

BEDFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE
September 12, 2017
Bedford High School - Large Group Instruction Room

1. Call to Order

At 6:00 p.m., Mr. McAllister called to order the meeting of the Bedford School Committee.
Other members present include Mr. Brosgol, Ms. Santiago, Ms. Scoville, and Ms. Guay.

The School Committee adjourned to Executive Session at 6:01p.m. Executive Session adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

2. Return to Open Session

At 7:35 p.m., Mr. McAllister called to order the meeting of the Bedford School Committee.
Other members present include Mr. Brosgol, Ms. Santiago, Ms. Scoville, and Ms. Guay.

3. Comments from Public

None

4. Personnel Report

Mr. Sills made the following announcements:

Appointments:

Laura Albones	Special Education Teacher	Davis
Jaime Craven	.25 Educational Assistant	Davis

Extracurricular Appointments:

Tammy Burke	Fall Cheerleading	BHS
Joseph Pike	Boys Cross Country	BHS
Roseanne Ham	Varsity Field Hockey	BHS
Lisa Gocht	JV Field Hockey	BHS
Thomas Tone	Varsity Football	BHS
Dan Mullen	Assistant Football	BHS
Joe Curran	Assistant Football	BHS
Mike Schreiber	JV Football	BHS
Corey Shepherd	JV Football	BHS
Calvin Carroll	Freshman Football	BHS
Eric LaCroix	Assistant Freshmen Football	BHS
Jim Nagle	Golf	BHS
Dave Boschetto	Varsity Boys Soccer	BHS
Gunnar Olson	Assistant Soccer	BHS
Bill Berlino	JV Boys Soccer	BHS
Eric Driscoll	Varsity Girls Soccer	BHS
Heather Smiles	JV Girls Soccer	BHS
Amanda Rabesa	Freshmen Girls Soccer	BHS
Lisa Predaina	Varsity Volleyball	BHS
Olivia Akana	JV Volleyball	BHS
Jackie Supprise	Freshmen Volleyball	BHS
Alexis Duffy-Protentis	Athletic Trainer	BHS
Ken Norling	Athletic Coordinator/Cross Country	JGMS
Bev Barton	Field Hockey	JGMS

Carlos Caprioli	Boys Soccer	JGMS
Jeff LoPresti	Football	JGMS
John King	Football	JGMS
Derek Johnson	Assistant Football	JGMS
Liz Cowles	Girls Soccer	JGMS

Mr. Sills asked the School Committee to review and consider approval on a policy update. The Internet, Newspaper, Television, Radio and Periodical Release Form was revised so that permission is granted unless the parent notifies the school in writing that they deny permission. This form is used in some schools and was never updated last year when the policy in general was updated.

Mr. McAllister told Mr. Sills that since this is a policy change, the School Committee will delay the vote until the next meeting in order to give families the chance to comment.

Mr. Sills asked the School Committee to approve a request by Kindergarten teacher Vera Corbett Ahiyya to travel to the National Council of Teachers of English conference in St. Louis on November 17-19, 2017. She would miss one day of school to attend this conference which is focused on new literacy ideas and integration of advocacy practices. Ms. Corbett Ahiyya will pay her own travel and hotel fees while the district will pay entry to the conference.

Mr. Brosgol made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the professional development trip for Vera Corbett Ahiyya to travel to St. Louis, MO on November 17-19, 2017 in order to attend the National Council of Teachers of English conference at a cost not to exceed \$412.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. Guay

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

Mr. Sills reported that the district is once again participating in the Harvard Teachers to Scholars Program, after a four year break. Mr. Sills said that thanks to financial help from all of the Parent Associations, there are now fifteen slots available and to date, thirty teachers have applied.

5. Sweetwater Property Discussion

Mr. Sills reported that Town Manager Rick Reed asked if the Schools would be interested in the town purchasing all or a portion of a property located on Sweetwater Avenue that abuts the Lane School parking lot. The owner is looking to sell and the Selectmen want to know if the schools want them to buy it. Mr. Sills said his initial thought is that the Lane School parking, access and egress has been worked out and that this purchase is not necessary or valuable to the schools.

Mr. Sills asked the School Committee members if they felt differently. No one did but Mr. Brosgol pointed out that buying property is always a good investment so he would be inclined to think a little bit more about it. The consensus of the Committee is to tell Mr. Reed and the Selectmen that the schools have no opposition to the town purchasing the property but the schools have no plans to develop the land.

6. Dog Park Presentation

Resident Laurie Walsh made a presentation to the School Committee regarding the ad-hoc Dog Park Committee's desire to build a dog park in town. She made the presentation to the Committee because one of the desired areas for this park is on school property across from JGMS and adjacent to the playing fields.

Ms. Walsh said that Dog Park Committee started looking for sites about a year ago. Since then, with help from the DPW, seven sites have been identified as possibilities. She also explained that the Committee has discovered a grant worth \$225,000 which could be used to fund this project as long as the town was able to come up with 10% of the total cost.

Ms. Walsh further explained that there was a survey conducted and the idea of a dog park is very popular. The Committee will now develop a budget to support this project and continue to investigate site options. Right now, the area across from JGMS which is school property, is the favored location due to its central location. Ms. Walsh said a few more additional parking spots may be needed, but she is not sure that people will drive to the dog park given its central location.

