

BEDFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE
November 29, 2016
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. Santiago, Mr. Pierce, Mr. Brosgol and Student Representative Mary Manning. Ms. Anne Guay arrived around 8:00.

2. Comments from Public

None

3. Personnel Report

None

4. Presentation: Lane School Project on Equity & Diversity

Mr. Sills explained that the district has had an Equity & Diversity Committee since 2013. The Committee is made up of staff from all buildings. The Committee strives to help the District meet its cultural proficiency goal to nurture diverse identities in our communities. The Committee meets monthly and is open to all.

Over the past few years, three professional workshop days for all staff have been held on Equity & Diversity:

- March 2014 - Indicators of a culturally proficient teacher with an emphasis on how to talk about race
- January 2015 - Facing History presented Nurturing Diverse Identities
- March 2016 - Research was presented on the importance of doing anti-bias work in schools and community.

Three Equity & Diversity Committee members, Jamie Nolan, Julia Herman and Sarah Dorer, presented a project underway at Lane School to bring anti-bias curriculum through children's literature to Grades 3-5.

Ms. Dorer explained that both Davis and Lane schools have decided to approach anti-bias curriculum through children's literature. Ms. Herman and Ms. Nolan explained Lane School's approach to bring anti-bias curriculum through children's literature for grades 3-5. They decided to choose four books per grade and one would be dedicated to ELL students. Using the Teaching Tolerance Anti-Bias Framework- four domains were identified – diversity, justice, identity, and action. Identity groups were also selected – race and ethnicity, gender, immigration, religion, ability, community and place.

Thirteen books out of eighty possible books were selected through a deliberate process. Mr. Ackerman approved the purchase. On the afternoon of March 11, 2016, Lane School EDC Committee members worked with faculty on how to develop lesson plans for each book. Each plan was shared with all grade level teachers and then saved on the shared drive. Staff was highly engaged and all took ownership of the project. The expectation was set that every class in each grade would incorporate the four books into their curriculum starting in 2016-17.

Ms. Herman and Ms. Nolan gave examples of grade level lesson plans that were developed based on one of the books for each grade. They noted that this year, teachers have begun to integrate the books into their curriculum. They are also helping children apply crucial thinking skills learned and developed through the anti-bias picture book lessons to other topics across the curriculum. Each teacher gave examples of this.

Ms. Herman and Ms. Nolan explained that the next steps is to meet as a group at the end of the year to reflect and discuss experiences. The Lane School EDC will also continue to support conversations among faculty in regards to issues of cultural proficiency in daily interactions with students. They will also help pull skills learned into the rest of the curriculum.

Ms. Manning, student representative, praised the curriculum and experience and thinks that kids will be kinder as a result.

Ms. Santiago said that she believes that sharing experiences and learning from one another is great and will lead to a much richer learning experience for all kids.

Mr. Pierce asked what defines a “difficult conversation”? Ms. Herman and Ms. Nolan said that students often have questions for teachers that can be difficult to answer. They also noted that Staff can have difficult conversations amongst themselves too.

Mr. Pierce asked if these lessons help with anti-bullying and anti-harassment efforts. Both teachers said yes. They explained in third grade, students learn how people differ from one another. The anti-bias lessons and conversations help lead to acceptance of these differences. Both teachers agreed that anti-bullying should not be a separate lesson but should be carried out in all lessons through-out the school year.

Mr. Pierce said he really appreciates the critical thinking opportunities given the students at such a young age.

Mr. Brosgol asked if the EDC has determined any measurements of reaching cultural proficient goals. Ms. Herman and Ms. Nolan said that in one of the Professional Development workshops, it was suggested to develop a continuum of the skills required to be a “diverse and anti-bias” teacher. Work in this area will continue.

Mr. McAllister said that it is great that teachers have tools for having difficult conversations. He believes that these Professional Development workshops were a good investment.

Mr. Ackerman said that the Lane School EDC did a great job and that Ms. Herman, Ms. Nolan and Ms. Dorer were great leaders of this initiative.

Mr. Sills said that it is impressive that teachers can help students with these difficult topics and conversations.

5. Superintendent's Report

Mr. Sills presented a preview to the FY'18 Budget.

Mr. Sills explained the context of the budget request. Overall, enrollment has increased from the last day of school in June 2016 to October 1, 2016 more than projected. JGMS saw the largest increase. However, out-of-district placements have gone down due to the huge inroads the district has made bringing students back in district.

The Maintenance of Effort Budget request for FY'18 is \$38,802,119 which is a 2.89% increase over the FY'17 actual. The drivers are the same – salaries, operating expenses, regular transportation, SPED out-of-district and SPED out-of-district transportation.

Considering the growth in enrollment, Mr. Sills would also like to consider adding the following:

Enrollment Driver

- A teacher at Lane School
- 1.7 JGMS teacher for arts and wellness

SPED Driver

- .7 SPED teacher and specialists
- .2 math/STEP teacher at BHS
- .5 Behaviorist TAs for Preschool, Davis and Lane autism programs

Instruction

- .3 math support
- .3 TA support
- 1.0 Instructional Technology teacher

Other

- 2.0 Custodians (due to additional space and cut back on supplies and help)
- Coaching stipends due to expanded sport offerings at High School
- Preschool furniture for a new class, Ipads, and the Learning Management System.

The total budget impact for all of the above is \$675,000.

Mr. Sills provided an estimate of what it would have cost if we did not enroll several new students into our Preschool and SAIL program. Savings ranged from \$390,000 (SAIL Program) and \$520,000 (From the Preschool).

Mr. McAllister said that the budget presentation format was very helpful. He did give Mr. Sills some suggestions to improve the presentation for Thursday's meeting with the Finance Committee.

6 Adjournment

Ms. Santiago made the following motion:

MOVED: Motion to adjourn at 8:40 to Executive Session for contract negotiation preparation, not to reopen.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. Guay

MOTION APPROVED 5-0

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. McAllister **Yes**

Ms. Guay **Yes**

Mr. Brosgol **Yes**

Mr. Pierce **Yes**

Ms. Santiago **Yes**

School Committee Secretary

Date

BEDFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE

November 29, 2016

Exhibits/Documents

- Presentation: Equity & Diversity at Lane School: Anti-Bias Picture Book Curriculum dated Nov. 29, 2016
- Bedford Public Schools FY18 Budget Preview