

**BEDFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE**  
**November 3, 2015**  
**Bedford High School - Large Group Instruction Room**

**1. Call to Order**

At 7:40 p.m., Mr. McAllister called to order the meeting of the Bedford School Committee. Other members present included Ms. Guay, Mr. Pierce, Mr. Hafer and Mr. Brosgol.

**2. Comments from Public**

None

**3. Hanscom Non-Active Military Family Children Update**

Mr. Sills reported that he recently met with representatives from Hanscom AFB, the Town Of Lincoln, the Superintendent of Lincoln-Sudbury High School, our State Representatives, and representatives from DESE to discuss the issue of educating non active military families who reside on Hanscom AFB.

Mr. Sills reminded everyone that the issue at hand is where children of retired military families living on HAFB should go to high school. He noted that HAFB is located in Lincoln and students from active and retired military families living on HAFB attend a Lincoln K-8 school on base. High School students from active military go to Bedford High School. However, now that the federal government allows non active personnel to live on HAFB, the question is where should the high school students go to school.

Bedford High School has three students from retired military families living on HAFB enrolled. The Town of Lincoln has agreed to reimburse us for the costs to educate these students. However, Bedford has declared that no more students from retired military families living on HAFB will be allowed to attend the Bedford High School. The fear is that we would establish a precedent and that the numbers of students in this situation will increase.

Mr. Hafer who also participated in the meeting said that Lincoln seems indifferent to having to pay for these three students. He thinks that more non-active families will move to HAFB. He also believes ideally that it would be best to have these students come to Bedford High School along with the rest of the students who live on Hanscom but not without an established funding mechanism. Mr. Hafer believes there may be 30 or so students who have parents that are retired and are attending Hanscom elementary/middle school.

Mr. Pierce said that it is unfortunate that the students get caught up in this issue. He believes that the Federal government should have developed a solution when they agreed to privatize housing on HAFB. "It is unfair to expect Bedford residents to pay for these students."

**4. Space Needs Task Force**

Mr. Sills reported that the initial meeting of the Space Needs Task Force was held. He said that participants have a nice mix of backgrounds. Three more meetings have been planned and they will meet at each of the schools so that the Task Force can tour each of the schools.

Mr. Pierce, also a member of the Space Needs Task Force, said that it seems like a great bunch of people and that many are already bringing new ideas forth to consider.

Ms. Sills said the Task Force will really dig into analyzing and verifying the enrollment projections.

Mr. Sills told the School Committee that Town Meeting approved repurposing funds for the feasibility study for all schools to just the Lane School. Mr. Hafer commented that the town is indeed growing and it is good that the Schools are going to move forward with possibly financing an addition to Lane School without waiting for state building renovation funding process as it is a very long process and very competitive.

### **5. Class Size Report**

Mr. Sills discussed enrollment, desired class sizes, and correcting the DESE average class size calculation.

#### *Enrollment*

Mr. Sills reported that overall total Bedford Public School enrollment has been somewhat consistent over the last five years. However, Davis School has grown by 74 students (3 class rooms) since 2011. Mr. Sills reminded the Committee that in 2009 a large enrollment study was done (Locker Report) and then redone last year (NESDEC). So far, the 2015 study is proving to be more accurate.

#### *Class Size Guidelines*

Mr. Sills noted that the Schools have not codified its class size guidelines and he thinks that this is something the School Committee should do. He believes it would be beneficial to the budget and space planning processes to have formal class size guidelines. Mr. Sills would like the School Committee to consider the following:

Class	Guideline	Maximum
K	18	20
1-2	20	22
3-5	22	24
6-8	23	25
9-12	18	20 College Prep level
9-12	22	25 Honors, High Honors levels

Mr. Sills believes that given today's curriculum standards and expectation of critical thinking, middle and high schools should strive to keep aggregate student numbers per teacher at 100. Also, complex populations and differentiation of learning further requires reasonable limits on class size/teacher load.

Mr. Sills said all in all, Bedford has good class size averages and that there is strong community support to keep the average class size in line. However, our class size average has recently been distorted in some publications. Mr. Sills examined the methodology used by these publications and the DESE and feels that it should be explained.

#### *Correction to DESE calculation of Bedford's average class size*

After reviewing the methodology used to find class size averages for a recent Boston Magazine article, Mr. Sills learned that since Bedford High School has a lot of small support classes in regular education, this distorted our average to be smaller than it really is.

Also, since Bedford elementary schools give fewer grades to elementary students compared to other districts, this ends up weighting the high school classes disproportionately and depressing the class size average.

And finally, Bedford High School has many class overlays due to the fact that our minors are yearlong and that we have a high number of mixed level classes. This also depressed the class size average.

