

**BEDFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF
February 12, 2013
Bedford High School - Large Instruction Room**

1. Call to Order

At 7:35 p.m., Ms Bickford called to order the meeting of the Bedford School Committee. Other members present included Mr. Hafer, Mr. Pierce, and Ms. Seibert. Mr. Ben Driscoll, student representative, was also in attendance.

2. Comments from Public

None

3. Personnel Report

Mr. Sills asked the School Committee to consider approving two field trip requests from Nicole O'Toole, the Music Department Program Administrator.

The first trip is for four students to attend the Massachusetts Music Educators Association All-State Festival in Boston on February 28, 2013 through March 2, 2013. Mr. Sills explained that the students auditioned and were accepted to this festival and would get the opportunity to work with distinguished conductors and perform in Boston's Symphony Hall.

Ms. Seibert made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the field trip request for four students to attend the Massachusetts Music Educators Association All-State Festival in Boston on February 28-March 2, 2013 at a cost of \$400 to the school department and \$300 per student.
MOTION SECONDED by Mr. Pierce
MOTION APPROVED: 4-0

Ms. Seibert asked Mr. Sills to let the School Committee know the details as to where the students will be staying.

Ms. Bickford said she is so pleased to hear that BHS students are attending this festival.

Mr. Sills also asked for School Committee approval for another music department field trip. This field trip is for a student to attend the National Association for Music Education All-East Festival in Hartford,Ct. This student was nominated for and accepted into this festival. Ms. O'Toole and Ms. Budka will accompany the student along with the student's family.

Ms. Seibert made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the field trip for one student to attend the National Association for Music Education All-East Festival in Hartford, Ct. at a cost of \$400 for the school and \$495 for the student.
MOTION SECONDED by Mr. Pierce
MOTION APPROVED: 4-0

Ms. Bickford noted that this was the first time a BHS student has achieved this recognition.

Mr. Sills announced the appointment of Linda Barbacano to Accounts Coordinator in the Business Office.

Mr. Sills also asked the School Committee to consider approving a new Teaching Assistant position at Lane School for the remainder of this school year. A student is returning from hospitalization and the classroom does not have teaching assistant in the room. Mr. Sills explained that it would be detrimental to the student to move to a classroom with a teaching assistant. Funds for this new position will come from an unfilled position at Lane (due to a resignation). The position will not be needed next year because the student will be placed in a classroom with teaching assistant support.

Mr. Pierce made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the Teaching Assistant position at Lane School for the rest of the 2013 school year.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. Seibert

MOTION APPROVED: 4-0

4. School Committee Reorganization

Ms. Bickford announced that after serving on the School Committee for eight years, Ms. O’Gara has announced her resignation.

Ms. O’Gara spoke and explained that she has accepted a position at the Bedford Public Library and has to resign from the School Committee. She said that it has been a “privilege” to work with everyone on the School Committee and in Bedford Public Schools. She has loved working on the School Committee and shares the Committee’s passion for education. She is very disappointed to have to resign.

Ms. Seibert said that it has been wonderful working with Ms. O’Gara and that she is happy to hear about her new opportunity at the Library.

Mr. Hafer and Mr. Pierce also thanked Ms. O’Gara for her hard work and dedication and agree that it is unfortunate that she has to give up her School Committee work.

Mr. Sills noted that it is a tremendous loss to the schools. He said that Ms. O’Gara is an example of a continuous learner and that he will miss her technology expertise. “Thank you on behalf of the student and staff of Bedford Public Schools.”

Ms. Bickford said she appreciates many things about Ms. O’Gara but especially the following:

- 1) Her perspective on all aspects of schools
- 2) Her balanced insight on issues
- 3) Her passion for learning and technology
- 4) Her sense of humor

Ms. Bickford explained that the School Committee will have to reorganize as a result of this change.

Mr. Hafer made the following motion:

MOVED: To nominate Mr. Pierce to serve as Vice Chair of the School Committee.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. Seibert

MOTION APPROVED: 4-0

Ms. Seibert made the following motion:

MOVED: To nominate Mr. Hafer to serve as secretary of the School Committee.

MOTION SECONDED by Mr. Pierce
MOTION APPROVED: 4-0

Ms. Bickford then explained that process to fill Ms. O’Gara’s seat. According to town by-laws, the seat for the remaining term can be filled with School Committee and Selectmen approval. The goal is to accept applications from the public beginning February 13th and to have a joint interview with candidates on a March 12th joint School Committee/ Selectmen meeting. The appointment will be until March 2014.

Ms. Bickford showed the School Committee a letter highlighting this process. School Committee members reviewed the letter without comments. Ms. Bickford agreed to post on the website and advertise the open position.

