

**GUILFORD BOARD OF EDUCATION
MONDAY, APRIL 11, 2005
GUILFORD HIGH SCHOOL, GUILFORD, CONNECTICUT**

1. Call to Order – Action on Minutes

Chairwoman Whelan called the meeting to order at 7:33 p.m. Board of Education members present were Richard Beatty, William Bloss, Keith Bishop, William Dwyer, Greg Muccilli, Kathleen Nolan, James Ralls and Sandra Whelan. Administrators present were Barbara Truex, Anne Keene, Marilyn Sturgess, Catherine Walker, and Anne Snurkowski . Also present were School Business Administrator, Andy Potochney, and BOE Student Representatives Megan Harrison, Liz Jazinski, and Allison Kloepper.

1.1 March 14, 2005 (Executive Session)

Upon a motion made by Mr. Dwyer and seconded by Mr. Mucilli, the Board voted six in favor of approving the minutes of March 14, 2005 as presented. Mrs. Nolan and Mr. Dwyer abstained from the vote.

1.2 March 14, 2005 (Regular Meeting)

Upon a motion made by Mr. Beatty and seconded by Mr. Bishop, the Board voted six in favor of approving the minutes of March 14, 2005 with one correction. Mrs. Nolan and Mr. Dwyer abstained from the vote.

1.3 March 28, 2005 (Executive Session)

Upon a motion made by Mr. Beatty and seconded by Mrs. Nolan, the Board voted unanimously in favor of approving the minutes of March 28, 2005 as presented.

1.4 March 28, 2005 (Working Committee Meeting)

Upon a motion made by Mr. Beatty and seconded by Mr. Ralls, the Board voted six in favor of approving the minutes of March 28, 2005 as presented. Mrs. Nolan and Mr. Dwyer abstained from the vote.

1.5 March 30, 2005 (Special Meeting-Expulsion Hearing)

Upon a motion made by Mr. Beatty and seconded by Mr. Ralls, the Board voted five in favor of approving the minutes of March 30, 2005 as presented. Mr. Bloss, Chairwoman Whelan, and Mr. Dwyer abstained from the vote.

1.6 March 30, 2005 (Special Meeting-Expulsion Hearing)

Upon a motion made by Mr. Beatty and seconded by Mr. Bishop, the Board voted six in favor of approving the minutes of March 30, 2005 (Special Meeting-Expulsion Hearing) as presented. Chairwoman Whelan and Mr. Dwyer abstained from the vote.

**2. Review and Approval of Expenditures for the Month of March
Board Reviewer for the Month: Sandra Whelan**

Chairwoman Whelan reported that currently, as of March 2005, the budget is comparable to last year at this time. The accounts that continue to be of concern are tuition and fuel for heat and transportation. The tuition account for March has a credit of \$92,153.93 reflecting receipt of the Excess Cost Grant in the amount of \$242,443.00.

Chairwoman Whelan reviewed the warrant reports dated March 1, 2005, March 7, 2005, and March 28, 2005. She noted that the March 1, 2005 warrant was primarily for medical insurance payable to the Town of Guilford in the amount of \$500,106. Mr. Bishop questioned whether further prior year encumbrances can be expected as reflected in the second warrant report dated March 7, 200. Mr. Potochney stated that the only additional prior year encumbrance is a bill from Simplex in the amount of \$5000.

On the warrant report of March 28, 2005, Chairwoman Whelan noted a site improvement expense to BKM for carpeting at Calvin Leete. On page 10 of the same report, Chairwoman Whelan explained that the \$43,200 payment to the University of New Haven is for contracted services for 6 interns. On page 12, \$14,897 to J. Devoe Trucking reflects payments for snow removal through January, 2005. Mr. Potochney anticipates snow removal expenses to exceed the budget by \$22,000.

Chairwoman Whelan also explained the expenditures on pages 3, 12, and 13 of the March 28, 2005 warrant report to the GHS Student Activity Account, including general administration of \$5000, \$20,000 for hockey ice time, and \$15,000 for one half year of salaries.

Upon a motion made by Mr. Dwyer and seconded by Mr. Ralls, the Board voted unanimously to approve the expenditures as presented.

