

BELMONT SCHOOL COMMITTEE MINUTES
REMOTE MEETING
MAY 10, 2022

RECEIVED
TOWN CLERK
BELMONT, MA

DATE: June 6, 2022
TIME: 9:11 AM

Present: Ms. Meghan Moriarty, Chair
Ms. Amy Checkoway, Secretary
Mr. Michael Crowley
Mr. Jeffrey Liberty
Mr. John Phelan, Superintendent
Ms. Janice Darias, Assistant Superintendent
Mr. Anthony DiCologero, Director of Finance, Business and Operations

Absent: Mr. Jamal Saeh
Ms. Kate Bowen

1. OPENING BUSINESS
1.1 Call to Order

Chair Moriarty called the meeting to order at 6:31 pm.

1.2 Citizens' Concerns

David Palmer: Asked when and where the first meeting of the Math Working Group will be, and expressed interest in attending the meetings.

1.3 Adjustments to the Agenda - none

1.4 Chair's Report

Chair Moriarty shared some recent and upcoming community and School Committee events and encouraged participation in various events including:

- BHS Pops concerts
- BPS Staff Recognition Day
- FBE Outstanding Teacher Awards
- SEPAC virtual parent event
- One Act Plays at BHS and Little Mermaid at CMS
- Volunteer Opportunities via school PTO/PTAs
- SC Retreat – May 14, agenda includes SC subcommittee assignments and Superintendent Evaluation process

1.5 Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Phelan shared school news and reminders including:

- FBE sponsored the Outstanding Teacher Awards in the new BHS auditorium
- BPS Staff Recognition Event recognized staff with 10/20/25/30 years of service
- Notice of high COVID numbers in Middlesex county cases was sent out May 9, including recommendation of masks (they are still optional). The Belmont BOH strongly recommended masks, but did not mandate them, at their recent meeting.
- SEPAC meeting this Thursday
- BCAA Book Donation of hundreds of books and first Belmont AAPI run and walk
- BHS graduation is June 4 the last day of school for students (other than seniors) is June 22.

1.6 Student Advisory Report

Student Advisors to the School Committee Duncan Beecroft (Grade 12) and Kendall Higgins (Grade 11) offered their third and final Student Advisory Report of the school year. Ms. Higgins spoke about the AP exams, which were proctored over the last two weeks and are ongoing. Students appreciated recent activities sponsored by the PTO Acts of Kindness Committee, which offered some stress relief during these weeks. Mr. Beecroft gave an update on senior events such as the Junior/Senior Prom, graduation (June 4) and the All Night Party (June 4; 9 pm- 5 am).

SC members and Superintendent Phelan asked some follow up questions.

2. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- School Committee Joint Meeting with SB, WC, LTCPC, CBC Minutes of February 16, 2022
- School Committee Joint Meeting with SB, WC, LTCPC, CBC Minutes of April 11, 2022

On a motion offered by Amy Checkoway and seconded by Mike Crowley, it was voted unanimously (4-0-0) on a roll call vote to approve the Joint School Committee, SB, WC, LTCPC, CBC minutes of February 16, 2022.

Member Crowley made edit suggestions for the April 11, 2022 joint meeting.

On a motion offered by Jeff Liberty and seconded by Mike Crowley, it was voted unanimously (4-0-0) on a roll call vote to approve the of Joint School Committee, SB, WC, LTCPC, CBC minutes of April 11, 2022 as amended.

4.1 Technology Update – Google Platform

Superintendent Phelan introduced Director of Technology Steve Mazzola, to update the SC on the recent consolidation from two to one email platforms and provide an overview of the technology staff. After the district adopted the Google Apps for Education system several years ago, and during remote/hybrid learning, it became evident there were some inefficiencies with having two systems. Director Mazzola reviewed the benefits of consolidating the systems and decided to move to the Google platform. The Technology department staff identified migration pathways including student information systems, printers, telephones, security and heating systems, and management tools to plan the work. The email migration occurred the evening of May 3, and utilized eight teachers who acted as Google Ambassadors within the schools, in addition to the technology staff.

Next, Director Mazzola introduced the technology staff (Phil Sullivan, Nate Preston, Dan Spadola, Bob Coate, Beth Allen, Patrick McLaughlin, Dee Shea, Christine Trischitta, Eileen Buys, and Natalya Bochkov) and highlighted their roles and services to the district and classroom students and teachers. Belmont Parent and Google Solutions Engineer Andrew Harteveltdt worked with the migration team, as well, and brought in outside expertise.

School Committee members asked about the timing of the migration during the school year and about any cost savings and security improvements with the Google platform.

Superintendent Phelan thanked Director Mazzola for his leadership and organization and his team for taking on the migration work in addition to their usual responsibilities. Mr. Mazzola thanked the Administration and School Committee for support on behalf of the Technology Department, particularly in terms of ensuring sufficient resources in the budget.

