

BEDFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF
April 5, 2011

Bedford High School - Large Instruction Room

1. Call to Order

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

2. Comments From Public

None

3 Personnel Report

Dr. LaCroix presented the following revised job descriptions for review:

- Elementary Team Chairperson
- Secondary Team Chairperson – Dr. LaCroix noted that this is a new job description and resulted from a retirement. The position was previously a Program Administrator position.
- Elementary Guidance Counselor – one suggestion from the School Committee was to add something with regards to writing behavior intervention plans and conducting behavior functioning assessments.
- Teaching Assistant – Special Education
- Board Certified Behavior Analyst – Dr. LaCroix explained that this is a new position and was developed based on the District’s current needs.
- Executive Assistant to Superintendent of Schools – job description was redone to reflect what the position entails today (which is very different due to central office cut backs and reorganization)
- Administrative Assistant to the Assistant Superintendent of Schools - job description was redone to reflect what the position entails today (which is very different due to central office cut backs and reorganization)

The School Committee gave Dr. LaCroix several edits on each job description and agreed to vote on each at the next School Committee meeting.

Dr. LaCroix presented the following informational items:

Retirements

Robin Eriksen	Foreign Language Teacher	Middle
Kathy Gallant	Elementary Teacher	Davis
Beth Rozek	Special Education Teacher	Middle
Jane Jacobs	Elementary Teacher	Lane
Bette Jervinis	Guidance Counselor	Davis
Gwen Oien	Elementary Teacher	Lane
Lois MacGregor	Special Education Program Admin	High
Sue Collins	Instructional Technology Teacher	High/Davis
Cathy Jordan	Special Education Teacher	High

4. Presentation: Foreign Language Department Review & Action Plan

Barbara Barnett, Program Director for Foreign Language grades 3-12, gave a departmental overview and presented highlights of the action plan resulting from the Foreign Language Curriculum Review.

Ms. Barnett thanked Vixen Peare, Wendy Tanahashi-Works, and Kim Alexander for their tireless work on the self study.

Ms. Barnett began the presentation by reminding everyone that the guiding principles of the Foreign Language program are to prepare students for proficiency. Bedford's Foreign Language Program incorporates the 5 C's of Foreign Language Learning – communication, communities, cultures, comparisons, and connections. Foreign language learning includes real life situations, learning cultures, discovering connections with other subject areas, and extending the learning experiences from to classroom to home to the global society.

The goal, according to Ms. Barnett is to create global learners. To accomplish this, foreign language teachers observe one another and a certain amount of professional development time is dedicated to sharing experiences. The teachers are currently reassessing all common major assessments and are adopting authentic readers for all grade levels.

Ms. Barnett noted that the Foreign Language team disagrees with the Curriculum Review recommendation to start offering Mandarin in grade 6. They realize that this is not viable at this time. The team also disagrees with the visiting team's recommendation to not place a student in his or her heritage language class. Bedford believes that this should be decided on a case by case basis. Also, Bedford teachers disagree with the recommendation to only offer Spanish at the elementary level. They believe this option sets Bedford apart from other elementary foreign language programs and will not be beneficial to our students.

Ms. Peare, Spanish teacher from Lane, noted that for the last 13 years or so, 20% of the students take French and the remaining take Spanish. Currently the schedule for Lane School students is to meet three times a week for 25 minutes each time. Next year, the schedule may change to two forty-five minute blocks. Ms. Peare said that the teachers are concerned that this change may affect proficiency.

Ms. Peare thanked the School Committee for keeping the elementary foreign language program alive during tough financial times.

Ms. Wendy Tanahashi-Works spoke briefly about the middle school program. She said enrollment for Spanish and French has remained the same here as well. Sixth graders have foreign language three times per six-day cycle for 54 minutes and 7th and 8th graders meet five times a week for 54 minutes. Students entering the middle school can change languages but students are encouraged to stick with the language they learned at Lane School. Technology is used quite a bit to help with written and oral skills. Ideally, the middle school would like a portable foreign language lab. Also, the foreign language teachers would like to develop a placement assessment/policy and allow new 7th and 8th grade students to take 6th grade language classes if needed.

Ms. Alexander gave a review of the high school program. At the high school, 70% of students are enrolled in Spanish, 15% in Latin and 15% in French. AP classes are approved by the college

boards. Language clubs are very popular with the students. The annual foreign language trips are also very popular.