3. Public Forum for Topics on the Board Agenda Only - None

4. Communications - None

5. Student Representatives

Liz Jazinski reported from Adams Middle School on Thursday, April 14, 2005 the Adams Jazz Band will perform with the GHS Jazz Band at the GHS Auditorium. The 7th and 8th Grade Band concerts will be on Wednesday, May 4, 2005 at 7:00 and 8:30 p.m. Orchestra and Honors Band concerts will be on Wednesday, May 25, 2005, at 7:00 p.m. 7th and 8th Grade Choral concerts will be on Tuesday, June 14, 2005 at 7:00 and 8:30 p.m.

Ms. Jazinski further reported that several Adams students received honors at the State Science Fair. John Hudak and Naomi Morduch-Toubman both received 1st honors while Alexander Monte, Alden Skelton and Christopher Sondej received 3rd honors. Ms. Jazinski concluded by reminding everyone that the budget referendum is April 26, 2005 and urged everyone to vote.

Allison Kloepfer reported that participants in the Melissa Jones March Science Night learned about the Titanic from a Mystic Aquarium traveling educator. Future dates to note at Jones include Friday, April 29, 2005 for the next Science Night and Thursday, May 26, 2005 for Math Games. Baldwin Middle School 5th grade students recently enjoyed a fun evening at Wheel World for the 10th Annual Roller Rock while 6th graders participated in the Banana Beach Party.

Megan Harrison reported that Calvin Leete School raised money for victims of the Tsunami. During April there will be a flower sale, variety show and a 4th grade musical. The PTO also raised a total of \$3,946.50 from a candy sale, netting Calvin Leete \$2,015. A.W. Cox raised \$4,800 during the SARAH Read-a-thon, a 98% increase over last year.

Chairwoman Whelan asked how seniors are feeling as they anticipate responses from colleges. Liz Jazinski explained that most students have received their responses and are anxiously counting down the days until graduation.

6. Superintendent's Report

6.1 Recognition of Three Student Athletes

Athletic Director, Chip Dorwin recognized three exceptional student athletes, Brianna Rooney, Jay Koloseus, and Schuyler Beeman (not present). Senior, Brianna (Breezy) Rooney is the Gatorade State Player of the Year for Girls' Basketball. She also set the all-time scoring record for GHS of 1400 points in her career. Ms. Rooney also tied the scoring record for GHS Girl's Soccer. She is on the New Haven Register's All-Area Team and the New Haven Tap Off Club's All-Area Team. She will be attending Quinnipiac University on a basketball scholarship in the fall of 2005.

Junior, Jay Koloseus, has earned All-American status as a runner. He finished 4th in the 3200 meter at the National Scholastic Indoor Track Championship, won the State Open Championship with a new race record of 9 minutes, 18.5 seconds, placed 4th at the New England Championship, and won the 1000 and 3200 meter events at the Class L Championship.

Junior swimmer, Schuyler Beeman, earned All-American status in his sport for his times in the 50 meter free-style. He is also being considered for All-American status in the 100 meter back stroke. He won both of these events in the Class M Championship.

The student athletes were received with a round of appreciative applause from the Board of Education and audience.

6.2 CMT Preliminary Report

Dr. Keene presented a PowerPoint presentation of the results of the Connecticut Mastery Tests (CMT) for Fall 2004. All students in grades 4, 6, and 8 participate in this statewide assessment. Students are tested in mathematics, reading, and writing on skills they are expected to master by the end of grades 3, 5, and 7. The reading test includes Degrees of Reading Power (DRP), a vocabulary usage test, and reading comprehension. The mathematics test includes computation, algebra, patterns, probability, statistics, geometry and measurement. The writing portion of the test requires students to write an essay and also includes an editing and revising portion.

Dr. Keene presented two sets of data to the Board. The first reflected GPS CMT trends in each of grades 4, 6, and 8 since 1998. She explained that in the year 2000 a new generation of test began, generation 3. She further explained that in 2004 all students, for the first time, were tested on the grade level assessment. Prior to 2004, special education students were tested at their instructional levels. As a result, there was a slight decline statewide in test scores in 2004 because all students were tested at grade level.

Dr. Keene further explained that in grade 4, with 100% participation, math, writing and reading scores declined slightly from 2003 to 2004. In grade 6, math and reading scores declined slightly while writing scores remained the same. In grade 8, math, reading, and writing scores increased with all students including those tested out of level.

