

**GUILFORD BOARD OF EDUCATION  
MONDAY, APRIL 10, 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, Alan Meyers, Naomi Migliacci and Ted Zuse. Administrators present were Tom Forcella, Anne Keene, Merry Leventhal, Bruce Hall, Charlotte Nelson, Gary Endean, Bob Loizeaux, and Anne Snurkowski. Also present was Business Manager Andy Potochney.

**Action on Minutes of:**

**1.1 February 27, 2006 (Policy Subcommittee Meeting)**

Upon a motion made by Mrs. Dudley and seconded by Ms. Migliacci, the Board voted unanimously in favor of approving the minutes of February 27, 2006.

**1.2 March 13, 2006 (Finance Subcommittee)**

Upon a motion made by Mr. Zuse and seconded by Dr. Meyers, the Board voted unanimously in favor of approving the minutes of March 13, 2006.

**1.3 March 13, 2006 (Regular Meeting)**

Upon a motion made by Dr. Iorio and seconded by Ms. Migliacci, the Board voted unanimously in favor of approving the minutes of March 13, 2006, with one correction. Dr. Meyers was present at the meeting and was not included in the attendance.

**1.4 March 22, 2006 (Policy Subcommittee)**

Upon a motion made by Mrs. Dudley and seconded by Mr. Zuse, the Board voted unanimously in favor of approving the minutes of March 22, 2006.

**1.5 March 27, 2006 (Working Committee)**

Upon a motion made by Mr. Zuse and seconded by Mrs. Dudley, the Board voted seven in favor of approving the minutes of March 27, 2006. Mr. Bishop abstained from the vote.

**6.1 Student Recognition**

With the Board's permission, Chairman Bloss moved this item. GHS Principal Bruce Hall introduced Eric Goldstein from The Prudential Spirit of Community Awards program. Mr. Goldstein presented GHS junior, Elizabeth Americo, with a silver medallion in honor of being named Connecticut's top high school volunteer of the year. Ms. Americo will also

receive a \$1,000 award and an all-expense paid trip to Washington, D.C. for a series of national recognition events from May 6 to May 9, 2006.

Ms. Americo is the founder and president of the school club “Students for Health and Social Justice”, an organization dedicated to learning about poverty and community health issues, and taking action on them. Her group has sponsored an annual dance benefit and other fundraisers for health care programs in Haiti, tsunami victims, UNICEF and other causes.

Chairman Bloss expressed the Board’s admiration for her outstanding achievement. Mrs. Dudley invited Ms. Americo to come to a future Board meeting to report back on her trip to Washington, D.C.

**2. Review and Approval of Expenditures for the Month of March**  
**Reviewer for the Month: Alan Meyers**

Dr. Meyers reviewed the warrants dated March 1, 2006, March 8, 2006, and March 22, 2006. He stated that expenditures totaled 65.44% this year as compared to 64.01% at the same time last year. He noted that March 2006 had three pay periods as compared to two in March 2005. He also noted a credit of \$186,467.54 in the tuition account reflecting the receipt of the Excess Cost Grant from the State.

On the warrant dated March 1, 2006, Dr. Meyers noted the payments for medical, life and disability insurance totaling \$585,795.61.

On the warrant dated March 8, 2006, Dr. Meyers noted the purchase of books from local vendors and the 20% discount they offer.

On the warrant dated March 22, 2006, Dr. Meyers noted the large amount of energy bills and a payment to High 5 Adventure Learning Center for work on a ropes course at GHS. He also referenced a payment to Ear, Nose and Throat Medic in the amount of \$549.41 to evaluate a student’s hearing. He further noted payments of \$29,919.709 to ACES for tuition and \$5,500 to the University of New Haven for intern-contracted services.

Dr. Iorio asked why there was such a large difference in the percent expended this year to date in the Central Office as compared to last year at this time (91.65% in 2006 versus 14.97% in 2005). Mr. Potochney responded that purchases were made earlier in the school year this year.

Mr. Zuse noted the higher percentage expended for substitute teachers this year to date, 78.97%, as compared to 65.11% in 2005. Mr. Potochney responded that the district is using more substitute teachers this year and will be over the budgeted amount in this category.

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

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

Bobby Baird addressed the Board stating that a superintendent of schools in San Diego, CA received a \$25,000 award for his performance.

Doug Newman addressed the Board regarding item 7.4 Recommendation from Policy Subcommittee to remove five policies. He questioned why the policies were not on the district website. He expressed his frustration at not being able to access the policies online during the policy review process.

