

BEDFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF

April 14, 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 made the following personnel announcements:

Retirements:

John Fichera	Elementary Teacher	Lane
Jane Riley	Counselor	Lane
Brendan Desilets	English Teacher	Middle
Maureen Sullivan	English Teacher	High
Paula Verrier	Social Studies Teacher	High
Carol Grof	Building Secretary	Lane

Resignations:

Stacey Mayo	Math Teacher	Lane
Cathy Pearce	Science Teacher	Middle

Appointments:

Nikki Lua	Building Secretary	Lane
Cyndy Taymore	Director of Special Ed	System
Philip Banios	Principal	Davis
Amber Edwards	Grade 5 Teacher	Lane
Christina O'Brien	Guidance Counselor	Lane
Jennifer Larrenaga	.5 Grade 4 teacher	Lane
Christina Estlick	Reading Teacher	Davis

4. METCO Program Presentation

Donnette McManus, Director of METCO, presented a history and review of Bedford's METCO program.

She began by reminding the Committee that METCO began in 1966 as a voluntary desegregation program and that today, 36 communities participate. The mission of the METCO is

"To ensure access to quality suburban public school education for students of color from urban school districts and to enhance school districts and to enhance the educational experience of suburban students by providing an integrated learning environment."

Ms. McManus then presented a few key facts of the METCO Program:

- 10% more METCO graduates attend college than the statewide average.
- METCO students select 4 year colleges nearly twice as often as peers attending Boston schools.
- In 2004, 100% METCO seniors passed the 10th grade English and Math MCAS tests (Versus 25% of their Boston educated peers.)

Ms. McManus said that currently there are 88 students in the Bedford METCO program. She reminded the School Committee that METCO students are accepted where there is space in the district. Parents must apply to the METCO office. In Bedford, the METCO Director works with the Principals to place students, as space allows.

Ms. McManus said that since 2005, 27 METCO students have graduated from Bedford High School. The class of 2009 has 7 graduating students.

Ms. McManus noted that Bedford METCO students are able to participate in a wide variety of extra curricular activities because there is a daily late bus.

Ms. McManus explained that much of her job is centered on community building. Several events are scheduled to help METCO and Bedford students and families get together outside of school. For example, this past year, there was an Apple Picking Trip, skating party, and the annual Soul Food Dinner. Also, there is a partnership with Hanscom Air Force Base that allows students to go to the Base for all types of recreational activities.

According to Ms. McManus, challenges for the program are funding, continuing relationship building and transportation.

The School Committee thanked Ms. McManus for her presentation.

Ms. Bickford said that she was pleased to hear how vibrant the program still is. She asked about Ms. McManus' funding concerns.

Ms. McManus said that she has heard that there would be funding cuts for FY'10. She has begun trying to find ways to supplement funding so student services will not have to be cut.

Ms. Seibert asked if Ms. McManus saw any trends in losing students in the middle school years. Ms. McManus said she did not see a trend but acknowledged that lots of Boston students take the entrance tests for the Boston Exam Schools and some get in and choose to go.

Ms. Seibert asked how many of the college bound seniors are first generation college goers. Ms. McManus said that METCO does collect this information and that she would get information to the School Committee.

Ms. Seibert also commented on the success of the Hanscom partnership. Ms. McManus agreed that it was a great community builder for the Lane, Middle and High School METCO students.

Ms. Seibert asked Ms. McManus to describe her wish for the future. Ms. McManus said that her wish is that all students have equal access to education not just the METCO students.

Mr. Hafer asked why Bedford had high college rates. Ms. McManus said that METCO, Inc. promoted the idea that students need to go to college and Bedford has many role models in this area. "METCO students take school very seriously."

Mr. Hafer asked how Bedford compares to other districts. Ms. McManus said that there is no official report card on districts but students and families who come to METCO often ask to be part of Bedford schools.

Mr. Hafer said that he was pleased to hear that community outreach programs take place in Boston and Bedford too.

Mr. Pierce asked how much funding Bedford receives for METCO. Ms. McManus said about \$535,000 or about \$6,000 per pupil including transportation.

Mr. Pierce asked if METCO Inc tries to get more communities involved in the program. Ms. McManus said that financial constraints will not allow METCO to recruit more communities. Dr. LaCroix said that "conversations" do occur in other communities.

Ms. O'Gara asked if METCO students drop out. Ms. McManus said yes, but not in Bedford. She said it is a small program and everyone works hard to keep them here.

Dr. LaCroix suggested that the School Committee authorize the Chairman of the School Committee to sign a letter to Governor Patrick asking him to reinstate funds to the FY'10 METCO budget. She then distributed a letter to SC members to review.

Ms. Seibert made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee authorize Bedford School Committee Chairperson to sign a letter with the Superintendent to Governor Patrick to support METCO funding.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. Bickford

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

5. Contract Approval – Davis School Flooring

Mr. Coelho asked the School Committee to award a flooring contract for flooring work to be done at Davis School beginning June 26th and ending August 15th. He explained that seven bids were received. He would like to award the contract to Capital Carpet & Flooring Specialists for \$23,757. This company was the second lowest bidder. He explained that the lowest bidder did not have qualifications for the job and did not fulfill the requirements for bid specifications.

Ms. Bickford made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve a contract for replacement of Davis School flooring with Capital Carpet and Flooring Specialists for the amount of \$23,757.

MOTION SECONDED by Mr. Pierce

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

6. Acceptance of Gift Donation

The Joseph Warren-Soley Masonic Lodge donated \$1,000 to the Bedford High School Guidance Department to help cover expenses related to activities between Hanscom students and their “off-base” peers. (Activities include bowling, pizza, etc.)

