

**BEDFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF
October 11, 2011**

Bedford High School - Large Instruction Room

1. Call to Order

At 7:35 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. Matt Coughlin and Sam Markuse, student representatives were also in attendance.

2. Comments from Public

None

3. Personnel Report

Dr. LaCroix asked the School Committee to consider moving two contract positions to employee positions. The two positions are a .9 Adjustment Counselor at JGMS and a PreK/Elementary Speech Therapist. These positions help staff various in-house special education programs. Dr. LaCroix would like to move them to employee positions because in the long- run, it will be more cost effective than the existing arrangement.

Ms. Bickford made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the addition to full time equivalent the grant funded positions of .9 Adjustment Counselor and Speech Therapist.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. O’Gara

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

Mr. Pierce asked if these employees would receive benefits at rates of those who are currently receiving benefits. Dr. LaCroix said yes but it would still end up being a more cost effective method of staffing these important positions.

Dr. LaCroix asked the School Committee to approve the job description of Director of Information Technology, which was presented at the last School Committee meeting.

Ms. O’Gara made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the job description of Director of Information Technology as amended.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. Bickford

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

Dr. LaCroix announced the following informational items:

Extra Curricular Appointments:

High School

AFS Advisor

Atmosphere Committee

Chess Club

Drama Advisor

Angela Allen

Barbara Barnett

Sean McGowan

Bill Berlino

Drama Scenery Advisor	Gerry Peters
Drill Team Advisor	Chris Edris
Environmental Club	Michael Griffin and Jackie Supprise
Gay Straight Alliance	Lisa Flannery
Grade 9 Advisors	Evan Grunwald and Cassie Dresser
Grade 10 Advisors	Matt Rose and Scott Stief
Grade 11 Advisors	Dana Button and Ashley Martell
Grade 12 Advisors	Janine Towle and Leanne Heldman
History Day Advisor	Jim Sunderland
Inquiry Advisor	Rich Donnelly
Interact Club	Janel Halupowski
Language Club-French	Angela Allen
Language Club – Latin	Kim Alexander
Language Club – Spanish	Cintia Laurencio
Literacy Magazine	Larry Sheinfeld
Marching Band Director	Jim Felker
Marching Band Assist. Director	Bryan Nash
Marching Band Flag Squad	Megan Asp
Marching Band Drill Instructor	Nick Gleason
Mathematics League Advisor	Sean McGowan
Musical Instrument – Wind	Evan Grunwald and Ken Lord
Musical Instrument – Strings	Phil Maffa
Music – Jazz Band Advisor	Jim Felker
Music – Vocal Ensemble	Diane Pritchett
Musical Theater Director	Nancy Willis
Musical Theater Assist. Director	Jessica Ham and Bryan Nash
Musical Theater Conductor	Evan Grunwold and Diane Pritchett
National Honor Society	Christine Larimore
Robotics Team	Sarah Leshay
School Newspaper Advisor	Laura Bruno
Science Bowl/Ocean Bowl	Michael Griffin and Beth Billouin
Science League Advisor	Michael Griffin
Step Team	Lisa Flannery and Stania Augustin
Tournament of Plays	Lisa Flannery, Jennifer Fero, Tova Kornfeld
Web Page Director	Ken Lord
West Suburban Science League	Arthur Lew and Scott Stief
West Suburban Science Olympiad	Liana Heldman and Scott Stief
Yearbook	Angela Allen and Karen Santos
Yearbook and Art Advisors	Angela Allen and Karen Santos

Middle School

Mathematics League	Lisa Fontaine-Rainen
Music – Instrumental	Evan Grunwald
Music – Jazz Band	Amy Budka
Music –Vocal	Amy Budka
Musical Theater Director	Amy Budka
Musical Theater Assist. Director	Amy Budka
Musical Theater Conductor	Cathy Martin
Musical Theater Choreographer	TBD
Newspaper	Matt McGonagle

National Honor Society
School Council
School Mediation
Science League
Washington DC Trip Coordinator
Web Page Director
Yearbook

Pat Steven & Marilyn Bemis
Libbey Beinert-Hunnewell & Lauren Noefri
Roseanne Ham & Renee Anderson
Barbara Ferri & Heidi Scaltreto
Joe Casey
Ken Lord
Libbey Beinert-Hunnewell

