

BEDFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF

May 12, 2009

1. Call to Order

At 7:30 p.m., Ms. O'Gara called to order the meeting of the Bedford School Committee. Other members present were Mr. Pierce, Mr. Hafer, Ms. Seibert and Ms. Bickford. Charles Connell, student representative was also present.

2. Comments from Public

None

3. Personnel Report

Dr. LaCroix presented several action items for the School Committee to consider.

The first item of consideration was adding staff for the 2009-2010 school year. Dr. LaCroix explained that Davis School has had an unanticipated increase in Kindergarten enrollment. As of today, there are 180 students enrolled for the 09-10 Kindergarten and Dr. LaCroix expects this number to increase as new families move into town over the summer. Dr. LaCroix proposes adding another Kindergarten teacher and another Educational Assistant (both .8 positions) to accommodate this enrollment and to manage class size. The plan is to use existing space in the building by moving classrooms and workspaces around.

Ms. Bickford asked for the dollar value of these additions. Dr. LaCroix said it would be \$50,000 for both positions.

MS. Bickford made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee make an addition to the FY'10 operating budget for a .8 teaching position and a .8 educational assistant in an amount not to exceed \$55,000.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. Seibert

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

Ms. Seibert asked how this affects the budget. Mr. Coelho said that after the budget season and all of the changes are accounted for, this may not result in an increase to authorized FY'10 budget.

Mr. Hafer asked if it was possible that these teachers would not be here next year and Dr. LaCroix said yes.

Dr. LaCroix also requested approval for a new .8 Teaching Assistant at Davis School. This need is for a new student who will be enrolling at Davis. Teachers have observed this child and have concluded that the child needs a one to one Teaching Assistant. Funds for this position will come from the stimulus funds from the State.

Ms. Seibert made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve a .8 Special Education Teaching Assistant position for Davis School for the 2009-2010 school year.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. Bickford

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

Mr. Pierce asked if this move was avoiding an out-of-district placement. Dr. LaCroix said yes, it would likely be a collaborative placement or private school if we did not provide a Teaching Assistant.

Mr. Pierce asked how much money it will cost for a .8 Special Education Teaching Assistant. Dr. LaCroix said it costs about \$15,000. She said that it is prudent to try to service the child in-house and to try to provide in-house programming and to keep the student in Bedford on a long-term basis.

Mr. Kenney, a member of the Finance Committee, asked what would happen if Bedford does not receive the stimulus money from the State. Dr. LaCroix said then it would cost \$15,000.

Dr. LaCroix also asked to create a .5 Teaching Assistant position to help develop a new program at Lane School. She said that the population moving through the school requires social-emotional support. The Middle School has a similar program and it has been a success.

Dr. LaCroix further explained that a cohort of students moving from Davis to Lane as well as a cohort moving to 4th grade requires this new position. This move would allow Lane to make a full time Special Education Teacher and a .5 Special Education Teacher Assistant to meet the needs. This move will meet the Federal stimulus guidelines of a creating new, cost effective program. Also, Dr. LaCroix reminded the Committee that it is critical to have the right staff in place to make the new therapeutic program successful.

Ms. Bickford made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve a .5 Special Education Teaching Assistant at Lane School for the 2009-2010 school year to be funded with State stimulus funds.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. Seibert

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

Ms. Bickford reviewed the financial analysis provided by Mary Koert. Ms. Koert presented information that compared the cost to keep five students in-house to the cost of five out-of-district placements.

Dr. LaCroix said that Mr. Ackerman is looking at various ideas on how to use existing space to accommodate this change.

Ms. Bickford said she was pleased to see continuity in programming with Lane School to the Middle School.

Dr. LaCroix said that several contracted positions are needed to support the in-house programs and that this is a good way to staff and support a start-up program.

Dr. LaCroix also asked the School Committee to consider approving several overnight or overseas field trips.

The Bedford High School football team is seeking approval to attend the annual preseason football camp on August 26-29, 2009 at Camp Winaukee at Lake Winnepesaukee in Moultonboro, NH. Approximately forty students will participate at a cost of \$120 per student.

