

**JOINT MEETING OF THE BEDFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
AND BEDFORD SELECTMEN**

**November 26, 2019**

**Large Group Instruction Room, Bedford High School**

**1. Call to Order**

At p.m. 7:33, Ms. Santiago called to order the meeting with a roll call of the Bedford School Committee and the Bedford Selectmen.

The following members were in attendance:

**Mr. Brosgol  
Ms. Guay  
Ms. Scoville  
Ms. Santiago**

**Mr. Rosenberg  
Ms. Mitchell  
Ms. Fleischman  
Mr. Moonan  
Mr. Pierce**

**2. Public Comment**

**None**

**3. Candidate Interviews and Appointment of Interim School Committee Member to Fill a Vacant Seat Created by Recent Member Resignation**

Ms. Santiago started by thanking the candidates who put their names forward to interview for the vacant seat on the School Committee. She went on to explain the interview process stating that there would be five questions asked and that the decision will be made by a majority vote.

Before starting the interviews, Mr. Rosenberg asked the candidates if there were any who if appointed, did not plan to run in March 2020, when the new elections are held. All of the candidates said that if appointed, they planned to run in March.

The candidates were as follows:

Dr. Eleanor Gorsey, PhD  
Dr. J. Bradley Morrison, PhD  
Ms. Helen Pulizzi  
Dr. Elizabeth Stringer-Keefe, PhD  
Ms. Nina Tate  
Dr. Gloria Tsai, PhD

The candidates were called in alphabetical order to answer questions that asked about financial decision making, top priorities for the school system, dealing with opposition, student stress, student challenges and their own schedule availability and flexibility.

Due to traffic, Dr. Gorsey was delayed so the interviews started with Dr. Morrison.

*Dr. J. Bradley Morrison is a professor at Brandeis University and resides on Fox Run Road in Bedford.*

Dr. Morrison said that he believes strongly in education and that he believes that it is a critical aspect to what makes Bedford a great place. He said that believes there should be a balance for students with the arts, sciences, curriculum as well as extra-curricular activities and sports. Dr. Morrison thinks that it is important that students get the support that they need to continue on to whichever path they choose whether it be going on to college, technical school or entrepreneurial ambitions. He went on to say that this all can and should be done in a fiscally responsible manner.

*Dr. Eleanor Gorsey was the Principal of the Bedford Learning School and a Professor at Parks College at St. Louis University and resides on Old Billerica Road in Bedford.*

Dr. Gorsey said that she believes in reaching students to help them advance and that there are different methods of teaching to reach each child. She feels that it is important to bring children to their full potential and she has had great experience working with a range of students with different needs. She mentioned that she has taught in different capacities over a span of forty years and she feels that she has something to contribute to the position.

*Ms. Helen Pulizzi is student at Framingham State University with a major in Elementary Education. She is a current Bedford High School graduate and resides on Evans Avenue in Bedford.*

Ms. Pulizzi said that she felt that civic engagement is very important to the community. She said that if appointed she would promote educational equity such as growing the SAIL, STEP and BRIDGE programs. Ms. Pulizzi said that she feels that Bedford is unique because it does not charge fees for extra-curricular activities, she believes that this contributes to student equity and that she would support the continuation of this. She talked about the importance of class size and what impact growing classes can have. Ms. Pulizzi went on to say that she also would work on closing opportunity and achievement gaps in order to help promote growth and success of Bedford students.

*Dr. Elizabeth Stringer-Keefe is an Associate Professor at Stonehill College and resides on Alcott Street in Bedford.*

Dr. Stringer-Keefe is a big proponent of public education and believes that it is the cornerstone of democracy. She thinks that supporting town and school to adopt a stance that reflects diversity and inclusivity is very important for students today. Dr. Stringer-Keefe believes that there should be a balance of technology because saturation of social media and bullying but she also believes that technology also has tools and skills that students will need to be successful. She also thinks that it is a priority to help the District and the Town balance internal and external accountability with regard to state and federal initiatives.

