



**BELCHERTOWN PUBLIC SCHOOLS
REGULAR SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
September 24, 2013**

LOCATION: Swift River Elementary School Library
TIME: 7:00 pm

SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBERS: Dr. Linda Tsoumas, Chair (present); Ms. Clare Popowich, Vice-Chair (present); Mr. Richard Fritsch, Secretary (present); Ms. Myndi Bogdanovich, Member (present); Dr. Michael Knapp, Member (present)

ADMINISTRATION: Dr. Judith Houle, Superintendent of Schools (present); Mr. Brian Cameron, Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning (present)

BHS STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES: (not present)

VISITORS: Ms. Brenda Aldrich, Selectmen Liaison to School Committee; Ms. Amanda Saklad; Ms. Mona Griffin; Mr. Jim Russell, Republican reporter; Ms. Aimee Henderson, Sentinel editor

MINUTES

- I. Call to order
Dr. Tsoumas called the Regular School Committee meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.
- II. Special awards and presentations
None
- III. Update from BHS Student Advisory Council representatives
Not present; Dr. Tsoumas stated that these representatives have just been appointed (Mr. Michael DeBarge and Mr. Ben Stone) and will attend future meetings.
- IV. Public comment regarding items on the agenda
None
- V. Approval of minutes
 - A. September 10, 2013
MOTION: Ms. Popowich moved to approve the minutes of the September 10, 2013 Regular School Committee meeting, as amended. Mr. Fritsch seconded the motion.
COMMENT: Dr. Tsoumas requested that a paragraph on page 7 under the report of the Personnel & Policy Subcommittee, E. 1. Transition Specialist Job Description, be struck as it contained information which referenced the individual's personnel record. The minutes will be amended to reflect the deletion of this paragraph as requested.
VOTE: 5-0-0, approved unanimously

VI. Reports and recommendations of the Superintendent

A. Collective bargaining contracts for signatures

Dr. Houle stated that one set of collective bargaining contracts was complete and had been reviewed by Dr. Houle and received by the MTA. She then passed this contract to School Committee members for their signatures. She noted that two more sets of contracts have been completed and were in the process of being proof-read, and two additional sets of contracts are still being revised and not yet completed. Dr. Houle stated that she anticipates having the last four sets of contracts completed and available for School Committee signatures at the October 8th meeting.

B. PARCC assessment pilot

Dr. Houle stated that there is a consortium of 17 states participating in the PARCC (Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers) pilot, which will serve as a field test of this assessment system. This system is designed to help determine how well students are prepared for the challenges they will face in college and the workplace in the 21st century. It is anticipated that PARCC will be chosen to eventually replace the current state assessment system, the MCAS. In order to prepare for its implementation, pilot assessments will be given to selected students in many districts across the state in the spring, taking place in two windows of time: mid-March to mid-April, and early May to early June. Two types of assessments will be given: a performance-based assessment (PBA), which is designed to assess students' critical thinking and problem-solving skills; and an end-of-year assessment (EOY), which is designed to assess students' content knowledge and skills after a year of instruction.

Dr. Houle noted that this year's PARCC assessment will be administered to a small number of students, about 15% of the total population state-wide. Because this is a pilot, there will only be limited results reported and no results will be used to rate schools or educators. Participating students in grades 3-11 will be assessed in English Language Arts/Literacy or Mathematics. No student will participate in the entire PARCC assessment. She also stated that the PARCC Field Test is a timed test, unless an exception is made for any student whose IEP requires it.

Dr. Houle then reviewed our district's participation in the 2014 PARCC Field Test as selected by the Massachusetts DESE:

- SRE, Grade 3, ELA;
- CHCS, Grade 4, Mathematics;
- JBMS, Grades 7 & 8, ELA;
- BHS, Algebra I, Mathematics.

Dr. Houle explained the reason for the upcoming switch in assessment systems, noting that Massachusetts is one of 45 states to have aligned its state curriculum frameworks to the Common Core State Standards, and that Belchertown teachers have written curriculum in the two designated areas that align with the new standards. Also noted was that Belchertown will not seek exemption for the MCAS in administering the PARCC assessment pilot.

