

**GUILFORD BOARD OF EDUCATION
MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 2005
GUILFORD HIGH SCHOOL, GUILFORD, CONNECTICUT**

1. Call to Order – Action on Minutes

Chairwoman Whelan called the meeting to order at 7:37 p.m. Board of Education members present were Richard Beatty, William Bloss, Keith Bishop, Cynthia Cartier, William Dwyer, Kathleen Nolan, James Ralls, and Sandra Whelan. Administrators present were Anne Keene, Bruce Hall, Anne Snurkowski, Merry Leventhal, Michael Biddle, Charlotte Nelson, Gary Endean and Marilyn Sturgess. Also present were GEA President Rose Dostert and School Business Administrator Andy Potochney.

Upon a motion made by Mr. Bloss and seconded by Mr. Bishop, the Board voted unanimously to add an executive session to the end of the regular meeting for the purpose of discussing personnel.

1.1 August 15, 2005 (Executive Session)

Upon a motion made by Mrs. Nolan and seconded by Mr. Beatty, the Board voted unanimously in favor of approving the minutes of August 15, 2005 as presented.

1.2 August 15, 2005 (Regular Meeting)

Upon a motion made by Mr. Beatty and seconded by Mr. Ralls, the Board voted seven in favor of approving the minutes of August 15, 2005 as presented. Chairwoman Whelan abstained from the vote.

1.3 August 22, 2005 (Executive Session)

Upon a motion made by Mr. Beatty and seconded by Mr. Bishop, the Board voted seven in favor of approving the minutes of August 22, 2005 as presented. Chairwoman Whelan abstained from the vote.

1.4 August 29, 2005 (Executive Session)

Upon a motion made by Mrs. Cartier and seconded by Mr. Dwyer, the Board voted seven in favor of approving the minutes of August 29, 2005 as presented. Mr. Beatty abstained from the vote.

**2. Review and Approval of Expenditures for the Month of August
Reviewer for Month: Andy Potochney**

Mr. Potochney reported on the expenditures for the 2004-2005 and the 2005-2006 budgets in the month of August.

Mr. Potochney reported that the final 2004-2005 expenditures are currently being reviewed by the auditor. He does not expect any significant revisions to the final report. He reviewed the warrant dated August 8, 2005 totaling \$88,606.33 stating that there were no unusual expenditures in this warrant pertaining to the 2004-2005 budget.

Mr. Beatty questioned the two identical expenditures of \$4,712 to Delta Education, Inc. on page 4 of the warrant dated August 8, 2005. Dr. Keene explained that these costs were for the FOSS Science Program including materials for experiments and supporting books.

Mr. Beatty further questioned the expenditure to A.L. Larson Co. for equipment, asking what type of equipment had been purchased. Mr. Potochney explained that hard drives, a pressure washer, LCD projectors and a few additional items were purchased.

Mr. Bishop asked about the expenditure to Guilford Interior Specialties under the category Building Maintenance. Mr. Potochney explained that the district purchased locks and petitions for the restrooms.

Mr. Potochney reviewed the 2005-2006 budget stating that expenditures were comparable to last year at this time: 6.25% this year vs. 6.53 % in 2004. He reviewed the warrants dated August 1, 2005, August 4, 2005, and August 22, 2005. He stated that the August 1, 2005 warrant was primarily for insurances including medical, life, and disability totaling \$586,102.58.

Mr. Potochney noted that the payment of \$5,576 to New England Overland Floor on page 2 of the warrant dated August 4, 2005 was for the work on the gym floor at Calvin Leete.

On the warrant dated August 22, 2005 Mr. Potochney noted the tuition payments on page 6 of \$100,504, explaining that while it may seem early to be making such payments, many schools require advance payments.

Mr. Potochney noted the payment of \$39,572 to Dell Computer, explaining that the district purchased a total of 55 new computers: 25 for Guilford High School, 25 for Adams Middle School, and 5 for Guilford Lakes.

Mr. Beatty asked if the expenditure for Special Transportation on page 8 of the August 22 warrant was for special education. Mr. Potochney confirmed his assertion and added that the payment pertained to summer school.