The second set of data compared Guilford 4th, 6th, and 8th grade regular education students' performance with our ERG (ERG B) and the state. Guilford's test scores exceeded the state and our ERG in all areas with the exception of 4th and 8th grade math. Guilford's scores in 4th and 8th grade math were only slightly below our ERG and still significantly higher than the state's results. Dr. Keene stated that the district should be very proud to be first in ERG B in reading in each of grades 4, 6, and 8. She believes this is a result of the amount of support and effort placed on reading in the schools, at home by parents, through the Guilford Library, and from the community at large. She added that Guilford ranks in the top 10 statewide in reading for each grade.

Dr. Keene summarized by explaining that this data will be further analyzed by sub-groups including special education, English language learners, and males and females to determine additional necessary steps to improve student achievement. The district will continue to utilize benchmark assessments to measure students' performance. The results of these assessments will be used to determine professional development needs and to make curricular and instructional adjustments.

Board members had several questions and comments. Mr. Bishop and Chairwoman Whelan expressed their appreciation to the staff and principals. Chairwoman Whelan asked when Guilford refocused its goals on reading. Dr. Keene explained that in 1999 the

State Department of Education required that each district develop a 3-year early literacy plan. Since that time there have been 2 summer institutes for staff, each elementary school has a reading specialist, leveled books have been purchased, and professional development opportunities in reading have increased.

Mr. Bloss asked how many special education students are instructed out of grade level in Guilford. Dr. Keene clarified that all student are instructed and tested at grade level. The number of students identified as special education students in our district include 30 4th grade, 30 6th grade, and 35 8th grade students. Mr. Bloss noted that these results reflect that some of our special education students are performing at or close to goal.

Dr. Keene concluded by reminding the Board and the public that the next round of testing will be in April, 2006 and will include grades 3 - 8.

6.3 Discuss World Language Program

Sharon Jakubson provided the Board with a summary of the report she first presented at the March 14, 2005 BOE meeting. Mrs. Jakubson stated that she has been working with teachers, demonstrating teaching techniques, observing classrooms, and networking with other school districts to help formulate a world language plan. Her recommendation is to maintain our current programs in grades 5-8 while increasing vocabulary themes in 6th grade. During the 2005-06 school year, a task force including parents, teachers, Mrs. Jackubson, and Mrs. Snurkowski should be formed to analyze scheduling issues at Baldwin that currently prohibit expanding the world language program. Mrs. Jakubson expressed her concern that the program be planned well and of the highest quality to insure its long term success.

Mr. Bloss asked how instructional time would be allocated to accommodate an expanded world language program based on the criteria of No Child Left Behind (NCLB). NCLB does not give districts credit for art, music and language programs. Mrs. Jakubson explained that the specific factors she considered in her cost-benefit analysis were space costs, funds, scheduling, and the reduction of other programs to accommodate an expanded sequential world language program.

Mrs. Jakubson further explained that NCLB requires teachers to become highly qualified. Elementary world language teachers would be required to meet the highly qualified standard as well as appropriate certification. Mr. Muccilli questioned if the availability of highly qualified instructors would then determine which languages would be taught. Mrs. Jakubson stated that school districts need to drive that decision.

Additional questions from the board followed. Mr. Beatty asked if teachers need to be cross-certified at the middle school level. Mrs. Jakubson explained that they only have to be certified in the language that they are teaching. Mr. Ralls asked for clarification about the difference between the exploratory program in 5th grade and the sequential program in grades 6 through 8. Mrs. Jakubson explained that in 5th grade students learn basic greetings and sound systems of both French and Spanish, begin to understand basic

conversation, and learn about the different cultures. Based on this introduction, students can then choose a language to commit to for the next 7 years, through high school.

Mr. Bishop added that there are many studies that show that the study of world languages enhances students' comprehension of other subjects. He asked why Adams is able to incorporate sequential world language into their schedule. Mrs. Jakubson explained that world language is incorporated into the art and music cycle.

Mrs. Truex reminded the Board that there is a nutrition and physical activity bill pending for grades kindergarten through 5 that would mandate 20 minutes of physical activity for every day exclusive of physical education class. If this bill passes, Baldwin's task force will face additional scheduling challenges.

