

BEDFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF
November 27, 2012
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, Ms. Seibert and Ben Driscoll, student representative.

2. Comments from the Public

None

3. Personnel Report

Mr. Sills announced the appointment of Khunravy Say, Teaching Assistant at the high school.

4. Art Department Action Plan

Aleta Devaney, Art Director for K-12, presented the action plan to the Art Department’s recent self-study.

Ms. Devaney explained that in November 2010, the Art Department underwent a self-study, followed by a program review in March 2012. Tonight, she is presenting an action plan for the department as a result of the program review and report.

Action Plan

In the elementary schools, the focus to improve will be on scheduling. Art teachers need time to set-up and clean up between classes and students end up suffering by missing valuable class time. Also at Lane School, the classes on Wednesday are shorter than the others, due to the early release Wednesday schedule. Students who have art on Wednesdays end up with a class that is only 20 minutes or so, when you account for set up and clean up.

Ms. Devaney also explained that the elementary teachers need UBD training and need to integrate more technology into the elementary art classroom. Also, the elementary schools will update art web pages to keep parents up-to-date. Ms. Devaney wants to ensure that the Art Department is included in back-to-school nights.

At the middle school, Ms. Devaney will facilitate vertical teaming especially around transitions. There is a need for common assessments and curriculum mapping. Also, there will be more interdisciplinary projects similar to the 8th grade mural project.

At the high school, Art I and Ceramics I will coordinate content and develop common assessments based on essential questions and learning goals. iPads will be incorporated. Also the scope of instruction in Art Graphics and/or Art as Communication will be broadened.

Finally, Ms. Devaney said that she will provide art course flow charts for the Program of Studies.

Ms. Seibert suggested exploring grants with the BEF for some of the technology needs. She is impressed with the goals to improve communications with parents. And, she agrees that art should be part of back –to-school nights.

Mr. Hafer said that he appreciates the focus on mapping the curriculum and work on developing common assessments. He also agrees that the BEF is a good resource.

Mr. Pierce asked Ms. Devaney if she thinks that the students are attracted to ceramics because they have so much digital exposure? Ms. Devaney said that this is something to think about.

Ms. O’Gara said that overall this is a very impressive response to a Program Review. She suggested using sites such as Flickr to post pictures and images of student work on the web. Ms. O’Gara echoes Mr. Pierce’s thought that students need and/or desire hands on activities.

Ben Driscoll, student representative, said that smartboards really help in the art classroom.

Ms. Bickford asked Ms. Devaney about her thoughts on the program review process. Ms. Devaney said that the highlight was the team’s visit that ended up with a new network of colleagues. They were very interested in seeing our classes and to interview students. However, writing the report was tedious. Some of the process could be streamlined.

5. FY’2014 Operating Budget Proposal

Mr. Sills reported that the FY’ 14 request of \$34,709,554 is 5.86% above last year’s operating budget. He noted that the last 4-5 years were very lean years and this year, the budget request is addressing some needs that have been building over the last few years.

First, he identified guidelines used to develop the budget request:

- Identified fixed costs such as special education out-of-district, contractual salary increases, utilities and ERI/SLBB retirements.
- Establish priority needs – look Strategic Plan and identify major changes and challenges
- Use cost centers – core services, utilities, special education out-of-district placements and ERI/SLBB
- Continue use of available offsets

Mr. Sills reminded everyone of the Bedford Public Schools mission:

“The Bedford Public Schools will develop skillful, reflective, lifelong learners who think critically and creatively and who are informed, responsible, and productive global citizens. The school community will provide a safe, respectful, and inclusive environment in which the unique intellectual, social, ethical and emotional growth of each learner will be realized.”

Mr. Sills explained that the budget request for FY’ 14 supports this mission.

The request for maintenance of services is \$33,746,891. This includes contractual obligations in salary and non-salary items as well as retirements, legal mandates and utilities. This amount is a 3% increase over last year’s core services (same categories).