Mrs. Nolan asked Mr. Potochney for his projections on the impact of the recent increases in oil and gas prices on the 2005-2006 budget. He explained that the current budget for gasoline for transportation is \$164,000. Based on current prices, Mr. Potochney projects

transportation costs to be \$217,000. The current budget for heating oil is \$417,000 and he estimates, based on current prices, that heating costs will be \$551,000.

Upon a motion made by Mr. Bishop and seconded by Mr. Beatty, the Board voted unanimously in favor of approving the expenditures for the 2004-05 budget subject to the result of the auditor's report.

Upon a motion made by Mr. Beatty and seconded by Mr. Dwyer, the Board voted unanimously in favor of approving the expenditures for the 2005-06 budget for the month of August.

Chairwoman Whelan suggested that Mr. Potochney meet with the Finance Committee prior to the next Working Committee Meeting on September 26, 2005 to give them an overview of the history of the district's insurance plans. She suggested that the Board discuss insurance plan options.

Mr. Potochney requested that the Board also discuss the projected timetable for the 2006-2007 budget process at the September 26 meeting.

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

Chris Tracy expressed his thanks to Dr. Keene for serving as interim superintendent. He explained to the Board that, as a member of an action team for the strategic planning process, assessments of future needs were made conservatively based on the constraints of recent budgets. He urged the Board to be more expansive in the future when evaluating the recommendations made by the strategic planning team.

Finally, Mr. Tracy expressed his thanks to Chairwoman Whelan, Mr. Ralls, Mr. Beatty, and Mr. Muccilli for their service on the Board.

Bobby Baird asked the Board if phonics will be taught this year. Dr. Keene stated that phonics is already taught in the schools.

4. Communications

Mr. Bishop reported that he and other Board members received a letter questioning the future of the Camp Hazen field trip at Baldwin. Chairwoman Whelan explained that the Camp Hazen experience is being evaluated to align it with the new science curriculum. Dr. Keene added that she will meet with Mrs. Snurkowski and the science teachers to discuss the experience and how best to structure it to support the curriculum.

Mrs. Nolan reported that she received a phone call from a GHS parent interested in discussing the start times for the high school. The parent was also interested in scheduling issues, most specifically concerning the ability for students to have a scheduled lunch. Mrs. Nolan assured her that the scheduling issues are being evaluated by Mr. Hall and a committee at the high school. Chairwoman Whelan added that the high school start times are being addressed by the strategic plan.

5. Student Representatives

No report. Student representatives should be selected for the October 11, 2005 meeting.

6. Superintendent's Report

6.1 Superintendent's Report

Dr. Keene asked Mrs. Sturgess to introduce the new teachers to the Board. Mrs. Sturgess announced that the 40 new teachers are very enthusiastic and bring a variety of experiences to their new positions. The teachers participated in a two-day orientation prior to the start of the school year during which they expressed their commitment to fostering learning among our students.

Mrs. Sturgess presented the following new teachers through a slide presentation: Anne Hartford (Cox Grade 2), Maria Hofilena (Cox Grade 1), Lee Beatty (Jones, Grade 1), Elizabeth Hill (Jones, Grade 3), Elizabeth Jacobson (Jones, Grade 3), Colleen Kelly (Jones, Kindergarten), Laura Vedrani (Jones, Grade 3), Kevin Whiteman (Jones, Grade 4), Kevin Flanagan (Lakes, Grade 3), Matthew Guarnieri (Lakes, Kindergarten), Kathryn Biehn (Leete, Grade 1), Mary Cuff (Leete, Grade 2), Lauren Davi (Leete, Grade 3), Kate Driscoll (Leete, Grade 1), Jamie Froelick (Leete, Grade 4), Erin McGrady (Leete, Grade 4), Courtney Barbour (Baldwin, Grade 6), Gina Broccoli (Baldwin, Grade 5), Deborah Doll (Baldwin, Grade 6), Patricia Scanlon (Baldwin, Grade 5), Susan McDonald (Baldwin, Art), Meghan Childs (Adams, Spanish), Holly Clough (Adams, Social Studies), Christopher Jones (Adams, Instrumental Music), Krista Pasieka (Adams, Science), Marina Volkova (Adams, English), Melissa Watrous (Adams, Social Studies), Theresa Bademan (GHS, English), Johanna Cassella (GHS, Mathematics), Matthew Diglio (Physical Education), Kira Drummond (GHS, Chemistry), Jennifer Fitting (GHS, Guidance), Justin Fox (GHS, Science), Jodie Haupt (GHS, Science), Meagan McGowan (GHS, Social Studies), Kirk Samuelson (GHS, Biology), Thomas Schaefer (GHS, Tech Ed), Sasha Vliet (GHS, English), and Brian White (GHS, Social Studies).

