

**BEDFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF**

October 13, 2009

1. Call to Order:

At 7:30 Mr. Pierce called to order, the meeting of the Bedford School Committee. Other members present included Ms. Bickford, Ms. Seibert, Ms. O’Gara and Mr. Hafer.

2. Comments From Public

None

3. Personnel Report

Dr. LaCroix asked the School Committee to review and approve the job description of Early Childhood Coordinator. Dr. LaCroix explained that this is an existing job and that the description of the position is being updated. The School Committee reviewed the job description and gave Dr. LaCroix several edits and comments.

Ms. Bickford asked if this position should be titled, “Early Intervention Liaison”, but Dr. LaCroix said no because the position works with children aged 3 to 5 years and at this age, the children are no longer part of Early Intervention.

The School Committee members agreed to vote on the final job description at the next School Committee meeting.

Dr. LaCroix also asked the School Committee to consider approving a field trip request from Michael Griffin and Jackie Supprise. The request is for approval of monthly hiking day trips for the Environmental Club which may be out-of-state and on weekends. Mr. Griffin has asked for approval of these trips ahead of time in order to streamline the planning process.

Ms. Bickford made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the week-end Environmental Club monthly hikes to New Hampshire, Vermont, and Maine at no cost to the school.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. O’Gara

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

Dr. LaCroix also asked the School Committee to consider a field trip request from Ms. Diane Pritchett. Ms. Pritchett is asking the School Committee to approve a trip for approximately fifty students to attend and/or perform at the World Expo in Shanghai, China in June 2010. Priority would be given to choral and music program students and then open up to all others if space allows. All students would be involved in the performance. The cost is estimated to be \$2,950 per student. Students would leave on June 23rd and return home on July 2nd. Dr. LaCroix said she thinks this is an amazing opportunity and recommends approval.

Ms. O’Gara made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve a field trip request for 50 Bedford

High School students to attend the World Expo in Shanghai China on June 23, 2010 through July 2, 2010 at no cost to the school.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. Bickford

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

Ms. Bickford asked if this trip would be open to graduating seniors. Dr. LaCroix assumes yes, but would double check. She is not sure if it would be open to incoming freshman.

Dr. LaCroix announced the following informational items:

Appointments:

Joanne Daley	Replacement Guidance Counselor	Middle School
Deb Griffin	.2 Special Education Teacher	Davis School
Jean Mielie	.4 Math Replacement Teacher	High School
Clare Hunt	ELL Tutor	Elementary Schools
Brian Peck	Temporary Maintenance Worker	Facilities

4. Presentation: Gifted and Talented Program

Ms. Lisa Rainen and Ms. Sarah Dorer gave an update on the Gifted and Talented Program in grades K-8. Ms. Rainen is a JGMS teacher and gave an update on the Middle School Program. Ms. Dorer gave an update on the Davis and Lane program.

Ms. Rainen explained that half of her day is devoted to advanced math classes. She said that the math teachers give unit pretests to all students and those that score high and who need far more than the regular curriculum come to work with her. She said that flexibility and a focus on individual needs of the students have been a focus of the gifted programming at JGMS. This process started about three years ago and since that time, 153 students have been involved in her math enrichment classes.

Ms. Rainen pointed out that students in regular math classes who are in need of challenges do get extra enrichment from the math teachers.

Ms. Rainen said that the JGMS math teachers are very supportive of the math “pull out” groups. She also said that student comments have been extremely positive.

Ms. Rainen also discussed other program enrichment initiatives at the middle school. She noted that after school, the following opportunities exist for all interested students:

- MathCounts
- Scrabble
- Science Olympiad
- Geography Bee
- Spelling Bee

Ms. Rainen shared several awards and recognitions. For example, the MathCounts team advanced to State Level of competition five out of the past six years. One student progressed to the National MathCounts Championship in 2008. Also, 6th and 7th grade won the National Language Arts League competition in 2007 and 7th grade placed second in 2008.

Ms. Rainen also explained that she provides consultation to all JGMS teachers on differentiating instruction practices and curriculum. She is available to help create materials for teachers and is able to work with Program Administrators to support differentiation efforts.

Ms. O’Gara asked Ms. Rainen to explain how she splits her time. Ms. Rainen said that most of her time is spent with her math pullout groups. However, she tries to support the teachers and work on other enrichment areas as best as she can.

Ms. Bickford said that the Gifted and Talented Program really makes a tremendous difference for many students who need to be challenged and engaged. She is happy to hear that students in her groups “struggle” and that they learn that it is satisfying to struggle and learn.

Ms. Bickford asked Ms. Rainen about the new math texts. Ms. Rainen said that the texts are a good starting point and that regular classroom teachers are finding ways to incorporate more investigations.

