

**BEDFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF
May 24, 2011**

Bedford High School - Large Instruction Room

1. Call to Order

At 7:30 p.m., Mr. Hafer called to order the meeting of the Bedford School Committee. Other members present included Ms. Seibert, Ms. O’Gara, and Mr. Pierce. Ms. Bickford was not in attendance.

2. Comments From Public

None

3. Personnel Report

Dr. LaCroix asked the School Committee to consider approving 2 job descriptions – a Library Educational Assistant and a Foreign Language Lab Assistant.

After review, Ms. Seibert made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the Educational Assistant – Foreign Language Lab (High School) job description as presented.

MOTION SECONDED by Mr. Pierce

MOTION APPROVED: 4-0

Roll Call Vote:

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

Ms. Seibert made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the Educational Assistant – Library position job description as presented.

MOTION SECONDED by Mr. Pierce

MOTION APPROVED: 4-0

Roll Call Vote:

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

Dr. LaCroix also presented three out-of-state field trips for the School Committee to consider.

The first trip is a request from Mr. Jim Sunderland for travel with 11 students to the University of Maryland for the National History Day competition. The trip date is June 12 – June 16, 2011 and will cost \$453 per student which includes transportation via bus, lodging, meals and registration and required fees. Students would miss four days of school.

Ms. Seibert made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the out-of-state field trip request by Mr. Sunderland to travel to University of Maryland for the National History Day Competition on June 12 –16, 2011 for eleven students at no cost to the school department.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. O’Gara

MOTION APPROVED: 4-0

Roll Call Vote:

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

Ms. O’Gara said that she hopes there are some fundraising efforts to help students in need.

The second trip request is from Dana Button who requested permission to travel to Spain during the April 2012 school break. The trip would be open to 45 students at a cost of \$2,679 per student. Students would miss one day of school due to travel time.

Ms. Seibert made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the field trip request to Spain for approximately 45 students to travel during April 12 – April 22, 2012 at no cost to the school department.

MOTION SECONDED by Mr. Pierce

MOTION APPROVED: 4-0

Roll Call Vote:

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

The final out-of-state field trip request is from Mr. Hebert who is requesting permission for approximately 42 students to travel to Greece during February 2012 break. The cost is \$2,392 per student. One day of school will be missed due to travel time.

Ms. Seibert made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the field trip request for 42 students to travel to Greece during the period of February 17-25, 2012 at a cost of approximately \$2,392 per student and at no cost to the school.

MOTION SECONDED by Mr. Pierce

MOTION APPROVED: 4-0

Roll Call Vote:

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

Ms. O’Gara said that she understands that the tour company, Explorica, has a good reputation.

Dr. LaCroix announced the following informational items:

Resignation:

Colleen Reed	ELL Teacher	Davis
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Appointments:

Tiffany Cook	Board Certified Behavior Analyst	Davis & Lane
Gretta Venuti	.5 Elementary Teacher	Lane
Percy Napier	METCO Director	System

4. Social Studies Program Review

Mr. Mike McAllister, Principal of Butler School in Belmont (and father of a first grader at Davis School and graduate of BHS) presented the program review recently completed on the Social Studies Department. He thanked other members of the visiting team including Geoff Tegnell from Brookline, Ellen Shea from Lexington, Kevin O'Reilly from Hamilton-Wenham, and Judi Allen from Malden.

Mr. McAllister said that the goal of the study was to identify successes and needs from an outside perspective. The major questions considered were

How aligned is the curriculum K-12?

How clear are the course expectations? (BHS)

To what extent does the Social Studies curriculum and its delivery meet the needs of all learners?

Highlights from Mr. McAllister's presentation include:

Davis School Strengths

- Impressed that specialists are taking the lead in incorporating Social Studies materials.
- Davis Town is a great example of a unit that integrates Social Studies, Science, Math and English Language Arts.
- Common projects at each grade level encourage equity and encourages collaborations.