*Ms. Nina Tate is a stay-at-home Mom who volunteers to serve as a Board Member for Bedford's BEST/PTO, she is a member of the Building Committee, Lane School Advisory Council and serves on several other councils and committees. She resides on Glenridge Drive in Bedford.*

Ms. Tate feels that it is very important to give back to the community and that public school education is equally as important. She has volunteered within the Bedford Public Schools for the past six years. Ms. Tate believes that literacy is an essential priority for students of all ages and also thinks that it is important to focus on the social and emotional well-being of our students. Ms. Tate understands that it is important that Bedford continues along the path of the development of equity for all students.

*Dr. Gloria Tsai is a full time Mom who was an Assistant Professor at Nazareth College in Rochester, NY. She resides on Jeffrey Circle in Bedford.*

Dr. Tsai shared a personal experience about a student who recently immigrated to the U.S. and has had a difficult time connecting and adapting to school life both socially and emotionally, here in Bedford. She was motivated by this experience and believes that diversity is a reflection of our school and community. She would like to see promotion of diversity and cultural understanding in Bedford to include the hiring and retention of cultural and ethnic minority teachers to really reflect the composition of our school population.

After all candidates were interviewed by the members of the School Committee and the Selectmen, Ms. Santiago went on to thank the candidates saying that we are very lucky to have such a great panel of applicants.

School Committee Members and the Selectmen spoke about some of the positive attributes of each of the candidates.

Ms. Santiago stated that we are lucky to have some skilled educators on the panel and she really liked Dr. Keefe's discussion about the importance of resiliency. She thought Ms. Pulizzi was extremely eloquent speaking about education and she liked her educator's perspective as well as her perspective as former student. Ms. Santiago also appreciated Dr. Tsai's emphasis on the importance of diversity and how it is impacting our schools.

Mr. Brosgol said that this is a difficult choice. He said that he was impressed by the candidates and their grasp of the issues. He thanked the candidates and said that if they did not win the appointment now, then he hoped that they would run for a seat for School Committee in the spring election.

Ms. Guay thanked the candidates for coming and said that she was thrilled to see such interest from such a talented group of people. She said that listening to the candidates has made her think a little bit differently about her role on School Committee realizing some of the strengths that they have but also some strengths that they could use and she found it very helpful.

Ms. Scoville said that she thinks that this was harder to interview in person rather than to run for an election. She thanked the candidates for coming.

Mr. Rosenberg agreed with everybody's assessment of the richness of the community and that it is very self-evident with the panel of candidates that we had this evening. He was thankful for the expertise of the panel as well as their thoughtful answers. He reviewed the responses that were given throughout the evening and said that Dr. Morrison's response about the response of fiscal responsibility really resonated with him.

Ms. Mitchell said that they were in an interesting position as Selectmen since they don't work directly with School Committee but she was thankful to have been part of this process. She commended the applicants and said that she could relate to how difficult it is to speak publicly in an interview and said that they each had interesting things to say. Ms. Mitchell said she feels that it is important to make sure that our boards and committees reflect the diversity to our changing population. She went on to thank the candidates.

Ms. Fleischman also thanked the candidates and said that what stood out to her were the candidates that were future-focused. She said that she thinks that as a participant of the visioning exercises for the next strategic plan, she appreciates those who grapple with not only the student of today but also with what the student of the future will look like to include space needs and social and emotional needs of these students.

Mr. Moonan agreed with his colleagues. He said that even though they are not really part of the educational group that interfaces with teachers, he is amazed how far education has come since he was in school and how educators now include psychology and social interaction and said that he was impressed by the entire discussion during the interview process. Mr. Moonan added his thanks and said that we are blessed with such a diverse group of candidates.

Mr. Pierce said that he too appreciated the richness of the group. He said that what resonated with him was the emphasis on meeting the child where they are educationally to meet their needs and that there were so many important points across the spectrum of what is delivered to the students of Bedford. He agrees that it is a great school district and feels that it is very important to maintain that. Mr. Pierce also agreed with Mr. Rosenberg that a financial side of a future School Committee member is also very important.

The School Committee and the Selectmen then cast their votes to decide who would fill the role of School Committee member until the elections in the spring.