4.2 BHS Values Update

Superintendent Phelan introduced BHS Principal Isaac Taylor, who outlined recent BHS core values work. Principal Taylor recognized the move to a new building was an opportunity to revise school core values, collaboratively with students and faculty. Taylor described the procedure beginning on January 28 with Community Day, followed by staff professional development and faculty/department meetings. Students were trained to engage in and help lead the input process. Submitted values were ranked by the Leadership Team, staff and students, and included a consensus protocol. Selected BHS community values are Kindness, Equity, Perseverance, and Responsibility. Principal Taylor and the High School administration are working on how to incorporate these identified values into daily work at school and during conflict resolution. The High School administration will look for further feedback from the school community to help make the values a living thing. Principal Taylor appreciated the student leadership role during this process.

Chair Moriarty took comments and questions from the School Committee. Member Liberty asked if parents were invited to participate in the process and if not, why not. Member Checkoway asked what precipitated the goal to have stated values, and appreciated the student-centered approach.

Superintendent Phelan indicated the High School NEASC Visioning of the Graduate would align with District Visioning work that began before COVID. Phelan was impressed that Principal Taylor hosted staff and students together.

Member Crowley commented on other possible applications of this kind of process such as student mental health.

4.3 ESSER/Reallocation Budget Update

Superintendent Phelan gave a presentation to summarize the use of federal ESSER and reallocated funds in FY22. The district is benefitting from one-time use of federal funds in the amount of \$1.4M in ESSER II and III and potentially \$1M in Town ARPA funds in FY23. Mr. Phelan reviewed the positions that were funded to support COVID-related academic and mental health recovery services for students as part of a 2-year plan (2021-22 and 2022-23).

Belmont High School

- 1.0 Transition Room Educator in The Bridge Program (ESSER/ARPA)
- 2.0 Social Workers (ESSER/ARPA)
- 1.0 Special Education Teacher (IDEA)
- 1.0 Campus Monitor (Reallocated FY22 General Fund)

Chenery Middle School

- 3.0 Social Workers (2.0 ESSER/ARPA; 1.0 Reallocated FY22 General Fund)
- 1.0 Math Specialist (Reallocated FY22 General Fund)
- 1.6 ELA Teacher (Reallocated FY22 General Fund)
- 0.2 Chorus Teacher (Reallocated FY22 General Fund)

Elementary Schools

- 2.0 Math Coaches (ESSER/ARPA)
- 0.4 Assistant Principal across three elementary schools (ESSER/ARPA)
- 2.0 Special Education Team Chair (IDEA/FY22 General Fund)

All levels

- 6.0 Building Substitutes (ESSER/ARPA; Reallocation of FY22 General Fund)

District level

- 1.6 Floating Nurses (ESSER/ARPA)
- 2.0 METCO Aides (ESSER/ARPA)
- Varsity Tutors (ESSER/ARPA)
- Summer Academic Recovery (ESSER/ARPA)
- Professional Development

Member Crowley urged Superintendent Phelan to continue discussions with the Town Administrator and Select Board to access residual federal funds for FY24, given that the need for services will continue. Member Liberty asked for more details about the impact of the added positions versus the reach. Member Checkoway asked for a reminder about if CMS had social workers prior to recent Federal funding and if the need for social workers is greater than what is available. Ms. Checkoway also inquired about the shared Assistant Principal position and how it has gone to share this position across schools. Superintendent Phelan acknowledged a learning curve with the shared position. The administration will reflect on what was learned for FY23. Chair Moriarty inquired if the summer academic support programs will continue similarly to last year or as usual.

4.4 World Language Trip – Out of Country (vote)

Chair Moriarty summarized SC Policy 6006 Class and School Trips which stipulates that when trips are taken out of the country, the proposal must be submitted to the Superintendent for approval and to SC for a vote. Due to past COVID trip cancelations and liabilities, Assistant Superintendent Janice Darias submitted trip agreements from ACIS Educational Tours to school district counsel for review, in an attempt to have clearly defined liability information for families, as the travel agreement is between parents and the company. Teachers Vicky D’Annunzio and Jacqueline Kaiser presented on the proposed trips abroad to Spain (El Camino del Norte) and France (Paris Lumiere) from April 14-21, 2023. Both teachers stressed the importance of bringing different cultures to students first-hand to enrich the in-classroom experience and learning. Safety and security protocols were reviewed, as were the different trip protection plan options for families. The France and Spain program fees were quoted at \$3,998 and \$3,755 respectively and include airfare, hotel, breakfast and dinner, historic sites, tours, and visits with local students.

Multiple SC members asked that funding be addressed for students who would like to participate but are in financial need. Also of importance is clear communication of possible liability to parents and the importance of the insurance options.

On a motion offered by Jeff Liberty and seconded by Amy Checkoway, it was voted (4-0-0) on a roll call vote to approve the World Language trips to France and Spain in April 2023.

5. SUBCOMMITTEE/LIAISON UPDATES as needed

- Curriculum and Instruction Subcommittee meeting - May 24, agenda is Science Plan of Action
- Equity Subcommittee meeting - May 18
- BMHS meeting - May 13
- Finance Subcommittee Meetings forthcoming

6. OTHER BUSINESS

- 6.1 Consent Agenda - None
- 6.2 Personnel Items - None
- 6.3 Business Items - None

7. ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 9:07 pm.

Respectfully Submitted by:

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Amy Checkoway". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "A" and a long, sweeping underline.