

Minutes of April 16, 2012, Regular (Rescheduled) School Board Meeting

General- President Schwartzfisher called to order the Regular (Rescheduled) April meeting of the Beaver Island Community School Board at 7:30 pm on Monday, April 16, 2012.

Present- Barb Schwartzfisher, Dawn Marsh, Karen Johnson, Brian Cole, and Jessica Anderson, and Nancy Tritsch.

Absent – Dana Hodgson

Others Present – Kitty McNamara, Alice Belfy, Deb Roberts, Missy Williams, Julie Martin, Beth Croswhite, Lynn Cary.

Public Comment – None

Approval of Minutes - Moved by Tritsch, supported by Johnson, to approve the March 12, 2012, Regular School Board Meeting Minutes with the following corrections:

1. Sue (not Sarah) Avery was in attendance.
2. More detail was requested under Public Comment to include a guest speaker's name and the reason(s) his presentation was considered offensive.

Motion carried.

Moved by Cole, supported by Marsh, to approve the minutes of the March 15, 2012, Special Board Meeting as presented. Motion carried.

Lead Teacher Report – Beth Croswhite reported on the college visits (Lansing Community College, MSU, GVSU, FSU, CMU, and the University Center in Gaylord) the Juniors recently took. Students find the visitations valuable and worthwhile, and Beth is thankful funds are allocated for these trips. Deb Robert presented school data compared to state expectations as she interpreted new MEAP scores. Deb further explained how teachers analyze the results to support student achievement.

Treasurer's Report – Treasurer Karen Johnson reported on line items in this year's budget where savings will most likely be realized, and areas where there are shortages. Budget planning assumptions include a big drop in revenue for 2012-2013, with revenue flattening out (no increase predicted) for the next couple of years. Planning is based on the expectation the expenditures must remain at about two million dollars, with a 15 percent fund balance. Due to declining enrollment one teaching position in 2012-2013 will be eliminated at the secondary level and some existing staff will be reassigned. Legislators are still working on retirement reform legislation (SB 1040). Section 22d funds are currently included in the school aid act and it budget planning is based upon BICS receiving same amount as last year.

Special Election – May 8, 2012 – Voter contact packets (similar to what has been used in previous school elections) were distributed to board members. An informational flyer will be mailed to all post office box holders. Board members and school staff are asked to contact community members to reinforce need for passage of the millage.

Board Member Election Cycle – After much discussion, there was no action to change to school board terms to six years as newly allowed by law. BICS School Board members wish to remain with four-year terms.

Policy Third Readings were held on the following policies:

1. Curriculum Development and Review
2. Bullying
3. Electronic Communications
4. Drug Free Schools: Students
5. Drug Free Schools: Employees

First Readings were held on the following policies:

1. Suspension and Expulsion of Students
2. Guest Speaker

Fourth Readings were asked for the following policies:

1. Bullying
2. Electronic Communications

Moved by Tritsch, supported by Cole, to approve the following policies:

1. Curriculum Development and Review
2. Drug Free Schools: Students
3. Drug Free Work Place: Employees

Board Work Session – The agenda for the April 23, 2012, School Board Work Session includes (1) defining the roles and responsibilities of board members; and (2) the transition (hiring) process for replacing Superintendent/Principal Kathleen McNamara. Kitty officially retires at the end of the 2012-2013 school year.

Administrative Update – Anderson, Cole, and Schwartzfisher will confer diplomas at this year's commencement, along with McNamara. Tritsch and McNamara will attend OPIE (Outstanding Person in Education) to honor on of this year's recipient, Beaver Island's Miranda Rooy. Hodgson and Marsh will help to confer 8th grade graduation diplomas. Other items McNamara reported or mentioned included upcoming school trips, Sports Awards Ceremony, Strings Concerts, Northern Lights League (NLL) Meeting, Banquet, Bash, Sumer School, Planned Parenthood's "Just Say No" Program, CTE Awards Dinner, Island Cleanup, Track & Field Day, and the Academic Awards Ceremony.

Board Member Round Robin – Each board member had a chance to make a comment or bring up a concern.

Submitted by *Alice Belfy*
Alice Belfy, Recording Secretary

Attachment (1) March 20, 2012, Letter to Parents from Deb Robert and Kathleen McNamara re: BICS 2011 MEAP Data as it Compares to State Expectations

March 20, 2012

Dear Parents,

As you are aware our 3rd – 9th graders all took the state mandated MEAP test back in October. The results are finally in and we have attached those results to this letter. We have reviewed these reports as a staff and are pleased to report that we are at or above the state average in almost all subjects at every grade level! There are several things to note as you are reviewing your child's MEAP test results.

