

**BEDFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF
January 18, 2012**

Bedford High School - Large Instruction Room

1. Call to Order

At 7:30 p.m., Ms. Seibert called to order the meeting of the Bedford School Committee. Other members present included Mr. Hafer, Ms. O’Gara, and Mr. Pierce. Matt Coughlin, student representative, was also in attendance. Ms. Bickford was absent.

2. Comments from the Public

None

3. Personnel Report

Dr. LaCroix asked the School Committee to approve job descriptions that were discussed at the last School Committee meeting.

Mr. Pierce made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the job description of High School Principal as amended.

MOTION SECONDED by Mr. Hafer

MOTION APPROVED: 4-0-0

Mr. Pierce made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the job description of Literacy Coach.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. O’Gara

MOTION APPROVED: 4-0-0

The School Committee reviewed several updated job descriptions – Grade Level Leaders K-5, Middle School Team Leaders, and Curriculum Coordinators. Dr. LaCroix explained that these positions have been updated to reflect the job position in the future. The positions now incorporate leading data discussions and curriculum frameworks as part of the new teacher evaluation system. Dr. LaCroix said these changes are significant. The positions will still be appointed annually so existing grade level leaders can think about the new responsibilities. Dr. LaCroix noted that the Curriculum Coordinator description now covers all buildings and reflects the changes required regarding data needs.

The School Committee discussed the job descriptions and gave Dr. LaCroix several edits. They will consider voting on them at a future meeting.

Dr. LaCroix announced that Libbey Beinert-Hunnewell, a .8 PE teacher at the Middle School, will be taking a leave of absence for the 2012-2013 school year.

4. Policy Approval

Dr. LaCroix noted that the Social Networking Policy for Staff will be discussed at a future meeting. However, she did present a change to the Acceptable Technology Use Policy for Students (IJNDBA). The policy now contains a paragraph about all students participating in yearly Internet safety training. School Committee members also suggested updating the

requirement that students must not download or install software of any kind since this is now permissible on the iPads.

Dr. LaCroix agreed to incorporate these changes (plus a few minor edits) into the final version of the policy which will be presented for vote at a future meeting.

5. 2012-2013 BHS Program of Studies

Mr. Jon Sills presented proposed changes to the 2012-2013 BHS Program of Studies. He presented the School Committee with a memo that described all of the changes, many of which are minor. (None of the changes entail adding FTE.) He discussed some of the more significant changes.

Some of the changes discussed include:

***Graduation Requirements**

Next year's senior class (2013) will be the last class to graduate under the old rules of 110 credits. Therefore, language will be updated in the Program of Studies to reflect this fact. Beginning with Class of 2014, requirements include four years of math and two years of same foreign language.

* Add level 4 of Personal Finance, a popular class now that four years of math is required.

* Add a creative writing elective (no FTE but will be layered on top of existing creative writing class).

* Add level 4 Real World Social Studies (blend with level 3).

* Keep 9th grade guidance verbiage of Social-Emotional needs. The memo says to delete this but Mr. Sills will not do so.

* Replace Power & Energy with a new course on Robotics and Engineering. This course will be more hands on and will develop more up-to-date skills and likely attract more students.

* Add a new ELL course due to the growing district-wide ELL population.

* Add a new special education course – Transition Skills. This is the next step now that we have more and more special education students coming back to BPS from out-of-district placements.

*Senior English classes will be offered as blended level classes, similar to the social studies classes. Teachers have become skilled at differentiating within a blended class. (Mr. Sills said that he is trying to propose offering blended English electives as a matter of course and not only due to scheduling pressures. School Committee members were a little unsure of this strategy. Mr. Sills agreed to watch carefully.)

* Change the name of the “Madrigal Singers” to “Advanced Choir” because the course work includes more than madrigal singing. Mr. Sills said the name has not been changed in the past due to traditions but he thinks it is time to change it to accurately reflect the course work. Mr. Sills even noted that the traditional Madrigal Dinner performance has been changed to an acapella evening.

Mr. Hafer said that it seems that we are “diluting” the top level English classes by offering blended classes only. Mr. Sills said that teachers are skilled at differentiating and will encourage juniors in English Level 5 classes to take the AP exam. He also said that Level 5 is noted on the transcript, not a blended class.