Lane School:

Student Council Advisor
Web Page Director

Jean Hale, Jean Mickel, Cheryl Johnstone
Ken Lord

Davis School:

Web Page Director
Senior Tutor Program

Ken Lord
Jennifer Wayne-Bartlett and Christina Avis

4. Presentation: Guidance Department

Dr. Diane Ryan gave an update on the Guidance Department in the middle and high schools. She began the presentation by noting that it has been three years since her last presentation and three years since the School Committee approved adding a new Guidance Counselor position at the high school. Dr. Ryan said that this addition has been a wonderful addition to the school and has really helped many Hanscom students and families transition smoothly to Bedford High School.

Dr. Ryan explained that the overarching goal of the guidance department is to, “Support the academic and socioemotional development of the adolescent.” She explained that this goal connects the department to everything they do.

Functions include:

- Encouraging students to stretch academically.
- Encouraging student to become independent learners.
- Encouraging students to participate in the life of the school.
- Identifying and helping students who are struggling academically and/or emotionally.
- Creating and adjusting student schedules.
- Working with students on post-high school plans.
- Working with students of active military families.

Dr. Ryan said that she feels that the Guidance Department is an integral part of the fabric of each school.

Dr. Ryan noted that the redesign of the district website was a great opportunity for the department to reorganize and expand its site. She encouraged the School Committee to visit the site to see the college planning information, look at Naviance and discover all of the great information available to students and families.

Dr. Ryan said that this is the second year that the department is submitting electronic college applications. Last year, the first year, two-thirds of all applications were submitted electronically. The department uses the Naviance System to expedite the electronic application submissions. All students are introduced to Naviance in the 10th grade. The system has lots of powerful data and Dr. Ryan is getting very good at using it especially in the School Profile.

Dr. Ryan noted that Guidance and Special Education are working more closely with one another. For example, a few nights ago, she hosted a panel discussion on college and students with learning disabilities. She is also providing information on learning disability support at specific colleges on the web site.

The Guidance Department is also focusing on closing the achievement gap. One effort underway is that all Guidance Counselors must contact METCO parents to set up a meeting with the parent and student to discuss academic goals and share information.

Dr. Ryan also explained that for the first time, this year's College Fair will be held in the spring rather than the fall. This change occurred because early action is now very commonplace and seniors are already applying to colleges in the fall. The spring College Fair is now focused on juniors who are just beginning to get serious about starting their college search.

Dr. Ryan shared some data from last year. For example in 2011:

- 93% of the Class of 2011 is attending college.
- 79% of the Class of 2011 are attending a four year college
- 14% of the Class of 2011 is attending a two-year college.
- 46% of the Class of 2011 submitted early action applications
- Two thirds of the early applications were accepted.

Dr. Ryan said that she believes that Bedford families are using common sense and applying to schools wisely.

Currently, a major initiative is to help colleges better understand Bedford High School's unique strengths. This summer, Dr. Ryan and Mr. Sills traveled to BC, BU, MIT, Northeastern, Tufts, Harvard and Brown. Their goal was and continues to be to build a relationship with the primary review officer and learn more about the review process. The goal is to communicate with college admissions counselors in every way possible about the excellent preparation that BHS students receive. They do this via visits to colleges, with college visits to BHS, in our Profile and with teacher recommendations.

Dr. Ryan said that she learned that the transcript is the single most important document that colleges consider. She also learned that every document that is sent to the college is scrutinized carefully. She learned that Bedford applicants are read as a group and that student performance is compared to all applicants and to learning opportunities available at BHS. They look to see if the student has taken advantage of all the opportunities available to them at BHS.

Going forward, the action plan for the department includes:

- Next year, poll BHS college freshmen on their level of preparation compared to peers.
- Continue to visit Tier I and Tier II colleges.
- Continue to add compelling data to the Profile especially more AP data.
- Work with faculty to write recommendations that describe the student classroom performance in detail.
- Create a website video that shows the uniqueness and richness of the BHS learning experience.

School Committee members had several comments and questions.

Matt Coughlin, student representative, asked if multiple students from BHS apply to one school, does this hurt their chances of acceptance. Dr. Ryan said that she believes that colleges want to look at each application individually, but statistically speaking, this may not be true.

