

BEDFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE
December 12, 2017
Bedford High School – Large Group Instruction Room

1. Call to Order

At 7:30 p.m., Mr. Brosgol called to order the meeting of the Bedford School Committee. Other members present included Ms. Santiago, Ms. Scoville and Ms. Guay. Ms. Tracie Lewis, Student Representative was also present. Mr. McAllister was absent.

2. Comments from Public

None

3. Personnel Report

Mr. Sills reported the following personnel items:

Deborah Cartaglia	Resigned as a Special Education Teaching Assistant at Davis
Leah Lewin	Resigned as a Special Education Teaching Assistant at Davis
Tom Jacobs	Resigned as a Building Sub at Davis
Victoria Moniz	Resigned as an Educational Assistant at the Pre-School
Molly Singh	Lane School Teacher is on a Leave of Absence
Kim Limoli	Appointed Long Term Sub at JGMS
Marlee Cassel	Appointed Long Term Sub at JGMS
Alison Wardwell	Appointed Interim Special Education Teacher at JGMS

Mr. Sills also reported the following extracurricular appointments at the JGMS:

Amy Budka	Play Director
Barbara Ferri	Assistant Play Director
Linda Aiken	Music Accompanist
Jennifer Buckley	Choreographer
Marlee Cassel	6 th Grade Drama Coach

Mr. Sills reported that the Bedford Minuteman Scholarship Fund generously donated \$3,000 to Bedford Public School libraries to support American Studies.

Ms. Scoville made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee accept the \$3,000 gift from the Bedford Minuteman Scholarship fund to go to the Bedford Public Schools' libraries in support of American Studies.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. Santiago

MOTION APPROVED: 4-0

School Committee members thanked the Bedford Minutemen for their generous donation.

4. Handbook Revisions

Mr. Matt Mehler, Assistant Principal at JGMS, explained that recently there has been some regulatory changes regarding Title IX complaints of sexual misconduct and violence. Therefore, the Bedford High School and John Glenn Middle School handbooks (sections on reporting alleged sexual harassment and/or discrimination) have been updated to reflect this change. The change however, is not in the policy itself, but in the procedures for reporting and investigating

alleged sexual harassment centering on students. A detailed change memorandum from Mr. Mehler and Ms. Galante (high school Principal) was given to the School Committee for review.

Mr. Mehler reviewed some of the regulatory changes that prompted this update. For example:

- School districts must provide interim measures to both the alleged victim and the alleged aggressor during the investigation.
- The word “prompt” is used rather than a specific number of days required to investigate a report of sexual harassment.
- School districts cannot prohibit the alleged victim or alleged aggressor from discussing the investigation or allegations with others.
- Written notice is required and the names of the alleged perpetrator and victim must be given.
- A letter of finding must go to the alleged perpetrator and the perpetrator must have time to respond.
- The appeal process must be clearly spelled out and available to both victim and aggressor.

Ms. Guay said that the changes appear to favor the accused but she points out that the changes codify the alleged aggressor’s procedural rights. She also said that the procedure asks a lot of schools, especially school administrators who are not experts in criminal law.

Ms. Guay also noted that she is not sure that the updates to our Sexual Harassment policy are really necessary because the Education Alert (describing the changes) states that the changes are for complaints of sexual misconduct and violence. “Sexual harassment does not fall under sexual misconduct and violence.”

Mr. Sills thought that this was an interesting point and will get advice from the school’s attorneys.

Ms. Santiago gave Mr. Mehler some edits on the proposed changes. He agreed to make the changes for the final version.

The School Committee agreed to vote on accepting the procedural updates proposed for the BHS and JGMS Handbooks after Mr. Sills investigates Ms. Guay’s questions about sexual harassment falling under complaints of sexual misconduct and violence.

5. MCAS Presentation

Ms. Marylou Sallee presented the recent MCAS results. She began the presentation however, by describing the testing transition that is underway in the state.

