

BEDFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE
May 3, 2016
Bedford High School - Large Group Instruction Room

1. Call to Order

At 7:40 p.m., Mr. McAllister called to order the meeting of the Bedford School Committee. Other members present included Mr. Brosgol, Ms. Guay, Mr. Pierce and Ms. Santiago.

2. Comments from Public

None

3. Personnel Report

Mr. Sills reported the following personnel items:

Leave Of Absence

Laila Alamni	Teaching Assistant	High School
Amy Barnes	SPED Teacher	High School

Retirement

Paula Barilone	Kitchen Manager	Middle School
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Appointments

Joann Daday	.5 Educational Assistant	Preschool
Shirley Waters	Kitchen Manager	Middle

Extracurricular

Kristie Kimbal-Dorey	METCO Academy	Davis
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4. Special Education Review – Director of SPED

Ms. Marianne Vines, Director of Special Education, gave a presentation reviewing the year in special education. Ms. Vines said when she started in this position last year, she established the goal of inclusion. “How can we incorporate more special education students into the general education environment at all levels and how can we support them?” This past year, the focus of the special education department changed to trying to determine what services students need to be successful in classrooms.

Over the past year, Ms. Vines said she has worked closely with the IT Department to ensure students have the necessary assistive technology. She also worked to ensure special education assistants are in the classrooms and that there are very few pull-out sessions. All special education staff have been provided with professional development with a focus on inclusion.

Ms. Vines also created several co-teaching classes throughout the district. Currently, there are 3 co-taught classrooms at Davis, 3 co-taught classrooms at Lane, 1 at JGMS, and 10 at the high school. She will continue providing professional development to teachers so that more will be willing to work with a co-teacher. Additional training days will be scheduled.

Next year, Ms. Vines hopes to:

- Expand use of the JGMS inclusion specialists
- Have more co-teaching classrooms at Davis and Lane schools
- Have fewer math and ELA pullout classes in all schools

Ms. Vines described some of the special education programs that are available for Bedford students.

SAIL Program (Socially aware independent learners)

This program is designed to serve K-12 students with educational needs related to an Autism Spectrum disorder and other related disabilities. The program utilizes an integrated model with supports. Students are provided a safe, nurturing environment. A Board Certified Behavioral Analyst is provided along with many other related service professionals. There is currently a SAIL classroom at Davis School. It will expand to Lane School next year. The New England Center for Children has helped us establish this program. Ms. Vines noted that there are some students on the Autism Spectrum who do not need this type of substantially separate programming.

STEP Program

This is a substantially separate program at the high school. It started last year. We have serviced 15 students since its inception. Three students returned to BHS from outplacements. The students in this program have significant emotional difficulties typically from trauma, depression or anxiety. Students stay in the program all day. Mainstream teachers “push” into the classroom. The goal is to build relationships with these students so that they are learning ready.

Ms. Vines noted that the teachers in this program are very caring and provide lots of opportunities for these students to get out into the community. For example, one day the students went to the Council of Aging and helped seniors learn to work their iPhone. Another example is the field trip to help build homes for Habitat for Humanity. They also do fun, team building activities like going to the trampoline park or camping.

Ms. Vines said next year, the program will have additional space and she may update the format of the program as a result.

Ms. Santiago asked how Ms. Vines measures success of special ed. programs. Ms. Vines said that it really varies. With the inclusion programs she looks at the scheduling of students to see how much time is really spent in general ed. classes. She also looks at testing results. At the preschool success is measured against typical peers. Also, meeting IEP goals is an important measure.

Mr. Pierce asked what co-teaching looks like in a classroom. Ms. Vines said it means having two licensed teachers in the classroom.

Mr. Pierce suggested highlighting more measurements for special education success (i.e. How many pass MCAS?)

Mr. Brosgol asked how the co-teaching pairs were made. Ms. Vines said that she did an all-call and people volunteered. She expects there will be more next year.

Mr. Brosgol asked how many of the SAIL kids would have been out-of-district? Ms. Vines said about half.

Ms. Guay asked if we know how many preschoolers are coming to school with a diagnosis of Autism? Ms. Vines said that Early Intervention tells us and Kindergarten Screening can also identify students.

Ms. Guay asked if SAIL has a summer program. Ms. Vines said yes. There will be a five week program then a week off, and then one more week of programming as we get closer to the start of school.

Ms. Guay asked if classrooms need more adult support. Ms. Vines said no. She does not want too many adults in the classrooms. The BCBA will observe and offer insight to what types of supports may be needed.

Mr. McAllister agreed with Mr. Pierce about presenting more specific, data driven results. He suggested adding data points to the presentation next time as he thinks this would be helpful especially to those not involved in the schools directly.

Mr. Sills asked how many STEP students would be outplaced if this program did not exist? Ms. Vines said all. They would attend the collaborative programs or be placed in private programs.