Davis School Challenges

- Is the specialist curriculum being reinforced and assessed in the classroom?
- Need more critical thinking.
- Continue to develop common assessments.
- Need professional development in Social Studies content areas.

Lane School Strengths

- Team teaching is great – it ensures social studies is being taught.
- Great creativity and collaboration with curriculum alignment.
- Common assessments are being implemented.
- Technology is a tremendous focus on every lesson.

Lane School Challenges

- Need more critical thinking.
- Mixed messages on amount of time to spend on Social Studies.
- Need for professional development.
- Desire for more technology.

Middle School Strengths

- Strong professional relationships.
- Good emphasis on critical thinking skills.
- Good assessments on critical thinking skills.
- Solid alignment of frameworks.
- Encouragement of students to question reliability of online sources.
- Good use of technology.
- Agendas and objectives always reinforced.

Middle School Challenges

- Is there a clear plan for foundation texts in 8th grade?
- Need for more technology for students to use to generate work.
- Parent concern about moving to high school – challenge of rigor and workload.

BHS Strengths

- Curriculum is constantly being updated.
- Teachers are always communicating with one another.
- Major focus in critical thinking and assessing it.
- Accessible technology.
- Clear expectations.
- Passion of teachers.
- Great opportunities for extracurricular activities.

BHS Challenges

- Need more focus on reading skills. (Lane School faculty can help with this.)
- Parent concern about level mobility and question if all level of courses are getting the same level of challenges.
- Not all opportunities are available at all levels.

Major system-wide commendations include:

- Commitment to professional collaboration.
- Effective use of technology.
- Intense focus on critical thinking.
- Increasing commitment to correlating to Mass. Frameworks.
- Coordinated alignment of all district-wide documents.
- Well-organized site visit.
- Incredible attention and care by Social Studies host team – Christine Butler, Joe Casey, Karen Lerra and Susan Nocera.

Major system-wide recommendations include:

- Encouraging BHS teachers to shift to student centered learning.
- Provide equity and opportunity in non-level 5 courses.
- Explicitly teach literacy strategies at BHS and JGMS.
- Create more common planning times dedicated to Social Studies.
- Give teachers access to more content area professional development.
- Explore the expansion of 21st century skills beyond technology.

Mr. Hafer thanked Mr. McAllister and the entire program review team.

Mr. Pierce asked if the next step is the action plan. Ms. Butler said yes, that it will take about 6 months to prepare the action plan. Ms. Butler commented that she is overall very pleased with the Program Review results as it validates Bedford's strengths and weaknesses. She is going to coordinate the development of the Action Plan with the English department. She hopes this interdisciplinary approach will help the elementary teachers cope with the multiple self-studies that they are involved with simultaneously.

Mr. Pierce likes this interdisciplinary approach but asked how common elements of the findings of the report are shared across the district. Dr. LaCroix said that this becomes part of the work of each Principal and established vertical teams will work on it as well.

Mr. Pierce asked if there was "initiative overload" especially at the elementary level.

Ms. Butler said that it is a challenge for leaders because there is a lot going on and many recommendations do interact with different initiatives.

Ms. Nocera said she appreciates Mr. Pierce's concern but the Social Studies self-study makes teachers feel confident.

Ms. Lerra said it is a challenge and that teachers are always looking at ways to combine initiatives and curriculums. This happens during collaborations.

Ms. Taymore said that the Common Core drives common skills that help teachers think about how things overlap. For example, how can things discussed during the Literacy block spill over to Social Studies or Science?

Mr. Pierce said that he believes that the self-study and independent review process is far more rewarding than evaluating the programs entirely on test scores. He hopes that the Race to the Top focuses on this and not test scores.

Dr. LaCroix said that the Board of Education will vote on new standards for evaluation and Bedford will not rely on test scores.

