

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

1. Call to Order – Action on Minutes

Chairwoman Whelan called the meeting to order at 7:40 p.m. Board of Education members present were Richard Beatty, William Bloss, Keith Bishop, Cynthia Cartier, Greg Muccilli, James Ralls and Sandra Whelan. Administrators present were Barbara Truex, Anne Keene, Gary Endean, and Marilyn Sturgess. Also present were Accounting Manager Linda Trudeau and GEA President Rose Do stert.

Chairwoman Whelan welcomed Lorri Hahn as the new Clerk to the Board of Education.

1.1 February 14, 2005 (Regular Meeting)

Upon a motion made by Mr. Bishop and seconded by Mr. Bloss, the Board voted six in favor of approving the minutes of February 14, 2005 with three corrections noted. Ms. Cartier abstained from the vote.

1.2 February 16, 2005 (Executive Session)

Upon a motion made by Mr. Ralls and seconded by Mr. Bishop, the Board voted six in favor of approving the minutes of February 16, 2005 as presented. Ms. Cartier abstained from the vote.

1.3 March 2, 2005 (Working Committee Meeting)

Upon a motion made by Mr. Beatty and seconded by Mr. Ralls, the Board voted unanimously in favor of approving the minutes of March 2, 2005 as presented.

**2. Review and Approval of Expenditures for the Month of February
Board Reviewer for the Month: Kathy Nolan**

In the absence of Mrs. Nolan, Mrs. Trudeau reported that currently, as of February 2005, the budget is expended 56.44% compared to 55.97% last year at this time. The accounts that continue to be of concern are tuition, fuel, special education and transportation.

Mrs. Trudeau reviewed the warrant reports dated February 1, February 7, and February 22 including payments made for medical insurance, Soundtree for the music lab at Adams, and Mars for Baldwin's bleachers. J. Devoe Trucking was paid \$15,222.50 for snow plowing and sanding through January 2. Mrs. Trudeau added that the finance department is projecting that total snow removal costs will be over budget by \$20,000.

Mrs. Trudeau pointed out that we have received our first payment for the Excess Cost Grant of \$242,443. This should be enough to cover special education tuition cost for March and April.

Mr. Beatty questioned if February's tuition expenditures of \$138,234.66 are unusually high or average. Mrs. Trudeau responded that this figure reflects payments made for expenses incurred in previous months, making the February figure higher than average.

Mr. Beatty asked whether the \$275,000 in transferred funds are reflected in the 56.44% figure Mrs. Trudeau reported. Mrs. Trudeau explained that these are not additional funds, only transferred, so they will have no effect on the figure. Mr. Beatty added that the current tuition percentage of 95.28% compared to last year's 76.08% is misleading as this year's figure reflects the transfer in of \$275,000.

Mr. Bishop asked if we should expect an adjustment in the category of purchased services to cover the increased projections for snow removal costs. Mrs. Trudeau reported that right now projections for purchased services shows a balance of \$790. A transfer of funds into this account should not be needed.

Upon a motion made by Mr. Bloss 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

Mr. Bishop reported that the Board of Finance is meeting tonight and Mr. Potochney is present at that meeting. Mrs. Truex, Mr. Bloss, and Mr. Bishop attended the last Board of Finance meeting.

Mr. Ralls received an email about the World Language program at Baldwin and the desire to see the program expanded. Chairwoman Whelan explained that a discussion on World Language is on the agenda for April. Mrs. Truex added that Mrs. Jakubson will detail the proposed curriculum at that meeting.

Chairwoman Whelan received a communication from Ted Fessel who congratulated both the girls and boys high school basketball teams. He also expressed his pleasure at working with the Oratory Contest and the Girls' and Boys' State and wanted the Board to know that the music department has done a great job with the veterans.

Chairwoman Whelan received a communication asking our progress with this year's District Goals. Mrs. Truex will address the question under her Superintendent's Report.

Mr. Bloss reported receiving a phone call from Representative Heinrich regarding state budget information. She informed him that the proposal to mandate municipalities spend 15% of their operating budget on maintenance will not be favorably received in the

House. Also, there is a move toward fully funding Special Education Excess Cost Grants, resulting in 100% above five times for municipal placements, and 100% above one time per pupil cost for state placements. For budgeting purposes we may have more certainty when determining our special education expenses. Unfortunately there may also be adjustments made at the state level on regular education cost sharing.

Mrs. Truex reported that she spoke to Mr. Potochney about our latest projections for special education costs. Approximately \$250,000 remains problematic. This includes one additional outplacement.

Mr. Beatty asked Mrs. Trudeau if we can anticipate receiving additional cost grants. Mrs. Trudeau explained that the grant payments are divided in two. We received approximately 75% of the grant money in February and can expect the remaining 25% this spring.

5. Student Representatives - Not Present

6. Superintendent's Report

6.1 Report of Meeting with Food Service

Mrs. Truex reported that she met with four stewards of the Food Service staff. Also present at that meeting were Mr. Potochney, Mr. Dwyer and Mrs. Nolan. Many suggestions were generated from the Food Service staff including menu types, offering more specials, and marketing ideas, all in an effort to increase program participation. The next step is to look at reorganizing the entire program. Mrs. Truex added that she does not want to out-source the Food Service program at this time.

Mrs. Truex addressed the question under Communications regarding progress on District Goals. The first goal calls for review and revision of K-12 Social Studies curriculum to ensure alignment with state and national standards. Mrs. Sturgess reported that the committee has met in grade level groups to map out and identify overlap and other issues. After going back to their school level groups to discuss possible changes this spring, the committee will draft the suggested changes and bring them back to the school levels. One of the issues that surfaced was the lack of non-western studies prior to the high school level. The committee will look at the possibility of introducing these studies at the middle school level.

