

**GUILFORD BOARD OF EDUCATION  
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 14, 2005  
GUILFORD HIGH SCHOOL, GUILFORD, CONNECTICUT**

**1. Call to Order – Action on Minutes**

Chairwoman Whelan called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. Board of Education members present were Richard Beatty, William Bloss, Keith Bishop, William Dwyer, Greg Muccilli, James Ralls and Sandra Whelan. Administrators present were Barbara Truex, Anne Keene, Bruce Hall, Catherine Walker, Anne Snurkowski, and Ian Neviaser. Also present were Student Representatives Megan Harrison, Liz Jazinski, and Allison Kloepfer; School Business Administrator Andy Potochney and GEA President Rose Dostert.

Chairwoman Whelan noted the large number of people in attendance at this evening's meeting regarding the GHS block scheduling and level designation proposals. She requested that people hold their public comments/questions until the GHS administration gives their presentation. Opportunity for public comment will be provided following the presentation.

**1.1 January 10, 2005 (Regular Meeting)**

Upon a motion made by Mr. Muccilli and seconded by Mr. Beatty, the Board voted unanimously to approve the minutes with one correction noted by Mr. Bishop.

**1.2 January 24, 2005 (Finance Subcommittee Meeting)**

Upon a motion made by Mr. Bishop and seconded by Mr. Dwyer, the Board voted three in favor of approving the finance subcommittee minutes of January 24, 2005. Mr. Beatty, Mr. Bloss, Mr. Dwyer and Mr. Ralls abstained from the vote since they were not present at the subcommittee meeting.

**1.3 January 24, 2005 (Working Committee Meeting)**

Upon a motion made by Mr. Ralls and seconded by Mr. Dwyer, the Board voted unanimously to approve the minutes of January 24, 2005 as presented.

**1.4 January 25, 2005 (Budget Workshop)**

Upon a motion made by Mr. Bishop and seconded by Mr. Ralls, the Board voted unanimously to approve the minutes of January 25, 2005 as presented.

**1.5 February 1, 2005 (Budget Workshop)**

Upon a motion made by Mr. Ralls and seconded by Mr. Muccilli, the Board voted six in favor of approving the minutes of February 1, 2005 as presented. Mr. Beatty abstained from the vote since he was not present at the meeting.

**1.6 February 7, 2005 (Special Meeting)**

Upon a motion made by Mr. Ralls and seconded by Mr. Dwyer, the Board voted six in favor of approving the minutes of February 7, 2005 as presented. Mr. Beatty abstained from the vote since he was not present at the meeting.

**2. Review and Approval and Expenditures for the Month of January  
Board Reviewer for the Month: Keith Bishop**

Mr. Bishop reported that Mr. Potochney is continuing to work on updating the account information for the Board. Mr. Bishop stated that tuition, fuel and special education transportation are the three areas that continue to be higher than budgeted.

Mr. Bishop reviewed the warrant reports dated January 3, January 12, and January 26 including payments made for prior year encumbrances for sprinkler work. Payments were also made for medical insurance, half of the GY&FS student assistance counselor at Adams, copy charges, first payment to LEARN for Strategic Planning, our portion of the audit, annual septic tank pumping, student record folders, calculations related to actuarial services, two-way radio replacement, Vo-Ag tuition for half of the year for eight students.

Mr. Beatty questioned if Mr. Potochney has up-to-date projections on the accounts that will be over budget. Mr. Potochney reported that as of the end of January we were approximately \$400,000 over budget and he is in the process of updating the projections.

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**

Dee Jacobs stated that last spring the Cox K-2 playground had to be dismantled because of state requirements. The BOE provided a swing set; however, climbing equipment has not been replaced. The PTO is working toward raising funding to cover some of the expense and the PTO is counting on funding the BOE allocated last spring. She encouraged the Board to recognize the importance of the playground and to unfreeze the dollars that are already committed to help make up the difference in the cost.