#1. To coincide with the new Common Core State Standards, the state of Michigan has adopted new "cut scores" for MEAP proficiency this year. That is to say that a student would need to achieve significantly higher scores THIS YEAR to be considered "proficient" compared to what was expected last year. For example: A 3rd grader who scored a 300 on the 3rd Grade math MEAP last year would have been considered Proficient (Level 2). Based on the new cut scores, that same score would now place that child in a Level 4 (Not Proficient). All subjects had new "cut scores", but the subjects whose state-adopted "cut scores" changed the most significantly were math and science.

#2. The state of Michigan EXPECTED dramatic drops in student proficiency scores. One report noted that last year 78% of the 8th graders taking the Science MEAP test would be proficient. Based on THIS year's new Cut Scores, we are being told to expect that number to drop to 14%!

#3. Because of our small class sizes, we are forced to combine a minimum of two grade levels into each class and rotate the curriculum in every subject except math. One year, I teach based on the 6th Grade Social Studies curriculum, the following year I teach based on the 5th Grade Social Studies curriculum. Consequently, not all of our children receive the standard curriculum in the correct year, so testing them on that material becomes less than optimal. For example: The 5th grade State of Michigan Social Studies curriculum is based around US History. Students taking the 6th grade social studies MEAP are tested over what they learned in 5th grade social studies. What does all of this mean? It means that every other year our 6th grade students are trying to take a social studies MEAP test based on a year's worth of curriculum that they have not had yet. This is just ONE example of this.

#4. To add to this issue, the Michigan has also recently adopted new Common Core State Standards that 48 of the states have already adopted. So basically, all at once we have new, more rigorous standards to teach to, new target (cut) scores to try to achieve and are being told that within the next two years we will also see a new assessment. A lot of changes are happening very quickly.

#5. Not every child who does poorly on the MEAP test is considered to be at-risk. Sometimes there is no explanation for why a child did poorly on an assessment. Whether they were not feeling well, or simply had a bad day, sometimes children who generally do just fine in class score poorly on a single test. So, in determining students who require additional services, we will be looking at multiple assessments as well as classroom observations to determine needs.

What does all of this mean? It means that, state-wide and here on Beaver Island, schools are working to make sure that they are knowledgeable in the new curriculum, possess the proper materials at each

grade level to teach that curriculum and are utilizing an effective intervention system for those students who struggle to succeed in this new, more rigorous program.

Let us be clear. Although this has schools scrambling to try to convert curriculum and grade level expectations so that all students can achieve mastery, these changes needed to happen. At both a state and national level, we need to hold the proverbial "bar" higher than ever before if our children are going to be competitive in today's global society.

This leads us to the most important issue to all of us-- parents, teachers and students alike. What are we at BICS going to do about it? The answer to this is not quite so simple and will vary from student to student, depending on their age, schedule and individual needs. Some of the remedial programs already in place include: one-on-one and small group interventions during the school day (elementary), early morning reading program (elementary), and free after-school tutoring in both reading and math (all grade levels). Other interventions that are being considered but have not yet been implemented include: special seminars that focus on specific math skills needed, in-school remediation, structured study halls, and summer school. This may require extra work, on the part of the student, outside of their regular school work. If they are currently behind, it WILL require extra effort and work to catch up. There is no way around that. Retention would be considered as a last resort, but must also be included in this list of possibilities.

If your child is considered to be a candidate for additional services, based on both state and local assessments, you may expect a contact from your child's teacher regarding plans and recommendations to help bridge the gap in their knowledge base.

Although we are placing a great emphasis on bringing up the skill levels of all struggling learners, we also want to make sure we celebrate all of the wonderful accomplishments that your children are showing on this assessment. We have NO students in grades 3 – 8 that were considered to be Not Proficient (level 4) in Reading or Writing even with the new cut scores being applied! This is fantastic and we need to celebrate that! In some cases, in both reading and math, the percentage of our students that are proficient or advanced is more than 40% higher than the state average! These are wonderful things to celebrate!

If you have other questions, comments or concerns, please let us or your child's teacher know and we will do our best to provide you with an answer.

