

BELMONT SCHOOL COMMITTEE AND SCHOOL DEPARTMENT RETREAT MINUTES

Homer Municipal Building Gallery Room

August 30, 2022

**RECEIVED
TOWN CLERK
BELMONT, MA**

DATE: October 17, 2022
TIME: 3:42 PM

Present: Ms. Meghan Moriarty, Chair
Ms. Amy Checkoway, Secretary
Ms. Kate Bowen
Mr. Mike Crowley
Mr. Jeffrey Liberty
Mr. Jamal Saeh
Mr. John Phelan, Superintendent
Ms. Janice Darias, Assistant Superintendent
Mr. Anthony DiCologero, Director of Finance, Business and Operations
Mr. Michael McAllister, Director of Human Capital
Ms. Karla Koza, Director of District Reconfiguration
Ms. Chon'tel Washington, Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

1. OPENING BUSINESS

1.1 Call to Order

Committee Chair Meg Moriarty called the meeting to order at 1:06 pm.

2. RETREAT: DISCUSSION OF GOALS AND PRIORITIES FOR 2022-23 SCHOOL YEAR

The School Department presented draft priorities for the district for the 2022-23 school year for input and discussion with the School Committee, which include the budget, DEI, and district reconfiguration. The Superintendent provided the context that this is not a strategic plan, but more of an operational plan. Questions from School Committee members at the outset of the discussion focused on student outcomes including academics, SEL, and mental health and the NEASC accreditation process which the district is undergoing in 2022-23 which includes developing a "portrait of a graduate."

Priority #1: Budget

The Superintendent presented an overview of the budget approach this year and noted that the budget process this year will focus on feasibility and allocating resources based on student needs. Member Liberty commented on the importance of the School Committee seeing precise data on student achievement and mental health to help understand what will be required to dig out from COVID. The Superintendent mentioned several data sources that the district is using including MCAS and iReady. There was agreement that the budget will focus on student needs and acknowledgement that there may be negotiation about the level of the budget with town partners as part of the budget process. School Committee member comments and questions focused on staff exchange assumptions (Member Saeh), fees, and considering programs as well as positions (Member Bowen).

Priority #2: DEI

Ms. Washington presented key focus areas for the DEI work and noted that the work is primarily driven by the equity audit that took place last year along with additional feedback sessions. Some level setting

work with adults is taking place now in order to make sure that the school community is ready and equipped to meet the needs of all students. Member Saeh expressed that there is urgency and he would like to see more focus on student metrics and short-term student-focused goals. Superintendent Phelan noted that there will be equity goals built into each school's improvement plan and educator goals. Member Liberty suggested defining terms and quantifying what the outcomes will be. Member Crowley inquired about student surveys. Member Bowen encouraged the school department to think about ongoing pulse checks to see where students are at.

Priority #3: District Reconfiguration

Ms. Koza presented the different tasks and activities that will be happening this year related to district reconfiguration. There is some concern about the fall-heavy focus and a lot of work to do. Member Liberty commented that he appreciated the project management "punch list" and suggests adding how we will know if this is effective and downstream where the input made a difference. He also asked about community partnership and engagement. Member Checkoway asked what the vision of teaching and learning will look like at the end of the year. Ms. Darias commented that it will be definition of the transferable skills and some way to measure the portrait of a graduate. Ms. Checkoway suggested sharing some models of what the outcome may look like from other districts and suggested consideration of any additional strategies (big or small) that could happen to make the district feel like a good place to work. There was some discussion about the new Atlas system and its benefits.

Several School Committee members supported the idea of making student outcomes a focus in this document so that students are at the center of the district's work and priorities.

The school department will present a revised version of the priorities at a SC meeting in September that reflects the discussion from the retreat and any written feedback received.

3. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned by Chair Moriarty at 3:05 pm.

Respectfully Submitted by:

