

BEDFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE
November 1, 2016
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. Brosgol, Mr. Pierce, Ms. Santiago and Student Representative Miles Henderson

2. Comments from Public

None

3. Personnel Report

Mr. Sills asked the School Committee to vote on the revised School Committee meeting schedule as presented tonight. It was revised due to a religious holiday falling on a previously planned meeting night.

Mr. Brosgol made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the revised School Committee Meeting Schedule for 2016-17 as presented.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. Santiago

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

Mr. Sills asked the School Committee to approve a field trip request by Mr. Griffin and Ms. Curran for students to travel to Panama City, Panama on April 13-20, 2018 to learn about historical Panama, ecology, and environmental issues and to practice speaking and listening to Spanish. Students in Spanish, AP Environmental Science or the Environmental Club are invited to participate. The cost is approximately \$3,600 per student. The trip is limited to 18 students and will be appropriately chaperoned.

Ms. Guay made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the field trip request for 18 members of the AP Environmental class or Environmental Club or any student seeking a Spanish language immersion experience to travel to Panama on April 13-20, 2018 (missing one day of school) with Mr. Griffin at no cost to the school department.

MOTION SECONDED by Mr. Brosgol

MOTION APPROVED: 4-0-1 (Ms. Santiago abstained since her daughter is in the Environmental Club and in a Spanish class).

Mr. Sills asked the School Committee to consider approving a .2 Speech and Language teacher for the SAIL Program at Davis School. If this is approved, the plan will be to move this teacher to the Lane School SAIL Program next year. The position will be funded from savings from out-of-district tuition and the extra help for this year would be very beneficial.

Ms. Santiago made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee add .2 Speech and Language teacher for the Davis School SAIL Program at a cost of \$10,927.

MOTION SECONDED by Mr. Pierce

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

Mr. Sills explained that there is a need to accommodate 9 new students in our Integrated Preschool program. The students are coming to us from Early Intervention – they are turning age (3) and are aging out of Early Intervention services. A .4 Special Education teacher and 2 Educational Assistants (8 hours each) will be needed to staff this new classroom. The class will meet in the afternoons. It is expected to cost \$23,400 for the rest of the school year.

Mr. Pierce asked if this is required by law. Mr. Sills said yes. He also reminded the School Committee that before we had our Integrated Preschool, we would have to send all of these children out-of-district in order to meet their educational needs.

Mr. Sills said that new classroom space at the high school will be required next year.

Mr. McAllister reiterated that this is a mandated service and not optional.

Ms. Guay made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee add a Preschool teacher and two Educational Assistants for a total cost of \$23,400 for a new class of preschoolers to be held in the afternoons at the high school Integrated Preschool for the remaining 2016-17 school year.

MOTION SECONDED by Mr. Brosgol

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

4. Capital Expenditures/Lane School Parking Options

Mr. Sills reviewed the FY'18 Capital projects request and presented an updated parking lot proposal for the Lane School.

The total FY'18 Capital Expense Projects for Schools/Facilities is \$1,182,869 which includes \$300,000 for the Lane School parking reconfiguration project.

Mr. Sills explained that since the last School Committee meeting, he has met with residents in the Lane School neighborhood. Mr. Sills learned that the neighbors are not concerned about evening events at the school that cause cars to park on the nearby streets. These events happen infrequently and are no big deal. However, their main concern is speeding of cars and school busses. The neighbors do not want the schools to build a new access road to the school and they do not want the road leading into the school to be widened. (Mr. Sills agreed to communicate concerns of speeding to the DPW and Police Departments).

The Building Committee considered this feedback and ultimately agreed not to widen the road to the school at this time. The Building Committee revised their recommendation (Option #1A) as follows:

- Extend the bus loop capacity
- Do not widen the road leading into the school – keep as is.
- Make the parent drop off/pick up area in the sight-line of the door
- Improve the circulation of the parking lot/driveway
- Add parking spaces to the east end (Total spaces will be 151)
- Create a bike path from the Rail Trail where an informal path exists. The belief is that more students will ride bikes to school.

Mr. Sills said that the revised cost to do this option is \$473,000. The higher cost is due to additional design costs, more contingency fees, and adding the bike path connector.

Mr. Sills said that the DPW has agreed to move some projects around so they can commit to using \$172,000 to help with this project (paving) and Mr. Alani agreed to remove the Energy Management System project (\$200,000) from the FY'18 Capital Request budget (hoping to find grant money to do this or to delay the project for a year or two). Therefore, there will be a need for approximately \$100,000 to move forward with this option. Mr. Sills said he will use \$300,000 as a placeholder in the FY'18 capital budget request but the hope is that there will be enough contingency funds available to cover most of the cost.

Mr. Brosgol asked about earlier concerns on the east end parking area at Lane School. Mr. Sills said that as many options were reviewed, it became clear that parents did not want to drop off students at the east end of the lot because it was too far away (and out of sight) of the school door.

Mr. Brosgol asked if 151 spaces would be enough parking. Mr. Sills said that he feels this will be enough parking for the size of the addition and the use of the building during non-school hours.

Mr. Brosgol asked when this project would be completed. Mr. Sills said this summer.

Ms. Guay suggested to create a few 15 minutes only spaces.

Ms. Guay suggested looking for other community funds for the bike path. Mr. Sills said he has asked the Principal to look into Safe Routes Committee to see if they could help.