Mrs. Cartier responded that the policies will be online in the future. Dr. Forcella attempted to explain that the format is not consistent throughout the policy manual and that part of the review process will involve creating a consistent document.

Mr. Newman also referenced item 7.5 Executive Session for Negotiations with the Guilford Education Association. He stated that salaries and benefits represent 64% of the Board of Education Budget. He suggested that the teachers' union has different goals than what parents and the administration want or need. He said it is important for these groups to develop shared goals and asked that while the negotiations with the GEA are beginning, that the taxpayers should be assured by the BOE that they are getting a return for their tax dollars.

Chairman Bloss responded that it is not accurate to state that the teachers' union's goals are opposite those of parents. He also stated that the Board will be implementing a new bargaining model with clear expectations.

Bruce Hall stated his objection to the way Mr. Newman addressed Dr. Forcella.

Dr. Forcella continued his explanation of the policy review process, explaining that the policies will be entered manually to ensure accuracy and consistency. When the process is complete, the policies will be posted on the website.

Ms. Migliacci stated that there has been community involvement in policy development, referencing the community participation in the creation of the Wellness Policy.

**4. Communications**

Dr. Meyers commended the community on the efforts to publicize the April 11 referendum and encourage citizens to vote in favor of the Budget and Bond issue.

Dr. Iorio also applauded the efforts of interested citizens and the cooperation that exists between the Board and the community.

Mr. Bishop stated that Mauro Rubbo, Mr. Zuse, Dr. Forcella, Calvin Leete principal Nancy Bishop, and he participated in a GCTV program to explain the Calvin Leete and Adams projects to be considered in the April 11 referendum.

Dr. Meyers stated that Dr. Forcella, Dr. Keene, Mrs. Cartier, World Language Chair Sharon Jakubson and he participated in a GCTV program to explain the Budget.

## **5. Student Representatives**

Elizabeth Pino and Erin Staff reported that the junior prom will be May 6. They also reported that the GHS spring musical, “Guys and Dolls”, enjoyed sell-out crowds. The theatre department won the Connecticut Drama Association competition. Ms. Pino and Ms. Staff also reported that Voices, and the Jazz and Wind Ensembles will present a concert on April 11 prior to their trip to Orlando, FL. They also stated the schedules for AP and SAT testing in May.

The students also reported that they will be meeting with Dr. Forcella to discuss ways that they may become more active with the Board of Education.

## **6. Superintendent’s Report**

### **6.2 Strategic Plan Update**

Dr. Forcella updated the Board on the Strategic Plan. He explained that a meeting was held on April 3, 2006, with members of the Action Teams. He reviewed the results of this meeting, explaining that the Action Teams originally received a large amount of data from the focus groups that was compiled and then given to the Steering Committee to create the plan.

Because of the amount of information, the changes that have taken place since the Plan was created (new Board members and a new superintendent), and the need to continue to work with those who developed the Plan, the Action Teams and Dr. Forcella established guidelines and next steps for the Plan. Dr. Forcella also provided the group with an update on those steps already active.

The guidelines for the plan include the following: the plan must express common values, purpose and expectations; establish and maintain quality standards; ensure effective distribution of resources; and guarantee optimal return on investment.

Dr. Forcella stated that the district’s mission is the keystone of the plan and stressed the importance of ensuring that all elements of the plan are consistent with the mission, and that, if implemented, these elements will accomplish the mission.

Dr. Forcella explained that the Plan needs to clearly define where the district wants to be and the District Leadership Team needs to implement the action steps at the building levels.

Dr. Forcella shared a status update on those steps identified in the Plan that are already moving forward. These areas include: implementing world language in the elementary schools; increasing the professional development budget; new teacher support; walk through

training for administrators; mentoring in all seven schools; revising the Budget presentation format; and evaluating block and other scheduling alternative at GHS.

Dr. Forcella also stressed that the Strategic Plan must be dynamic. Areas of the Plan will change over time and it will be important to continually revisit and adjust the Plan.

Dr. Forcella explained that the Culture Action Team and the Resources Action Team were able to come to agreement on next steps. The focus area of Learning and Teaching will require another meeting as the amount of information is much larger and will take longer to review.

Dr. Forcella communicated the next steps for the Plan. He explained that the full plan, including updates being made this spring, should be approved this spring. The Plan must be effectively communicated to the public and the GPS faculty and staff. In the fall 2006, the development and interaction of committees and groups throughout the district will be defined with clear purposes and functions.