5. Presentation – Athletic Department

Mr. Keith Mangan, Director of Athletics, gave an update to the School Committee. He began by highlighting his personal goals for the department. They are:

- Strengthen the connection between athletics and academics
- Promote strong scholastic and athletic values
- Build the capacity of the high school programs through feeder programs
- Promote opportunities for personal and professional growth

Mr. Mangan noted that Bedford athletes are expected to stand up and do the right thing. He noted that the Athletic Program’s philosophy is:

“The highest potential of athletics is achieved by committing to the ideal of pursuing victory with honor. Good faith efforts to honor the words and spirit of our philosophy will improve the quality of our programs and the well being of all teammates.”

Mr. Mangan described the three goals used to determine level of play:

- Emphasize development of basic skills and appropriate attitudes, values and team concepts
- To allow as many students as possible to participate
- To compete competitively with Dual County and non-league opponents

The Athletic Programs at the High School and JGMS include 19 sports (12 boys, 14 girls, and 2 co-ed). The teams have won many honors and awards.

Mr. Mangan also pointed out what’s new in the department:

- Fields (turf and an overall town plan for all fields)
- Dual County league changes (No longer has small and big and new towns are interested in joining)
- Coaching Evaluations
- Forms online
- Service projects (Team Captains are leading this effort)
- Pre-Season meetings (educational component)
- BUCS in college (showcases former students playing a collegiate level)
- Bedford Athletic Association is busy fundraising for athletic scholarships and to provide financial assistance to uniforms, scoreboards, etc.

Mr. Mangan also described the new registration process for families, "Family ID". Each family will register online. There will be an open window for registration. No more forms. Parents will also learn about head injuries. BHS will post its policies and parents can sign off. Physicals will still be handed in on paper. The cost for this new system is \$1,000 for unlimited usage.

Mr. Mangan recently added Girls Indoor Track (winter) and Boys Swimming (winter). He is close to adding wrestling (winter) and a JGMS alpine skiing team. He also hopes to add boys' volleyball in the spring and girls ice hockey in the winter.

Mr. Mangan's wish list for the department include:

- Full time Athletic Trainer
- Add middle school football to the budget
- Add uniform replacement back into the budget
- Add a permanent assistant track coach at the middle school
- Add a floating freshman coaching position
- Add a weight room supervisor

The School Committee members thanked Mr. Mangan for a thorough presentation. They did have a few questions.

Ms. Seibert asked what was happening with head injuries. Mr. Mangan replied that BHS is ahead of the curve in terms of following new MIAA rules. The Athletic secretary works with Guidance and Administration to get accommodations for students with head injuries and to get them back into school. He may soon be instituting software to help establish baselines on student athletes. Overall, the school is experiencing a rise in concussions but he does not know if it is an actual increase in injuries or maybe an increase due to the oversensitivity to the issue that has widespread media coverage.

Ms. Seibert asked if parents were concerned about concussions happening in certain sports. Mr. Mangan said no, that concussions happen in all sports.

Ms. Seibert asked Mr. Mangan for examples on how he was interconnecting athletics and academics. Mr. Mangan said one example is that progress reports are shared with coaches. Another is that homework study halls are held before practices. He said overall, there is a lot of attention on academics.

Ms. Seibert asked how Mr. Mangan sees the turf field on Sabourin affecting the athletic programs. Mr. Mangan said that it will be great and he will use the new field to its full capacity. He is very excited.

Mr. Hafer said he is amazed at how many students participate in athletics (870 students in 2012-2013).

Mr. Hafer asked how Mr. Mangan hires coaches. Mr. Mangan explained that Head Coaches are hired by using a selection committee and that the Principal makes the final decision. All coaches go through a certification process. (Some however can be grandfathered in.)

Mr. Hafer asked if Mr. Mangan looked to teachers first (as possible coaches). Mr. Mangan said that hiring teachers as coaches is ideal but teachers cannot always do the job. He selects the best person for the job. Coaches are evaluated year to year.

Mr. Hafer suggested getting the Recreation Department on board with the new online registration program, Family ID.

Mr. Pierce asked when fall sports were due to start. Mr. Mangan said August 22nd for football. August 25th for all other sports.

Mr. Pierce said that he hopes students get a chance to participate in the evaluation process for coaches.

Mr. Pierce also suggested helping coaches address the sensitive issue of playing time. He said it is important that student athletes understand why they are not playing more.

Mr. Pierce said that there are a lot of rumors about who will get to use the new turf field. He asked Mr. Mangan to do his best to dispel these rumors.

