

**GUILFORD BOARD OF EDUCATION
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 2006
GUILFORD HIGH SCHOOL, GUILFORD, CONNECTICUT**

1. Call to Order

Chairman Bloss called the meeting to order at 7:32 p.m. Board of Education members present were Keith Bishop, William Bloss, Cynthia Cartier, Barbara Dudley, Louis Iorio, Naomi Migliacci, Kathleen Nolan, and Ted Zuse. Administrators present were Tom Forcella, Anne Keene, Bruce Hall, Nancy Bishop, Gary Endean and Ian Neviasser. Also present were Business Manager Andy Potochney and Accounting Manager Linda Trudeau.

Upon a motion made by Mr. Zuse and seconded by Mrs. Dudley, the Board voted unanimously to move the executive session for personnel and negotiations to the end of the regular meeting.

Action on Minutes of:

1.1 January 9, 2006 (Finance Subcommittee)

Upon a motion made by Mrs. Nolan and seconded by Mr. Bishop, the Board voted unanimously in favor of approving the minutes of January 9, 2006.

1.2 January 9, 2006 (Regular Meeting)

Upon a motion made by Dr. Iorio and seconded by Mrs. Nolan, the Board voted unanimously in favor of approving the minutes of January 9, 2006.

1.3 January 10, 2006 (Joint BOE/BOF Finance Subcommittee)

Upon a motion made by Mrs. Nolan and seconded by Mrs. Dudley, the Board voted unanimously in favor of approving the minutes of January 10, 2006.

1.4 January 14, 2006 (Executive Session – Special Meeting)

Upon a motion made by Dr. Iorio and seconded by Ms. Migliacci, the Board voted unanimously in favor of approving the minutes of January 14, 2006.

1.5 January 23, 2006 (Policy Subcommittee)

Upon a motion made by Mrs. Cartier and seconded by Ms. Migliacci, the Board voted seven in favor of approving the minutes of January 23, 2006. Mrs. Nolan abstained from the vote.

1.6 January 23, 2006 (Working Committee)

Upon a motion made by Mrs. Dudley and seconded by Mr. Zuse, the Board voted unanimously in favor of approving the minutes of January 23, 2006 with one correction.

1.7 January 24, 2006 (Budget Workshop – Public Input)

Upon a motion made by Dr. Iorio and seconded by Mr. Bishop, the Board voted unanimously in favor of approving the minutes of January 24, 2006.

1.8 January 25, 2006 (Budget Workshop – Public Input)

Upon a motion made by Mrs. Nolan and seconded by Mrs. Dudley, the Board voted unanimously in favor of approving the minutes of January 25, 2006.

1.9 January 30, 2006 (Special Meeting)

Upon a motion made by Mrs. Nolan and seconded by Mrs. Dudley, the Board voted unanimously in favor of approving the minutes of January 30, 2006.

**2. Review and Approval of Expenditures for the Month of January
Reviewer for the Month: Ted Zuse**

Mr. Zuse reviewed the warrants dated January 3, 2006, January 11, 2006, and January 25, 2006. He noted that the district spends \$3,237 for trash pick-up and \$4,789 monthly to lease copy machines. He added that an additional \$22,000 was paid for maintenance of the copy machines.

Mr. Zuse reported that the oil and fuel bills for heat and transportation totaled \$108,870. He noted that the district paid Pitney Bowes \$4,000 for the rental of postage machines. He suggested that the district consider buying postage on-line. He also noted two payments to Earth Technologies totaling \$4,166 for removing and transporting hazardous waste from Guilford High School (GHS).

Mr. Zuse also noted a payment of \$23,400 to Hungerfords/Connecticut Water Co. for the water tanks at Melissa Jones. Mr. Zuse also noted the payment of \$585,802.61 for medical, life and disability insurance.

Finally, Mr. Zuse reported a payment to the student activity fund of \$22,500, noting that \$15,000 was for referees, \$4,500 for tickets, and \$3,000 for other. He noted that the Board's finance subcommittee might address the management of this account.

Upon a motion made by Ms. Migliacci and seconded by Mrs. Dudley, the Board voted unanimously in favor of approving the expenditures for the month of January as presented by Mr. Zuse.

