

BEDFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF
September 18, 2012
Bedford High School - Large Instruction Room

1. Call to Order

At 7:35 p.m., Ms Bickford called to order the meeting of the Bedford School Committee. Other members present included Mr. Hafer, Ms. O’Gara, Mr. Pierce and Ms. Seibert.

2. Comments from the Public

None

3. Personnel Report

Mr. Sills asked the School Committee to consider approving an out-of-country field trip to Morocco for the February 2014 vacation.

Mr. Hebert is proposing offering a trip to forty 10th -12th grade students to travel to Morocco during February 2014 vacation. The educational aim of the trip is to explore and learn about the history and culture of Morocco. The trip is being run by the Explorica Company and will cost \$3,149 per person. Students will miss one day of school, the Friday before vacation. If more than 42 students sign up, then students will be asked to answer questions about what they hope to gain by going on this trip as a way to select. Teacher recommendations will also be used. Students will learn more about the culture, history, religion, customs and current events of Morocco before departure during Xblock and readings. Mr. Hebert explained that so far, no other trips have been planned for this time frame.

Mr. Hebert mentioned that if there is ever a travel advisory issued on Morocco, the travel company Explorica will work to set up an alternative destination.

Ms. Seibert made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the request to offer a trip to Morocco during vacation week in February 2014 at no cost to the school.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. O’Gara

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

Mr. Sills asked the School Committee to support several new grant-funded positions that need to be filled due to the increase in the ELL population. At Davis School, the ELL population has increased from 48 students to 61 and Lane’s population has increased from 12 to 25. Mr. Sills would like to add a .1 FTE. This increase would cost the district \$1,203 in FY’13.

Also, Mr. Sills asked to hire a Math Coach at Lane and will use Title 1 funds. Davis and the middle school need Title 1 support as well and Mr. Sills proposes hiring a 1.0 FTE to do this. He explained funds from Title 1 and an available salary line item of \$22,500 will be used.

Ms. Seibert made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve adding a .1 FTE to the Lane School ELL position at a cost of \$1,203 and a 1.0 FTE teaching position for John Glen Middle School and Davis School at a cost that is within the 2013 budgets.

MOTION SECONDED by Mr. Pierce

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

Ms. Seibert asked what salary differential exists from the summer hires, if any. Mr. Coelho said approximately \$40,000 is there.

Mr. Sills asked the School Committee to approve a job description that was discussed at the last meeting.

Mr. Pierce made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the job description for “Intervention Specialist” as proposed.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. O’Gara

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

Mr. Sills asked the School Committee to approve several Bedford Public School’s policies that were discussed at an earlier meeting.

Mr. Pierce made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the Student Health Services and Requirements Policy (File: JLC) as amended.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. O’Gara

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

Ms. Seibert made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the School Choice Policy (File: JFBB) as presented.

MOTION SECONDED by Mr. Pierce

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

Ms. Seibert made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the Executive Sessions Policy (File: BED) as presented.

MOTION SECONDED by Mr. Pierce

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

Ms. Seibert made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the Emergency Plans Policy (File: EBC) as presented.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. O’Gara

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

MS. Seibert made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the Professional Staff Hiring policy (File: GCF) as presented.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. O’Gara

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

Ms. Seibert made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the Instructional Materials policy (File: IJ) as presented.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. O’Gara

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

5. Presentation: iPad Project at BHS

Ms. Donna Clements and Ms. Colleen Murray presented information gathered on the iPad pilot at the high school.

Ms. Clements explained that last year, the pilot began and that 25% of the students and 30% of the teachers were given iPads. This year, all 9th and 10th grade students as well as 115 upper classmen (60% of the student population) received iPads. All high school teachers were equipped as well.

Ms. Clements reminded everyone of the goal of the initiative:

“Through the use of technology students will build their own personal learning networks, collaborate with others and be producers of knowledge, content and creative expression.”

Ms. Clements noted that the Strategic Plan “Vision 2017” includes a fusion of strategy and the technology vision of integrating technology in new and effective ways to enhance teaching and learning.

Ms. Clements said specifically, students will:

- Create and grow their own personal learning networks
- Collaborate with others locally and around the world
- Become producers of knowledge and content
- Acquire information
- Have the ability to creatively solve problems
- Develop critical thinking skills by considering multiple perspectives
- Construct and communicate original thoughts
- Access tools and information they need to be active self-directed and discerning learners.

Ms. Clements explained that the iPad pilot was evaluated with the assistance of MassCUE (a technology assessment program). Four Bedford Public School administrators were trained on how to use this program to evaluate the iPad program.

As a result, several surveys were developed for parents, students and teachers. Also, unannounced classroom visits were done to observe iPad use. Focus groups with students, parents and teachers were also conducted.

Feedback from parents indicated that they did not know the technology vision of the schools. They were also very concerned about the increased distractibility of the device in school and at home. Parents were also concerned that some of the assignments using the iPad were long and time consuming.

Students also did not know the technology vision of the school department. They too, were concerned about the distractibility issues. They would like to see a common app for note taking and to see consistent use of the iPad in all the classes. They would like to see more digital content.

