

**GUILFORD BOARD OF EDUCATION
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 28, 2005
ADAMS MIDDLE SCHOOL, GUILFORD, CONNECTICUT**

1. Call to Order

Mr. Bloss called the meeting to order at 7:14 p.m. Board of Education members present were Keith Bishop, William Bloss, Cynthia Cartier, Barbara Dudley, Louis Iorio, Alan Meyers, Kathleen Nolan, and Ted Zuse. Administrators present were Anne Keene, Catherine Walker, Anne Snurkowski, Merry Leventhal, Nancy Bishop, Gary Endean, and Marilyn Sturgess. Also present were Business Manager Andy Potochney and Accounting Manager Linda Trudeau.

2. Preliminary Budget Discussion for Public Input

Mr. Bloss explained that the purpose of this portion of the meeting was to allow public input into the Budget process before the Budget is prepared. Mr. Bloss opened the meeting to public comment.

Terry O'Hara encouraged the Board to introduce World Language in elementary school. She stated that many studies prove that the introduction of any language at an early age is beneficial to brain development. She urged the Board to be creative in exploring ways to accomplish this goal.

Jenn Pensa asked the Board to include air conditioning for Calvin Leete in the 2006-07 Budget as a part of the Community Task Force on School Facilities (CTFSF) recommendations. She reminded the Board that Calvin Leete is the only elementary school that does not have air conditioning. Mrs. Pensa expressed concern that the process may be delayed if the installation of air conditioning is deferred to a town-wide referendum.

Michele Raiti, member of the Guilford PTA Talented and Gifted (TAG) Committee, asked the Board to include a school-wide enrichment coordinator and a TAG program in the 2006-07 Budget. She explained that the PTA is requesting to share their research on TAG programs with the Board. The PTA is also requesting that two Board members work with their committee to help research programming ideas, implementation and assessment processes, and costs for TAG and enrichment programs.

Mary Beth Ghoreyeb expressed her disappointment with the large Kindergarten class sizes at Guilford Lakes, explaining that her son is in a class of 23 students. She referenced BOE regulation 6011 which states that recommended Kindergarten class size is 15 - 20 students.

Gina Tracy stated that GPS does not currently meet the State requirements for minutes per week of music instruction in elementary schools. The State recommends 60 - 100

minutes of music instruction and development per week. Mrs. Tracy said that Guilford currently offers 60 minutes of music per week in the elementary schools. She also stated that the Connecticut Arts Education recommends 40 - 80 minutes of theatre in elementary school. She stated that she had a conversation with Dr. Scott Shuler, consultant for the Arts for the CT Department of Education. He offered to come to Guilford and share his expertise with the Board. Mrs. Tracy asked Chairman Bloss to contact him prior to finalizing the Budget to hear his recommendations.

Dee Jacobs asked the Board to plan ahead at all levels in the school system to reduce class sizes. She urged the Board to fund teachers, not just add interns.

Kathleen Balestracci expressed her concern about the increasing class sizes at Guilford Lakes explaining that this is an issue in all grades at the school. She believes that interns can offer a temporary solution to some of the large sections, but the continued increase of new housing starts in the Guilford Lakes district suggests that enrollments will continue to rise and more permanent solutions need to be found.

Mrs. Balestracci also expressed her interest in learning more about TAG and enrichment programs, stating that the 10% of students that are at the highest levels should receive educational services corresponding to their abilities. Mrs. Balestracci also thanked Mrs. Cartier and Chairman Bloss for their attendance at Lakes PTO meetings. She conveyed the positive comments of PTO members who found the conversations with the Board members to be very valuable.

Doug Newman expressed his hope that the Strategic Plan will be incorporated into the 2006-07 Budget as many of the issues raised by other speakers are addressed in the plan. He suggested that the Board include the hiring of a demographer to study the population trends in Guilford. Mr. Newman also asked the Board to consider redesigning the construction of the Budget including the implementation of a zero-based budget. Finally, he referenced the Strategic School Profile for Special Education stating that Guilford spent 21% of the Budget on 10% of the students in the 2003-04 school year. He asked that the Board not forget the students at mid and high levels of ability.

Chairman Bloss shared comments from Lisa Fiala via email asking the Board to adopt a zero-based budget program, to prioritize spending proposals into broader categories, and to hire a school-wide enrichment coordinator.

Mike Graziano asked the Board to consider a recorder program for all students in the 4th grade, citing studies that children's performance in math improves with music instruction. He described the process a student must go through to play an instrument, from looking at a symbol on paper, to analyzing it, and then reacting by playing it. Mr. Graziano also stated that many of the students with the highest academic performances participate in band or orchestra.

Paula Graziano explained that in the 1989-1990 school year her daughter participated in a grant-funded all-day Kindergarten program. She observed that the children in this

program were more advanced than the other Kindergarten children when they entered 1st grade. She stated that 1/3 of the all-day Kindergarten class is now entering graduate school. No follow-up studies were done to evaluate and compare the performance of the all-day Kindergartners with the other students. She asked the Board to follow through with studies to evaluate any future experimental programs in the school system, volunteering to help with that process.

Stacy Miller expressed her concern about the increasing class sizes in the Guilford schools. She stated that she has five children in the system including two in Kindergarten at Lakes with 22 and 23 students in their classrooms. She described the chaotic environment due to the large number of students. She also expressed concern about large class sizes in the 5th and 6th grades.

Gina Tracy addressed comments to Jim O’Keefe, member of the Board of Finance, who was in the audience. She urged the Board of Finance not to cut the Board of Education budget because increased spending is needed to continue to improve the quality of education in Guilford.