Ms. Bickford said she appreciates the fact that math pullouts are based on pretests.

Ms Seibert said that it is important for students to have this opportunity in middle school because middle school is a good place for students to take risks and to experiment. She is also pleased to see that Ms. Rainen is really meeting the individual needs of the students.

Ms. Seibert asked if Ms. Rainen would like more opportunities to teach more enrichment classes in nonmath subjects.

Ms. Rainen answered yes. She sees how positive the enrichment classes are for the math students and she would like the opportunity to do this in other subjects.

Mr. Hafer asked,” Why math?”

Ms. Rainen said that math is truly the hardest to differentiate in a class and teachers struggle to do so. She also said that the need exists and it is a challenge for the teachers to meet.

The School Committee thanked Ms. Rainen for a comprehensive presentation.

Ms. Sarah Dorer, Director of the K-5 Gifted and Talented Program, then gave an update on the K-5 program. Ms. Dorer explained that she has been the K-5 Director for the last 12 to 13 years and that she works at both the Lane and Davis Schools. She commented that Bedford is very lucky to have such great technology in place.

Ms. Dorer explained that Bedford has supported a Gifted and Talented Program since 1983. She said that Bedford is only one of a few towns to offer such programming especially now that school budgets have been reduced. Most towns focus only on special services for the lower end.

The goals of the Bedford’s Gifted and Talented Program for grades K-5 are:

- To provide support and guidance for the educational needs of gifted students
- To promote teaching and learning strategies that enhance the elementary curriculum for all students.

Ms. Dorer noted that the goals of the program have not changed since its inception in 1983.

Ms. Dorer explained that a continuum of services are in place to ensure that the academic, social and emotional needs of academically-advanced elementary students are met. Ms. Dorer is involved in acceleration of particular subject areas, cross grading (academic needs are met by allowing students to join a higher grade for reading or math) and curriculum differentiation in the classroom. Ms. Dorer also works with students on independent studies often in small groups or individually.

Ms. Dorer identified keys to a successful program as being:

- Systemwide administrative support
- A continuum of services to meet the individual needs of students
- A team approach to meeting the needs of children
- Open lines of communication between the Gifted and Talented Teacher and the classroom teacher as well as parents and students.
- Flexibility and appropriate placement from year to year.
- Use of community and outside resources.

Ms. Dorer explained that her day is spent consulting with teachers regarding curriculum differentiation. She also holds weekly math enrichment classes. She also uses pretesting to determine accelerated instruction. Ms. Dorer also does science enrichment for all first grade classes.

At Lane, she works with students to publish the Lane newsletter "The Fast Lane". She also does engineering design challenges for those students who do not take chorus.

Ms. Dorer shared some of the independent projects from students in grades 1-5. For example, she showed the Field Guide for Cattail Corner and described the plastic and container recycling program that has been set up and implemented by Lane students.

Ms. Dorer mentioned that she communicates a lot with Ms. Rainen, especially about students who are moving on to the Middle School.

Ms. O'Gara commented that the focus on individual students is wonderful.

Ms. Bickford was thrilled to hear that Ms. Dorer has a web page. She thought this was a great way to provide information to people who are interested in the gifted and talented programs.

Ms. Bickford also said she was glad to hear that some gifted students are placed with one another. She thought this was good for students especially at Lane.

Ms. Seibert said she was impressed with Ms. Dorer's "freshness". Ms. Dorer said she loves the fact that the students have their own ideas for independent projects. She enjoys her role of finding a way to pull it all together with them.

Mr. Hafer agrees that the programming is great. He wonders whether similar programming should be offered at the High School.

Ms. Dorer said her objective is to make sure the individuals get what they need. She said the High School offers great programs and enrichment opportunities. Ms. Rainen said that Guidance Counselors really help make sure these students get what they need.

Mr. Pierce asked why Massachusetts is last in supporting Gifted and Talented Programming. Ms. Dorer said she does not know.

5. Presentation: Capital Budget

The School Committee reviewed the FY2011-FY2016 Capital Budget Project Request. Mr. Lord, Mr. Coelho and Mr. Jones were all on hand to provide additional information on some of the larger and more important requests.

Wireless Network at Davis and Lane

Mr. Ken Lord, Network Administrator, spoke about the wireless network request for Davis and Lane Schools (\$33,000). He asked the School Committee to consider putting the Davis and Lane School wireless network request as one of the top priorities for the 2011 Capital Budget request. He said the project was pulled last year due to budgetary constraints.