After this thorough analysis, Mr. Sills concluded that our class size average is still better than comparison districts but at a narrower gap. The recalculated average class size is 17.7.

Mr. Sills presented the School Committee with the full class size report (showing averages for all grades),

Mr. Hafer said that he does not believe that growth at Davis School will decrease as projected in the 2015 report. He also said that he appreciates Mr. Sills' efforts in explaining the distortion in Bedford's published class size average but he does not think it is necessary to go into such detail with other audiences.

Mr. Pierce said he thinks that formalizing class size guidelines is a good idea but he would like some more information before voting on this. One thing he would like to know is how many classes are already over the desired size and even the maximum size? Also, what is the plan when class sizes are over the guideline?

Mr. Sills said he is not expecting the School Committee to vote on this tonight but he does hope it is something that can be done in a few weeks. He thinks this information would be very helpful to the space needs and budget processes.

Mr. Brosgol asked what the PreK limit is. Mr. Sills said due to space limitations there is room for about 10 more students. Also the ratio of special needs and regular education needs to be properly maintained. Mr. Sills also noted that universal PreK will someday be mandatory.

Ms. Guay stated that the reason we have so many overlays at the high school is that we are a relatively small school system and offer a lot of course options. She asked if we have ever received feedback on these overlays. Mr. Sills said we do get feedback and it is often wide-ranging.

Ms. Guay asked if the limited grading at Davis School is deliberate. Mr. Sills said no but he expects that there will be more grades given as we move to a standards base curriculum.

Mr. McAllister said he feels like we have a lot of work to do before voting on class size guidelines.

## **6. Annual Report**

Mr. Sills presented the FY'15 Bedford Public Schools Annual Report to the School Committee. School Committee members agreed to give Mr. Sills some small edits to incorporate. For example:

- Mr. Pierce suggested removing the reference to a particular student.
- Ms. Guay suggested adding a comment that we have dug deeper into the class size average used by Boston Magazine.
- Mr. Hafer noted that the School Committee officers have to be updated.

None had any major comments or changes.

Mr. Hafer made the following motion:

**MOVED: That the School Committee approve the FY15 Bedford Public School Annual Report as amended.**

**MOTION SECONDED by Ms. Guay**

**MOTION APPROVED: 5-0**

### **7. Superintendent's Report**

Mr. Sills and Ms. Sallee reported that today was a full professional development day for all teachers. Each school had different professional development programs. Lane School had a speaker, Rob Evans. He discussed Collegiality V. Congeniality. The High School had a variety of presentations given by teachers for teachers. Davis worked on its Mission Statement and JGMS worked on "Making Thinking Visible".

Mr. Sills said he was impressed with how much impact staff has in determining the topics and all were powerful and hands on presentations.

Mr. Sills said he made an adjustment to the Capital Plan. If Davis School is approved by the MSBA then we will need to request money for a feasibility study in the march 2017 Town Meeting. Therefore, this has been put in budget as a place holder.

Mr. Sills also reported that the Technology budget has been reduced by \$32,000.

### **8. Liaison Reports**

Ms. Guay reported that EDCO met last week and began discussions on how to reduce assessments. She also reported that Youth and Family Services agreed that there will not be a formal Bedford Unplugged event this year. However, they will encourage families to continue this tradition on their own and Youth and Family Services will continue to offer suggestions.

### **9. Minutes**

Mr. Pierce made the following motion:

**MOVED: That the School Committee approve the minutes from the October 6, 2015 School Committee meeting as amended.**

**MOTION SECONDED by Ms. Guay**

**MOTION APPROVED: 5-0**

### **10. Future Agenda**

Mr. Hafer said he will be working on establishing fund balance guidelines.

Mr. Pierce asked for a budget time line.

Mr. McAllister would like to know the results of the DESE vote on whether to go with PARCC or MCAS or something in between. He also looks forward to learning about Bedford's results.

**11. Adjournment**

Ms. Guay made the following motion.

**MOVED: Motion to adjourn at 9:15 p.m.**

**MOTION SECONDED by Mr. Hafer**

**MOTION APPROVED: 5-0**

**Roll Call Vote:**

**Mr. McAllister                      Yes**

**Ms. Guay                              Yes**

**Mr. Brosgol                         Yes**

**Mr. Pierce                          Yes**

**Mr. Hafer                             Yes**

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School Committee Secretary

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Date

**BEDFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE**  
**November 3, 2015**  
**Exhibits/Document**

- Draft of Bedford Public Schools Annual Report FY'15
- Presentation Class Size Report FY'16
- Draft of minutes from the October 6, 2015 School Committee meeting