

**GUILFORD BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING
MONDAY, DECEMBER 8, 2008
GUILFORD HIGH SCHOOL LIBRARY, GUILFORD, CT**

1. Call to Order

Chairperson Bill Bloss called the meeting to order at 7:37 p.m. Board members present were Bill Bloss, Barbara Dudley, Keith Bishop, Lou Iorio, Alan Meyers, Kathleen Nolan and Ted Zuse.

Administrators present were Tom Forcella, Anne Keene, Merry Leventhal, Nancy Bishop, Paula McCarthy, Rick Misenti, and Marc Guarino. Also present were Business Administrator Andy Potochney and Accounting Manager Linda Trudeau.

2. Action on Minutes of:

- 2.1 September 8, 2008 (Amended: Regular Meeting)**
- 2.2 October 27, 2008 (Facilities Subcommittee Meeting)**
- 2.3 November 3, 2008 (Finance Subcommittee Meeting)**
- 2.4 November 3, 2008 (Regular Meeting)**
- 2.5 November 17, 2008 (Workshop Meeting)**
- 2.6 November 24, 2008 (Facilities Subcommittee Meeting)**

Upon a motion made by Dr. Meyers and seconded by Mrs. Dudley, the Board voted unanimously in favor of approving the minutes of September 8, 2008 (Amended: Regular Meeting); October 27, 2008 (Facilities Subcommittee Meeting); November 3, 2008 (Finance Subcommittee Meeting); November 3, 2008 (Regular Meeting); November 17, 2008 (Workshop Meeting); and November 24, 2008 (Facilities Subcommittee Meeting) with an amendment to the Facilities Subcommittee Meeting of October 27 and one to the November 3 meeting.

Chairman Bloss noted that on the November 24, 2008, Facilities Subcommittee Minutes the vote for a new chairperson should be changed from two votes for Mr. Bishop and one for Mr. Zuse to two votes for Mr. Bishop and one for Mr. Bloss. Mr. Zuse had nominated and voted for Mr. Bloss for the chairmanship, not himself.

Mr. Zuse asked that his comments under New Business on the November 3, 2008, Regular Meeting minutes, be revised to read, "While it is gratifying to see the higher performance by Guilford students on State assessments, he is concerned that the school administration may be distracted by the future demands of the pending new high school project."

**3. Review and Approval of Expenditures for the Month of November
Reviewer for Month: Keith Bishop**

Upon a motion made by Dr. Meyers and seconded by Mrs. Dudley, the Board voted unanimously in favor of approving the expenditures for the month of November as presented by Keith Bishop.

4. Public Forum for Topics on Board Agenda Only (three minute limit)

Ann Maxwell expressed concern about the proposed 2009-2010 School Calendar. She stated that she is concerned about the extra days off for students when there are no alternatives for supervised activities for students, especially those for middle school-age. She suggested that the days off foster a poor work ethic for children. She also suggested that, despite good performance on State and National tests, our students will need to compete in a global market and that the decreased time spent in school will be detrimental to them.

5. Communications

Chairman Bloss stated that Board members had received comments from the public regarding the proposed 2009-2010 School Calendar. Mr. Zuse noted that he received a communication from a parent regarding the try-out process for basketball at Adams Middle School.

Dr. Forcella responded to the communication received by Mr. Zuse by stating that, due to the competitive nature of sports at the middle school level, some students are cut from teams. He noted that parents have suggested providing more intramural opportunities for students. Dr. Forcella expressed his support for such activities.

6. Student Representatives

Marissa Mohrer and Elizabeth Savrann reported on activities in the schools. Ms. Mohrer noted that four holiday concerts are taking place for high school music groups. She also noted a National Honor Society dance on December 12 and an upcoming blood drive.

Ms. Savrann noted the expansion of AP classes at GHS to include an AP Economics class. She also noted the continued discussion of senior internships.

Both students gave an extensive report on activities at Baldwin based on information provided by Baldwin students including field trips, extra curricular activities, music programs, and a visit from Melissa Jones 2nd graders to meet with Baldwin 6th graders for a reading program.

