

BEDFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE
November 27, 2018
Bedford High School – Large Group Instruction Room

1. Call to Order

At 7:40 p.m., Mr. Brosgol called to order the meeting of the Bedford School Committee. Other members present included Ms. Scoville, Ms. Santiago and Ms. Guay. Student Representatives Alex Oleksinski and Samantha Gallant were also present. Mr. McAllister was absent.

2. Comments from Public

None

3. BHS Music Presentation

Ms. Katrina Faulstich, Choir Director, was at the School Committee meeting to discuss “Literacy & Music Through Sight-Singing”. Members of the Honors Choir were also in attendance to sing for the Committee.

Ms. Faulstich explained that one of the exercises the choir does in class is to “Sight-Sing”. This is where students look at music for the first time and sing it without ever having listened to it. It is done in class and as homework. The goal is to help improve sight-singing skills as well as pitch and rhythm. It is frequently used at auditions especially for the district and state competitions. They use “do-re-mi-fa-sol-la-ti-do” when singing.

Ms. Faulstich and the Choir demonstrated a sight-singing assignment. Ms. Faulstich also showed different levels of sight-singing assignments.

Ms. Faulstich explained that students use the Ipad for the assignments at home and she uses a rubric to assess the work.

Ms. Guay asked how long Honors Choir has been in existence at the high school. Ms. Faulstich said it has been around for many years – under different names. It requires students to audition.

Ms. Scoville was pleased to see how technology helps students do their work.

Ms. Santiago asked if these developing music skills helped the students in other classes. Eran Z answered that it does connect with some of his other classes such as the Creativity & Culture class. Heather said that learning songs in other languages creates a deeper appreciation of foreign languages. She also sees a lot of connections to her history classes.

Mr. Brosgol asked if choir is difficult to fit in schedules. Ms. Faulstich said that it can be but that there are other opportunities for students to sing and perform.

Mr. Brosgol asked how the School Committee could help. Ms. Faulstich said help promoting attendance to concerts and other events would be appreciated. She said the spring musical is always popular with the community but she wishes people would come out to see some of the other events. Ms. Faulstich thanked the Bedford Citizen and POMS for their support.

Mr. Sills said it is so good for students to come to a music class and learn how to sing and sight-sing. He thanked Ms. O'Toole for her leadership. He is "very proud of the music department."

4. Personnel Report

Mr. Sills presented the "Head Maintenance Technician Forman" and the "Head Lead Custodian" job descriptions for a second review hoping for an approval.

Ms. Santiago asked that the descriptions be written using consistent language.

Ms. Guay asked if it is common to prefer an employee with an Associate degree. Mr. Coelho said yes, that it is nice to have this if possible so it was included in the job description.

Mr. Sills agreed to make the language more consistent throughout the job descriptions and will bring them back to the Committee for approval at the next meeting.

5. FY'20 Budget Preview

Mr. Sills presented the first look at the FY'20 operating budget. He said that the report tonight was a general overview. He will present the same overview to the Finance Committee later this week.

Mr. Sills reminded the School Committee that over the last few years, special education out-of-district placements have been reduced as we have created in-house programs. These programs have helped Bedford students remain in their local school and has resulted in major savings over the past few years. However, Mr. Sills noted that these large savings may not be sustainable. Also, some students are not best served in our programs. He also noted that we believe in the "push-in" model of teaching students with special needs and this takes a lot of personnel.

Mr. Sills reminded the School Committee that overall school enrollment in the town is still growing. Davis is on track to have ten Kindergarten classrooms and ten second grade classrooms. He also commented that the number of students with significant social-emotional challenges is growing.

Mr. Sills said that the FY'20 Maintenance of Effort Budget has been calculated to be 3.75% increase. This is for the same programs and covers contractual obligations.

