

**BEDFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF
April 10, 2012**

Bedford High School - Large Instruction Room

1. Call to Order

At 7:00 p.m., Ms. Seibert called to order the meeting of the Bedford School Committee. Other members present included Mr. Hafer, Ms. O’Gara, Mr. Pierce, and Ms. Bickford.

2. Motion to Adjourn to Executive Session

Ms. Bickford made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee adjourn to Executive Session for purposes of contract negotiations.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. O’Gara

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

3. Reconvene to Open Session

At 7:45 p.m., Ms. Seibert called to order the Open Session Meeting of the Bedford School Committee. Other members present included Mr. Hafer, Ms. O’Gara, Mr. Pierce, and Ms. Bickford. Sam Markuse, student representative, was also in attendance.

4. Comments from the Public

None

5. Personnel Report

Dr. LaCroix asked the School Committee to review two updated job descriptions:

Early Childhood Coordinator

This job description is being updated to reflect changes in the field today. According to Ms. Taymore, Judy Mirel, the current Early Childhood Coordinator, is retiring and as a result, it is a good time to update the job description. In addition to the changes in the early childhood field, the district also will have three PreK classes next year at the Integrated Preschool at the High School. The Early Childhood Coordinator will be responsible for these classes as well as Early Intervention Transition and Special Education Services for children ages 3-6. One other change is that coordination and responsibility of the Kindergarten Screening Program is being transferred to the Principal of Davis School.

Ms. Bickford asked about the kindergarten screening change. Ms. Taymore said that Ms. Peterson, the Principal of Davis School, is comfortable with the change and agrees that it should fall under her area of responsibilities since it involves so many teachers from the Davis School. She has also seen this same job responsibility fall under the Principal in her past experiences.

The School Committee reviewed the description and made some minor edits. The vote will be taken at the next meeting.

Educational Assistants

Ms. Taymore explained that this new job description replaces the various versions of Educational Assistants that existed previously. For example, there was a description for an Office Educational

Assistant and a Cafeteria Educational Assistant, as well as a Copy Center Educational Assistant Together with the Bedford Education Association, Ms. Taymore developed a more generalized Educational Assistant description that would cover all support positions in the school. Today, Educational Assistants move around the buildings and perform support around the buildings. Flexibility is key to the role.

The School Committee did not have any questions and agreed to vote on this new description at the next meeting as well.

Dr. LaCroix asked the School Committee to approve a last minute field trip request from Mr. Donnelly. The request is last minute because Bedford students won the first round of the EuroChallenge and now can compete at the National level. The competition is April 29-30th in New York City. The ten students involved will miss one day of school. They will travel to New York City by school van and will have two faculty chaperones.

Ms. Bickford made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the field trip request for the EuroChallenge Competition sponsored the Federal Reserve in New York City on April 29 through April 30, 2012 for ten students using the school van and at no other cost to the school department.

MOTION SECONDED by Mr. Pierce

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

Dr. LaCroix asked the School Committee to approve changing the Early Childhood Coordinator position from a .8 to a 1.0 position due to the increase in the number of Preschool classes and preschool special education population. She explained that there would not be a budget increase but a reallocation of the personnel budget.

Dr. LaCroix also asked that the School Committee approve changing the Davis School music teacher position from a .9 to a 1.0. The Davis School music teacher will use this extra time to travel to Lane School to help ease the schedule at Lane, which is overloaded due to Chorus.

Mr. Kenny, a member of the Finance Committee in the audience, asked if these changes would affect the benefit packages. Dr. LaCroix said no.