Joe Petrowski stated that the BOE should be expecting some reimbursement through the state for the portables and the Leete roof. He encouraged the Board to not tap any other line items affiliated with resources or student support in order to make up the shortfall but rather go the BOF for a special appropriation to make up the differences.

**4. Communications**

Chairwoman Whelan noted that all Board members received communications regarding the GHS proposal for block scheduling and changes to level designations.

**5. Student Representatives**

Megan Harrison reported on activities at Calvin Leete and A.W. Cox including the celebration of “Read Across America” on March 2, enrichment programs and a teacher swap read aloud.

Allison Kloepfer reported on activities at Melissa Jones and Baldwin including a skating party at Jones, PTO enrichment programs and a visit by Mystic Aquarium representatives. Baldwin students will be participating in the 10<sup>th</sup> annual Roller Rock and the annual Banana Beach Party.

Liz Jazinski reported on activities at Guilford Lakes, Adams and GHS. Guilford Lakes students and staff raised \$5,225 to help rebuild schools and libraries in the areas effected by the tsunami. GHS Parent Teacher conferences will be held on March 23 from 6-8 p.m. and March 24 from 1-3 p.m.; sign-up sheets will be available in the Library beginning March 15. Volunteers are needed for Project Graduation. Scholarship applications are now available in the Guidance Office. A Meals on Wheels benefit concert will take place on February 16 at GHS. GHS Connection is presenting “Teens Speak Out” on March 29 from 7:00-8:30 p.m.

Upon a motion made by Mr. Bloss and seconded by Mr. Muccilli, the Board voted unanimously to move item 7.2 to this time on the agenda in order to dismiss Mr. Potochney prior to the GHS scheduling discussion.

**(7.2) DISCUSS for Possible Action: Request for Special Appropriation**

Mr. Potochney recommended the Board wait before requesting a special appropriation from the BOF until the numbers firm up since things are changing on a regular basis. As discussed at a previous meeting, not making the payment to the Pension Fund would reduce the deficit and there will be other changes as we go along. Mr. Potochney suggested we continue to keep the BOF informed that we may be requesting additional funds for a special appropriation but to wait until we have better numbers.

Mr. Ralls questioned if the Board will need to authorize the transfer of funds at this time. Mr. Potochney recommends the Board transfer \$60,000 from science textbooks and \$65,000 from site improvement in order to pay the tuition bills that will be due on February 23. He noted that these two items are both included in the 2005-06 proposed budget. Mr. Potochney noted that even if the BOE decides to request a special appropriation, a transfer of funds is still required at this time in order to continue to pay the bills.

Upon a motion made by Mr. Dwyer and seconded by Mr. Ralls to transfer a total of \$125,000 (specifically \$60,000 from Science Textbooks and \$65,000 from Site Improvement) to cover the expenditures for this month.

Mr. Beatty stated that he is opposed to making any more transfers since there is no guarantee those funds will be available in the next budget. Mr. Beatty stated that at this point we are going to have a deficit, we just don't know how much it is going to be. He would like the Board to request a special appropriation at this time because he feels the Board is just putting off the inevitable. He stated that the BOF gets copies of the reports every month and they know what the projected overages are.

Mrs. Truex noted that if the proposed 2005-06 is cut by the BOF and/or it doesn't pass at referendum, the BOE controls what stays in and what comes out. The BOE can make sure that those two line items are kept in the 2005-06.

Chairwoman Whelan stated she was opposed to taking funding from the textbook account; however, since the state science frameworks were delayed and our science curriculum will not be approved until June, this was a good account to transfer from. A lengthy discussion ensued regarding whether it is appropriate to make the special appropriation request now without knowing the specific dollar amount of the deficit or to wait until firmer numbers are available. The Board also discussed its effect on the 2005-06 proposed budget.

Mr. Potochney stated that the reimbursement coming in early March from the Excess Cost Grant will help offset the deficit. In addition, some of the tuition placements may also decrease in March.

