

**GUILFORD BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING
MONDAY, APRIL 5, 2010
GUILFORD HIGH SCHOOL LIBRARY, GUILFORD, CT**

1. Call to Order

Chairperson Bill Bloss called the meeting to order at 7:42 p.m. Board members present were Mary Beeman, Bill Bloss, Keith Bishop, Barbara Dudley, John Ireland, Alan Meyers, Chris Moore, Susan Renner, and Ted Zuse.

Administrators present were Tom Forcella, Anne Keene, Nancy Bishop, Michael Biddle and Marc Guarino. Also present was Accounting Manager Linda Trudeau.

2. Action on Minutes of:

- 2.1 March 2, 2010 (GHS Selection Subcommittee)**
- 2.2 March 8, 2010 (Joint Finance and Facilities Subcommittee Meeting)**
- 2.3 March 8, 2010 (Special Meeting)**
- 2.4 March 8, 2010 (Regular Meeting)**
- 2.5 March 9, 2010 (GHS Selection Subcommittee)**
- 2.6 March 16, 2010 (GHS Selection Subcommittee)**
- 2.7 March 22, 2010 (Facilities Subcommittee)**
- 2.8 March 22, 2010 (Workshop Meeting)**

Upon a motion made and amended by Dr. Meyers, the Board voted unanimously to approve the minutes of March 2, 2010 (GHS Selection Subcommittee); March 8, 2010 (Joint Finance and Facilities Subcommittee Meeting); March 8, 2010 (Regular Meeting); March 9, 2010 (GHS Selection Subcommittee); March 16, 2010 (GHS Selection Subcommittee); March 22, 2010 (Facilities Subcommittee); and March 22, 2010 (Workshop Meeting) and to table approval of the March 8, 2010, Special Meeting pending review of corrections to this set of minutes. Minor revisions were noted on several sets of the minutes approved.

Mr. Ireland noted on the March 8, 2010, Regular Meeting minutes that the last sentence on Item 10.4 should state, "The second request will be for \$190,000 to remove the oil tank at Melissa Jones and possibly replace it with a geothermal system that may generate a payback to the school system or replace the tank with a system in kind if no payback exists."

Mr. Bishop noted on the March 8, 2010, Joint Finance and Facilities Subcommittee Meeting minutes that it should be noted who was in attendance from each committee as a vote was taken at this meeting.

Mr. Bishop noted on the March 8, 2010, Special Meeting minutes in the first paragraph that the recommendation came from the Facilities Subcommittee. Mr. Bishop noted in the second paragraph of the same minutes that the Board approved the Bond for the Design of Energy, Health and Code Compliance Projects, and not the subcommittee.

Mr. Bishop asked that it be noted in response to Mr. Zuse's question regarding snow guards falling off at A.W. Cox, that no snow guards fell off at A.W. Cox.

Mr. Bishop noted that the purpose for the Board's adjournment to Executive Session be noted as an Expulsion Update.

Mr. Zuse requested that both votes taken at the March 8, 2010 Special Meeting be reflected in the minutes and the specific amounts included in the motions. He also requested that the names of the Board members and their votes be reflected in the minutes. Action on this set of minutes was tabled until the May 10, 2010, Regular Board Meeting.

**3. Review and Approval of Expenditures for the Month of March
Reviewer for Month: John Ireland**

Upon a motion made by Mrs. Beeman and seconded by Mrs. Dudley, the Board voted unanimously in favor of approving the expenditures for the month of March as presented by Mr. Ireland.

Per a request from Mr. Zuse, Linda Trudeau will update the Board via email on the current financial position of the Board of Education's medical fund.

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

None

5. Communications

None

6. Student Representatives

Student representative Simi Parikh reported on news at the high school including fundraising activities for Haiti, concerts, a SADD Principal For a Day fundraiser, Senior Breakfast, GHS Hockey State Championship, GHS Theatre Department best performance at CT Drama Association, Physics Team first place performance, and Math Team third place performance in State competition.

7. Superintendent's Report

Dr. Forcella explained the impact of the recent rains on schools in the district. The roof at Guilford Lakes leaked over the library. He stressed the importance of the passage of the referendum question for a new roof at the school. One basement-level classroom in the courtyard at Adams Middle School had water in it and there is a drainage issue at Baldwin that will be addressed this summer.

Dr. Forcella confirmed that mold testing is ongoing at Adams Middle School.

7.1 Acknowledge Donations from Private Individuals to Guilford High School (exhibit)

Dr. Forcella acknowledged donations of \$400 for a refrigerator to be used by GHS Connection and \$100 for fabric to be used by the GHS Art Department both from private individuals.

7.2 Acknowledge Donation from the Guilford Rotary to the Elementary Schools (exhibit)

Dr. Forcella acknowledged the donation of \$600 from the Guilford Rotary Club for dictionaries for all Grade 3 students.

