

BEDFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE
June 4, 2019
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. Scoville, Ms. Guay, Ms. Marquis and Ms. Santiago. Ms. Samantha Gallant, student representative was also in attendance.

2. Comments from Public

None

3. Personnel Report

Field Trip Request

Ms. Sandra Arena, teacher at the High School, proposed a trip to Italy and Greece for the February 2020 break. The trip will have 20 -25 students between grades 9-12 attend. The goal is to enhance the students' knowledge of global communities relating to lifestyle, religion, history, climate and agriculture. There will be a focus on the farm to table food concept as well as learning about the origins of the English, Italian and Greek languages. The cost to the students will be \$4,065 each and no cost to the schools. Explorica is the tour company organizing the itinerary.

Ms. Arena spoke about the success of her recent trip to Italy this past spring break. She did note that this new trip would require an extra day due to a full travel day needed to get to Greece.

Ms. Santiago made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the field trip to Italy and Greece for approximately 25 high school students on February 13, 2020 through February 22, 2020 at cost of \$4,065 per student and no cost to the schools.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. Scoville

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

Mr. Sills announced the following appointments for the 2019-2020 school year:

Kalyani Seth	General Education Adjustment Counselor	Davis/Lane
Laleh Lewis	Kindergarten Teacher	Davis
Jasmyn Chacko	Spanish Teacher for LOA	High School
Julina Nocera	Elementary Teacher	Lane
Jane Del Gobbo	Interim Special Education Program Admin	Lane

4. BHS/JGMS Construction Bid

Taissir Alani, Facilities Director, reported that on May 29, 2019, Facilities and TBA opened the General Contractors bids for the JGMS addition and the BHS renovation project. Six bids were received and JJ Cardosi, Inc. was the lowest bid at \$5,833,000.

Reference checks were done on JJ Cardosi and all were positive. TBA Architects recommends approval of JJ Cardosi for this project and the Facilities Department concurs.

Mr. Alani noted that Town Meeting approved the project cost at \$6,282,735. He feels we should be able to include retrofitting the B Wing for HVAC to be completely fossil-fuel free (something that was added at the last minute).

Ms. Scoville asked if construction vehicles would be using the Plateau Field at JGMS. Mr. Alani said no because he expects a ramp to facilities to be built and therefore the field will not be impacted. The field however will be closed for safety concerns.

Ms. Santiago asked if installation of solar panels are part of this project. Mr. Alani said no that they will be done as a separate project but the roof will be prepared for the panels.

Mr. Brosgol asked if JGMS roof replacement was part of this project. Mr. Alani said no and added that it may become part of the solar panel project if it is deemed necessary.

Ms. Santiago made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve entering into a contract for \$5,833,000 with JJ Cardosi, Inc. as General Contractor for the JGMS addition and the BHS renovation project as approved at the fall 2018 Town Meeting.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. Marquis

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

5. BHS Handbook Amendment

Mr. Sills reported that at the last School Committee meeting, Ms. Alicia Linsey and Ms. Paula Springer advocated to change the name of the Guidance Department to Counseling Department and to change the name of Guidance Counselor to School Counselor. Therefore, the 2019-2020 Bedford High School Handbook must be change to reflect this change.

Ms. Guay made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve amending the 2019-2020 Bedford High School Handbook to reflect the change in the name of the department to Counseling Department and change the name of the Guidance Counselor position to School Counselor.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. Marquis

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

6. JGMS School Improvement Plan

Mr. Kevin Tracey, Principal of John Glenn Middle School, presented the 2019-2020 School Improvement Plan.

Mr. Tracey reviewed the district mission statement (see below) and he noted that he is very excited to work on the Strategic Plan and help define the Portrait of a Graduate.

District mission statement: The Bedford Public Schools develops skillful, reflective, lifelong learners who think critically and creatively and who are informed, responsible, and productive global citizens. The school community provides a safe, respectful, and inclusive environment in which the unique intellectual, social, ethical, and emotional growth of each learner is realized.

Mr. Tracey reviewed some highlights of the year including:

- Staff focus on reading comprehension strategies
- Adoption of new 6th grade math text—continuation of vertical alignment in math
- Google has helped with adopting online student portfolios
- A race affinity group has been formed to help understand the METCO experience
- Positive results from the extended year math program (Calculus Project)

- Movement towards a more inclusive models is underway at JGMS with co-teaching and reading partnerships.
- Lots of good work being done around our students and staff social-emotional well-being.
- Looking forward to having more high school students come to JGMS as mentors and interns.
- Lots of extra-curricular success this year – drama, sports, iRobot visits etc.