Mr. Mangan said right now the plan is for Varsity and JV teams to use the turf field. Games will start earlier. The town leagues will then be able to use the fields after games. Field Hockey will also use the field. He will definitely work with the recreation department to get a lot of teams on the turf field so they can rest some of the big grass fields.

Mr. Pierce said he hopes that Bedford continues to play Concord on Thanksgiving since it is such a community event. Mr. Mangan agrees but he said that this is a subject that league members have a variety of opinions.

Ben Driscoll, student representative, said he is also impressed that 870 students participate in athletics especially given the academic and other extra curricular demands.

6. Gifted and Talented Program

Ms. Sarah Dorer and Ms. Lisa Rainen updated the School Committee on the Gifted and Talented Program in the elementary schools and in JGMS. They also gave the School Committee a comprehensive packet on the programs.

Ms. Dorer reminded the Committee that the Gifted and Talented Program began in 1983 at the elementary level and in 2003 at the middle school level. She noted that very few districts in Massachusetts offer such a program.

At the elementary level, the goals of the program is to

- Provide support and guidance for the educational needs of gifted students
- To promote teaching and learning strategies that enhance curriculum for all students

At the middle school level, the goals of the program include:

- Provide support and guidance for educational needs of gifted students – directly to the students and through classroom teachers.
- To promote teaching strategies around differentiated instruction that support learning needs of all students.

Ms. Rainen explained that the programming at the middle school started with math differentiation. The program grew until 2007 when the schedule changed at the middle school

and made scheduling gifted programming more challenging. Enrichment opportunities are offered to all students both during the school day and before and after school.

According to Ms. Dorer, Bedford believes gifted students are those students by virtue of advanced ability, require adaptation to the curriculum to meet their educational needs.

At the elementary level, enrichment curriculum depends on the individual child's interest. Clustering in classroom is good and occurs when possible.

At the middle school level, the focus is on math enrichment (math pull out classes). After school enrichment programming is rich. Ms. Rainen tries to form groups with targeted students but scheduling is tight and space constraints exist. Also, students are apprehensive to join such groups at this age level.

Ms. Rainen and Ms. Dorer shared a long list of accomplishments and awards. They both believe that the key to success include:

- System-wide support
- A continuum of services
- Using the approach to teach to meet students needs
- Open lines of communications between teachers, families and students
- Flexibility in placements
- Use of community resources

Ms. Seibert thanked Ms. Dorer and Ms. Rainen. She is also thankful that the programming is flexible and based on student needs, timing and scheduling. She is pleased that there are no testing requirements to be part of the Gifted Program. She views this program as the other "special needs" programming. She also thinks it is admirable that the competitions that the many of the students enter is for "fun" and not truly competitive in nature.

Ms. Seibert asked about future desires for the program. Ms. Rainen said that she would like to have an acceleration policy. She would also love her own classroom space.

Ms Dorer said that she really does not want anything new. She has good relationships with teachers. She did note that it is so fortunate that BEST/BEF funded the robotics technology unit because the kids love it.

Mr. Hafer said that it is amazing to see all the awards that the students have won and to see how many students are part of this enrichment programming.

Mr. Pierce asked if technology goals, such as the one-to-one initiative at the high school, will affect gifted and talented programming. Ms. Dorer said she believes it will enhance programming. One example is that it makes accessing information and research so much easier. Ms. Rainen said that small pull out groups are still key regardless of the technology. She said the small groups make middle school aged students comfortable and ask questions.

Ms. Bickford said that the 1998 Blue Ribbon Panel thinking is still valid today. Gifted /enrichments programming keeps certain kids engaged until they get to high school where the programming is enriching on its own.

Mr. Sills said that Gifted and Talented programming helps keep public school diverse. Also, lots of the programming that is done with the gifted students ends up helping lots of students. He also

agrees that given all the benefits of technology, it will never replace discussions and conversations.

7. Vote FY'14 School Budget

Mr. Sills recapped the FY' 14 budget proposal.

November 28, 2012 initial budget request: \$34,709,554

Jan. 22, 2013 School Committee voted budget: \$34,331,451

Finance Committee guideline (Dec 2012): \$33,493,377

Finance Committee revised guideline (Feb 2013): \$34,093,337

Difference between School Committee voted request and final Finance Committee guideline:
\$238,074

Mr. Sills explained that Mr. Coelho really scoured the budget and squeezed out additional savings. Also, based on information from the State on homeless transportation expenses, the budget request has been reduced further to \$34,093,337. The variance is now \$121,231.