Sincerely,

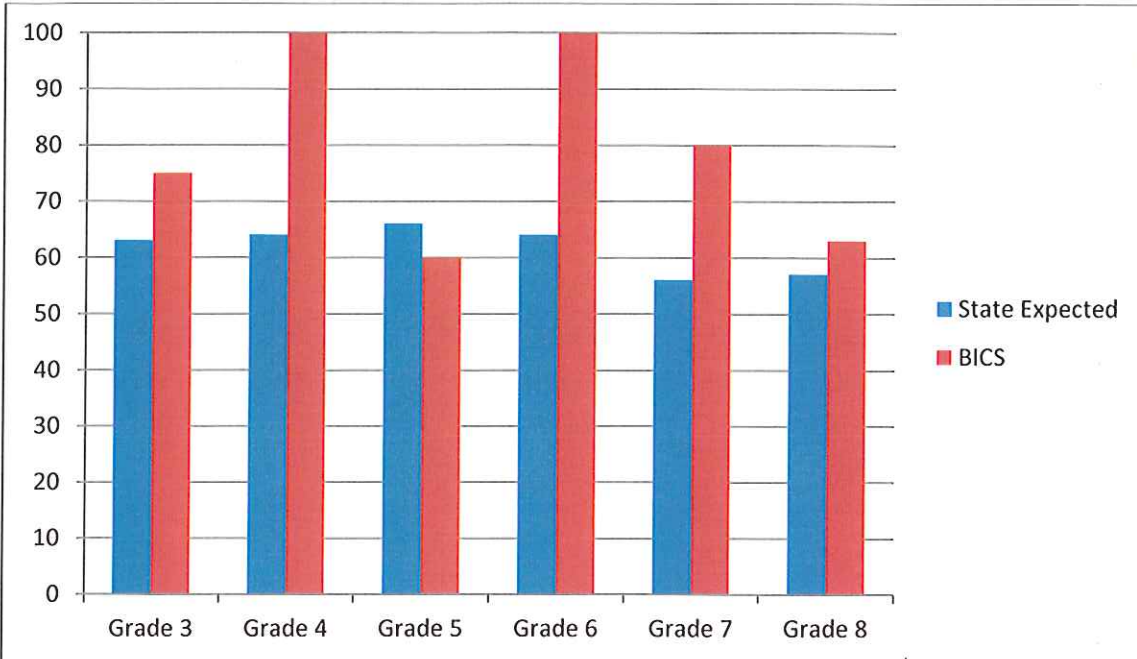
Debbie Robert

Lead Curriculum Teacher

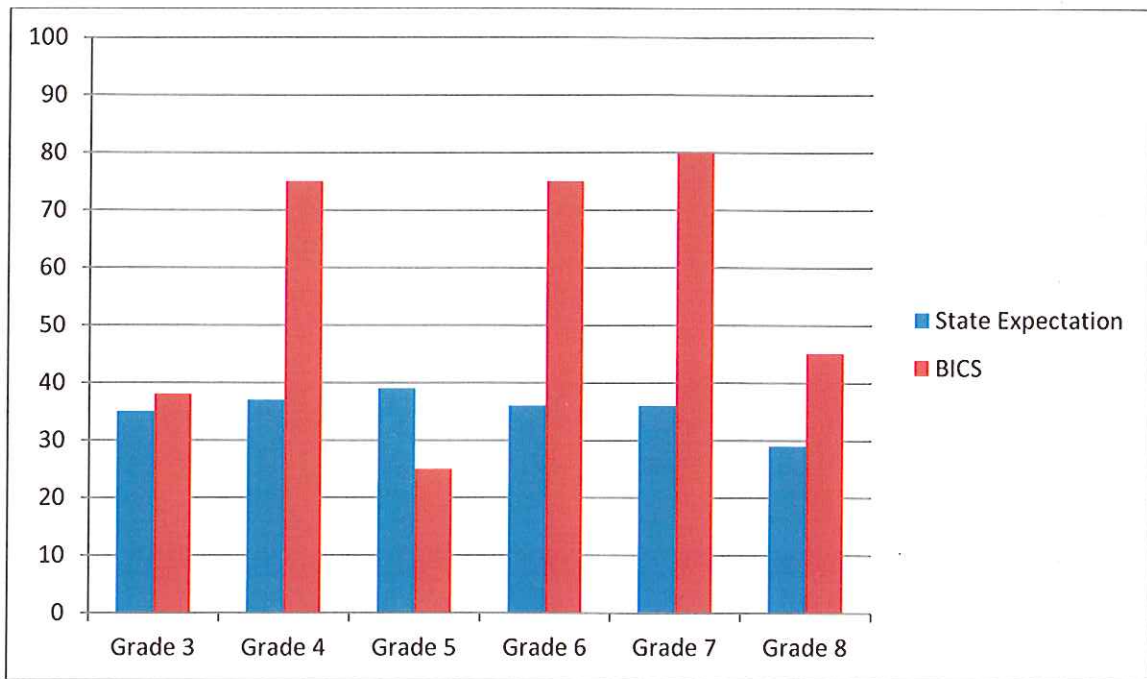
Kathleen McNamara

Principal