Chairman Bloss and Dr. Keene summarized the upcoming meeting dates pertaining to the Budget process as follows: December 5th the Board’s finance subcommittee will have an organizational meeting; January 9th there will be a discussion of the preliminary Budget at the regular Board meeting; January 10th the Board of Education and the Board of Finance subcommittees will meet; January 24th and 25th the Board of Education will hold public hearings on the Budget; January 30th the Board will hold a special meeting to approve the Budget; and the Budget will be submitted to the Board of Finance in February.

Dr. Keene reminded the public that the complete list of Budget meeting dates is posted on the district website.

The Board recessed for ten minutes, reconvening at 8:00 for their working committee meeting.

3. Discuss Procedure for Appointment to Fill BOE Vacancy

Chairman Bloss presented a procedure for the appointment of the Board of Education vacancy based, in part, on input from the Freedom of Information Commission. He explained that there is not a written procedure in place specifying exactly how to select the new member. Chairman Bloss proposed that all interested non-Democratic candidates submit a letter of intent and a resume to Vice Chairman Bishop and him by Thursday, December 1. The Board will interview all of the candidates in executive session at a special meeting of the Board on Wednesday, December 7 at 7:00 p.m. He indicated that the Board may vote that evening or choose to wait until the December 12 regular meeting. A candidate receiving 5 or more votes would be elected to the Board.

Mr. Zuse commented that he would prefer not to vote on the same evening as the interviews.

Upon a motion made by Mr. Bishop and seconded Mrs. Cartier, the Board voted unanimously to approve the procedure for appointment to fill the Board of Education vacancy as presented.

4. Board Organizational Topics

Board of Education Meeting Schedule for 2006:

Chairman Bloss presented the 2006 calendar dates for BOE meetings. He commented that the Board might want to consider changing the format of the working committee meetings to include more comprehensive issues and schedule individual committees meetings at other times.

There was also discussion and agreement to change the start time of the working committee meetings to 7:30 p.m.

Upon a motion made by Mr. Zuse and seconded by Dr. Meyers, the Board voted unanimously to adopt the 2006 meeting schedule with the amended start time of working committee meetings from 8:00 to 7:30 p.m.

Liaisons to Individual Schools:

Chairman Bloss reported on the following school liaison assignments: Chairman Bloss and Mr. Zuse to GHS; Dr. Meyers to Adams; Dr. Iorio to Baldwin; Mrs. Nolan to Leete; Mrs. Cartier to Lakes; Mr. Bishop to Jones; and Mrs. Dudley to Cox. The new Board member will be assigned to one of the schools when appointed.

Disbursement Review:

The disbursement review schedule is as follows: Mr. Bishop, December 2005; Dr. Iorio, January 2006; Mr. Zuse, February 2006; Mrs. Cartier, March 2006; Dr. Meyers, April 2006; Mrs. Dudley, May 2006; new Board member, June 2006; Chairman Bloss, July 2006; Mrs. Nolan, August 2006; Mr. Bishop, September 2006; Dr. Iorio, October 2006; Mr. Zuse, November 2006; and Mrs. Cartier, December 2006.

Representative to LEARN Board of Directors:

Mrs. Dudley volunteered to serve on the LEARN Board of Directors.

Committee Assignments:

Committee assignments are as follows: Finance - Dr. Meyers, Mr. Zuse, Mrs. Nolan, Dr. Iorio, and Mr. Bishop; Policy - Mrs. Cartier, Mrs. Dudley, Chairman Bloss, and new Board member; Facilities - Mr. Bishop, Mr. Zuse, and Dr. Iorio; Expulsion - committee of the whole (minimum of three members needed for hearings); Standing Building - Mr. Bishop, Mr. Zuse, and Dr. Iorio; Land Acquisitions - Mr. Bishop; Standing Fields - Mrs. Cartier will serve until the new Board member is appointed; and Health Advisory - Dr. Meyers and Mrs. Cartier.

Chairman Bloss explained that assignments to the Negotiations Committee will be deferred until the Board consults with Dr. Forcella. He also noted that committee chairpersons will be in place by the December 12 regular meeting and individual committee progress reports will be presented at that time.

BOE Orientation with New Superintendent – Saturday, January 14, 2006:

The Board is still looking for a location for this meeting.

Mrs. Cartier stated that it is her understanding that BOE committees and the administration and staff of GPS should be making decisions and taking actions based on the strategic plan. She suggested that Board representatives and members of the strategic plan steering committee temporarily review regular BOE committee and district activity to assure compatibility with the strategic plan through December 2005.

Dr. Keene assured the Board that the strategic plan is a priority for Dr. Forcella as they continue to meet. She is itemizing and updating the activity on the action steps of the plan for him as many of the identified goals are existing objectives in the district.

Dr. Meyers stated that the Board is committed to the implementation of the strategic plan. The slight delay in initiating some of the action steps is to allow Dr. Forcella the opportunity to provide input into the administration of the plan.

The Board also discussed including monthly updates on strategic plan progress at regular Board meetings.

Upon a motion made by Mrs. Nolan and seconded by Dr. Iorio, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn to executive session at 8:25 p.m. to discuss legal matters.

Upon a motion made by Dr. Meyers and seconded by Mrs. Nolan, the Board voted to come out of executive session and adjourn at 9:15 p.m. No action was taken in executive session.

Respectfully submitted,

Lorri L. Hahn
Clerk to the Board of Education