

BEDFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF
January 15, 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, Ms. O’Gara, Mr. Pierce, and Ms. Seibert.

2. Comments From Public

None

3. EDCO Collaborative: Executive Director Colleen Dolan

Ms. Colleen Dolan presented an update on the EDCO Collaborative to the School Committee. The EDCO Collaborative is made up of twenty urban and suburban school districts in the Greater Boston area. Bedford is a member. EDCO is governed by a board comprised of school superintendents and school committee members from each of its member school districts.

EDCO supports member districts through a wide range of services including professional development, special education programs, comprehensive educational programming to middle and high school students who are deaf and hard of hearing, special education transportation and cooperative purchasing of utilities and other items upon request.

Ms. Dolan explained that the main purpose of the collaborative is to improve education through collaboration. Its mission is aimed at providing high quality educational and related services to students at risk and to enhance the equity; intercultural understanding and equal opportunity in education.

Some of the special education programs EDCO offers include:

- Program for Deaf and Hard of Hearing located in Newton
- Manville Partners Program aimed at capable adolescents diagnosed with Aspergers’ Syndrome
- The North Crossing Program serves students in grades 6-12 who have been diagnosed with clinical mental health issues.
- Youth Alternative Program in Boston
- Wrentham Habilitative Services

Ms. Dolan explained that these programs are offered at a lower cost than private day programs and that the programs are just as good if not better than the private offerings.

Ms. Dolan also explained that EDCO offers a lot of professional development programs. The Seefurth Education Center helps member districts to strengthen their curriculum instruction, leadership and professional development. The center also provides technical assistance programs for member districts on new state regulations. It offers new school committee member orientation and holds monthly leadership roundtables on hot topics such as the new teacher evaluation system. Collaborative professional development programs are offered at the lowest feasible fee.

Ms. Dolan also addressed Chapter 43 – new legislation passed in 2012 that ensures EDCO (and all collaboratives) are correctly following state rules and regulations. (Previously, there were not a lot of regulations for collaboratives to follow.)

Ms. Dolan said she welcomes these new regulations and that EDCO's most recent audit is posted on its website.

EDCO is currently working on a new, amended agreement for members. A drafted agreement should be ready in March.

School Committee members thanked Ms. Dolan for addressing the School Committee.

Mr. Hafer asked whether EDCO could help with establishing best practices for school security. Ms. Dolan said yes and that she would bring this up at the next Roundtable.

Mr. Pierce asked how much Bedford's pays to be part of EDCO. Mr. Coelho said that Bedford pays \$18,000 per year.

Mr. Pierce asked if this was a standard amount. Ms. Dolan said no and explained that each district pays a different base fee. She said that she did not know how this base fee was originally determined. EDCO is reviewing how the fees are structured and will make changes as it learns more.

Ms. O'Gara said she is pleased with the Chapter 43 regulations (and the fact that they have developed a checklist) because she believes this will clear up any misconceptions about collaboratives.

Ms. Bickford thanked Ms. Dolan for coming tonight because she believes member districts need to understand what is going on.

Ms. Bickford asked how the programs were developed. Ms. Dolan explained that they grew as a result of the needs of the member districts. CASE and LABBB Collaboratives developed programs for special education needs. EDCO has been focusing on professional development.

Ms. Bickford asked if it makes sense to have each collaborative focus on different needs or is it good to have a collaborative focus on a little of everything. Ms. Dolan said that the collaboratives are looking at this issue. They are examining whether it makes sense to share services with one another and still maintain its uniqueness to meet member needs.

Ms. Dolan suggested that the School Committee write a letter to the Head of the Commission on how Bedford hopes the future of collaboratives will end up.

Mr. Sills thanked EDCO for its support of the Tenacity Challenge. He said that this academic challenge for students of color would not happen without EDCO's financial support.

4. Security Task Force Update

Jon Sills explained that following the tragedy in Connecticut, he established a task force to review security procedures and recommend changes and items needing improvement. The Task Force includes Administrators from each of our schools, parents, a School Committee member, police representatives, and a facilities representative. Two parents on the task force are in the security business.