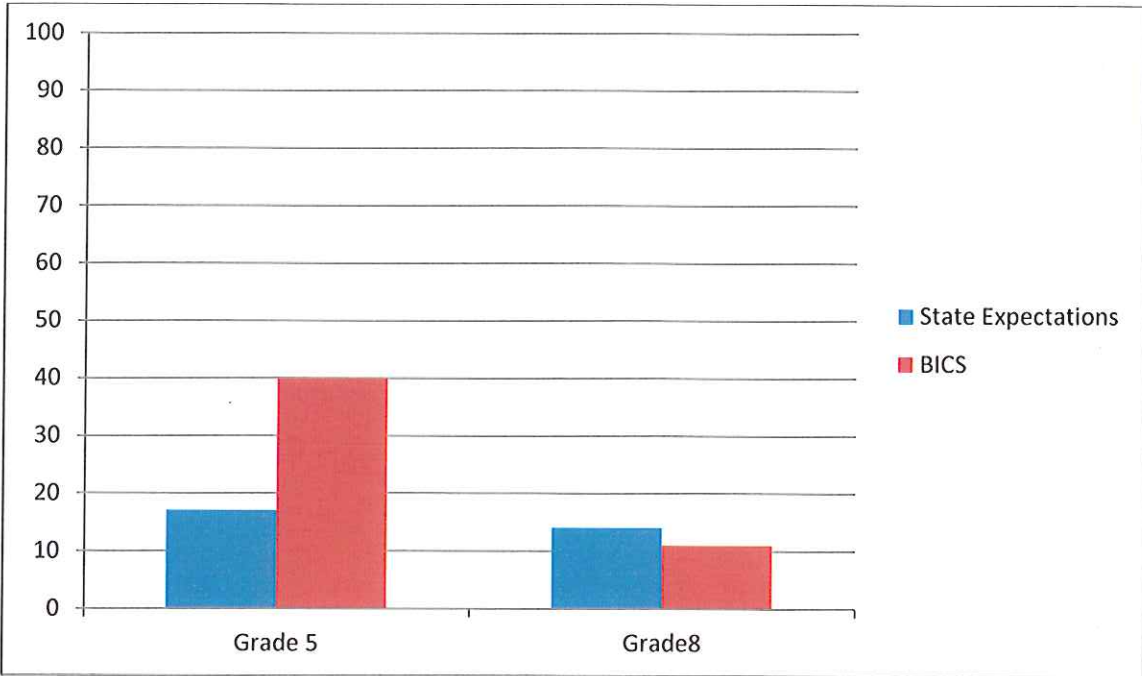
BICS 2011 MEAP DATA AS IT COMPARES TO STATE EXPECTATIONS



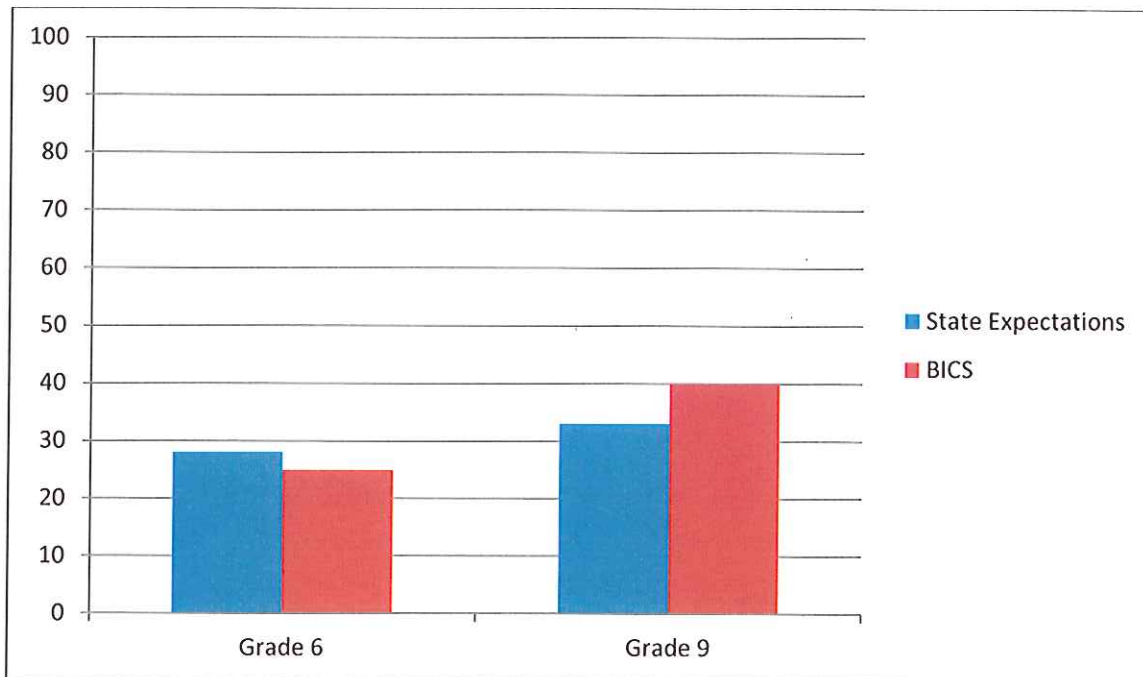
READING



MATH



SCIENCE



SOCIAL STUDIES