Mrs. Jakubson added that many successful language programs enhance the content of other subjects. Many school districts are realizing the positive effects learning a foreign language has on other subject areas.

Chairwoman Whelan suggested that the task force at Baldwin should be lead by Mrs. Jakubson. Mrs. Truex further suggested that the Teaching and Learning Task Force of the Strategic Planning Team will be recommending Action Steps next month and it would be important for a world language task force to be a part of these recommendations.

Mr. Bishop stated that he supports expanding world language but does not want to see any of the district's music programs be diminished to accommodate the expansion.

7. BOARD AGENDA

7.1 ACT ON Personnel Items (exhibit)

Upon a motion made by Mr. Bloss and seconded by Mrs. Nolan, the Board voted unanimously to accept the resignation for the purposes of retirement of Mary Lou Benson (Baldwin, Grade 6) effective August 31, 2005.

Upon a motion made by Mr. Bloss and seconded by Mr. Beatty, the Board voted unanimously to accept the resignation of Jennifer Mandel (Guilford Lakes, Grade 1) effective August 31, 2005.

Upon a motion made by Mr. Beatty and seconded by Mr. Ralls, the Board voted unanimously to ratify the appointment of Sasha Vliet (GHS English) effective September 1, 2005.

Upon a motion made by Mr. Bloss and seconded by Mr. Beatty, the Board voted unanimously to ratify the appointment of Johanna Cassella (GHS Math) effective September 1, 2005.

Upon a motion made by Mr. Bloss and seconded by Mr. Ralls, the Board voted unanimously to ratify the extension of a leave of absence for one year for Kerry Brewster (Jones, Grade 2) effective September 1, 2005.

7.2 ACT ON Participation in Southern Connecticut Language and Culture Program (exhibit)

Mrs. Truex explained that this is a regional grant Guilford has participated in for several years. This year Guilford has had 11 students and 2 alternates participate in a diverse selection of courses at Yale University. Courses of study range from Greek, Danish, and Arabic, to Chinese and Gaelic. Mrs. Jakobson explained that the number of students in the program from Guilford has grown over the years due to their increasing success each year. The grant includes tuition, books, reimbursement for mileage, and the full use of Yale resources.

Upon a motion made by Mr. Bloss and seconded by Mr. Dwyer, the Board voted unanimously to approve participation in the Southern Connecticut Language and Culture Program effective September 1, 2005.

7.3 ACT ON Policy 4137: Evaluation/Termination of Athletic Coaches (exhibit)

Mr. Bloss explained that the Connecticut General Assembly passed a statute last year that states that coaches have certain rights to evaluations on an annual basis. A coach who has been in the same position for 3 or more years who is either non-renewed or terminated has a right to an appeal to the Board of Education. The proposed policy is required under state law. Mr. Bloss stated that some revisions would be necessary to the policy. The policy committee recommended changing the word “Board” in lines 1 and 2 to “Athletic Director” as the Board of Education is not involved in hiring or terminating coaches. The committee recommended adding the sentence: “At a hearing before the Board, the coach shall have the burden of showing that the decision reached was an abuse of discretion.”

Upon a motion made by Mr. Beatty and seconded by Mr. Dwyer, the Board voted unanimously to approve Policy 4137: Evaluation/Termination of Athletic Coaches as amended.

7.4 ACT ON Special Appropriation Request for \$250,000 (exhibit)

Mr. Potochney recommended that the Board request a special appropriation from the Board of Finance for \$250,000. The purpose of the request is to address increased expenses in special education tuition, transportation, and fuel for heating and the buses. Mr. Potochney addressed the change in the original projected need from \$600,000 to \$250,000. He explained that we will not be making a second payment for the pension plan of \$150,000. We also will not incur the \$70,000 expense for science textbooks or the \$65,000 expense for the new heat management system at the high school until next year.

Mr. Beatty asked for clarification of the \$381,000 difference between the original anticipated additional expenses and the current recommendations. Mr. Potochney explained that there were salary and medical benefit savings of approximately \$350,000 and other savings from additional accounts.

