

DRAFT
BEDFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE
December 10, 2019
Large Group Instruction Room, Bedford High School

1. Call to Order

At 7:30 p.m., Ms. Santiago called to order the meeting of the Bedford School Committee. Other members present included Ms. Scoville and Mr. Brosgol. Ms. Guay was delayed and arrived at 8:35 p.m. Mr. Morrison was absent. There were no student representatives present this evening.

2. Comments from Public

None

3. Literacy and ELA Presentation

Ms. Elizabeth Marcotte, English Program Administrator for BHS and John Glenn Middle School, Ms. Andrea Salipante, ELA Coordinator for the Lane and Davis Elementary and Dr. Jennifer Rabold, Secondary Literacy Program Administrator for the high school and the middle school gave a joint presentation addressing ELA and Literacy K-12.

Ms. Marcotte stated that the main focus of the 2019-2020 school year is on data and that she and staff are using a book called "Data Wise".

She explained the "Data Wise Process" which is eight-step model that guides teams of educators from schools in working collaboratively to improve teaching and learning through evidence-based analysis. She talked about grades 6-12 saying that they are making progress but there is still room to grow and she has seen an increase in achievement scores and said that the overall the MCAS data was hard to compare because different tests were administered to different classes. She noted that writing is the area that is in most need of improvement.

Ms. Salipante spoke about ELA and Reading at the Davis and Lane Elementary schools. She said that DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators of Early Basic Literacy Skills) is used for Kindergarten assessment, Fountas and Pinnell's Benchmark Assessment System for grades 1-5 and MCAS data for grades 3-5. She said that grades 1-5 did well in the areas of accuracy, fluency and comprehension but thinks that testing should be done at these early grade levels in order to track student progress.

Next Dr. Jennifer Rabold talked about identifying strengths and weaknesses and reviewing processes for assessments for struggling students. She reviewed inquiries that she had made about standardized tests, literacy assessments and the need for literacy screening and then introduced the steps that will be taken such as implementing literacy screening assessments and making recommendations for school and grade wide literacy support structures, interventions and procedures. She talked about the use of GRADE (Group Reading Assessment and Diagnostic Evaluation) which that determines what developmental skills Pre-K-12 students have mastered and where intervention is needed. Dr. Rabold said that data can explain a lot about a student, what isn't always obvious on the outside and that grades can identify the struggling student. She went on to say that according to the MCAS results there are quite a few Bedford students who struggle with reading and that understanding vocabulary is a great concern because it is key to reading comprehension.

1 *The School Committee had some questions and comments:*

2
3 Mr. Brosgol stated that the majority of children in the United States cannot read
4 proficiently and wonders how comprehension of difficult text can be improved in order to
5 then have the student prove their comprehension by writing.

6
7 He asked which was more common, having better readers than writers or better writers
8 than readers.

9
10 Ms. Marcotte said that the old tests made it easier to write about any context but the new
11 test analyze comprehension in reading.

12
13 Mr. Brosgol asked if the Literacy Assessment score range was higher than most other
14 towns or is this large range common.

15
16 Ms. Rabold said that ranges like this are unusual but she will be glad to look into this
17 further.

18
19 Mr. Brosgol asked for clarification. Most students struggle with non-fiction text and do
20 well with fiction text but Bedford seems to do well with the non-fiction texts which are
21 mainly science and history based. Mr. Brosgol asked if the challenge is with the
22 comprehension of those texts or is the challenge writing down what they understood.

23
24 Ms. Rabold said that they are working with the other content area teachers in order to
25 look at the strategies that students use to read a fiction text. She said that the strategies
26 used reading science text vs. history text can be very different.

27
28 Ms. Scoville said that she really like the GRADE being used to catch the quite kids who
29 may otherwise slip through – she wondered if the GRADE will also be used on K-5
30 students and wondered how they decide which tier a student should be assigned.

31
32 Ms. Salipante said that there are weekly meetings with staff using data as the starting
33 point of the decision but the weekly meetings were also an important factor.

34
35 Ms. Scoville mentioned that the Lucy Calkins pilot at Davis will eventually target other
36 grades.

37
38 Ms. Salipante said that the ultimate goal is to implement the program in grades K-5.

39
40 Ms. Scoville hoped that the students would not lose the joy of reading and not to lose that
41 joy because of the testing.

42
43 Ms. Marcotte said the that key is to expose students to all kind of reading until they find
44 what they like.

45
46 Ms. Scoville asked whether students that have attended preschool score higher according
47 to DIBELS and if they have reviewed the lower scoring students to determine if those
48 students had attended preschool.

1 Ms. Salipante said that the kindergarten screening tool that is used in the spring shows
2 other data that identifies early literacy skills.

