

**BEDFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF
March 8, 2011**

Bedford High School - Large Instruction Room

1. Call to Order

At 6:30 p.m., Mr. Hafer called to order the meeting of the Bedford School Committee. Other members present included Ms. Seibert, Ms. O’Gara, Mr. Pierce and Ms. Bickford

2. Adjourn to Executive Session

Ms Seibert made the following motion:

MOVED: Motion to adjourn to Executive Session at 6:30 p.m.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. Bickford.

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

Roll Call Vote:

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

3. Return to Open Session

At 7:40 p.m., Mr. Hafer called to order the open session meeting of the Bedford School Committee. Other members present included Ms. Seibert, Ms. O’Gara, Mr. Pierce and Ms. Bickford. Ashley Nagy, student representative was also in attendance.

4. Comments From Public

None

5. Personnel Report

Dr. LaCroix asked the School Committee to consider the following out-of-state field trip requests:

Mr. Shawn Daley is requesting approval to travel to “Carter Notch Hut” in Jefferson, NH for the annual RISE Program self-esteem building activity. There are 10 students in the RISE Program who will be traveling on April 13-15, 2011. The cost of the trip is \$1816 and will be covered by the RISE program budget.

Ms. Seibert made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the out-of-state field trip request for students in the RISE Program to travel to Carter Notch Hut in Jefferson, NH for the period of April 13- 15, 2011 at a total cost of \$1816 which is covered in the FY’11 budget.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. O’Gara

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

Mr. Rich Carson and Mr. Chris Edris have asked the School Committee to reconsider a trip to Highland Center, Twin Mountain, NH on April 8-10, 2011. This trip was originally planned (and approved) for October 12, 2010. The trip was postponed due to logistical reasons. The trip is now

planned for April and cost per student (\$140) has not changed. Twenty ROTC students plan on traveling via school van to get there.

Ms. O’Gara made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the field trip for ROTC students to travel to Twin Mountain, NH on April 8-10, 2011 at no cost to the school department.

MOTION SECONDED BY Ms. Seibert

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

Dr. LaCroix reported the following informational items:

Resignations:

Erin Money	Guidance Counselor	Middle School
Candace Russell	.6 PE Teacher	Middle School
Thomas Fay	Social Studies Teacher	High School
Vera Carroll	.5 Computer Technician	System
Colleen Irving	.2 Program Admin/Math	High School

Return from Leave of Absence:

Carrie Taylor	.65 Family and Consumer Science Teacher	High School
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Leave of Absence:

Theresa Wiggins	.5 Elementary Teacher	Lane School
Justin Jourdan	English Teacher	High School

Coaching Appointments:

High School

Al Dougherty	Head Boys Outdoor Track
Kevin McGovern	Assistant Boys Outdoor Track
James Greenwood	Head Girls Outdoor Track
Joel Hebert	Assistant Girls Outdoor Track
Charles Puopolo	Head Varsity Baseball
Harry Boghigian	Assistant Varsity Baseball
Gunnar Olson	JV Boys Baseball
Tim French	Freshmen Baseball
Dave Wilson	Varsity Softball
Dennis Walsh	Assistant Varsity Softball
Bill Berlino	JV Softball
David Sukoff	Co-Varsity Boys Lacrosse
David Malio	Co-Varsity Boys Lacrosse
Jeff LoPresti	JV Boys Lacrosse
Meghan Harris	Varsity Girls Lacrosse
Bev Barton	JV Girls Lacrosse
Matt Driscoll	Freshman Girls Lacrosse
John Guilfuss	Varsity Boys Tennis
Marjorie Marino	JV Boys Tennis (.5)
Susan Adamik	Varsity Girls Tennis
Vixen Peare	JV Girls Tennis (.5)
Amanda Rabesa	Athletic Trainer

Middle School

Matt Hagar	Co-Baseball
Jeff McGrath	Co-Baseball
Jim Nagle	Softball
Ken Norling	Outdoor track

Dr. LaCroix also announced that the BEA has ratified the three-year teacher's contract. She also noted that the School Committee and the Selectmen have also signed the contract.

Mr. Hafer said that this is great news.

