

**BELMONT SCHOOL COMMITTEE MINUTES
CHENERY MIDDLE SCHOOL COMMUNITY ROOM
MARCH 28, 2017**

Present:

Dr. Lisa Fiore, Chair
Ms. Susan Burgess-Cox, Secretary
Mr. Murat Bicer
Mr. Thomas Caputo
Ms. Andrea Prestwich
Ms. Elyse Shuster
Mr. John Phelan, Superintendent
Ms. Janice Darias, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction

Absent:

Mr. Anthony DiCologero

1. **OPENING BUSINESS**

1.1 Call to order

Dr. Fiore called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

1.2 Pledge of Allegiance

Dr. Fiore led the Pledge of Allegiance.

1.3 Citizens' Concerns

Several parents presented concerns regarding the elimination of elementary music. Dr. Fiore explained Superintendent Phelan would be addressing the topic during his Superintendent's Report.

1.4 Adjustments to the Agenda

Dr. Fiore suggested an adjustment to the agenda. The Wellington Update would be presented first followed by the Winn Brook update.

1.5 Chair's Report

Dr. Fiore acknowledged Elyse Shuster's last meeting as a School Committee member; however, she has agreed to continue with the ongoing contract negotiations. Dr. Fiore and Superintendent Phelan thanked Ms. Shuster for her energy and years of commitment to the School Committee.

1.6 Student Representative Report

There was no student representative in attendance

1.7 Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Phelan updated the School Committee on activities and events in the schools such as the Burbank Geography Challenge and the visit by Malcolm Mitchell at the Butler School. Malcolm Mitchell read to the students from a book he had written and spoke to them about the importance of reading in his life.

Superintendent Phelan announced the Belmont Boosters has offered to replace the Belmont High School sign on Concord Avenue. The new sign will be the same size but will also have "Home of the Marauders" underneath.

Superintendent Phelan announced 3 workshops with Frank Locker, the Education Facilitator working with the planning of communication on the high school building project. The first meeting will be for staff on April 3rd and on May 4th and May 5th meetings will be held for community members. Mr. Locker has also agreed to meet jointly with the School Committee and BHS BC on the evening of May 4th. Superintendent Phelan noted Bill Lovallo, Belmont High School Building Committee Chair will be his guest on Belmont Schools Now on April 5th.

Superintendent Phelan explained he recently met with all of the Aftercare Directors for a discussion on space needs and challenges.

Superintendent Phelan stated he recently met with parents of elementary music students, and Arto Asadoorian, Director of Visual and Performing Arts to discuss the changes to the elementary music program. He stated one of the concerns around the changes made to the elementary music program was how it was communicated to parents. He explained he had sent out a communication to all parents earlier today regarding the changes to the music program. He also explained the decision to implement these changes was made as a result of data collected and analyzed by Visual & Performing Arts Director Arto Asadoorian and his staff. Superintendent Phelan stated he believes the program moving forward will be better for children. He explained Mr. Asadoorian is looking into how the Saturday Morning Music Program can be reinvented if it turns out it is affected by the changes.

2. **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

There was no unfinished business.

3. **MAJOR BUSINESS**

3.1 Wellington Update – Exhibit B

Principal Amy Spangler presented an update on what has been happening at the Wellington School. She began by comparing enrollment numbers from October 2010 to October 2017. There has been an increase of 147 students which represents approximately 6 additional classrooms of students.

Principal Spangler discussed the following school initiatives: Second Step Curriculum which implements explicit classroom instruction, teaches concepts through reinforcement in all instructional areas, provides family education through links and news, provided orientation and planning for new staff, and implements tier 2 supports for at least two grade levels. She also discussed growth mindset principles such as using bulletin boards and morning announcements. The staff also read *Power of My Words* by Paula Denton and they share real stories and examples from colleagues each Monday.

Principal Spangler explained how the Wellington is working to develop student and staff resilience through the Connections Program, SOAR Academy, Fine Dining Day and monthly staff resilience activities.

