

**BEDFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
MINUTES OF  
November 29, 2011**

**Bedford High School - Large Instruction Room**

**1. Call to Order**

At 7:35 p.m., Ms. Seibert called to order the meeting of the Bedford School Committee. Other members present included Mr. Hafer, Ms. O’Gara, Mr. Pierce, and Ms. Bickford. Matt Coughlin and Sam Markuse, student representatives were also in attendance.

**2. Comments**

None

**3. Policy Presentations**

Dr. LaCroix asked the School Committee to review the revised “Pregnant Student Policy”. She noted that the policy has been updated due to changes in regulations. The change is that the student, family and school need to develop a plan. A doctor’s involvement is no longer required.

Dr. LaCroix also asked the School Committee to review the Traumatic Brain Injury/Concussion policy. Mr. Keith Mangan, Athletic Director, explained that this new policy is a result of new state guidelines and laws regarding concussions. He explained that the policy requires changes to some of the athletic forms and the development of a new form regarding education about concussions. Now, parents need to complete current department approved training on head injuries. Also, all of the athletic staff must complete annual training in prevention and recognition of sports-related head injury.

If a student is injured with a concussion the student can only come back to sports if the state form is completed by a doctor. There will be gradual progression back to play.

This new policy has increased communications with community physicians.

Bedford Public Schools will have to report head injuries on and off the playing field.

Ms. O’Gara noted that some colleges have base-line cognitive testing done to help determine the affect of any head injuries. She asked if Bedford High school has any plans to do this as well. Mr. Mangan said that the athletic booster club would like to fund this initiative starting next fall.

Ms. O’Gara said it is very important to get student athletes on board and to understand the importance of the new policy.

Mr. Hafer asked about implementing the policy at the middle school. Mr. Mangan said yes, it is applicable to JGMS athletes as well.

Mr. Hafer asked what role the Student Assistance Team plays with the new Concussion policy. Mr. Mangan said that the Student Assistant Team is a team of faculty and staff from the high school that looks at many student-related issues including how head injuries affect the classroom. However, a Concussion Team has now been formed and has representation from Administration, Guidance, Athletics and the Nurse.

Mr. Pierce asked about privacy laws. Mr. Mangan said all records in the athletic office and nurse's office are locked. However coaches do need to know about prior history of concussions along with specific medical histories and issues.

Ms. Bickford asked for some clarification on some of the language regarding parents' obligation to report any head injury to the school.

Ms. Seibert noted that the policy requires a lot more work from the Athletic Department. Mr. Mangan agreed but said that it is important to educate coaches, parents and students and his office will keep track of everything.

Ms. Seibert asked where the model policy presented tonight came from. Mr. Mangan explained it was from the Department of Health.

Ms. Seibert said that the School Committee would vote on both policies presented tonight at the next School Committee meeting.

Dr. LaCroix said that Mr. Mangan did a great job working on developing this policy for Bedford sooner rather than later. She said it was another mandate written to protect our students but unfortunately, comes unfunded with a lot of administrative work.

#### **4. International Student Program**

Dr. LaCroix presented information to the School Committee on an international student program, "Educatus International". The program offers international students the possibility to attend a public or private high school and to stay with a host family in the USA. The students have an opportunity to earn diplomas.

Dr. LaCroix explained that in order for Bedford High School to participate, Bedford would have to apply and pay a \$2,350 application fee. The company would come to Bedford High School and review and approve our application. BPS would in turn charge tuition for any student to attend. The agency will handle the paperwork and the family placement.

Dr. LaCroix noted that several nearby school districts participate and many more are considering it. All in all, she thinks it is great opportunity for international students to come to Bedford High School.

Mr. Hafer asked about the amount of tuition charged to students. Dr. LaCroix said that it is usually based on the cost per student but it is up to the School Committee to decide.

Mr. Hafer asked about the number of students that come. Dr. LaCroix said that is up to the Principal.

Mr. Hafer asked about the deadline to apply to the program. Dr. LaCroix explained that it is a 60 day approval process.

Dr. LaCroix recommended that the School Committee charge \$17,500 tuition which is the responsibility of the family.

Mr. Pierce asked about discipline rules. Dr. LaCroix said that the international students would follow the same rules as our students.

Ms. O’Gara said that the program looks appealing especially since Educatius International does all the work including the background checks, visas, and finding host families.

Ms. Bickford agreed and said it was a great opportunity for diversity in our school. She did wonder why the brochure was slanted towards private schools being a strong choice for college prep and public schools for fun courses and sports.

