

BEDFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE
May 9, 2017
Bedford High School - Large Group Instruction Room

1. Call to Order

At 7:35 p.m., Mr. McAllister called to order the meeting of the Bedford School Committee. Other members present included Mr. Brosgol, Ms. Santiago and Ms. Scoville. Ms. Guay arrived later.

2. Comments from Public

None

3. Personnel Report

Mr. Sills announced the following personnel items:

- Tracy Fernald, Nurse Leader, transferred from Davis School to JGMS (Beginning 9/2017)
- Patricia Hazelton has been appointed Food Service Worker at Lane School
- Nicole Brown has been appointed Contracted O.T. at JGMS
- Pamela Bishop has been appointed long-term Special Ed sub at the high school
- Thomas Tone has been appointed Varsity Football coach
- Pat Flaherty-Dawson has been appointed Academic Homework Club Advisor (17-18) at Davis
- Kristie Kimball-Dorey has been appointed Technology Workshop Advisor (17-18) at Davis

Ms. Gisone, Special Ed teacher at the high school, is seeking permission to take 30 high school students from the Bridge and STEP programs to Hampton Beach, NH on June 8th. The objective of the field trip is team building and social skills development and to celebrate success. Mr. Sills explained that these students all suffer from anxiety and taking the students to a new environment is good for them. The cost is \$1350 and will be charged to the schools

Mr. Brosgol made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the field trip request for 30 students in either the Bridge or STEP program at the high school to travel to Hampton Beach in Hampton, NH on June 8th at a cost of \$1,350 to be charged to the schools and no cost to the students.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. Santiago

MOTION APPROVED: 4-0-0 (Ms. Guay was absent)

Mr. Sunderland is asking permission for four students to attend the national competition at the National History Day competition on June 11- June 15, 2017 at the University of Maryland in College Park, MD. These students have qualified for the competition. The cost is \$500 per student and no cost to the schools.

Ms. Scoville made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the out-of-state field trip request for four BHS students to attend the National History Day competition on June 11 -15, 2017 at the University of Maryland in College Park, MD at a cost of \$500 per student and no cost to the schools.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. Santiago
MOTION APPROVED: 4-0-0 (Ms. Guay was absent)

4. Religious and Cultural Holiday Task Force

Mr. McAllister reminded the Committee that last week, they listened to a presentation and reviewed a proposed policy regarding attendance on religious and cultural holidays. He explained that tonight, the School Committee needs to vote on the proposed policy.

Mr. Sills reviewed the recommendations from the Task Force and the proposed Bedford Public School's policy.

Recommendations:

- Minimize disruption of learning by
 - Having no school only on Christmas Eve due to high rate of student and teacher absences would preclude academic progress
 - Allowing normal teaching and learning on all religious and cultural holidays, including new material, tests, quizzes, and homework
- Have a policy that
 - Excuses all absences due to observance of religious or cultural holidays upon parent request
 - Provided for extra time for students to make up missed work or test and the expectation that teachers will work with students to do so in a manner that minimizes the burden
 - Includes major religious holiday and cultural holidays as designated by the Dept. of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) on the school calendar
- Provide professional development and regular administration memos that
 - Orient teachers' awareness of the new policy and calendar so they can anticipate student absences and plan, whenever feasible, not to give tests or major projects
 - Facilitate increased faculty awareness to support students who miss work due to these observances
- Ensure the promotion of awareness of diversity of beliefs through morning announcements of impending holiday
- Pilot of 2 years and review

Proposed Policy (for the JGMS and BHS student handbooks)

- Any student who is absent due to a religious or major cultural holiday observance, will, upon notification by the parent, have his or her absence excused (exempt at the high school)
- Any student who is unable, because of religious or cultural holiday beliefs, to attend class shall be provided with the time (no less than one week) and the opportunity to make up missed work and/or assessments. Open and timely communication between students, families, and teachers shall ensure that the opportunity to make up work/assignments does not place an unreasonable burden upon any of the parties.

Mr. Brosgol made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee adopt the Task Force and Superintendent's recommendation as presented tonight.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. Santiago

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

Mr. McAllister commented that it is a good idea to have this policy as a two year pilot.

