

BEDFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE

April 22, 2020

Live Virtual Online Meeting using Zoom™ Audio/Video Conference Software

*** Due to the Covid-19 Crisis, this meeting was live-streamed over the internet using Zoom™ video/audio conferencing software in order to adhere with social distancing measures put in place by Governor Baker. This meeting was open to the public for live chat during Public Comment.*

1. Call to Order

At 7:34 p.m., Ms. Santiago called to order the meeting of the Bedford School Committee. Other members present included Mr. Brosgol, Mr. Morrison and Ms. Scoville. Ms. Guay was briefly delayed and joined the meeting at 7:35 p.m. Each member stated his or her name in a roll call attendance.

Mr. Brosgol dropped connection at 7:34 p.m. and rejoined the meeting at 7:35 p.m.

Ms. Santiago recognized the passing of Mrs. Lisa Hafer, wife of former Bedford School Committee Member, Mr. Brad Hafer. She spoke highly of Mrs. Hafer and her years of volunteerism for the schools.

2. Comments from Public

None

3. Personnel Report and Art Teacher Descriptions

INFORMATION ITEMS:

Resignations:

<i>Michael Dattoli</i>	<i>1.0 Elementary Teacher</i>	<i>Davis</i>
<i>Michelle Twiss</i>	<i>1.0 Special Education Teacher (Severe)</i>	<i>Davis</i>
<i>Jessica Guay</i>	<i>1.0 Special Education Teacher</i>	<i>Davis</i>
<i>Danielle Marchisseault</i>	<i>1.0 Grade 6 Science Teacher</i>	<i>JGMS</i>

Appointments:

<i>Indigo Foxtree-McGrath</i>	<i>1.0 Special Education Teaching Assistant</i>	<i>JGMS</i>
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Transfers:

<i>Hailey Yerova</i>	<i>1.0 Middle School Art Teacher</i>	<i>JGMS</i>
<i>Anya Kennedy</i>	<i>1.0 ELA Teacher</i>	<i>BHS</i>
<i>Kaitlin Curran</i>	<i>1.0 Grade 4 Elementary Teacher</i>	<i>Lane</i>

There was a first reading of the following four job descriptions:

- Davis Elementary School Art Teacher
- Lane Elementary School Art Teacher
- John Glenn Middle School Art Teacher
- Bedford High School Art Teacher

Ms. Santiago commented on some minor corrections to be made in each of the job descriptions.

Mr. Sills will have the amended copies ready for the second read in the next School Committee meeting.

4. District Calendar Revision and Vote

Mr. Sills told the School Committee that he had spoken to the Department of Education and Secondary Education (DESE) and he is still waiting for clear guidance on steps to calculate the last day of school, which included questions on snow days, one day of closure at BHS earlier in the school year, and the cancellation of April Vacation. He said that he expects clear guidance by the end of the week and planned to have it ready for vote by the next School Committee meeting.

5. Co-Teaching Presentation by Marianne Vines, Director of Special Education

Director of Special Education Ms. Marianne Vines gave a Co-Teaching presentation to the School Committee.

Ms. Vines talked about the effectiveness of co-teaching and said that it is difficult to determine the effectiveness in an overall school district because the definitions vary.

- Classes are not similar enough to provide meaningful comparative data
- Implementation of co-teaching including roles and responsibilities vary from class to class

Ms. Vines outlined what would need to be done in the Bedford Public Schools to determine the effectiveness:

- Impact on inclusion in Bedford
- Student outcomes
- Fidelity of implementation
- Stakeholders perceptions

She went on to discuss inclusion and why it is important, saying that by law, students have the right to be educated in the regular classroom citing laws 603 CMR 28.03 (a), 603 CMR 28.06 (c) and the 1997 IDEA Amendments which mandated that students with disabilities receive the same content knowledge as their peers.

Ms. Vines outlined the benefits of inclusion to both general education and special education students.