The first cast of votes came up with two candidates receiving no votes, Dr. Eleanor Gorsey, PhD and Ms. Nina Tate.

Mr. Rosenberg asked if anyone received four votes and Ms. Santiago responded that Dr. Morrison received four votes. Mr. Rosenberg went on to say that since he was one who advocated for Dr. Morrison, he thought that Dr. Morrison's financial perspective would complement the current School Committee. Mr. Rosenberg also agreed that there were other candidates who had strengths that would complement the composition of the School Committee, but he found that Mr. Pierce's comment about Dr. Morrison's prioritization of the financial piece was significantly important especially when the budget process is already under way.

Mr. Brosgol reviewed his notes on each of the four final candidate's answers to their top three priorities if appointed to School Committee mentioning that each group of responses were excellent goals, but agreed that Dr. Morrison's answers meshed particularly well with the role of a School Committee member and noted that there is a distinct difference between their role and the role of school leadership. He said that he thinks that Dr. Morrison's goals as he articulated were in the spirit of what the School Committee is trying to do and thanked him for sharing them.

Ms. Scoville thinks that the understanding of education and that it is more than just the finances. She thinks that the educational piece is very important and is really a big value for the decision.

Ms. Santiago thanked Mr. Pierce and Mr. Rosenberg for bringing their perspective. She said that budget is important but the primary role as School Committee members is to promote student achievement. She agrees that the School Committee should act as a good steward of the Town's funds but thinks that student achievement and wellness is the bottom line role of the School Committee.

Ms. Mitchell thought that Ms. Pulizzi had a unique perspective having been a student of Bedford as well as an education student and she found this very compelling. She disclosed that she has worked with Ms. Pulizzi in the past and mentioned that she has worked on budget and interpersonal assignments of teams and placement. She said that Ms. Pulizzi was a thoughtful and discreet individual and that it would be a bold choice to have a college student on the School Committee but felt it was a chance worth taking.

Ms. Guay said that she has noticed how the School Committee members have changed over the years and what she brought to the table which was policy. She says that there has been a shift and that there were members of the past that were stronger on the budget side and that this is something to think about.

The School Committee and the Selectmen cast a second round of votes for the final four candidates who were Dr. Tsai, Dr. Morrison, Ms. Pulizzi and Dr. Stringer-Keefe.

There was one candidate with six votes which was the majority of all Board members.

Ms. Santiago made the following motion:

**MOVED: That the School Committee and the Board of Selectmen approve the appointment of Dr. J. Bradley Morrison to fill the School Committee vacancy through Town election on March 14, 2020**

**MOTION SECONDED by Ms. Guay**

**MOTION APPROVED 6-3-0**

<b>Mr. Brosgol</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Ms. Santiago</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Ms. Scoville</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Ms. Guay</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Mr. Rosenberg</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Ms. Mitchell</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Ms. Fleischman</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Mr. Moonan</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Mr. Pierce</b>	<b>Yes</b>

#### **4. Personnel Report**

##### ***Information Items***

##### **Resignations:**

*None*

##### **Retirements:**

*None*

##### **Transfers (with current positions):**

*None*

##### **Appointments:**

*None*

## *Action Items*

### **Field Trip Request - Out-of-State / Overnight Field Trips:**

#### **Vermont**

Mr. Sills presented a request by Bedford High School teaching staff Ms. Sandra Arena to bring students on an out of state field trip to Vermont to visit the Grafton Cheese Company, Vermont Shepherd, King Arthur Flour, the New England Culinary Institute, Cold Hollow Cider Mill, Ben and Jerry's Factory and the Von Trapp Farmstead.

The purpose of this trip will be to learn about farming, cheese/dairy production and maple sugaring and for students who may be interested in the culinary/hospitality industry. Ms. Arena will be accompanied by two additional chaperones, Mr. Sean McGowan and Ms. Justine Flora.