Mr. Pierce made the following motion:

MOTION: Moved that the School Committee approve the BHS Football team to attend the annual preseason football camp on August 26-29, 2009 in Moultonboro, NH at no cost to the school department.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. Seibert

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

Ms. Barbara Barnett has asked the School Committee to approve a trip to Spain for the April break (April 15-25, 2010). The trip will be open for 24-44 students who are in grades 9 through 12 and who are in Spanish III or above. The trip will provide students with an immersion experience in Spanish and will create opportunities for students to become global citizens. The cost is \$2,808 per student and the students will miss one day of school due to travel.

Ms. Bickford made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve a trip to Spain during April vacation 2010 at no cost to the school department.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. Seibert

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

Ms. Bickford asked to see a summary of all spring trips. Dr. LaCroix agreed and said that she is trying to develop a calendar of all the trips offered so students can make informed decisions.

Information Items:

<i>Resignations:</i>	Teresa Kang Solomon Chabor	ELL Teacher Custodian	System System
Appointments:	Gretchen Fricke	English Teacher	Middle (replacement)
Increase in Assignments:	Nicole Lindsey Liz Cowles	.5 elementary teacher to 1.0 Lane .2 to 1.0 math teacher to Middle	

4. JGMS School Improvement Plan and Handbook

Jayne Viladenis, Principal of the Middle School, presented the School Improvement Plan for 2009-2010. She began by presenting the mission statement and reviewing this year's goals.

Ms. Viladenis presented the mission statement

“The John Glenn Middle School Philosophy rests on four fundamental principles: flexibility, exploration, experimentation, and application of basic skills...”

Ms. Viladenis then explained that this year, the School Improvement plan moved from a focus on curriculum mapping to using the “Understanding By Design” template for units of study that will be used to drive decisions around teaching and learning. She explained that this year, the staff began to establish and follow a school-wide assessment system, staying true to use of Professional Learning Communities.

Ms. Viladenis then presented specific elements for the major goals for the 2009-2010 school year. Specific elements under the major goals include:

- 1) Governance and Leadership
 - Improve transition practices from grades 5 to 6 and 8 to 9.
 - Review the implementation of new leveling criteria in English and Math
- 2) Curriculum and Instruction
 - Create Understanding by Design unit plans to coincide with departmental curriculum maps.
 - Post curriculum maps on course scope/sequence on web.
 - Establish common expectations, assessments, and benchmarks.
- 3) Assessment and Evaluation
 - Create common assessment for each subject area at each grade level.
 - Implement school-wide writing/scoring continuum.
 - Train teachers in protocols for examining student work
- 4) HR and Professional Development
 - In conjunction with the MSPA create an online volunteer network as means to increase parent/community volunteer opportunities at the middle school .
- 5) Student Academic Support
 - Enhance electronic scheduling process in order to make Learning Center cohort classes more efficient.

The School Committee had several questions/comments for Ms. Viladenis.

Ms. Siebert thanked Ms. Viladenis for the fact that all the goals make sense and flow from year to year. She did ask if the mission statement is new. Ms. Viladenis explained that it is not and that it does have to be updated.

Ms. Siebert asked why the anti-bullying initiative is not on the School Improvement Plan as a goal. Ms. Viladenis explained that more and more students say that bullying is not a problem. She said parents tell her that students are aware of issues about bullying and are trying to stop it. “Rachel’s Challenge” continues and JGMS students will continue to do the anti-bullying presentations. Overall she is pleased that the school has had a great start to try to eradicate a terrible problem.

Ms. Seibert asked if Ms. Viladenis will continue with the effort. She answered yes and she thanked two teachers – Nicole D’Etremont and Roseann Ham for their help with the efforts.

Ms. Viladenis also mentioned that the School will continue with surveys to monitor trends.

Ms. Seibert said that she was happy that curriculum maps, scope and sequence of classes were going to be posted on the website.

Ms. Bickford thanked Ms. Viladenis and Mr. Chapman for the School Improvement Plan. Ms. Bickford suggested that Ms. Viladenis continue to look and tweak the 7th and 8th grade leveling criteria and to not rely on numbers only. She recommends that she do this every year.

Ms. Bickford asked Ms. Viladenis to clarify what she meant by “reviewing protocols”. Ms. Viladenis said that she meant reviewing the protocol for assessing an assignment. (Did the assignment accomplish what we wanted it to do?)

Ms. Bickford asked if teaching in the longer block was still an ongoing training subject. Ms. Viladenis said yes, but in different ways. She explained that the focus is off of the longer period but is now a part of meeting the middle aged learner needs. She said that the staff is doing a good job and that different people are at different levels of the learning curve.