Ms. O’Gara asked how Mr. Sills will assess whether blended classes are successful. Mr. Sills said he will poll teachers at the beginning and at the end of the course and will also survey students. Ms. O’Gara agrees with the proposed name change of the Madrigal Singers.

Ms. Seibert asked how Advanced Choir will be marketed to students. Mr. Sills said that it is still the same premier choir and that students need experience in chorus and other performances to be part of it. Guidance Counselors will also explain.

Ms. Seibert agrees with the change but thinks the name, “Advanced Choir” is boring and academic and not a good description of the performance level. Mr. Sills agrees and is open to suggestions but for this Program of Studies, he will use the Advanced Choir course name.

Mr. Pierce made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the changes to the BHS Program of Studies as outlined in the memo dated January 13, 2012.

MOTION SECONDED by Mr. Hafer

MOTION APPROVED: 4-0-0

Matt Coughlin, student representative, commented that having concrete guidelines in what distinguishes a level 4 and a level 5 will help a lot in blended classes. Mr. Sills asked for more specific information and asked Matt to meet with him to discuss further.

Matt also suggested that Sociology be offered at a level 4/5 like the other social studies classes (Psychology, Law). He said many students do not take the class because it is not offered in level 5. Mr. Sills said that this was a good suggestion.

6. 2012-2013 School Calendar

Dr. LaCroix presented the 2012-2013 calendar to the School Committee for review. It basically follows the same pattern as this year. However, there will no longer be an orientation period for kindergarten and first grade students in the beginning of the year. She also recommends that Friday, December 21st be a half day (before the Christmas break). Early release Wednesdays will continue.

Mr. Pierce made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the 2012-2013 School Calendar as presented on January 18, 2012.

MOTION SECONDED by Mr. Hafer

MOTION APPROVED: 4-0-0

7. FY’13 Budget Discussion

Dr. LaCroix reviewed the FY’13 budget proposal to date:

November 29, 2011	Initial proposed budget request	\$33,058,930	4.23% increase
December 13, 2011	Revised proposed budget request	\$32,966,779	3.94% increase

Tonight, Dr. LaCroix said she will propose voting on a final budget number of \$32,787,202 which is a 3.38% increase and \$500,241 more than the Finance Committee’s recommendation.

Dr. LaCroix explained that this new number results from utility savings, additional confirmed retirements, new senior administration changes and a tuition reduction from LABBB and out-of-district placements. Dr. LaCroix pointed out that reducing out-of-district placements is risky because the district has no way of predicting the need for this service.

School Committee members reviewed several slides which detailed the specific changes that made up the final proposal of \$32,787,202.

Dr. LaCroix spent some time reviewing the details of the iPad 1:1 project. Highlights include:

- Initially deployed 260 iPads for the freshman class of 2015
- FY'13 budget request is for \$135,700 to equip the new freshman class (2016) and 10th grade teachers with iPads. (The 135,700 includes the second lease payment for the class of 2015 and for the new lease payments for the new batch of iPads)

Dr. LaCroix reminded everyone that this project is underway to improve student engagement. She sees the future as all students having just-in-time technology in their hands in the classroom. "It is not about the iPad but about creating a 1:1 environment in our high school."

Dr. LaCroix noted that if we keep adding iPads for new classes of freshman, the cost will total \$639,600. The network at the High School will also have to be expanded at a cost of \$180,027 making the total investment for the 1:1 project \$819,627.

Dr. LaCroix noted that it is a national trend to move away from static textbook to a 1:1 environment. "This is an investment in technology for our schools."

Mr. Kenney, a member of the Finance Committee in the audience, asked how the schools plan on handling new versions of equipment and software in the future. Dr. LaCroix and Ms. Taymore explained that the plan is to be on a migration schedule and to send older equipment down to the lower grades. They also explained that many of the applications are free and that the iPad is not reliant on major software changes like PCs and laptops.

Ms. Taymore reminded Mr. Kenney that this is a move to a more current and effective mode of learning.

Ms. O'Gara commented that the amount of shared knowledge that results from tablet use is extensive and that the amount of nationwide collaboration is "amazing".

Mr. Pierce thinks that the "run rate" is \$159,000 annually which is roughly what the schools have paid for textbooks. He expects budgets for textbooks and PCs will continue to decrease in the future.

