

**BELMONT SCHOOL COMMITTEE MINUTES
CHENERY MIDDLE SCHOOL COMMUNITY ROOM
SEPTEMBER 24, 2013**

Present: Ms. Laurie Graham, Chair
Mr. Kevin Cunningham
Ms. Anne Lougée
Ms. Elyse Shuster
Ms. Laurie Slap
Dr. Thomas Kingston, Interim Superintendent
Ms. Janice Darias, Assistant Superintendent
Mr. Anthony DiCologero, Director of Business, Finance and Operations

Also present: Thomas Zembowicz, Student Representative
Amy Zhang, Student Representative

1. **OPENING BUSINESS**

1.1 Call to order

Ms. Graham called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

1.2 Pledge of Allegiance

Ms. Graham led the Pledge of Allegiance.

1.3 Citizens' Concerns

There were no citizens' concerns.

1.4 Adjustments to the Agenda

Ms. Graham suggested that the vote on surplus property be moved to the beginning of the agenda since Ms. Lindsey Rinder was present to answer any question.

Mr. DiCologero explained that the School Department has approximately 900 books that should be disposed of as they have no marketable value. The School Committee is required to vote on the disposal of any assets. Ms. Rinder explained that she has other books that do have value and will be sold to a publisher.

On a motion offered by Ms. Lougée and seconded by Ms. Shuster, it was

VOTED unanimously 5-0 to allow the disposal of surplus property.

1.5 Chairman's Report

Ms. Graham updated the Committee on recent community, school and sporting events that have taken place or will take place in the future.

Ms. Graham announced that five individuals had submitted letters of interest for the School Committee vacancy. The Board of Selectmen and School Committee met yesterday to vote. The initial vote ended in a tie and a second vote also ended in a tie. The Board of Selectmen and School Committee will meet on September 30 at 6:00 p.m. to vote again.

Ms. Graham announced that Dr. Kingston was out of town and that Ms. Darias would present the Superintendent's report.

1.6 Superintendent's Report

Ms. Darias stated that she had three items to share with the Committee.

1. A memo on our performance on the 2013 MCAS and our accountability designation from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) based on the 2013 data;
2. Information on the field testing of a new assessment that may replace MCAS as soon as the 2014-15 school year, called Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC); and
3. Results from the parent survey that we administered in partnership with DESE to collect data for the Federal Office of Special Education Programs.

Ms. Darias announced that as a result of improved performance on the 2013 MCAS, but most especially improvements at the middle school, all schools in the district, and therefore the district as a whole, is now classified as Level 1 in the state's accountability system. Last year the state received a waiver from the U.S. Department of Education to develop its own accountability system rather than the guidelines of No Child Left Behind. The alternative is still rigorous, and demands continued improvement as demonstrated on MCAS scores of all students and students classified in the "high needs" subgroup, which combines students with disabilities, low income, and English Language Learners. Last year under this system, Chenery Middle School was level 2 because our subgroup performance was not improving at the required rate. This year the improvement met the target, moving Chenery to Level 1 status, and therefore the district as a whole. This is the result of tremendous focus and hard work by multiple Belmont educators and leaders, who are to be commended for their efforts. The progress and performance index used to determine the status is a complex formula that awards points for meeting improvement targets at each grade and subject, along with "extra credit" for increasing the number of students earning "advanced" (the highest performance level) and decreasing the number of students earning "warning or failing" (the lowest level). We earned extra credit points in mathematics and science, so extra kudos to those educators and leaders.

Belmont is among a small group of 90 districts (approximately 25% of the districts in the state) that have earned this designation. Among those 90 districts, only a handful of them are K-12 districts like Belmont.

The PARCC assessment is being developed by a multi-state consortium to measure students' mastery of the common core state standards for English language arts and mathematics. Massachusetts is a member of this consortium and our commissioner, Mitchell Chester, is the Chair of PARCC's Governing Board. The Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education will vote to determine if Massachusetts will adopt this assessment as a replacement to the MCAS. The assessment could be implemented as early as the 2014-15 school year.