Mr. Sills said that in addition to maintaining programs, he would like to consider adding:

- A 10th Kindergarten teacher at Davis School (keeping the Interventionist position)
- Additional ELL teachers to support the 172 ELL students and to support ELL at the preschool. There is also a new mandate to screen for dyslexia.
- The High School needs another Science teacher as it is projected that 4 more sections of Chemistry will be required.
- The High School will need another Robotics/Engineering teacher due to the kids coming to the school from JGMS.
- The High School needs more math lab support
- Davis needs a Special Education teacher and a Speech and Physical Therapist. Davis would like to stop using contractors for the therapist positions.
- The preschool and elementary schools need various instruction and social emotional/behavioral supports.

- Writing support is needed at JGMS
- The STEP teaching model is being examined and may result in the need for an additional teacher.
- The High School needs more reading support teachers.
- Davis School will need additional custodial support when the new building addition is complete.

Overall, the financial impact of the above is approximately one million dollars which will be a 6.6% increase over last year's budget. Mr. Sills reminded everyone that this is a very preliminary number.

Ms. Guay suggested also exploring the possibility of setting up some after school programs (in conjunction with the Recreation Dept.) geared towards children with autism and emotional challenges.

Ms. Scoville said that adding reading support is very important.

Ms. Santiago agreed that it is better to have therapists who work with our young children regularly be Bedford Public School employees rather than contractors.

Ms. Guay also suggested that funding to support our Hanscom students needs to be re-evaluated.

6. Update on Race Matters at the High School

Mr. Sills updated the School Committee on race matters at the high school. He reminded the group that he has sent out a couple of letters to the community in anticipation of a news article criticizing the school (which never happened). He said these letters have opened up conversations in town and has left him to wonder how Bedford can better communicate about race? He said that these conversations have been overall positive but have also been challenging.

Mr. Sills said that it is an immense responsibility to ensure our schools make it possible that *all* kids feel that they matter. Teachers have had training and will continue to do so. But students of color continue to experience micro aggressions. "Our job is to help every student and we need to work on this."

Mr. Sills said he is considering bringing in a consultant to work with the faculty to help ensure each student has a voice and an opportunity to be heard. A lot of work has been done in the district to ensure academic equity and opportunity is available to all. However, he believes we need to work on changing behavior and attitudes. He also feels that recruitment efforts to hire more teachers of color is crucial.

Mr. Oleksinski, student representative, agreed and said that we all need to build an understanding of those students who do not look like us or who did not grow up in Bedford. He believes that people would not be offensive or insensitive to others if we all get to know one another.

Miss Gallant, student representative, said that there is not enough awareness of what faculty and administration are doing to help with race relations. And she thinks it is very important to measure the impact of these programs. "The bottom line is students should not be offended by teachers or other students."

Ms. Guay commented that so much of this issue is societal but she believes schools can make a difference. She agrees with Miss Gallant that it does not matter how many equity programs we run if our students are offended. She also suggested that socio-economic issues are considered too not just race.

Ms. Scoville agrees that the "Bedford bubble" needs to be popped so we can all learn about different experiences.

Ms. Santiago thanked the student representatives for their thoughtful comments.

Mr. Brosgol said that changing behaviors is the hardest thing we have to do as a school system. "We are swimming upstream". He thanked Mr. Sills for spearheading this important work.

Miss Gallant, student representative, discussed a club she started at school. The club is for black students to discuss issues and then bring them to teachers' attention. She said that Principal Gallante has been very supportive. She said the club brings both positive and negative experiences forward and the club hopes to inspire more dialogue with more teachers.

Mr. Sills was very interested in this effort.

7. Minutes

Ms. Guay made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the minutes of the October 16, 2018 School Committee meeting.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. Scoville

MOTION APPROVED: 3-1-1 (Mr. McAllister absent, Ms. Santiago abstained)

8. Adjournment

Ms. Guay made the following motion:

MOVED: Motion to adjourn at 9:30 p.m.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. Scoville

MOTION APPROVED: 4-0

Roll Call Vote:

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


School Committee Secretary


Date

BEDFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE

November 27, 2018

Exhibits/Documents

- BHS Music Presentation
- FY'20 Budget Overview Presentation
- Draft of the October 16, 2018 minutes