The Task Force is examining building security, dismissal procedures, anti-bullying measures, student support programs and technology. It is very broad. The task force is looking at measures

that can be implemented quickly as well as more long-term initiatives. The task force has come up with a list of immediate security needs at each school.

Improvements at Davis School include installing door locks and a buzzer/intercom (and possibly a code or card reader) at the front door (in the vestibule). Also, there is a need to create a window in the office in order to improve the line of sight to the door from the office. Long-term improvements include sealing the doors to the classroom corridor with a magnetic door release and panic button.

Lane School needs access control at the main entrance. Longer-term plans call for constructing and installing classroom corridor doors with magnetic seals and panic buttons. This would have to be a summer project due to the amount of construction work required.

The recommendation at the Middle School is to construct a window on the outer office wall and to install access control locks, buzzer, intercom and code/card readers on the interior doors. Long-term plans call for improving after-school security and access.

At the high school, it is recommended that a video camera be installed at the front door to compliment the swipe card and buzzer. The office personnel cannot see the front door, despite there being a lot of glass. Long term, the 34 doors throughout the building need to be on an alert system.

Ms. Bickford asked about the time frame of the task force. Mr. Sills said that the task force feels like it is rushing into decisions. They want to do a thorough job and therefore, its work is becoming more comprehensive.

Mr. Hafer said that he sits on the security task force. He recognizes that the initial task is to determine how to lock the front doors at each school. He said that members of the task force recognize the fact that a locked door may not stop a violent act from happening, but it is a reasonable approach to making everyone feel more secure with minimal impact on students.

Ms. Seibert asked if the video camera proposed for the high school could be connected to the police department. Mr. Jones said yes. However, the price to have such a camera would go up significantly if we wanted to record for surveillance. Mr. Sills said he did not want the cameras for surveillance.

Ms. Seibert asked for clarification on the magnetic seals on corridor doors. Mr. Jones explained that this would allow the office to close and/or open the doors in certain areas.

Mr. Pierce said that it is difficult to acknowledge that the front doors to our schools have to be locked. He said the schools really need to have solid procedures in place to make this work. Davis School, for example, often has crowds of parents coming to the school for various events. These situations will have to be managed appropriately. Also, how would the Before School Sports program be managed? He said a real schemer will exploit our vulnerabilities.

Ms. O'Gara said she likes the idea of having the doors locked and asking for identification. She too is concerned about making sure procedures are clearly established and communicated.

Mr. Sills agrees that training personnel and establishing procedures will be critical.

Ms. Bickford asked for School Committee consensus on several of the items presented tonight.

School Committee members agreed on:

Davis School new window in office	\$4,000 estimate
Davis School locks/buzzer/ access	\$9,200 estimate
Lane Entrance Lock/buzzer/access	\$9,500 estimate
JGMS window on outer wall	\$6,000 estimate
JGMS locks/buzzer/access	\$9,200 estimate
BHS Video camera	\$5,700 estimate
BHS external door alert system	\$4,000 estimate

The School Committee said they agree with these projects because they seem to be the simplest way to lock the front doors at each school. Each project ensures a line of sight is established from the office and allows the office personnel to unlock the doors from the office.

Mr. Jones said that there is a balance of approximately \$50,000 in capital appropriations from two years ago. He said if he forgoes some flooring and painting maintenance, he can use this money for the above projects. He will also get firmer pricing on the above projects.

Ms. Bickford said that it will be important to have firm pricing and accurate balances in the capital appropriation funds. Mr. Jones agreed to have final numbers for the next school committee meeting.

Mr. Sills said that in the meantime, front doors will be locked in all schools and volunteers and educational assistants will help with opening the doors.

5. FY'14 Budget Discussion

Ms. Bickford reviewed the status of the FY'14 budget process to date:

\$34,709,554 is the budget request as of November 27th

\$33,493,377 is the budget guideline issued by Finance Committee on Dec. 21st

\$1,216,177 is the variance

Mr. Sills explained that he went back to discuss the variance with the Principals. Together they agreed:

- To comply with state and federal mandates
- Address changing demographics in our schools. (i.e. increasing enrollment, problematic class size, changing demographics)
- To continue with expansion of in-house special education programs that save money.
- Maintain existing programs.