The motion to make the \$125,000 transfer passed by a vote of five in favor (Bloss, Dwyer, Muccilli, Ralls, Whelan) and two opposed (Beatty, Bishop).

Mr. Bishop motioned to put the Board of Finance on notice and specifically request that the BOE will need approximately \$250,000 extra to cover the over expenditures in the special education account. Mr. Dwyer seconded the motion with the amendment that a dollar figure not be included.

Discussion ensued regarding whether a specific dollar amount be included or not. Mr. Bishop suggested changing the wording to "up to a specific amount." Mr. Potochney cautioned the Board that if they are going to ask for a request, it should include a specific amount.

The amended motion made by Mr. Dwyer is to approach the BOF and inform them that we have a fiscal shortfall and do not have a specific dollar figure yet; however, we want them to be made aware that there is a problem and we will probably be coming to them for additional money before the end of the school year. Mr. Beatty stated a specific

dollar amount should be included in the motion. Mr. Muccilli suggested revisiting this in March. Mr. Dwyer called the question.

## **6. Superintendent's Report**

### **6.1 CTF SF Update**

Mary Jo Kestner, Co-Chair of the Community Task Force on School Facilities, gave the BOE an update. She stated that the committee has continued to meet every other week and has been gathering information from forums at PTO meetings as well as from general community forums. The committee has also been reviewing comments from the Strategic Planning focus groups. Two informational programs have aired on GCTV. The second public forum is scheduled for February 16 at 6:30 p.m. at the community center. She encouraged members of the community to attend.

Ms. Kestner stated that there has been some discussion among the Task Force members as to whether the original charge of a five-year plan should be extended. She requested the BOE think about extending the charge to the committee out to the 5-10 year range.

Mrs. Truex noted that members of the public/parents may e-mail comments related to facilities to [CTFSF@guilford.k12.ct.us](mailto:CTFSF@guilford.k12.ct.us). Ms. Kestner stated that meeting minutes and agendas are also available on the district web site.

### **6.2 5-8 World Language Program Recommendations**

World Language Department Chairperson Sharon Jakubson gave the Board an overview of the World Language program and options for possibly adding staff/programming in the future. She also reviewed the cost and benefit analysis. Mrs. Jakubson stated that her recommendation would be to maintain the current foreign language program structure at both Adams and Baldwin for the 2005-06 school year. She also recommended carefully planning an exploratory 5<sup>th</sup> grade program that would meet multiple times a cycle and explore the feasibility of a 6-8 sequential language program thus providing the administration and teachers quality time to design and structure a program with feedback from parents.

Mrs. Jakubson stated that the Strategic Planning Committee in their recommendation to the BOE should address the issue of a World Language program for grades 1-4. She noted that careful examination of the ramifications of such a program must occur prior to implementation since there are several issues that need to be considered.

It was suggested that BOE members e-mail Mrs. Jakubson any questions they have. The recommendations will be posted on the district's web site. Board members had several questions; however, due to the large turnout for tonight's meeting, it was decided to continue this discussion at the March meeting.

### **6.3 Update on High School Block Schedule Proposal and Level Designations**

Assistant Principal, Ian Neviaser, gave the Board an update on the Block Schedule Proposal. He reviewed the benefits this type of change would have for the high school students and staff including assuring every student a lunch period and increased instructional time. Mr. Neviaser noted that since their initial presentation in January to the BOE, they have made a few changes including offering three lunch waves rather than four. Mr. Neviaser also noted that block scheduling has been discussed for years and is not a new philosophy.

With regard to the block scheduling proposal, Board members asked several questions regarding professional development for teachers to help them adapt to a new block schedule format, whether or not any departments would be adversely affected by this change, whether adjustments would need to be made to curriculum, as well as the lunch waves and speed of service in the cafeteria.

Principal, Bruce Hall, discussed a proposal to reexamine the leveling structure at the high school to withdraw level 2 as a level. Mr. Hall noted that part of the NEASC recommendations from the high school accreditation process had to do with scheduling and leveling. It was recommended that the high school look at scheduling alternatives and also look at more heterogeneity within our academic programs. Committees were formed to review scheduling, curriculum, standards and climate.