Ms. Bickford made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve for the FY 2013 school year, a change in the Early Childhood Coordinator position from a .8 to a 1.0 and a change in the Davis School music teacher position from a .9 to 1.0.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. O’Gara

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

Dr. LaCroix made the following personnel announcements:

Retirements:

Diane Heckley	Special Education Teacher	Davis
Angela Hodgdon	Elementary Teacher	Davis
Jean Jones	Elementary Teacher	Davis
Judy Mirel	Early Childhood Coordinator	Davis
Joyce Ryder	Kindergarten Teacher	Davis
Bobby Galani	Teaching Assistant	Davis

Kevin Connolly

Technology Education Teacher High/Middle

Appointments:

Henry Turner	Principal	High School
Elizabeth Larrabee	Occupational Therapist	Lane/Middle School
Jessica Williams	Special Education Teacher	Davis School
Kristen Vogel	Assistant Principal – full year	High School
Amy Signorello	Food Service Worker	Davis

Resignations:

Justin Jourdan	English Teacher	High School
Diane Pritchett	.4 Music Teacher	Middle/High School
Jonathan Levis	Computer Lab Assist.	Middle School
Amber Edwards	Elementary Teacher	Lane School
Michael Axman	Teaching Assistant	Middle School

Coaching Appointments:

Kevin McGovern	Head Coach -Outdoor Track	High School
Al Dougherty	Assistant Outdoor Track	High School
James Greenwood	Assistant Outdoor Track	High School
Joel Hebert	Assistant Outdoor Track	High School
Ken Norling	Outdoor Track	Middle School
Charles Puopolo	Varsity Boys Baseball	High School
Gunnar Olson	Assistant Varsity Baseball	High School
Bill Berlino	JV Baseball	High School
Matt Hagar	Baseball Co-Coach	Middle School
Jeffrey McGrath	Baseball Co-Coach	Middle School
Dennis Walsh	Varsity Softball	High School
Meagan Asp	Assistant Varsity Softball	High School
Jim Nagle	JV Softball	High School
Justin Newton	Softball	Middle School
Dave Sukoff	Varsity Boys Lacrosse Co Coach	High School
Christopher Kratz	Varsity Boys Lacrosse Co Coach	High School
Jeff LoPresti	JV Boys Lacrosse	High School
Meghan Harris	Varsity Girls Lacrosse	High School
Bev Barton	JV Girls Lacrosse	High School
Matt Driscoll	Freshman Girls Lacrosse	High School
John Geilfuss	Varsity Boys Tennis	High School
Marjorie Marino	JV Boys Tennis	High School
Monika Drabkova	Varsity Girls Tennis	High School
Roseann Ham	JV Girls Tennis	High School
Amanda Rebesa	Athletic Trainer	High School

6. iPad Pilot Evaluation

Mr. Ken Lord and Ms. Donna Clements presented a report on the iPad project at the High School. Mr. Lord explained that this is Part One of the update. Recently, students, staff and parents have been surveyed about the iPad pilot and information is just being reviewed. Surveys will continue and further analysis will be done. This information will be reported to the School Committee again in the fall as Part Two.

Mr. Lord reviewed the project timeline to date:

June 2011	30 iPads purchased for staff training
Summer 2011	270 iPads purchased and configured
September 2011	75 applications loaded (most for free)
October 2011	270 iPads distributed to students (in Social Studies classes)
October 2011	Purchased additional 10 iPads for new enrollees
October 2011 to present	Ongoing staff training

Mr. Lord also explained that he, Ms. Clements and Mr. Ackerman have been taking a training class on how to evaluate the iPad project accurately. As a result of this class, a survey was issued to 150 parents, 180 students and all teachers in March. Mr. Lord is now digesting this information (open ended questions and answers) and will report further in the fall.

In May, he will be working on a developing an improvement plan for next year.

Ms. Clements then showed an informative video of iPad use throughout the high school.

Mr. Lord explained that he believes it is best to purchase the iPad 2 again for next year. He did not think the extra cost for the iPad 3 is worth the few extra features. The FY13 budget for iPads is \$53,300 which is for 380 new iPad 2s. (There will be 694 total iPads on hand). The plan is to distribute to all High School teaching staff, all 9th graders, and 238 10th graders. Ipads will also be provided to some 11th and 12th graders – those that are in the mixed grade level classes.

Dr. LaCroix reminded the School Committee that Bedford is working with two nearby communities – Burlington and Andover on curriculum using the iPad. As a result of this partnership, we received a portion of a \$50,000 innovation grant. Dr. LaCroix said that it has been great to be able to work with other teachers from these districts.

Dr. LaCroix also complimented the BHS staff for figuring out new, creative way to teach in the classroom thanks to the iPad.