7. Superintendent's Report

7.1 2009-10 Budget Update

Dr. Forcella reported that the 2009-2010 Budget process is on schedule. He noted that the Board of Education has met with the Board of Finance to share the process and the priorities for the upcoming school year. He noted that the administration is cognizant of the economic realities facing tax payers and is focused on a most conservative Budget. The priorities identified for the upcoming year include Interventions, Facilities and Professional Development. He noted that the administration is committed to creative and innovative ways to address these priorities that have been identified as key to achieving the district's vision of a collaborative learning environment where all students achieve at high levels.

7.2 Project Blueprint Update

Dr. Forcella updated the Board on the recent meeting of the Project Blueprint consortium of school districts which includes Wayland, MA; Cape Elizabeth, ME; Palisades, PA; Whitefish Bay, WI; Edina, MN; and now Guilford, CT. Dr. Forcella noted that school superintendents and other key administrators as well as Board of Education members meet regularly to discuss educational trends, share ideas and discuss challenges and opportunities in their districts. He noted that the upcoming meeting in Wayland, MA will discuss schools of the future including international baccalaureate programs.

7.3 Collaborative Safe Schools – Healthy Students Grant

Dr. Forcella noted that Guilford is working with Madison to submit a grant to the State of Connecticut that could yield between \$500 - \$750,000 in funds to be used in prevention of substance abuse.

7.4 State of the Schools

Dr. Forcella reported that the second annual State of the Schools report to the community will take place on January 14, 2009. He noted that data used in last year's report will be the benchmark for this year's statistics. He also explained that the results of a recent survey taken by parents will be reported on and used for future planning.

7.5 Educational Specs Update

Dr. Forcella stated that there will be a meeting of the Board on December 16 to review revised Educational Specifications for the proposed new Guilford High School. He noted that, once approved, the Ed Specs will act as a guide for the architects of the new project as they develop their designs.

7.6 Adams Middle School Facility Committee Update

Dr. Forcella reported that the first meeting of the Adams Facility Committee will take place on December 16 at 4 p.m. at Lathrop House. He explained that the committee will include representatives from the Boards of Finance, Selectmen and Education and that Mary Jo Kestner and Mauro Rubbo, co-chairs of the Community Task Force on School Facilities, will serve as advisors to the committee.

7.7 Guilford Public Schools Online Application System

Dr. Forcella explained that the employment application process for Guilford Public Schools is now automated online. He explained that this new process will not only eliminated paperwork, but will allow department heads and administrators to access and review applications online making the hiring process much more efficient.

8. Board Agenda

8.1 ACT ON Personnel Items (exhibit)

Upon a motion made by Mr. Zuse and seconded by Mrs. Dudley, the Board voted unanimously to ratify the resignation of Justin Fox, Guilford High School Science teacher, effective November 21, 2008.

Upon a motion made by Mr. Bishop and seconded by Mrs. Dudley, the Board voted unanimously to ratify the appointments of Sarah Warchol, Speech and Language Pathologist, Guilford Lakes, effective November 24, 2008 and Sheryl Mozur, School Psychologist, Jones and Guilford Lakes, effective December 23, 2008.

8.2 RECEIVE Request for PreCalculus Textbook (exhibit)

Guilford High School Math Department Chair, Donna Pudlinski presented her department's recommendation for a new PreCalculus textbook, "PreCalculus with Limits: A Graphing Approach," published by Houghton Mifflin Co. Ms. Pudlinski explained her committee's reasons for recommending the text including the rigorous presentation, the extensive and real-life problems and applications, and the technology support and additional resources available to students including online support and DVDs.

Ms. Pudlinski noted that a January adoption of the book would enable her department to implement the use of the text during the second semester of this school year. Chairman Bloss asked that the adoption of the text be included as an "ACT ON" item on the January 12, 2009, Regular Meeting agenda. Dr. Keene noted that the text will be available for public review at Lathrop House for the following month.

8.3 ACT ON Recommendation from Policy Subcommittee:

8.3.1 Revisions to Regulation 5514: Administering Medications to Students (exhibit)

Upon a motion made by Dr. Iorio and seconded by Mrs. Nolan, the Board voted unanimously to accept the recommendation from the Policy Subcommittee on the revisions to Regulation 5514: Administering Medications to Students.