- The trip will take place from April 2 to April 4, 2020
- There will be three chaperones and approximate 20 student maximum
- Students will miss 1.5 days of school
- Open to all students in grades 9-12 and will be selected in order of sign up
- Two BHS vans will be used for transportation
- The only cost to the school is cost for gasoline for the vans
- Cost to students will be \$250.00 plus any personal expenses
- Substitutes will be needed for classroom coverage

*The School Committee members had the following questions and comments:*

Ms. Guay asked about options for students who cannot afford to pay for field trips and if there is a process to help these students.

Mr. Sills says that it depends on the trip and it seems other districts struggle in the same area. Mr. Sills said that he has thought of looking to local resources to help with these expenses.

Ms. Guay suggested that Bedford citizens and local businesses may be interested in contributing to a fund for students who can't afford some of the less expensive field trips and that she would support that kind of a fund.

Mr. Sills said that the school does find funds available to trips such as the D.C. trip or classroom field trips.

Ms. Scoville and Ms. Santiago noted the missed days of school but were still in agreement with the field trip.

Ms. Santiago made the following motion:

**MOVED: That the School Committee approve a request for an out of state field trip for Bedford High School students in grades 9-12 to go to Vermont from April 2<sup>nd</sup> to April 4<sup>th</sup>, 2020 at no cost to the school and a cost of \$250.00 per student.**

**MOTION SECONDED by Ms. Scoville**

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

## **Explorica's Yucatan Adventure**

Mr. Sills presented a request by Bedford High School teaching staff Ms. Karen Ford and Mr. Charles Alperin to bring students on an out of state field trip to the Yucatan, Mexico from April 17<sup>th</sup> to April 24<sup>th</sup>, 2021. The trip will consist of a maximum of 36 students from BHS. The students will have the opportunity to visit the Mayan ruins of Chichen Itza, Tulum and Ek' Balam. Additionally, they will experience the natural wonders of the Chuburna mangrove and Balankanche caves. Students will have a chance to practice Spanish and learn about the Mayan culture and live out Bedford High School's social and civic expectations by acting with integrity, respect valuing cultural diversity and showing tolerance.

- The trip is all inclusive but does not cover incidentals
- There will be no cost to the school
- Estimated cost per student is \$2,656.00 which does not include lunch or souvenirs
- Open to all students in grades 9-12
- Limited to 36 students
- Bus transportation will bring students to and from the airport from BHS
- Transportation in the Yucatan provided by Explorica, included in trip cost
- Ms. Ford and Mr. Alperin will chaperone and add additional chaperones as necessary
- Students will submit applications to be chosen for this trip
- No school will be missed

*The School Committee members had the following questions and comments:*

Ms. Guay said that she was very concerned and thinks that travel to Mexico is very dangerous right now and that the state department has warnings about other regions of Mexico and she would like more assurance that this trip is safe for the students.

Mr. Brosgol asked if Bedford's School Committee is unique in supporting all out of state field trips. He prefers not to approve this because it seems that it is perpetuating field trips for students who can afford it but it makes him uncomfortable. He said he will support the trip but would rather not see some students unable to attend for financial reasons.

Ms. Guay does not feel like high school students need to travel to Europe or overseas and she said she would like more information before approval.

Ms. Santiago asked if the other members would like to delay approval.

Mr. Sills said that he would do more research.

Ms. Santiago felt that it was worthy of getting more safety information and she appreciates that Mr. Brosgol brought up looking further into this before approving.

Mr. Sills agreed that there should be more information on safety and the consideration of the equity of all students. He said that he would also like to have further discussion on this topic.

There was no vote on this field trip until more information has been obtained.

**INFORMATION ITEMS:****Resignations:**

Denise Fennelly	Food Service Worker	Davis
Rebecca Robichaud	0.6 Educational Assistant	Preschool
Megan Hanafin	1.0 Elementary Teacher	Lane

**Retirements:**

Virginia Baudanza	Food Services Kitchen Manager	Davis
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**Appointments:**

Jaclyn Rideout	1.0 Interim Special Education Teacher: Social/Emotional	Davis
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Education:	Sacred Heart University Fairfield, CT Major: Psychology Bachelor of Science 2009
	University of Massachusetts at Boston Boston, MA Major: Elementary Education Master of Education 2012