Mr. Hafer thanked everyone for the informative presentation. He asked Mr. Lord if he thinks the project has met expectations.

Mr. Lord said that yes, many teachers have embraced the one-to-one pilot and has moved forward on their own. However, going forward, the district needs to plan more training on things like managing the distractions. Also, the upgrade to the High School's WIFI will be beneficial to all.

Mr. Lord also commented that he has learned a lot about the iPad like backing it up and syncing them. Therefore, the district needs to find ways to get more resources to support the iPads in this way.

Mr. Hafer asked if Mr. Lord expects PC replacements to go down. Mr. Lord said yes and he already sees this happening.

Mr. Pierce said that a lot has happened in only six months. He sees the iPads as a good way to move towards personalization/differentiation of education in the classroom. He asked Mr. Lord if we are close to allowing students to bring in their own device.

Mr. Lord said yes, next year, we will have an open network and this year, the policy was changed to allow students to bring in their own device. (However, it did not work since the network was closed). Next year, with an open network, it will be one step closer. However, teachers may not be able to integrate curriculum on different devices – this is about three or four years away.

Ms. O’Gara said she is pleased to hear all teachers will get an iPad next year. She expects to see even more creative collaboration as a result. She also sees the iPad as a great way to support L.D. students.

Ms. O’Gara said she was pleased to see in the video, examples of how the iPad is being used in areas other than math and science.

Ms. Bickford said she is impressed with the academic benefits of the iPad but is concerned about the “side effects”. For example, she sees that it is very important to help teachers learn more about managing the distractions (of the iPad) in the classroom. She also thinks it will be important to have teachers teach the skill of focusing and the skill of eye contact – important skills that are going by the wayside due to the heavy use of technology in society. She sees schools as having the responsibility of teaching these skills.

Ms. Bickford would like to review the survey results before the fall presentation, if possible.

Ms. Seibert said she saw a keyboard used by a student in the video. She asked if we were providing keyboards. Mr. Lord said no, that some students and teachers buy keyboards to use on the iPad on their own. They often come with a case.

Ms. Seibert asked Mr. Lord to clarify what he meant when he said that the lower price of the iPad would “advance” the program.

Mr. Lord said he meant being able to buy more iPads earlier than planned. For example, the lower price will allow ALL high school teachers to have an iPad next year and even some upper classmen.

Ms. Clements commented that she is most astounded by the fact that the high school has only used iPads for 6 months. At the beginning of the year, she saw students and faculty using the iPad as a way to access information. Now, as she went around to shoot the video, she sees a shift from using the device as a resource to using the device as a way to inspire new ideas and new ways to learn.

Sam Markuse, student representative, said that as an upper classman, he is jealous! But in his role of Junior Mentor, has asked freshmen students if they liked the iPads. He said that all did like them but he noticed that the distraction it causes is obvious too. He did notice that students in the Learning Center with organizational issues really benefit from the iPad. He asked if there was a plan to ensure these students get them too. (Mr. Lord said he would discuss this with Administration.)

Mr. Coelho noted that he has been analyzing a variety of lease options. He has received several competitive lease options and feels that the final lease price will be less than the budget. He asked the School Committee to authorize the Chair to enter into a lease agreement for the iPads with ePlus Group, Inc. the company with the most competitive lease option.

Ms. O’Gara made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee authorize the Chairperson and the School Department to enter into a three-year lease agreement with ePlus Group, Inc. for the acquisition of iPad2 devices and associated computer hardware and peripherals as part of Phase 2 of the 1:1 Computing iPad2 Initiative for students and faculty at Bedford High School.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. Bickford

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

Mr. Kenny had some questions about long term plans of the iPad and other technology use. The School Committee explained that these questions would be addressed in the Strategic Plan presentation later this evening.

7. Discussion: Multi-Age Classroom at Davis School

Dr. LaCroix reported that Ms. Taymore and Ms. Peterson, Principal of Davis School, feel that it would be best to suspend the multiage classroom for next year. The two teachers would be reassigned to a first grade and second grade teacher.