Action Items at the High School include:

- Create a placement test for all incoming students.
- New language lab renovation.
- Develop local field trip opportunities for students.
- Investigate the feasibility of a foreign language exchange program.
- Remove leveling in French due to small enrollment numbers.

Ms. Emma Currier commented that the new foreign language lab is really enjoyable and helps make learning fun. She also would like to see French AP offered every year. (Ms. Barnett said the numbers don't allow this to happen and is offered every other year.)

Mr. Pierce asked what is driving the schedule change at the Lane School. Ms. Cyndy Taymore said that the reading model of the Common Core Standards requires a 90 minute block of literacy per day. Couple this requirement with 60 minutes of math and other curriculum enhancements, there is less time for foreign language. According to Ms. Taymore, Mr. Ackerman and the Lane School staff are aware of these requirements and are trying to figure out the best way to deliver foreign language. Right now, it is a work in process and Mr. Ackerman will present a final schedule recommendation.

Mr. Pierce said that he remembers that repetition is critical to foreign language success.

Mr. Pierce asked if Mandarin would ever replace French at Lane. Ms. Barnett said no, that this is not a viable option at this time. Dr. LaCroix said that she did not think three languages would work at the elementary level.

Mr. Pierce asked if the portable language lab for the middle school was on hold. Ms. Barnett said yes because the team wants to see the results of a trial with the current high school vendor.

Mr. Pierce suggested partnering with another school district as a way to launch a foreign language exchange program

Ms. Barnett said that she has looked to other districts to help do this. However, one hurdle Bedford needs to get over is that other school districts allow athletes to attend foreign language trips (or participate in foreign exchange programs) without athletic penalties. Mr. Pierce said that this was interesting to hear and would be a good future discussion.

Ms. O'Gara thanked Ms. Barnett and the Curriculum Review Team. She is concerned with eroding the early exposure to language and would like to discuss this further. She feels that even though French numbers continue to be low, it is important to offer this language because it is so important worldwide.

Ms. O'Gara said she is happy to hear that all students, even those on education plans, can take a foreign language. Ms. Barnett agreed and said that professional development in differentiating instruction is always helpful.

Ms. O'Gara asked if plans for new text books were put on hold. Ms. Barnett said yes but that it is fine to wait for text books because the teachers are very resourceful and creative.

Ms. O’Gara fully supports the idea of local field trips.

Ms. Bickford commented that tonight’s presentation is indicative of how beneficial the self study process is. It really pulls the staff together.

Ms. Bickford questions whether it is necessary to use placement tests in 5th grade. She is afraid that they may make the student feel negative about foreign language. Ms. Barnett agrees with this concern but on the other hand, it would be good to have a summary of where students are in the curriculum so the middle school curriculum can be tweaked accordingly.

Ms. Bickford asked if the placement test for 8th to 9th grade is more formal. Ms. Barnett said it was and that it was good to have another tool to help make smart placements.

Ms. Bickford is happy to hear that Ms. Barnett is exploring foreign exchange programs and opportunities.

Ms. Seibert agreed that the team’s participation and commitment to the self study process is impressive.

Ms. Seibert said that she was glad to hear how technology helps the foreign language program at the middle school and wonders if it helps at the other schools. Ms. Barnett said that the High School uses technology all the time and she is exploring ways to use it at Lane School as well.

Mr. Hafer believes that Bedford has a very strong foreign language program and he sees great coordination from Lane to the middle school to the high school.

Mr. Hafer asked if there was a good time for students to take two foreign languages to study. Ms. Barnett said that it was a personal choice and that any time is good.

Ms. Alexander said that Latin is a great option (to take as a second language) and that it attracts a very diverse group of students. She said that taking two languages is addressed at the 8th grade parent night.

5. Presentation: 1-1 Implementation at Bedford High School

Ken Lord, Network Administrator, Donna Clements, Technology Integration Specialist, and Dr. LaCroix discussed a proposal to supply all 9th graders with iPad2s, beginning September 2011.

Dr. LaCroix explained that despite financial constraints, the school district must continue to think about moving forward. One way to do this is to consider embarking on a 1:1 pilot program for all 9th graders and their teachers.. The goal would be to learn how a 1:1 computing device, the iPad 2 in this case, would change the class room learning environment. The Burlington Public Schools is also considering this pilot and would be willing to partner with us.