7.3 Spelling Program Update

Dr. Keene provided an update on the Sitton Word Work/Spelling program including the following timeline of actions: Development of the Language Arts Curriculum Appendix in the 2007-2008 school year; Approval of the Sourcebook Series for Teaching Spelling and Word Skills on August 11, 2008; Professional development for staff on how to use the new resource October 10, 2008; Full implementation of Sourcebook Series in January 2009; Evaluate program and make adjustments as necessary in 2009-2010 school year; and provide follow-up training for grade level teachers focusing on differentiation and formative assessment on May 28, 2010.

Dr. Keene provided achievement scores for grades one through four comparing results for fall 2009 and winter 2010.

Mr. Zuse asked how we know if the Sitton program is better than other programs or if are students are performing better than they were before using the Sitton program.

Dr. Keene explained that after evaluating other programs the word work/spelling committee comprised of elementary teachers determined that the Sitton program was the best program. She noted that prior to the Sitton program there was no consistent spelling evaluation in all schools to be able to compare past performance with current performance. She noted that next year comparable data will be available.

7.4 2010-11 Budget Update

Dr. Forcella stated that the proposed 2010-2011 education budget represents a 2.8% increase over the current year. He noted that principals have made significant reductions to operating budgets of 28 to 40%. He also noted a net reduction in staff of 14 positions. Dr. Forcella explained that decisions to reduce personnel were made based on minimizing the impact on programs and instructional models.

Dr. Forcella explained that administrative funds were to be reallocated to improve instruction through the hiring of instructional coaches.

Mr. Zuse asked the Superintendent if there was room to reduce the proposed budget further.

Dr. Forcella responded that it would be very difficult to make further reductions to the proposed budget without impacting learning, adding that close to \$1 million had already been cut from the budget.

Mr. Bishop reminded the public that the budget referendum would take place on April 20. He stated that the Board has looked closely at the proposed budget and would answer any questions that the public may have. He asked the public to vote and to support the budget.

Mr. Zuse asked the Superintendent if a town like Guilford can make the kind of cuts to the budget that other towns are making including reducing staff by 40 or 50 people, and still be in compliance.

Dr. Forcella responded that reductions at those levels would be devastating. He noted that Guilford's test scores continue to increase, classroom instruction is differentiated, and teaching methods are effective.

Chairman Bloss noted that the budget increase this year and proposed 2.8% increase for next year are comparable to the low increases of the early 1990's. He noted that it took 10 years to recover the programs that were lost during that time. He stated that if the budget did not pass in the first round that the result would be reductions impacting class sizes and programs. He noted that despite lower per pupil spending than comparable districts, Guilford does a lot with what we have.

8. Board Agenda

8.1 ACT ON Personnel Item (exhibit)

Upon a motion made by Mr. Zuse and seconded by Mrs. Dudley, the Board voted unanimously to ratify the resignation of Margaret Cross, reading teacher, Guilford Lakes School, for the purpose of retirement, effective August 31, 2010.

Upon a motion made by Mr. Bishop and seconded by Mrs. Beeman, the Board voted unanimously to ratify the resignation of Lara Silvestro, Kindergarten teacher, Calvin Leete School, effective August 31, 2010.

Mr. Ireland asked if there would be a workshop discussion on teacher and administrator evaluations. Chairman Bloss stated that this discussion would take place over the summer.

8.2 RECEIVE Annual Audit Report (exhibit)

Mrs. Trudeau stated that the Town received the annual Audit Report on its financial statements including the operations of the Board of Education for the year ended June 30, 2009. Blum Shapiro noted "no matters involving internal control over financial reporting and its operations that we consider to be material weaknesses." Mrs. Trudeau noted that the accountants did not

issue a Management Letter nor did they inform the Business Office of any deficiencies for the year ended June 30, 2009.

Chairman Bloss asked that the Audit Report be included as a discussion item on the May 10, 2010, agenda.

8.3 APPROVE Donation of \$5,478.50 from the Guilford Fund for Education (exhibit)

8.3.1 The Writer’s Workshop for GHS (\$1,000.00)

8.3.2 2010 National Art Education Association Convention for Melissa Jones and Calvin Leete (\$1,128.00)

8.3.3 Interact Digital Display and Showcase for GHS (\$1,850.50)

8.3.4 S.T.A.R.R. Environmental Carnival for Calvin Leete (\$1,500.00)

Upon a motion made by Mrs. Dudley and seconded by Mr. Bishop, the Board voted unanimously to approve a donation of \$5,478.50 from the Guilford Fund for Education for the following: \$1,000 to Guilford High School for The Writer’s Workshop: Finding Voice and Form; \$1,128 to Melissa Jones and Calvin Leete Elementary Schools for the 2010 National Art Education Association National Convention; \$1,850.50 to Guilford High School for a digital display and showcase for the Interact Club; and \$1,500 to Calvin Leete School for a S.T.A.R.R. Environmental Carnival.

