



**BELCHERTOWN PUBLIC SCHOOLS
REGULAR SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
October 8, 2013**

LOCATION: Swift River Elementary School Library
TIME: 6:30 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); Mr. Edward Dunn, Contracted School Business Manager (present); Mr. Ben Admussen, Data Administrator (present); Mr. Scott Karen, Director of Technology (present); Ms. Kristi Guzzo, Director of Student Support Services (present); Ms. Sandra Bremer, Principal, Cold Spring School (present); Mr. Robert Kuhn, Principal, Swift River Elementary School (present); Ms. Paula Fitzgerald, Principal, Chestnut Hill Community School (present); Mr. Thomas Ruscio, Principal, Jabish Brook Middle School (present); Ms. Christine Vigneux, Principal, Belchertown High School (present); Mr. Douglas Daponde, Dean of Students/Athletic Director (present); Ms. Stacy Monette, JBMS Assistant Principal (present); Mr. Michael Lavelle, CHCS Assistant Principal (present); Ms. Eileen Farrington, SRE Assistant Principal (present)

BHS STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES: (not present)

VISITORS: Ms. Brenda Aldrich, Selectmen Liaison to School Committee; Ms. Patricia Correia, MASC Field Director; Mr. Jim Russell, Republican reporter
(See attached sign-in sheet for additional visitors.)

MINUTES

- I. Call to order
Ms. Popowich called the Regular School Committee meeting to order at 6:31 p.m.
- II. Vote to enter into Executive Session under M.G.L., c. 30A, §21, Parts (2) and (3), to discuss strategy with respect to negotiations with nonunion personnel, administrators and central office staff, and 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 (anticipated return to Open Session at 7:00 pm).
Ms. Popowich – yes
Mr. Fritsch – yes
Ms. Bogdanovich – yes
Dr. Knapp – yes
(Dr. Tsoumas not present at this time.)
The School Committee returned to Open Session at 6:56 p.m. Dr. Tsoumas joined the Committee during Executive Session.

- III. Special awards and presentations
- A. National Principal's Month: Administrators' Recognition
- Dr. Tsoumas stated that October has been designated National Principal's Month by the National Association of Secondary School Principals and the National Association of Elementary School Principals, in order to honor individuals in school leadership roles. In that regard, Dr. Tsoumas expressed her thanks on behalf of the School Committee to the Senior Leadership Team, and certificates of recognition were presented to the following individuals: Mr. Brian Cameron, Mr. Ben Admussen, Ms. Kristi Guzzo, Mr. Edward Dunn, Ms. Sandra Bremer, Mr. Robert Kuhn, Ms. Paula Fitzgerald, Mr. Thomas Ruscio, Ms. Christine Vigneux, Ms. Andrea Mastalerz (not present), Ms. Eileen Farrington, Mr. Michael Lavelle, Ms. Stacy Monette, Mr. Desi Vega (not present), Mr. Douglas Daponde, and Mr. Scott Karen.
- IV. Update from BHS Student Advisory Council representatives
- None; Ms. Vigneux stated that due to unforeseen circumstances, neither representative was able to attend this evening's meeting.
- V. Public comment regarding items on the agenda
- None
- VI. Approval of minutes
- A. September 24, 2013
- MOTION: Ms. Popowich moved to approve the minutes of the September 24, 2013 Regular School Committee meeting, as presented. Dr. Knapp seconded the motion.
- VOTE: 5-0-0, approved unanimously
- B. October 1, 2013
- MOTION: Dr. Knapp moved to approve the minutes of the October 1, 2013 Regular School Committee meeting, as presented. Mr. Fritsch seconded the motion. Dr. Tsoumas then offered a friendly amendment to remove the last four lines of the last paragraph under *Item III. A. Superintendent Search: presentations of proposals and selection of consultant 1. New England School Development Council* on page 2, so that the paragraph will end with "comfort level with the vendor".
- MOTION: Dr. Knapp moved to amend the minutes of the October 1, 2013 Regular School Committee meeting, as requested. Ms. Popowich seconded the motion.
- VOTE ON THE MOTION AS AMENDED: 5-0-0, approved unanimously
- VII. Reports and recommendations of the Superintendent
- A. Updates on School Improvement Plans
- All school building principals provided brief updates to their school improvement plans, noting changes and progress made, and explaining how these updates align with the three district goals. The principals reviewed objectives, strategies,

responsibility, and a timeline for achievement of each objective. Dr. Knapp commented that he would like to see these strategies tied to student achievement in the future.

Ms. Vigneux added that there will be a virtual high school pilot program beginning in spring 2014 for 30 students, and Mr. Brennan Murray, BHS Library/Media Specialist, will run this program.

Mr. Fritsch addressed all the school administrators and asked if, in light of the fact that there are some students who do not have access to technology at home, would it be possible to keep the school libraries open for an hour or more after school to provide these students with access to the Internet. Dr. Knapp suggested that the librarian at Clapp Memorial Library may be helpful with this type of accommodation for the students.

