

BEDFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF

May 26, 2009

1. Call to Order

At 7:00 p.m., Ms. O'Gara called to order the meeting of the Bedford School Committee. Other members present were Mr. Pierce, Mr. Hafer, Ms. Seibert and Ms. Bickford.

2, Adjournment

Ms. Bickford made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee adjourn to Executive Session.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. Seibert

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

Roll Call Vote:

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

3. Return to Open Session

At 7:35 Ms. O'Gara called to order, the Open Session meeting of the Bedford School Committee. Other members present were Mr. Pierce, Mr. Hafer, Ms. Seibert, and Ms. Bickford. Charles Connell, student representative, was also present.

4. Comments From Public

None

5. Personnel Report

Dr. LaCroix presented two field trip requests for approval.

Mr. Felker has requested approval of the annual Marching Band Camp trip to Camp Jordan, Ellsworth, Maine. This year approximately 30-40 students will attend this camp on August 16- August 22nd to learn basic skills and technology for the Marching Band season. The cost will be \$350-400 per student and no cost to the schools. Mr. Felker, three Marching Band staff members and four parents will chaperone the trip.

Dr. LaCroix commented that she is very pleased to see the number of students interested in participating in the Marching Band.

Ms. Bickford made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the field trip request for the 30-40 students to attend the Marching Band camp in Ellsworth, Maine on August 16-22, 2009 at no cost to the schools.

MOTION: SECONDED by Ms. Seibert

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

Ms. Diane Pritchett has requested approval of the annual Madrigal Singers field trip. This trip will be held on September 11 – September 12, 2009 in Groton, Mass. The trip will be for 23 students and Ms. Pritchett and four parents will chaperone. The trip is to provide intense rehearsal time together and is an annual tradition. The cost is \$117 per student and no cost to the schools. Students will miss a part of school on September 11th.

Ms. Seibert made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the field trip request for the Madrigal Singers to travel to Groton, Ma on September 11-12, 2009 to participate in the annual rehearsal weekend at no cost to the schools, other than use of the school van.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. Bickford

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

Dr. LaCroix reported the following items:

Resignations:

Mary Littig	Grade 2 Teacher	Davis School
Allison Lowrey	Teaching Assistant	Lane School
Danielle Forest	Teaching Assistant	Lane School
Mark Frank	Teaching Assistant	Middle School

Appointments:

Andrew Lee	Replacement Social Studies Teacher	High School
Stania Augustin	Replacement Social Studies Teacher	High School
Heidi Scaltreto	Science Teacher	Middle School

6. Robotics Presentation

Mr. Mike Griffin and students on the Robotics Team described their winning experience at the recent competition, the BAE Granite State competition. This team designed and built, “Blue Lightning” the winning robot, which they demonstrated to the Committee.

The students, along with Mr. Griffin, described the experience. They said that it was a great opportunity to work together. They learned to be “gracious professionals” because your partner on one challenge could quickly become your competitor at the next challenge.

Mr. Griffin said that this was not an inexpensive competition but it was worth it. He hopes to get more sponsorship next year so students do not have to pay to attend (\$500 registration fee plus cost to build the robot.)

Mr. Griffin also showed some pictures of the recent trip to Belize and how much the students saw and learned about nature, wildlife, and Mayan culture.

The School Committee thanked Mr. Griffin for sharing this information and congratulated the Robotics Team for their success.

Mr. Griffin mentioned that the Robotics Team will be working with the Middle School Lego Robotics team next year. They are also considering establishing a Junior Lego Robotics team at the elementary level.

7. Davis School Improvement Plan

Ms. Jenny Brown, Principal, presented the 2009-2010 School Improvement Plan for Davis School. Mrs. Brown, who is leaving July 1st, thanked that School Committee and Dr. LaCroix for helping her start her Administrative career in Bedford. She said she was “honored” to start here.

Ms. Brown began her presentation with a review of some of the key accomplishments this past year.