Ms. Bickford said at the last Finance Committee meeting, members asked a lot of questions about the desire to move to a five-day kindergarten program. Dr. Claire Jackson, Assistant Superintendent, addressed this question. Here is a summary of her presentation:

Education Reform has stated that learning is cumulative and sequential. Also, the Common Core curriculum standards have changed what students need to know and when. Students in grades K-7 need to accomplish specific learning goals so that all 8th graders can complete Algebra I (a major new goal). Massachusetts's frameworks now contain very explicit learning goals for all grades including K and Pre-k.

Dr. Jackson compared kindergarten report cards from 2008 to today's report card. There is an enormous change in curriculum demands. Dr. Jackson concluded that teachers and students need more time to address the curriculum demands but still offer a nurturing, playful environment for kindergarten.

Mr. Sills said that the Administration is not saying this is the best way to teach but Massachusetts is invested in the Common Core curriculum. Therefore, Bedford needs to make changes now to ensure Bedford remains a top school district in the state.

Mr. Hafer asked how many school districts have five full day K programs. Mr. Sills said he believes 68% do.

Mr. Pierce made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve \$34,214,568 as the FY'14 school budget request.

MOTION SECONDED by Mr. Hafer

MOTION APPROVED: 4-0

School Committee members agreed to discuss the kindergarten curriculum changes with the Finance Committee to help explain the need to change to a five-day program.

Mr. Bowen, a member of the Finance Committee in the audience, asked if the School Committee had any feedback from parents on the five-day program. Mr. Sills said no formal survey was done with pre-k families but based on conversations he had with families during the Principal search, many are supportive of a five-day program.

8. Facilities Department Vehicle Use

The School Committee asked Mr. Jones for information on the vehicle assignments within the Facilities Department. They were looking for information so they could make/revise a policy about vehicle use by the Facilities Department.

Mr. Jones explained that the Facilities Department has 7 vehicles that are assigned to maintenance staff. Prior to the creation of the Facilities Department, the School Department allowed maintenance personnel to take the assigned vehicle home. This policy was continued when the Facilities Department was created (1997) and is still the policy today.

Employee use of town vehicles for commuting is restricted to job related assignments. No personal use is allowed. Also, employees are required to pay state and federal taxes on the value of the take home vehicle, which is calculated by the Town Finance director.

Mr. Jones described the practice of allowing maintenance staff to take vehicles home. He also addressed the operating costs related to doing this and compared with the benefits of having vehicles at home (to the town and the employee).

Mr. Jones also showed photos of each vehicle to illustrate the importance each vehicle is for the maintenance worker. He noted that each worker has to carry around a lot of equipment and this equipment needs to be stored somewhere safe and handy. Keeping it their own vehicle and having the vehicle at home has been a secure and efficient way to do business.

Mr. Jones also noted that driving vehicles to and from work does not speed up the replacement schedule for the vehicles. The longest commute is 49 miles. He also asks his staff to coordinate trips to hardware stores whenever possible to avoid over use.

Mr. Jones sees this policy as a benefit to the town. There is a higher level of response. There is no wasted time for transferring tools and equipment between vehicles. There is also no need for secure parking or storage. It is also a good benefit for employees who are on a somewhat lower pay scale for skilled workers.

Mr. Bowen, a member of the Finance Committee in the audience, suggested that Mr. Jones figure out a way to value this benefit. He suggested Mr. Jones give the Finance Committee the W2 figures. Ms. Bickford suggested that an average-mile per vehicle was a better way to put a value on this benefit. Mr. Bowen agreed.

9. Superintendent's Report

Mr. Sills said that the Rotary Club is partnering with the schools to do good deeds. Look for more information.

Beth Benoit will be the new Principal at Davis School. She was a Director/Principal of a public preschool in Colorado. She is an experienced leader with a passion for kids and a respect for faculty.

10. Liaison Reports

None

11. Future Agenda

Ms. Seibert would like to learn more about the PARCC tests – the standardized tests that will replace MCAS.

12. Adjournment

Ms. Seibert made the following motion:

MOVED: Motion to adjourn at 11:05 p.m. to Executive Session to discuss personnel contract matters, not to re-open.

MOTION SECONDED by Mr. Hafer

MOTION APPROVED: 4-0

Roll Call Vote:

Ms. Bickford	Yes
Mr. Hafer	Yes
Mr. Pierce	Yes
Ms. Seibert	Yes

School Committee Secretary

Date

BEDFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE
February 12, 2013
Exhibits/Documents

- Presentation: Athletic Department
- Presentation: Gifted and Talented Program
- Presentation: Vehicle Assignment for the Facilities Department
- Bedford Public Schools FY 2014 Budget Request dated 2/12/2013
- Presentation; Kindergarten Then and Now dated 2/12/2013

BEDFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Executive Session
February 12, 2013