Additional next steps will include the following: ongoing parent and community feedback; the development of an annual report that includes student achievement data and other pertinent information that relates to the Strategic Plan; projecting cost implications for various aspects of the Plan; defining the decision making process; and school improvement planning.

Dr. Forcella stressed the importance of school improvement planning as this piece will require specific departments and each school to establish individual goals to accomplish the objectives of the Plan.

Mr. Zuse asked how the plan will be updated and revised. Dr. Forcella explained that there will be a district-wide team that will include Board members, community members, and school personnel. This team will meet annually to review data and oversee actions and results. They will then determine areas that need to be adjusted, added and addressed.

Mr. Zuse asked if there will be structure in place for assessing existing staffing and resources. Dr. Forcella responded that the District Leadership Team will be developing the processes for evaluating current staff, resources and practices and future needs.

Mr. Bishop stated that work has always been done at the building level but will now need to relate specifically to the goals of the Strategic Plan.

Chairman Bloss stated that he is encouraged by the commitment of the administration to the implementation of the Strategic Plan. Dr. Forcella added that the Strategic Plan will continue to be a monthly agenda item at Board meetings.

### **6.3 Quarterly Curriculum Report**

Dr. Keene provided updates on the comprehensive reviews for the Social Studies and Language Arts Curricula. She stated that the Social Studies Curriculum document is nearing completion. Meetings with committee members at each grade level K-12 have focused on developing guiding questions, addressing conceptual understandings for each standard, providing logical progression in skill attainment, and eliminating the overlap content that had been identified earlier. The K-12 committee will meet on April 12, 2006, to review progress and set the date for presentation to the Board. Marilynn Sturgess is leading this review.

Dr. Keene explained that one of the goals of the language arts committee is to combine the reading curriculum K-6 with the writing curriculum K-6 into one language arts document. Groundwork has begun with the reading resource teachers reviewing the two existing documents and suggesting ways to correlate the two. Teachers and administrators made a site visit to a Fairfield County elementary school that participates in the Teachers College Writing Project to observe the language arts block, and local data is being collected and analyzed to identify strengths and weaknesses as compared to the Language Arts State Frameworks adopted in February 2006. The district language arts committee will have an organizational meeting prior to the end of the 2005-06 school year. Curriculum completion is scheduled for spring 2007.

Dr. Keene reported on the targeted reviews for the K-8 Physical Education and Science and Math Curricula. The K-8 Physical Education teachers have identified lessons that integrate science concepts such as principals of force, pull, resistance, motion, velocity, gravity and friction into physical education. These lessons will be added to the Physical Education Curriculum as suggested activities in appropriate grades.

Dr. Keene reported that mathematics and science are closely connected and similar skills can and should be supported in both areas of curriculum. This year 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade science teachers were asked to support student improvement in the area of scientific notation and measurement through joint efforts. The math specialist provided science teachers with materials that would support this effort and the teams worked together to address these areas. Additional coordination of efforts between mathematics and science will be pursued.

Dr. Keene added that an additional FOSS unit will be added at every grade level next year.

Mr. Zuse asked when the new Language Arts Curriculum will be implemented. Dr. Keene responded that the new curriculum will be implemented in 2007 and that certain areas will be field tested in 2006.

Mrs. Dudley stated that she has met with Marilynn Sturgess to receive an update on the Social Studies Curriculum and the review process. She looks forward to working with this committee to finalize the new curriculum.

#### **6.4 Proposed BOE Workshop Calendar**

Dr. Forcella presented a workshop calendar with suggested topics for the monthly Working Committee meetings. He proposed the following schedule: April – Math Curriculum update and Budget reductions; May – critical issues with a teacher dialogue; June – superintendent evaluation; July – high school schedule; September – reading program; October – class size and Budget priorities (to include the leadership team); and November – technology.

Mrs. Cartier suggested that the Board meet with each administrator individually in either May or June to discuss concerns and issues at each of their schools and to provide the Board with a general status report.

Mrs. Cartier also stated that she would like the Board to discuss the Budget process during the summer. Dr. Forcella responded that the Board might consider a longer session during the summer to discuss the Budget and the Strategic Plan.

Dr. Iorio added that it will be important to include new teachers as well as veteran teachers in the discussions at the May Working Committee meeting.