- The Lane and Davis School Councils discussed the second to third grade transition and together, published a document to help parents cope with this transition. The document will be published in future Student Handbooks.
- The lunch program instituted a new prepayment system that worked well and has helped with outstanding receivables.
- The Bridges math curriculum has been adopted at grade 2.
- Science practices have been documented across the three grades at Davis. This has not happened in quite awhile.
- A K-5 writing committee has been created and 6+1 Traits and other best practices have been discussed. An outside speaker came in to meet with teachers on this topic.
- First grade adopted the Bridges math program this year and has common assessments.
- The K-2 report card has been implemented using Aspen.
- ELL resources have been developed from an Action Research team.
- Behavior Plans were developed on a cluster of second grade students with behavior issues. This was a lot of work but the students had a successful year as a result.

Ms. Brown then discussed goals for the 2009-2010 School year.

- Transition to the new Principal
- Continue to explore adding the fifth day of kindergarten. Approximately 340 people responded to a survey and the majority of the people are in favor of adding the fifth day. Ms. Brown said she would summarize the findings for Mr. Banios, the new incoming Principal.
- Summer work will be done by Davis and Lane staff to align the standards.
- Grade 2 teacher training in Bridges will continue and will include more collaboration with Grade 3 teachers from Lane.
- Teachers will take what they have learned about writing and turn it into curriculum and expectations.
- K and 1st grade will explore new handwriting programs. The goal is to work with area preschools too.
- Monitor the new K-2 report card, especially the reading continuum. Teachers will consult with one another so that assessment is consistent.
- Continue to review students’ needs and adjust programming accordingly.

Mr. Hafer thanked Ms. Brown for her work at Davis. He said that Davis is a fun environment but also is focused on education and curriculum. He feels that the experience really gives the students a solid base for success.

Ms. Bickford asked Ms. Brown about the effort to share details of Dibels with parents. Ms. Brown said that the staff will share Dibel information with parents at conferences (and will have a handout). Ms. Bickford said that this should really be a system goal.

Ms. Bickford commented that handwriting should really be a K-5 initiative. Today, children's handwriting is increasingly illegible as they move through middle and high school especially with the increased use of keyboards.

Ms. Brown said that she agrees that handwriting is important and that Davis and Lane teachers are very interested in dealing with the issue together. She said that they need to get the preschoolers involved too.

Ms. Bickford thanked Ms. Brown for the wonderful job she did at Davis School.

Ms. Seibert asked if parents feel that a focus on handwriting may be a waste of time? Ms. Brown said no, not at Davis. She said forming letters is a primary part of our learning.

Ms. Seibert thanked Ms. Brown for acknowledging how important it is for Davis School to evolve as the needs of students change over time.

Mr. Pierce thanked Ms. Brown and said it would be terrific if she came back to Bedford someday! He also commented that he pleased to see the data on the report cards as a start of a longitudinal look at the individual student as they move through the Bedford schools.

Mr. Pierce also asked about the recess grant/initiative that was implemented a few years ago. Ms. Brown said that this was the start of many practices that have been put into place today.

Ms. O'Gara said she was sorry to see Ms. Brown leave and wished her the best.

Ms. Bickford made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the Davis School Improvement Plan for the 2009-2010 school year as presented.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. Seibert

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

8. Lane School Improvement Plan Presentation

Mr. Ackerman, Principal, presented the Lane School Improvement Plan for 2009-2010 school year.

Mr. Ackerman said that this past year was a transition year and he thinks that overall, it went well. He said the staff worked really hard and that Mr. Nolan had done a lot of preparation work before he left.

Mr. Ackerman said that at Lane, the focus has been and will continue to be on the whole child. Next year, the goals will focus on the following:

- There will be a refocus on respect and good manners within the school environment.
- Classroom teachers will work with the students on ways to resolve conflicts.
- The style will become a little more “old school”.
- More staff will be added at recess and in the lunchroom
- Antibullying efforts will continue. One effort will involve summer reading suggestion of books with bullying theme.
- Staff will continue to gather data and use it to make student learning decisions.
- Consistent expectations will be set with regards to learning math facts.
- Continue to tackle the achievement gap.
- K-5 science curriculum review will continue.
- R.T.I. instruction will be used more at Lane. (Response to Intervention)
- Lane will continue to work with the Town on the Safe Routes to School initiative.
- Drop off and pick up procedures will be monitored and improved as necessary.

Mr. Ackerman also discussed how Lane School, along with the rest of the Bedford Public Schools, will try to move Social Studies curriculum to incorporate higher level thinking. Mr. Ackerman thinks technology will help do this and will allow students to have a more global perspective. At Lane, for example, fourteen classes have connected with an International partner.