Mr. Sills explained that the Strategic Plan is a clear direction of the Bedford Public Schools values and expectations. Namely to

- Provide challenging education by maintaining appropriate class sizes
- Ensure all population can access the programming
- Develop inclusive programs and supports
- Ensure physical environment and access to emerging technologies support learning

Mr. Sills highlighted some budget challenges for FY14:

- Increasingly complex special education population and need to expand cost-avoidance in-house special education programs.
- Unexpectedly steep growth of BHS population compounding existing pressures of class size
- Increasing complexity of student body –a reflection on Bedford’s changing demographics.
- State and Federal mandates

Mr. Sills pointed out that there is currently a special education need for FY’ 14 for four students at Davis and ten at BHS. In-house programming, which saved \$2.9 million in out-of-district placement costs – needs expansion. He is asking for:

- A Bridges* program to be established at Davis – 1.0 SPED teacher and 1.0 Teaching Assistant.
- A Bridges* program expansion at BHS – 1.0 SPED teacher, .2 Adjustment counselor
- A Crossroads program expansion at BHS - .6 SPED teacher and .2 transitions teacher

* Bridges helps with social-emotional needs

Mr. Sills estimates costs for this expansion to be \$213,945. He estimates out placement cost avoidance of \$662,566. Mr. Sills also pointed out that over the last five years, as we have built in-house SPED programs, we have added 13.3 FTEs to SPED, but have lost 1.7 FTEs in regular education.

Mr. Sills pointed out that meanwhile, we have been experiencing district wide growth. BHS enrollment has increased to 881 students, the largest population since 1982-1983. Projections for FY’ 14 are for about the same overall enrollment. “The impact on class size at the high school is unacceptable,” according to Mr. Sills.

The FY’ 14 budget request is seeking additional staff as follows”

.4 FTE in English

.8 FTE in Social Studies

.2 FTE in Foreign Language

.4 FTE in Music (BHS, JGMS, and Davis)

Mr. Sills said that this request is a prudent request and will NOT relieve all class size problems.

Mr. Sills then described how complex our student population is:

- The ELL population has doubled since 2008 (from 40 to 95 students)
- Displaced families have increased from 0 to 33 over the past two years and there are another 33 students that we transport back to home districts for school.

Mr. Sills noted that displaced families have several challenges. One is to educate students here and the other is to pay for transportation back to the home district. Right now, transportation costs are at an annualized run rate of \$180,000,

The State will reimburse the town’s general fund next year. Other challenges exist with serving this population. The Assistant Principals are responsible for registering the students at the hotel. Personnel at the district office spend time arranging transportation. Also, there are

many educational gaps that need to be filled with these transient students. As a result, Mr. Sills is asking for some additional personnel:

- 1.0 ESL teacher at Lane
- 1.2 Counselors at JGMS (Skills Center and Adjustment)
- .8 Guidance/Adjustment Counselor at the High School (This person will act as a case manager for the district and will work closely with BYFS).

Mr. Sills explained that the extra counseling at the High School will also help with transitioning students back to school from hospitalizations – something that is becoming more and more common. The extra help will also allow the Guidance Department to continue to work on showcasing Bedford High School with colleges. Something that is very important and has begun to really work.

The budget request also attempts to address the numerous unfunded state and federal mandates. For example, the Common Core Curriculum has added tremendous pressure on kindergarten. The four-day program cannot adequately meet these standards. Kindergarten teachers say that there is less time for social/play development and that a five-day kindergarten program will help. This will require an additional 1.6 FTE.

Mr. Sills added that the new teacher evaluation program requires increased supervision. He would like to add 1.3 FTEs to reduce the Program Directors time in the classroom so that they have more time to supervise.

Other requests for core services include

- Removing a computer technician position and adding a 1.0 Technology Director position.
- Adding a .75 custodian to address excessive over time.