Mr. Chapman said that UBD makes teachers share more and teachers incorporate tips on making longer periods work better.

Ms. Bickford asked if the School Committee could have more information on reconfiguring special education delivery at the middle school. Ms. Viladenis said yes, that she would prepare a memo.

Mr. Hafer asked what subject would be the next curriculum study. Ms. Viladenis said writing.

Mr. Pierce said thank you for a very cohesive presentation. He asked about the AYP issue in Special Education. Ms. Viladenis said that math teachers have been meeting regularly to provide teachers with resources to help. Also, the teachers are developing tiered lessons to be used in math classes. She also hopes to identify particular periods for Title 1 tutors to help service efficiently.

Ms. O’Gara said she is pleased to see the goal for next year on writing across the curriculum.

Ms. Bickford made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the 2009-2010 JGMS School Improvement Plan as presented on May 12, 2009.

MOTION SECONDED by Mr. Pierce

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

Mr. Peter Chapman presented the JGMS Student Handbook for the 2009-2010 School Year. He summarized the updates as follows:

- Majority of changes were made in format not substance.
- Changes were done to combine similar sections in order to avoid redundancy
- The Athletic section was moved to an Appendix
- A bell schedule will be included
- The order of the handbook is grouped by content and not alphabetically.

He said that some important areas were accidentally left out and that he plans on adding them. They include SEPAC, vacations, volunteering (which will be combined with MSPA).

Ms. Bickford said that she was pleased that the Handbook cross referenced the old format to the new format. She acknowledged that this must have been a huge task.

Mr. Chapman said it was big and thanked everyone at the school who helped with this project.

Ms. Bickford pointed out that some items in the old handbook should be included in the new. She suggested adding extracurricular activities such as music.

Ms. Seibert discussed the Student Council Articles with Mr. Chapman. She suggested that he consider making the Council more open to more students to participate. Mr. Chapman said he would discuss this suggestion with teachers involved in Student Council.

Mr. Pierce said he liked the new format but wondered why the Handbook includes several policies. Dr. LaCroix answered by saying that it is good to include policies in the Handbook because parents and students are expected to read the Handbook and sign a sheet acknowledging that they read it.

Mr. Pierce suggested asking legal counsel to see if we can stop adding policies to the handbook since they are online. However, Ms. O’Gara disagreed. She thought it was important to have important policies like the Discipline Policy in the Handbook so that all students and families have the opportunity to read it.

Mr. Hafer suggested highlighting important policy changes year to year in the cover letter.

Ms. O’Gara asked Mr. Chapman to make sure the Drug and Alcohol policy was current since the State law recently changed.

Ms. O’Gara thanked Mr. Chapman for taking on the monumental task of updating and reformatting the Handbook.

A few other edits were discussed with Mr. Chapman. He agreed to incorporate them.

Ms. Bickford suggested that next year, Mr. Chapman should try to streamline the Handbook.

Ms. Bickford made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the 2009-2010 JGMS Student Handbook with edits as discussed on May 12, 2009.

MOTION SECONDED by Mr. Pierce

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

5. BHS Student Handbook

Mr. Jon Sills, Principal, discussed the substantial changes made to the BHS Student Handbook for the 2009-2010 school year. He presented all of the changes in a memo to Dr. LaCroix dated May 8, 2009

A few items discussed were as follows:

Retention Notification

- Added that a student must be passing current English class in order to be promoted.

Code of Conduct

- Clarified the language in the Code of Conduct regarding students being under the influence, possession of and sale & distribution of drugs and alcohol. The policy now clearly states that the police must be notified.
- Clarified the policy that the minimum penalty on students who fail to bring an electronic device to the Office when asked is now an automatic 5 detentions (insubordination). Subsequent violations will have more serious consequences.

Mr. Sills said that there are ongoing discussions with regard to chronic tardiness. He said some students arrive when they want to. He is looking for ways to stop this behavior and is currently working with classroom teachers to motivate the students to attend class on time. He believes counting tardy minutes does not work so this policy/punishment will likely be removed. The new policy, tied to classroom rubrics, will be presented when finalized.

Mr. Sills noted that all changes in the Athletic section are all formatting changes.

