

**BELMONT SCHOOL COMMITTEE MINUTES  
CHENERY MIDDLE SCHOOL COMMUNITY ROOM  
DECEMBER 4, 2018**

Present: Ms. Susan Burgess-Cox, Chair  
Ms. Andrea Prestwich, Secretary  
Ms. Tara Donner  
Dr. Lisa Fiore  
Ms. Jill Norton  
Mr. John Phelan, Superintendent  
Ms. Janice Darias, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction

Absent: Ms. Kate Bowen  
Mr. Anthony DiCologero, Director of Finance, Business and Operations

1. **OPENING BUSINESS**

1.1 Call to order

Susan Burgess-Cox called the meeting to order at 7:06 p.m.

1.2 Pledge of Allegiance

Susan Burgess-Cox led the Pledge of Allegiance.

1.3 Citizens' Concerns

There were no citizens concerns.

1.4 Adjustments to the Agenda

Chair Burgess-Cox announced agenda item 3.2 – ELL Report would become 3.3 and agenda item 3.3 – 2018/19 School Year Class Size Report would become 3.2.

1.5 Chair's Report

Chair Burgess-Cox updated the committee on the Foundation for Belmont Education's (FBE) recent board meeting. She thanked the FBE for the amazing work and all the funding they have raised for Belmont Public Schools.

## 1.6 Student Representative Report

A member of the Belmont High School Student Advisory Council updated the School Committee on recent activities at Belmont High School. Students have been selling snowflakes and candy canes to raise money for the donation of gifts to families in need.

The International Economics Summit is once again being hosted by Belmont High School. 100 students from Beijing, China will travel to Belmont High School for a trade simulation.

## 1.7 Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Phelan spoke about the recent National Honor Society Induction Ceremony at Belmont High School. He thanked Principal Tom Brow for leading the evening and noted the excellent speaking presentations by students and the guest speaker.

## 2. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

There was no unfinished business.

## 3. MAJOR BUSINESS

### 3.1 BHS Freshmen Mentoring Program

Superintendent Phelan welcomed BHS history teacher Jamie Shea and Assistant Principal Lisa Hurtubise. Jamie and Lisa provided an overview of the updates to the Class Connector Program. The program has been in place for many years but based on research showing students transitioning from grade 8 to grade 9 need more support, it was decided to build on the current program. The Class Connectors Program allows grade 12 students to get to know incoming grade 9 students. They provide tours of the school and facilitate a meeting with guidance counselors. The group then gets together for a pizza dinner provided by the Belmont High School PTSO. On the first day of school the Class Connectors host a half day orientation program and lead presentations for the grade 9 students on academics, extracurricular activities, and how to become a successful Belmont High School student.

Lisa Hurtubise and Jamie Shea discussed some possibilities for the program for next year which includes Assistant Principals accompanying guidance counselors to grade 8 meetings in April. They are also considering a Step Up Day where grade 8 students come to explore the high school in June. They would also like to have parents and guardians of incoming grade 9 students given the opportunity to meet with school staff and one another.

### 3.2 2018-19 School Year Class Size Report – Exhibit B

Assistant Superintendent Janice Darias provided the School Committee with information on how class sizes have changed over the years and where they stand now. The average increase is 95 students per year which gives the current projection of 4663 students by October 2019. In addition to increased housing units being built in Belmont, there is an increase in students who are non-English speaking (ELs)

as well as students on IEPs who receive their services through out of district schools. From 2017-2018 each school had an increase in the number of EL students with the exception of Winn Brook and Belmont High School.

Elementary enrollment increased by 14 students from 2017-18 to 2018-19. The middle school had an increase of 11 and Belmont High School had an increase of 12. Ms. Darias noted each elementary grade level is currently within the guidelines for class size. Ms. Darias went on to explain averages for middle school and high school class sizes.