Mr. Hafer asked if we are expecting too much from the college admissions personnel to look carefully at our profile and data to understand our story. Dr. Ryan said that her impression is that admissions personnel do take the time to review and understand the profile.

Mr. Sills said that he feels that quality of BHS's Level 5 Social Studies and English classes surpasses AP curriculum in these subjects. However, to prove his point, he will be organizing students in their junior year to take the AP exams. He thinks Bedford students will test well.

Dr. Ryan noted that only Northeastern University adds points for AP classes taken.

Mr. Sills said that he is looking to see if some of our grading is deflated. He and Dr. Ryan will be studying this issue.

Mr. Hafer commented that the Profile is looking better and better each year. He suggested including more department specific information, such as the science department explaining its sequencing or the History department explaining why they don't offer an AP class.

Mr. Pierce said that he is glad to hear that it is still humans who are reviewing the college applications. He wonders if this will be electronic in the future.

Dr. Ryan said that she did not see this in the immediate future. She feels that a lot of worry and care goes into reviewing applications.

Mr. Pierce said it was interesting to hear that Boston College looks at how current Bedford High School graduates are doing at their school. He likes how the Profile includes where Bedford students are going to college.

Dr. Ryan said she plans on continuing to track attending colleges in the future.

Mr. Pierce thinks the Naviance scatter grams are very helpful to applicants.

Mr. Pierce asked if Guidance Counselors encourage students to apply to higher-level colleges. Dr. Ryan said yes that counselors encourage reach schools and safety schools to all students.

Ms. O'Gara said that she thinks Naviance is a rich and robust tool. She wondered if parents are aware of everything this tool has to offer. She thinks parents need to dig deeper into the tool to see its true benefits.

Ms. O'Gara was pleased to hear about the recent panel with regards to learning disabilities in college.

Ms. O'Gara said she thinks it is a great story that Bedford students are doing well on AP exams and not getting all A's in the AP classes.

Ms. O'Gara said that it is part of Bedford's culture as a town to not brag or publicize every success our students achieve. "Maybe we could do a little better with publicizing our strengths."

Dr. Ryan commented that the Common Application process makes it so easy to apply to college. Therefore the pool of applicants at each school really grows and the percentage of acceptances goes down too. She said we need to realize that we cannot control this phenomenon but do need to be aware of it.

Ms. O’Gara asked how staffing is right now in Guidance. Dr. Ryan said that it was satisfactory.

Ms. Bickford said that she is pleased to hear what Diane and Jon have been learning while visiting colleges. She said her take away from the presentation is that applications are still a personal effort.

Ms. Bickford is also pleased to hear that the Guidance Counselor working with Hanscom students has made such a positive impact on the school.

Ms. Bickford also thinks that it will be beneficial to share with teachers the fact that readers at a college group all of the Bedford High School students together.

Ms. Bickford asked if there is any information on Gap Year Programs. Dr. Ryan said that a few students do take a year off and that this trend is growing. She also noted that many colleges really like community college students because they come to school a more mature student.

Matt Coughlin, student representative, said that he noticed that Naviance GPA data is different than the College’s own publications. Dr. Ryan said that Naviance is probably more realistic because it is difficult to figure out how schools calculate a GPA.

Matt Coughlin also asked why class rank is important to colleges. Dr. Ryan said that it displays a better sense of how challenging your work has been compared to others.

Sam Markuse, student representative, said that he thinks that holding the College Fair in the spring is perfect timing for juniors.

5. Presentation: MCAS

Cyndy Taymore, Assistant Superintendent, reviewed MCAS results.

ELA Scores at BHS

According to Ms. Taymore, Bedford High School is considered 100% passing in ELA. The “MCAS Academics really paid off.” Ms. Taymore said that Deb Sakelakos in the Skills Center really worked wonders with the students who needed help, especially those students who transfer into BHS.

The concern now, however, is moving more students into the advanced category. To help accomplish this the plan is to continue to build MCAS skills into the literature and writing curriculum. Also, a watch list of students at each grade level will be developed and followed.

Math Scores at BHS

Grade 10 had 93% of its students at Proficient or Advanced. However, subgroup concerns continue. Teachers will use MCAS questions with the lowest score in daily work.

