

**BELMONT SCHOOL COMMITTEE MINUTES  
CHENERY MIDDLE SCHOOL COMMUNITY ROOM  
May 22, 2012**

Present: Ms. Laurie Graham, Chair  
Mr. Daniel Scharfman, Secretary  
Ms. Laurie Slap  
Mr. Kevin Cunningham  
Ms. Anne Lougée  
Ms. Pascha Griffiths  
Dr. Thomas Kingston, Superintendent  
Ms. Janice Darias, Assistant Superintendent  
Mr. Anthony DiCologero, Director of Business, Finance and Operations

1. **OPENING BUSINESS**

1.1 Call to order

Ms. Graham called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. in the Chenery Middle School Community Room.

2. **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

On a roll call vote of 5-0-0 (Mr. Scharfman had not arrived at the meeting at this time) the School Committee voted to enter Executive Session for the purpose of discussing collective bargaining with Union and Non-union personnel given that a discussion in Open Session may have a detrimental impact on the School Committee's bargaining position. Ms. Graham announced that the Committee would return to Open Session.

3. **OPEN SESSION**

At 7:00 p.m. the School Committee returned to Open Session in the auditorium of the Chenery Middle School as part of the Community Service Awards Ceremony.

Ms. Deb McDevitt, Director of Social Studies, welcomed all present to celebrate the commitments students and the schools has shown to at least four years of community service. She introduced Alice Melnikoff, the Community Service Coordinator for the Belmont Public Schools as a "tireless worker in helping Belmont students achieve their highest potential in service."

Ms. Melnikoff explained that Presidential Service Awards are given in three categories: for 100-174 hours students are awarded the bronze medal, for 175-249 the silver, and for 250 or more hours the gold. 125 students, 40 of whom are seniors, qualified for an award this year. Belmont High School students have provided over 31,000 hours of service this year, the seniors alone accounting for 9,900 of those hours. She invited Dr. Kingston and Ms. Graham to hand out the awards. Ms. Melnikoff then invited Abby Harper, a former student to the podium to discuss the role of community service in her life.

Ms. Harper spoke movingly about how community service has shaped and deepened her connections and understanding, and has given her chances to travel far. She exhorted those present “to look beyond the material aspects of service, to consider instead service that gives people meaning, a purpose, and a sense of empowerment.”

Ms. Melnikoff closed by expressing the community’s pride and gratitude to all of our students engaged in community service, but most especially to our graduating seniors for all that they have done to improve our community.

### 3.1 Business Meeting

At 7:30 p.m. the School Committee returned to the Chenery Middle School Large Community Room to continue the business portion of the meeting.

### 3.2 Pledge of Allegiance

Ms. Graham led the Pledge of Allegiance.

### 3.3 Citizens’ Concerns

There were no citizen’s concerns.

### 3.4 Adjustments to the Agenda

Ms. Graham announced that the Student Advisory Council would present their report immediately after the Superintendent’s Report.

### 3.5 Chairman’s Report

- Ms. Graham mentioned that the Lillian Blacker Awards for Excellence in Writing were held last week. Three Belmont High School seniors; Kaitlin Miller, Matthew Nemitz, and Rosemary Baratta all received awards. The Lillian Blackstone Awards is the capstone project for all graduating seniors represents close to a years’ worth of reading, research and writing. Ms. Graham congratulated the recipients of the awards as well as all the seniors who finished their thesis.
- Ms. Graham reminded everyone that there are nine more days of the Belmont Golden Shoes Program.
- May 25<sup>th</sup>, the annual Memorial Day Exercises will be held. Belmont High School, Wellington School and Winn Brook School will be visited by current and former military people.
- May 25 the Chenery Middle School Jazz Band and Chamber Music Singers will be performing at the Great East Music Festival.
- May 31 the Chenery Middle School 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Spring Concert - 7:00 p.m.
- June 1 the 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Instrumental Program will be held at the Chenery Middle School.

- June 6 the 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Chenery Middle School Courtyard celebration will be held from 5:00 – 7:00 p.m.
- June 1 the Belmont Special Education Advisory Council is sponsoring their Annual Appreciation Awards which will be held in the Chenery Middle School Cafeteria.
- The Foundation for Belmont Education is accepting orders for STAR Awards through June 8.