Mr. McAllister expressed some concerns with the Lane School parking project. He said that the project seems more like a "nice to have project" rather than a necessity. He is worried about:

- Relying on using some of DPW funds (not a guarantee)
- Pushing off the Energy Management System project (or relying on grant funding to move forward)
- The plans may not improve the circulation and parking needs of the school given the placement of the school on the lot.
- Finding ways to convince more parents to rely on bus transportation rather than pickups.

Ms. McClung, a member of the Finance Committee in the audience, said that she has heard a suggestion from parents about creating a new centralized bus drop off point so the parents can meet the bus at a location away from the school where there is less congestion. Mr. McAllister said that we really could not safely manage such an arrangement.

Mr. Sills said that this would be a whole new conversation – are we managing bus pick up efficiently as possible.

Mr. Sills then reviewed the final list of proposed capital projects for the FY'18 request. He highlighted:

Information Technology replacement plan	\$445,200
Photocopier Replacement plan	\$48,454
BHS Pole Vault/High Jump Mat System	\$22,525

Mr. Sills also adjusted the cost of the wheel chair lift for the press box to \$32,000 which is the amount of installation costs. The Finance Committee voted to support the purchase of the equipment only and this will appear on the warrant at the Special Town Meeting in November. He reviewed the list of other projects on the FY'18 request.

Mr. Pierce made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the FY'18 Capital Budget request of \$1,182,869 as presented tonight.

MOTION SECONDED by Mr. Brosgol

MOTION APPROVED: 4-1-0 (Mr. McAllister voted no)

Mr. Pierce and Ms. Santiago said that they believe that the Lane School parking project is a necessity. They both believe that there is a need

- For more parking spaces due to the addition
- To make bus loading more efficient
- To make the area safer by improving circulation of parent drop offs and pick ups

Ms. Guay made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the FY'18 capital projects of Technology Replacement, Copier Replacement and the BHS Pole Vault/High Jump Mat system purchase at a cost of \$516,179.

MOTION SECONDED by Mr. Brosgol

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

5. Class Size Report

Mr. Sills reported that there are an additional 75 students enrolled in Bedford Public Schools this year. The breakdown is:

- 16 additional students at Davis
- 32 additional students at Lane
- 27 additional students at JGMS

Mr. Sills reviewed FY'17 actual enrollment versus projected enrollment. We ended up with 65 more students than projected. Mr. Sills concluded:

- Continued growth in Kindergarten
- Grade 5 is larger than expected
- Grade 6 is larger than expected

Mr. Sills then reviewed the district's class size guidelines currently in place:

	Guideline	Max.
Kindergarten	18	20
1 st grade	20	22
Grades 2-5	22	24
Grades 6-8	23	25
High School	18	20 College Prep level
	22	25 Honor/High Honor level

Mr. Sills also noted that the district will strive to keep the aggregate number of students per teacher at JGMS and BHS at 100.

Mr. McAllister asked if we were meeting these goals. Mr. Sills said he would get the School Committee this information.

Mr. Sills presented data on the average class size at each grade and at each school. For example at the middle school, only 4% of the major classes are above the maximum limit. However there are about 20% Arts & Wellness classes above the max.

Mr. Sills explained that at the High School, there are 631 sections of classes. He explained that 131 of these sections are “over lays”. This means that one teacher covers 2 or more sections in one classroom. (For example a high honors history class is combined with an honors history class). Mr. Sills said that this is a practice that the high school does in order to give students more opportunities to learn at the correct level. He said it is very unique to Bedford High School. This practice does skew the average class size measure used by many public sources like Boston Magazine. The practice tends to make our class size look lower than it really is.

Mr. Sills concluded that overall, class size is OK throughout the district. However there are areas where it is starting to increase.

Miles Henderson, student representative, shared his experience with class size at the high school. He said that overall, most of his classes have around 18-20 students. Last year, his AP French class was large but that is because AP French is only offered every other year. Miles also shared his experience being in a class with mixed levels. He said that overall, this is not a big deal. The School Committee members thanked Miles for sharing his perspective.

6. Superintendent’s Report

Mr. Sills reported several items:

- Long-time METCO, Inc. Director Jean Maguire will be retiring. She served for 40 years and really launched and maintained the METCO program as we know it. Mr. Sills also noted that METCO will be celebrating its 50th anniversary – the last desegregation program in the country. Mr. Sills is involved in looking for an interim CEO/Director of METCO Inc.
- The 6th Grade class had another successful overnight field trip to Natures Classroom. This trip has become a great new tradition for 6th graders.
- Lane School construction project is on schedule and budget. Mr. Sills is very pleased with both the Architects and the construction firm.
- The Program Review process has been updated and will soon be relaunched.

7. Minutes

Mr. Brosgol made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the minutes of the October 18, 2016 School Committee meeting as amended.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. Santiago

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

8. Liaison Reports

Ms. Guay reminded families that Bedford Unplugged is still in existence and families should look online at the town website to find some ideas on how to spend time together as a family “unplugged”,

9. Future Agenda

Mr. Pierce said that the Concussion Policy needs to be reviewed.

Ms. Guay would like to hear more about the preschool and the autism programs.

Mr. McAllister would like information on whether we are hitting are class size and teacher load targets.

10. Adjournment

Ms. Santiago made the following motion:

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

MOTION SECONDED by Mr. Pierce

MOTION APPROVED 5-0

Roll Call Vote:

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

School Committee Secretary

Date

BEDFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE

November 1, 2016

Exhibits/Documents

- Presentation: Capital Budget Requests FY'18
- Presentation: Class Size Report October 2016
- Draft of School Committee Meeting dates for 2016-17
- Draft of minutes from the October 18, 2016 School Committee meeting