Mr. Ackerman also said that overall, there have been great strides with technology use at Lane this past year. For example, the Lane School Blog is accessible in all classrooms and to all students and is a great way to engage students.

Ms. Bickford asked if there were any comments on the three-term report card. Mr. Ackerman said that teachers feel that there is not enough information each term to fairly evaluate students with a four-quarter report card. Therefore, efforts are underway to explore the three-term option. Mr. Ackerman said he would report back once feedback has been received.

Ms. Bickford asked where the “rubric” was that Mr. Ackerman referred to. Mr. Ackerman said he meant the Lane Golden Rules, which are in the handbook. He said he would like to simplify the Golden Rules.

Ms. Bickford asked about Safe Routes and why he thought it was important to participate. Mr. Ackerman said that it is a program that promotes fitness and environmental awareness (since the goal is to increase students walking to school.) Mr. Ackerman said that he sees this as something fun for students and families to participate in and to think about walking around town more.

Ms. Bickford said that she is pleased with the Social Studies goal of becoming more of a higher level thinking curriculum, but asked that Mr. Ackerman remember the importance of students learning facts too. Mr. Ackerman agrees that a balance is needed.

Ms. Seibert thanked Mr. Ackerman and said that she feels things are really coming together at Lane.

Mr. Hafer said that it was good to hear the whole child philosophy is still important at Lane.

Mr. Hafer asked how the morning recreation drop off program is working. Mr. Ackerman said that it is a great program and the students and parents are very happy with it.

Mr. Pierce asked Mr. Ackerman to not lose focus that Lane School is not a middle school and that it is a time when students learn the rules and tools. Mr. Ackerman agreed.

Ms. O'Gara said she is pleased with the strides in technology use. She said that technology can really help with many of the goals including learning math facts, strengthen writing, and increasing global awareness.

Mrs. Ellis, a member of the audience, asked if there would be plans to include parents in the respect/manners initiative. Mr. Ackerman said yes.

Mrs. Ellis also asked what RTI is. Mr. Ackerman said it is a system to identify students in need and to help use strategies to help have flexible support as needed. The goal is to see reductions in SPED.

Mr. Pierce made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the 2009-2010 School Improvement Plan for the Lane School.

MOTION SECONDED by Mr. Hafer

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

Dr. LaCroix said that antibullying efforts are happening K-8 but it is also important to teach our young students about cyber bullying. In the news, there was a case about a young student involved in cyber bullying and the consequences. It is important to teach our children about this area as well.

9. Approval of Contract

The School Committee considered approving a contract with LaRovere Design/Build Corporation for miscellaneous site work at the High School. The work includes:

- a new exterior stair
- new exterior ramp
- courtyard side walks
- new flagpole

LaRovere signed the contract and work will begin at the end of June.

Ms. Bickford asked is there was any word from the Jenks Nature Trail partners. Dr. LaCroix said that the parties have received the letter and no comments have been made.

Ms. Bickford asked if this work was part of the High School Project budget. Dr. LaCroix said yes.

Ms. Bickford made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the contract with LaRovere

Corporation of Everett, Ma for miscellaneous site work at a cost not to exceed \$150,754.

MOTION SECONDED by Mr. Pierce

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

10. Superintendent's Report

Dr. LaCroix reported that June 4th will be the High School graduation. The ceremony will be outside, rain or shine. She said that the tent is no longer available because the Building Project paid for it the last two years since the gym was unavailable. Umbrellas will be available if necessary.

11. Minutes for Review

Ms. Bickford made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the minutes of the February 10, 2009 School Committee meeting as amended.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. Seibert

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

12. Future Agenda

Ms. Bickford asked if there was any feedback from the community meeting on security. Dr. LaCroix said that the only outcome was to lock the second entrance at JGMS. Dr. LaCroix said that there was no consistent message from the community that would require any capital projects for consideration next year.

13. Adjournment

Ms. Seibert made the following motion:

MOVED: Motion to adjourn at 9:30, not to reopen.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. Bickford

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

Roll Call Vote:

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

School Committee Secretary

Date

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**EXECUTIVE SEESION
MINUTES OF**

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