

**GUILFORD BOARD OF EDUCATION
MONDAY, MARCH 12, 2007
GUILFORD HIGH SCHOOL, GUILFORD, CONNECTICUT**

1. Call to Order

Chairman Bloss called the meeting to order at 7:37 p.m. Board of Education members present were Keith Bishop, William Bloss, Louis Iorio, Naomi Migliacci, Kathleen Nolan and Ted Zuse. Administrators present were Tom Forcella, Anne Keene, and Anne Snurkowski. Also present were Accounting Manager Linda Trudeau and Director of Operations Clifford Gurnham.

Action on Minutes of:

- 1.1 February 7, 2007 (Special Meeting)**
- 1.2 February 8, 2007 (Special Meeting)**
- 1.3 February 12, 2007 (Regular Meeting)**
- 1.4 February 13, 2007 (Special Meeting)**
- 1.5 February 26, 2007 (Workshop Meeting)**
- 1.6 February 26, 2007 (Special Meeting)**
- 1.7 February 27, 2007 (Special Meeting)**
- 1.8 March 1, 2007 (Special Meeting)**

Chairman Bloss noted that he believed there should be another set of minutes from a Special Meeting on February 12.

Upon a motion made by Mr. Zuse and seconded by Mrs. Nolan, the Board voted unanimously in favor of approving the minutes of February 7, 2007 (Special Meeting), February 8, 2007 (Special Meeting), February 12, 2007 (Regular Meeting), February 13, 2007 (Special Meeting), February 26, 2007 (Workshop Meeting), February 26, 2007 (Special Meeting), February 27, 2007 (Special Meeting) and March 1, 2007 (Special Meeting).

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

Total expenditures for the month of February were \$3,451,554.65. Mr. Zuse reviewed three warrants. On warrant S020107 totaling \$661,888.07, Mr. Zuse noted payments to the Town of Guilford for medical, life and disability insurance. He then referenced a handout showing medical benefit account projections through FY 2006-07 prepared by the Town. Currently there is a projected surplus of \$489,474. This money will be used to pay down the current fund balance of \$1,392,122.

On warrant S020707 totaling \$487,755.13, Mr. Zuse noted the following expenses: a payment to Hewlett-Packard Corp. in the amount of \$7,499.91 for 11 computers at Adams Middle School and a payment of \$11,500 to Mitchell College for tuition.

On warrant S022107 totaling \$342,482.73, Mr. Zuse noted the following expenses: A payment of \$18,055 to the Town of Guilford for the BOE share of the annual audit and \$22,046.95 to SimplexGrinnell for fire alarm and phone system service at all schools.

Mr. Zuse noted that of the \$20,000 budgeted for Unemployment Compensation, only \$381 has been expended to date. Mrs. Trudeau confirmed that tuition expenses are now projected to be \$60,000 over budget.

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

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

None

4. Communications

Mr. Bishop extended an invitation to the Board to attend the Robotics show that the new GHS Robotics Club, Apple Pi, will be competing in on Saturday, March 17 at the Hartford Convention Center.

5. Student Representatives

None.

Mr. Zuse requested an update from Dr. Forcella on the status of the student representatives as they have not been attending Board meetings. Dr. Forcella stated that he will provide an update.

7.3 RECEIVE Grades 1-4 World Language Curriculum (exhibit)

Chairman Bloss asked that this item and item 7.4 be addressed early in the meeting in consideration of the teachers making the presentations.

Elementary school World Language teachers Domenica Santoro and Laura Anderson presented the proposed Grades 1-4 World Language Curriculum. They explained that the goal of the program is to combine basic conversational language skills with the core subjects taught in that grade. The teachers researched the state frameworks and national standards when developing the curriculum as well as GPS curriculum for each grade.

Themes including math concepts and the calendar are spiraled throughout the grades, reoccurring in more detail as the children get older. Ms. Santoro and Ms. Anderson distributed the proposed curriculum to all teachers in grades 1 – 4 and to the elementary school principals and incorporated their ideas into the curriculum document.

Ms. Migliacci asked how the teachers might be using technology in their classes. They responded that they frequently use technology including an interactive SMARTBoard, LCD projectors and visits to the many websites available on World Language.