As part of the final phases of development, most districts in member states are being asked to participate in a field test of items in the spring of 2014. The assessments consist of two parts: a Performance-based assessment (PBA) in March/April (like the open response items of the current MCAS) and an end-of-year (EOY) machine-scored assessment, administered in May/June. The assessment is designed to be administered on a computer, although in the beginning there will be a paper and pencil option.

Belmont has been selected to administer field tests in:

- Two classes of Grade 4 English language arts at the Butler School (3 sessions of PBA in March/April) using the online/computer-based assessment;
- Two classes of Grade 7 mathematics at Chenery Middle School (2 sessions of the EOY assessment in May/June) using the paper/pencil assessment;
- Two classes of Grade 8 mathematics at Chenery Middle School (3 sessions of PBA in March/April) using the paper/pencil assessment; and
- Three classes of Grade 9 English language arts at Belmont High School (2 sessions of the EOY assessment in May/June) using the online/computer-based assessment.

Ms. Darias explained that Belmont is awaiting information regarding the process for which 4th, 7th, 8th, and 9th grade classes will be selected for the field test. The DESE has offered the opportunity to exempt students from taking the MCAS if they are taking the PBA in March/April. The exemption could be applied for our grade 4 and grade 8 students. However, we have not yet determined if we will opt for the exemption. We will not receive any data from the PARCC field test, and the data from the MCAS is important for understanding student learning as well as measuring our school and district performance. The School Committee, as well as families, will be informed as soon as there is more information available to make a decision regarding exemptions.

Ms. Darias explained that last year the BPS, in partnership with the DESE to collect data for the Federal Office of Special Education Programs, asked parents to complete a survey. All parents were invited to participate in the survey, and within the survey were asked to identify whether their student was receiving special education services. The response rate from Belmont was on the low side, 9.3% or 405 parents; of those, 355 were parents of students in general education, and 50 were parents of students with disabilities. The questions focused on how well the district engages and involves parents in their child's education, knowing that research shows increased involvement improves student

learning. The data for Belmont's responses were presented as compared to all the districts participating. In addition to showing very high levels of satisfaction regarding how and what is communicated, the data also indicates that the district performs well compared to the state survey cohort. The data has been shared with our Director of Student Services, and has been useful in making programming adjustments, especially in partnership with the Belmont Special Ed Advisory Council.

1.7 Director of Finance, Business and Operations' Report

Mr. DiCologero explained that the Town is closing out the FY13 fiscal year. He has been working closely with the Town Accountant to confirm the School Department balance. He also mentioned that he is in the process of completing the end of year financial report for the DESE.

2. **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

There was no unfinished business.

3. **MAJOR BUSINESS**

3.1 PLT – Response to Intervention (RTI) – Jaynene Delitt-Young – Exhibit A

Ms. Graham introduced Ms. Jaynene Delitt-Young who presented an overview of the Response to Intervention (RTI) program. She explained the 3-Tier Model which includes:

Tier 1 – Established /low risk

Core reading program only

Mini lesson/guided

Reading/differentiation

70-80% of students will be successful with only Tier 1 instruction

Tier 2 – Emerging/some risk

Additional 30 minutes 3x per week

Group could be as many as 5:1 but 3:1 is preferable

Tier 3 – Deficit/at risk

Additional 30 minutes 3x per week

Small groups – maximum 3 students

Ms. Delitt-Young explained the 8 core principles of RTI

1. We can effectively teach all children;

2. Intervene early;

3. Use a multi-tier model of service delivery;

4. Use a problem-solving model to make decisions within a multi-tier model;

5. Use scientific research-based, validated intervention/instruction to the extent available;

6. Monitor student progress to inform instruction;

7. Use data to make decisions. A data-based decision regarding students' response to

intervention is central to RTI practices; and

8. Use assessment for 3 purposes (screening, diagnosis, and progress monitoring).

3.2 RETELL Update – Lindsey Rinder – Exhibit B

Ms. Lindsey Rinder presented an overview of the changes to enrollment and instruction in the English Language Learners program (ELL). Belmont has seen an increase from approximately 100 ELL students in 2008 to 180 ELL students in the 2013-2014 school year. The number of level 1 students (who do not speak any English) has also greatly increased.