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

None

4. Communications

Mrs. Dudley reported on a presentation about a virtual high school program she attended at Project LEARN on January 12. She stated that Director of Development, Doreen Marvin, provided an overview of the 150 on-line courses available to several towns in Connecticut. Courses cost approximately \$500 and can be taken at home or at school. LEARN reports a 90% success rate for course completion.

5. Student Representatives

Jonathan Baker reported that there was a Technical Career Fair at GHS with representatives from technical schools, community colleges, hairdressing schools, and culinary arts programs. Calvin Leete will have several gymnastics shows taking place from February 13 – 15, and the school will kick-off their annual read-a-thon on February 28. Calvin Leete also hosted a Kindergarten orientation on February 9.

Mr. Baker further reported that Guilford Lakes will celebrate Sharing and Caring Day on February 14. Lakes will host a special education screening for preschool students on February 15. A.W. Cox will begin a cultural enrichment month beginning on February 16 with PTO sponsored events.

Mr. Baker noted that Team 8-1 at Adams Middle School will be taking a trip to the Museum of Natural History on February 16. On February 17, Adams will have Spirit/Crazy Hair Day. On Monday, February 27 there will be an 8th grade orientation at GHS. On Tuesday, February 28 Adams will hold its annual spelling bee and CMT practice testing.

6. Superintendent's Report

6.1 Health Advisory Committee Presentation

Dr. Forcella stated that a wellness policy must be created by Fall 2006. Nancy Bishop, member of the Health Advisory Committee (HAC), summarized the history of the committee, and introduced Dr. Marlene Schwartz, an expert on childhood nutrition, member of HAC, and parent of three children at Calvin Leete.

Dr. Schwartz presented a slide show on Promoting Student Health in Guilford, including an overview of nutrition research, 2004 and 2005 survey results from Guilford parents, and information about the federally mandated local wellness policy for 2006.

Dr. Schwartz discussed the steady increase of obesity in the U.S., compared overweight and obesity data for children nationally with children at Calvin Leete and A.W. Cox, and risks of poor nutrition and inactivity. She also discussed eating behaviors, food preferences, the impact that accessibility has on consumption, portion sizes, the advertising of unhealthy food versus healthy foods, and using food as a reward.

Dr. Schwartz summarized the activities of HAC including the following activities in 2004: a parent opinion survey, a student nutrition survey, and a collection of data on students' weight. In 2005, the committee completed the following: a school lunch fruit study, a student nutrition survey, and a collection of student weight data.

She explained that in 2006 the committee will focus on the research that shows that healthy children learn better and score higher. HAC will complete the School Health Index for all Guilford schools, and will draft a school wellness policy. The wellness policy will include the following components: nutrition guidelines for foods in school, nutrition education, physical activity promotion in school, and measurements and evaluations for the implementation.

Dr. Schwartz summarized the results of the 2004 parent survey. She stated that 92% of parents feel that food should not be used as a reward in school, two-thirds of parents are concerned about their children's nutrition, and two-thirds of parents feel their child eats too many sweets.

She reported that in the 2004-2005 school year ala carte snack foods were removed from the elementary schools. A study in 2005 concluded that home consumption of unhealthy snacks did not increase despite the elimination of the snacks at school, resulting in an overall reduction of unhealthy snack consumption.

Dr. Schwartz concluded that the school needs to create an environment that supports good nutrition and physical activity.

Mr. Zuse asked what can be done for children who do not get enough to eat, especially in the morning. Dr. Schwartz responded that a breakfast program might be an option to consider at the high school.

Discussion continued about distributing materials to parents and teaching students how to eat healthy. Mrs. Cartier added that part of implementing the wellness policy will be finding ways for the staff to embrace it and it is her hope that HAC will be involved in that process. Dr. Iorio added that healthy eating habits depend on parents and beginning the process early in children.

Mr. Bishop added that a challenge facing the school system is the expense and perishability of certain foods.

Mr. Zuse asked if the committee is concerned about the effect limiting food choices may have on children who do not eat enough food. Dr. Schwartz explained that it is most important that children eat nutrient-dense foods, rather than foods with high caloric levels. She added that parents are free to include a variety of foods in lunches they prepare for their children to bring to school.

Dr. Iorio added that the wellness policy will benefit both underweight and overweight children by teaching healthy eating habits.

Barry Felson, parent of a five-year-old student at A.W. Cox, expressed his concern over the amount of unhealthy snacks served to students for various celebrations in the classroom. He does not want other parents to teach his child to eat in a way that will endanger his health. He added that he hopes the Board will not only develop a wellness policy, but also develop guidelines to enforce the policy.

