr. LaCroix said no, all students. She said that LABBB feels that this work is part of the LABBB charter and it is a good way to stretch our partnership.

Mr. Hafer complimented Dr. LaCroix on a great job managing very complex projects.

Mr. Pierce is pleased to hear about starting a longitudinal database on each child by publishing assessment data online. Also, he received a lot of positive comments from parents on making changes to the JGMS math curriculum.

Ms. O'Gara said that it is wonderful that all the information will be put on ASPEN. She is especially glad that assessment data will be there but will be given in context.

Ms. O'Gara also noted that it is unbelievable that the High School faculty gave unanimous approval of the standards documentation (for NEASC study). She said that this is a great achievement. Dr. LaCroix agreed that this is very significant and a good sign of the cohesiveness of the staff.

8. Superintendent's Report

Dr. LaCroix reported:

- Mr. Sills met with a group of graduates who were on IEPs while at the High School. He then hosted a meeting with these students who discussed their experience at BHS. It was a very powerful meeting.
- Yongyi Chen, a freshman at the High School, is one of only two hundred students who had a perfect score in a world-wide math competition. Congratulations!
- The HS Building Committee is close to concluding their work. Dr. LaCroix thanked Peter Cox for his wonderful work as a Project Manager for the High School.
- The JGMS Moving On Ceremony will be held at the high school because the large size of the class. It will be held tomorrow, June 17, 2009.

Ms. Bickford handed out a Finance Committee memo which summarized the \$1.5 million budget shortfall for 2010 that resulted from reductions in State aid. She included discussion points from a Fiscal Planning meeting. Ms. Bickford said that the schools may have to reduce the operating budget for 2010 by approximately \$400,000.

9. School Committee Reorganization

MOTION: Mr. Hafer nominated Mr. Ed Pierce to serve as Chairman of the School Committee for the 2009-2010 school year.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. Bickford.

Mr. Pierce accepted the nomination.

MOTION APPROVED 5-0

MOTION: Ms. Seibert nominated Mr. Hafer to serve as Vice Chairman of the School Committee for the 2009-2010 school year.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. Bickford

Mr. Hafer accepted the nomination

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

MOTION: Ms. Bickford nominated Ms. Seibert to serve as Secretary of the School Committee

MOTION SECONDED by Mr. Hafer
Ms. Seibert accepted the nomination
MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

10. Adjournment

Ms. O’Gara made the following motion:

MOVED: Motion to adjourn at 9:45 to Executive Session not to reopen.

MOTION SECONDED by Mr. Hafer

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

Roll Call Vote:

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

School Committee Secretary

Date

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