6. Presentation: Science Department

Michael Griffin, Brad Smithson, Lenore Zavalick and Terri Kuhlmann gave an update on the Science program to the School Committee. The Action Plan, resulting from the recent Self Study/Curriculum Review was also presented to the School Committee for review.

Ms. Kuhlmann began with an update at Davis School. She explained that in essence, the science curriculum at Davis School tries to teach "how to think like a scientist". She noted that children in grades K through 2 are natural observers and that Davis science lessons build on this skill. For example, she teaches her children to draw *that* tree, not a tree. She also noted that science is about trying, failing and trying again. Students at Davis also write in science journals. Kindergarteners learn about bats, seasons, and frogs. Also, the K team is piloting a wood and paper unit this year. First graders learn balance and weighing, organisms (plants), and weather. First graders are trialing a unit on solids and liquids. Second grade students learn about insects, soil, rocks and minerals, and force and motion.

Ms. Kuhlmann also explained that every class visits Cattail Corner three times a year and records observations. Ms. Dorer helps with all first grade science lessons and is working on a robotics unit with second graders. BEST also sponsors annual Audubon visits.

Priorities at Davis include:

- Establishing a dedicated science time.
- Ensuring common units, activities and assessments.
- Professional development to build content knowledge.

Ms. Kuhlmann noted that teachers are getting more comfortable with the content and units are beginning to tie in with one another.

Ms. Zavalick reported on the Science program at Lane School. She commented that students at Lane are very excited about the hands-on activities that are offered. She feels that the Lane teachers are very dedicated to science despite limited time. Students also use science journals to record observations and these have been a great opportunity for writing.

In third grade, students study "fast" plants, the water cycle, light and sound (which is covered in music and art) and the solar system.

Fourth grade students learn about simple machines, food chains and webs, electricity, and rocks and minerals.

Fifth grade curriculum is magnets and motors, the changing earth, and weather. Ms. Zavalick said how much fun the fifth grade volcano project is for the students and the teachers.

Ms. Zavalick also noted that Ms. Dorer does some special enrichment projects too.

Ms. Zavalick pointed out that teachers supplement the curriculum with their own materials. Also, many teachers are beginning to use Google documents to collaborate on projects.

Ms. Zavalick pointed out that most students in Grade 5 get a “proficient” or an “advanced” in the Grade 5 science MCAS test.

Moving forward, the Lane School would like to:

- Develop grade level Technology/Engineering projects and rubrics.
- Find storage space for the science materials.
- Develop more consistency.
- Develop common assessments.

Mr. Brad Smithson, science teacher at JGMS, spoke about the middle school program. He explained that in sixth grade, students study Physical Sciences. He said that they did not switch this curriculum to a later grade as recommended by the recent Science Curriculum review report. He and the other teachers at JGMS feel that Physical Science works well developmentally. Seventh grade curriculum is Life Science and Earth Science is the eighth grade curriculum.

Mr. Smithson said that MCAS trends in science at the middle school have been inconsistent which is typical for the age group. He thinks students suffer from MCAS fatigue by the time they get to the eighth grade. He said during the period of March through May, daily life at the middle school is interrupted by MCAS. He sees students leave open response questions blank, which is an indication of fatigue. Teachers do give open response questions in each subject area and this information is beginning to reveal some knowledge gaps.

Mr. Smithson reviewed the action items at the Middle School as follows:

- Need to find more opportunity to communicate with the High School. This has happened recently and was very helpful.
- Make sure all middle school teachers use an inquiry-based model.
- Establish specific labs at each grade level.
- Since knowledge and reading levels vary quite a bit at the middle school, there is a need for professional development in this area.

Mr. Griffin said that he is pleased that the High School can continue to offer a variety of science options. For example the following courses are offered:

Freshman	Physics
Sophomore	Chemistry, AP Physics B
Junior	Biology, AP Biology, AP Chemistry, AP Physics B or C, Anatomy & Physiology
Senior	All AP courses, Marine Biology, Engineering, Forensics,

Mr. Griffin said that the High School teachers would like to offer even more courses. However, he understands that this is not yet possible. Clubs often fill in the gap.

Mr. Griffin noted that all BHS students pass the science MCAS. Also, more and more students are scoring in the Advanced/Proficient categories.

Mr. Griffin said that the AP program is very strong and growing. He said these courses put a lot of demands on the teachers, but they do it. Generally, students in AP classes take the AP test and often score above the Massachusetts and National averages.