Science Scores at BHS

All current students enrolled that took the 2011 Physics MCAS exam have successfully passed and have met the Massachusetts Science requirement for graduation.

Middle School ELA Scores

All students, including subgroups, made AYP. Low income and Special Education subgroups are still a concern and need more advanced scores.

Middle School Math Scores

The struggle in this area continues. Subgroups (Special Education and Low Income) have deemed JGMS in “Corrective Action” for failing to make AYP for the third year in a row. Ms. Taymore said she would like to build more math support in to the 6th grade schedule. Also, the scope and sequence of the math curriculum is being reevaluated due to the Massachusetts Common Core work.

Middle School Science Scores

Science scores are stagnant and have not moved into advanced. Ms. Taymore feels a reason for this is that many subjects are taught and teachers do not know what the test will focus on. Teachers will use data on the science questions to tweak the curriculum.

Lane School ELA Scores

Lane was deemed as “Needs Improvement Year 1” due to 1/10th of a point on its CPI target. There are some concerns. Grade 4 overall scores were disappointing, especially the long composition. Vocabulary is a concern in grade 5. Both grades 4 & 5 are struggling with open response questions and reading nonfiction.

As a result of this data and the Common Core requirements, a detailed ELA action plan has been developed.

Math Scores at Lane

Good MCAS results but anticipated changed in the Massachusetts Common Core curriculum is concerning. Lane may need a new math textbook and training, as Everyday Math is not aligning with the new standards.

Science at Lane School

Successful MCAS scores. However, the curriculum needs to be reassessed so students have sufficient time to experience Technology/Engineering activities before the exam.

Ms. Taymore highlighted some of the challenges the entire district faces:

- Complete the alignment with the new Massachusetts curriculum.
- Incorporate the common core skills across all curriculum areas.
- Identify “power standards” and shift to deeper teaching of content.
- Develop the capacity to provide targeted intervention and remediation when needed.

The School Committee had several comments and/or questions.

Sam Markuse, student representative, suggested reviewing the MCAS support efforts. In the past, the efforts focused solely on how to answer the MCAS test question and not the skills. Ms. Taymore thanked Sam for this comment and said that the focus is different this year.

Mr. Hafer said it is interesting to see that Lane and JGMS science scores are in the Needs Improvement area. He wonders if the curriculum is lacking. Ms. Taymore said that she believes it is more of a focus problem. At the elementary level, the focus is clearly on literacy and math. She also acknowledges that there are inconsistencies across the classrooms. Also, we do not know the focus of the test at this level.

Dr. LaCroix said that elementary teachers probably do not spend enough time on science lessons because they also offer music, art and foreign languages.

Mr. Hafer asked if the Middle School's status of "failure to improve" is concerning. Dr. LaCroix said that 82% of the schools in Massachusetts are not making AYP.

Ms. Taymore said our focus is not on those in the warning category but on the advanced/proficient category, where it should be. We are looking at what skill sets our students need to focus on.

Ms. O'Gara said she believes that the action plans presented are reasonable responses to MCAS data and she thanks those who prepared them.

6. Class Size Report

Dr. LaCroix reported that as student enrollment has grown gradually, we have started to see a gradual growth of classes that have more than 25 students. For example, there are 28 classes with more than 25 students at the high school and 28 classes with more than 25 students at the middle school. The High School needs more FTEs. The Middle School needs more FTEs and more space. Dr. LaCroix does not think that these issues will be addressed in this year's budget discussions but wants the School Committee to be aware of the situation.

Student Representatives Sam Markuse and Matt Coughlin gave some examples of very large classes and explained how detrimental it is to daily learning. Dr. LaCroix agreed with their comments.

7. Approval: Capital Budget

Dr. LaCroix and Mr. Coelho presented a revised capital budget request so that the School Committee could review and prioritize the requests in order to present them to the Capital Expenditures Committee.

Ms. Bickford asked Mr. Jones for more information on the Lane School roof replacement project because the cost is now estimated to be \$80,000. Mr. Jones explained that the roof was inspected last summer and is found to be in very poor condition. He feels that this deterioration is the result of last winter's snow removal efforts. The roof is not leaking at the moment but he is not sure how long it will hold up, especially if it is another snowy winter. Ms. Bickford asked Mr. Jones to get another estimate before presenting this to the CEC. Mr. Jones agreed.