Ms. Rinder explained new changes in the program such as increased structure and larger instructional groups K-12. All core academic teachers are required to earn an SEI endorsement and the target enrollment for this year was 32. There were 35 teachers who volunteered to take the course and all but one is enrolled in the Belmont SEI Endorsement course or in a course in another district.

3.3 Vote to approve out of state trips: Ferry Beach / Washington D.C. – Exhibit C

Ms. Darias explained that the Ferry Beach trip includes all grade 5 students – half of the grade 5 students attend Monday-Wednesday and half attend Wednesday-Friday. The Washington D.C. trip is for grade 8 and focuses on American history curriculum. There is financial support available for students who need it.

On a motion offered by Ms. Slap and seconded by Ms. Shuster, it was

VOTED unanimously 5-0 to approve the Ferry Beach and Washington D.C. field trips.

3.4 School Committee Sub-committee & Liaison appointments – Exhibit D

Ms. Graham deferred the appointments to a subsequent meeting since there was not a full committee.

Ms. Graham explained that Mr. Scott Stratford has requested a position as the School Committee's appointment to the Belmont Media Center Board. She shared his bio with the School Committee. She also stated that Mr. James Barrett requested reappointment to the Information Technology Advisory Committee.

On a motion offered by Mr. Cunningham and seconded by Ms. Shuster, it was

VOTED unanimously 5-0 to appoint Scott Stratford as liaison to the Belmont Media Center Board.

On a motion offered by Ms. Slap and seconded by Mr. Cunningham, it was

VOTED unanimously 5-0 to re-appoint James Barrett as liaison to the Information Technology Advisory Committee.

4. **SUBCOMMITTEE/LIAISON UPDATES (as needed)**

4.1 Student Representative

Thomas Zembowicz updated the Committee on the new Belmont High School attendance policy and shared student concerns regarding absences for illness that might not warrant documentation (i.e., a common cold). He also announced that Belmont High School has 6 semi-finalists for National Merit Scholarships. Amy Zhang expressed interest in finding ways to have the new iPads used in a more efficient manner.

4.2 Finance Subcommittee

Ms. Slap stated that she and Mr. DiCologero have been working on the year end report schedule.

4.3 Policy Subcommittee

The Policy Subcommittee has not met.

4.4 Curriculum & Instruction Subcommittee

The Curriculum & Instruction Subcommittee has not met.

4.5 Capital Budget Committee

The Capital Budget Committee will meet in October.

4.6 Warrant Committee

The Warrant Committee is having their first meeting tomorrow night.

4.7 Wellington Building Committee

Ms. Graham stated that burners that were causing noise were replaced in July. Interior noise testing was done the last week in August. Ms. Graham mentioned that 4 tennis courts at Belmont High School will be replaced using Wellington Building Committee funds.

5. **OTHER BUSINESS**

5.1 Consent Agenda

Surplus Property – Exhibit E was discussed at the beginning of the meeting.

5.2 Personnel Items - None

5.3 Business Items – None

5.4 Approval of Minutes

September 10, 2013

On a motion offered by Ms. Slap and seconded by Mr. Cunningham, it was

VOTED unanimously 5-0 to approve the minutes of September 10, 2013 as amended.

6. **FUTURE BUSINESS**

Upcoming Meetings:

September 30, 2013

Joint Meeting of BOS and SC

Selectmen's Meeting Room – 6:00 p.m.

October 8, 2013

School Committee Meeting – Recognition of Teachers receiving Professional Status

CMS Large Community Room

6:30 p.m. – Reception

7:00 p.m. – Recognition Ceremony

7:30 p.m. – Business Meeting

October 22, 2013

School Committee Meeting

Boston Elder Services – 7:00 p.m.

7. **ENCLOSURES**

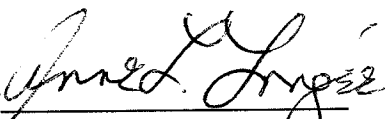
None

8. **ADJOURNMENT**

At 9:56 p.m. on a motion offered by Ms. Lougée and seconded by Ms. Slap, it was laurie s at

VOTED unanimously 5-0 to adjourn the meeting.

Respectfully submitted by


Anne Lougée, Secretary