The benefits for students with disabilities include:

- Elimination of the stigma of being in special education

- Increased social initiations, relationships and networks
- Peer role models for academic, social and behavior skills
- Greater access to the general education curriculum
- Higher expectations
- Higher graduation rates
- Increased inclusion in future environments

The benefits for students without disabilities include:

- Receiving individualized help and accommodations through collaboration between the special education and general education teachers
- Increased appreciation and acceptance of individual differences
- Prepares all students for adult life in an inclusive society
- Opportunities to master activities by practicing and teaching others
- Greater academic outcomes

On In-District programming, Ms. Vines noted that in October of 2012, Bedford had 78% of students' serviced In-District while 20% were Out of District placements compared to October of 2019 where Bedford had 90% of special education students' In-District and only 9% in Out of District programs. She said that DESE defines students as "fully included" if they are in classes for 80% of their school day. Ms. Vines said that there are 392 students in Bedford that leave for language and OT services but the rest of their days are 80% in regular education classes. She said that there are 24 partially included students that spend up to 60% of their day in general education classes and 31 substantially separate students who spend 60% of their time out of the general education classrooms.

Ms. Vines showed the GPA data on the students in co-taught classrooms between 2017 and 2019, which showed an increased GPA in the co-taught classroom:

- *2017/2018 School Year*
 - ALL Special Ed Students 78.4
 - Co-taught Special Ed students 81.54
 - Overall GPA 87.9
- *2018/2019 school year*
 - ALL Special Ed Students 77.096
 - Co-taught Special Ed students 83.19
 - Overall GPA 86.28

Ms. Vines stated that co-teaching is not automatically effective because there are two people in the classroom, but the partnerships, co-planning and the avoidance of placing a disproportionately high number of students with or at risk for disabilities in a classroom.

Ms. Vines played two video clips for the School Committee. The first was Ms. Erica Callahan, a parent of a second grader in an integrated classroom and the second was Mr. Vincent McGrath, who is a math teacher at JGMS who teaches in a co-taught classroom and is a parent of a student in a co-taught classroom. She also shared results from stakeholder surveys that were taken by general education teachers, special education teachers and administrators.

Ms. Vines finished by stating the next steps needed:

- Administrators need to work together to develop a vision for co-teaching across district
- Provide professional development for administrators on co-teaching
- Administrators need to work together to strengthen our practices for staff evaluation of co-teachers across district
- We need to consider professional development in Universal Design for Learning and Differentiation.

The School Committee had some questions and comments:

Mr. Brosgol is surprised that there is no data on the effectiveness of co-teaching. He wondered if the teachers were getting the direction that they need and if parents actually are aware of what co-teaching is. He asked about quality control and how growth is measured. Mr. Brosgol mentioned that he had hoped that he would have seen different feedback.

Ms. Vines sees it differently and believes the presentation showed that co-teaching is working well. She said that the point is to show that MCAS cannot be used as a measurement and that it is difficult to show the effectiveness of co-teaching if the class make up is forever changing.

Mr. Brosgol is a full supporter of co-teaching but he said that he had hoped to see better validation.

Mr. Morrison said that he would like to hear more about what is being done to help teachers with co-teaching.

Ms. Vines stated that all new teacher pairs have two paid professional development days to help them get to know each other and start to prepare and plan their co-taught classes for the upcoming year. They have more professional development opportunities in the spring and have summer days to work together as well.

Mr. Sills stated that there are days set aside in the contract for co-teaching pairs to have PD and co-planning where their two areas of expertise can come together to be more effective.

Mr. Morrison feels it is a real opportunity and it is headed in the right direction. He believes that it is working in some instances and that it is the right idea that can get better. Mr. Morrison hopes that the teachers can learn to self-evaluate to determine what they have done well and where there is room for improvement.

Ms. Guay applauds the district for the undertaking. She feels that it takes a tremendous amount of work and requires a complete buy in by all teachers involved. She wondered if it would be helpful to hire consultants that could observe and make suggestions. Ms. Guay asked if shared planning time is built into the teacher's schedule weekly.

Ms. Vines said there are 1-2 periods a week set aside for shared planning.

Ms. Guay asked if the district sees improved outcomes in math and reading.

Ms. Vines said yes, the district does seem improvement in those areas.

Ms. Guay asked if anxiety in students with special needs and autism is being addressed.

Ms. Vines said that those students have pull out classes and other classes in a learning center environment when necessary for students who cannot participate fully throughout the day. She spoke about the SAIL inclusion program, which is aimed at helping students with autism.