Mr. Bloss asked Mr. Potochney if \$250,000 will be enough money to complete the school year. Mr. Potochney expressed confidence that it would; he also does not foresee additional significant savings to request less than \$250,000.

Upon a motion made by Mr. Bishop and seconded by Mr. Dwyer, the Board voted unanimously to approve the Special Appropriation Request for \$250,000 as recommended by Andy Potochney.

7.5 ACT ON Art and Music Curricula

Chairperson Whelan asked why the art curriculum is titled K- 8 when Kindergarten classes do not leave their regular classrooms for art instruction. Mrs. Sturgess and Dr. Keene explained that while formal instruction begins in grade 1, Kindergarten teachers incorporate many art concepts in their classrooms.

Mr. Bishop asked if the curriculum is based on the state's frameworks. Mrs. Sturgess explained that both our current curriculum and the proposed curriculum are based on the state's frameworks. Mr. Bishop also asked if it would be possible to provide a grade-by-grade synopsis available to parents and the public on the district's web site. Dr. Keene explained that it is Board policy to present special subjects in grade ranges and a summary of information will be available on the web site.

Upon a motion made by Mr. Bloss and seconded by Mrs. Nolan, the Board voted unanimously to approve the Art Curriculum effective September 1, 2005 as presented.

Upon a motion made by Mr. Beatty and seconded by Mr. Dwyer, the Board voted unanimously to approve the Music Curriculum effective September 1, 2005 as presented.

7.6 RECEIVE: Science Material Recommendations (exhibit)

Dr. Keene and Andrea Nemergut presented 2 textbook/resource proposals. The first proposal was for a science kit, Full Option Science System (FOSS) to support the new science curriculum to be presented in May, 2005. A FOSS newsletter and overview was made available to the Board and to the public.

Ms. Nemergut piloted Populations and Ecosystems, one of the program's 12 modules in her 6th grade class. The kits come with many interesting materials including live organisms, a textbook, a comprehensive teacher resource guide, and much support material. They provide first hand experiences for children as they make observations, collect and analyze data, and draw conclusions. Students created and researched different habitats and learned many related concepts. Ms. Nemergut was very excited about the

impact FOSS has had on students, and highly recommended adoption of the FOSS program.

Dr. Keene explained that a committee of teachers, parents, and administrators from Guilford met with a consultant from FOSS and decided to pilot the 12 modules across the district. The recommendations from the committee include the implementation of at least one FOSS kit for each of the grade levels. The specific recommendations would be: 1st grade –Insects; 2nd grade - Solids and Liquids; 3rd grade - Earth Materials; 4th grade - Magnetism and Electricity; 5th grade – Physics of Sound and Color and Light; 6th grade – Populations and Ecosystems and potentially a Weather and Water module. The two modules in the 5th and 6th grades would be shared as science is taught every day of the cycle.

The total cost for each kit averages \$720. This will be the cost per teacher as one kit will address the needs of up to 32 students. The purchase will also include professional development for staff. Dr. Keene stated that there will be two recurring costs, live organisms for the 1st and 6th grade kits. Other consumables are common items such as rubber bands and markers with negligible costs.

Mrs. Nolan asked for clarification regarding how much of the curriculum the FOSS kits will address. Dr. Keene explained that there are many strategies and materials that will be integrated into the new science curriculum including FOSS, if approved.

The FOSS kits will be on display for the public to examine at locations throughout the Guilford's schools and at GPS Central Office at 55 Park St.

The second presentation was for the Glenco Science Astronomy textbook for grade 5. The majority of middle school science units will use the Holt Technology Series aligned with the new curriculum. But the science committee recommends the Glenco Astronomy text as it will better meet the needs of this unit. The cost will be \$14.25/text book and grade 5 will require 330 copies. Dr. Keene explained that this Astronomy textbook will be on display at Lathrop House for the next month.

Mr. Bishop questioned the need for a book for every student. Dr. Keene explained that all 5th grade teachers will be teaching the Astronomy unit at approximately the same time, making sharing books difficult. Mrs. Snurkowski added that sharing the FOSS kits would be feasible according to the teachers, but sharing the texts would be a struggle.