Mrs. Sturgess also welcomed Dr. Patrica Free Brett, Director of Pupil Services in the presentation.

Chairwoman Whelan welcomed all of the new teachers on behalf of the Board. Dr. Keene expressed her appreciation to the administrators, teachers, and office staff involved in the process of hiring and processing all of the new teachers.

6.2 Intern Report

Mrs. Sturgess reported that 10.5 interns will be used in all elementary schools this school year distributed as follows: four interns at Lakes, two in grade 3 and two in Kindergarten; two interns at Cox for grade 3; three interns at Leete, one and one half in Kindergarten, one in grade 3, and one half in grade 4; and one and one half at Jones in

Kindergarten. (The interns will participate in the professional development opportunities available to teachers.)

Mrs. Sturgess explained that three of the interns are in the masters program at the University of New Haven, one in a masters program at Quinnipiac University, and the others have degrees and are pursuing additional training or are considering shifting their certification from one discipline to another.

6.3 Preliminary Enrollment Report

Dr. Keene directed the Board to the spreadsheet outlining elementary school enrollments. The report included enrollments as of September 9, 2005, projected enrollments as of August 15, 2005, and enrollments from June 27, 2005.

Dr. Keene reported that the projections from August 15, 2005 have been consistent with the enrollment figures as of September 9, 2005 with few variations. She stated that the interns are assigned to classes with highest enrollments.

Dr. Keene referenced the Kindergarten sections at Lakes with sections of 21 and 22 students, reminding the Board that full time interns will be used in these sections. She stated that the largest sections are the third grade classes at Lakes with 24 students each and the third grade classes at Cox with 24 and 23 students. These sections will all receive intern support, para professional help and student teachers. The fourth grade at Calvin Leete with 23 students will be supported by a half-time intern.

Mr. Beatty asked if the reduction of 2 students in grade 3 at Cox and the addition of 2 students at Lakes were the result of transfers within the district. Dr. Keene explained that while there were some requests in the district for transfers to other schools, this was not the case with these sections.

Mr. Bloss observed that there are 8 additional students at Lakes in the third grade this year as compared to last year. He asked why there was such a large increase. Dr. Keene explained 1 child transferred from Jones to Lakes and the other 7 children are new to Guilford.

Mr. Bishop stated that the total enrollment for the district as of September 12, 2005 is 3,935 compared to 3,917 for the 2004-2005 school year. Dr. Keene reminded the Board that final enrollment figures will be verified and finalized effective October 1, 2005.

Dr. Keene reported that the enrollments at GHS and the elementary schools have increased by 30 and 34 students respectively. The middle school enrollments have decreased slightly from 2004-2005.

6.4 Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) Report

Dr. Keene explained that this report is required by the No Child Left Behind Act. All schools in the district have achieved Adequate Yearly Progress. This report will be posted on the district web site along with the individual schools' report cards.

Dr. Keene also reported that the CAPT reports were just released and are currently being analyzed. A complete report will be available in the near future.

7. BOARD AGENDA

7.1 ACT ON Personnel Items (exhibit)

Upon a motion made by Mr. Beatty and seconded by Mr. Bloss, the Board voted unanimously to accept the resignation of Therese Detora (Calvin Leete, Grade 1) effective August 31, 2005.

Upon a motion made by Mr. Bishop and seconded by Mr. Beatty, the Board voted unanimously to ratify the appointments of the following teachers: Gina Broccoli (Baldwin, Grade 5), effective September 1, 2005; Jodie Haupt (Guilford High School, 0.2 Freshman Physical Science), effective September 7, 2005; Susan McDonald (Baldwin, 0.1 Art), effective September 1, 2005; and Kathryn Biehn (Leete, Grade 1), effective September 12, 2005.