Mr. Tracey then outlined the 2019-2020 School Improvement goals:

1. Culturally Responsive Teaching professional development
2. Continue focus on improving students' literacy skills especially on instructional practices in regards to nonfiction/information materials and texts. Also will examine current writing practices school-wide and will implement consistent expectations and language.
3. Continue to work towards curation of (online) student work to help with self-reflection on learning.
4. Continue to foster positive and inclusive school culture to ensure all feel welcome and safe. (Will do an exit survey with students of color)
5. Need to mitigate the impact of special education programming on the heterogeneous make up of classes across all subjects.
6. Continue to expand academic support and enrichment programs to promote greater equity and access. Review the effectiveness of the interventions such as Calculus Project, co-teaching, and reading partnerships.
7. Focus on mindfulness and reduction of student stress by expanding K-12 parent education series. Follow Challenge Success and see how it can be used at JGMS. Implement diversion program for social media, drugs and alcohol use.
8. Manage the school renovation project.

School Committee members had a few questions.

Ms. Gallant, Student Representative, was pleased to learn about the race affinity group and that there would be more Mentor opportunities for high school students to come to JGMS.

Ms. Guay asked how the staff reacted to the focus on literacy. Mr. Tracey said that teachers appreciate the effort to use consistent language and the framework it brings to the school. The strategies themselves are not really new to teachers.

Ms. Guay proposed using exit interviews for students in 8th grade as they leave to go to the high school.

Ms. Marquis asked if there was a diversion program that Mr. Tracey wanted to use. Mr. Tracey said no. She suggested seeing what other districts use.

Ms. Marquis asked what an e-portfolio looks like. Mr. Tracey said each student sets up their own and they are very different. Right now, students curate work that they are excited about. He would like it to be more goal oriented but still broad based – arts, music, athletics along with papers and reports.

Ms. Scoville said that she does not see “Curation” at home yet but does see a lot of google document use. She is excited about the potential.

Ms. Scoville asked if vaping a concern. Mr. Tracey said he is concerned and we need preventative education on the risks of vaping.

Mr. Brosgol asked if there were any changes in the Counseling Department. Mr. Tracey said that there are three Counselors and a School Adjustment Counselor. He is also pleased that Ms. Linsey is pulling everything together especially with the social-emotional curriculum.

Mr. Sills reminded the School Committee that a vote to approve the School Improvement Plan would happen after the summer retreat with Administrators.

7. 2019-2020 JGMS Handbook

Assistant Principal Nick Bacigalupi presented proposed changes to the 2019-2020 John Glenn Middle School Handbook. He explained that the majority of changes this year are “housekeeping” in nature. The section pertaining to “H.E.A.R.T.” has been expanded.

H.E.A.R.T (Honor, Empathy, Acceptance, Responsibility, and Tenacity) represents the values JGMS students and staff have adopted. The Handbook now contains a chart with examples of what the values look like. For example, under HONOR – “I make the best choice whether or not it is popular” or ACCEPTANCE – “I stand up to ignorance and intolerance”.

Mr. Bacigalupi said that teachers have been doing a great job weaving these values into their classrooms and having these values has really encouraged many conversations with the students.

Mr. Bacigalupi also noted that they updated the Electronic Devices section in the handbook by adding “Smart Watches”. These have become a distraction in class.

Ms. Santiago cautioned about using the term “nice” in the HEART information because too often in the past, girls were always told to be “nice” and this may unconsciously be limiting young girls’ self-esteem.

Ms. Guay made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee accept the changes proposed for the 2019-2020 John Glenn Middle School Handbook as presented.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. Santiago

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

8. 2018-2019 District Goals Year End Report

Mr. Sills reported on how well the District met its four strategic goals. Highlights of this report follow:

1. Coherent, Higher Order Thinking Curriculum/Student-Centered Instruction

Mr. Sills said that the key focus areas under this goal were to strengthen K-12 non-fiction literacy and to increase student independence. Some actions include:

- Professional Development targeted to literacy learning strategies
- Trained teachers and implemented Lucy Caulkins in all grades at Lane
- Created K-12 anchor standards for reading and writing focused on claim-evidence reasoning
- Made significant progress in transforming learning expectations into “I can” statements.
- Made use of “growth mindset” language

Mr. Sills graded efforts to strengthen literacy focus with an “A” and a “B+” for increasing student independence – districtwide.