Teachers were most concerned with classroom management and would like more professional development opportunities to share best practices. They also noted a problem with email and would like more time to develop content.

Some other important conclusions about the iPad use were discovered:

- Students were more organized and prepared for class.
- Students were more engaged in classroom activities.
- Students utilized various tools to creatively solve problems.
- Students were learning from a variety of sources and therefore developing critical thinking skills.
- Students were using tools to help them become active, self-directed learners.
- The learning environment was empowering students.
- The learning environment helped students communicate more effectively.
- Students had easy access to resources, files and applications.
- Students have opportunities to become successful members of a global community.
- Teachers were migrating current materials to digital format.
- Teachers were collaborating more.

Ms. Clement also pointed out some areas that need attention as the 1:1 Program continues.

- Determine common apps to be used for note taking and organization.
- Teachers should test assignments to determine the length of time to complete and the effectiveness of the technology.
- Ensure that iPads are effectively implemented in all classes.
- Professional development should focus on increasing student-centered learning.
- Teachers should create digital library of resources, tutorials, and examples of best practices.
- Continue to share best practices at staff meetings.
- Continue to collaborate with Burlington and Andover schools.

Ms. Clements also spent some time discussing updating policies and handbooks as a result of the iPad implementation. She said policies need to be clarified with regards to responsibility of payment for damage or loss of an iPad. Also, a new policy has been developed to ensure iPad use is not disruptive to the educational environment. She also noted how important it will be to consistently enforce these new policies. Some work has already been done in these areas.

She reiterated the importance of communicating the district's technology vision. She suggested using a video broadcast to demonstrate what is happening in the classrooms with the iPads.

Ms. Colleen Murray reviewed what was new this year in the technology end to support this initiative. For example:

- The wireless Network at the high school was replaced.
- JGMS received the older equipment.
- A new computer technician was hired to help with support.
- Students may now bring their own device to the High School and use the network.

Going forward (2013-2014), Ms. Murray would like to complete the iPad implementation and to add an additional computer technician to help with support. Also, she would like to continue with Smartboard installations at Lane School.

Ms. Seibert thanked Ms. Clements and Ms. Murray on the helpful presentation. She would however, like to see the full copy of the survey results.

Ms. Seibert noted that the Technology Vision for 2017 is big and expensive. She wondered if the iPads are saving any money in the long run. Mr. Sills said that he will do the analysis but it is a little too early in the process. However one example that is encouraging is that a cost of a Chemistry text on the iPad is \$14 versus a cost of \$40-60 for a printed book. Overall he feels that this vision will be expensive at first but will eventually result in ways to save money.

Ms. Seibert said she was pleased that overall the feedback is positive. She noted that it sounds like teachers need more time to learn to more effectively with the iPad.

Ms. Clement said this year it was very helpful to get the iPads to the teachers before the summer break so they had time to get to know it. But she agrees that teachers are facing the need for more time to learn something new.

Ms. Seibert asked if there is a way to automatically back up student work on the iPad. Ms. Murray said yes that the Dropbox application does this as do some other apps.

Mr. Hafer thanked Ms. Clements and Ms. Murray for a very thorough presentation. He is pleased to learn the outcome of the surveys and to see the resulting action items. He is also glad to see a misuse policy being developed and instituted.

Mr. Hafer said that the Vision 2017 plan needs to focus on areas we are saving – costs and time.

Mr. Pierce said the presentation was a very helpful framework. He looks forward to seeing more content development and including this information to parents and the community. He thinks developing a video to do this is a great idea.

Mr. Pierce asked that parents be notified if their student misuses the device (by playing games).

Ms. O’Gara was pleased to hear all the details. She also thinks that the projected need for more technology support may be the worst-case scenario. She hopes that the demand for technology support may not be needed as much projected.

Ms. O’Gara asked about the misuse policy and what defines a “game”? Ms. Clements said that students should close all apps when they leave a class. Therefore, when they enter a new classroom, the iPad is turned off and the teacher knows what to expect to see on the iPad. (Some teachers do use “games” in their lessons.)

Ms. Bickford thanked Ms. Clement and Ms. Murray for a comprehensive report. She believes that this is the way the future is going. (She referred to a recent article in the Boston Globe about the number of schools in Massachusetts that use iPads.) She said that Bedford is not really a pioneer but is an early adopter. She gives the staff credit for embracing the technology and thanked the community for supporting it. She agrees that it is very important to teach the community about the value of the iPad.

Ms. Bickford asked how many iPads broke last year. Ms. Murray said about 30 out of 250.

Ms. Bickford asked if any families refused to sign the iPad contract. Mr. Turner, Principal of BHS, said that last year, a few parents did say no. But everyone agreed this year. The back up plan is that if a family refuses to sign the contract, an iPad would be reserved for the student use at school. Students will have access to all materials.

Ms. Bickford said that schools now have the responsibility to teach students when it is appropriate to multitask and how to focus without trying to multitask.

Mr. Sills added that the iPad really helps teachers create assessments that truly measure critical thinking. They allow for more sophisticated and complex assessments.

6. Approval of Superintendent Goals

The School Committee listened to the Superintendent's Goals presentation last week and reviewed the complete document.