Prior to the next agenda item, Chairman Bloss asked Michael Ayles, Co-Chairman of the Standing Building Committee, to answer questions from the Board about the Community Task Force on School Facilities (CTFSF) report for projects proposed at Calvin Leete and Baldwin.

Mr. Ayles provided an overview of the contingencies included in the project costs. He explained that generally 10-15% is the most acceptable contingency percentage in the industry for construction projects, particularly on projects involving existing structures. He detailed each of the four contingencies: design, escalation, construction, and project. Mr. Ayles concluded that the Standing Building Committee is satisfied with the numbers provided by architects Fletcher Thompson.

6.2 Strategic Plan Update

Dr. Forcella presented a sample layout for the action steps of the Strategic Plan. He explained that the action teams developed steps and included notes for each step. He has added a space to assign the responsibility of each action step to a specific staff member and an additional space to record the end result of the action. Another area will be included to reflect the costs, if any, associated with the action.

Dr. Forcella reported that he has been meeting with faculty at each school to identify critical issues and then compare these issues with the action steps identified. He will then meet with the members of the actions teams and steering committee to get their feedback on the rubric created for the action steps and the critical issues identified.

Dr. Forcella noted that there are many action steps that have been implemented or are in process. He further explained that a five-year timeline identifying all of the action steps needs to be developed. He stated that some of the action steps have costs associated with them and he recommended the Board develop a five-year financial plan to incorporate the action steps with the other needs of the district during these years.

Dr. Forcella also stated that the Board and the administration need to consider the impact on human resources in the district when planning the implementation of the action steps. He stressed the importance of establishing a vision for the plan and the future of the district.

Dr. Forcella stated that his next step will be to provide the Board with a list of those actions already taking place in the district. Once he has met with the action teams and steering

committee, a complete summary of all action steps will be developed. He added that the Strategic Plan will be a regular agenda item at Board meetings.

In response to a question by Mr. Zuse regarding the action step to develop an Instructional Council, Dr. Keene explained that this step will be done in April. She anticipates that there will be representatives from each school, parents, and Board members. She anticipates that there will be faculty with expertise in specific subject areas represented.

6.3 CTFSF Action Step 2 – Scope of Services (exhibit)

Dr. Forcella explained that the CTFSF would like feedback from the Board regarding the scope of services expected. Chairman Bloss asked Board members to review the document and provide any feedback to him and he will give it to the CTFSF.

Mr. Bishop encouraged the Board to provide feedback in a timely manner to insure that the CTFSF can continue its work.

Mr. Zuse asked if it might be feasible for some of the work in the facilities plan be done by the district's facilities manager.

7. Board Agenda

7.1 Appointment of Board Representative to the Professional Development Committee

Chairman Bloss explained that currently Sandy Whelan is the Board's representative to the Professional Development Committee. He asked that any Board member interested in serving on the committee contact him.

7.2 APPROVE Recommended Appointments for Community Task Force on School Facilities

Chairman Bloss announced the appointments of Larry Gelo and Gus Kellogg to the CTFSF.

7.3 RECEIVE FOR POSSIBLE ACTION: Community Task Force on School Facilities Study

Chairman Bloss reminded the Board that in the short term there will not be any work needed on the septic system at Adams based on the CTFSF study. He summarized the recommendations for the Baldwin addition and site improvements and Calvin Leete window replacement and mechanical system upgrades, stating the costs for the projects as \$11,570,000 and \$5,169,000 respectively. These costs do not reflect any state reimbursements.

Following a statement from each Board member present, the consensus was to recommend the bonding of the Calvin Leete project by the Board of Finance and to postpone the

Baldwin project. The Board members agreed that the Calvin Leete project is necessary to improve the ventilation system and replace the outdated mechanicals and boilers. They also agreed that it would be important to receive the results of the studies planned by the CTFSF for Adams and GHS space reconfigurations and other renovations before proceeding with the current recommendations for Baldwin.

Mr. Bishop stated that it had been the goal of the CTFSF to have the studies completed by this time on Adams and GHS so the Board could evaluate all of the projects at once. He added that the Board may need to consider portable classrooms at Baldwin to alleviate some of the overcrowding issues.

