

**BELMONT SCHOOL COMMITTEE MINUTES  
BELMONT HIGH SCHOOL AUDITORIUM  
JANUARY 9, 2018**

Present: Dr. Lisa Fiore, Chair  
Ms. Susan Burgess-Cox, Secretary  
Ms. Kate Bowen  
Mr. Thomas Caputo  
Mr. Murat Bicer  
Ms. Andrea Prestwich  
Mr. John Phelan, Superintendent  
Ms. Janice Darias, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction  
Mr. Anthony DiCologero, Director of Finance, Business and Operations

Also in attendance: Mr. Arto Asadoorian, Director of Fine and Performing Arts  
Ms. Elizabeth Baker, Director of Science  
Ms. Janet Carey, Winn Brook Elementary School Principal  
Ms. Tricia Clifford, Burbank Elementary School Principal  
Mr. Michael McAllister, Chenery Middle School Principal  
Mr. Daniel Richards, Belmont High School Principal  
Ms. Sherri Turner, Belmont High School Assistant Principal

1. **OPENING BUSINESS**

1.1 Call to order

Dr. Fiore called the meeting to order at 6:42 p.m.

1.2 Pledge of Allegiance

Dr. Fiore led the Pledge of Allegiance.

1.3 Citizens' Concerns

There were no citizens' concerns.

1.4 Adjustments to the Agenda

There were no adjustments to the agenda.

1.5 Chair's Report

Dr. Fiore thanked everyone who helped clear the snow after the recent storm.

## 1.6 Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Phelan thanked members of the DPW and Facilities Department for their hard work during the storm.

## 2. **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

There was no unfinished business.

## 3. **MAJOR BUSINESS**

### 3.1 Belmont High School 2018-19 Program of Studies – Exhibit A

Belmont High School Principal Dan Richards provided a brief overview of the 2018-2019 Program of Studies explaining it is a collaborative work with Directors, and Assistant Principals trying to be sure the classes offered are in alignment with the Strategic Plan.

Elizabeth Baker, Director of Science, provided information on the addition of a project-based course, Introduction to Robotics. This course will include learning design techniques, building and drawing by computer and by hand, as well as participation in a robotics competition. There has been a demand for a robotics class from students and the community. The Foundation for Belmont Education provided a grant for the purchase of the robotics kits and future supplies will be purchased using funding from the existing budget. The addition of this course is budget neutral.

Science Ethics is another class being offered at the honors level. Students will be required to write a position paper as part of the course. Another minor change to the science courses is the renaming of Computer Aided Design and Electronics (CADE) to Design & 3D Printing to include the 3D printing units that have been added to the course.

Arto Asadoorian, Director of Visual and Performing Arts presented a brief overview of the following three new courses:

3D Art 1: An introductory course using techniques which are used in ceramics and sculpture with clay, wood, plaster and wire.

Digital Art 1: An introduction into the skills and concepts of digital art making, graphic design and web-design by using the elements of artistic and commercial design.

Animation 1: Students will learn traditional hand-drawn cell animation, digital animation and 3D modeling.

### 3.2 LABBB Capital Fund Vote

LABBB is a special education collaborative which includes Lexington, Arlington, Belmont, Bedford, and Burlington. The Board of Directors is requesting member School Committee's to authorize the creation of a Capital Account to ensure compliance with Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) regulations. The money held in this account would cover capital projects in any of the buildings LABBB students attend.

On a motion offered by Murat Bicer and seconded by Tom Caputo, the Committee

**VOTED** unanimously to approve the LABBB Collaborative Board of Directors to establish a Capital Reserve Fund of up to \$2,000,000.

3.3 BHS-BC Update on Grade Configurations - Exhibit B

Grade Configuration Study

Superintendent Phelan presented materials from a study done by the consulting firm, SMMA, on district grade configuration. The study included the “right sizing of schools” which involves matching classroom and student capacity with the capacity of core and no-core spaces in all schools. These spaces include special education, English Learning (EL) and other student service needs. Superintendent Phelan explained the costs related to “right sizing” each elementary school and the middle school as it relates to each high school grade configuration. The study demonstrated that the most cost-effective option when considering the “right sizing of schools” would be a new 7-12 high school, a 4-6 middle school and K-3 elementary schools.

Superintendent Phelan and the School Committee welcomed audience members to provide feedback and ask questions.

District Configuration Presentation

Superintendent Phelan updated the School Committee, Belmont High School Building Committee (BHS-BC), Board of Selectmen, and community members on the district’s work associated with grade configuration for the new high school. The following items are consistently considered in this work:

- Education Vision for teacher/student engagement that will increase students’ academic and social emotional outcomes
- Space, enrollment, and the operational needs of the district – short-term and long-term.
- Financial costs to the Town and district – short-term and long-term.
- Timeline of needs and solutions for district challenges.

The MSBA has approved three grade configuration options for the BHS-BC to consider for this project: 9–12, 8–12 and 7–12. A survey of Belmont educators on this issue resulted in 168 responses with 36.3% voting for K-3, 4-6 and 7-12 (separating 7-8 from 9-12), and 36.2% voting for K-4, 5-7 and 8-12 (separating grade 8 from 9-12). Superintendent Phelan provided an overview of research regarding the impact of different grade configurations on student learning and achievement. The Belmont Leadership team looked at this research in their work on grade configuration. Belmont High School Principal Dan Richards, Chenery Middle School Principal Michael McAllister, Burbank Elementary School Principal Tricia Clifford, and Winn Brook Elementary School Principal Janet Carey shared their thoughts on the space and educational needs at their school as well as the impact of grade configurations on student learning and development.

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

4.1 Finance Subcommittee

There was no report from the Finance Subcommittee.

4.2 Policy and Procedure Subcommittee

There was no report from the Policy and Procedure Subcommittee.

4.3 Curriculum and Instruction Subcommittee

There was no report from the Curriculum and Instruction Subcommittee.

4.4 Capital Budget Committee

There was no report from the Capital Budget Committee.

4.5 Warrant Committee

There was no report from the Warrant Committee.

4.6 Belmont High School Building Committee

Superintendent Phelan provided an update on the Belmont High School Building Committee as part of his presentation on grade configurations.

4.7 Community Path Committee

There was no report from the Community Path Committee.

4.8 Library Long Range Planning Committee

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

5. **OTHER BUSINESS**

5.1 Consent Agenda

5.2 Personnel Items - none

5.3 Business Items – None

5.4 Approval of Minutes

November 16, 2017

November 30, 2017

December 12, 2017

The School Committee did not vote on the three sets of minutes. They will be voted on at a future meeting.

6. **FUTURE BUSINESS**

Upcoming Meetings:

January 23, 2018  
Finance Subcommittee Meeting  
SAB Conference Room – 7:30 a.m.

January 23, 2018  
School Committee/BHSBC/BOS Joint Meeting  
Wellington Cafeteria – 7:00 p.m.

7. **ENCLOSURES**

Strategic Plan  
Important Dates for School Committee

8. **ADJOURN**

Upon a motion by Murat Bicer, seconded by Tom Caputo, the meeting adjourned at 9:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by



Susan Burgess-Cox, Secretary