Members of the School Committee asked Mr. Sills about the policy on athletes knowingly being in the presence of drugs and alcohol. After discussion, Dr. LaCroix explained that a few years ago, a lot of work went into developing this policy and that the current language seems to work. She advises not making any changes to this area right now. She thinks it should always be discussed and debated to see if the policy still works.

Mr. Pierce suggested adding a Team Captain to the policy. Mr. Sills said that there will still be a separate Athletic Handbook too with more information such as Team Captains and Athletic Award criteria.

Ms. Bickford made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the changes made to the Bedford High School Parent/Student Handbook as outlined on the May 8, 2009 memo and discussed at the May 12, 2009 meeting.

MOTION SECONDED by Mr. Pierce

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

6. School Choice

Dr. LaCroix recommended that the School Committee vote to reject school choice for the 2009-2010 school year.

Mr. Pierce made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee reject School Choice for the 2009-2010 school year.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. Bickford

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

7. Acceptance of Gift Donation

BAE Systems donated \$1,000 to cover the costs including equipment, travel, and the set up of a Lego League at the John Glenn Middle School. The High School Robotics team will be their mentor.

Ms. Bickford made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee gratefully accept the \$1,000 from BAE Systems to be used to help start-up the Lego League at John Glenn Middle School.

MOTION SECONDED by Mr. Pierce

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

8. Bus Transportation Contract

Mr. Coelho recommends awarding the 2010-2012 Student Transportation contract to Bedford Charter Service for both in-district regular, special education, and METCO transportation. They offered the most favorable rate and two additional option years, completely discretionary. The rate is 9.15% over three years. Also, Bedford does not have to agree to exercise the extensions until March 2012.

Ms. Bickford made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee award the contract for in-district day student bus transportation, special education transportation, and athletic transportation for the 2009-2010 school year through the 2011-2012 school years inclusive to Bedford Charter Services at an estimated cost of \$855,135.

MOTION SECONDED by Mr. Pierce

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

Ms. Bickford also made this motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee award the contract for METCO student bus transportation for the school year 2009-2010 through 2011-2012 inclusive to Bedford Charter Service at an estimated annual cost of \$254,220 subject to appropriation of METCO funding.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. Seibert

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

9. Approval of Acceptable Use Policy

The School Committee reviewed the Acceptable Technology Use Policy for Students. The policy reviewed reflected all of the changes discussed at the last School Committee meeting.

Ms. Bickford made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee accept the Bedford Public School Acceptable Technology Use Policy for students as printed.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. Seibert

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

10. Approval of Web Page Policy

The School Committee reviewed the final version of the Web Page Policy (IJNDC)

Ms. Seibert made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the BPS Web page Policy IJNDC as printed.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. Bickford

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

The School Committee agreed to send their comments on the Web Permission form to Ken Lord and Dr. LaCroix.

11. Liaison Update

- Mandarin Language discussions and meetings have started. The Committee is gathering information and hope to present a proposal in the fall.
- Ms. Seibert has been appointed chair of EDCO Public Policy Committee.
- Ms. Bickford said that the Graduation Requirement Committee hopes to do a fall presentation to the School Committee.

12. Superintendent's Report

Dr. LaCroix has implemented a H1N1 flu communications plan. She said there was a lot of information to absorb and that the plan will help the district make decisions and communicate effectively. She feels that we have done a good job so far by working with all the town boards and creating the same message.

Ms. Bickford advised everyone that Dr. LaCroix has been elected as the VP of Massachusetts School Superintendent Association.

13. Minutes for Approval

Ms. Bickford made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the minutes of the January 20, 2009 School Committee meeting as amended.

MOTION SECONDED by Mr. Pierce

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

Ms. Bickford made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the minutes of the April 7, 2009 School Committee meeting as amended.

MOTION SECONDED by Mr. Pierce

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

14. Consent Agenda

Textbook Adoptions – Mathematics, Bridges Program, Personal Finance

Ms. Seibert made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the Consent Agenda as written on May 8, 2009.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. Bickford

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

15. Future Agenda Items

Mr. Hafer suggested having a “data dialogue” with the Planning Board to look at the impact of the new developments on schools.

16. Adjournment

Ms. Seibert made the following motion:

MOVED: Motion to adjourn at 10:50 to Executive Session for contract discussions. Not to reopen.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. Bickford

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

Roll Call Vote:

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

School Committee Secretary

Date

BEDFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE

**EXECUTIVE SEESION
MINUTES OF**

May 12, 2009