3
4 Ms. Santiago asked what would happen if a student with these needs moved to Bedford in
5 the middle of the school year.

6
7 Ms. Marcotte said that no matter what grade, the staff makes sure that the student has
8 what they need to succeed.

9
10 Dr. Clifford thanked the ELA staff and said that she was very impressed by all that they
11 are doing.

12 13 **4. Superintendent Search Update**

14
15 Ms. Santiago started by saying that the subcommittee has solicited proposals from five search
16 firms so far. She said that two proposals have been received, two are promised by the end of the
17 week and one firm is not accepting new clients at this time.

18
19 Ms. Santiago said that Ms. Guay has been very helpful reviewing School Committee policy and
20 Open Meeting Law. She said that the hiring subcommittee will be composed of two School
21 Committee members, one ex officio, one appointed and the Superintendent appears to be one
22 option to allow them to conduct the screening of new candidates with community input.

23
24 Ms. Guay thinks that the vote for the hiring subcommittee should take place at the next School
25 Committee meeting. She clarified that Mr. Sills and Ms. Santiago will be ex officio and that Mr.
26 Brosgol will be the appointee.

27
28 Ms. Santiago said that this needed to be decided. She referred to the Board of Selectmen's
29 screening committee as a model.

30
31 Mr. Brosgol said that he was under the impression that the subcommittee would be formed with
32 two School Committee members as well as members of the community and he feels that this is
33 the right way to go.

34
35 Ms. Guay said that it is imperative to keep this process discreet in the beginning to protect the
36 candidates who haven't announced this to their current employers.

37
38 Mr. Sills says that he understands that the subcommittee does the leg work with the help of a
39 search firm and can also have the input from the community and then the hiring committee will
40 interview the candidates. He said that there are different iterations.

41
42 Dr. Clifford said that in her experience having been through this process, the School Committee
43 will ask for people in the community to apply for the search committee and then gives a timeline.
44 The community members are selected and then they work with consultant to look through
45 applicants and creates questions. Initial interviews are conducted and then they bring 3
46 candidates to the School Committee. The School Committee then chooses from the 3 finalists.

47
48 Ms. Santiago said that there are two parts, the project management piece and then the interview
49 and candidate screening piece. She said that the hiring subcommittee is the right group for the
50 candidate screening piece.

- School Committee Subcommittee
 - o Two School Committee members
 - o Superintendent
 - o Looks at resumes, organizes, chooses top 10 applicants
- Superintendent Search Committee
 - o School Committee Members
 - o Community Members
 - o Conducts interviews of 10 chosen applicants
- School Committee
 - o Interviews three finalists

Ms. Santiago made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee to approve the establishment of the School Committee Hiring Subcommittee for the purpose of organizing a Superintendent search composed of:

Mr. Brosgol

Ms. Santiago

Mr. Sills

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. Guay

MOTION APPROVED: 4-0-0

5. CASE Agreement

Mr. Sills said that each CASE Collaborative has a formal agreement with each of the School Committees of the member districts. He said that there are three proposed changes in these agreements and he would ask that the School Committee support these changes. These must be approved by member School Committees in order to take effect.

First:

Page seven of the agreement

XVII “a” replaces “any”

Any member School Committee may withdraw from CASE at the end of “a” fiscal year.

Timeframe from notification has been changed from 6 months to 24 months

Second:

Page 10 of the agreement

XXIV – Adding to the anti-discrimination clause which brings it up to date in in reference

Third:

XXV – Twenty-four-month notification change period before a district can withdraw from transportation.

Ms. Guay asked if any consideration was given to 12 months vs. 24 months.

Mr. Sills said that 12 is not enough to align for fiscal budget planning.

Ms. Guay asked if there is a plan to add a new district to replace the district that left the collaborative.

1 Mr. Sills said that this would be welcome.

2
3 Ms. Guay asked why we should continue with only 2 Bedford students in CASE.

4
5 Mr. Sills said that it is of no cost to Bedford.

6
7 Ms. Santiago asked about the transportation clause and asked what the risk is to Bedford if we
8 withdrew at some point and what impact would the loss of the surplus funds look like.

9
10 Mr. Sills said that the CASE transportation has a surplus although not every year and it is figured
11 two years' prior dependent on ridership. He said that the dollar amount is between \$50-\$100K
12 worth of credits but there hasn't been a credit in about two years.

13
14 Ms. Santiago asked at what point would we seek counsel for review for example if we wanted to
15 leave the contract.

16
17 Mr. Sills mentioned that two past EDCO changes have not gone to legal counsel and said that he
18 feels comfortable with the changes but would be glad to have the counsel review it.