Mrs. Walker followed up by explaining that Adams' 7th grade students began the school year with an interdisciplinary trip to Hammonsett State Park focusing on ecology and ecosystems. This trip may be expanded to include Chatfield Hollow. A science and a social studies teacher at Adams have been working with a state geologist to continue to provide this introductory field trip. The summer reading program supports this unit of study for children entering grade 7. Mrs. Walker stated that it would be difficult and unfair to ask the majority of 7th grade students to delay their follow-up studies from 6th grade and their summer reading because of lack of textbooks.

8. Unfinished Business - None

9. Reports of Committees

Mr. Bishop reported that the Community Task Force on School Facilities continues to meet twice each month. The committee is considering the impact curriculum changes such as world language and all-day kindergarten would have on future facility needs. Baldwin classrooms are now being utilized 87-88%, considered capacity. Mr. Bishop encouraged feedback through the district web site from the public.

Mr. Bishop reported that the Land Acquisitions Committee is continuing to consider sites for future school facilities.

10. Public Questions

Lisa Rothstein expressed concern about block scheduling at GHS. She and her husband attended the GHS Connection meeting on April 5, but did not find the meeting informative. She questioned how block scheduling will be decided, by whom, and when. Chairwoman Whelan explained that when block scheduling was presented to the Board at the February 14, 2005 meeting, the Board suggested that GHS conduct further research and involve parents in the discussion process. The GHS Connection meeting was the first step in the process. GHS administrators will be continuing to make more information available to parents.

Dee Jacob stated that there is a delay between the time children are dismissed from elementary school at 3:17 p.m. and the time the buses arrive at the schools to bring the children home. She was under the impression that the Board and the transportation coordinator were going to investigate this and possibly make adjustments to bus or building schedules to reduce the waiting time for students or increase instructional time for students by extending the school day.

Mrs. Truex responded that there were a few adjustments made to the middle school schedules. She further explained that Nils Peterson logs arrival times for all of the buses and at this time no further adjustments have been made. Mrs. Truex added that instructional time officially ends at 3:17 p.m.

Mr. Dwyer stated that he believes it is difficult for Laidlaw to keep the same bus drivers in Guilford. He believes that the town's economical contract with Laidlaw may not enable the bus company to hire and keep drivers. New bus drivers take longer on their routes because they are unfamiliar with each stop.

Bobby Baird wished Mrs. Truex well in her retirement. He reminded the Board that there has been a budget freeze in past years. Mrs. Truex responded that the salary increase in the 2005-06 budget is approximately 1%. He questioned whether the new roofs for Baldwin and GHS will be in the referendum because he has heard conversations in

support of this bond. He stated that he believes the budget should be rejected, but the roofs supported.

Ray Ortega expressed his support for the world language program. He is concerned about how students are selected for specific programs. He wanted to know if all children are eligible to take a foreign language. Mrs. Truex explained that with few exceptions all students can take a foreign language. There is a process between the guidance counselors and teachers at Baldwin and Adams to decide which programs students should transition into in 7th grade.

Gina Tracy expressed her support of the study and implementation of world languages through interactive learning relating to GPS music programs. She also hopes to see increased math scores as a result of earlier exposure to world language. She also explained the Suzuki method of music instruction to the Board. Mrs. Tracy added that 100 students at Guilford Lakes participate in a foreign language enrichment program.

11. New Business

11.1 Update on Superintendent Search

Chairwoman Whelan reported that consultants from LEARN, hired to conduct the superintendent search, have been meeting with focus groups including teachers, administrators, other GPS employees, parents, and the community. Chairwoman Whelan reminded the public that two additional focus groups will be held on April 14, 2005.

Chairwoman Whelan stated that Dr. Keene and Mrs. Truex will be attending a Connecticut Association of Boards of Education (CABE) workshop on Accountability for Learning in Connecticut. She added that BOE members are welcome to attend.

Mr. Bloss reported that the Yankee Institute for Public Policy studied school districts' test scores and compared them to per pupil spending levels. Guilford ranked in the top 10 for school districts in the state, and was noted in the report to be an efficiently run school system.

Chairwoman Whelan encouraged everyone in the community to vote in the budget referendum on April 26, 2005.

11. New Business - None

Upon a motion made by Mr. Dwyer and seconded by Mr. Beatty, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn at 10:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lorri Hahn
Clerk to the Board of Education