Ms. Santiago made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee accept the proposed policy on religious and cultural holidays as presented tonight.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. Scoville

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0-0

Roll Call Vote:

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

Mr. Brosgol noted that using the word “major” in the policy is subjective. Mr. Sills said that we will use the DESE definition of a major religious or cultural holiday as a way to limit from possibly hundreds of holidays.

Mr. Sills said this was difficult to pull this together as there is no perfect situation for all families. He said the district will live with this policy for two years and then evaluate by looking at the rates of absences and the effect on teaching and learning.

Mr. Sills thanked Ms. Irving and Ms. Hammer, two teachers from the Task Force, who were in the audience tonight. He also thanked Helen Pulizzi, a student from the high school who served on the Committee and was also in the audience.

5. Davis School Improvement Plan

Ms. Beth Benoit, Principal of Davis School, presented the School Improvement Plan for the 2017-18 school year. She began the presentation by reviewing this year’s accomplishments and then discussed the Improvement Plan as next steps.

Ms. Benoit presented this information in the context of the District’s strategic objectives.

Coherent, Higher Order Thinking Curriculum and Student-centered Learning

Ms. Benoit explained how all grades in Davis School use integrated projects (science, social studies, math and ELA). The Kindergarten team does an updated Davis Town project (as described last year) as part of the” Me and My Community” theme.

Ms. Benoit said that the first grade focused on “The Natural World and Me” and the second grade is doing “A Year Long Journey through the Continents”. All Davis School students learned, at appropriate levels, to collaborate and develop deep thinking skills.

Ms. Benoit explained that all of the above is a product of summer work focused on developing common standards. But the students are the ones who drive how the class gets there.

Davis staff is looking at assessments especially in reading. The writing rubrics are well developed. Authentic assessments related to the Integrate Projects are being created. (For example a rubric to assess collaboration skills).

Equity & Diversity: Teaching All Students

Davis school systematically wove all social and emotional development into all aspects of the school community. Data was used to make good decisions with the whole child in mind.

Going forward, teachers will continue to strengthen practice of teaching tolerance standards. Professional conversations will continue to best support students in conflict resolution and problem solving especially during unstructured times. A special effort will be given to educate the school about autism and inclusion as the SAIL program begins its second year. Co-teaching practices will continue to ensure that all students' needs are met in the least restrictive environment. Davis will continue to find ways to celebrate differences within the school community including families.

Collaborative Professional Culture

This year, cluster teams were successful especially in problem solving ways to meet individual needs. In 2017-18, Ms. Benoit will seek a building-wide understanding of the principles of shared leadership and work towards its implementation. Leadership teams will be created to engage in and facilitate difficult conversations. Processes will be developed that promote trust and open and respectful dialogue.

Ms. Scoville said that she has witnessed the shift in the Davis School curriculum as the bar has been raised. However, she is pleased to hear tonight that the integrated studies emphasizes student excitement and fun in learning.

Mr. Brosgol asked if Ms. Benoit was able to get to know the students in the Integrated PreSchool especially as it grows. Mr. Benoit said she does work with the teachers to learn about the needs of the students coming into kindergarten. However, she also does this with other preschools in town. She also relies on the robust kindergarten screening program that happens in the spring.

Mr. Brosgol asked if the Davis students are aware of the students in the SAIL program. Ms. Benoit said yes because the students from SAIL are a part of the everyday life at Davis. Sometimes teachers do address the SAIL student differences with their class.

Ms. Guay said she found it interesting that some students are selected as Peer Leaders for All School Assemblies. Ms. Benoit said these students are selected by Guidance Counselors and that they are often students who need to feel good about themselves by being a leader. Many work very hard to become a Peer Leader.

Mr. McAllister thanked Ms. Benoit for a very authentic presentation. He does wonder, however, if we are doing all this good work, why aren't Bedford's standardized test scores higher.

Ms. Benoit thought this was a good question and feels that we need to identify what is holding our kids back and how can we change instruction.

Mr. McAllister asked what efforts are underway to make the Davis School staff more diverse. Ms. Benoit said she is working to broaden her hiring and reaches out to the parent and community to bring in visitors and volunteers that reflect the school's diversity.