### 3.6 Superintendent's Report

Dr. Kingston announced that the four member team from Belmont High School has won the National Economics Challenge which is sponsored by the National Council for Economics Education. The Belmont Team members were John Lazenby and Robbie Gibson who are both seniors and Ben Goodman and Evan Green who are juniors. The team was coached by Bryan Corrigan.

Dr. Kingston stated that on May 23 the Professional Learning Teams Conference would be held in the Belmont High School Field House. He invited the School Committee members as well as members of the community.

Dr. Kingston announced that on May 30 the professional staff who are going to be participating in the implementation of the new Educator Appraisal System will be meeting with Beverly Miyares who is involved in Professional Development with the Massachusetts Teachers Association. Ms. Miyares will be presenting an overview for all professional staff on the new Educator Appraisal System. Belmont administrators have been in conversation with the Belmont Education Association and will be coming back to the School Committee for a review of the Memorandum of Understanding which is being forged with the BEA.

Dr. Kingston updated the Committee on the status of the Butler Playground. He stated that it has been a true public/private partnership to build resources for the new playground. Dr. Kingston presented the following names of donors who have contributed \$1,000 or more to the Butler Playground Fund.

Jianjian Wang	\$1,500
Michael A. Smith and Zhiping Yao	\$1,000
Elizabeth and Graham Allison	\$10,000
Butler Extended Day Program, Inc.	\$25,000
Belmont Savings Bank Foundation, Inc.	\$10,000
The Hoerle Foundation	\$1,000
Watertown Savings Bank	\$2,500
Cambridge Savings Bank Foundation	\$5,000
Dr. Graham Allison	\$25,000
Butler PTA Pledge	\$24,000
Dr. Ralph Jones	\$38,000

Dr. Kingston announced that \$143,000 has been raised in contributions, \$11,530 of which is coming from contributions from Butler parents. The total contributed amount of money at this point is \$154,530. At Town Meeting last week a transfer of \$19,500 was voted from the Capital Budget. The School Department has incurred operating costs of about \$9,000. Thus the total amount in pledges, receipts, and expenditures is \$183,030. The estimate as of today for the cost of the full completion of both phases of the project is about \$169,000, and thus construction for both phases of the playground

appears to be fully funded, with a buffer for any unpredicted expenses. Dr. Kingston stated that the plan is to have the playground completed over the summer.

### 3.7 Director of Finance, Business and Operations' Report

Mr. DiCologero announced that a team from the Massachusetts Association of School Business Officials (MASBO) will be conducting a financial review on May 30 and May 31. They will be looking at the financial operations and will provide a report with recommendations for any changes they suggest.

### 6.4 Student Advisory Council Update

Ms. Graham invited the Student Council members to present their report.

Linda Wei, Rachel Hanna and Katie Leinbach talked about some of the important things they learned at Belmont High School.

Linda Wei who is a senior discussed learning how to be a critical thinker helped her as well as support from the Guidance Department helping her work through the college application process. Rachel Hanna stated that support from teachers was most helpful to her. Katie who is a junior discussed the importance of athletics and being part of a team.

## 4. **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

There was no unfinished business.

## 5. **MAJOR BUSINESS**

### 5.1 Professional Learning Team Report – Exhibit A

Ms. Darias introduced foreign language teachers, Amy Sanchez (Grades 5 and 7 Spanish Teacher), Carmen Anderson (Grades 6 and 8 Spanish Teacher), and Xin Yu (Grades 5-8 Chinese Teacher)

The teachers presented results from the work of last year's PLT. The PLT involved immersion days which allowed students to spend the entire class speaking, hearing, reading, and writing only the language they were studying. Immersion classes were held at least one day per week.

Students were given a survey at the beginning of the year where they were asked about their comfort level with the target language. The students took the survey again at the end of the year so teachers could understand how their level of improvement. The survey findings showed that students felt they had improved in their speaking and listening skills.

### 5.2 ELL Report – Exhibit B

Ms. Lindsey Rinder, Curriculum Director for English/Language Arts presented an overview of the English Language Learners (ELL) Education Program in Belmont using a PowerPoint presentation which can be viewed on the Belmont Public Schools website.

In Belmont, 58% of ELL students are in grades K-5. ELLs constitute the only group of public school students whose numbers are growing in Massachusetts and enrollment has grown 57% since 2000.