Mr. Fritsch expressed his concern that some students will suffer from "over-testing" by taking both PARCC and MCAS tests, and he feels that parents must be made

aware that this could potentially result in poorer MCAS scores. It was noted that EOY testing will consist of Mathematics in the MCAS, and ELA in the PARCC Field test. Dr. Knapp asked what the state is hoping to achieve by replacing MCAS with PARCC, and Dr. Houle stated that it will be valuable to have a performance-based assessment for assessing critical-based thinking, and also that having more online assessments will ready the students for working in increasingly computer-based environments. She noted that the pilot will enable the state to test its infrastructure as well, in anticipation of the implementation of PARCC.

C. District-Determined Measures pilot

Dr. Houle reviewed the District-Determined Measures (DDM) piloting plan which will be implemented during the 2013-2014 school year. The DDM pilot is part of the new Educator Evaluation System and this plan rates standards of practice and the impact on student learning. Data is used from MCAS results, and tests that the district creates or those purchased from a vendor, and this data will provide information on what constitutes student growth. Dr. Houle explained the minimum piloting requirements which the DESE had provided in a document (Student Impact Rating/District DDM Piloting Plan-September 2013) included in this evening's correspondence. Although five requirements are listed, she stated that all five do not have to be met at this time, and those that need to be tested are in the process of being identified. The DDMs that are chosen to be piloted must have the following information to be submitted to the DESE: grade/subject or course; DDM name; DDM source; type of assessment; item types; how long the district has been using the assessment; a description of the reason for piloting the assessment.

Dr. Houle concluded by saying that this is a very difficult and labor-intensive piece of the Educator Evaluation System to implement, with a plan to field test this pilot in spring 2014. Administrators and teachers will work on this together in order to set benchmarks for student learning and to observe and map student growth.

Mr. Fritsch reiterated his comment that he is concerned that the students will be "bombarded" with testing next spring.

VII. Unfinished business

A. Superintendent search process

Dr. Tsoumas reported that the Request for Proposals (RFP) for the Superintendent search process had closed yesterday at 4:00 p.m. The RFP letter had been sent to four different consulting groups and had also been posted on the school district's website. Two proposals had been submitted for consideration, which Dr. Tsoumas opened at this time, and distributed a copy of each to the School Committee members.

The first proposal was from Massachusetts Association of School Committees (MASC), and had been submitted by Ms. Pat Correia, who is the field director for the Belchertown area. References were provided and materials were included which addressed the specific questions as outlined in the RFP. The cost proposal presented by MASC was \$12,000.00, with up to \$4,000.00 more in extra fees for additional services, which were offered to Belchertown since it belongs to MASC.

The second proposal was from New England School Development Council (NESDEC) which included the required materials as requested in the RFP. Its cost proposal was \$11,795.00 with additional costs for detailed services. (Dr. Tsoumas noted that Belchertown is not an affiliate of this group, but should consider joining NESDEC, if eligible based on student enrollment, in order to qualify for discounts.)

Dr. Houle stated that under Chapter 30B (MGL), the School Committee is not required to choose the low bid, but can make a choice based on what is determined to be best for the district.

Dr. Tsoumas directed the School Committee members to review these proposals and to prepare oral questions for the vendors' presentations which will take place at a School Committee directed agenda meeting scheduled on October 1st at 7:00 p.m. It was decided that each vendor would be allotted 30 minutes for its presentation, followed by 15 minutes for questions from the School Committee.

The first vendor (NESDEC) will be scheduled at 7:15 p.m. The second vendor (MASC) will be scheduled at 8:15 p.m. Following the presentations, the School Committee will make a decision as to which consulting group will be hired for the Superintendent search process.