Mr. Pierce made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the Superintendent's Goal for the 2012-2013 School Year.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. O'Gara

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

Mr. Sills said that the complete goal document will be posted on the website.

7. Appointment of School Attendance Officer

Ms. Bickford explained that annually, the School Committee must appoint attendance officers.

Ms. Seibert made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee appoint the four Principals and 5 Assistant Principals and the two School Resource Officers (Jeff Wardwell and Steven Waite) as School Attendance Officers for the 2012-2013 school year.

MOTION SECONDED by Mr. Pierce

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

8. Revote of FY13 School Budget

Mr. Coelho asked the School Committee to consider revoting the FY 13 budget based on revised salary and non-salary projections, inclusive of all personnel and payroll updates through the opening of the school year. Mr. Coelho said the revote represents a shift of approximately \$41,793 from salary line items – based on hiring across the districts and CBA reserve expenses. The funds will be shifted to the School Committee Reserve line item. Also, the request for additional .1 FTE to address ELL support and the \$22,500 to fund additional tutoring are incorporated in the budget revote figures:

Mr. Pierce made the following motion:

MOVED: That the Revised FY13 budget breakout be as follows:

Salary \$23,536,632

Non-Salary \$ 9,250,570

Grand Total \$32,787,202

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. Seibert

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

9. Surplus Property

Mr. Coelho asked the School Committee to declare several items as surplus thus allowing the school department the ability to dispose of them properly. Mr. Coelho explained that the items are no longer in use by the district. This action will be in accordance to state procurement laws.

Ms. O’Gara made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee declare the following items as listed on memo dated 9/14/2012 as surplus:

(69) World History People and Nations textbooks

(48) World History Perspectives on the Past

(18) 28”, 30”, and 32’ JVC televisions

(1) Ascension Portable Wheelchair Lift

(2) Sharp ER-2386 Cafeteria Cash Registers

MOTION SECONDED by Mr. Pierce

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

Ms. Bickford asked Mr. Coelho to make sure that there would not be an instance where we would need or use the portable wheelchair lift before the item is disposed.

10. Superintendent’s Report

Coordinated Program Review (CPR)

Mr. Sills spoke about the CPR review that the district went through last year. He explained that Bedford was cited to improve in a few areas (five out of six hundred) but overall, Bedford was described as the “gold standard”. A formal response will be prepared and delivered by September 24th.

AP Exams

Mr. Sills said that 119 students took 188 AP exams last spring and seventy-five percent of the students scored 4 or 5. These scores exceed state and global averages. Mr. Sills noted that 23 students took the English AP exam and 20 of the students scored a 4 or 5. What is interesting about this is that Bedford does not offer an AP English class. The same scenario existed with the Psychology exam. Mr. Sills said that these facts say a lot to colleges about the rigor at Bedford High School.

MCAS

Scores will be reported publicly in the next couple of days. Mr. Sills said that Massachusetts is a high performing state and therefore has different targets instead of AYP. He explained that a new index is being used to help us focus on closing the achievement gap. All in all, Bedford continues to be a high performing district. Bedford High School met and exceeds targets including 83% of our high needs students are meeting targets.

Mr. Sills said Lane and JGMS show some deficiencies in meeting the new index. He believes more vertical work is needed as well as additional interventions to the high need populations. Mr. Sills explained that because of these deficiencies Bedford is deemed a level 2 district. Mr. Sills said he does not expect to stay at this level.

Ms. Bickford said that it is unfortunate that the media will likely only report level one and level two districts without explanations.

11. Liaison Reports

Ms. Seibert reported that the CEC met to discuss the new process to be used this year to evaluate and prioritize capital projects.

Mr. Hafer said that the outdoor fields committee has been meeting and is putting together an inventory report. They will be reporting their findings to the Selectmen.

Ms. O’Gara said that Bedford won (again) “100 Best Communities for Young People”. She said that the schools were noted for their technology and drop out prevention efforts.

Ms. Bickford said that the Fiscal Planning Committee met to discuss financial results. The town fiscal policy document is being discussed and edited and will soon find its way back to the School Committee for feedback.

12. Minutes

Ms. O’Gara made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the minutes of the June 12, 2012 School Committee meeting as amended.

MOTION SECONDED by Mr. Pierce

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

13. Adjournment

Ms. O’Gara made the following motion:

MOVED: Motion to adjourn at 9:45 p.m. to Executive Session to discuss strategies with regards to litigation, not to reopen.

MOTION SECONDED by Mr. Pierce

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

Roll Call Vote:

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

School Committee Secretary

Date

BEDFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE
September 18, 2012
Exhibits/Documents

- Draft Job Description of “Intervention Specialist”
- Draft of the following policies:
 - Student Health Services and Requirements File: JLC
 - School Choice File: JFBB
 - Executive Sessions File: BEC
 - Emergency Plans File: EBC
 - Professional Staff Hiring File: GCF
 - Instructional Materials File: IJ
- Presentation: Bedford High School iPad Initiative
- Draft of Minutes of June 12, 2012 School Committee meeting

BEDFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Executive Session
September 18, 2012