Experience:	Hardy Elementary School Arlington, MA Special Education Teacher - 3 years
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Placement Step:	MA – 03
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Kimberly Parmentier	0.3 Education Assistant/Recess Coordinator	Lane
Jennifer Barry	1.0 Interim Special Education TA/Behavior Tech	Davis
Cassidy Foley	Food Service Worker	Davis
Jessica Martel	1.0 Special Education TA/Behavior Tech	Lane

**Extracurriculars:**

Paul Harrington	Tenacity Challenge Coach (1 of 8)	JGMS
Bonnie Klein	Tenacity Challenge Coach (2 of 8)	JGMS
Marcy Beinert	Tenacity Challenge Coach (3 of 8)	JGMS
Jennifer Naylor	Tenacity Challenge Coach (4 of 8)	JGMS
Wendy Tanahashi-Works	Tenacity Challenge Coach (5 of 8)	JGMS
Lynda McGraw	Tenacity Challenge Coach (6 of 8)	JGMS
Elizabeth Wilson	Tenacity Challenge Coach (7 of 8)	JGMS
Maureen McDermott	Tenacity Challenge Coach (8 of 8)	JGMS

**Athletics:**

*Winter appointments will be provided once all coaches are assigned.*



## 5. Donation Approval

Mr. Sills presented a donation of \$3,500.00 given to Bedford Public Schools from the Bedford Minuteman Scholarship Fund for the support of American Studies through the school libraries. The Bedford Minuteman Scholarship Trust plans to continue this endeavor with an annual donation.

Ms. Guay and Ms. Santiago agreed that this was a very generous donation and thanked the Bedford Minuteman.

Ms. Santiago made the following motion:

**MOVED: That the School Committee accept the donation of \$3,500.00 from the Bedford Minuteman Scholarship Fund for the support of American Studies through the school libraries.**

**MOTION SECONDED by Ms. Scoville**

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

## 6. Appointment of School Committee Secretary

Ms. Santiago presented the nomination for the role of School Committee Secretary for the remainder of the school year.

Ms. Guay volunteered for this position and said that she would be thrilled to serve as the Secretary for the Town of Bedford School Committee for the remainder of 2019-2020.

Ms. Santiago made the following motion:

**MOVED: That the Ms. Guay is appointed to serve as the Secretary for the Town of Bedford School Committee for the remainder of 2019-2020.**

**MOTION SECONDED by Ms. Scoville**

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

<b>Mr. Brosgol</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Ms. Santiago</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Ms. Scoville</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Ms. Guay</b>	<b>Yes</b>

## 7. Superintendent Recruitment

Ms. Santiago started by reiterating that Mr. Sills has announced his retirement at the end of June, 2020 and she thanked Mr. Sills for his service as Principal of Bedford High School as well as his service as Superintendent of Schools and wished him a very happy retirement.

She said that Tuesday, December 3rd, 2019 Massachusetts Association of School Committee's (MASC) Mr. Glen Koocher will present the services they offer to assist with the search to Bedford's School Committee as part of their membership.

Ms. Santiago said that she attended the D.E.S.E training for Superintendent evaluation and that she learned that there are about 30 districts currently in the process of recruiting new Superintendents. She mentioned that we are a little bit late in the process now and that we must act promptly and questioned whether the other members would like to form a sub-committee.

There was discussion about whether to hire a search consultant and whether it should be posted internally first and went on to say that some districts groom and hire internally. Ms. Santiago suggested an internal posting should be done sooner than later to get the search underway. She mentioned the Open Meeting law and said that only the final candidates will be interviewed publicly.

Mr. Brosgol thought that they should absolutely hire a consultant to help with the recruiting process and that he agrees there should be a sub-committee formed as well. He mentioned that he was not aware of an internal candidate.

Ms. Guay agreed and thinks that this will add efficiency to the search process.

Ms. Scoville also agreed to both the sub-committee and the hiring of a search consultant.

Mr. Sills said that the internal posting must be posted for 10 business days and that an internal candidate can still apply after the posting has gone public. He thought there may be one or two potential internal candidates.

Ms. Scoville expressed concern if the posting was not posted internally first and what the optics may be from an outside person.