VIII. New business
None

IX. Reports of subcommittees/representative to Collaborative for Educational Services

A. Collaborative for Educational Services (Ms. Bogdanovich)

1. Report from September 11, 2013 meeting

Ms. Bogdanovich stated that appointments had been made for the positions of Chair and Vice Chair for each of Hampshire and Franklin counties, and a Secretary and Treasurer had been chosen for the entire collaborative. Ms. Susan Egmont will serve as the search consultant for the new Executive Director, and Mr. Frank Mertes was appointed as the new CFO. A discussion was also held with regard to investing in a virtual school to provide supplemental online learning for students.

The CES will meet again tomorrow evening.

B. Curriculum & Instruction (Dr. Tsoumas/Dr. Knapp)

None; no future meeting has yet been scheduled.

C. Healthy & Safer Schools Advisory Committee (Ms. Popowich)

1. Report from September 11, 2013 meeting

Mr. Cameron stated that this Advisory Committee had met to discuss the logistics of the Pinwheels for Peace project which was held last Friday. The group also discussed updates and potential changes in the bullying prevention/intervention policy.

2. Mr. Cameron confirmed that the next meeting is scheduled for October 16, 2013, at 2:15 p.m. in BHS Room 317.

D. Jessica's Boundless Playground Committee (Dr. Tsoumas)

Dr. Tsoumas reported that the Playground Committee had met on September 18th. At this point in time, the group is reconnecting with the brick printing company to continue this fundraiser activity. Grant applications are being reviewed for consideration, and two potential grant funding organizations are trying to set up values for "in kind" types of donations. Dr. Tsoumas stated that the Playground Committee has raised approximately \$180,000.00 to date, with the CPC having provided \$100,000.00 of that amount. She also noted that a Poker Run had been held, and the Playground Committee also had a booth at the recent Belchertown Fair.

The next meeting of the Playground Committee is scheduled for October 16th.

E. Personnel & Policy (Ms. Popowich/Ms. Bogdanovich)

1. Job Description: High School Custodial PM Shift Leader

Ms. Popowich reported that the following agenda item was discussed and voted on at a Personnel & Policy Subcommittee meeting held earlier this evening. As a result of the recent round of negotiations, it was explained that the custodian contract allows for a PM Shift Leader, and Mr. Lachance had presented a job description for this position which will be filled at the high school. He explained that BHS currently employs five custodians, with four working the 3:00-11:30 p.m. shift, and one working 11:00 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. The Shift Leader will work 2:00 p.m. to 10:30 p.m. in place of one of the four covered 3:00-11:30 p.m. shifts, and Mr. Lachance made it clear that this position does not take the place of the building's custodial supervisor. The Shift Leader will be a stipendiary position at BHS and will be internally posted for currently employed custodians. With regard to the document as included in this evening's correspondence, Mr. Lachance had then reviewed the specific qualifications with two new additions, performance responsibilities with two new additions, and a new job goal for the position of Shift Leader. After some discussion, it was decided that the presented job description for BHS Custodial Shift Leader should be amended, as follows: strike #3 under Qualifications as it conflicts with #10; and in #'s 4, 5, 6 under Qualifications, the words "Has" and "preferred, but not" will be struck, so that these qualifications will read as "required". Mr. Lachance concurred and these changes will be made to the job description.

Dr. Knapp commented that some of the requirements listed in the job description presented a "tall order", in that it specifies experience in several specialty areas, such as electricity, plumbing, and HVAC. Dr. Houle stated that the district has contracts with licensed professionals in these specialties, and that this individual needs to have a "working knowledge" of these areas. As a shift leader only, he/she will still defer to the custodial supervisor for any problems that cannot be readily solved.

VOTE: A vote was taken to approve the job description for High School Custodial PM Shift Leader as amended and brought forward by the Personnel & Policy Subcommittee.