Dr. LaCroix reminded the School Committee that the School Committee originally approved the multiage classroom concept in 2004 and that it was approved as a pilot program with a goal of growing the concept if it proved to be worthwhile. Dr. LaCroix said that the program has not grown to include more teachers/classrooms over the years. Dr. LaCroix said that given all of the changes in the curriculum and standards, that today, less student time is actually spent in a multiage environment than it was back in 2004. She agrees that it seems to make sense to suspend the program for next year.

Ms. Taymore referred to the minutes from the original vote on the multiage program. She reiterated that it was a pilot program with the hope that it would grow and it has not. She said that both she and Ms. Peterson feel that the changes that have occurred due the district’s move to a more scientific-based curriculum make the multiage classroom an added stress to the Davis School.

Ms. Taymore explained that there has been a lot of instructional changes as the district moves towards a more collaborative grade level model. These instructional changes and the need for intervention blocks has put a lot of stress on school building schedules. Ms. Taymore said that it is a systemic change that is causing this decision and not a reflection on the great work and dedication of the two multiage teachers, Janet Houston and Deb Davies. Ms. Taymore said she is open to other options.

Mr. Pierce wondered if given the changes in math and literacy standards, whether the students were truly getting a multiage instruction today.

Ms. Bickford noted that it has been seven years since the multiage inception and she has not really heard anything about it – nothing negative and nothing positive. She is hearing tonight that instructional practices are changing due to the new standards and that this particular model is now cumbersome for the teachers. She said however, that the cancellation of the program has come upon us quickly. She wonders if there is a way to discuss dismantling it in the future or perhaps finding new ways to make it work.

Dr. LaCroix said she is also concerned about the new teacher evaluation system that will be enrolled in September. She said the new system will collect data across the grade and she wonder if multiage teachers will be at a disadvantage in this new system.

Dr. LaCroix said she thinks it is important to look ahead and ask, “Does multiage make sense with the new common core standards? Does it make sense with the new teacher evaluation system?” She does not have any objection to keeping the program as long as the future is considered.

Ms. O’Gara commented that the multiage program has not grown. But she acknowledges that if we do not allow families to ask for it, then how do we know if it is desired?

Dr. LaCroix pointed out that no new teachers have asked to do a new multiage program

Ms. Seibert is reluctant to see a change in curriculum change something that has been working out fine. She feels that we should look at the issue further.

Ms. O’Gara agrees that she feels like we are jumping to quickly to cancel the program. She does feel however that the new common core standards and the new teacher evaluation program will bring big hurdles for the program and wonders if they are manageable.

Dr. LaCroix suggests doing a fall program review and putting this on the Davis School Improvement Plan. She thinks it would be beneficial to evaluate the program in context of needs of children given the changing state mandates.

Mr. Hafer agrees that a program review makes sense. He also feels it is important to determine the best way to transition the first graders currently in the program.

Ms. Bickford agrees that a program evaluation is overdue and it would be good to do it with an eye to the future. She said parents also need to be aware of any possible changes.

Ms. Morrow, a multiage parent in the audience, said that parents were recently made aware of possible changes to the program.

Ms. Davies clarified that no first grade parents have ever wanted to opt out of the program for the second year except one who wanted the student to be home-schooled due to some significant learning issues. Ms. Davies also said that there never has been a Principal at Davis School who has been there longer than three years who chose to take the initiative to move the program forward.

Many multiage parents were in the audience and several spoke on behalf of the program and the teachers. Mr. Rob Sutter spoke about the positive effects it has had on his son. One parent said it would be a shame to see the program dismantled because it is a “pain” to schedule.

Mr. Caron, a multiage parent, suggested finding two other teachers to do a multiage classroom and that the four teachers together could be a group for support and/or the new teacher evaluation system. Ms. Taymore thought this was a viable option to consider.

Ms. Seibert thanked all the parents for coming to support the program. She said that the plan would be to review the program in light of the future curriculum and teacher evaluation changes.

