

BEDFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE

November 6, 2017

Bedford High School – High School Guidance Conference Room

1. Call to Order

At 6:30 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.

2. Comments from Public

None

3. Personnel Report

Mr. Sills asked for approval of an out-of-state field trip organized by Chris Zellner, BHS English teacher. He is proposing to bring 20 students to New York City on December 1-2 and then another 20 to New York City on December 8-9 for students in the African American English class. The students will visit Harlem and the 911 Memorial. The goal is to support the African American literature curriculum. The cost will be \$250 per student and school vans will be used for transportation. The students will be leaving on a Friday afternoon and will return on Saturday evening. No school will be missed.

Mr. Brosgol made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the field trip for students in the African American course to travel to New York City on either December 1-2, 2017 or December 8-9, 2017 to visit Harlem and the 911 Memorial at a cost of \$250 per student and no cost to the schools.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. Guay

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

Mr. Sills also presented a proposed field trip by Ms. Herman and Ms. Nolan at Lane School. They are proposing to take six METCO students in grade 5, along with six friends of their choosing, to Mt. Cardigan Lodge in Alexandria, NH. The aim of this trip is to foster connections with Boston and Bedford students while learning outdoor and leadership skills. The teachers feel that this will be a good opportunity to support the transition to 6th grade. The cost will be \$50 per student and will be covered by the METCO grant.

Ms. Guay said that the fact that students would pick a friend to join them sounded unusual and potentially troublesome.

Mr. Sills said that the Diversity Committee talked about this trip but it does sound unusual to him too. Mr. Sills suggested holding off on voting on this right now until he gathered more information.

Mr. Brosgol made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee abstain on voting on the field trip request to Mt. Cardigan in New Hampshire

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. Guay

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

Mr. Sills agreed to bring this forward again in the future.

Mr. Sills reported that Akil Mondesir will be the interim METCO Director for the rest of the year since Claire Jones resigned. Mr. Sills will fill Akil's Assistant Director (or Social Worker) position.

Mr. Sills also announced the appointment of Alison Wardwell, Special Education Teacher, at JGMS.

Mr. McAllister asked Mr. Sills to report on the number of non-residents who attend Bedford Public Schools.

4. Review of Town Meeting Warrant

Mr. Sills said that tonight at Special Town Meeting, the Schools will be asking for approval of \$990,000 appropriation for preparation of schematic design and construction documents for the Davis School renovation project. In the spring, at Town Meeting, the Schools will ask for \$11.2 million for the addition. The schools may also add the roof replacement and funding for schematic design for JGMS and BHS renovation projects. He shared a copy of the presentation that would be used tonight at Special Town Meeting.

Mr. Sills commented that in today's Boston Globe, there was an article that said that the Metropolitan Planning Council concluded that building new homes does not necessarily lead to an increase in school enrollments. However, the article concluded that new homes in towns with reputable schools and new homes in walkable urban communities usually have experienced increasing school enrollments.

Mr. Sills said that he believes that the article was written in such a way in order to not discourage building/approving affordable housing in Massachusetts.

5. Superintendent's Report

Mr. Sills said that he will be asking for additional personnel for the Bridge Programs based on the results of the program review and our recent experience. He plans on asking for :

- A 1.0 Special Education Teacher at Lane School
- A 1.0 Adjustment Counselor at Lane School (so there could be 2 distinct special education programs – Bridge and SAIL)
- Additional FTE at Davis school to relieve the Adjustment Counselor's evaluation responsibilities.
- 1.0 Adjustment Counselor at JGMS
- 1.0 Adjustment Counselor at BHS

Mr. Sills said that the costs to do this can be covered without adding to the FY'18 budget. He estimates that the impact to the town (for benefits) is potentially \$68,000.

Mr. Brosgol suggested that the schools analyze the new staff added over the last five years to ensure that we are really saving money when we bring in in-house special education programs. He asked Mr. Coelho to look to see if there is any new information to support this argument.

Mr. McAllister said he is worried that this new request for additional staff may create "urgency fatigue" with the Finance Committee.

Mr. Sills replied that the Finance Committee understands that the in-house Special Education programs are different from our regular education programs. He feels that he can explain the

needs to the Finance Committee and that Mr. Coelho can look into providing more information that explains how we offset costs.

Ms. Santiago asked why the need for these new positions was not accounted for in the budget last year. Mr. Sills said that the budget met the needs of the students but the support system is stretched and taking a toll. He sees in-house Special Education programs as a continual work in progress.

Ms. Scoville said that she thinks that supporting these Special Education programs correctly will help support all the kids in Bedford Public Schools.

Mr. McAllister asked the School Committee members to send him more questions and concerns about staffing the special education programs.

OPEB (Other Post Employment Benefits)

Mr. McAllister handed the School Committee members a copy of a policy document related to OPEB that the Town Finance Director gave him to review and sign if the School Committee agreed. School Committee members agreed to review the document. Mr. McAllister and Mr. Sills wondered if it made sense for the School Committee to sign a financial-based (and not school-based) policy.

6. Adjournment

Ms. Guay made the following motion.

MOVED: Motion to adjourn at 7:25 P.M.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. Scoville

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
November 6, 2017
Exhibits/Documents

- Presentation: The Davis School Building Project for Special Town Meeting