Ms. Seibert asked about the process if this proposal is approved. Dr. LaCroix said if approved, the first step is to begin the Visa sponsoring process and to schedule a site visit.

Mr. Kenney, a member of the Finance Committee in the audience, asked if this would affect the School Choice law. Dr. LaCroix said no, it would not. Bedford can still decline to participate in School Choice.

Sam Markuse asked if there would be any GPA guidelines. Dr. LaCroix said yes, the students would follow BHS academic rules and guidelines.

Matt Coughlin asked if there were any opportunities for BHS students to go abroad. Dr. LaCroix said not through this program but reminded everyone that the Rotary Club offers an exchange program for Bedford students. She feels that this new program would be a good compliment to the existing Rotary program.

Ms. Bickford made the following motion:

**MOVED: That the School Committee approve the application to Educatius International for Bedford High School to be accepted into the program at a cost of \$2,350.**

**MOTION SECONDED by Ms. O’Gara**

**MOTION APPROVED: 5-0**

Dr. LaCroix thanked Mr. Kevin Tracey, Assistant Principal, for his hard work on investigating this program.

## **5. FY’13 Budget Presentation**

Dr. LaCroix presented the FY 2013 Operating Budget Request to the School Committee. She thanked her Administrative Team for their hard work in the preparation and gave special thanks to Mr. Coelho for his tireless work in the process.

Dr. LaCroix reviewed the guidelines used by the Administrative team during preparation of this budget. They include:

1. Recognize contractual and legally mandated drivers.
2. Recognize the tight fiscal conditions of the town and state.
3. Limit Program Administrators to a zero percent increase in discretionary spending.
4. The out-of-district budget is based on known placements.
5. The CASE budget is based on student enrollment as of June 30, 2011.

Dr. LaCroix highlighted some changes for the FY’13.

- In-house special education programs will be expanded. She noted that additional costs will be incurred in order to realize bigger savings in the future.
- Add 1.0 FTE for an additional Transitions Class Teacher
- Add .6 FTE for a Teaching Assistant at BHS

- Add .6 FTE for an additional Occupational Therapist for JGMS and Lane Schools.
- 2.0 FTEs for Teaching Assistants at JGMS.
- Move the Assistant Principal position at Lane School to the operating budget. (This position was grant funded this year but the grant is ending.)
- Add .4 FTE for a Teaching Assistant at the High School to cover Directed Study classes.
- Add a .1 FTE for an Adjustment Counselor at JGMS.
- Add a .2 FTE Computer Technician for the system. This will make a current employee full time.
- Restore \$4,200 for summer technology students.
- Restore \$9,200 for summer custodian help.
- Add a .5 FTE adjustment counselor for Lane School to support new SPED programs.
- Transfer a 1.0 FTE from Grade 2 to Grade 3 due to the large class moving through.

Dr. LaCroix explained that the kindergarten enrollment number is unknown at this time but is projected to be 183. She won't know if this is accurate until the spring.

In summary, the FY'13 request is \$33,058,930 which is \$1,342,550 more than the FY'12 approved budget of \$31,716,380 (a 4.23% increase).

Dr. LaCroix also noted that we will not be getting the \$220,000 from the Federal Ed Jobs Grant or \$50,000 from State Impact Aid Mitigation due to smaller Hanscom enrollment.

Dr. LaCroix broke the budget request down further as follows:

FY '13 Core Services	\$26,394,597
ERI/SLBB- staff retirements	\$108,406*
SPED ODD Expenses	\$5,789,129
Utilities	\$766,798
Grand Total	\$33,058,930

\*Dr. LaCroix noted that this number is already out-dated as several more teachers have just submitted retirement paperwork and the deadline to do so is January.

The School Committee discussed the School System's obligation to pay for transportation for any homeless students. For example, if a homeless student is enrolled in Bedford schools and is then placed in another shelter out of town, Bedford may have to pay for transportation to Bedford schools. Dr. LaCroix said that the State is beginning to discuss this issue as it realizes the burden it is becoming for towns and school systems.

The School Committee discussed the FY'13 Out-of-District request. Dr. LaCroix pointed out in her presentation that Bedford avoided approximately \$2.9 million in tuition expenses by creating in-house special education programs. The FY'12 costs of these in-house programs was \$1,728,922 versus an estimated cost of \$4,651,054 in ODD tuitions. Ms. Taymore however did point out that we have a lot of vulnerabilities with these in-house programs. She said it is important that we keep the classes small, improve our skills in teaching these specialized students, and realize that teaching assistants are also critical in helping these students succeed.