Transition Path

- Before 2013, all public schools used the “legacy” MCAS exam which were aligned to the then new Massachusetts frameworks.
- 2013-14 Bedford participated in small PARCC test pilot at JGMS and Lane schools
- 2014-15 statewide pilot of PARCC – Bedford does this in grades 3-8. Computer based testing was done at JGMS and paper testing was done at Lane.
- 2015-16 statewide pilot of PARCC. Bedford does paper tests in grades 3-8.
- 2016-17 Next generation of MCAS (MCAS 2.0) administered for everyone in grades 3-8. Grades 4 and 8 use computer based testing.

Ms. Sallee then discussed how MCAS 2.0 differs from the legacy MCAS. Some key points include:

- Tests have more complex topics and advanced context especially in the earlier grades
- Questions are multi-step. Two-part questions require identifying evidence for inference. Both parts need to be correct for credit.
- Tests focus on critical thinking abilities and ability to make connections between reading and writing.

Ms. Sallee showed examples of MCAS 2.0 questions to illustrate how different the 2.0 version is from the legacy.

Ms. Sallee said that the grade 5 math test used an interface that was not known to our students. Students need to practice on this interface so they can concentrate on the questions. She also learned that often the questions are spread over three pages, and the information is not repeated on each page.

Ms. Sallee shared a parent report which uses new achievement levels. “Advanced”, “Proficient”, “Needs Improvement”, and “Warning” are replaced with “Exceeding Expectations”, “Meeting Expectations”, “Partially Meeting Expectations”, and “Not Meeting Expectations”.

Ms. Sallee also noted that schools did not receive much data from the Department of Education this year.

Bedford Results

Bedford students performed above state averages. Bedford scores in ELA, indicate that more instruction is needed on multiple and complex texts especially in nonfiction. Ms. Sallee feels that more coordination of nonfiction reading is needed in English, Science, and Social Studies especially at the middle school level.

Math results indicate the need to layer in more opportunities for students to do the higher order aspects of math.

Steps underway for MCAS 2.0 improvements at Lane School include:

- Offering professional development on refining the teaching of reading.
- Encouraging teachers to use small group reading instruction
- Implement leveled literacy intervention in grade 3
- Title 1 tutoring
- Analyze performance in each math standard and adjust instruction accordingly.

Steps underway for MCAS 2.0 at the middle school include:

- Analyzing performance data in ELA
- Developing clearer vertical alignment
- Adjust common assessments
- Align teacher goals to areas of concern
- Intensify work in aligning math curriculum with standards
- Adjust instruction and pacing in math lessons
- Math department needs to follow guidelines for sound lessons and authentic literacy.

Ms. Guay asked if we did the portfolio option (rather than MCAS exams) for some of our special education students. Ms. Sallee was going to check.

Ms. Guay said that the elementary expectations are really high. Ms. Sallee agreed.

Ms. Guay said that she does not want Bedford teachers to teach to the test, but the reality is that there is a new generation of tests being used. Ms. Guay felt that given the fact that we provide summer work for AP students at BHS, it makes sense to offer summer work for students who struggle as well.

Mr. Sills said that to keep in mind that 62-72% of Bedford students can read complex tests. However, he wants all of the students to do this. Ultimately, he wants student to want to do better themselves.

Ms. Lewis, student representative, said she is glad that she did not have to take the new version of MCAS exams. They very much remind her the ACT college tests.

Ms. Scoville asked Ms. Sallee to review the graduation requirements of the MCAS exams. Ms. Sallee said that Science, Math and ELA must be all above failing. The class of 2019 will be the first class to need to pass the new version of MCAS to graduate.

Ms. Scoville concluded that Bedford is not teaching to the test, but is certainly teaching higher order thinking standards.

Ms. Santiago commented that her daughter, who took the PARCC test on a computer, complained of a headache after spending the entire day on the computer.

Mr. Brosgol asked why the state is mandating computer based testing. He also wondered if we were prepared for a full computer based roll out of the test.

Mr. Sills said that we are ready for a full roll out of a computer based test. He also thinks that the state is doing this because it is easier and less expensive to compile the data. However, Mr. Sills does wish that the test was adaptive – so kids move on to new questions if they are doing well but stay on the same type of question if they are not doing well.

Ms. Santiago said that she is concerned about the school's continual need to invest in technology just to keep up with the MCAS needs. She asked Mr. Sills what the consequences would be if we stopped investing in technology.