5. JGMS School Improvement Plan and Student Handbook Changes

Mr. Tracey, Principal of the middle school, presented the School Improvement Plan for 2016-17. He thanked the School Council for their diligent work in preparing the plan. He also thanked the School Committee and the Bedford community for its support and investment in the infrastructure, Guidance, the new Robotics curriculum, and Skills Center at JGMS. He also thanked Mr. Mehler for being such a great problem solver with the middle school students.

Mr. Tracey noted that the School Improvement Plan is structured around several district wide areas of focus – Governance and Leadership, Assessment, Curriculum and Instruction, and Student Support. Mr. Tracey reviewed highlights under each area and noted that the entire School Improvement Plan will be posted on the website tomorrow.

Governance and Leadership

- Student government has been expanded
- Advisory has successfully changed to a place to build a positive culture and move away from the anti-bullying focus of the past.
- The new Moving On Ceremony will be in place this year – combining the academic awards and moving on ceremonies. Awards are no longer grade based but are team awards (for good citizenship etc.)

- The leveling structure has been improved. The new Algebra 1A class is successful. All but approximately 21 students are now taking some form of Algebra in 8th grade.
- The 6th grade schedule has removed learning group stigmas.
- There was a successful trial of one co-taught class in 6th grade.
- There has been more special education teachers working inside the classrooms rather than pulling kids out for small groups.

Mr. Tracey said 2016-17 goals under Governance and Leadership include continuing to foster a positive and inclusive school culture.

Curriculum and Instruction

- Staff is reading “Whistling Vivaldi” to help with the goal of having engaging curriculum for all learners.
- There will be a Tenacity Challenge at the middle school next year. Twelve districts have committed to competing.
- Administration will continue to try to make heterogeneous groups of students while scheduling for next year.
- An English task force will be weighing pros and cons of having English levels in 7th grade.
- Lots of work is being done on making student thinking “visible”
- Coding curriculum will be rolled out in 6th grade
- The Math Dept. is trying to figure out how to get more kids on track to take calculus in high school.

Assessment

- JGMS will continue to focus on analyzing student achievement data to improve instruction and programs.
- Teachers are focusing on benchmarking. They are examining student work together as a staff.

Student Support

- The website has updated curriculum mapping. He said that this project involved a lot of reflection by staff. Foreign Language is still in the works.
- Guidance Counselors have been pushing into classrooms. Next year, the hope is to offer some parent workshops.
- A new Guidance website will be launched.
- The staff will be examining how middle school students feel. Focus groups during advisory may be one way to measure this.

Mr. Mehler referred the School Committee to the memorandum he distributed regarding changes to the Student Handbook for 2016-2017.

Ms. Santiago suggested the Mr. Tracey find ways to make coding and robotic curriculum attractive to females.

Mr. Pierce asked how Administration can make the middle school years more positive for girls especially with the dangers of social media and technology. Mr. Tracey said the Mr. Mehler and the guidance counselors spend a lot of time dealing with these issues. Mr. Mehler said that the Handbook has some new language in it for next year. This language clearly states expected student behavior with social media and behavior at student socials. (For example, no cell phones are allowed on the dance floor.)

Mr. Brosgol suggested that we think about how we can measure cultural proficiency. Mr. Tracey agrees. Mr. Sills said he agrees with this suggestion too – that it is important to find baselines with classroom conversations and comfort level/progress.

Ms. Guay thanked Mr. Tracey for following up with School Committee concerns raised last year.

No School Committee members had questions or concerns with proposed handbook changes.

Mr. Pierce made the following motion regarding the 2016-2017 Student Handbook:
MOVED: That the School Committee approve the changes to the 2016-2017 JGMS Handbook as noted in the Memo dated April 25, 2016.
MOTION SECONDED by Ms. Guay
MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

Mr. Pierce made the following motion regarding the 2016-17 School Improvement Plan:
MOVED: That the School Committee approve the JGMS 2016-17 School Improvement Plan as presented.
MOTION SECONDED by Ms. Guay
MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

6. School Lunch Price Proposal

Mr. Ken Whittier, Director of Food Services, explained that as part of the Federal School Nutrition Program guidelines, Food Services must annually review lunch prices and use the Paid Lunch Equity Tool (PLE) to ensure that reimbursements for Free and Reduced Lunches do not subsidize pricing of paid lunches. “We do not want free/reduced lunch reimbursement to keep the price of school lunches artificially low.

Mr. Whittier said that he has determined that our PLE average is below the Federal goal by 12 cents. Therefore, he is recommending an increase in the elementary and middle schools’ lunch price by 10 cents and a 25 cent increase at the high school. The proposed price of lunch at Davis, Lane and JGMS is \$2.60 and \$3.00 at the high school. The change at the high school will mean that all meal types will cost the same which will help make lines at the registers move faster.

Mr. Whittier pointed out that the Price Equity tool and the resulting lunch price adjustment does not equate to profitability. It is a measure of compliance with the Federal guidelines.

Mr. Whittier presented information to the School Committee that showed the new lunch prices would put Bedford in the midrange in comparison to other area districts.