Mr. Hall stated that the high school Standards Committee is recommending that we use an accelerated/honors/AP level, a college prep level and then a general studies level which would pull out the existing level 2. Mr. Hall stated that by collapsing level 2 into level 1 would begin to erase the negative perception of courses that are not level 1. This would raise the bar for greater academic expectations for the majority of our students. The new heterogeneous college prep class would give students who may have been identified as level 2 in the past an opportunity to interact and engage in a higher level of activity with their peers promoting more positive self-image and a greater opportunity for real learning, development and personal growth to take place. It would also bring our students more in line with college level expectations.

The Board asked many questions including what effect this change may have on CAPT scores, what degree parents/students were involved in the discussions, how many students are currently enrolled in level 2 courses, how many AP courses are offered and what type.

Chairwoman Whelan opened the meeting to the public for comments/questions on the presentation. Many parents and several students addressed the Board with questions or comments regarding either block scheduling, the proposed change to level designations, or both.

Speakers included: David Rothstein, Casey Smith, Shawn Smith, Colleen Dunn, Leslie Krumholz, Jeff Cash, Patty Haggerty, Tim Sullivan, Michael Hoge, Cindy Kozal

(twice), Julian Weisser, Linda Young, Jan Brissette (twice), Becky Ortega, Peggy Keabian, Pat Colburn, Jim Weisser, Joe Petrowski, Dee Jacobs, Morgan Nederhood, Sarah Shiner, Jeff Deacon, Anna Smith, David Nederhood, Joe Goldberg, Kathy Duman, Ted Zuse, and Doug Newman.

The majority of speakers expressed concern about the block proposal and that the parents have not had ample opportunity to participate in the discussion until this time. Some felt that it will be difficult for the teaching staff to meet the extra demands of teaching in the block and that students will have difficulty staying focused during longer class periods particularly if the teacher is not effective. Many speakers also expressed concern about the proposal to change the structure of how high school classes are leveled. Again, parents felt that the proposal has not allowed them to have much input into the process and that perhaps we are rushing into it. They suggested that more opportunities to discuss this should be made available to parents and students. A few speakers thought that these decisions should be put off until a new Superintendent is hired.

Several members of the public felt that the block scheduling proposal and the proposed change to the leveling structure should be treated as separate issues and discussed separately. Several members of the public said they are not comfortable supporting the proposals without getting more information.

Several parents stated that the “GHS Connection” has hosted forums where these topics have been discussed. It is unfortunate that attendance at these meetings has not been higher.

Board members thanked the many members of the public for their input. The general consensus of the Board is for the high school to continue discussions with parents and students by holding forums and to keep the two issues separate. Consideration should be given to not implementing the proposals in September. Discussions on both topics with continue.

## **7. BOARD Agenda**

### **7.1 ACT ON Personnel Item**

Upon a motion made by Mr. Bishop and seconded by Mr. Dwyer, the Board voted to accept with regret the resignation for the purposes of retirement of Bruce Faitsch (GHS, Science and Dept. Chair) effective August 31, 2005.

### **7.2 DISCUSS for Possible Action: Policy 4170/4270 – Resignations**

Upon a motion made by Mr. Bloss and seconded by Mr. Muccilli, the Board voted unanimously to approve Policy 4170/4270 – Resignations as presented.

**8 Unfinished Business – None**

**9. Reports of Committees**

Mr. Bishop reported that the Facilities Task Force will be holding another public forum on February 16 at 6:30 p.m. at the Community Center.

**10. Public Questions**

Bobby Baird addressed the Board with comments about the town charter and the special appropriation request to the Board of Finance. He encouraged the public to reject the budget.

**11. New Business**

Upon a motion made by Mr. Dwyer and seconded by Mr. Ralls, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn at 11:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Terri M. Fiondella  
Clerk to the Board of Education