Mr. Sills said that if we stopped investing in technology we would be depriving a significant population of our students. Many of our students would be ill prepared for college. He also sees that our MCAS exam scores would go down and Bedford as a town, would lose its competitiveness.

Mr. Brosgol said it is troublesome for schools to fund a computer-based mandate.

Mr. Brosgol asked if Bedford benefitted at all by participating in the PARCC trials. Mr. Mehler said that we learned a lot about computer based testing. The Tech department did a great job. Very few technical problems arose last year. Ms. Sallee said that PARCC also

gave us a lot of information on the different types of questions used. Mr. Sills thinks generally, districts that did not participate in PARCC scored lower on the MCAS 2.0.

Mr. Brosgol asked what really surprised Ms. Sallee and Mr. Sills. They both said that questions in the early grades are very challenging.

Ms. Guay said it is disappointing that private schools are not required to take state exams.

Ms. Santiago said that the language frameworks used in the test are really not fair to ELL students. Ms. Sallee said that MCAS does have a process that continually reviews and revises the questions in attempt to stop cultural biases.

Ms. Sallee reported on a few other things regarding MCAS:

- Next generation science exam is still being developed
- BHS Accountability Level has fallen to a “2” due to not meeting our progress targets in 10th grade math and science exams.
- The high school is adjusting rigor in ELA and Math to prepare for MCAS 2.0 high stakes test
- Disciplinary literacy will help in MCAS 2.0
- Faculty collaboration is needed so that all students will meet the standards

In summary, Ms. Sallee said that MCAS 2.0 does align with higher order thinking and will assess essential academic skills and supports our work with helping all students. However, MCAS 2.0 does not measure certain skills valuable to Bedford Public Schools – creative expression, oral arguments, nor healthy social and emotional growth.

School Committee members had a few last thoughts:

- Will the network capacity and our internet provider be ready for full roll out of computer based testing?
- Will Level 1 and Level 2 designations go away?

Mr. Sills said that this presentation will be posted on the website. His take away is that Bedford is in a good place. MCAS 2.0 aligns with our district mission and learning goals so it is good to pay attention to this test.

6. Davis School Project Update

TBA Architects has been refining the Davis School project needs so they can create schematic design and construction documents. One proposed change is to place the two east wing rooms on top of the one story roof instead of placing them where the modulars are currently located. This change will work programmatically and save money. The other change is a new layout for the nurse’s room and main office. This will allow the nurses area to expand to three beds and the teachers’ lounge will move to the former ELL room which is somewhat more centrally located for teachers.

Also, TBA is proposing some options for the exterior of the addition without using the architectural interruptions that are on the rest of the building because this will be expensive.

The Davis School Building Committee will be meeting on Tuesday, Dec. 19th to discuss these issues and to make decisions to move forward with schematic design and construction documents.

Ms. Santiago reminded Mr. Sills to be sure to discuss environmental impact on choices being considered.

Mr. Sills reminded the School Committee that the Building Committee has recommended that the entire roof be replaced during this project since the roof has exceeded its expected life cycle and then the entire roof will be on one maintenance cycle. However, if this piece of the project is not accepted, it will not impact moving forward with the addition.

7. Superintendent's Report

None

8. Minutes for Review

Ms. Santiago made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the minutes of the November 6, 2017 School Committee meeting as amended.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. Scoville

MOTION APPROVED: 4-0

9. Future Agenda

The FY'19 Operating budget proposal will be given on January 2, 2018.

10. Adjournment

Ms. Santiago made the following motion.

MOVED: Motion to adjourn at 9:28 P.M. not to reopen.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. Scoville

MOTION APPROVED: 4-0

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. McAllister	Absent
Mr. Brosgol	Yes
Ms. Santiago	Yes
Ms. Scoville	Yes
Ms. Guay	Yes


School Committee Secretary


Date

BEDFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE

December 12, 2017

Exhibits/Documents

- Change Memo from Ms. Galante regarding proposed changes to the BHS 2017-18 Student Handbook.
- Change Memo from Mr. Mehler regarding proposed changes to the JGMS 2017-2018 Student/Parent Handbook
- MCAS 2.0 and MCAS Accountability Presentation dated Dec. 12, 2017.
- Draft of minutes from the November 6, 2017 School Committee meeting.