Ms. O'Gara asked Mr. McAllister to comment more on the recommendation to teach reading strategies along with content. Mr. McAllister said that this recommendation will make teachers have important conversations and focus on things that will help students in the long run, as opposed to things that help students pass a test.

Ms. O'Gara asked if identifying "power skills" and "power content" of each lesson will help ensure equity in all levels. Mr. McAllister said yes, identifying core skills and content will ensure all students in all levels learn these skills and content.

Ms. O'Gara said that a parent asked if equitable rigor in all levels could be accomplished without relying on homework. Mr. McAllister said that it is important to understand the point of homework and having meaningful homework is key.

Ms. O'Gara asked Mr. Casey to comment on the fact that the Middle School does not have levels in Social Studies. Mr. Casey said that it is challenging to teach a class with such diversity but it is all about differentiating instruction.

Ms. Seibert commented that tonight's presentation is a good example of the collaboration and critical thinking skills we want our students to learn.

Ms. Seibert said she is concerned overall with the amount of homework even if it is meaningful. Ms. Butler said she is working informally with the English Department on this topic.

Mr. Hafer said that he is impressed with the amount of interdisciplinary efforts that are underway.

5. Lane School's 2011-2012 School Improvement Plan

Mr. Rob Ackerman discussed highlights from the current school year and presented the 2011-2012 School Improvement Plan for Lane.

2010-2011 Review

- Emphasis on building community throughout the school.
- Started developing common assessments in Social Studies and Science.
- Continued with identifying essential skills in all subjects.
- Collected data in English and Math and will do so more in Social Studies and Science.
- Ramped up anti-bullying efforts during lunch, recess and before school.
- Issued parent survey in January. Results indicate that 95% parents think Lane is doing an excellent job, overall.

2011-2012 School Improvement Goals

Mr. Ackerman said that the focus in 2011-2012 will be implementing a new block schedule that will accommodate 90 minutes of uninterrupted English Language Arts as well as a 30-minute block for intervention. The 30-minute intervention block will be called "WIN" – what I need. Two of these 30-minute blocks will focus on writing needs. Mr. Ackerman explained that due to these changes, foreign language classes will meet twice a week for 45 minutes. There is also set times for Social Studies/Science and specials. The plan is to have various teachers teach specific skills during the intervention blocks. Mr. Ackerman thinks that the new schedule will be more consistent and a success.

Ms. O'Gara asked how the new schedule reflects children's developmental needs. Mr. Ackerman said that this is a challenge of scheduling but each class will still be flexible and based on students' needs.

Ms. Taymore said that developing the new Lane and Davis schedules has been a teacher driven process. She is also pleased that it gives Social Studies and Science dedicated times. Ms. Taymore reminded everyone that a 90-minute literacy block does not mean one activity for the entire 90 minutes. It will require all the staff to participate including Teaching Assistants, Librarians, Occupational Therapists, and Speech Therapists.

Mr. Ackerman said he is committed to trying the new schedule for a year.

Mr. Ackerman also pointed out that next year, the Library will be used as a resource, similar to the computer lab. Students will still have weekly access but the Librarian will be teaching

research skills. Classrooms can sign up with the Librarian. The Librarian is very excited about this change.

Mr. Ackerman said RTI is another huge goal for 2011-2012. Also, curriculum work will focus on writing maps, the 90-minute ELA block, creating common assessments in all subjects, research projects and higher order thinking skills.

Professional development will concentrate on diversity and Autism.

Mr. Pierce said that he is not sure that one year will be enough to measure the effect in changing the frequency of foreign language class time. He understands the pressure to change but the effect will not be noticed until high school years.

Mr. Ackerman said that we need to examine our priorities. He understands that Bedford has always valued a well-rounded education and hopefully the new Lane School schedule will accommodate this.

Mr. Pierce asked what was going with the transition from 5th grade to 6th grade. Mr. Ackerman said there was a parent meeting last week and that a student visit is planned as well. He does need to ensure that teachers in both grades are talking with one another.

