



**BELCHERTOWN PUBLIC SCHOOLS
REGULAR SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
August 23, 2016**

LOCATION: Swift River Elementary School Library

TIME: 6:30 p.m.

SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBERS: Ms. Dawn French, Chair (present); Dr. Thomas Laughner, Vice-Chair (present); Dr. Michael Knapp, Secretary (present); Ms. Myndi Bogdanovich, Member (present); Mr. Jeffrey Charron (present)

ADMINISTRATION: Mrs. Karol Coffin, Superintendent of Schools; Mr. Brian Cameron, Assistant Superintendent and Director of Student Support Services; Shawn Fortin, Director of Teaching & Learning; Mr. Edward Dunn, Contracted School Business Manager; Mr. Thomas Ruscio, JBMS Principal; Ms. Jennifer Champagne, Principal CHCS; Mr. Robert Kuhn, SRE Principal; Ms. Sandra Bremer, Principal CSS; Mr. Doug Daponde, BHS Assistant Principal; Mr. Bruce Hastings, BHS AD & Dean of Students; Ms. Karen Cousland, JBMS Assistant Principal; Ms. Jill Pelletier, Assistant Principal CHCS; Mr. Ben Admussen, Data Administrator; Mr. Scott Karen, Director of Technology; Ms. Phyllis DuComb, Nurse Leader

BHS STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES:

VISITORS: Eric Bright, Kathy Bernardin, Candice Tarnawa, Thomas Howell, Laurie Murray, various district employees

Minutes

Pledge of Allegiance

- I. Call to order
Ms. French called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm.
- II. Public comment regarding items on the agenda
There were no public comments regarding items on the agenda.
- III. Special awards and presentations
 - A. Newsweek Article – 500 Best High Schools in America
Superintendent Coffin noted that the Belchertown Schools were ranked 359th in America out of over 17,000 high schools. Ms. Vigneux also noted in her address at orientation that Belchertown is ranked 13th in the State of Massachusetts.

Superintendent Coffin noted that although the high school receives the honor all grade levels contribute to the overall so all are to be commended on the education of our students.

IV. Approval of minutes (A.I.)

A. July 23, 2016 Regular Session

Motion: Dr. Laughner moved to accept the July 23, 2016 minutes as amended.

Second: Dr. Knapp

Vote: 5,0,0

V. Reports and recommendations of the Superintendent

A. Strategic Plan Report (A.I.)

Motion: Ms. Bogdanovich moved to approve the 3 year Strategic Plan

Second: Dr. Laughner

Vote: 5,0,0

Discussion: Dr. Knapp expressed his concerns of the lack of School Committee participation in the development of the plan. Would like to see support/participation for plan outside of school employees.

Superintendent Coffin introduced Fran Frederick and Melanie Caponi-Babb from the committee. Superintendent Coffin went over the process that the district used for the strategic plan. The core values for the district are; respect, responsibility, relationship, rigor, reflection, and resilience.

Ms. Caponi-Babb read the vision statement for the District. "Belchertown students, both individually and collaboratively, will be innovative thinkers, problem solvers and unique, creative contributors to their community and the world."

Goals;

1. Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment
 - a. All students will have access to a standards-based curriculum, engage in differentiated learning experiences and demonstrate mastery of targeted skills, concepts and strategies.
 - b. Questions; Dr. Knapp questioned how it is determined that the goals have a positive impact on students. Dr. Fortin noted that assessments are used and social/emotional assessments are being worked on. Mr. Charron questioned how many guides are available. Dr. Fortin noted that STEM is the only one not available. Dr. Fortin also noted that the library/media and digital media are combined.
2. Educator Growth and Development
 - a. Implement a continuum of educator professional growth and development which supports a vibrant experiential learning environment characterized by innovation and risk taking.
3. Community Partnerships
 - a. Through open communication and visible actions, connect community

members and families with our schools and our schools with the community and families.

- b. Questions/Comments: Mr. Charron noted the need for a brand and who would be responsible for it. Dr. Fortin noted preliminary work is being done with a consultant, and it is still being worked on. We need to know what our "message" is. Questions; noted is is difficult articulating what is great about Belchertown schools. The message needs to be consistent.

4. Programmatic Facilities

- a. Analyze and determine viability of education programs in relation to present facilities learning spaces then create a long range plan for differentiated multi-modality learning spaces.
- b. Questions/Comments: Dr. Knapp noted that broader budget basis in the strategic plan should have long range budget plans. Superintendent Coffin noted some is noted in the outcome.

Dr. Fortin, Ms. Caponi-Babb and Ms. Frederick spoke to the goals, outcomes and action steps for the goals.