Mr. Bloss stated that one of the new teachers he spoke with earlier in the evening at the new teacher reception shared his enthusiasm over the interview process. He was impressed with the thorough and professional procedures. Mr. Bishop added that the new teachers have felt welcomed and well-prepared by staff in their buildings.

Dr. Keene concluded that the district is committed to providing all of the necessary support to the new staff to ensure their success.

7.2 ACT ON Agreement with Acting Superintendent (exhibit)

Chairwoman Whelan explained that there is a change in the wording of the agreement from "acting" to "interim". Dr. Keene explained that the State Department of Education has two categories when describing temporary superintendents. An acting superintendent is an individual who is not certified to be a superintendent and may only serve for a limited time. The term "interim" applies to an individual that is certified and there is no time limit on the appointment.

Chairwoman Whelan summarized the agreement. Dr. Keene will serve as interim superintendent of schools from August 24, 2005 until the Board terminates her appointment. In consideration for her additional duties the Board shall pay \$100/business day on the school calendar.

Chairwoman Whelan thanked Dr. Keene for her willingness to take on the additional responsibilities and for doing a great job.

Upon a motion made by Mr. Bishop and seconded by Mr. Beatty, the Board voted unanimously to ratify the agreement with the interim superintendent as presented.

7.2 ACT ON Food Services Contract (exhibit at meeting)

Mr. Bishop reported that the Food Services committee reached an agreement with the Food Services union on August 23, 2005. The three-year contract includes wage increases, insurance coverage and co-pay changes, an increase in the work year from 180 to 182 days, and other adjustments.

Upon a motion made by Mrs. Cartier and seconded by Mr. Beatty, the Board voted unanimously to approve the Food Services contract as presented.

Mr. Bishop acknowledged the challenges involved in the negotiation process when trying to balance the needs of workers with families in Guilford and the increased costs of running the Food Service program.

7.3 RECEIVE K-8 Physical Education Curriculum (exhibit at meeting)

Mrs. Sturgess presented the K-8 Physical Education Curriculum which was developed with input from all of the physical education teachers in grades K-8. The curriculum follows guidelines from the Connecticut frameworks. The standards include fitness, movement, physical activity, and respect for differences.

The emphasis in the curriculum is on giving children the knowledge, the skills, and the attitudes they need to develop active and healthy lifestyles. The goal is for children to continue these practices into adulthood.

The district will be required to develop a wellness policy addressing nutrition and healthy lifestyles that will be implemented by September 2006.

7.4 RECEIVE: Strategic Plan Recommendation from Steering Committee (exhibit)

Strategic Plan Steering Committee members Dede Colcord and Brian Lemon presented an overview of the draft of the Strategic Plan for the Guilford Public Schools from 2005 – 2010.

Mrs. Colcord began by summarizing the process explaining that initially focus groups were conducted with participation from parents, community members, school administrators, students, staff, and Board of Education members. The resulting 1500 comments were categorized into four main areas of focus: Learning and Teaching, Culture, Resources, and Facilities. Facilities comments were given to the Community Task Force on School Facilities and were not addressed by the Steering Committee.

Mr. Lemon detailed the Strategic Plan process from its inception in November 2004. Twenty-five focus groups generated the 1500 comments based on the question, 'If you could have anything you wanted in the Guilford Public Schools, what would you have?'

The Steering Committee identified the four areas of focus, a mission statement, guiding statements, parameters, goals, strategies, and objectives. Individual action teams were formed to work within the identified focus areas to recommend action steps in each area.

Action Team plans were reviewed and edited by the Steering Committee and the draft was developed. Key issues include the following:

- The document is dynamic requiring continuous review and assessment.
- The new superintendent should provide input into the plan.
- The plan was developed based on data and is research based.
- Measurements to continuously assess the plan are critical.
- The assignment of specific duties should be left to the Board of Education and the administration.
- Effective communication is needed to promote collaboration and informed decision-making.
- High expectations for students must be maintained.

Mrs. Colcord and Mr. Lemon presented an overview of the goals, strategies, objectives, and action steps of each of the three areas of focus. They also provided a summary of the recommended action steps for the first six months of implementation of the plan.