8.4 ACT ON Recommendations from Policy Subcommittee:

8.4.1 Policy 5422: Student Health Services (exhibit)

Upon a motion made by Mr. Bishop and seconded by Mrs. Beeman, the Board voted unanimously to accept Policy 5422: Student Health Services as recommended by the Policy Subcommittee.

8.4.2 Policy 5222: Student Records – Confidentiality (exhibit)

Upon a motion made by Mrs. Dudley and seconded by Mr. Bishop, the Board voted unanimously to accept Policy 5222: Student Records - Confidentiality as recommended by the Policy Subcommittee.

8.4.3 Regulation 5222: Student Records – Confidentiality (exhibit)

Upon a motion made by Mrs. Beeman and seconded by Mrs. Dudley, the Board voted unanimously to accept Regulation 5222: Student Records - Confidentiality as recommended by the Policy Subcommittee.

8.4.4 New Policy 3516: Sexual Offenders on School Property (exhibit)

Chairman Bloss explained that the Connecticut General Assembly found that sexual offenders must register with the Chief of Police and in turn the police must notify the Superintendent of Schools of those on the list. The new Board policy addresses sexual offenders on school property

including student offenders, parent/guardian offenders and non-parent/non-guardian offenders all on a case by case basis.

Upon a motion made by Mrs. Beeman and seconded by Mr. Bishop, the board voted unanimously to accept new Policy 3516: Sexual Offenders on School Property as recommended by the Policy Subcommittee.

9. Unfinished Business

None

9. Reports of Committees

10.1 Policy Subcommittee

Mrs. Dudley noted that the Policy Subcommittee is continuing discussions about bullying related policies.

Mr. Zuse asked if the policy related to cell phone use has been evaluated. Dr. Forcella responded that he has not received any comments or complaints from principals regarding cell phone use.

Mr. Zuse asked the Board to consider evaluating the various approaches to discipline taken by athletic teams and extra-curricular organizations for consistency.

Dr. Forcella noted that the Board adopted a Philosophy of Discipline and Behavior that has guidelines for all organizations within Guilford Public Schools to ensure consistency of actions.

10.2 Facilities Subcommittee

Mr. Ireland reported that the Guilford High School Selection Committee is visiting 8 high schools around the State. He noted that four Architects will be interviewed and a recommendation brought to the Board on April 26.

10.3 Finance Subcommittee

Dr. Meyers reported that the Board met with the Property Owners Association in a Special Meeting on March 31, 2010.

10.4 Liaisons to Town Committees

Mrs. Dudley shared a brochure from the Regional Educational Service Centers Alliance through LEARN. She also reported that she attended a ground breaking for the Marine Science Magnet High School in Groton, CT. She noted that there were significant savings realized by starting the building project during a recession.

Dr. Meyers reported from the Health Advisory Committee that the Guilford Rotary Club offered to donate funds for recess equipment. He forwarded this information to the principals to find out the needs at the schools.

Dr. Meyers also noted that the Health Advisory Committee considered the issue of having recess before lunch versus after lunch. The Committee voted to send the issue to Dr. Forcella and the Leadership Team for their consideration.

Dr. Meyers stated that the Health Advisory Committee's emphasis is on fitness and particularly on fun spontaneous activities during the school day. The group is collecting and evaluating data from all schools on such activities.

Mr. Zuse asked about the status of the Developmental Assets Survey results.

Dr. Forcella explained that the survey results will be presented by TEAM Guilford to the Community. Volunteers are being solicited to serve on a steering committee to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of our youth, identify the weakest assets and develop action plans. Dr. Forcella summarized the premise of 40 developmental assets or behaviors in young people and what communities can do to support positive behaviors. He spoke about the importance of bringing students and the community together.

11. Public Questions

Rose Smith spoke about her concerns regarding bullying in the schools. She suggested that there should be a culture among staff and students whereby bullying is not tolerated. She asked for the Board's help with this.

Chairman Bloss assured Mrs. Smith that this is a priority for the Board and encouraged her to get involved with the TEAM Guilford initiative.

12. New Business

Dr. Moore asked about the status of the food service department and the potential of having an outside company manage the program. Dr. Forcella explained that the district is looking to have an independent evaluator come in to look at Guilford's food service program in an objective way to provide information for the district to base future decisions about the program.

Mr. Zuse referenced an article in the CAFE Journal highlighting successes in education in Massachusetts and suggested that this information be included in a future workshop meeting for discussion.

Dr. Forcella noted that it is difficult to make comparisons between states and that it might be more beneficial to look at what we are doing in Guilford as compare with similar communities performing at high levels. He suggested that a discussion about the communities around the country involved in Project Blueprint, an annual workshop attended by Guilford and six other

high performing school districts around the country, and what has worked well for them might be more productive.

Upon a motion made by Mr. Zuse and seconded by Mrs. Dudley, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn at 9:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

Lorri Hahn
Clerk to the Board of Education