Dr. Laughner noted it would be helpful to add something in the goals that shows how the goals connect to the mission.

B. Budget & Allocation Resource Pilot

Superintendent Coffin noted this is informational. This directly impacts the Finance & Budget Subcommittee. Dr. Dunn spoke to this item. 30 schools have been invited by the DOE to pilot this program. Belchertown was selected as one of eight districts to participate. There will be a meeting in Worcester, September 23 with 4-5 asked to attend the meeting. The pilot is to help districts on spending and allocation of their budget.

VI. Personnel update

A. Personnel update as of August 23, 2016

Superintendent Coffin updated the Committee on the new hires for the district as well as those leaving this year. Superintendent Coffin introduced the new assistant principal at JBMS Karen Cousland. Ms. Cousland noted she has been in education for 23 years, she comes from West Springfield High School.

Dr. Knapp questioned the positions, LT sub music/chorus at JBMS and LT sub library/media at CHCS. Superintendent Coffin noted they are combined positions and only require one person.

Hired: Melissa Jorge, Mary Roy, Kristie Burdick, Jillian Nugent, Geoffrey Gould, Jennifer Champagne, Karen Cousland, Danielle Melleur, Ron DuFord

Leaving: Regina Bernesche, E.Barry Brown, Ryan Butler, Jean Jackman, Ronald McClure, Ellen Finelli, Lana Kopacz, Maria Ligus

VII. Unfinished business

A. Proud of WMass Public Schools Campaign

Superintendent Coffin spoke to the campaign. This is through the Collaborative and they would like to know if we are interested in becoming involved. They are looking for articles about Belchertown Schools to post on a FaceBook page.

Dr. Knapp noted the Collaborative has no official position on Charter Schools. This is to shine a light on public schools. Mr. Charron questioned submissions and cautioned the district may want to do "brand" work before contributing articles for publication. Ms. French questioned who would be responsible for submissions. Superintendent Coffin noted the individual schools would submit to central office for submission.

VIII. New business

A. Foreign Exchange Policy – Waiver Request (A.I.)

Motion: Ms. Bogdanovich moved to approve the waiver of policy JFABB for this student.

Second: Dr. Laughner

Vote: 5,0,0

Discussion: Ms. Bogdanovich noted at an earlier meeting of the Personnel & Policy subcommittee it was voted to recommend the waiver to the School Committee. Dr. Laughner noted that many school districts in the area do this. The P&P subcommittee will be working on updating the policy with regard to limits of the policy. This student would be counted in next year's enrollment numbers. Dr. Knapp noted the student is coming in in 2 weeks and questioned what the district is waiving. Dr. Laughner noted the cost of \$7,500 tuition would be waived. Mr. Charron questioned if this would set a precedent. Dr. Knapp noted that the district would benefit from the waiver as our students would get exposure to more of the world through foreign students.

B. Approve Policy GBEB, Staff Code of Conduct (A.I.)

Motion: Ms. Bogdanovich moved to approve policy GBEB

Second: Dr. Laughner

Vote: 5,0,0

Discussion: Ms. Bogdanovich noted this was voted on at an earlier meeting of the P&P subcommittee to bring forward to the School Committee.

C. Approve Policy GBEC Drug-Free Work Place (A.I.)

Motion: Ms. Bogdanovich moved to approve policy GBEC as amended.

Second: Dr. Laughner

Vote: 5,0,0

Discussion: School Committee discussed the language in the document. Ms. French and Mr. Charron questioned why "may be subject to" is used. Mr. Charron noted the language should include the "possibility" of a clear action.

D. Regulation GBEC-R Drug Free Work Place

Motion: Ms. Bogdanovich moved to table.

Second: Dr. Laughner

Vote: 5,0,0

Discussion: Superintendent Coffin requested this be tabled for edits.

E. Approve Policy JICFB, Bullying Prevention Policy (A.I.)

Motion: Ms. Bogdanovich moved to approve policy JICFB as previously amended.

Second: Dr. Laughner

Vote: 5,0,0

F. Approve Policy JICH, Alcohol, Tobacco and Drug Use and eliminate JICHA Drug Policy (A.I.)

Motion: Ms. Bogdanovich moved to approve policy JICH as amended and eliminate policy JICHA.

Second: Dr. Laughner

Vote: 5,0,0

Discussion: Ms. Bogdanovich noted that the changes made in the P&P meeting. This will combine both policies into one.

