

BEDFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE
May 26, 2015
Bedford High School - Large Group 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 Mr. Pierce, Ms. Guay, Mr. McAllister and Mr. Brosgol. Miss Sophia Kyrou, student representative, was absent.

2. Comments from Public

None

3. Personnel Report

No personnel report given.

4. Bedford High School Presentation – School Improvement Plan and Handbook Changes

Dr. Turner, Principal, began the presentation by reviewing some highlights of the 2014-2015 school year. Dr. Turner noted:

- BHS had four National Merit Semi-Finalists
- DESE nominated BHS a “School of Accommodations”
- A successful year in sports
- A successful annual musical production of “Shrek”
- A national award given to the DECCA Team (Business club)
- A strong range of college acceptances

Dr. Turner said that the students worked very hard this year and that all in the graduating class are college-ready. He believes Bedford High School is one of the elite, competitive high schools in eastern Massachusetts.

Student Handbook

Ms. Boynton, Assistant Principal, distributed a memo regarding the changes proposed for the 2015-2016 Student Handbook. She explained that the goal for this year’s Handbook is to make it more accessible and informative to students. In an effort to streamline the information, she has moved non-essential content online. There is also a link to the Athletic Handbook online. All in all, the changes have reduced the Handbook to 70 pages. She discussed some of the more substantial changes.

The biggest change in policy is the change to GPA calculation beginning with the incoming freshman class (2019). Ms. Capodanno, Director of Guidance, explained that this change was discussed with parents, faculty, JGMS parents, and students. The change makes our GPA calculation more in line with University of Massachusetts.

Changes in the calculation include:

- GPA is calculated only on major classes (no minors)
- Unweighted GPA will be on a 4.0 scale
- Weighted GPA will be on a 5.0 scale
- The graduating classes of 2016, 2017 and 2018 will continue to utilize the former GPA calculation formula
- BHS will continue to report rank only upon request for the 2016, 2017, and 2018 classes.

School Improvement Plan

Dr. Turner explained that the 2015-2016 School Improvement plan contains many of the same long-term objectives from the 2014-2015 plan. He has identified the following areas of focus:

- More work is needed on multicultural and global education
- Improve BHS initiatives to help them become sustainable
- Academic achievement gaps exist – need to reduce
- Need more effective communications with families – especially to those with struggling students.
- Ensure high expectations for all students – the leveling rubric will be updated

Dr. Turner shared some graphs on how weighted GPAs for several sub groups are becoming more similar – less gaps. He also shared a slide on how most students do better when they take higher level classes.

Dr. Turner said, “We are a high expectation school and we need to make sure students are well prepared for college. We need to push students to take higher level courses.”

Dr. Turner outlined the goals for 2015-2016 School year:

1. Develop protocols for effective communications with struggling students – both internally and with parents. The new interventionist position will help with this.
2. Establish common expectations for each level in each department. Teachers need to keep talking about learning expectations and having consistent goals.
3. Further development of multicultural and global curriculum. The English and History departments are taking the lead by rolling out new themes in the foundations classes.
4. Provide professional development to help further teacher capacity and to provide more opportunities to learn from one another. (Dr. Turner said that the BHS teachers love to learn from one another and that this desire to improve themselves really helps our students.)

Mr. Brosgol asked if the students feel that they are being forced to expand their multicultural awareness? Dr. Turner said that he is not just adding this to the student’s plates but he is trying to figure out ways to incorporate it into the content and culture of the school. The thought is “how do we incorporate skills in our students to help them talk about differences? How can we get them to engage in the classrooms?” He does not want it to feel forced.

Mr. Brosgol asked if Dr. Turner is trying to encourage students to move up levels in all subjects. Dr. Turner said in all except to do this in math is more difficult.

Mr. Pierce said he applauds Dr. Turner’s multiyear goals of equity and diversity. He also appreciates this collaborative approach and the focus on higher order thinking. All goals are right on target.

Mr. Pierce did suggest reviewing the Honor Roll calculations and to clarify the language in the Handbook.

Ms. Guay said that the new Handbook is a good document and she is happy to see a lot of the regulations moved to online. Ms. Boynton thanked her and said that the regulations that were kept in the handbook – discipline, attendance – were done so as directed by the attorneys.

Ms. Guay asked if there is a parent orientation for the Hanscom Airforce Base families. Dr. Turner said that Mr. DeChellis does a lot of orientation work with the students and the Registrar does a lot of communications with the parents. Ms. Capodanno has some ideas on how to do a better job.

Dr. Turner mentioned that this year, current students were allowed to take iPads home during the summer and that new students are going to get the iPads at orientation classes to be held in August. The hope is that the opening of school will focus on school rather than logistics of getting iPads.

Mr. McAllister complimented Dr. Turner on the fact that the School Improvement Plan is progressive and not a list of “checking off the boxes”.

Mr. Hafer suggested that as things evolve, Dr. Turner should be mindful about helping “struggling” students at all levels – high level and lower level students. Dr. Turner agreed.