8.4 RECEIVE Request to Name the GHS Press Box (exhibit)

GHS Athletic Director Chip Dorwin asked the Board to consider naming the press box at the new turf field after Bo Mooradian, in recognition of his 35 years of involvement in Guilford Youth Football and the football programs at GHS. Mr. Dorwin noted that Mr. Mooradian has been announcing football games since 1972 and continues to do so today.

Chairman Bloss noted that it is Board policy to appoint a subcommittee to review all requests to name a building, activity, etc. after an individual and requested that Board members interested in serving on this subcommittee contact him.

8.5 APPROVE Donation of Shed for GHS Baseball Program (exhibit)

Mr. Dorwin explained that the Guilford High School Baseball Booster Club would like to contribute toward the purchase of a shed to be used by both the GHS Athletic Department and GHS Baseball for storage. The shed would be located near the baseball field where the small shed is now located. The funds from the athletic department would come from the gate receipts.

Upon a motion made by Mr. Zuse and seconded by Dr. Meyers, the Board voted unanimously to approve the donation for the shed for the GHS Baseball Program and GHS Athletic Department.

Chairman Bloss asked that a letter be sent to the Baseball Boosters to thank them for their generous donation.

8.6 APPROVE \$3,850.00 Donation from the Guilford Fund for Education to the Guilford Public Schools (exhibit)

Upon a motion made by Dr. Iorio and seconded by Mrs. Nolan, the Board voted unanimously to approve \$3,850 in donations from the Guilford Fund for Education to the Guilford Public Schools.

The donation will be used for the following: \$1,800 for a Writers Wall Publication for Melissa Jones; \$1,425 to establish a Model United Nations Team at GHS; and \$625 to pilot a study to explore the use of Nintendo's Wii with children on the autism spectrum.

8.7 RECEIVE 2009-2010 School Calendar (exhibit)

Dr. Forcella explained that the Calendar Committee is a large, inclusive group of parents, administrators, teachers and Board members. The group received and consider feedback from parents and staff and developed a list of key issues they faced developing the new calendar. The main issues include:

1. Including both February and April vacations.
2. Starting school before or after Labor Day.
3. Veterans Day and Columbus Day as school holidays.
4. Adding four additional full weeks of school over the 2008-2009 School Calendar.
5. Making Veterans' Day a PD day for professional staff.
6. Early release days for PD/PLCs.

Chairman Bloss reviewed comments received in Board communications on the subject of the proposed calendar. They included questions about having Veterans and Columbus Day off, time off for the Jewish holidays, dismissing students early for professional development for faculty, having the day off before Thanksgiving, and considering having early dismissal days on Fridays.

Mrs. Nolan asked if the productivity level of students is diminished on shortened school days. Dr. Forcella noted that, while there is physically less time during an early release day, these days are not true "half days" so that work gets done and teachers are committed to making these days productive and meaningful for students.

Mrs. Nolan referenced comments made by Ms. Maxwell regarding the lack of activities available for students on early dismissal days. She asked Dr. Forcella about the possibility of having extracurricular clubs meet on these days. Dr. Forcella suggested that he will look into this possibility.

Mrs. Dudley stated that, as a member of the Calendar Committee, she is confident that the group did discuss all of the issues noted by Chairman Bloss as public concerns and interests. She also stated that 22 people served on the committee.

Nancy Bishop noted that there is no recess in elementary school on early recess days adding 20 minutes of instructional time to the schedule.

8.8 POSSIBLE ACTION ON: Ratification of Contract with the Guilford Association of Educational Support Services

Dr. Meyers noted that Mrs. Dudley, Ms. Sanacora and he represented the Board during the negotiations with the Guilford Association of Educational Support Services. He stated that the parties have agreed on a fair and equitable three-year contract. He noted that employee contributions to benefits will increase 1% each year from 11.5% to 13.5%. He noted that the number of hours of work per week to receive benefits will increase from 20 to 25 hours (current employees will be grandfathered in). Salary increases will be as follows: 2008-2009: 4.19%; 2009-2010: 3.97%; and 2010-2011: 4.01%. There will also be reduction in the number of steps in the pay scale from five to three.