### 3.3 ELL Report – Exhibit A

Lindsey Rinder, Director of English and English Language Learners provided an overview of the English Language Education Program. She is grateful for the grant Belmont received which has allowed us to have an extended year as well as an extended day program. It is a nice way for students to get to know each other and work on academics. The English learners (ELs) speak over forty languages with the most common being Mandarin. Most of Belmont's ELs were born in the U.S. The increase in ELs this year is less than in past years but the number of students arriving with learning disabilities or interrupted learning has increased.

EL students are taught academic language which consists of linguistic complexity, forms and conventions, and vocabulary usage. Ms. Rinder provided an overview of MCAS results for EL students. In 2018 80% of EL students met or exceeded the expectations of grades 3-8 MCAS.

Some continuing challenges are the rising enrollment and students with increasingly complex needs. At least one ELE teacher has been added for the past seven years and the ELE teacher ratio is among the highest among EDCO districts at 34:1.

### 3.4 2019 Kindergarten Registration Presentation Update – Exhibit C

Superintendent Phelan explained the process for the 2019 kindergarten registration which has evolved over the past few years to an online registration process. The goal this year is to create a centralized registration. On the evening of January 24<sup>th</sup> all incoming kindergarten families will be welcomed at Chenery Middle School to learn what the process looks like and what kindergarten is like in Belmont. Online kindergarten registration will open on January 24<sup>th</sup> as well. Once a child is registered online, the parent will receive a link to a Home Language and Parent Information Form which will be completed online. Once those are completed, they will be given a registration appointment for kindergarten registration on March 13, 14, or 15. Students whose registration is completed by April 5<sup>th</sup> 2018 will be the first round of school assignments. Students whose registration is complete by May 23<sup>rd</sup> will be the second round and placed by June 1<sup>st</sup>. Students whose registration is complete by August 9<sup>th</sup> will be the third round and placed by August 16<sup>th</sup>. Students will then be placed on an ongoing basis as needed throughout the year.

### 3.5 Start Times Survey Results Discussion

Superintendent Phelan explained start times surveys were sent out to staff, students and parents and the responses have been tabulated and reviewed. The information will be presented at a

School Committee Policy Subcommittee meeting with a recommendation to create a pilot at Belmont High School next year.

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

4.1 Finance Subcommittee

The Finance Subcommittee met this morning and discussed the budget process and how budgets are created at the school level.

4.2 Policy Subcommittee

The Policy Subcommittee will meet on December 11<sup>th</sup>.

4.3 Curriculum & Instruction Subcommittee

The Curriculum and Instruction Subcommittee is in the process of scheduling a meeting to review the Belmont High School Program of Studies for next year.

4.4 Capital Budget Committee

The Capital Budget Committee will meet on Thursday.

4.5 Warrant Committee

The Warrant Committee will meet

4.6 Belmont High School Building Committee

The Belmont High School Building Committee will meet tomorrow to begin discussion of phasing work at the high school from January to June.

4.7 Community Path Update

At the last meeting of the Community Path Committee a liaison was appointed who will provide the School Committee with occasional updates.

5. **OTHER BUSINESS**

5.1 Consent Agenda

5.2 Personnel Items – None

5.3 Business Items – None

5.4 Approval of minutes - None

6. **FUTURE BUSINESS**

Upcoming Meetings:

December 10, 2018

Board of Selectmen/School Committee/Warrant Committee Joint Meeting  
Selectmen's Meeting Room – 7:00 p.m.

December 18, 2018

Finance Subcommittee Meeting  
SAB Conference Room – 8:00 a.m.

December 18, 2018

School Committee Meeting  
CMS Community Room – 7:00 p.m.

7. **ENCLOSURES**

Strategic Plan

Chair Burgess-Cox announced the School Committee would not be entering Executive Session at the close of the meeting.

8. **ADJOURN**

At 8:35 p.m. on a motion offered by Jill Norton and seconded by Andrea Prestwich, it was

VOTED unanimously to adjourn the meeting.

Respectfully submitted by Andrea Prestwich  
Andrea Prestwich, Secretary