Dr. LaCroix asked the School Committee to think about supporting this pilot and suggested that funding could come from the remaining BHS renovation fund.

The proposal is to have all 9th grade students supplied with an iPad 2 and to have all 9th grade English, Science, History and Math teachers have them too. (Teachers that only teach 9th graders) This would allow Bedford to shift the learning environment to a personal learning network. The

move will be to move away from the computer lab model and its inherent limitations and put the technology into the students' hands 24/7. Dr. LaCroix believes that we have not pushed technology far enough into the business of teaching students. She believes that this technology can be used to inspire and engage students more effectively as it is a much more multimedia, multisensory and more collaborative way to teach and learn.

Dr. LaCroix and Mr. Lord believe the teachers are ready for this pilot. They already incorporate Web 2.0 resources into their teaching and are ready for integration. Also, digital textbooks are the future and using a device like the iPad will allow us to create our own digital textbook.

According to Dr. LaCroix this pilot will allow Bedford to "expand the opportunity to develop 21st century skills."

Mr. Lord estimates that it will cost \$180,000 to purchase 276 iPads and the related equipment. (This is for all 9th grade students and their teachers). An application (app) budget will be developed. It is estimated that 2 days of training will also be required. After the first year, Mr. Lord expects that the wireless network at the high school will have to be expanded in order to roll it out to other grades. The cost of doing this will be approximately \$50,000. The older network equipment can be used at JGMS and/or Lane School.

Mr. Lord pointed out the following challenges:

- Finding sustainable funding
- Finding time for professional development
- Theft./damage (insurance is an option and we may consider asking parents to purchase)
- Storage especially during lunch, PE and Art and during mixed-use classes.

Other important areas that will need development include:

- Updating the Acceptable Use Policy for a 1:1 device
- How do we staff a service center (maybe consider offering this as a class for students?)
- Creating a parent/student contract
- Storage and charging issues
- Classroom management – how can teachers trouble shoot and how can teachers keep students on task?

Ms. Clement said her goal for this pilot is to figure out how we can effectively embed technology. The 1:1 environment forces a shift in teaching and in learning and this is where professional development will be needed. Also, she imagines her job will be to review applications and help with textbook creation.

Mr. Lord suggested several potential sources for funding:

- FY'12 BHS renovation funds
- PC replacement funds
- Textbooks savings

In order to move forward with this pilot for September 2011, Mr. Lord said he needs to order iPads by May 1, 2011. He then could choose apps and train staff during June. In the summer, he would work with Apple and then roll out for students in fall 2011.

School Committee members had several questions and comments.

Mr. Hafer said that the vision of this proposal is terrific but he does not want to rush into it. He would like to further define Bedford's needs and financial projections before going out and ordering. He would like to learn more about what Burlington has done in planning for such a project. He also wondered why the iPad was chosen over other devices.

Mr. Lord said that he has been looking at other devices for the past year and has determined that the iPad2 would be the best. It is compact, easy to use, and there are plenty of applications. The iPad2 also has video recording which could be used a lot in the school environment. Other districts agree that this device is right.

Ms. Currier said that it would be "very cool" to have iPads and sees how it can be used for students to become better learners. She likes the idea of spending class time on "homework" and using the iPad at home to view the lecture.

Mr. Pierce said he believes that technology will change the model of the classroom. He thinks the proposal is moving the district in the right direction. The problem though, is finding sustainable funding for \$180,000 a year. He also said he feels rushed to spend \$180,000 especially after just ending a very tough budget cycle.

Dr. LaCroix said to think about using iPads instead of text books (to justify the cost).

Mr. Pierce questions the longevity of the iPad.

Mr. Lord said that the future will be that schools supply the 1:1 device to students at first, but ultimately, students will supply their own device to school.

Ms. O'Gara said that she believes we are already technologically behind in delivering intellectual content and a move to a device like the iPad will help. However, she is concerned about "being under the control of Apple". She asked if other apps will work on the iPad too.

Mr. Lord said that there are some benefits of being under the Apple umbrella. It will protect us from bad applications and from viruses. However, Apple does allow us to build our own apps too.

Ms. O'Gara asked about the vision for tech support.