Ms. Guay said that it sounds like a dog park in town will bring joy to many in town and she is impressed that the group found a grant to fund it.

Ms. Scoville understands the need and desire for a dog park but wonders about insurance and liability especially if it is on school property.

Ms. Santiago said she is concerned that the location is very congested during drop –off and pick-up times and that adding a dog park in the same location would add to this congestion.

Mr. Brosgol asked if CPC funds could be used. Ms. Walsh said she believes they could. He also expressed concern with location because it is on a sharp corner and there are no sidewalks. He also wondered if there would be restrictions due to nearby wetlands.

Mr. Sills suggested that a traffic study would be needed if that site was selected.

Mr. McAllister asked about the next steps. Ms. Walsh said that if this is a positive idea to the School Committee, she would bring it to the Selectmen and town attorney.

Mr. McAllister agreed that the School Committee will put this topic on a future agenda to discuss further and will reach out for community feedback.

Mr. Sills clarified that the School Committee is taking the proposal under consideration and he is sure there will be further questions and concerns that will need to be addressed before the School Committee supports the project.

7. Lane Update

Mr. Sills reported that the Lane School opened on time for the first day of school. The parking lot changes will be done next summer. Mr. Sills noted that neighbors have expressed concern about the loss of trees and the amount of lighting that will result when the parking area is reconstructed. Therefore, a forum has been scheduled for September 25th with neighbors and the DPW to review the plans.

Mr. Sills also reported that the \$300,000 in contingency money will be used for cleaning up any “punch list” items and the parking lot project.

8. Davis Update

Mr. Sills reminded the School Committee that Option 4B – moving the preschool to the new Davis School, and having 10 classrooms each for kindergarten, first and second grade, was

approved at the last meeting. He will be meeting with the Finance Committee, town finance employees, and the Capital Expenditure Committee this week. TBA has and will present cost comparisons with the Lane School project. Mr. Sills also has met with Town Manager Rick Reed to look at the project's financial impact on the town.

9. District Goals Preview: Literacy

Mr. Sills and Ms. Sallee introduced the district's principle strategic focus for the next few years – K-12 Literacy.

Mr. Sills explained that all students need skills and content background to understand complex text. Needs assessments done throughout the district show that there is work to be done in this area.

Mr. Sills believes that in order to be independent thinkers in today's environment (for example reliance on social media, "fake" news, or changing jobs), our students need to be critical readers of complex text. "This skill is essential to students achieving depth of understanding, analytical and inferencing skills and enduring independence as thinkers and learners." Mr. Sills thinks this is also an equity issue.

Mr. Sills said that this will be a K-12 focus. The higher grades assume kids learned reading skills earlier. But this is not necessarily true. All students in all grades need to develop abilities to comprehend complex texts. "Teaching general literacy in the elementary grades and disciplinary literacy in the secondary grades must be the responsibility of all educators."

Ms. Sallee explained that to understand the term "disciplinary literacy", one should think of the way practitioners think – inquiry based instruction. "How does a scientist read and write its scientific material?" "How does a historian read and write its materials?" Therefore, JGMS and BHS curriculum leaders will be laying out a literacy plan. A needs assessment at these schools is now underway. More professional development will be forthcoming.

Mr. Sills said that this is not a new focus for the schools but it is and will be a deliberate effort to hone in on developing our student's ability to comprehend complex texts.

Ms. Guay asked about the Literacy Specialist Role in this. Ms. Sallee said that the Specialist will work with teachers and frame lessons to include strategies to help kids read complex texts.

Ms. Scoville noted that she sees how inquiry based instruction has already started at Davis School.

Ms. Santiago agreed that this is an important focus.

10. Superintendent's Report

Mr. Sills was proud of the ranking Bedford Public Schools received on Niche.com (#17). But he said he takes this compliment with a grain of salt. He was impressed too with the number of "hits" Bedford received compared to other nearby towns – proof that Bedford is a hot market.

Mr. Sills briefly reviewed key enrollment numbers:

	Predicted	Actual
Kindergarten	189	197
JGMS	582	594

Mr. Sills also commented that he hopes that parents call when there is a concern or question rather than use social media. Ms. Guay agreed that social media can blow up an issue into something much bigger than it has to be.

11. Minutes for Review

Mr. Brosgol made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the minutes from the June 6, 2017 School Committee meeting as amended.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. Santiago

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

Ms. Santiago made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the minutes of the June 13, 2017 School Committee meeting as amended.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. Guay

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

12. Adjournment

Ms. Scoville made the following motion.

MOVED: Motion to adjourn at 9:00 P.M

MOTION SECONDED by Mr. Brosgol

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. McAllister Yes

Mr. Brosgol Yes

Ms. Santiago Yes

Ms. Scoville Yes

Ms. Guay Yes

School Committee Secretary

Date

BEDFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE
September 12, 2017
Exhibits/Documents

- Dog Park Presentation
- Draft of June 6, 2017 School Committee meeting minutes
- Draft of June 13, 2017 School Committee meeting minutes