8. Presentation: Strategic Plan 2012-2017

Dr. LaCroix presented the Strategic Plan for 2012-2017. She explained that a broad-based working group of 19 people appointed by the Superintendent in May 2011 prepared the plan. The group included students, residents, staff, parents, technology staff, members of the School Committee, as well as a member of the Capital Expense Committee. The initial stages of the work included identifying a list of critical issues facing the school system. The second phase included gathering information from the community from an online survey. Survey responses were collated in October and November of 2011 and analyzed. 846 surveys were completed. Key findings were used to develop the plan details. All in all, the plan was developed in approximately six months.

The plan focuses on the evolving needs of the schools and supports student learning in the 21st Century. The Plan includes a detailed Technology Vision for 2012-2017 as well. The plan has been designed to both articulate the vision for the schools and to identify resources needed to support the vision. The plan sets forth an action plan for a five-year period.

Dr. LaCroix reviewed highlights of the plan including:

- The mission of the Bedford Public Schools
- The new vision statement
- The new value statements
- The new Technology Vision

She explained that these statements represent Bedford Public Schools' aspirations.

Dr. LaCroix further explained that as the Strategic Plan was developed, a conversation about technology ensued and the group realized that they are embedded so the technology vision is part of the 5-year plan.

The Technology Vision for 2017 is that Bedford Public Schools will integrate technology in new and effective ways to enhance teaching and learning. Through the use of technology, the following goals have been set forth:

- Students will build own personal learning networks
- Students will collaborate with others
- Students will be producers of knowledge, content and creative expression.

Dr. LaCroix said that survey results were used as the foundation for the development of the system-wide goals. The five goal categories will remain the same as those used in the past.

Governance and Leadership

Maintenance of a nurturing culture of innovation characterized by collaboration is the centerpiece of this goal. Action items set forth under this goal include appropriate integration of technology.

Curriculum and Instruction

The schools must be prepared to tailor the curriculum to meet needs of students with varied abilities and interests. Action items will include maintaining current class size, balanced curriculum and establishing appropriate levels of challenge for all students.

Assessment and Evaluation

The ongoing measurement of both individual student achievement and overall program effectiveness are included in this goal.

Human Resources and Professional Development

The employment and retention of a highly skilled, competent, diverse, adaptable and motivated teaching force is essential.

Student Academic Support

Students need to feel both emotionally and physically safe in school. All student populations must have access to high quality academic programs.

Finance and Asset Management

Schools must maintain annual operating and capital budgets that reflect the mission and values. A goal is established which identifies the need to address the need for reconfiguration or additional space at Davis, Lane and JGMS. Also, continue to seek additional financial support for students from Hanscom Air Force Base.

Dr. LaCroix said that the Strategic Plan is a guiding document that reflects the values and goals that the Bedford community has articulated for its schools. The Action Plan is based upon these goals and provides a focus and timeline for the schools. However, she recognizes that the goals and action plans are sensitive to the context of resource limitations and should be reviewed and updated on an annual basis.

The School Committee thanked Dr. LaCroix for the overview and agreed to send specific comments and edits directly to her. They would like to digest the information over the next few weeks before voting to approve the plan. (Upon approval, the Strategic Plan will be posted on the district website.)

Mr. Hafer said that he noticed that the context of the current environment – mandates, budget constraints, etc. is not really summarized in the Plan.

Mr. Pierce said that it was a great opportunity to be part of the Strategic Planning process.

Ms. O’Gara agreed that it was a great process and a great opportunity to come together as a community and to look at the schools in a big picture. She said it was nice to have the opportunity to articulate the community’s values.

Ms. Bickford said that this plan is really quite different than a business plan but it is still very helpful. The plan helps the District define its goals and objectives which are in turn tracked and measured.

Ms. Bickford is concerned that the survey tool did not really reach everyone in the community. She said last time the plan was done, the survey was mailed to everyone’s home. This time it was online. She would like to know if this response rate was different from the first plan. This information will help when it is time to do the next Strategic Plan.

Ms. Bickford did ask if the Vision Statement was similar to the current one. Dr. LaCroix said yes. Ms. Seibert said that she compared the two statements and is amazed how similar they are. She is pleased with the consistency.

Ben Driscoll, a high school student who served on the strategic planning committee, said it was a great process to be part of.

Ms. O’Gara said that the students on the team always asked the hard questions and proved to be a valuable part of the committee.