Mr. Griffin also noted that students do extremely well in the many science competitions that they are involved with.

The High School has the following action plan:

- Find time for teachers' technical instruction. (i.e. teach a teacher on how to take apart a microscope to clean.)
- Differentiate instruction.
- Refine course placement process.
- Waiting for Common Core and new standards.

Mr. Pierce thanked the Science team. He asked Mr. Griffin about the value of a self-study. Mr. Griffin said that the self-study makes the teachers look at science K –12 and that this really helps with collaboration. He realizes that high school teachers can be resources for elementary teachers. Also, the process has identified gaps. However, the process has been very long especially coupled with the NEASC review process.

Mr. Pierce said he is concerned with teacher overload at the elementary level. Mr. Griffin agrees. He hopes that the elementary level will turn to their high school colleagues to do mini lessons and to help build content knowledge and confidence.

Ms. O'Gara asked why the Curriculum Review report suggested flipping the order of some of the courses. Mr. Griffin and Mr. Smithson felt this came about simply because that is how it is done at other districts. Both men felt that MCAS results do not indicate a problem.

Ms. O'Gara asked if leveling was needed in science at the middle school. Mr. Smithson said no, he believes in the middle school model but says it is very challenging.

Ms. O'Gara asked about space constraints at the elementary schools. Ms. Kuhlmann said that the Space Need report addressed some problems at Davis. Ms. Zavelick said limited space is a real challenge at Lane. She said it is very time consuming to set up a project for 25 students, to ensure there are enough materials, and to cleanup.

Ms. Bickford said that she can feel the positive effect the vertical teams are having on teaching and curriculum. She is pleased that Earth Science is not moving from eighth grade. She is also pleased that the K-5 curriculum is hands-on. She asked Mr. Griffin if students lose some of the enthusiasm for science at the higher grades. Mr. Griffin said he does see some of this happen inside the classroom, but participation in the science clubs is really high and desire for more niche clubs is growing.

Mr. Seibert said that the enthusiasm of the K-12 science team is obvious and that tonight's presentation was a great way to see the progression through the grades.

Ms. Seibert asked Mr. Griffin to address the AP versus Level 5 debate. Mr. Griffin said that the high school is looking at this issue and is looking to shift the courses to match other subjects. This is a hot topic right now at the high school.

Ms. Nagy said that she is excited to take Environmental AP (and a little scared that it may be too hard.)

Mr. Hafer said it seems to be a big jump to AP level classes. Mr. Griffin said that the philosophy of the science department is to move kids up levels in science. There will be some changes in course levels in the future.

Mr. Hafer said he is pleased to see STEM courses starting in the curriculum, even at the elementary level.

7. Presentation: Energy Task Force

Ms. Abby Hafer, member of the Bedford Energy Task Force, presented a draft of a town-wide energy policy and reduction plan to the School Committee. Ms. Hafer explained that the Town of Bedford, through the Energy Task Force, has been actively working to reduce municipal energy consumption. The Energy Task Force is in the process of developing a Town Energy Policy and Energy Reduction Guidelines for the users of town facilities. The goal is to reduce Bedford's municipal energy use by 20% within five years.

These efforts, according to Ms. Hafer, will result in direct savings and a Green Community designation, which will allow the town to apply for grants for further energy reductions.

Ms. Hafer complimented the schools on the work done so far. Schools can help further by focusing on temperature control, lighting control, buying the right equipment, and involving the occupants in this town-wide endeavor.

Ms. Hafer specifically described how Energy Teams could be formed at each school to help figure out ways to monitor and reduce energy consumption.

Ms. Hafer said that she is specifically asking the schools to support the general philosophy of the Energy Task Force and to review and provide feedback on the draft of the policy.

Mr. Hafer, who is liaison to the Energy Task Force, clarified that Town Meeting will vote on adopting a "Stretch Code" and that the School Committee does not have to be involved in this. Mr. Jones noted that after Town Meeting, the Schools will have to approve several next steps in the process in applying for Green Communities.

Mr. Pierce said that after reviewing the policy, he is not comfortable with the wording. He cannot live with statements such as "must have energy star rated equipment" or "must have fuel efficient vehicles". He said that policy language needs to have flexibility and that he cannot approve language that uses "must", "always", "every".