5-0-0, approved unanimously

- F. Property & Transportation (Mr. Fritsch/Dr. Knapp)
 - 1. Mr. Fritsch confirmed that the next meeting of this subcommittee is scheduled for October 22, 2013, at 6:30 p.m., in the SRE Library, prior to the Regular School Committee meeting.
- G. School Safety Task Force (Mr. Fritsch)
 - 1. Report from September 23, 2013 meeting
Mr. Fritsch stated that this group is making good progress on several units, and that the group has been expanded to include nursing staff as well as members from the community.
- H. Technology Advisory Committee (Mr. Fritsch)
 - 1. Mr. Fritsch confirmed that the next meeting of this Advisory Committee is scheduled for October 2, 2013, at 5:00 p.m. in the IT Dept., located in the Tadgell Building.
- X. Correspondence
 - A. Agenda: September 24, 2013
 - B. Minutes: September 10, 2013
 - C. Collective bargaining contracts for signatures (hand carried to the meeting)
 - D. PARCC Pilot Participation
 - 1. Email identifying schools and classrooms
 - 2. Frequently asked questions
 - E. District-Determined Measures pilot chart
 - F. Superintendent Search Proposals (hand carried to the meeting)
 - G. Thank you letter to the Higgins family
 - H. Thank you letter to the Belchertown Football Association
- XI. Vote to enter into Executive Session under M.G.L., c. 30A, §21, Part (3), to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining with Unit A, Teachers, as conducting said business in open session would have a detrimental effect on the School Committee's negotiating position. The Committee will return to open session.

Dr. Tsoumas – yes

Ms. Popowich – yes

Mr. Fritsch – yes

Ms. Bogdanovich – yes

Dr. Knapp - yes

The Committee entered into Executive Session at 7:50 p.m.

The Committee returned to Open Session at 8:00 p.m. Ms. Popowich acted as Chair, as Dr. Tsoumas had excused herself from Executive Session due to the nature of the discussion held therein.

MOTION: Dr. Knapp moved to approve the Memorandum: Unit A, Instructional Technologists, as presented. Mr. Fritsch seconded the motion.

VOTE: 4-0-0, approved unanimously

MOTION: Mr. Fritsch moved to approve the Memorandum: Unit A, Lead Mentors, as presented. Dr. Knapp seconded the motion.

VOTE: 4-0-0, approved unanimously

XII. Adjournment

MOTION: Dr. Knapp moved to adjourn the Regular School Committee meeting at 8:01 p.m. Ms. Bogdanovich seconded the motion.

VOTE: 4-0-0, approved unanimously

Respectfully submitted by,



Kathryn A. Petersen

Non-Confidential Recording Secretary to the School Committee

School Committee members' signatures:

Linda Tsoumas, Linda Tsoumas, Chair

Clare Popowich, Clare Popowich, Vice Chair

Richard Fritsch, Richard Fritsch, Secretary

Myndi Bogdanovich, Myndi Bogdanovich, Member

Michael Knapp, Michael Knapp, Member

The mission of the Belchertown Public Schools is to ensure that every student meets with success every day. To that end, we pledge to ensure that we have rigorous, standards-based curriculum; instruction designed to meet the needs of diverse learners in every classroom; and access to the global learning community via state-of-the-art technology in schools that are communities of respect and civility for all.

2011-2015 Strategic Plan Goals (adopted by the Belchertown School Committee, 3/1/11):

- Goal #1: To have guaranteed (standards-based and implemented by all), viable (doable and accessible to every student), seamless K-12 curriculum in every content area.
- Goal #2: To have rigorous (standards-based), relevant (grounded in 21st Century skills), differentiated instructional practices with the ability to access the global learning community via technology available to every learner.
- Goal #3: To implement a plan to ensure that our students understand the importance of acceptance, tolerance, and respect supported by all adults in the community.

The Belchertown School Committee conducts its business in open session pursuant to Chapter 30A, Section 21 of the Massachusetts General Laws. The public is welcome to comment only on items on the agenda for this meeting as noted above. If you wish to address the School Committee regarding an item not on the agenda for this meeting, please contact the Superintendent of Schools at 413.323.0423 or via email at superintendent@belchertown.org to determine the best way to address your concerns (see [School Committee Policy BEDH](#)).

BELCHERTOWN SCHOOL COMMITTEE
REGULAR SESSION
SIGN IN SHEET

DATE: 9-24-13

PLS. PRINT NAME BELOW

BRENDA ALDRICH

Amelia Sekla

Ramona Griffin