Dr. Forcella added that there are significant space issues relative to special needs of incoming students for the 2006-07 school year and those needs will need to be addressed.

Mr. Zuse expressed concern about the lack of direct control the Board of Education has over construction projects and their costs. He added that he hopes that the work proposed for Leete will cost less than the proposed \$5,169,000. He also questioned whether the Board might have supported the Baldwin project if the proposed costs were similar to the original estimates for work at Baldwin received in 2003.

Upon a motion made by Mr. Bishop and seconded by Mrs. Dudley, the Board voted unanimously in favor of approving the recommendations by the Community Task Force on School Facilities for Calvin Leete School for window and entrance replacement in the amount of \$1,325,000 and mechanical system upgrades in the amount of \$3,844,00 and forwarding a request to the Board of Finance to include these projects in their recommendations for bonded capital projects to be included in the April 11, 2006 referendum.

Chairman Bloss asked for a motion to forward the CTFSF recommendations for Baldwin Middle School. Hearing none, the Board did not move forward with this recommendation.

Chairman Bloss thanked the CTFSF for the work they have done and will continue to do. He acknowledged the amount of money the CTFSF saved the Town as a result of their thorough studies of Adams' septic system.

Mr. Bishop added that the CTFSF is considering separating the components of the Baldwin project, explaining that the reconfiguration of the bus loop and parking has a higher priority than classroom additions.

Mrs. Dudley asked the administration to address the space needs of the orchestra at Baldwin as they are currently using part of the cafeteria for their rehearsals.

Mrs. Nolan asked the administration to provide the Board with the costs associated with portable classrooms at Baldwin.

7.4 ACT ON Superintendent's Recommendation Regarding the Implementation of a New Schedule at Guilford High School

Bruce Hall and Ian Neviaser presented a proposal for Block Scheduling entitled "Opportunities for Extended Learning Time." Mr. Hall explained that the proposed schedule will provide students with more in-depth learning, enable all students to schedule a lunch, and will slow down the frenetic pace of the school day. He also noted that the two areas that will require the most attention when making the change to the A/B Block will be facilities and professional development.

Mr. Neviaser provided a history of scheduling at the high school from the late 1980's to today. He explained that currently the high school does use an A/B Block for Science and PE. In March 2004, the scheduling committee surveyed the Guilford Education Association (GEA) and the majority of staff voted for periods of 60-90 minutes. In 2005, the GHS staff voted for the A/B Block Schedule when presented with 3 different scheduling options. Professional development began in 2005 to prepare staff for teaching in an extended time period.

Parent meetings were held in 2005 and 2006 to educate parents on the A/B Block Schedule. Ongoing meetings will take place to determine how to increase the capacity of the GHS cafeteria. Ongoing and future plans include additional professional development for staff, meetings with parents, students, and community members to explain the schedule and address concerns, and the regular meeting of a block scheduling committee to ensure that all teachers are prepared to use extended time effectively.

Mr. Neviaser outlined the other schedules that were considered and their pros and cons. The schedule options considered were the following: trimester, rotating drop/floating (6, 7, or 8 periods over 4 days), and the 4 x 4 Block.

Mr. Neviaser detailed the pros and cons of the A/B Block. He stated that while the committee identified a few concerns with the schedule, the benefits are significant including the following: the implementation of concept-based curriculum which promotes higher order thinking, extended learning time that allows for more authentic assessments and offers teachers the opportunity to expand their implementation of "Best Practices" as identified in the district goals, and the opportunity for teachers to further the use of technology in the classroom and offer more student centered activities.

Mr. Neviaser also noted the decreased time students will spend in the hallways; 19 minutes versus 42 minutes each day, and the increase of yearly contact hours from 986 to 1039.5.

Dr. Forcella stated that he believes in an extended learning schedule and specifically the A/B Block. He explained that the block schedule can change the culture of the school, allowing for more higher order thinking by students and more collaboration for staff.

Dr. Forcella explained that while the administration is committed to the the A/B Block, Mr. Hall, Mr. Neviaser, Dr. Keene and he believe that the district should wait one more year,

until 2007-08 to implement the schedule. This will allow time for more comprehensive professional development for staff, the hiring of a consultant, modeling and reflective practice by teachers, a plan for ongoing training, and the necessary facility evaluations and accommodations.