Ms. Seibert said that education and outreach on energy reduction will help with the policy development process.

Ms. O'Gara agrees that the language in the policy needs to be more flexible. She does think that energy teams at the buildings will be beneficial.

Ms. Bickford asked for reassurance that the School Committee will be able to review a final version of the fuel efficiency plan and the energy policy. Mr. Jones said that this would happen before the town submits an application for Green Community designation.

Ms. Bickford said that she has made several notes and edits and will pass them along.

Ms. Seibert said that she will also pass her comments along too. She is impressed with how concise the energy plan and policy is.

Mr. Hafer said that the Energy Task Force has made great progress and that the Schools have saved a lot of money. The School Committee understands the importance of developing a policy and energy plan. However, he does not want to add more burdens to school personnel. He believes changing behaviors towards energy consumption will be very difficult.

The School Committee gave Ms. Hafer their verbal support on the Energy Policy and application for Green Communities but did not vote on anything since the plan is under development.

8. Goals and Midyear Review

Dr. LaCroix presented the School Committee with a copy of the 2010-2011 Goals and Objectives document dated September 28, 2010. The document is also posted on the school district's website.

Dr. LaCroix presented the following highlights from this document:

Goal: Government and Leadership

Critical Issue - Communication among and between staff with the district.

- Vertical teams have been established K-12 and have been meeting to ensure consistent communication about curriculum development between schools.
- Begin alignment of our curriculum with National Common Core Standards.
- Work with BEA on Race to the Top and its implications for teacher evaluations.
- Review NEASC recommendations with BHS.

Critical Issue – Communication with Schools and Home

- Aspen use is expanding to reporting grades, test data and homework and assignments.
- Superintendent's blog has kept families current about important initiatives such as the budget and changes in school start times.
- A new district Web page redesign is underway.

Critical Issue – Communication with schools and community

- Development of a new five year strategic plan will soon be underway and will include community input.
- A Technology Task Force will be established.
- Space Needs plan will be implemented.
- Follow up with the MSBA regarding the Statement of Interest on Davis School.

Goal: Curriculum and Instruction

Critical Issue - Continue to establish high expectations for academic excellence

- Implementing Response to Intervention (Tiered Instruction) at all schools.
- Strengthen common best practices to include metacognitive learning strategies at BHS.
- Continue work of Reading Task Force.

Critical Issue- Maintain balanced comprehensive K-12 curriculum

- Post curriculum maps.
- Streamline phonics instruction K-3.
- Refine writing expectations K-2.
- Use flexible reading groups at Lane School.

- Develop engineering/design projects.
- Continue to develop 21st century skills at BHS and the other schools.

Goal: Assessment and Evaluation

Critical Issue – Assess student achievement on local, state and national assessment measures

- Data teams at each school share data with teachers in a timely manner in order to promote best practices.
- Continue to analyze MCAS/AP results to identify needs.
- Reading students (after elementary level) are monitored 3x/year with common standardized assessments.

Critical Issue – Evaluate the effectiveness of programs

- Continue with Program Review process.
- Assess the impact of the math coach and the Behaviorist.

Goal: Human Resources and Professional Development

Critical Issue – Recruit competent, motivated teachers

- Integrate new math coach and behavior specialists.

Critical Issue – Design professional development programs to maintain a qualified teaching force

- Anti-bullying training across the district.
- ELL compliance.
- Institute a fellowship program with Merrimack College.

Goal: Student Academic Support

Critical Issue – Define acceptable social climate for student in school

- New anti-bullying policy will be adopted at BHS.
- Defined acceptable social climate at BHS.
- Davis & Lane have instituted behavior intervention systems.
- Grades 3-12 participated in a climate survey.

Critical Issue –Provide support services at appropriate levels of instruction based on individual student needs.

- Implement Year 2 plan for RTI.
- Examine issue of Start Time at Bedford High School.

Goal: Finance and Asset Management

- Maintain annual budgets that reflect mission and values supported by town.
- Energy reduction by 5%.
- Ratified and approved new three-year contract with BEA that helps meet financial guidelines.
- Continue efforts to maximize federal and state financial resources to support Hanscom students and to maintain funding received this year.