Mr. Whittier also noted that new POS systems will be implemented at Lane, JGMS and the high school next year. This will allow for more accurate and streamlined records and hopefully reduce cafeteria lines. Training on the new system will be needed. He thinks it is easy to learn and that training can be covered in the summer.

Mr. Whittier said that the District credit policy for unpaid meals needs to be updated.

Mr. Whittier also reminded the School Committee that Massachusetts law prohibits sales of food during school hours unless it meets the strict nutritional standards.

Mr. Whittier said that he hopes participation will grow. He has been and will continue to expand fresh produce and will continue to use the Commodity Diversion program to get higher quality food products in our schools. He said that the new fish and chips offerings on Fridays at Lane, JGMS and the high school were successful. He is also trying to expand scratch/batch cooking opportunities in the kitchens to enhance offerings.

Ms. Santiago asked if the POS systems will help schools move away from using disposable trays. Mr. Whittier said that these trays are typically used when we have 4 lunches at the elementary schools which is a result of enrollment.

Ms. Santiago asked if Mr. Whittier ever tracked food waste as way to see what is being thrown away. Mr. Whittier said he has not done this though he can see how it would be helpful.

Ms. Santiago said it would be ideal to move towards composting food waste someday.

Ms. Santiago asked if there are any vegan/vegetarian options regularly available since this is often very important to high school students. Mr. Whittier said he offers some but thinks he could offer more options.

Ms. Santiago thanked Mr. Whittier for all that he does especially given the fact that he works with a limited budget and under very strict guidelines.

Mr. Pierce said that the movement in lunch prices still positions Bedford in the mid to low range when compared to other districts.

Mr. Brosgol asked if Mr. Whittier had any updated information on participation rates. Mr. Whittier said he has seen a decline overall since 2010. He said the regulations hurt meal offerings and participation rates have been dropping since.

Ms. Guay asked if Bedford's rates of free or reduced lunch prices have changed. Mr. Whittier said the number of free lunches has decreased but the numbers of reduced lunches has increased.

Mr. McAllister thanked Mr. Whittier. He said that he does not understand the success of the food program given all of the limitations and restrictions. He thanked the food services staff for their great service.

Mr. Pierce made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the school lunch price increase of 10 cents at Davis, Lane and JGMS and a school lunch price increase of 25 cents at the high school.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. Guay

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

7. Lane School Staffing Needs

Mr. Sills said that Lane School has seen a large number of move-ins that is driving the need for another 5th grade classroom next year (8 in total), Meanwhile, kindergarten enrollment indicates that 9 classrooms will be needed next year, and not 10 as anticipated. Therefore, Mr. Sills would like to use \$30,000, resulting from savings in the budget, to help fund the extra fifth grade classroom. He will ask the Finance Committee to cover the remaining costs with a zero fund transfer at the end of the year.

Ms. Guay made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee will ask the Finance Committee for a zero fund transfer of \$30,000 at the end of the school year for the purpose of covering half of the expense of adding another fifth grade teacher at Lane School.

MOTION SECONDED by Mr. Pierce

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

8. Superintendent Report

Mr. Sills reported that Ken Gordon asked the legislature for \$500,000 in impact aid. This was granted. However, Lincoln will get \$100,000 of this in reserve for any children of retirees who may end up going to school there. Representative Gordon is still advocating for more money.

Mr. Sills thanked Ms. Sallee and Mr. Tracey for conducting a thorough Principal search and vetting candidates with all groups. The field has been narrowed to three candidates. Site visits will be held this week and final interviews will follow.

Mr. Sills said that the House has voted to add \$500,000 to the 21 million dollar METCO budget. He said he is pleased, though it is not as much as we wanted.

Mr. Sills reported that the Lane School Building Committee has been formed and will begin meeting next week.

Mr. Sills said he has received an amazing response to his request to form a Religious Holiday Task force. He will soon be organizing this.

9. Liaison Reports

None

10. Minutes for Review

Ms. Guay made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approves the minutes of the March 1, 2016 School Committee meeting.

MOTION SECONDED by Mr. Pierce

MOTION APPROVED: 4-0-1 (Ms. Santiago abstained)

Ms. Guay made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approves the minutes of the March 23, 2016 School Committee meeting as amended.

MOTION SECONDED by Mr. Pierce

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

Mr. Sills thanked Bedford TV for getting videos online of all the Principal finalists.

11. Adjournment

Ms. Guay made the following motion.

MOVED: Motion to adjourn at 10:45 p.m., not to reopen.

MOTION SECONDED by Mr. Brosgol

MOTION APPROVED 5-0

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. McAllister	Yes
Ms. Guay	Yes
Mr. Brosgol	Yes
Mr. Pierce	Yes
Ms. Santiago	Yes

School Committee Secretary

Date

BEDFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE

May 3, 2016

Exhibits/Documents

- Presentation: Special Education Review
- Presentation: JGMS School Improvement Plan
- Presentation: School Food Services
- Memo: Proposed changes to the JGMS 2016-17 Student/Parent Handbook
- Draft of minutes from the March 1, 2016 School Committee meeting
- Draft of minutes from the March 23, 2016 School Committee meeting