Dr. Keene explained that the first grade classes meet daily for 20 minutes in an environment where the teacher speaks entirely in Spanish. Much physical activity, songs and gestures are used to communicate and enhance comprehension. Dr. Keene noted that the proposed 2007-08 Budget includes the expansion of the FLES program to grades 2 and 3.

Ms. Anderson and Ms. Santoro stated that the children are excited about the Spanish program and are learning many concepts. The two stressed that planning time is a critical component in the success of the new program.

7.4 RECEIVE Grade 5 Social Studies Textbook Recommendation (exhibit)

Grade 5 teachers John Montanaro and Mark Diglio presented a PowerPoint presentation describing the evaluation process and features of the textbook they are recommending for adoption for Grade 5 Social Studies, “Building a Nation” from Scott Foresman Publishers.

The teachers explained that due to curriculum changes, a lack of depth in the current textbook, and the interest in utilizing available technology to advance students’ knowledge base, a new textbook is needed.

The recommended text is available online for students and teachers. The series features leveled readers, a video library and several additional ancillary materials. Because the text is available online, the Board need only purchase classroom sets for use during school and available to those students unable to access the internet from home.

The teachers explained that they read many favorable reviews on the text.

There was discussion regarding how many textbooks should be purchased relative to how many students will be able to access the text online from home. The teachers stated that textbooks will be available from the classroom to bring home as needed, but that the majority of students will access the information online.

The textbook will be available at the Superintendent’s Office for public review for the next month.

6.3 CTFSF Update

Curt Krushinsky from Fletcher Thompson Architects presented reports evaluating existing facility conditions at Adams Middle School and Guilford High School per the guidelines of Action Step 2 of the CTFSF Priority Path Recommendations.

Mr. Krushinsky explained that Fletcher Thompson interviewed several staff and administrators at both schools to discuss programming issues. They then met with Dr.

Forcella to discuss the issues raised to ensure their alignment with the goals of the district. Dr. Forcella noted that most of the issues were relevant to the district goals and therefore included in the Fletcher Thompson reports. The architects then developed a space program to address the potential programming needs for each department. Mr. Krushinsky explained that, based on State guidelines, both schools are under-sized. Adams is approximately 25,000 sq. ft. smaller than recommended State guidelines for a school with their enrollment levels.

The Board discussed potential State reimbursement, the different use of spaces in today's schools, and the importance of aligning programming needs and facilities needs.

Mr. Krushinsky explained the contents of the reports including enrollment and square footage guidelines; existing floor plans; educational space needs identified by staff; and an analysis of each of the building's systems.

Mr. Krushinsky addressed the issue of differing reports on the square footage at Guilford High School. District records indicate that the square footage is 225,000. In fall 2006, Fletcher Thompson determined the square footage to be closer to 175,000. Mr. Krushinsky reported that his firm just completed measuring the area of the high school and found it to be 186,000 sq. ft.

Mr. Bishop stated that it is important that the programming needs of the district are what dictate the facilities planning.

Mauro Rubbo asked for the Board's input on the information presented. He also explained that he has spent time developing the requested cost estimates associated with various scenarios for the facilities, including options related to grade reconfiguration. Mr. Rubbo explained that he will present this information at the May Board Meeting.

Chairman Bloss stated that the contents of the reports received will be discussed at the next Workshop Meeting.

6.1 Update on Director of Finance and Business Services Vacancy

Dr. Forcella explained that the interview committee completed six first interviews and has one additional meeting scheduled this week for the Director of Finance and Business Services position available due to the retirement of Andy Potochney. He stated that the goal is to find the best possible person for the position. He explained that two or three candidates may be asked back for second interviews or the search may continue.

6.2 Update on GHS Leadership

Dr. Forcella explained that Bruce Hall, Principal of Guilford High School, has submitted his resignation. Dr. Forcella thanked Mr. Hall for his years of service to the Guilford Public Schools. He stated that Mr. Hall has always had the best interests of the students at heart and has earned their respect and trust through his actions.

