

**BELMONT SCHOOL COMMITTEE MINUTES
CHENERY MIDDLE SCHOOL COMMUNITY ROOM
MAY 22, 2018**

Present: Ms. Susan Burgess-Cox, Chair
Ms. Andrea Prestwich, Secretary
Ms. Kate Bowen
Ms. Tara Donner
Dr. Lisa Fiore
Ms. Jill Norton
Mr. John Phelan, Superintendent
Ms. Janice Darias, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction
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 7:00 p.m. noting the School Committee had just come from a recognition ceremony for Community Service students. She congratulated them on their hard work and dedication.

1.2 Pledge of Allegiance

Susan Burgess-Cox led the Pledge of Allegiance.

1.3 Citizens' Concerns

Susan Burgess-Cox noted there were several parents and students in the audience due to a petition regarding the non-renewal of an English teacher. She suggested a representative or two from the group speak due to time constraints. A Belmont High School senior student who is currently serving as an assistant to Roanne Bosch spoke for the group. She explained Ms. Bosch has been a wonderful teacher and students in her classes have always been very engaged. She noted the petition is asking the school administration to reverse their decision to not renew Ms. Bosch.

1.4 Adjustments to the Agenda

There were no adjustments to the agenda.

1.5 Chair's Report

Susan Burgess-Cox announced she would not be providing a report in the interest of time since the agenda for the meeting was very packed.

1.6 Student Representative Report

There was no student representative in attendance.

1.7 Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Phelan announced he also would forgo a report during this meeting.

2. **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

There was no unfinished business.

3. **MAJOR BUSINESS**

3.1 ELA Capstone Pilot Presentation – Exhibit A

Assistant Superintendent Darias invited members of the English Language Arts Department to update the School Committee on their Senior Capstone Pilot.

Lindsey Rinder, Director of English Language Arts introduced the Senior Capstone Professional Learning Team (PLT) made up of the following members: Mark Reynolds, Roanne Bosch, Anna Guastella, Annmarie Fant, and Nate Markley. They explained as teachers they noticed that the current senior thesis process had become outdated and did not match with 21st century learning standards. They also felt the need to expose students to a broader selection of texts and to teach more diverse writing skills to better prepare them for college.

The teachers formed a PLT and began researching capstone models from other school districts and from that designing their own new capstone assessment materials. Students are allowed to use a wider variety of text choices in their final project including such as fiction, nonfiction, poetry, articles, op-eds, speeches, short stories, poems, plays, songs, film, etc. They will be asked to take a position on their topic of choice. Students will be able to include creative writing. The new senior capstone will also include a public presentation. The pilot will include up to 100 students, who will be chosen by lottery in two 12H and two 12CP classes.

3.2 Trip Proposals

Assistant Superintendent Darias provided an overview of each of the following trips which will take place in 2019.

- French language students trip to Quebec – February 2019. This is in place of the trip to France students have taken in the past. The hope is that more students will be encouraged to attend since it is closer and less costly.

- Latin language trip to Italy – April 2019.
- Grade 8 trip to Washington D.C. - This trip is shorter because students fly to and from D.C. However, most of the important visits are preserved because time is saved by not driving. This trip is taken each year and students are able to visit locations related to their studies.
- Social Studies trip to London, Paris, and Amsterdam. This trip will also allow students to visit locations they are studying.

Ms. Darias thanked the teachers and chaperones for preparing for these trips a year in advance which allows families to plan financially and for fundraising events to take place.

3.3 FY19 Budget Vote – Exhibit F

Superintendent Phelan thanked Anthony DiCologero for his work on the budget for FY19. A lengthy presentation was done for the School Committee in January and the budget was presented to the Board of Selectmen and Warrant Committee in February. Superintendent Phelan explained the budget will be voted on at Town Meeting on June 4th and it is customary for the School Committee to vote prior to that.

On a motion offered by Ms. Andrea Prestwich and seconded by Dr. Lisa Fiore, it was

VOTED unanimously to approve the FY19 School Department budget.

3.4 Start Times Public Forum

Superintendent Phelan noted the administration and staff of Belmont Public Schools has been looking at the possibility of a later start time for students but the discussion has been impacted by the new building project with the change in grade configuration. There will need to be a change in start times across the district once the project is complete but for now there has been a task force created to look at a change in start times for the high school. Ms. Andrea Prestwich introduced Dr. Judy Owens and read her bio for the School Committee.