Mr. Sills encouraged the internal posting and agreed to have any interested internal candidates could have a private discussion with him if they wished to do so.

Ms. Santiago recognized the support for hiring a consultant and agreed that it should be posted internally for 10 business days. She feels that we are still within the window of finding a good candidate.

Mr. Sills mentioned that whether the position was posted internally first rather than externally was a personal decision and not policy and that it should be posted externally no later than December 15<sup>th</sup>, 2019.

There was no vote taken.

## **9. Bylaws**

Ms. Santiago said that all boards, commissions and committees are encouraged to read and review the bylaws that are related to that committee. She said that any comments should be prepared and ready to be presented by November 30<sup>th</sup>, 2019.

Mr. Brosgol mentioned that the bylaws that pertained to School Committee were pretty bland and he encourages all members to read them. He said that he has looked at them pretty carefully and said that any changes from Special Town Meeting will not be voted on until All Town Meeting. Mr. Brosgol said that any members that had any suggestions or changes that they would like to see, please submit them to him before his next meeting on December 4<sup>th</sup>, 2019.

Ms. Guay asked that once the bylaws were approved at Town Meeting, will they go forward to the Attorney General's Office for final approval.

Mr. Brosgol replied yes to Ms. Guay's question.

## **10. Superintendent's Report**

Mr. Sills shared that the collective bargaining will begin in January with the Bedford Education Association. He mentioned that he would like to have an Executive Session on either the 3<sup>rd</sup> or 10<sup>th</sup> of December School Committee meeting to discuss strategizing. He reported that the Governor has signed the \$1.5-billion-dollar Foundation Budget increase. Mr. Sills went on to say that the increase for Bedford will be minimal but he hopes that their inclusion of Circuit Breaker and transportation calculations will have some benefit for the FY21 budget.

Ms. Guay asked if this would help more students with transportation.

Mr. Sills said that this wasn't how that determination is made but it could be possible.

Mr. Sills said that Bedford High School now has three students from LABBB and two students from EDCO's North Crossing program. He said that they are taking classes on a pass/fail basis and that Minuteman Tech no longer houses LABBB students for vocational programs. He said that we are currently seeking alternatives for these students but he said that we are lucky to be able to have them taking vocationally related subjects in Bedford.

Mr. Sills said that he and Ms. Kirrane have been working on the budget and will be meeting with the Leadership Team as a whole on December 3, 2019. He went on to mention that the English Language Learners program sponsored a family night earlier in the week that turned out wonderfully for families, students and staff members alike and he talked about how well the E.L.L. program has come along.

Ms. Guay commented that she had attended meetings with the Youth and Family Services Committee, the Building Committee and the Tree Committee but due to the late hour, she said she will give a full update at the next meeting.

Ms. Santiago re-capped the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education meeting that she attended on Superintendent Evaluation and that she would share some links and further information with the School Committee via email.

Ms. Santiago made the following motion:

**MOVED: That the School Committee votes to approve the minutes from the October 15, 2019 School Committee meeting.**

**MOTION SECONDED by Ms. Scoville**

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

## **11. Future Agenda Items**

- Further Discussion on the Vaping Policy

## **12. Adjournment**

Ms. Santiago made the following motion:

**MOVED: Motion to adjourn at 10:18 p.m. not to reopen.**

**MOTION SECONDED by Ms. Guay**

**MOTION APPROVED 4-0**

**Mr. Brosgol** Yes

**Ms. Santiago** Yes

**Ms. Scoville** Yes

**Ms. Guay** Yes

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School Committee Secretary

                      
Date

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**BEDFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE**  
**November 26, 2019**  
**Exhibits/Documents**

- Personnel Report for November 26, 2019
- Educational Out of State Field Trip Request for a trip to Vermont, April 2<sup>nd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup>, 2020
- Educational Out of State Field Trip Request for a trip to Yucatan, Mexico April 17<sup>th</sup> to April 24<sup>th</sup>, 2020
- Donation Letter Bedford Minuteman Scholarship Fund for American Studies
- Bylaws Memorandum
- Draft – Minutes from School Committee Meeting October 15, 2019