2. Equity and Diversity: Teaching All Students/Building Community

The key focus areas are closing the Achievement Gaps and deepening cross cultural understanding, improving conditions for social and emotional learning, and continuing to improve students’ sense of belonging. Some actions include:

- Implemented Interracial Parent Advisory Committee
- Provided multiple professional development courses given by teachers, administrators and students.
- Leadership team read “Culturally Responsive Teaching and the Brain” and will provide to all faculty for study next year.
- Significantly increased the number of African American and Latinx students in High Honors and AP classes.
- Established a K-12 Counseling Department with a focus on Social Emotional curriculum development
- Hired Social Worker clinician to assist METCO program
- Implemented Challenge Success at BHS
- Hired K-5 Director of Student Achievement with an expertise in social-emotional learning and data analysis.
- Trained teachers and implemented Responsive Classroom techniques

Mr. Sills graded efforts as follows:

Closing achievement gaps B

Increase support for students’ social emotional well-being A

Improving student sense of belonging A-

3. Collaborative Professional Culture

The focus this year was shifting the focus from teacher to student and to utilize evaluations to further strategic objectives. Mr. Sills graded the district efforts for this goal A-. He was especially pleased that all evaluators engaged in a series of workshops led by Assistant Superintendent Marylou Sallee.

4. Strengthen Communication and Deepen Our Community Support

Focus areas were on increasing opportunities for community and family engagement and commencing a five-year strategic planning process.

Sample actions:

- Widespread use of blogs and various forms of social media to promote school events and student achievements
- Student and faculty presentations at School Committee meetings
- Articles and letters to the community in local media
- Interracial Parent Advisory Council established
- Launched Strategic Planning Process

Mr. Sills gave an “A” for district-wide meeting of increasing opportunities for engagement and an “A” for launching the Strategic Planning Process.

Ms. Samantha Gallant, Student Representative, asked if there is consistency with literacy goals at all of the schools. Mr. Sills said yes that this was discussed with the Leadership Team. Next

year, there will be a literacy steering committee established to set goals and to follow up on actions to meet the goals.

Ms. Gallant said that a lot of the achievement gap work at the schools seems to focus on the Tenacity Challenge and on the Calculus Project. She asked if there were other efforts. Mr. Sills said yes, for example the "Excel" program at the high school has been in place for a while. This is where teachers are asked to find students who are capable of taking higher level classes and then offering support to help them succeed. Also, the Counselors help with setting academic goals too. The Culturally Responsive Classroom work will also be beneficial.

Ms. Gallant suggested expanding the title of the "Calculus Project" since the goal is to push students to take higher level classes in all subjects, not just math.

Ms. Guay thanked Mr. Sills for a detailed presentation and that she is very impressed with all of the accomplishments. She said she is especially pleased with the participation on the Interracial Committee. She suggested that maybe a School Committee member join some of these parent committee even if it is just to observe. Mr. Sills suggested reinstituting the practice of holding a School Committee meeting in Boston at least once a year.

Ms. Marquis said she was pleased to see the focus on social emotional well-being is throughout the district.

Ms. Scoville commented that family engagement this year has been terrific. She still would like to discover ways to attract families who do not typically come out to the programs. She also feels like the District needs to find and use a consistent platform for communication.

Ms. Santiago agrees that all the accomplishments are impressive. She also thanked Student Rep. Gallant for her thoughtful input and questions this year.

Mr. Brosgol thanked Mr. Sills for his hard work once again this year.

9. Superintendent's Report

Mr. Sills reminded everyone that tonight is Ms. Sallee's last School Committee meeting. He said that she has been an incredible partner and a tireless worker. He appreciates the fact that she can see both the details and the big picture. He is really going to miss working with her.

Mr. Sills reported that the two year pilot program on the Religious and Cultural Holiday Policy has ended and it is time to consider making it permanent. It will be placed on the next School Committee's meeting agenda so any public wishing to comment may do so. He reminded the Committee that the goal of the policy was to be equitable while minimizing school disruptions.

Mr. Sills said he did issue a survey and 73 parents, 26 teachers and 1 student participated. The results were that 77% of the people would like the policy to continue, 14% were neutral and 8% opposed.

Mr. Sills said the district joined an alliance to help with keeping student information private. Details to follow.

10. Minutes

Ms. Santiago made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the minutes of the May 14, 2019 School Committee meeting as amended.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. Scoville

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

The School Committee thanked Ms. Gallant, Student Representative, for her advocacy, commitment and insights this year on the School Committee. Mr. Sills said he is very proud of how Ms. Gallant represents our District. He thanked her for her courage to ask the tough questions and make the thoughtful comments this year.

11. Adjournment

Ms. Guay made the following motion:

MOVED: Motion to adjourn at 9:56 p.m. not to reopen.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. Marquis

MOTION APPROVED 5-0

Mr. Brosgol Yes

Ms. Santiago Yes

Ms. Scoville Yes

Ms. Guay Yes

Ms. Marquis Yes



School Committee Secretary



Date

BEDFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE

June 4, 2019

Exhibits/Documents

- JGMS School Improvement 2019-2020 presentation
- JGMS 2019-2020 Handbook changes memorandum
- 2018-2019 District Goals – End of Year Review presentation

- Draft of minutes from May 14, 2019 School Committee meeting