The second goal is the Science curriculum. Mrs. Truex reported that materials are being field tested by committees at each level, but the curriculum has not been brought before the Board as the state has been revising its standards. The new materials are generating considerable excitement in the schools and should translate into actual units of study. The Science draft has been in the hands of teachers since October. Staff members have been trying units and have had professional development. Dr. Keene will have the entire curriculum ready to present to the Board in May, and ready to implement in September. Dr. Keene further explained that a new Geophysical Science course is being designed at

the high school to expose students to the earth sciences prior to CAPT as the tests have many questions in this area. The Board asked questions about the different science courses currently offered at the high school including Biology, Physics, Chemistry and AP classes.

Dr. Keene addressed the expanded implementation of “Best Practices” that differentiate instruction based on student needs and providing ongoing professional support in literacy, numeracy and technology. This year, to date, Guilford Public Schools has offered 82 professional development opportunities within our district for all staff members. 3 opportunities have been in Science, 6 in Math, 18 in Technology, 12 in Reading, 2 in World Languages, and 8 in Data Analysis. 343 staff members have attended 206 separate conferences. The Board asked questions including how many conferences an individual staff member would be able to attend and if the administration has been satisfied with the level of participation. Both Dr. Keene and Mrs. Truex responded that participation and enthusiasm have been high. Both the number of events and the number of participants has increased over last year.

Dr. Keene reminded everyone that the World Languages program will be addressed at the April 11 Board of Education meeting. This year 5th and 6th grade students are participating in a World Language program. Mrs. Truex explained that changes have been made to the programs for grades 6-8 to adjust for the earlier introduction of World Language to our students. Mr. Bishop asked if Mrs. Jakubson will be including staffing requirements when she presents her recommendations at the April meeting.

In reference to School Climate goals, Mrs. Truex assured the Board that collaboration is alive and well among staff in our buildings. The Curriculum Committees and Strategic Planning Teams require constant collaborative efforts. She added that the Action Teams, consisting of 50% community members and 50% staff members, will be trained on Thursday, March 17, 2005. Mrs. Truex also reported that the Community Task Force on School Facilities has been working very hard prioritizing building needs. Members of the committee have revisited the schools to learn as much as possible about the environments.

Mrs. Truex reported that the Board of Finance will probably propose a \$175,000 cut in the Board of Education budget. In addition, even though the Pension Plan is performing very well, we are required to make a 3% contribution annually, translating to a minimum payment of \$142,000 that has not been included in the 2005-06 budget.

Mr. Bloss questioned the sensibility of this requirement. Mrs. Trudeau explained that any amendment to this rule must be made by the Board of Selectman. Mr. Bloss asked that a discussion about whether to request the Board of Selectman amend the Pension Plan rule be added to the next regular Board agenda. Mrs. Truex expressed concern about where further budget cuts may be made reminding the Board that 4 staff and 5 para educator positions have already been eliminated.

Mr. Dwyer questioned the Board of Finance's response to the bonding issues. Mrs. Truex responded that the Board of Finance did not ask any questions and seemed to understand the importance of fixing the roofs. In addition, the Board of Selectman has approved the specifications presented by Mr. Saisa.

Mr. Bishop stated that a change in state legislation last year requires school systems to first bring school projects before voters in a town referendum for approval prior to approaching the state for construction reimbursement grants. The Community Task Force on School Facilities is examining the impact this new legislation will have on proposed projects because of the delay that will occur between the time a referendum is held and the time a request can be made to the state. The concern is that costs will rise from original estimates.

7. BOARD AGENDA

7.1 ACT ON Accepting Adams Modular Classrooms as Complete (060-0089RE)

Upon a motion made by Mr. Beatty and seconded by Mr. Muccilli, the Board voted unanimously to accept the Adams modular classrooms as complete as recommended by the Standing Building Committee.

7.2 RECEIVE for POSSIBLE ACTION: Acceptable Use Regulation 6338 (Exhibit)

Mr. Bloss noted that this item is a change in our Technology and Instruction Acceptable Use Regulation. The changes are designed to align us with First Amendment guarantees relating to the use of the system. There was also significant discussion about whether a student and a parent should be required, under penalty of being barred from the system, to disclose misuse of the system by another student (third party). There was not unanimity on this point by the committee but the majority believed that there should not be a mandatory disclosure rule.

Upon a motion made by Mr. Bloss and seconded by Mr. Muccilli, the Board voted unanimously to adopt Acceptable Use Regulation 6338 to be implemented in the 2005-06 school year.

7.3 RECEIVE Art and Music Curricula

Mrs. Sturgess has been leading the Art and Music Committee as they make the necessary revisions to align our curriculum with the new state frameworks. Mrs. Sturgess explained that in the introduction of each curriculum proposal the state performance standards are listed. The Music curriculum has 9 state standards and the Art curriculum has 6. Each curriculum is grouped by grade level, grades K-4 (1-4 for Art), 5 and 6, and 7 to outline students' required skill levels. Organizing the curriculum this way demonstrates the

gradual changes in expectations. Also included are sample assessment tools. The Board will act on the Art and Music curricula at the April 11, 2005.

8 Unfinished Business – None

9. Reports of Committees

Mr. Bishop reported that the Facilities Task Force will be putting drafts together in May for presentation to the Board of Education in June. Included will be projected time lines and estimated costs for projects.

10. Public Questions - None

11. New Business - None

Upon a motion made by Mr. Beatty and seconded by Mr. Bishop, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn at 8:53 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lorri Hahn
Clerk to the Board of Education