19
20 Ms. Santiago made the following motion:

21 **MOVED: That the School Committee approve the revised CASE agreement including**
22 **changes made to sections XVII, XXIV and the addition of XXV**

23 **MOTION SECONDED by Ms. Scoville**

24 **MOTION APPROVED: 4-0-0**

25
26 **6. Class Size Guidelines Review**

27
28 Mr. Sills asked that the School Committee support an adjustment to the Class Size guidelines
29 which was initially voted on several years ago. He said that he would like to correct an earlier
30 error in the class size for the second grade guideline recommendation.

31
32 Mr. Sills asked that the change from the current 22-24 class size maximum to 20-22 class size
33 maximum. He said that in second grade, students are still learning to read and smaller class size
34 would benefit the students.

35
36 Mr. Brosgol said that he is happy to reduce the class size guidelines.

37
38 Ms. Guay asked if there were aides in the second grade classroom.

39
40 Mr. Sills said that aides are shared among classrooms.

41
42 Ms. Guay asked if other towns with smaller class sizes also have aides in the classrooms. She said
43 she'd read that unless you drop the class size to 12-15, only then does it really make a difference.
44 She asked if it was in Mr. Sills' professional opinion that he endorse moving teachers from one
45 school to another.

46
47 Mr. Sills said yes, it is.

48
49 Ms. Guay asked that would it be possible in the future to move a second grade teacher to a third
50 grade teaching position.

1 Mr. Sills said, yes he would. He said learning a new grade curriculum is not easy but the teachers
2 are well trained and he is not going to advocate for an additional Davis classroom teacher.

3
4 Ms. Santiago asked why the number is 22 students and not 23.

5
6 Mr. Sills said that the vast majority are 22 or under and he thinks that reflects common wisdom of
7 what early education needs to have in terms of class size in K-2.

8
9 Ms. Santiago made the following motion:

10 **MOVED: That the School Committee the approved Class Size Guidelines to reduce the**
11 **second grade class size from 22-24 to 20-22.**

12 **MOTION SECONDED by Ms. Scoville**

13 **MOTION APPROVED: 4-0-0**

14
15 **7. Personnel Report**

16
17 **Job Descriptions First Reading**

18
19 Mr. Sills talked about the reorganization of two assistant positions to the Office of the
20 Superintendent which would have a small budget impact.

21
22 Human Resources Specialist

23
24 Assistant to the Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent of Schools

25
26 Mr. Sills went on to explain the duties of each of the roles according to the job descriptions.

27
28 Ms. Guay asked if the jobs duties were divided equally and that one person is not overwhelmed
29 with duties and that this is the type of work that one person can do.

30
31 Mr. Sills said that he thinks that they are well balanced.

32
33 Ms. Guay asked if the HR person would handle harassment issues.

34
35 Mr. Sills said no, that would have to be handled by an administrator.

36
37 Ms. Santiago asked about the impact to the budget and what that will look like.

38
39 Mr. Sills said that Executive Assistant is being advertised at a +/- of around \$5,000 to the current
40 salary and that the HR position would only be a small bump and will be the go to person for the
41 Superintendent and the Assistant Superintendent for all HR questions.

42
43 **8. Superintendent's Report**

44 None

45
46 **9. Minutes**

47
48 Ms. Santiago made the following motion:

49 **MOVED: That the School Committee votes to approve the minutes with amendments from**
50 **the October 29, 2019 School Committee meeting.**

1 **MOTION SECONDED by Ms. Scoville**

2 **MOTION APPROVED: 4-0-0**

3
4 **11. Liaison Report**

5
6 Mr. Brosgol attended the *

7
8 Ms. Guay is on the School Building Committee and has been attending meetings
9 She has also attended the Bedford Arbor Resource Committee meetings as well and has listened
10 to the thoughts of conservationists, engineers as well as citizens about the JGMS parking lot
11 project.

12
13 Ms. Guay also attended a meeting with Bedford Youth and Family Services and the
14 subcommittee discussion about vaping and the dangers.

15
16 Ms. Scoville attended the Bedford Community Partnership Committee and said that she was
17 introduced to a new social worker that was recently hired.

18
19 **12. Adjournment**

20 Ms. Santiago made the following motion:

21 **MOVED: Motion to adjourn at 9:42 p.m. not to reopen.**

22 **MOTION SECONDED by Ms. Guay**

23 **MOTION APPROVED 4-0-0**

24 **Mr. Brosgol** Yes

25 **Ms. Santiago** Yes

26 **Ms. Scoville** Yes

27 **Ms. Guay** Yes

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32 School Committee Secretary

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Date 

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BEDFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE

December 10, 2019

Exhibits/Documents

- Literacy and ELA Presentation
- CASE, Concord Area Special Education Collaborative Agreement (revised)
- Class Size Correction, December 6, 2019
- Personnel Report - Job Descriptions
HR Specialist and Executive Assistant to the Superintendent and the Assistant Superintendent