Mr. Hafer asked if Dr. Turner thought some students would be upset about not receiving A+ anymore. Dr. Turner said yes, but noted that it is difficult to distinguish an “A” and an “A+” in class.

Mr. Sills added that this will lay the groundwork for discussions on grading and rigor.

Ms. Guay made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the Bedford High School 2015-2016 School Improvement Plan as discussed tonight.

MOTION SECONDED by Mr. Brosgol

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

Ms. Guay made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the Bedford High School 2015-2016 Student Handbook as set forth tonight.

MOTION SECONDED by Mr. Brosgol

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

5. End of Year District Goals

Mr. Sills gave a progress report on district goals. He discussed some of the initiatives under each. School Committee members received a full report.

Strategic Objective: Coherent, Global, Higher Order Thinking Curriculum/Student Centered Learning

- Implement common assessments B+

Mr. Sills said much work was done to ensure students get the same quality content and skills and that assessments are a genuine measurement of complex thinking,

- Global curriculum modifications C+

Mr. Sills said this work is not yet systematic. A more deliberate articulations needs to occur.

- Multicultural Content adopted A-

Books have been added to the elementary school titles to address diversity. The high school did an audit that revealed that more texts with varied perspectives are needed. JGMS will do a more in depth audit next year.

- Promote transformative technology use A

Technology Showcase showed how entire district is engaged in technology integration. Also starting to implement coding curriculum in all grades K-12.

Strategic Objective: Equity: Teaching all students

- Provide professional development in cultural proficiency A
Facing History workshop for all faculty and staff was held.
- Continue to develop in-house SPED programs A
An Autism Program Davis and a self-contained program for the high school have been approved and planned.
- Increase special-ed push in and alignment with regular ed B+
The Davis cluster model helped with this goal. JGMS has made some structural changes to facilitate more push-in next year. Team teaching model has been successful at the high school.

Strategic Objective: Effective Communications with parents and community

- Identify and publish exemplars along with end of year learning objectives B
- Published Bedford Public Schools brochure A
- Davis and Lane improved communications to families regarding social-emotional curriculum A

Strategic Objective: Collaborative Professional Culture

- Modify schedules to accommodate more collaborative time A
- All Teachers developed evaluation team goals regarding achievement A
- Hire new Assistant Superintendent A

Mr. Brosgol asked if all the schools have embraced differences and the global curriculum. Mr. Sills said yes and that Facing History has helped to accomplish this.

Ms. Guay said that the push-in model is good but she does not believe it will work for all students.

Mr. McAllister thanked Mr. Sills for delivering a very clear plan and report.

Mr. Hafer thanked Mr. Sills and said that it is very clear what needs to be done.

5. Superintendent's Report

Mr. Sills said that the Enrollment Study will be presented at the June 9th School Committee meeting. He said the study implies that it is important for the district to move forward on building expansion plans.

Mr. Coelho briefly discussed some important points from the enrollment study:

- Bedford has grown 5.8% since 2000.
- People aged 25-44 are expected to increase in Bedford
- People are moving to Bedford at a fast rate.
- More than 600 students are expected at Davis School in 2016.
- BHS's enrollment of 850 is near its capacity.

Mr. Coelho said that the enrollment study looked at residential construction in town – both new construction and tear downs. The real estate market is hot and has a low inventory of homes. People are moving into apartments in Bedford and waiting for inventory to open up.

Mr. Pierce said it would be helpful to see a baseline for each school and then the changes made to accommodate program needs and population changes.

Mr. Brosgol noted that new housing will end up more than that projected by developers. It is always under estimated in his opinion.

Ms. Guay agreed that more people will move to town than anticipated. She said it is concerning because we have to plan for growth at all of our schools.

Mr. McAllister said that growth is a testament to all the good things that are happening in our schools. He said that this is the kind of information we should share with the Finance Committee and the community as a whole. He said it really is a great opportunity for Bedford. Mr. McAllister suggested that the School Committee make sure that the data is accurate and then use it in all conversations with the town and the community.

Mr. McAllister also suggested that the district needs to look at alternatives to the rising enrollments. Do we keep our same model or do we need to look at adding more schools?

Mr. Hafer thanked Mr. Coelho for the preview.

7. Liaison Reports

Mr. Brosgol reported that at the last Finance Committee there was a request for more information on the costs involved in bringing Special Education students back to Bedford schools.

Mr. Hafer reported that the Fields Partnership has agreed to replace the lights at Sabourin Field.

8. Adjournment

Mr. Mcallister made the following motion.

MOVED: Motion to adjourn at 10:00 pm to Executive Session to discuss non-teacher contract, the nurse's contract, and the Memo of Understanding with Lincoln - not to reopen.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. Guay

Roll Call Vote:

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

School Committee Secretary

Date

BEDFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE

May 26 2015

Exhibits/Documents

- Changes to the 2015-2016 Student Handbook memo dated May 7, 2015.
- Presentation: Bedford High School Improvement Plan for 2015-2016 year
- 2014-2015 District Goals End of Year Progress Report dated May 21, 2015