The largest population of ELL students is at Wellington Elementary School and Butler Elementary School. ELL teachers or tutors work with students individually or in small groups. The Chenery Middle School and Belmont High School each have approximately 20 to 30 ELL students in each grade. ELL teachers and tutors work with students in the classroom as well as individually and in small groups outside the classroom.

The progress of ELL students is measured by the Massachusetts English Proficiency Assessment (MEPA), MCAS scores, college admissions, and formal recognition in fine and performing arts and non-academic pursuits. Belmont's ELL students perform well on MCAS although there is a gap between their scores and those of their native-speaking peers.

Belmont ELL teachers have taken part in a great deal of professional development in the field of English language education which has benefited the ELL students. This has enabled students to integrate into the school community despite cultural differences and a lack of proficiency in English. The English Language Education staff recognizes the importance of social development and creates opportunities for students to interact with native-speaking peers in social settings.

Funding for ELL Programs is a concern. Since 2010 total per pupil expenditures in Belmont for all students have been approximately \$1500 below the state average. Despite the lack of funding, Belmont has increased both tutor and teacher FTEs in the ELE program to keep up with the growing student needs. Time is also a problem: when students are taken out of class to receive additional English language instruction, they are missing instruction in other subjects.

Massachusetts has changed the requirements for Sheltered English Immersion professional development. Teachers will now have to earn an ELL endorsement (RETELL) on any core academic teaching license. In addition, the state has also adopted a new set of standards for English language instruction, World-Class Design and Assessment (WIDA), to replace the English Language Proficiency Benchmarks and Outcomes (ELPBO) and a new standardized test of English language proficiency, ACCESS, to replace MEPA. Increased funding and staffing will be necessary to meet the increased expectations in English language education.

School Committee members congratulated Ms. Rinder on her thorough presentation and asked a variety of clarifying questions.

### 5.3 Task Force on Athletics & Extra-curricular Activities Report – Exhibit C

Mr. Scharfman summarized the Task Force recommendations and acknowledged the work of the Task Force which was formed in 2011. Mr. Scharfman explained that the Task Force succeeded in their objective of saving programs and suggested establishing a 3 year basis for Task Force recommendations. He presented the final recommendation of the Task Force and summarized what had changed since the January preliminary recommendations. He also requested that the School Committee act on the recommendations of the Task Force before the end of the current school year to provide clarity for the community and the many organizations that support extracurricular and athletic activities.

### 5.4 2012-2013 Fee Proposals and Vote to Adopt – Exhibit D

On a motion offered by Mr. Scharfman and seconded by Ms. Griffiths it was  
**VOTED** unanimously to adopt the 2012-2013 Fee Proposals – Exhibit D.

6. **REPORT OF SUBCOMMITTEES/LIAISONS**

6.1 Wellington Building Committee

Ms. Graham stated that the Wellington Building Committee would meet on May 23. The leaks have been repaired.

6.2 Finance Subcommittee

Mr. Cunningham reported that the subcommittee had completed the first two phases of its work and would turn its attention to longer-term planning.

6.3 Task Force on Athletics and Extracurricular Activities

Mr. Scharfman stated that the Task Force will meet one more time and then disband.

6.4 Student Advisory Council Update

The Student Advisory Council update had already been presented after the Superintendent's Report.

7. **OTHER BUSINESS**

7.1 Consent Agenda

7.2 Personnel Items – Informational

Personnel Status Updates Confidential Exhibit E

7.3 Business Items – None

7.4 Approval of Minutes

Ms. Graham suggested a slight wording change to the May 8 minutes.

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

**VOTED** unanimously to approve the minutes of May 8, 2012, as amended.

7. **FUTURE BUSINESS**

Upcoming Meetings:

May 29, 2012

Finance Subcommittee Meeting

SAB Conference Room – 8:00 a.m.

June 5, 2012  
School Committee Meeting  
Recognition of BPS Retirees  
CMS Large Community Room – 7:30 p.m.

8. **ENCLOSURES**

Social Studies Curriculum Change

9. **ADJOURNMENT**

At 9:31 p.m. on a motion offered by Ms. Lougée and seconded by Mr. Scharfman, it was

**VOTED** unanimously to adjourn the meeting.

Respectfully Submitted by



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Daniel Scharfman, Secretary