Mr. Hafer commented that the School Committee did not discuss the \$175,000 network upgrade project last spring when they approved the iPad pilot program. He does not know if they were misinformed or maybe they should have known that such an upgrade would be necessary. Also, if they move forward with this request, does it mean that the iPad project will also move forward?

Ms. Bickford said that she thinks that this request for a network upgrade is on the capital request list because it has to be discussed. She said the upgrade is a technology upgrade requirement that may be necessary whether we move forward or not with the iPad project.

Ms. Seibert said that technology needs for the future should be discussed with other town groups because it is not solely a school issue.

Ms. Bickford does feel that the School Committee needs to tell the ‘big technology vision story’ better in order to support our investments.

School Committee members reviewed the other requests on the list and made suggestions on combining some of the planned maintenance projects. School Committee members discussed their thoughts on the importance of each project. As a result of this discussion, the School Committee prioritized the list of requested projects and then made a motion to present the list to the CEC.

Priority List as of October 11, 2011

1. BHS Network Expansion	\$175,000
2. Lane Roof Replacement	\$ 80,000
3. Lane Alcove Corridor Improvements	\$ 13,000
4. Lane Smart Board Installation Phase 1	\$ 35,000
5. Planned Capital Maintenance	\$ 53,710
6. AC Compressors at Davis and JGMS	\$ 20,000
7. Copier replacements	\$ 34,611
8. JGMS Security Access	\$ 9,100
9. Lane Cafeteria Improvements	\$ 10,000
10. JGMS Auditorium Improvements	\$ 16,075
11. Energy Efficient Projects	\$ 481,593
Total	\$928,089

Ms. Bickford made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the prioritized list of capital budget requests, as created on October 11, 2011, for presentation to the CEC.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. O’Gara

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

8. Athletic Field Policy

Mr. Hafer presented the draft of the town-wide athletic field policy that was under development for the past year. He explained that it is an agreement that reflects actual practice. Mr. Keith Mangan, Athletic Director, has read the policy and is comfortable with it.

Mr. Hafer explained how this effort to write a field use policy came about. Mr. Hafer said that a number of town user groups have been concerned with the field conditions and the number of fields available for use. The DPW as a result, requested more specifics and for user groups to follow the rules. Therefore, the Fields Partnership Committee was established and the policy was drafted.

The School Committee reviewed the draft and had several comments for Mr. Hafer. For example, Ms. Bickford asked if it was realistic to prohibit pets on the fields. Several other

questions were raised and Mr. Hafer agreed to take the concerns back to the Fields Partnership Committee. He will bring forth another version of the policy for review.

9. Superintendent’s Report

Dr. LaCroix did not have anything to report tonight.

10. Liaison Reports

Ms. Bickford reported that the Hanscom Strategic Task Force met with Representative Charley Murphy to discuss pothole funds. No action to report as a result of the meeting.

11. Minutes

Ms. Bickford made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the minutes from the June 14, 2011 School Committee Executive Session meeting.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. O’Gara

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

Ms. Bickford made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the minutes from the June 14, 2011 School Committee Addendum to Open Session meeting as amended.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. O’Gara

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

Ms. Bickford made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the minutes from the September 13, 2011 School Committee meeting as amended.

MOTION SECONDED by Mr. Pierce

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

12. Adjournment

Ms. O’Gara made the following motion:

MOVED: Motion to adjourn, at 11:15, to Executive Session for purposes of determining interview logistics and process not to reopen.

MOTION SECONDED by Mr. Pierce

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
October 11, 2011
Exhibits/Documents

- **Guidance and Counseling Department Grades 6-12 presentation.**
- **Bedford Public Schools 2011 MCAS presentation.**
- **FY 2013-FY2018 Capital Budget Request – revised dated 9/30/11**
- **Draft - Use Policies for Athletic Fields and Other Recreational Facilities**
- **Draft - Bedford School Committee Executive Session Minutes dated June 14, 2011**
- **Draft – Bedford School Committee Minutes of June 14, 2011 Addendum to Open Session**
- **Draft – Bedford School Committee minutes of September 13, 2011 minutes.**

Bedford School Committee

**Executive Session Minutes
October 11, 2011**