

BEDFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE
December 8, 2015
Bedford High School - Large Group Instruction Room

1. Call to Order

At 7:30 p.m., Mr. McAllister called to order the meeting of the Bedford School Committee. Other members present included Ms. Guay, Mr. Pierce, Mr. Hafer and Mr. Brosgol.

2. Comments from Public

None

3. Personnel Report

Mr. Sills reported

- The appointment of Therese Gregoire – School Psychologist at Davis and Lane.
- Alison Hannah – Music Ensemble Extra Curricular at Davis School

4. International Field Trip Presentation

Assistant HS Principal Kate Boynton and HS teachers Joel Hebert, Chris Zellner, and Dana Curran introduced the School Committee to the Global Travel Committee. The Global Travel Committee at the high school exists to, “Help students become life-long learners who think critically and creatively and who are informed, responsible and productive global citizens.”

The committee intends to create a two – three year plan to help students and parents learn about travel opportunities sponsored by the high school. The Global Committee will also try to figure out ways to get more students to participate in these trips. The trips offered will be diverse in location and experience. The Committee would like to get information out there so families have time to plan and budget accordingly. The Committee would also like the time to raise scholarship funds for students in need.

Mr. Hebert began the presentation by showing a video that showed the experiences students have had on recent trips.

The trips that the Global Committee are currently planning involve different learning experiences – service, cultural, historical, science-related and language immersion. They will be considering both domestic and global trips. Right now the following are being proposed:

Galapagos Islands	February 2017
Italy	April 2017
Brittania	summer 2017
Dominican Republic	February 2018
Iceland	April 2018
Spain	July 2018

Domestic trip ideas include a cheese tour of Vermont, a National Park Tour, a Civil Rights Tour, and backpacking. These are in the early stages of planning at this point in time.

Ms. Boynton explained that a scholarship fund was established and last year there were a lot of funds raised, especially due to a donation from one of the tour companies. Currently there is only \$2,000 remaining in the fund. A goal of the Global Committee is to find some sustainable

funding streams. Ms. Boynton said that they will be talking to the parent organization for assistance.

Ms. Boynton also touched upon some other global initiatives underway at the high school. She reported that we currently have three exchange students attending BHS. Two are from Educatius (from China and Poland) and one sponsored by the Rotary Club (from Spain). Also, the Global Voices class recently had a one day exchange with students from a Chinese school in Boston. In January, there will be a group of students from Beijing visiting BHS.

Mr. Hafer thanked the presenters for the update. He is pleased to hear about the well –thought out plan and agrees that it is good to get the word out early for parents and students alike.

Mr. Pierce said he is pleased to learn that there is a thoughtful process behind the roll out of the trip approval requests. He was concerned that maybe there was a race to get trips approved first but he realizes that this is not the case at all.

Mr. Brosgol said that he has experience traveling with young students overseas. He thinks it is a wise idea to get the kids prepared early on. He even thinks that these trips should be discussed at the middle school/elementary school level so students can see the opportunities and do some long term savings.

Ms. Guay said that a lot of families will not be able to afford these trips. She believes fundraising is critical so that more students have the opportunity to participate.

Mr. McAllister asked why there was a change in tour companies. Mr. Hebert explained that the tour company was picked based on which company provided the best value which includes price and quality of the organization and tour guides.

Ms. Guay asked if there were other service opportunities for high school students besides these trips. Ms. Boynton assured here there were many – especially seniors.

Mr. McAllister thanked everyone for presenting and for taking the time to travel with students. He hopes that all types of students are able to participate. He said that the School Committee is a little uncomfortable given the fact that all students are unable to access these trips.

The School Committee asked if the high school takes out any special liability insurance for these trips. Mr. Hebert said no because families are asked to sign a waiver. Ms. Guay said that there may be some liability issues for the teachers who attend. Mr. McAllister suggested checking in with town counsel on this topic.

Mr. McAllister commends the group for continuing despite global tensions.

Mr. Sills asked for an update on this year’s trips. Mr. Hebert said that Cuba is running in February but the South Africa trip for the summer is cancelled due to low participation.

Ms. Boynton also mentioned that the Global Committee is working on plans for a website and to find opportunities to speak to families (such as Back to School Night). They also would like the students to talk to JGMS students about the experience.

The following motions were made as a result of this discussion:

Ms. Guay made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the international trip to the British Isles to be held on June 29, 2017 – July 10, 2017 at a cost of \$3,840 per student and no cost to the schools. Chaperones will be finalized closer to the date of the trip and will be based on the number and gender of students attending.

MOTION SECONDED by Mr. Pierce

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

Mr. Hafer made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the international trip to Dominican Republic on February 16-24, 2018 at a cost of \$2,637 per student and no cost to the schools.

Chaperones will be finalized closer to the date of the trip and will be based on the number and gender of students attending.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. Guay

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

Ms. Guay made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the international trip to the Galapagos Islands on February break 2017 at a cost of \$3,836 per student and no cost to the schools.

Chaperones will be finalized closer to the date of the trip and will be based on the number and gender of students attending.

MOTION SECONDED by Mr. Pierce

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

Ms. Guay made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the international trip to Barcelona, Madrid and Andalusia on July 5-14, 2018 at a cost of \$3,380 per student and no cost to the schools.

Chaperones will be finalized closer to the date of the trip and will be based on the number of students attending.