Mr. Sills made some recommended reductions and divided these reductions into priority levels.

Level 1 (least impact):

These reductions can be mitigated by deferred implementation, effective reorganization, and stretching existing resources:

- Change to salaries and ERI
- Reorganization of Technology Department
- Facilities Maintenance Contract Services savings
- Custodial equipment repairs

- Postpone Acuity Software purchase
- Electricity Budget reduction
- Increase offset in use of E-rate
- JGMS/BHS textbook replacements
- JGMS iPad pilot reduction
- JGMS no .4 math FTE increase
- BHS – eliminate 2 activity stipends
- BHS – eliminate .2 ITS FTE new request

Level 2

These reductions will have significant impact on teaching and learning

- Davis – eliminate a current EA 1.0 FTE
- BHS – eliminate a SPED TA 1.0 FTE
- Davis – eliminate new request for Bridge TA
- BHS – eliminate new requests for .3 PD (Art, music, PE)
- BHS – eliminate new Crossroads Teacher Requests
- Eliminate the expansion to 5 day kindergarten

Total proposed reductions \$542,099

Variance of revised School Budget to FinCom guideline \$674,078

The School Committee discussed each line item with Mr. Sills and Mr. Coelho.

Mr. Sills said he is extremely reluctant to eliminate the proposed expansion to a 5- day kindergarten program. He explained that due to the Common Core curriculum changes, kindergarteners have increased academic demands. As a result, there is less time for play and for social-emotional development. Teachers find themselves involved in instructional practices that are not ideal for 5 year olds. Adding another day to the program will allow more time for play.

Ms. Bickford suggest that Mr. Sills update the School Committee and the Finance Committee on the elementary need to engage in an iPad pilot since there is money in the budget request for Davis. She said that the vision needs to be articulated.

Ms. Bickford also asked for more information on the total professional development budget and the new model to move professional development time to the summer. She would like to know the specific impact of reducing the proposed budget by \$18,000.

The School Committee identified several items in the reduction list as “holds”. Mr. Sills and Mr. Coelho agreed to provide more information on these items for discussion at the next meeting. Items on hold included items related to the Technology reorganization, Curriculum Coordinators, and the 5-day kindergarten program request.

Mr. Pierce asked Mr. Sills and Mr. Coelho to consider any other ways to achieve full day kindergarten – fees, different schedules, etc.

School Committee members agreed to send Mr. Sills any other suggestions or concerns regarding the proposed reductions.

Mr. Hafer noted that contractual obligations alone are higher than the Finance Committee budget guideline amount.

Ms. Bickford said the goal for next week is to come up with a FY'14 budget recommendation.

6. JGMS Boiler Replacement Contract

Mr. Jones recommends entering into a contract with Ambient Temperature Corp for replacement of the boiler at JGMS.

Ms. O’Gara made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve a contract with Ambient Temperature Corporation to install a condensing boiler at John Glenn Middle School for a total cost of \$102,300, of which \$92,076 comes from the energy efficiency project budget and \$10,224 from energy utility incentives budget.

MOTION SECONDED by Mr. Pierce

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

7. Superintendent’s Report

Mr. Sills explained that the Davis School Principal search is well underway. The Search Committee is conducting interviews and commented that there is a strong candidate pool.

8. Minutes

The School Committee agreed to hold off on reviewing the minutes to the next meeting.

9. Future Agenda

None

10. Adjournment

Ms. O’Gara made the following motion:

MOVED: Motion to adjourn at 10:45 p.m. to Executive Session to discuss non-union and union contract issues, not to re-open.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. Seibert

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

Roll Call Vote:

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

School Committee Secretary

Date

BEDFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE

January 15, 2013

Exhibits/Documents

- EDCO Collaborative Annual Report 2012
- Recommended School Security Improvements Winter-Summer 2013
- Bedford Public Schools Revised Superintendent's Budget Request FY 2014 dated January 15, 2013
- Contract for John Glenn Middle School Boiler Replacement

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Executive Session
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