Ms. Scoville feels it would be a good idea to include both teacher's names in the summer email to parents. She said that it can be confusing to parents and this would be a simple way to identify a co-taught class. Ms. Scoville said that she has had an interesting perspective and in her experience, she has encountered well-paired teachers.

Ms. Santiago thanked Ms. Callahan and Mr. McGrath mentioning that she found their part in the presentation helpful and noted that she would like to hear from other parents as well. She asked how co-teaching works at JGMS and Bedford High School.

Ms. Vines stated that each team has a co-taught math class and a co-taught English class. Special education students then have either pull out classes or classes in the learning center for the rest of the day.

Ms. Santiago wondered what it would look like after general education program administrators attended professional development on co-teaching, she wondered if the result would be better-matched co-teaching pairs.

Ms. Vines said she hopes this is the outcome; the goal is for all teachers to have a clear picture of co-teaching.

Dr. Clifford stated that she would like to have consistency and understanding on how to meet the needs of the students.

Mr. Sills said that it is not a question of whether co-teaching is here to stay or not, for Bedford Public schools, it is a given. He explained that the MCAS data in the co-teaching survey took away from showing all of the benefits of co-teaching. Mr. Sills said that kids and parents do see a big difference.

Ms. Guay said that she has learned a lot tonight and believes that more professional development will give the general education teachers more confidence in co-teaching.

6. Superintendent's Report

Mr. Sills started by saying that the decision to close the schools through the end of the year is a huge decision and students and families are experiencing a feeling of loss. He noted that transition points such as Davis Town, Moving On Ceremony, the D.C. trip, the prom and graduation would all have an impact on students and families.

Mr. Sills said that essential standards and skills that are needed for the students must be identified so that they can move on to the next grade. He said that September will depend on whether we are all back in school and how support will be provided for the students.

Mr. Sills said that there would be new guidance issued in the next week on how to move forward with the last seven weeks of school. He said that school supplies would be sent to students and families that need them and that staff and students will need to retrieve their items from the schools.

Mr. Sills thanked the terrific staff and administrators for their hard work and pulling together.

Mr. Sills talked about parents and students facing an extremely difficult situation under the extreme conditions and many obstacles each family will have to face. He said that he will be working on getting and sharing guidance as it is released.

Ms. Guay asked Mr. Sills to address the consistency that is being kept across the district, she asked about the summer programs and services for students with special needs. She shared her concern about students with non-English speaking parents and students who qualify for the free and reduced lunch program.

Mr. Sills said that he is working with the town on providing food for all families in need, not just families who qualify for free and reduced lunch.

Dr. Clifford mentioned that the ELL coordinator has been reaching out to students and parents in the ELL program to provide them with information.

Ms. Scoville mentioned that she had participated in a fourth grade Zoom music class and found it fun and engaging. She commented on the See-Saw online learning program stating that students in third grade or lower may need parental help with the program.

Mr. Brosgol noted that even some of the fifth grade students need occasional monitoring. He said that he is concerned about parents who may not be computer literate or may be working full time. Mr. Brosgol said he is very happy with the BPS staff and the work that they are doing.

Ms. Guay asked if there was any way to find coaches or volunteers for parents who are struggling.

Mr. Sills said that teachers have offered to help the parents by assisting the students online but the parents must reach out to let them know if they need help. He stated that the schools are currently gathering data on students that are engaging and students who are not engaging. He said that BHS is almost 100%.

7. Adjournment

Mr. Morrison made the following motion:

MOVED: Motion to Adjourn at 9:23 p.m. to Executive Session for the following purposes:

- **Contract Negotiations with the Bedford Educators Association**
- **Contract Negotiations with Non-union Personnel**
- **Contract Negotiations with Service Providers (e.g., Bedford Charter)**

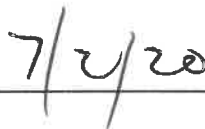
MOTION SECONDED by Ms. Guay

MOTION APPROVED 5-0-0

Mr. Brosgol	Yes
Ms. Santiago	Yes
Ms. Scoville	Yes
Ms. Guay	Yes
Mr. Morrison	Yes



School Committee Secretary



Date

BEDFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE
April 22, 2020
Exhibits/Documents

- Personnel Report
- Co-Teaching Presentation