Mr. Sills commented that as we continue with the 1:1 project, he expects the costs of the devices to go down. Students will eventually bring their own devices. The point is that we have to start the new environment with a common tool (the iPad) and develop teaching methodology. The future, however, will be using a variety of devices.

Dr. LaCroix pointed out that there was a capital budget request of \$180,000 to expand and upgrade the wireless network at the high school. Dr. LaCroix noted that the Capital Expense Committee was supportive of this project and she hopes it will get funded.

Ms. O'Gara made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve \$32,787,202 as the FY'13 Operating Budget for the Bedford Public Schools.

MOTION SECONDED by Mr. Pierce

MOTION APPROVED: 4-0-0

8. Acceptance of Donation

Mr. Ryan Jansen made a donation of \$500 to the Bedford Public Schools to be used for hardware, software, network upgrades or training materials. Microsoft is his employer and will match the donation.

Ms. O’Gara made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee accept the \$500 donation from Ryan Jansen for hardware, software, network upgrades or training materials with matching funds from Microsoft in the form of software products.

MOTION SECONDED by Mr. Pierce

MOTION APPROVED: 4-0-0

The School Committee thanked Mr. Jansen and Microsoft for the generous donation.

9. Superintendent’s Report

Massachusetts’s held a ceremony, the Governor’s 351, which celebrated 8th grade students from all over the state. Michael Barkan was selected from JGMS for his charity work with an organization named “Cradles to Crayons”. Dr. LaCroix congratulated Michael.

Dr. LaCroix announced that the new teacher evaluation system was just released from the state’s Department of Education. She said the plan is very well done – very clear. The next step for Bedford is to begin discussions with the teacher’s association. Her hope is that they will adopt the state plan as proposed. She explained that Bedford is a Race to the Top district and therefore needs to implement a teacher evaluation plan by September 2012. Bedford has already begun to set a foundation for such a plan and is in a good position to begin in September.

10. Liaison Reports

Mr. Pierce reported that the Strategic Planning Committee is in the goal writing phase. He expects the plan to be ready and presented to School Committee in April.

Ms. O’Gara said that the last Youth and Family meeting recapped everything that was done to help families in need in 2011.

11. Minutes for Approval

Mr. Pierce made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the minutes of the November 29, 2011 School Committee meeting as amended.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. O’Gara

MOTION APPROVED: 4-0-0

Mr. Pierce made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the minutes of the December 6, 2011 School Committee meeting as amended.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. O’Gara

MOTION APPROVED: 4-0-0

Mr. Pierce made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the minutes of the December 13, 2011 Executive Session Meeting of the School Committee meeting.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. O’Gara

MOTION APPROVED: 4-0-0

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

Mr. Pierce made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the minutes of the January 3, 2012 Executive Session Meeting of the School Committee meeting.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. O’Gara

MOTION APPROVED: 4-0-1

12. Future Agenda

The next School Committee meetings are scheduled for February 7, 14 and March 6th.

13. Adjournment

Ms. O’Gara made the following motion:

MOVED: Motion to adjourn at 9:45 to Executive Session for purpose of contract negotiations, not to reopen.

MOTION SECONDED by Mr. Pierce

MOTION APPROVED: 4-0-0

Roll Call Vote:

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

School Committee Secretary

Date

BEDFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE
January 18, 2012
Exhibits/Documents

- **Job Description – High School Principal**
- **Job Description – Literacy Coach**
- **Draft of job description – Grade Level Leader (k-5)**
- **Draft of job description – Middle School Team Leaders**
- **Draft of job description – Curriculum Coordinator**
- **Bedford Public Schools Acceptable Technology Use Policy for Students**
- **Memorandum to Dr. LaCroix from Mr. Sills dated January 5, 2012 regarding proposed changes to the Program of Studies for 2012-2013**
- **School Calendar 2012-2013**
- **Presentation: Bedford Public Schools 2013 Operating Budget Request dated January 17, 2012**
- **Draft of November 29, 2011 minutes**
- **Draft of December 6, 2011 minutes**
- **Draft of December 13, 2011 Executive Session meeting minutes**
- **Draft of January 3, 2012 Executive Session meeting minutes**

BEDFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE
January 18, 2012
Executive Session