B. PeaceBuilders building plans for 2013-2014

Dr. Houle noted that information for the district's 2013-2014 PeaceBuilders implementation plans, including a schedule of monthly themes and events by building, had been included in this evening's correspondence for review by the School Committee. No action needs to be taken on this item.

C. MCAS 2013 results

Dr. Houle provided an overview of MCAS results from spring 2013 with a PowerPoint presentation, stating that she would attempt to explain as briefly as possible this complex system of assessments, results, and their meaning for our schools. She reviewed three types of results with data showing the progress of Belchertown students on MCAS tests in English Language Arts, Mathematics and Science compared to state averages, historical year-to-year statistics on testing for the same group of students as they progress to higher grade levels, and finally a cohort comparison to individual grade levels. Dr. Houle reported that Belchertown has made progress as a district with higher proficiency rates, and she attributed these gains to the continuing work and improvement in curriculum with increased attention to standards for learning, and she also discussed the work that still needs to be done with regard to the district's accountability status.

With regard to the data, Dr. Houle expressed her concern over the persistent gaps with high-need, low income and students with disabilities. Dr. Knapp agreed that these results are disturbing, and speculated how those needs can be addressed. Dr. Knapp also noted that the disappointing scores in math from grades 3 to 4 may possibly be corrected by the implementation of the new math curriculum.

In conclusion, Dr. Houle was happy to report that 65 BHS students are eligible for the John and Abigail Adams scholarship, having met the requirement of an advanced score in one MCAS subject and a proficient score in the other. This scholarship will provide eight semesters of free tuition at a state college or university.

D. Budget transfers

Mr. Dunn presented the recent budget transfers, which are typically a result of events that occur over the summer, such as staff changes and contract ratifications, and these changes affect nearly all salary lines. He noted that many of the larger figures represent the reclassification of staff from school-based positions into district-wide based positions. Mr. Dunn was happy to add that the end-of-year report had been submitted to the state.

Dr. Knapp questioned why the amount in "School Committee Miscellaneous Reserve" had decreased significantly, and Mr. Dunn explained that money is left in that reserve until contract negotiations are settled, and then ultimately gets used for the renegotiated salaries.

MOTION: Mr. Fritsch moved to approve the budget transfers in the amount of \$413,331.35, as presented. Dr. Knapp seconded the motion.

VOTE: 5-0-0, approved unanimously

E. Title I Handbook

Mr. Cameron reported that he had updated the current Title I Parent/Guardian Handbook, and he highlighted the key components of the new booklet.

MOTION: Dr. Knapp moved to approve the revisions to the Title I Parent/Guardian Handbook 2013-2014, as presented. Ms. Bogdanovich seconded the motion.

VOTE: 5-0-0, approved unanimously

COMMENT: Dr. Knapp asked what percentage of poverty qualifies the district for Title I funding, and it was stated that it is based on 35% of the entire school population. He also asked why CHCS was not included in this funding (only CSS and SRE receive Title I funding), and Dr. Houle stated that it was simply a matter of not enough grant funding available to include CHCS in this program.

F. Coffee and Conversation with the Superintendent update

Dr. Houle stated that one of her established goals as Superintendent is to conduct quarterly meetings ("Coffee and Conversation with the Superintendent") with parents and guardians of Belchertown students, as well as school principals and other Central Office administrators, in order to share information about activities in the school district and to seek their input, answer questions, and address concerns. She noted that a survey had been made available to parents and she reviewed the feedback from that survey which closed on September 25th, with a total of 147 respondents. Questions on the survey addressed choices for preferred times/days, locations, and topics of discussion for the meetings. As a result of the feedback, the topics chosen for discussion at the Quarter 1 meeting will be the new math curriculum and state assessments (including MCAS and PARCC), and scheduled dates were provided for each school building. Dr. Houle also noted that parents who are unable to attend a meeting at their child's school are welcome to attend a meeting at another school.

G. Contracts for signatures

Dr. Houle presented two completed contracts (Unit B: Secretaries and Unit D: Food Service) for signatures by the School Committee, and noted that she and the BTA had reviewed them prior to this evening's meeting.

- H. Accounts Payable Warrant for signatures
Dr. Houle presented the accounts payable warrant for signatures by Dr. Tsoumas, Mr. Fritsch and Ms. Bogdanovich.

VIII. Reports of subcommittees/representative to Collaborative for Educational Services
At this time, Dr. Tsoumas recommended that the reports from all subcommittees and the Collaborative be deferred to the next School Committee meeting as there is no current action that needs to be taken on any items this evening. The School Committee concurred with this recommendation.