Mr. Zuse noted the inconsistency of employees who receive full benefits stating that custodians in the district must work 30 hours to receive full benefits.

Upon a motion made by Dr. Meyers and seconded by Dr. Iorio, the Board voted unanimously to ratify the Guilford Association of Education Support Services contract as reviewed by Dr. Meyers.

8.9 DISCUSS 2007-08 Strategic School Profiles

Dr. Keene reviewed the Strategic School Profiles. She highlighted some of the data she believed the Board would find noteworthy.

1. The percentage of Kindergarten students in Guilford who have attended Pre-K programs has decreased for a third consecutive year and is 6% below the state average.
2. The number of Guilford High School juniors and seniors working 16 or more hours has increased significantly – 5%.
3. 2007-2008 SAT scores are not yet at the levels the district is striving toward.

8.10 DISCUSS Capital Non-Recurring Fund

Mr. Zuse stated his support of a Town fund that would make available \$3 to \$4 million to fund capital projects and cover the expenses of design and architect fees, eliminating the need to bond

such projects. He stated that the establishment of such a fund would enable large capital projects to go to referendum with more precise financial information and perhaps having already been bid.

Mr. Zuse suggested that a capital non-recurring fund is a long range concept that would change the way the Town and the Board of Education approaches facility projects and planning. He noted that the Standing Building Committee requests more detailed architect and engineering specifications and currently the BOE does not have the resources available to fund such requests.

Chairman Bloss expressed concern over the Town's ability to establish a fund with enough resources to make a significant impact on capital projects in the near future.

Dr. Forcella noted that Region 4 in CT does have such a fund and he offered to investigate how it was established and how it continues to be funded.

Dr. Meyers suggested that the topic of a capital non-recurring fund be included as a discussion item with the Board of Finance at the January 12, 2009, Joint Meeting.

Mrs. Dudley suggested that some of the Board of Education members need more information on the subject before moving forward.

Following a request from Mr. Zuse to ask the BOE to request that the Board of Selectmen consider establishing a capital non-recurring fund, Chairman Bloss explained that this item is not on the agenda as an "ACT ON" item.

Upon a motion made by Mr. Bishop and seconded by Mr. Zuse, the Board voted unanimously to add an ACT ON item. Item 8.11 should read: POSSIBLE ACTION ON: Request that the Board of Selectman consider creating a Capital Non-Recurring Fund.

Upon a motion made by Mr. Zuse and seconded by Dr. Iorio, the Board voted six in favor of sending a letter to the Board of Selectman requesting that they establish a Capital Non-Recurring Fund. Dr. Meyers abstained from the vote.

9. Unfinished Business

Mr. Zuse asked for a report on the state of the Town's pension funds. Chairman Bloss stated that this information is maintained by the Town's pension committee.

10. Reports of Committees

Mr. Bishop reported as a member of the Land Acquisitions Committee that the Goss property is under contract by the Town pending a public meeting and referendum scheduled for January. He noted that public walks of the property will be scheduled for all interested community members.

Mrs. Dudley noted that she recently attended a CABE (CT Association of Boards of Education) Convention and stated that it was very informative. She urged her fellow Board members to consider attending a future convention.

11. Public Questions (four minute limit)

None

12. New Business

Mr. Zuse asked that the Policy Subcommittee review the policy and/or regulation pertaining to the dissemination of information, including registrations, for youth sports organizations in grades K-8 to the students, particularly sending this information home in backpacks. Mrs. Dudley stated that the committee would review this.

Mr. Zuse requested a five-year security plan be presented to the Board. Chairman Bloss stated that the Facility Subcommittee will need to discuss and vote on such a plan prior to including it on the Board agenda. Mr. Bishop noted that facility staff input will be needed.

Upon a motion made by Dr. Meyers and seconded by Mrs. Dudley, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn at 10:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

Lorri Hahn
Clerk to the Board of Education