Mr. Pierce and Ms. Bickford asked Mr. Coelho to present the cost savings over the last four years (the number of years the programs have been around) too. Mr. Coelho agreed to develop this information.

Dr. LaCroix pointed out that this budget request assumes a 65% state reimbursement rate for special education costs. She believes this is a solid assumption but will not know more until February the earliest. This results in an approximate \$1.09 million offset.

Dr. LaCroix also presented the transportation budget request (\$948.5K) and thanked Bedford Charter for working so closely with us this year to smooth out the new bus routes and schedules. She also noted that FY'13 is the first year of the extended option if the district chooses to invoke the contract option.

She also presented the facilities number (\$2,437,911) and the utilities number (\$766,798). Dr. LaCroix reminded everyone that the total utility budget has dropped 39.9% since FY'08 through closer rate monitoring and conservation measures.

Dr. LaCroix explained that the budget requests includes \$2,210,764 in budget offsets, a change of -2.01% from FY'12 budget.

Dr. LaCroix explained the risks in her budget request:

- State sustainability
- Building rentals
- Special Education risks – new population, no control of tuition costs, etc.

Dr. LaCroix pointed out what is missing from her request:

- Fifth day of kindergarten
- New teaching positions to mitigate large class sizes
- Offering Mandarin Chinese
- Adding staff to support growing ELL population and to offer translation services
- Expansion of the EXCEL program to the middle school
- Staffing and hardware to meet changing demands of technology

Dr. LaCroix said that the budget discussions will continue on the next two School Committee meetings (December 6 and 13<sup>th</sup>) and that the School Committee will work with the Fiscal Planning Committee to define available revenue for the school and town budget needs.

School Committee members had several requests for additional information and a few questions/comments.

Members agreed to email Mr. Coelho specific requests for additional information for their analysis. (For example FTE schedules comparing FY'12 and FY'13; textbook schedules; computer migration schedules)

Ms. O'Gara asked why the Special Education transportation expense is so big. Mr. Coelho explained that seventy students are transported and depending on where they go, the cost varies. Some students are in severe need and require an aid to ride with them.

Ms. Bickford said she is concerned about the class size at the high school and would like some information on enrollment numbers by school over time.

Ms. Bickford said she is impressed that the budget request is 4.23%, the lowest increase ever requested at this point in time of the budget process.

## **6. Superintendent's Report**

Dr. LaCroix said that the School Committee should expect to have more responsibility with the Collaboratives – appointing members and reviewing budgets – due to recent state activities in this area.

## **7. Liaison Reports**

Mr. Hafer reminded everyone that the Bedford Education Foundation will be holding a fundraiser at Barnes and Nobles on December 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup>.

Ms. O’Gara reported that the Energy Task Force will be applying for another grant and will ask for a letter of support (which will be presented at the next school committee meeting).

## **8. Minutes**

Ms. Bickford made the following motion:

**MOVED: That the School Committee approve the minutes of the October 11, 2011 School Committee meeting as amended.**

**MOTION SECONDED by Mr. Pierce**

**MOTION APPROVED: 5-0**

Ms. Bickford made the following motion:

**MOVED: That the School Committee approve the minutes of the November 8, 2011 Executive Session meeting of the School Committee.**

**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 November 17, 2011 Executive Session meeting of the School Committee.**

**MOTION SECONDED by Mr. Pierce**

**MOTION APPROVED: 5-0**

## **9. Adjournment**

Mr. Hafer made the following motion:

**MOVED: Motion to adjourn, at 10:00 p.m.**

**MOTION SECONDED by Mr. Pierce**

**MOTION APPROVED: 5-0**

### **Roll Call Vote:**

<b>Ms. Seibert</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Mr. Hafer</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Mr. Pierce</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Ms. Bickford</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Ms. O’Gara</b>	<b>Yes</b>

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School Committee Secretary

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Date

**BEDFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

**November 29, 2011**

**Exhibits/Documents**

- **Bedford Public Schools 2013 Operating Budget Request dated November 29, 2011**
- **Draft of October 11, 2011 School Committee minutes.**
- **Draft of November 8, 2011 Executive Session minutes.**
- **Draft of November 17, 2011 Executive Session minutes.**

**Bedford School Committee**

**Executive Session Minutes  
November 29, 2011**