#### **6.5 Medical Insurance Update (exhibit)**

Mr. Potochney explained that representatives from GPS and the Town met with four different insurance carriers and received bids for fully-insured and self-insured plans. Mr. Potochney summarized the bids and concluded that the best option will be to continue with our current self-insured plan with Anthem.

Dr. Meyers asked how often the school system is over budget on claims. Mr. Potochney explained that we do go over budget during some years. Dr. Meyers expressed concern over routinely exceeding the budgeted amount for insurance with our current self-insured plan. Mr. Potochney explained that typically the original budgeted amount for insurance is an area that will get reduced when budget cuts are made. The result is that insurance expenses are more likely to exceed the revised budget amount.

Mr. Zuse requested a history of the district's actual health expenses. Mr. Potochney will provide the Board with this information.

Dr. Iorio asked Mr. Potochney to explain the stop loss premium concept. Mr. Potochney explained that it is an umbrella policy that will cover individual claims over \$175,000 and if total claims exceed \$9,176,000 or 18%, then this reinsurance coverage will be activated to cover these additional expenses.

Chairman Bloss stated that the discussion of medical insurance will be carried over to the May 8, 2006, meeting and will include a review of actual health expenses.

#### **6.6 Deregulation Update**

Dr. Forcella explained that the Board participated in a joint meeting with the Board of Selectman and the Conference of Connecticut Municipalities (CCM). Chairman Bloss

explained that the CCM can provide a proposal to supply electricity to the school district's buildings for a set price for three years. CCM works with wholesale electricity suppliers. At issue are the price and the reliability of service. The district would be required to commit to a three-year contract locking in the price and would be hoping that the price of electricity would not go below the contracted rate.

The Board will continue to investigate other energy supply alternatives.

## **7. BOARD AGENDA**

### **7.1 ACT ON Personnel Items (exhibit)**

Upon a motion made by Mrs. Cartier and seconded by Mrs. Dudley, the Board voted unanimously to ratify the resignation of Gary Endean, Director of Technologies/Facilities, for the purpose of retirement, effective July 31, 2006.

Chairman Bloss stated that Mr. Endean has performed great service to the Town of Guilford and he will be deeply missed.

Upon a motion made by Mrs. Dudley and seconded by Ms. Migliacci, the Board voted unanimously to ratify the resignation of Charlotte Nelson, Jones Elementary School Principal, for the purpose of retirement, effective August 31, 2006.

Chairman Bloss stated that the district will be losing a great resource and a true positive leader when Mrs. Nelson retires.

Upon a motion made by Dr. Meyers and seconded by Mr. Zuse, the Board voted unanimously to ratify the resignation of Marjorie Williams, Jones Elementary School Grade 4 teacher, for the purpose of retirement, effective August 31, 2006.

### **7.2 DISCUSSION of Amendment to Pension Plan (exhibit)**

Chairman Bloss explained that a provision of the Pension Plan of the Board of Education and the Town requires a 3% annual contribution of the covered salaries. Since the Plan is 97% funded, it was recommended to the Board of Selectmen by the Board of Education in 2005 that this provision be eliminated from the Plan.

Upon a motion made by Mrs. Cartier and seconded by Dr. Iorio, the Board voted unanimously to request that the Board of Selectman amend the Pension Plan.

### **7.3 RECEIVE Recommendation for New Textbook: Conceptual Chemistry (exhibit)**

Dr. Keene introduced Lynn Curtis to explain why the selection committee recommended the Conceptual Chemistry textbook and support materials. Mr. Curtis stated that this textbook meets the needs of the level two chemistry course, designed for the college-bound student who does not plan to major in the field of science.

Dr. Iorio asked if the foundation of information that a student will receive using this textbook would be adequate if the student decided to major in the sciences in college. Mr. Curtis replied that it would be adequate as all of the core concepts of chemistry are included.

Dr. Meyers asked the publication date of the textbooks currently being used by science majors. Dr. Keene responded that those books were adopted in 2003.

Ms. Migliacci stated that she appreciated the in-depth review of the textbook that was provided to the Board. She asked about the supplemental support available online and the access to CDs from the publisher. Mr. Curtis explained that the publisher does supply web-based support and that this support is increasing. He also stated that CDs are available at a cost and that the final negotiations for this adoption have not been completed.

Discussion continued about the feasibility of buying less textbooks and more CDs and online courses so that students do not have to carry textbooks all of the time. The issue of all students' accessibility to technology was discussed.