9. Vote: EDCO Reorganization

Dr. LaCroix and Ms. Seibert are Bedford’s representatives to the EDCO Collaborative and its various subcommittees. Ms. Seibert and Dr. LaCroix reviewed some important changes forthcoming with the collaborative law. Dr. LaCroix explained that in March of this year, the Governor signed new legislation that will increase oversight and monitoring of educational collaboratives, including EDCO Collaborative and the EDCO Collaborative for Greater Boston, Inc. As a result, the boards of the collaborative must implement a plan to disentangle the two sides of the collaborative – the public and private bodies. Previously the two sides always met as one.

EDCO hired legal counsel to help them meet requirements of the new law. The DESE and the State Ethics Commission were also asked to help. After lots of due diligence, the plan is essentially to consolidate the programs and assets of the public and private agencies into a single public collaborative. Each school district involved in the EDCO Collaborative (twenty plus the Archdiocese of Boston) are asked to review and vote on a motion that will dissolve the private, for profit company and transfer the assets and programs to the public collaborative that was passed on March 8, 2012.

Dr. LaCroix asked the School Committee to consider taking this vote.

Ms. O’Gara made the following motion:

MOVED: That the Bedford School Committee vote to dissolve the Education Collaborative for Greater Boston Inc., by June 30, 2012 or as soon as legally possible thereafter, and further that our representatives for the EDCO Collaborative and the Education Collaborative for Greater Boston, Inc. be authorized to take all necessary steps to transfer all programs, contracts and available assets, including the Seefurth Fund, from the Education Collaborative for Greater Boston, Inc. to the EDCO Collaborative by the close of the fiscal year on June 30, 2012 or as soon as legally possible thereafter.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. Bickford

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

Dr. LaCroix noted that the board will now have only one voting member from district members.

10. Administrative Reorganization

Dr. LaCroix congratulated Cyndy Taymore for being appointed the new Superintendent for Melrose Public Schools. As a result, she recommended reorganizing the Administrative office.

Dr. LaCroix proposed for the next school year to have an Interim Director of Special Education and an Interim Assistant Superintendent. She said that this is the structure we had before Ms. Taymore was appointed Assistant Superintendent.

Ms. O’Gara made the following motion:

MOVED: That the Bedford School Committee eliminate the position of Assistant Director for Special Education for In-District Programs and re-create the position of Director of

Special Education effective July 1, 2012. Further move that the Bedford School Committee authorize the Superintendent of Schools to post the following positions:

- **Interim Director of Special Education**
- **Interim Assistant Superintendent of Schools**

Finally, move that the Bedford School Committee authorize the Superintendent of Schools to appoint both the Interim Director of Special Education and the Interim Assistant Superintendent of Schools.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. Bickford

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

Ms. Bickford pointed out that this is an exception to the Bedford Public Schools' policy due to the urgency of filling the positions.

11. Superintendent's Report

Mr. Coelho asked to move funds for the Lane School roof replacement project. He needed signatures from the School Committee to do this.

Mr. Coelho also had the School Committee sign the Fields Use Policy that they recently voted on.

12. Liaison Reports

Mr. Hafer said that the Fields Partnership Committee had a meeting and discussed addressing concerns about the artificial turf proposal. They will be ready to address these concerns at the fall Town Meeting.

13. Minutes for Review

The School Committee agreed to review the minutes from the February 7, 2012 meeting at the next School Committee meeting.

14. Future Agenda

Ms. Bickford asked for feedback on this year's revised bus schedules.

15. Adjournment

Mr. Hafer made the following motion:

MOVED: Motion to adjourn at 11:10 p.m.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. O'Gara

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

Roll Call Vote:

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

School Committee Secretary

Date

BEDFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE

April 10, 2012

Exhibits/Documents

- **Draft of Early Childhood Coordinator job description**
- **Draft of Educational Assistant –Student and Teacher Support job description**
- **iPad Project Presentation dated April 10, 2012**
- **Strategic Plan 2012-2017 and Technology Vision 2017**
- **Strategic Plan 2012-2017 presentation dated April 10, 2012 by Dr. LaCroix**