Mr. Sills noted that the budget request for FY' 14 Special Education is \$9,758,025, a 3.49% increase. Facilities is asking for a 3.71% increase. A few non-salary requests include a JGMS and Davis iPad pilot program (\$26,505), Acuity Data Assessment Software (\$45,000), Lane Envision Math textbooks (\$27,000), curriculum development/staff development (\$25,000), and fulfilling iPads for the remaining students/teachers at BHS (\$72,390).

In summary:

FY' 14 Core Services	7.41% increase
ERI	-22.58%
SPED ODD	-.31%
Utilities	5.08%
Total	5.86%

Mr. Sills noted that there are still many unmet needs – ELL translation, teaching assistants, transition services, existing class size pressures, no additional athletic support.

The School Committee had several general questions/comments for Mr. Sills. They agreed to send him specific questions directly

Ms. Seibert asked for clarification on the various SPED programs. Mr. Sills explained that Bridges is for social/emotional support, Crossroads supports students with significant cognitive issues, and then there are the language-based programs.

Ms. Seibert asked where the regular transportation cost is in the budget. Mr. Coelho explained that it has its own line item, it is not in the Out of district budget line.

Mr. Hafer suggested using a waterfall chart for the meeting with the Finance Committee showing key areas of expenses.

Mr. Pierce suggested pulling out the cost for displaced families transportation from the budget.

Mr. Pierce asked if full time Kindergarten is required by the state. Ms. CLAIRE said that a ½ day is required.

Mr. Pierce said he would like to a calculation of the total of unmet needs. He suggested ranking them.

Ms. O’Gara asked if there were any grants for full day kindergarten? DR CLAIRE said not that she knows of.

Ms. O’Gara said that the homeless problem is a structural problem and that the state is failing these families.

Ms. Bickford thanked Mr. Sills for a very clear presentation and for presenting a clearly articulated rationale for the budget request.

Ms. Bickford would like a chart for the offsets. She would also like to see utility trends as well.

Ms. Bickford then laid out the budget schedule:

- School Committee discussions will continue on 12/4, 12/11 and maybe 12/18.
- The Finance Committee is scheduled to meet with the School Committee on 12/6.

6. Superintendent’s Report

Mr. Sills was proud of the Bucs OT win on Thanksgiving Day.

He also noted two important fundraising activities to be aware of:

- A+ Program at Stop and Shop
- BEF Winter Bash on Saturday night.

Mr. Sills also spoke about a cross curricular project at Davis School – the librarian and technology specialist are teaching the students to create online cartoons to help learn social studies lessons.

7. Liaison Reports

Mr. Hafer reminded everyone of the BEF's Barnes and Nobles fundraiser on Dec. 13th and 14th. He also noted that ORASC will continue to meet to study the possibility of putting fields on St. Michael's land.

Ms. Bickford said that the Hanscom Strategic Task force may be reborn now that there are new legislators.

8. Minutes for Review

Mr. Pierce made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the minutes from the September 18, 2012 minutes as amended.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. O'Gara

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

Ms. O'Gara made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the minutes from the October 9, 2012 minutes as amended.

MOTION SECONDED by Mr. Pierce

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

9. Future Agenda

Ms. Bickford suggested discussing the shared energy efficiency services and deciding on whether to approve the fifth year of the bus contract.

Ms. Bickford also announced that she will not be running again for School Committee when her term is up.

Ms. Seibert suggested having a conversation with the new legislators.

Ms. Seibert would like to know if there is any information on the possible new Assessment tool that will replace MCAS.

10. Adjournment

Ms. Seibert made the following motion:

MOVED: Motion to adjourn at 10:15 p.m., to Executive Session to discuss Collective Bargaining strategy, not to reopen.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. O'Gara

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

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Exhibits/Documents

- **Art Department Action Plan presentation November 27, 2012**
- **Bedford Public Schools FY2014 Operating Budget Request presentation dated November 27, 2012**

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Executive Session
November 27, 2012