Mr. Zuse asked if this course addresses the Board's and high school's interest in elevating the expectations for level two courses. Mr. Curtis stated that this textbook will increase the rigor of this course. It is currently also being used at the community college level. He explained that this textbook is more real-world based and user friendly.

Dr. Keene reminded the Board that the textbook is a resource and not the curriculum. It will support the curriculum but is not the only source of information in the classroom. She added that the chemistry text will be available at Lathrop House for public review for the next month.

**7.4 RECEIVE Recommendation from Policy Subcommittee to Remove:**

- **Policy #1410 Law Enforcement Agencies (exhibit)**
- **Policy #1414 Fire Department (exhibit)**
- **Policy #1500 Relations Between Area, State, Regional, and National Associations and the Schools (exhibit)**
- **Policy #1610 Relations Among Non-Public and Other Educational Organizations and the Schools (exhibit)**
- **Policy #1614 Relations With Parochial and Private Schools (exhibit)**

Mrs. Cartier explained that the current policy manual was completed in 1998. The Policy Subcommittee will spend up to six months to review all of the policies. The manual is not available electronically except for more recent updated sections.

Part of this process includes identifying policies that are needed, those that are not needed, and those that need to be revised. The Wellness Policy is being developed by the Health Advisory Committee. This policy will be implemented in the 2006-07 school year.

Mrs. Cartier explained that while the majority of towns do not post their policies on their websites, it is the goal of the Policy Subcommittee to post the district's policies as soon as they have been reviewed, revised and approved by the Board.

Mrs. Cartier explained that the committee identified five policies at their last meeting that they deemed unnecessary and elementary. The current policy manual is much larger than many district's manuals and the committee is looking to remove those policies that are not needed.

Dr. Meyers asked if the five policies being considered for elimination can be placed on the website. Lorri Hahn responded that they can be put on the website.

Mr. Zuse asked that the minutes of the Policy Subcommittee completely reflect the activity at the meetings so the Board can understand the process of the policy evaluations.

**7.5 Executive Session: Negotiations (Guilford Education Association)  
Personnel (Administrative Vacancy)**

Chairman Bloss, with the Board's permission, moved this item to the end of the meeting.

**8. Unfinished Business**

None

**9. Reports of Committees**

Mr. Zuse reported that the Budget Subcommittee will be evaluating the Student Activity Fund and the BOE will receive a report in August of how the money is used and the process of managing this fund.

The subcommittee is evaluating the process of the Budget presentation. Dr. Forcella and Mr. Potochney will be contributing their recommendations on how this process should work.

Mr. Bishop reported that the Land Acquisitions Committee continues to meet monthly.

Chairman Bloss reported that the Town has accepted a bid for the roof replacement at GHS. The scheduled date of completion will be August 2006. The Board will be expecting bids for the approved roof replacement at Baldwin and anticipate a completion date of August 2006 for that project of.

**10. Public Questions (four minute limit)**

Bobby Baird addressed the Board and urged the public to vote no on the April 11 referendum. He also suggested that the superintendent should make decisions without consulting committees.

Charlotte DeGrado reported that the PTA and Board members Dr. Meyers and Dr. Iorio were in the center of town passing out flyers and urging citizens to vote in favor of the Budget. She expressed her appreciation for their efforts.

Dee Jacob reported that she attended the Strategic Plan meeting on April 3 and thanked Dr. Forcella for the opportunity to continue to participate in the process. Mrs. Jacob expressed her concern that PTOs must pay for their own insurance at a cost of \$350/ea. She stated that the PTOs continually raise money to provide resources and programs to the schools and should not have to raise that money to pay for insurance.

Mrs. Jacob stated that several solicitations from outside organizations go home in children's backpacks and compete with the fundraising efforts of the PTOs. She asked that the Board consider this issue in the future.

Chairman Bloss responded that the Board is investigating the insurance issue and has been addressing the backpack issue in the Policy Subcommittee meetings.

Suzanne Carlson expressed her observation that the town is working as a cooperative team including parents, school staff and administration, and the Board.

Mrs. Cartier added her appreciation to Suzanne Carlson and Jenn Pensa for their help in taping the GCTV programs on the Budget.

#### **11. New Business**

None

Upon a motion made by Ms. Migliacci and seconded by Mrs. Dudley, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn to executive session at 9:50 p.m. The Board returned from executive session at 10:29 p.m. and adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Lorri L. Hahn  
Clerk to the Board of Education