MOTION SECONDED by Mr. Hafer

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

Mr. Brosgol made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the international trip to Rome, Florence and Venice, Italy on April 15-23, 2017 at a cost of \$3,409 per student and no cost to the schools.

Chaperones will be finalized closer to the date of the trip and will be based on the number of students attending.

MOTION SECONDED by Mr. Hafer

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

5. Textbook Purchase

Ms. Dana Curran, Program Administrator for Foreign Language, proposed buying new online AP Spanish textbooks and workbooks. She explained that the way foreign language is taught, especially in the AP class, has changed and therefore the texts must be updated. The language no longer involves memorization of grammar rules but a focus on themes, contexts and overarching essential questions.

Ms. Curran is recommending the purchase of Tamas, AP Spanish Language and Culture ebook & supersite. The cost is \$2,500 for a six year license. Ms. Curran would also like to purchase 30 work books for \$2,850. The ebook is able to be downloaded on iPads.

Ms. Curran explained that teachers have tested the book in the AP course as well as some others and this book seems to be the best. She gave members of the School Committee a detailed memo describing the strengths and weaknesses of the texts.

Mr. Hafer thanked Ms. Curran for the presentation and written information.

Mr. Pierce asked if we could spread the payment over the six year license period. Ms. Curran said that this was not an option.

Mr. Brosgol asked about the French texts and whether they needed to be updated. Ms. Curran said that the French AP exam changed several years ago and we do not need to upgrade our materials.

Ms. Guay asked if non-AP students could benefit from this purchase. Ms. Curran said yes that the Spanish Literature and Cinema classes will and are both taught like the AP course already.

Ms. Curran said that the AP course will soon be testing a service learning component too.

Mr. McAllister told Ms. Curran that per practice, the School Committee will vote on this text book purchase request at the next School Committee meeting.

6. Space Needs Task Force and Capital Expenditure Update

Mr. Sills reported that the Space Needs Task Force has met several times and will be making a recommendation on the Lane School project at the first School Committee meeting in January. They have been very busy and diligent combing through a lot of data. They are trying to verify the NESDEC enrollment study and long term growth projections are justified. The group is also investigating alternatives to building additions.

Mr. Sills also reported he issued a survey to parents about pre-K kids at home in an attempt to understand incoming kindergarten classes.

Mr. Sills reminded the School Committee that the funding for the Davis School renovation project is going through the Massachusetts Building Authority process.

Mr. Sills also noted that all of the school's capital projects, except for the lift for the Press Box, were approved by the Capital Expenditure Committee. Money was set aside to purchase/lease any modular classrooms in case the Task Force recommends this.

Mr. McAllister thanked the volunteers on the Space Needs Task Force for working on this important issue.

7. Budget Update

Mr. Sills said he will make a formal presentation on the FY'17 budget request at the next School Committee meeting.

Last week, Mr. Sills presented a preliminary budget request which was 4.25% more than last year's budget (without any new programs or staff). He explained tonight, that he has reworked this budget request and expects to request a FY'17 maintenance budget increase of 3.74% and a total budget increase request of 4.77%.

Mr. McAllister reported that the Finance Committee has set the School's financial guideline at 3.5% increase and the rest of the town departments at a 2.5% increase.

8. Class Size Parameters

Mr. Sills asked to move this topic to next week's agenda. The School Committee agreed.

9. Superintendent's Report

Mr. Sills said that Bedford has reported to the Dept. of Education that we will be using the paper version for the next round of PARCC testing. Mr. Sills said he believes that Pearson's technical capacity is not ready and he does not want our students to suffer as a result. (Many students got bumped off the last PARCC test session in the middle of a writing exercise and many lost their work and were very upset.)

Mr. Sills also reported that CASE, LABB, and EDCO are looking into changing the collaborative structure. Mr. Sills is Chair of this effort. He believes it will be a very positive change for the future.

Mr. Sills has been elected to the METCO Board of Directors and he will be able to connect even more to METCO Inc.

10. Liaison Reports

Mr. Hafer asked for comments on the Field Use document he distributed at the last meeting. There was no discussion.

Mr. Hafer made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the updated Use Policies For Fields and Athletics.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. Guay

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

Mr. Brosgol reported that the Capital Expenditure Committee put place holders in the budget for modulars and did not agree to fund the lift for the Press Box. They also discussed the possibility of putting turf down on B Field.

Mr. Pierce asked about the legal requirements of installing a lift for the Press Box to meet ADA requirements. Mr. McAllister said that Fiscal Planning will look at the facts – legal requirements, deadline, and consequences of not abiding by these requirements.

Mr. McAllister suggested that the School Committee talk about the possibility of using the Mudge Fund for this project since this will be suggest by the Finance Committee and others.

Ms. Guay thanked BEF for issuing nine grants to school staff this year. She said that there were some great ideas and purchases made. She also reminded everyone that the annual fundraiser for the BEF is January 30, 2016.

11. Minutes for Review

This will be done at the next meeting.

12. Adjournment

Ms. Guay made the following motion.

MOVED: Motion to adjourn at 9:00 p.m.

MOTION SECONDED by Mr. Pierce

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. McAllister	Yes
Ms. Guay	Yes
Mr. Brosgol	Yes
Mr. Pierce	Yes
Mr. Hafer	Yes

School Committee Secretary

Date

BEDFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE
December 8, 2015
Exhibits/Document

- Presentation: Global Travel Opportunities