- A. Collaborative for Educational Services (Ms. Bogdanovich)
 - 1. Report from the September 25, 2013 meeting
- B. Curriculum & Instruction (Dr. Tsoumas/Dr. Knapp)
- C. Healthy & Safer Schools Advisory Committee (Ms. Popowich)
 - 1. Next meeting scheduled for October 16, 2013, 2:15 pm, BHS Room 317
- D. Jessica's Boundless Playground Committee (Dr. Tsoumas)
 - 1. Next meeting scheduled for October 16, 2013.
- E. Personnel & Policy (Ms. Popowich/Ms. Bogdanovich)
- F. Property & Transportation (Mr. Fritsch/Dr. Knapp)
 - 1. Next meeting scheduled for October 22, 2013, 6:30 pm, SRE Library
- G. School Safety Task Force (Mr. Fritsch)
 - 1. Report from October 7, 2013 meeting of selected workgroups
- H. Technology Advisory Committee (Mr. Fritsch)
 - 1. Report from October 2, 2013 meeting
 - 2. Next meeting scheduled for December 4, 2013, 5:00 pm

IX. New business

- A. Votes from Executive Session related to negotiations with nonunion personnel and Unit A: Teachers
Dr. Houle stated that there are no votes for Unit A: Teachers.

MOTION: Mr. Fritsch moved to approve the Central Office Staff (Single Contract Employees) Handbook of Benefits for July 1, 2013-June 30, 2016, as amended. Ms. Popowich seconded the motion.

VOTE: 5-0-0, approved unanimously

MOTION: Mr. Fritsch moved to approve the course reimbursement for single contract administrators at a maximum amount of \$1,000.00, requiring a grade of B or better or Pass on a Pass/Fail course, as demonstrated by an official transcript. Ms. Bogdanovich seconded the motion.

VOTE: 5-0-0, approved unanimously

X. Unfinished business

- A. Superintendent search process
Ms. Patricia Correia, MASC Field Director, presented the School Committee members with packets of information for planning the Superintendent search process. She first reviewed a schedule of tentative dates for focus group meetings,

noting that these dates could be changed and/or new dates added. It was decided that one date would be eliminated (October 15th), and one date was added (November 13th, 10:00am-2:00pm) to this schedule. Ms. Correira stated that the focus groups will ideally include parents/community members, administrators, teachers, students, other staff (paraprofessionals, custodians, aides), town administrators, and senior citizens. All meetings are open to the public, and anyone can attend any meeting regardless of the focus group scheduled. The meetings will be announced via a ConnectEd message and on Channel 5. They will also be posted on the district website and advertised in the Sentinel, the Republican, and the Hampshire Gazette.

Ms. Correira then reviewed the Superintendent search timeline, which detailed the steps that should be followed on a monthly basis, and she stated that it is important to follow the timeline. She noted in particular that the appointment of a search committee should occur in December and semi-finalist interviews should begin in March 2014. The timeline also recommends that site visits and Meet & Greet interviews for the final candidates should begin during the month of April, with a School Committee vote to appoint the new Superintendent by the end of that month. The anticipated start date for the newly appointed Superintendent is July 1, 2014 or as soon as possible. Ms. Correira said that it is important that specific dates for each month in this timeline be decided at the next meeting in order to have the information to create a brochure for the Superintendent search.

Ms. Correira then briefly reviewed the five performance standards for administrators which have been adopted by the DESE. If a superintendent is evaluated based on these standards, it is imperative that he/she be screened with these requirements in mind. The categories contained in the regulations for administrator standards are: leadership, administration, equity, community relationships, and professional responsibilities.

Discussion then ensued regarding the online survey that Ms. Correira provided from another district as a template, and revisions (additions/deletions) were made by the School Committee members to best suit the Belchertown Superintendent search. The link to this survey will be posted on the district website by October 17th. It was also suggested that paper notifications identifying the link to this survey be distributed at the Senior Center, Clapp Memorial Library, and the town offices.

The last item discussed was the advertisement for *Education Week*, and Ms. Correira stated that a salary range for the Superintendent must be determined if an ad is going to be placed in this publication.

The next meeting with Ms. Correira will take place at approximately 8:00 p.m. during the Regular School Committee meeting on October 22nd. A School Committee directed agenda meeting was also scheduled on Thursday, November 14, 2013 at 6:30 p.m. with Ms. Correira to continue discussion of the Superintendent search process.

- XI. Correspondence
 - A. Agenda: October 8, 2013
 - B. Minutes: September 24, 2013; October 1, 2013
 - C. School Improvement Plans

1. Cold Spring School
 2. Swift River Elementary School
 3. Chestnut Hill Community School
 4. Jabish Brook Middle School
 5. Belchertown High School
 - D. PeaceBuilders building plans
 1. Cold Spring School
 2. Swift River Elementary School
 3. Chestnut Hill Community School
 4. Jabish Brook Middle School
 5. Belchertown High School
 - E. MCAS 2013 results
 - F. Budget transfers
 - G. Title I Handbook
 - H. Coffee and Conversation with the Superintendent
 1. Survey results/Quarter 1 schedule
 - I. Contracts for signatures: to be hand-carried in
- XII. Adjourn
- MOTION: Mr. Fritsch moved to adjourn the Regular School Committee meeting at 10:10 p.m. Dr. Knapp seconded the motion.
- VOTE: 5-0-0, approved unanimously

Respectfully submitted by,

Kathryn A. Petersen

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: 10-8-13

PLS. PRINT NAME BELOW

Doug Dapardo BHS

Michael Lavelle

Lori Roder

Scott Riser

David Fitz

Remona Griffin

Pat Laveria

Robert Hall

Brenda D. Morrice