Mr. Lord said that today students and teachers are truly 21st century learners and need technology at their finger tips. He said it no longer makes sense to have to stop a lesson and move to a computer lab in a library at an assigned time. Mr. Lord explained that installing wireless networks at Lane and Davis would also allow students and teachers to utilize the laptop inventory more effectively. He said he is ready to begin migrating wireless equipment from JGMS to Lane and Davis schools.

Dr. LaCroix noted that at Lane School, programming is limited due to the lack of wireless technology. Teachers and students must go to the Lab to work on projects. As technology becomes more and more integrated into the daily curriculum, going to the lab becomes less efficient and scheduling becomes more difficult.

Mr. Jones, Facilities Director, said that from a facilities point-of-view, it is much better to invest into wireless networks rather than cable.

Ms. O’Gara reminded the Committee that Davis and Lane Schools are currently pressed for space and may end up reorganizing a lot of the classrooms and other spaces. Ms. O’Gara pointed out that it would be easier and less expensive to deal with a wireless network when the time comes to reorganize at either Davis or Lane.

The School Committee agreed that it will be imperative to make a strong compelling case to the Capital Expenditure Committee about the need for wireless networks at Davis and Lane Schools. They suggested presenting the need for both schools but to be prepared to split up the request if necessary and to have Lane the first priority.

Copier Replacement

Mr. Coelho explained that he would like to replace a copier at the Middle School and at Lane School. Lane also needs a Risograph machine. The total request is \$21,741.

Ms. Bickford asked Mr. Coelho for more information on each machine (age and usage) and to tally the number of machines at each school. Mr. Coelho agreed to provide this information.

Elementary School Furniture

Mr. Coelho and the School Committee discussed furniture replacement needs at Lane and Davis. Mr. Coelho explained that this project covered a lot of other items needed in the classrooms such as projectors and FM Systems.

Ms. Bickford said she prefers to keep only furniture in this category and feels adding miscellaneous items will bring confusion. She thinks furniture replacement is a need that is compelling enough on its own. She said that it will be important to explain to the C.E.C how 2009 furniture purchases were deployed.

Mr. Jones discussed several other capital budget projects on the Request. He said the majority of the items are program maintenance items. He did review a few specific projects. For example, he discussed the need for adding new outside lighting at JGMS. He also suggested removing the Davis generator project from the list if it is not a priority for 2011. He also recommended removing the video security and access projects because there is no urgent need for this project.

School Committee members asked more questions about each item on the budget request to help them make priority decisions at a later meeting.

Ms. Bickford said that it is important to keep abreast of the Maintenance Trust Fund from the MSBA since budgets will be very tight. She also commented that Bedford's town boards do understand the importance of maintaining buildings, but as a town, we have to figure out how to do it in a tight fiscal climate.

Ms. Bickford asked Mr. Jones for a write up clarifying how many years the building painting maintenance has been delayed and how much is reasonable to do in a year. She also suggested making a place holder for any possible space planning recommendations. Mr. Jones agreed.

Ms. Bickford asked if it would make sense to lump all the capital maintenance items together into one broad category titled "School Capital Maintenance" (Similar to the way other departments such as the DPW). Ms. Bickford thinks the time is right to make this change and other School Committee members agreed.

6. Class Size Report

Dr. LaCroix presented the Class Size report to the School Committee. She noted that JGMS continues to be challenged in terms of space utilization. Classes are held in the multipurpose room, the cafeteria and the auditorium. Also, JGMS has too many core classes in grades 7 and 8 with more than 25 students. Dr. LaCroix said she is also concerned with class size at Lane. Traditionally, 22 is the optimal class size but more than 50% of the classes have 24 and 25 students. This year, the number of Hanscom students attending the high school is lower than usual (86).

Ms. O’Gara expressed concern over the size of an Algebra I class at JGMS.

Ms. Bickford asked when the enrollment study would be completed. Dr. LaCroix said a draft is due next week.

7. Superintendent’s Report

-On October 19th there will be a Fiscal Planning meeting on the FY’11 budget.

-Linda Vanaria from the BHS Building Committee will address the School Committee next week and will turn the project over to the School Committee.

8. Minutes

Ms. Seibert made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the minutes of the May 12, 2009 School Committee meeting as amended.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. O’Gara

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

Ms. O’Gara made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the minutes of the May 26, 2009 School Committee meeting as amended.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. Seibert

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

9. Future Agenda

Budget

10. Adjournment

Ms. O’Gara made the following motion:

MOVED: Motion to adjourn at 10:50 p.m.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. Bickford

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Pierce	Yes
Ms. Seibert	Yes
Ms. Bickford	Yes
Ms. O’Gara	Yes
Mr. Hafer	Yes

School Committee Secretary

Date

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**EXECUTIVE SEESION
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