Ms. O’Gara asked if Mr. Ackerman had enough staff to cover the high-risk areas for bullying. Mr. Ackerman said he had enough and that he could always use more.

Ms. O’Gara asked for more information on the “WIN” block. Mr. Ackerman said that non-special education students will be helped during this time. For example, if a student fails a subtraction test, this child will meet with a teacher who will focus on subtraction skills with a group of students who need it.

Ms. O’Gara asked if all the data that has been collected overtime is truly used. Mr. Ackerman said yes and that the data will help plan the WIN blocks.

Ms. O’Gara said that next year will be an interesting year.

Ms. O’Gara also said that the change in the library model sounds very positive and interesting.

Ms. Seibert thinks that the new schedule is well organized but she hopes it is not too rigid. She believes that the staff needs to understand that they still have flexibility.

Mr. Hafer also likes the schedule and the improvement plan. He suggested that maybe the students who do not need intervention could use the WIN block to practice foreign language skills. Mr. Ackerman thinks with the right technology, this could happen.

Mr. Hafer said he is in favor of keeping the well-rounded curriculum because it integrates core skills.

Mr. Pierce made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the Lane School Improvement Plan for 2011-2012 school year.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. Seibert

MOTION APPROVED: 4-0

Roll Call Vote:

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

6. Davis School’s 2011-2012 School Improvement Plan

Mr. Phil Banios reviewed the 2010-2011 school year and presented the plan for 2011-2012.

2010-2011 Review

Mr. Banios said that this year, a significant effort was made to improve parent involvement especially with Dads. Several parents came in to help with Cattail Corner clean up as well as a group of students from the High School. Another example of family involvement has been the work accomplished on the school’s organic garden. Field Day and Opening Day are two other popular events at Davis that draw in many volunteers.

Mr. Banios noted that he hoped to change the parent pick up procedure at Davis to a rolling pick up. However, after many discussions and analysis, he determined that it was not feasible mainly due to the physical layout of the property. He will continue to seek ways to improve on pick-ups.

In terms of curriculum, Ms. Kuhlmann, a kindergarten teacher, developed a science curriculum binder and addressed the curriculum review team’s recommendations. Ms. Nocera, a first grade teacher, did the same for Social Studies.

Mr. Banios said that the handwriting program, Handwriting Without Tears, was implemented at all three grade levels in Davis. He said that most teachers are pleased with the program, especially due to its hands on nature. However the amount of materials and manipulatives is overwhelming but the students really love it. He said the challenge is to get all teachers to use it with fidelity. Also, the teachers must find away to fit it into their day.

Ms. O’Gara asked how much time is spent on teaching handwriting. Mr. Banios said typically about 45 –60 minutes a week.

Mr. Banios also talked about the “Heart prints Program”. This program is an example of a school-wide positive behavior program. Every morning during announcements he reads examples of good deeds children have done. The good deed is displayed on a heart and put up on the bulletin board for all to see. Also, another example of a positive behavior initiative is the good news postcards. This is when teachers mail home a post card telling Mom and Dad some good news about their child. Mr. Banios said that the results of all of these efforts, including the reinforcement of “respectful, responsible and ready” and whole school assemblies, have resulted in a decline of disciplinary incidents.

2011-2012 School Improvement Plan

Governance & Leadership

- Establish a before school sports program.
- Send out parent satisfaction survey.

Curriculum

- Continue to develop cohesive writing practices K-5.
- Integrate more persuasive and nonfiction writing into K-2.
- Implement a new block schedule.
- Provide professional development for teachers to help them make the most of the 90-minute ELA block at the K-2 grade level.
- Align curriculum with Common Core. (A lot of work has been done on the phonics scope and sequence.)
- Continue with Handwriting Without Tears program.
- Establish a math data team and plan interventions.

Student Support

- The RTI team has been working on establishing procedures to review and recommend interventions.