Mrs. Nolan reported that a parent had contacted her expressing concern about the extended time period for her child with special needs. Dr. Forcella explained that modifications will be made for specific needs.

Dr. Forcella added that he has had experience with block scheduling in other districts and the feedback from both staff and students is very positive.

Ms. Migliacci expressed her support of the block schedule. She stated that the schedule allows for more individualized teaching implementing many different methods, a less stressful day, and the implementation of many interesting opportunities for students during extended study hall periods. She added that the Learning and Teaching area of focus from the Strategic Plan will benefit from this type of schedule.

Chairman Bloss suggested delaying action on this proposal. Dr. Forcella suggested that the Board should make a commitment to the Block Schedule for the year 2007-08 in the near future so that the staff and administration can finalize plans for required professional development, address facilities issues, and take care of specific details involved with implementation.

Mr. Zuse commented that he believes it is important for the administration to view the comments and studies received from the public regarding block scheduling. Dr. Forcella and Dr. Keene encouraged Board members to forward all correspondence to them so they have a complete understanding of all of the issues and concerns.

Dr. Keene explained that many potential schedules were evaluated and the teachers are supportive of the proposed A/B Block. This support is critical to its success.

Dr. Iorio expressed his appreciation for Dr. Forcella's careful evaluation of the block schedule proposal and his willingness to defer the implantation until 2007-08. Dr. Forcella responded that the decision was a group one and included input from Mr. Hall, Mr. Neviasser and Dr. Keene.

7.5 APPROVE Donation of Computers and Monitors from the VNA Community Healthcare Inc. of Guilford (exhibit)

Gary Endean recommended the acceptance of the donation of the following computers and monitors from the VNA Community Healthcare Inc. of Guilford: one Dell Model D-L733R – 733 MHz computer, nine Gateway Models GP7-550 – 550 MHz computers, eight Dell Models P-410 – 450 MHz computers, eleven Dell 17-inch monitors, and one Gateway 17-inch monitor. He explained that the district's technicians will configure the computers and provide any attention they may require.

Upon a motion made by Mrs. Cartier and seconded by Mrs. Dudley, the Board voted unanimously in favor of approving the donation of computers and monitors from the VNA Community Healthcare Inc. of Guilford.

7.6 ACT ON Request to the Board of Finance and the Board of Selectman to Approve Purchase of Snow Removal Equipment (New Agenda Item)

Chairman Bloss reminded the Board that Jim Saisa recommended that snow removal be handled internally as it will result in savings to the district of up to \$240,000 over seven years.

Chairman Bloss explained that the Board of Education must seek approval for the purchase of \$96,000 in snow removal equipment as the equipment will be financed.

Upon a motion made by Mr. Zuse and seconded by Ms. Migliacci, the Board voted unanimously in favor of requesting approval from the Board of Finance and the Board of Selectman to finance snow removal equipment in the amount of \$96,000.

7.7 ACT ON Request to the Board of Finance and the Board of Selectman to Include the Adams Middle School Boiler in Their Recommendations for Bonded Capital Projects (New Agenda Item)

Upon a motion made by Mr. Zuse and seconded by Mrs. Dudley, the Board voted unanimously in favor of requesting that the Board of Finance and the Board of Selectman include a boiler for Adams in the amount of \$100,000 in their recommendations for bonded capital projects.

8. Unfinished Business

None

9. Reports of Committees

Ms. Migliacci and Mrs. Cartier reported on the work of the policy subcommittee. The committee is reviewing all of the Board's policies. Mrs. Cartier reported meeting with Dr. Keene to discuss prioritizing the review of the policy manual. She stated that the Health Advisory Committee will be developing the new wellness policy to be implemented in the fall of 2006.

Mrs. Cartier also reported meeting with the Guilford Lakes PTO presidents, Laurie Dray and Katie Balestracci. She relayed their hope that the issue of large class sizes at Lakes will be addressed by the Board. Mrs. Cartier also stated that she has been receiving positive feedback from people in the community about the proposed world language program in the elementary schools.

10. Public Questions (four minute limit)

None

11. New Business

Mr. Bishop reported that the annual concert performed by the band, orchestra and chorus at GHS will be on March 1 at Woolsey Hall.

Upon a motion made by Dr. Iorio and seconded by Mrs. Nolan, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn to executive session at 10:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lorri L. Hahn
Clerk to the Board of Education