Mr. Sills said that the district is working hard to bring in new staff of color. He finds it challenging. He is trying to teach people that Bedford really is a diverse community.

6. Lane School Improvement Plan

Mr. Robert Ackerman, Principal, presented the Lane School's 2017-18 Improvement Plan.

He began however, with a brief description of some of the highlights of this past school year.

Construction Project

Mr. Ackerman reported that the construction project is going well. The cafeteria is complete, although the grounds are not done. Also, the new wing is on schedule to be completed this summer. He has been very pleased with the contractors. They have been very accommodating.

Grade 2 to 3 Transition

This year, the Lane School teachers worked very hard on making the transition from grade 2 to grade 3 more comfortable for the students and families. Many families commented that they are pleased with this work, especially on the playground.

Anti-bias Books

All Lane teachers continue to read preselected books to their class. Teachers acknowledge that this practice has prepared them to deal with bias that arises in the classrooms. The practice will continue next year.

Science

The new science standards are being used at Lane. There are new, challenging topics but the teachers and the students like them. Also, the focus on outdoor learning is going well. The school will be getting a new greenhouse this summer.

Foreign Language

The department has been undergoing a review and the teachers have been visiting other elementary school programs.

Professional Development

Teachers really liked the Ed Camp model held in conjunction with Davis School staff.

2017-2018 Goals

- 1) Strengthen literacy in all grades.
 - Grade 5 will adopt the Fountas and Pinnell assessment tool.
 - Leveled literacy will be implemented in grade 3 to help those struggling with reading
 - The use of nonfiction reading will continue to deepen the understanding of content-area subjects.
- 2) How can students be more reflective in all subjects?
- 3) Continue with multicultural/anti-bias readings
- 4) Ensure the SAIL program will be well supported and that it is an integral part of Lane School.
- 5) Begin Responsive Classroom roll out. Some staff will be trained this summer to build leadership capacity in this area.
- 6) Rework the RTI process including the WIN block in the schedule.
- 7) Continue with co-teaching and expand it to 12 classrooms.
- 8) Continue with schoolwide positive behavior support system.
- 9) Continue with district peer observations. Try to figure out how to get the grade 2 and 3 and 5 and 6 teachers together more.

Ms. Scoville commented that she loved the outdoor learning at Lane School. She also asked about a new conference format that was tried in one class.

Mr. Ackerman said that one classroom had the students lead the conference. He has had a lot of positive feedback about this so he would like to slowly roll it out to other classrooms.

Mr. Brosgol asked if there was any feedback on the new standards based report cards. Mr. Ackerman said none!

Ms. Guay asked if teachers volunteered to be involved in a co-teaching arrangement or were they assigned. Mr. Ackerman said a mix of both. Many people are ready to do this, but there is a lot of extra work. Some teachers ask for a break too.

Mr. McAllister asked him the same question he posed to Ms. Benoit – why don't our students do better on standardized tests. Mr. Ackerman said he feels that we need to do improve reading skills but he does not want to do this with any quick fixes.

Mr. Sills said he hopes that the recent switch to Foundations at the lower grade will result in better test scores at Lane.

7. School Lunch Prices

Mr. Ken Whittier, Director of Food Services, gave an overview of the Food Services for the past year. Highlights include:

- Prepayments are \$72,950 more than they were last year
- Meal count is ahead of last year by 1,353.
- A new offering of “lunch toppers” at the middle and high schools has been successful. (Students add-on fresh fruits and vegetables to their lunch after paying)
- Nutrikids Programming is at all schools and has improved waiting times at the cash register. It also has reduced kitchen paperwork and increased accuracy.

Mr. Whittier reported that he believes that there may be an ease in the federal sodium restrictions on school lunches and that 1% flavored milk may once again be allowed. He thinks these will be positive changes for the lunch program. He looks forward to having more flexibility in the offerings.

Mr. Whittier also explained how the USDA requires school lunch programs to do a Lunch Price Equity analysis. This results in pressure for all school lunch programs to raise lunch prices each year in order to meet targeted weighted averages. The goal is to ensure that communities are not underpricing the cost of meals for students who pay full price. Mr. Whittier presented some analysis on this and determined that a 10 cent increase in lunch prices would keep Bedford at the target.