Mrs. Colcord and Mr. Lemon acknowledged the hard work of the many individuals who worked on the strategic plan. The overall goal of the process was to produce a useful tool to guide the district in providing the most effective learning, teaching, and school climate that promote attainment of the goals.

Chairwoman Whelan acknowledged and thanked the members of the audience who participated in the strategic planning process. She also thanked Doreen Marvin, consultant at LEARN, for guiding the district through the process.

Dr. Keene informed the Board that all of the ancillary materials from the action teams and the focus group responses are available in notebooks at the Office of the Superintendent for the public to review.

Chairwoman Whelan stated that the Board will review the draft document thoroughly at the September 26, 2005 Working Committee meeting.

8. Unfinished Business

Mr. Bloss wrote a letter to the town's ethics committee requesting their interpretation of the policy regarding gifts to GPS staff. While he has received some individual responses from committee members, he has not yet received a group response.

Mr. Beatty reported that negotiations with the para educators and secretaries continues.

Mr. Bishop reported that he wrote a letter to the editors of the Guilford Courier and The Shoreline Times in response to recent letters published accusing the Board of not responding to potential superintendent candidates. His letter states that the Board has responded to all candidates through the Board's search consultant George Goens of Goens and Esparo, LLC.

Dr. Keene reported back to the Board regarding their request for additional information about Title I money. She provided a letter to the Board and summarized her findings to the public. She explained that because the State of Connecticut receives Title I money, all districts must comply with specific regulations including the Highly Qualified Teachers Act (100% compliance by the end of this school year).

9. Reports of Committees

Mrs. Cartier reported that she attended the Standing Fields and Building Committee meeting regarding synthetic turf. A proposal was discussed evaluating the benefits and costs of synthetic turf versus natural grass. There will be follow-up meetings on the subject in the future.

Mr. Bishop reported that the Land Acquisitions Committee continues to meet and is working on initiatives supporting open space in Guilford.

Mr. Bishop also reported that he will be scheduling a Transportation Committee meeting on or prior to the September 26, 2005 Working Committee meeting to evaluate bus routing during the first few weeks of the school year. He noted that Transportation Coordinator Nils Peterson has been studying the routes and identifying areas of concern. Mr. Bishop noted that one of the key areas to evaluate is New England Road during the morning drop-off time at GHS. Some students are arriving late because of traffic delays.

Mr. Beatty reported that the Standing Building Committee is considering proposals for the first phase of the Community Task Force on School Facilities action steps.

10. Public Questions

Bobby Baird asked how many schools are in our ERG. Dr. Keene replied that currently there are 17 schools in our ERG. He then asked how we are doing compared to the other schools. Chairwoman Whelan explained that school systems are evaluated in many areas. Mr. Baird did not pursue the question.

Mr. Baird reiterated his support of Ned Vare. He also urged the Board to get rid of binding arbitration.

Suzanne Carlson expressed her concern about the plan to implement block scheduling at GHS in 2006. She suggested that a committee consisting of staff, parents, and students might be formed to evaluate block scheduling and identify appropriate teacher training prior to implementation. She is in support of block scheduling but is concerned about the time frame.

Dr. Keene explained that she did not have all of the specific data with her to address the steps being taken by GHS to prepare the staff for block scheduling. She referenced a professional development seminar attended by GHS staff prior to the start of the school year on how to use extended class periods effectively. Dr. Keene assured Mrs. Carlson that she and the administration at GHS are committed to providing all of the needed support to teachers and information to parents regarding block scheduling.

Chairwoman Whelan suggested that detailed information be shared at a future Board meeting regarding the specific professional development and other planning taking place prior to the implementation of block scheduling.

John Rubin addressed the Board as a member of the Steering Committee of the strategic planning process. He encouraged the Board to consider the plan to be a tool, and not just a casual document, to help the entire community make decisions. He acknowledged that there is a lot of work left to do, most importantly following through on the action steps and effectively communicating the plan to the community.

11. New Business

Chairwoman Whelan reminded the public that there will be a community meeting on Wednesday, September 14, 2005 at 7:00 p.m. in the chorus room at Baldwin Middle School to meet a finalist for the superintendent position.

Upon a motion made by Mr. Dwyer and seconded by Mr. Beatty, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn to executive session at 9:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lorri L. Hahn
Clerk to the Board of Education