Mr. Pierce asked about the effect of the new release time next year. Mr. Banios said that he knows that it is a parent concern – that Davis students will be getting home too late in the day. However, he hopes to improve on the dismissal procedures. He hopes that the busses will be more timely on their arrival and that he can load the students on to the busses more efficiently.

Ms. O’Gara thanked Mr. Banios for his visuals in the presentation. She thinks the before school program is a great idea as well as the survey. She is glad to hear that the emphasis at Davis continues to be hands on and developmentally appropriate activities. She is also pleased to hear that Mr. Banios is thanking students for being nice. She thinks the initiative on starting a math data team is timely especially as Bridges is sending curriculum updates that align with the Common Core.

Ms. O’Gara asked about the facility itself. Mr. Banios said that the Administration has looked ahead and made some plans to update space so that it can be used more efficiently. The plans are ready to roll once there is money in the budget to do so.

Ms. Seibert said that it is clear that the Common Core curriculum message is that schools need to do more and to do so more efficiently. However, she is thankful that Mr. Banios is doing this in a developmentally appropriate manner.

Mr. Banios said yes, it is true that the curriculum is being pushed down as a result of the Common Core. For example, it is now the expectation that Kindergarteners will learn how to read. However, he recognizes that the staff needs to adapt and to accept the new expectations with out driving the students too hard. Mr. Banios said that Kindergarten is very different today than it was just a few years ago and that this fact is hard on his staff. However his staff truly understands kids at the kindergarten level. Therefore, the new schedule has to be thoughtful. He also reminded everyone that the challenge is fitting a five-day curriculum into a 3 and $\frac{3}{4}$ day week.

Mr. Hafer thanked Mr. Banios for a well-organized plan. He said it is very important to have this because Davis sets the first impression of the Bedford Public Schools.

Mr. Pierce made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the Davis School 2011-2012 School Improvement Plan.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. O’Gara

MOTION APPROVED: 4-0

Roll Call Vote:

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

7. Approval: Lane School HVAC Controls Upgrade Project

Lane School HVAC Controls need to be upgraded. Mr. Coelho asked the School Committee to sign a contract for HVAC work to be done at Lane during the summer.

Mr. Pierce made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee award the HVAC Project at Lane School to ENE Systems in the amount of \$145,000.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. O’Gara

MOTION APPROVED: 4-0

Roll Call Vote:

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

8. Minutes for Approval

Mr. Pierce made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the minutes from the April 26, 2011 School Committee meeting as amended.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. O’Gara

MOTION APPROVED: 4-0

Roll Call Vote:

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

9. Future Agenda

Dr. LaCroix said the following items will be on the agenda on the next School Committee meeting, which is the last one for the year:

- Review of school lunch prices.
- End of Year Goal report
- High School Handbook
- iPad Lease
- School Committee reorganization

10. Liaison Reports

None

11. Superintendent's Report

The Strategic Plan is underway and six more community representatives have joined the team.

12. Adjournment

Ms Seibert made the following motion:

MOVED: Motion to adjourn at 11:00 p.m. to Executive Session for the purpose of contract negotiations, to re-open.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. O'Gara

MOTION APPROVED: 4-0

Roll Call Vote:

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

School Committee Secretary

Date

BEDFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE

May 24, 2011

Exhibits/Documents

- **Educational Assistant –Foreign Language Lab (High School) job description.**
- **Educational Assistant – Library job description.**
- **Bedford Public Schools K-12 Program Review Visiting Team Report Spring 2011**
- **Social Studies Visiting Team presentation May 24, 2011**
- **Lt. Job Lane School School Improvement plan 2011-2012**
- **Lt. Eleazer Davis Elementary School School Improvement Plan 2011-2012**
- **Draft of minutes from the April 26, 2011 School Committee meeting.**

Bedford School Committee

**Executive Session Minutes
May 24, 2011**