3.2 Winn Brook Update – Exhibit A

Janet Carey, Winn Brook Principal provided an overview of events going on at the Winn Brook School. She began by explaining the total student enrollment has increased by 36 students since 2010 which has impacted all classrooms. Ms. Carey went on to highlight the Social Emotional Learning practices such as Direct Instruction and Classroom Practices which were introduced to the staff by Rachel Poliner, a consultant who has been working with the district on SEL. Some of the classroom practices include greeting students at the door, morning meetings, allowing students choices in what they want to work on first, reinforcing language, and logical consequences. She explained the use of a Peace Table which is used for students who need a break or to work on solving problems with others. Ms. Carey also discussed various methods being used to teach math skills that make it interesting and fun for students.

3.3 MCAS 2.0 Update – Exhibit C

Assistant Superintendent Darias provided an update on assessment and accountability explaining the next generation MCAS tests which will include the transition to Computer Based Testing (CBT). Grades 3-8 English Language Arts and Mathematics MCAS testing will be computer based, provided stronger alignment to the current Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks and will provide better information regarding students' readiness for the next grade and college. She also provided information on the schedule for the Computer Based Testing.

3.4 Vote on School Choice

Superintendent Phelan explained the School Committee is required to vote each year on whether to take part in School Choice. School Choice allows students from outside of Belmont attend school here. Tuition is paid to Belmont by the town the student resides in.

On a motion offered by Mr. Bicer and seconded by Ms. Burgess-Cox and in accord with MGL Chapter 76, Section 128, Belmont Public Schools

VOTED unanimously to decline participation in School Choice for the 2017-2018 school year.

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

4.1 Finance Subcommittee

The Finance Subcommittee met earlier in the day and discussed the upcoming Warrant Article for Town Meeting related to the Special Education Reserve Fund.

4.2 Policy & Procedure Subcommittee

The Policy & Procedure Subcommittee has been working on drafting new language for the school calendar policy. They will finalize their work in a couple of weeks.

4.3 Curriculum & Instruction Subcommittee

There was no report from the Curriculum & Instruction Subcommittee.

4.4 Capital Budget Committee

The Capital Budget Committee met on March 23rd and will meet again in April.

4.5 Warrant Committee

The Warrant Committee will meet tomorrow.

4.6 Belmont High School Building Committee

The Belmont High School Building Committee sent an invitation to all parents to attend a community forum on April 6th regarding the Belmont High School building project. On April 3rd, members of the BHS-BC will visit the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) to finalize the hiring of the Project Manager.

4.7 Space Task Force

There was no report from the Space Task Force.

4.8 Community Path Update

The Community Path Committee held a meeting recently for community members to provide input on the different design options.

4.9 Library Long Range Planning Committee

There was no report from the Library Long Range Planning Committee.

5. **OTHER BUSINESS**

5.1 Consent Agenda

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

VOTED unanimously to approve the disposal of the technology items listed in Exhibit D.

5.2 Personnel Items – None

5.3 Business Items – None

5.4 Approval of Minutes

On a motion offered by Mr. Caputo and seconded by Ms Burgess-Cox, it was

VOTED unanimously to approve the February 28, 2017 minutes.

6. **FUTURE BUSINESS**

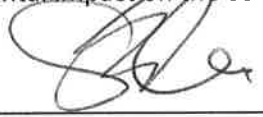
None

7. **ENCLOSURES**

❖ Strategic Plan

8. **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

At 9:00 p.m. on a motion offered by Mr. Caputo and seconded by Ms. Burgess-Cox, a roll call vote was taken and the School Committee agreed to enter Executive Session with no intent to return to Open Session for the purpose of discussing strategy with respect to collective bargaining with union personnel give that a discussion in Open Session may have a detrimental impact on the School Committee's bargaining position.

Respectfully submitted by 
Ms. Susan Burgess-Cox, Secretary