Ms. Scoville asked if Nutrikids provided data such as the average number of times a student buys lunch per week. Mr. Whittier said he did not know if the system was this sophisticated but his estimates are that on average, about 40% of kids buy school lunch.

Ms. Santiago asked what the point of the Lunch Price Equity Target was. Mr. Whittier said that the federal government wants to make sure that the amount of money reimbursed to schools matches those who pay for lunch.

Ms. Santiago asked that perhaps the increase in the number of school lunches sold is related to school enrollment. Mr. Whittier said he thinks the growth is due to more factors than just enrollment.

Ms. Santiago asked what our schools do if a student is unable to pay for lunch. Mr. Whittier said that we will always feed a student.

Mr. Brosgol asked how a 40% rate compares to other districts. Mr. Whittier does not know.

Ms. Guay said it is shocking to see how regulated school lunch programs are.

Mr. McAllister asked what this year's projection is. Mr. Whittier expects the program to break even.

Mr. McAllister told Mr. Whittier that he does a great job given all of the requirements and restrictions of a school lunch program.

8. 2017-18 School Calendar

Mr. Sills presented a calendar for the 2017-18 school year with a fall workshop day on Monday, November 13th and no early dismissal on Good Friday.

Mr. Brosgol made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the 2017-2018 school calendar, third draft version with a workshop day on November 13, 2017 and no early dismissal on Good Friday.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. Scoville

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

9. Superintendent's Report

Mr. Sills reported that he and Mr. Alani and Ms. Benoit reviewed bids for the Davis School RFP on a feasibility study. The result is that TBA Architects seems like the best fit. They have proposed completing the feasibility study at a cost of \$87,500.

Ms. Guay made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee award a contract to TBA Architects to conduct a feasibility study on Davis School at a cost of \$87,500.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. Santiago

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

Mr. McAllister reminded everyone that funds for this feasibility study were approved at the last Town Meeting.

Mr. Sills said he will be forming a Building Committee and that Ms. Santiago would represent the School Committee on such a committee.

Mr. Sills announced that the BEA contract for 2017-2020 has been ratified. Key provisions include:

- An additional professional day will be added in 2018-2019
- Improved evaluation timelines for Administration
- Improved leave-of-absence notification times

- Co-teaching training on a summer day.
- IEP evaluation resolution
- One sick day may be used for a religious personal day
- Additional stipend opportunities at all four schools
- Longevity payments will increase in 2018-19 school year
- COLA raises are 2%, 2.5%, 2%

Mr. Sills presented information on the decision making including the impact of COLA increases on salaries. He also presented comparative data on Bedford’s teacher steps with other districts and with another Bedford municipal contract. He did learn that several communities do not analyze compensation like we do, there are lots of variables.

Mr. Sills also explained the history of the Step structure for teachers. It was developed as a way to increase teacher salaries over time.

Overall, Mr. Sills said he feels good about the contract. He will present this to the Finance Committee at their next meeting. He also plans on publishing this presentation on the web site.

Mr. McAllister thanked Mr. Sills and Mr. Coelho for gathering all of this information from other contracts and districts.

10. Minutes for Review

Mr. Brosgol made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the minutes of the February 28, 2017 School Committee meeting as amended.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. Santiago

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

Ms. Guay made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the minutes of the March 21, 2017 School Committee meeting as amended.

MOTION SECONDED by Mr. Brosgol

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

11. Adjournment

Ms. Santiago made the following motion:

MOVED: Motion to adjourn at 10:40 P.M. not to reopen.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. Scoville

MOTION APPROVED 5-0

Roll Call Vote:

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

School Committee Secretary

Date

BEDFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE

May 9, 2017

Exhibits/Documents

- Second presentation on Religious and Cultural Holidays Task Force
- Davis School 2017-18 School Improvement Plan
- Lane School 2017-2018 School Improvement Plan
- Bedford School Lunch Program – Ken Whittier 2016-17
- 2017-2020 BEA Contract Presentation
- Draft of minutes from the March 21, 2017 School Committee meeting
- Draft of minutes from the February 28, 2017 School Committee meeting