Dr. Owens explained the research showing how starting school later impacts adolescents in a positive way. There is a shift in circadian rhythms that occurs with age and in association with the onset of puberty. This shift causes a several hour delay in the natural fall asleep and morning wake times. These shifts are in direct conflict with earlier high school start times which are usually before 8:30 a.m. Adolescents are also affected by the lack of REM sleep which is critical for learning and memory. Students will often sleep more on the weekends to make up for lost sleep during the week but Dr. Owens explained this practice leads to circadian misalignment. The result of this circadian misalignment causes a permanent state of “social jet lag” which can affect academic performance, daytime sleepiness, and can cause depression. Dr. Owens went on to explain how getting less than 8 – 10 hours of sleep each night affects the brain. It can impact cognitive function, attention, memory, learning of new tasks, emotional regulation and risk-taking behaviors. It can also affect physical health creating a risk of obesity, poor cardiovascular health, accidents, depression and substance abuse. Dr. Owens provided examples of schools who have implemented later start times and the positive effects the change has had. She explained elementary aged students require 9 – 10 hours of sleep each night but unlike adolescents, they are biologically, environmentally and socially better able to wake up earlier. Dr.

Owens noted how important community, staff and student engagement is when considering implementing any change in school start times.

Dr. Owens responded to questions from the School Committee and members of the audience.

3.5 Unit C Ratification Vote

At 8:50 p.m. on a roll call vote, Susan Burgess-Cox announced the School Committee would be entering executive session for the purpose of discussing collective bargaining with union members given that a discussion in open session may have a detrimental impact on the School Committee's bargaining position and they would return to open session at the conclusion.

The School Committee returned to open session at approximately 9:00 p.m. Susan Burgess-Cox announced the School Committee had voted to ratify the Unit C contract.

4. SUBCOMMITTEE/LIAISON UPDATES (as needed)

4.1 Finance Subcommittee

The Finance Subcommittee met last week to review different categories of the budget and how it is affected by the change in enrollment.

4.2 Policy and Procedure Subcommittee

The Policy and Procedure Subcommittee meet recently to discuss aftercare and the possibility of creating a task force on aftercare space needs.

4.3 Curriculum and Instruction Subcommittee

There was no report from the Curriculum and Instruction Subcommittee.

4.4 Capital Budget Committee

The Capital Budget Committee recently had their final meeting of the year. They will be submitting their final report to Town Meeting.

4.5 Warrant Committee

The Warrant Committee met last week to discuss articles for Town Meeting.

4.6 Belmont High School Building Committee

The Belmont High School Building Committee met earlier in the day with the Board of Selectmen and School Committee to discuss traffic issues related to the building site. They will be finalizing the design and site of the building in preparation for submitting the final documents to MSBA in July.

4.7 Community Path Committee

There was no report from the Community Path Committee.

5. **OTHER BUSINESS**

5.1 Consent Agenda

5.2 Personnel Items – none

5.3 Business Items – None

5.4 Approval of Minutes

On a motion offered by Lisa Fiore and seconded by Tara Donner, it was

VOTED 4-0-1 to approve the minutes of April 24, 2018 as amended

On a motion offered by Lisa Fiore and seconded by Tara Donner, it was

VOTED 4-0-1 to approve the minutes of May 8, 2018 as amended.

6. **FUTURE BUSINESS**

Upcoming Meetings

June 12, 2018

Finance Subcommittee Meeting

SAB Conference Room – 8:00 a.m.

June 19, 2018

School Committee Meeting

CMS Community Room – 6:15 p.m.

Joint Meeting with SC/BOS.BHSBC – 7:00 p.m.

7. **ENCLOSURES**

Strategic Plan

Important Dates for School Committee

2018-19 School Committee Calendar (DRAFT)

Dr. Judith Owens - Bio

8. **ADJOURN**

At 9:20 p.m. on a motion offered by Lisa Fiore and seconded by Jill Norton, it was

VOTED unanimously to adjourn the meeting.

Respectfully submitted by Andrea Prestwich 
Andrea Prestwich, Secretary