Mr. Lord said that for the 9th grade roll out, existing staff can be used. If or when we roll out to the whole school, more support will be needed. He suggested that we may want to consider offering an elective that has students run a support center.

Ms. Bickford thanked Dr. LaCroix for pushing this idea. She agrees with Mr. Hafer that she would like to see a clearer definition of what it will do to the system. For example, what about all of the PCs? How do we move from where we are today to where we are going? What effect will it have on budget?

Ms. Bickford said that she understands the desire for the pilot but it is a lot of money. She does not feel comfortable siphoning off the PC budget if most of the school department is still using them.

Ms. Bickford is also very concerned about the distraction of the iPad and fears that students really won't be listening or hearing the teacher. Overall, she believes that society is suffering from too many distractions and that people (especially young people) are losing the ability to communicate with each other. "Today at school, we still interact with one another and this is something that should be preserved."

Ms. Seibert agreed with Ms. Bickford even though technology is a great way to engage students. She agrees that there is too much technology in society and not enough real time with people.

Ms. Seibert thinks it is important to do a pilot of 1:1 computing next year because she does not want to be left behind. However, she has serious concerns about money and sustainability.

Mr. Lord mentioned that next week, there will be an iPad demonstration with Bedford High School teachers. He invited members of the School Committee to come and envision what a classroom will look like with iPads.

Ms. Seibert asked Mr. Lord about what kind of pushback he has been receiving. He said mainly a lot of logistical questions and questions on how to integrate the technology into the daily classroom routine.

Dr. LaCroix said that she will continue to push the State of Massachusetts to think about innovations in different ways and that 1:1 computing is an example.

Dr. LaCroix also commented that the iPad may not truly be "distracting" but may simply be a different way of thinking.

Dr. LaCroix said that she believes that Bedford needs to embark on this proposal – this year or next - to see if it is truly the future.

Mr. Hafer thanked Mr. Lord and Ms. Clement for all the work they did to present this project this evening.

6. Reserve Fund Transfer

Mr. Coelho explained the schools received a bill for \$47,550.95 for snow removal from the school building's roofs. He is seeking a reserve fund transfer for this unexpected expense.

After discussion, Mr. Coelho said that the Department of Revenue said that this bill could be considered to be a regular snow removal cost and come from snow removal budgets. He gave this information to the town finance department but has not heard back from them.

Ms. Bickford asked if we could absorb the cost through the regular budget. Mr. Coelho does not know at this time.

Mr. Pierce suggested that Mr. Coelho notify the Finance Committee about the bill.

As a result, the Ms. Bickford made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee notify the Finance Committee of a potential need for a reserve fund transfer in the amount of \$47,550.95 due to costs for snow removal from roofs of school buildings in January 2011.

MOTION SECONDED by Mr. Pierce

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

7. Superintendent's Reports

Dr. LaCroix reported that one hundred percent of seniors have passed the MCAS science test. She thanked the hard work of the high school staff for helping with this huge accomplishment.

Dr. LaCroix thanked everyone for their hard work on the FY'12 budget and especially thanked the Teachers Association.

8. Liaison Reports

Ms. Seibert reported that the Energy Task Force will be meeting tomorrow to continue work on the town-wide energy policy.

9. Approval of Minutes

Ms. Bickford made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve minutes of the February 15, 2011 Bedford School Committee meeting as amended.

MOTION SECONDED by Mr. Pierce

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

10. Future Agenda

More information on the 1:1 pilot proposal.

Energy Plan and Policy vote

11. Adjournment

Ms Seibert made the following motion:

MOVED: Motion to adjourn at 11:05 p.m.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. O'Gara

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

Roll Call Vote:

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

School Committee Secretary

Date

BEDFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE

April 5, 2011

Exhibits/Documents

- **Presentation: Foreign Language Department**
- **Job Description: Elementary Team Chairperson**
- **Job Description: Secondary Team Chairperson**
- **Job Description: Elementary Guidance Counselor**
- **Job Description: Teaching Assistant – Special Education**
- **Job Description: Board Certification Behavior Analyst**
- **Job Description: Executive Assistant to the Superintendent of Schools**
- **Job Description: Administrative Assistant to the Assistant Superintendent of Schools**
- **Memo: Snow Removal Costs dated 3/4/2011**
- **Draft of Minutes of the February 15, 2011 School Committee meeting**