G. Approve Policy JLD Guidance Program (A.I.)

Motion: Ms. Bogdanovich moved to approve policy JLD

Second: Dr. Laughner

Vote: 5,0,0

Discussion: Mr. Cameron spoke to the additions to the policy that came about during the CPR review.

H. Absences and Excuses new language

Superintendent Coffin spoke to the absence and excuses language. The Committee discussed the unexcused absence without a doctor's note even though a parent calls the student in. Mr. Daponte spoke to the BHS language and working of unexcused absence for a student on Friday at the high school.

I. Approval of 2016 – 2016-2017 Student-Parent Handbooks (A.I.)

Motion: Ms. Bogdanovich moved to approve 5 school handbooks for 2016/2017 as amended.

Second: Dr. Laughner

Vote: 5,0,0

Discussion: Ms. Bogdanovich noted editing changes for the handbooks. School Committee discussed the wording with regard to attendance and make up work time completion. CHCS handbook has additional wording for make up work time completion. Members discussed the addition to the JBMS and BHS handbooks.

Clarification of CHCS office or internal suspension policies were discussed. Office

detention is after school and internal suspension is in school. Mr. Cameron noted it had been added in the code of conduct. Dr. Knapp questioned admin can waive sports fees and admin and band director can waive band fees. Superintendent Coffin noted it will be changed to admin may waive band fees. Language regarding fingerprinting in the handbook. A listing of the school schedule for CSS, SRE, and CHCS, with information regarding start times for lunches, recess, etc. Streamlining a district handbook with individual school addendums. Superintendent Coffin noted ideally handbooks should be 20-25 pages to make them user friendly.

J. Approval of 2016 – 2017 BHS Athletics Handbook (A.I.)

Motion: Dr. Knapp moved to accept the BHS Athletics Handbook as amended.

Second: Mr. Charron

Vote: 5,0,0

Discussion: Mr. Hastings spoke to the changes;

- the fee system for sports this year - tier system
- Drug use policy added - used a combination of school and MIAA policies

Ms. Bogdanovich questioned the wording to “pay registration fee before try-out.” Mr. Hastings and Mr. Daponde noted this is to alleviate late fees through the season. Ms. Bogdanovich would like the lightning policy added to the handbook and add the excused absence language. Mr. Charron noted a refund policy should be added. Mr. Charron questioned how did a refund happen. Mr. Hastings noted the information goes to the Central office and is paid through them.

K. Approval of 2016-2017 Employee Handbook (A.I.)

Motion: Dr. Knapp moved to approve the current employee handbook.

Second: Ms. Bogdanovich

Vote: 5,0,0

Discussion: Ms. Bogdanovich noted the P&P subcommittee looked at the policy at their last meeting. Field trip procedure was looked at and revised.

L. New member – subcommittee roles (A.I.)

Ms. French appointed Mr. Charron to the Curriculum & Instruction Subcommittee and the Finance & Budget Subcommittee. Mr. Charron will be the 3rd warrant signature.

M. Substitute Pay – Increase \$5/day (A.I.)

Motion: Ms. Bogdanovich moved to approve the substitute pay increase.

Second: Dr. Knapp

Vote: 5,0,0

Discussion: Superintendent Coffin noted the current pay rate is \$65-70 per day. Belchertown is on the lower side of the scale. Dr. Laughner questioned what the budget implications would be. Mr. Dunn noted it would add an estimated \$16,375 to the budget. It has already been built in. Mr. Charron questioned if we have lost subs to

other districts because of the rate of pay. Superintendent Coffin noted that they have. She also noted this is a start but it does not meet the bar. Pathfinder pays \$85 per day. Mr. Charron asked how it would be communicated. Superintendent Coffin noted it will show up when advertising for subs. Dr. Fortin asked that it be conveyed to the current subs.

N. Return money to town discussion

Motion: Ms. Bogdanovich moved that we not return money to the town.

Second: Mr. Charon

Vote: 3,2,0 (Dr. Laughner and Dr. Knapp voted against)

Discussion: Ms. Bogdanovich noted in the motion that a budget accounting needs to be made to the School Committee.