Mr. Coelho asked the School Committee to accept these funds, which would fund about two years of activities for approximately 40 students. Mr. Coelho said that if the funds were accepted, they would be deposited into the BHS Gift Fund.

Ms. Bickford made the following motion:

Moved: That the School Committee accept \$1,000 from Joseph Warren-Soley Masonic Lodge for funding activities with Hanscom and Non-Hanscom students.

Motion Seconded by Mr. Pierce

Motion Approved: 5-0

The School Committee thanked the Joseph Warren-Soley Masonic Lodge and agreed to formally acknowledge and thank them for this contribution.

7. Liaison Updates

- Charter Review Committee will have an open meeting on April 30th.
- The EDCO Collaborative Legislative Forum was held at the State House last month.
- The Graduation Requirements Committee has held thorough discussions with students, parents and faculty. Work will continue.
- Strategic Communications efforts continue.
- Bedford Education Foundation work continues. It is currently raffling off the opportunity for students/families to take a favorite teacher out for ice cream.

8. Approval of Minutes

Ms. Bickford made the following motion:

Moved: That the School Committee approve the minutes of the December 2, 2008 School Committee meeting as amended.

Motion Seconded by Mr. Pierce

Motion Approved: 5-0

The School Committee decided to postpone further approval of minutes and listen to the SEPAC presentation.

9. SEPAC Presentation

Ms. Claudia Fox Tree gave a presentation to the School Committee on behalf of the Bedford Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC). She reviewed activities of the organization for the 2008-2009 school year.

Ms. Fox Tree said overall, this was a successful year for the SEPAC organization. Currently, there are 149 members and many more people attended some of the special event meetings. Ms. Fox Tree reported that throughout the year, there were many opportunities for parents to network with one another. Also, special events such as the Ann Helmus and Kalyani Krishman talks, attracted 60-80 people each!

Ms. Fox Tree also explained that the SEPAC Board has filled all its positions including Liaison to Middle School, Historian and Liaison to Private Placements. The bylaws have been updated and voting has been clarified.

This year SEPAC identified several important concerns and collaborated with the schools to address them. Some of these issues included

- Better understanding of Executive Functioning Disorders
- MCAS testing at the Middle School
- Access to after school/summer activities for out-of-district children

Ms. Fox Tree said that next year, SEPAC would like to reach out more to METCO. She would also like to meet with local area SEPAC's to expand and/or consolidate programs. The organization also plans to meet with the new Davis School Principal and the new Special Education Director.

Ms. Fox Tree said currently the budget for the organization is \$1100. Of this amount, \$500 came from the schools and the rest was raised during various events including Bedford Day and a Pampered Chef fundraiser. Funds are used to bring in special events and speakers and brochures/communications.

Ms. Bickford said that she is impressed with the success of the organization. She thinks that there is great participation and great programs. She did ask Ms. Foxtree to explain what she hopes to gain by meeting with other SEPAC organizations.

Ms. Fox Tree said that this will be a great networking opportunity for families and a good way to share resources and special events.

Ms. Seibert said that the SEPAC has done a great job. She did ask why parents come to SEPAC. Ms. Foxtree said that they come for support, to have questions answered and to learn.

Mr. Hafer said that he is impressed with the achievements of the group and the amount of people involved.

Ms. O'Gara and Dr. LaCroix thanked Ms. Fox Tree and Mary Koert, Special Education Director. Dr. LaCroix noted that Ms. Koert displayed strong leadership during her tenure here at Bedford Public Schools and that when she retires, she will leave a path that will be easy to follow.

Dr. LaCroix then reported that after an exhaustive interview process, she would like to appoint Cyndy Taymore as Special Education Director. Ms. Taymore was in the audience and introduced herself to the School Committee.

Ms. Taymore said that she was impressed with how vested Bedford is with educating children and she looks forward to working as Special Education Director. She said that two goals have already come to light

- Increase the capacity of Bedford to educate special education students in town
- Create a seamless network of support for all students and that Bedford already has a great foundation.

After the presentation, Ms. Bickford made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approved the appointment of Cyndy Taymore as Director of Special Education, effective July 1, 2009.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. Seibert

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

10. Superintendent's Report

Dr. LaCroix said that the Lane School will participate in the State program of "Walk to School" on May 6th.

Dr. LaCroix said that four Lane Students received an Honorable Mention award on the Explore Vision Contest – a contest about getting a new product to market.

Sean McGowan, a BHS teacher, was honored as the Sigma Xi High School Science and Mathematics Teacher of the Year from the University of Massachusetts Lowell.

11. Approval of Minutes (continued from earlier in the agenda)

Ms. Seibert made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the minutes of the December 9, 2008 School Committee meeting as amended.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. Bickford

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

Ms. Bickford made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the minutes of the January 13, 2009 School Committee meeting as amended.

MOTION SECONDED by Mr. Pierce

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

Ms. Seibert made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the minutes of the February 10, 2009 Executive Session meeting.

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 February 24, 2009 Executive Session meeting.

MOTION SECONDED by Mr. Pierce

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

12. Future Agenda

Ms. Bickford asked for feedback on the High School overseas field trips and team competitions. She also would like to view the History competition tapes.

Mr. Hafer asked about math textbooks review.

Mr. Pierce would like the end-of-the-year events calendar.

Dr. LaCroix noted that the last day of school is June 19th.

13. Adjournment

Ms. Seibert made the following motion:

MOVED: Motion to adjourn at 10:05.

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

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