Mr. Pierce thanked Dr. LaCroix for a comprehensive document and review of goals and objective for 2010-2011.

Ms. O’Gara asked if we were up-to-date on meeting the requirements of the state’s new antibullying law. Dr. LaCroix said yes.

Ms. O’Gara asked about the effect of implementing RTI. Dr. LaCroix explained that it is a very time consuming process and progress has been made. This effort will affect schedules. Intervention will be more timely and will also be documented.

Ms. Bickford asked if there was any information on the Maintenance Trust Fund from the MSBA. Dr. LaCroix said no and that she has sent formal letters requesting information.

Ms. Seibert and Mr. Hafer thanked Dr. LaCroix for her comprehensive review. Mr. Hafer suggested that at some point, Dr. LaCroix should give a status on some of the things that are not progressing.

9. FY’12 Budget Update

Dr. LaCroix announced that we now have a new three-year teacher contract that includes a financial settlement that helps the school department meet the FY’12 financial guidelines proposed by the Finance Committee. She thanked all of the teachers for allowing deferment of steps. Dr. LaCroix also believes that the state circuit breaker funds will reimburse us at a rate of 65%.

Given these developments, Dr. LaCroix announced that the final budget number for FY’12 is \$31,716,380. She pointed out that this is the same number that will appear in the warrant.

Mr. Hafer echoed Dr. LaCroix’s appreciation of the teachers agreeing to this contract. He also wanted to recognize the fact the schools did make a lot of reductions including elimination of several positions.

Mr. Hafer was also thankful that the Finance Committee adjusted the financial model.

Ms. Bickford made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve a FY’12 operating budget of \$31,716,380.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. O’Gara

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

Ms. Bickford thanked Dr. LaCroix and the administrative team for successfully negotiating a new teacher contract. She said that the new contract is evidence of what can be achieved with good labor relations.

10. Superintendent’s Report

Dr. LaCroix reminded everyone that March 11 is now a regular day of school and not a teacher workshop day. She also noted that the School Committee would meet prior to Town Meeting on March 28th. (There will not be a March 22, 2011 meeting)

11. Liaison Reports

Ms. O’Gara reminded everyone of the two upcoming plays – “Grease” at the high school and “You’re a Good Man Charlie Brown” at the middle school.

Mr. Hafer said that the Fields Partnership will meet to continue to develop a town-wide field policy.

12. Minutes for Review

Mr. Pierce made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the minutes of the July 12, 2010 School Committee meeting as amended.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. O’Gara

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

Ms. O’Gara made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the Executive Session minutes of the December 7, 2010 meeting as amended.

MOTION SECONDED by Mr. Pierce

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

Ms. O’Gara made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the Executive Session minutes from the January 4, 2011 meeting.

MOTION SECONDED by Mr. Pierce

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

Ms. O’Gara made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the minutes from the January 18, 2011 meeting as amended.

MOTION SECONDED by Mr. Pierce

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

Mr. Pierce made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the Executive Session minutes from the January 18, 2011 meeting.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. O’Gara

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

Mr. Pierce made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the February 4, 2011 minutes as amended.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. O’Gara

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

Mr. Pierce made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the Executive Session minutes of the February 4, 2011 meeting as amended.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. O’Gara

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

Mr. Pierce made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the February 9, 2011 minutes as amended.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. O’Gara

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

Mr. Pierce made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the Executive Session minutes of the Feb. 9, 2011 meeting as amended.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. O’Gara

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

Mr. Pierce made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the Executive Session minutes from the February 15, 2011 meeting.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. O’Gara

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

13. Adjournment

Ms Seibert 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:

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

School Committee Secretary

Date

BEDFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE

March 8, 2011

Exhibits/Documents

- **Presentation: Science Department dated 2/15/2011**
- **Energy Policy draft**
- **Goals Presentation dated March 8, 2011**
- **Draft of the following School Committee minutes:**
 - **July 12, 2010**
 - **Dec. 7, 2010 – Executive Session**
 - **January 4, 2011 Executive Session**
 - **January 18, 2011**
 - **January 18, 2011 Executive Session**
 - **February 4, 2011**
 - **February 4, 2011 Executive Session**
 - **February 9, 2011**
 - **February 9, 2011 Executive Session**
 - **February 15, 2011 Executive Session**