Superintendent Coffin opened the discussion regarding returning school monies to the town. She noted the school puts money still in the school budget at the end of the year toward items that were removed from the budget because of budgetary constraints. She also noted that there has been repeated discussions with the town about returning money. With it being noted that if money is returned to the town only a percentage of it gets put back into the department's budget. Mr. Dunn noted the school department last returned money to the town in FY12 in the amount of \$19,500. It did not seem to make a difference in the behavior regarding budgets. Dr. Laughner noted that this has also come up in the Revenue Committee meeting. He notes that if the town expects money to be returned there needs to be clear guidelines on what the schools should return money from. The schools should not return money budgeted for curricular expenses. Potentially return money from capital expenditures. Dr. Knapp noted that the town believes the Superintendent has oversight of the school budget but the School Committee ultimately has that oversight. Dr. Laughner noted that the schools need to communicate or demonstrate that we use the money well. Would like a better written policy from the town on how the budget process is done. Past practice does not work with new members. Dr. Knapp suggested looking at things like heating/oil or snow removal costs. Mr. Charron agreed that looking at expenses not directly related to education could be looked at. Superintendent Coffin noted that all building improvements come out of the school's operational budget. There are many encumbrances at the beginning of the year. Much of the money saved will go toward maintenance or capital improvement projects that couldn't originally be funded. Dr. Laughner noted that it may be a good idea to return money as a good faith gesture. Mr. Charron questioned what may be given up if money goes back to the town. Ms. French noted that other local districts do not give money back to the town. MASC said you neglect your district if you return money and could have a negative effect with state allocations in the future. Mr. Charron noted that School Committee needs to provide good stewardship for the district. Superintendent Coffin spoke to the new office being built in central office noting confidentiality being one reason for office space needed. Dr. Laughner noted transparency issues, questioned where it was in the budget. The

Committee discussed transparency in the budget. It was noted that the schools have not been level funded in 10 years and legally the School Committee determines how the appropriated budget is used.

- IX. Reports of subcommittees
 - A. Curriculum & Instruction (Dr. Knapp/Dr. Laughner)
Dr. Knapp noted they have not met.
 - B. Personnel & Policy (Ms. Bogdanovich/Dr. Laughner)
Ms. Bogdanovich noted P&P met earlier in the evening, all items were discussed previously on the agenda.
 - C. Property & Transportation (Ms. Bogdanovich/Ms. French)
Ms. French noted they have not met but have toured CSS and JBMS.
 - D. Finance & Budget Subcommittee (Dr. Laughner/Dr. Knapp)
Dr. Laughner noted they have not met.

- X. Reports of school department liaisons
 - A. Healthy & Safer Schools Advisory Committee (Ms. French)
Ms. French noted they have not met.
 - B. Technology Working Group (Dr. Laughner)
Dr. Laughner noted they have not met.
 - C. Collaborative for Educational Services (Dr. Knapp)
Dr. Knapp noted they have not met.
 - D. Revenue Committee
Dr. Laughner will be attending the November 1st meeting at 7:00 pm.

- XI. Correspondence
 - A. Agenda, August 23, 2016
 - B. Newsweek Article
 - C. July 26, 2016, Regular Session Minutes
 - D. Strategic Plan Report
 - E. Personnel Update
 - F. Proud of WMass Public Schools Campaign
 - G. Foreign Exchange Waiver Request
 - H. Policy GBEB, Staff Code of Conduct
 - I. Approve Policy GBEC Drug-Free Work Place
 - J. Regulation GBEC-R Drug Free Work Place
 - K. Policy JICFB, Bullying Prevention Policy
 - L. Policy JICH, Alcohol, Tobacco and Drug Use and eliminate JICHA Drug Policy
 - M. Policy JLD Guidance Program
 - N. Absences and Excuses new language
 - O. 2016-2017 Student-Parent Handbooks
 - P. 2016-2017 Athletics Handbook

- Q. 2016-2017 Employee Handbook
- R. Substitute Pays
- S. Returning money to town memo

XII. Vote to enter into Executive Session under M.G.L. 30A, §21, Part 3 to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining and individual contracts or litigation as conducting said business in open session would have a detrimental effect on the School Committee's bargaining or litigation position. The committee will not return to open session.

School Committee voted to enter into executive session at 9:40 pm. They will not return to open session.


Vote:


- Dawn French - yes
- Thomas Laughner - yes
- Michael Knapp - yes
- Myndi Bogdanovich - yes
- Jeffrey Charron - yes


Respectfully submitted by,

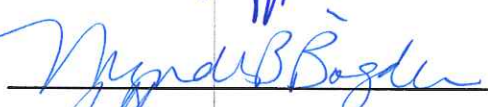
Ramona Griffin
 Non-Confidential Recording Secretary to the School Committee


School Committee members' signatures:

 _____, Dawn French, Chair

 _____, Thomas Laughner, Vice Chair

 _____, Michael Knapp, Secretary

 _____, Myndi Bogdanovich, Member

 _____, Jeffrey Charron, Member

Belchertown students, both individually and collaboratively, will be innovative thinkers, problem solvers and unique, creative contributors to their community and the world.

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](#)).