Dr. Forcella stated that he has appointed Ian Neviasser to the role of Acting Principal through the remainder of the school year. The district will plan a forum for parents and the community to provide input into the characteristics they want in a high school principal. Staff, Board members and administrators will also provide input. A national search will be undertaken and candidates will be interviewed by an interview committee representative of all stakeholders – parents, staff, administrators and Board members.

Dr. Forcella has determined, through conversations with Dr. Keene, that an additional administrator will not be needed at the high school to complete this school year. He stated that both Dr. Keene and he are willing to assist Mr. Neviasser in his role as Acting Principal.

Dr. Forcella will provide a timeline for the search for a new principal at the next Board meeting.

6.3 Update on 2007-2008 Budget

Dr. Forcella stated that Chairman Bloss, Mr. Potochney, and he presented the BOE Budget to the Board of Finance. Dr. Forcella explained to the Board of Finance the importance of developing a needs-based budget that outlines all priorities for the district. He stated that the BOE has not received any feedback from the Board of Finance on the Budget at this time, but suggested planning a time for the BOE to address eventual recommendations from the BOF.

Dr. Forcella further stated that it would be productive for the Board to get information out to the voters regarding the proposed recommendations from the BOF. He suggested that a public meeting would be beneficial.

BOARD AGENDA

7.1 ACT ON Personnel Items (exhibit)

Chairman Bloss expressed the Board's appreciation for Bruce Hall's service to Guilford Public Schools. He stated that the students have strong affection for Mr. Hall as exhibited by their actions at graduation over the last few years.

Upon a motion made by Dr. Iorio and seconded by Mrs. Nolan, the Board voted unanimously in favor of ratifying the resignation of Bruce Hall, Guilford High School Principal, for the purpose of retirement effective August 31, 2007.

Chairman Bloss expressed the Board's gratitude to Mrs. Vanacore for her 25 years of service to Guilford Public Schools.

Upon a motion made by Mrs. Nolan and seconded by Mr. Bishop, the Board voted unanimously in favor of ratifying the resignation of Margaret Vanacore, Guilford High School math teacher, for the purpose of retirement effective August 31, 2007.

7.2 ACT ON Non-renewal of Non-tenured Teachers

Chairman Bloss explained that the Board traditionally takes this action in the event that budget reductions dictate any decrease in staff.

Upon a motion made by Ms. Migliacci and seconded by Mrs. Nolan, the Board voted unanimously to adopt the non-renewal of non-tenured, first year teachers.

A representative from the Guilford High School robotics club presented invitations to the Board to attend the March 17 robotics competition at the Hartford Convention Center. Guilford High School has a robotics team consisting of 25 members and 12 mentors helping them to compete for the first time.

7.5 RECEIVE Report on Annual Audit Findings

Mr. Zuse suggested that discussion on the annual audit findings be referred to the Finance Subcommittee. Mr. Bishop stated that he would have preferred to receive suggestions from the audit in the form of a manager's letter even with the excellent performance by the GPS business staff.

7.6 ACT ON Bid Recommendation for Melissa Jones Elementary School

Mrs. Trudeau presented information on the bid process to install a phone system at Melissa Jones Elementary School. She noted that nine vendors attended the mandatory pre-bid meeting. Four vendors submitted bids for the project. Opticom Inc. of Middletown, CT was the low bidder with a bid of \$22,615. She recommended that the bid be awarded to Opticom Inc. Mrs. Trudeau noted that the district's Director of Technology Kevin Mitchill wrote the specifications for the phone system.

Upon a motion made by Mr. Zuse and seconded by Mrs. Nolan, the Board voted unanimously to accept the bid of \$22,615 submitted by Opticom, Inc. for a new communication system at Melissa Jones School.

7.7 RECEIVE FOR POSSIBLE ACTION Recommendations from Policy Subcommittee

7.7.1 Revisions to Policy 4116: Appointment and Conditions of Employment (exhibit)

Chairman Bloss explained that the revised policy includes uniform hiring procedures by the Superintendent for certified staff. The policy also states that the Superintendent shall develop a regulation establishing a procedure for recruiting and hiring certified administrative staff.

Mr. Zuse asked what information the Board will receive from the Superintendent relative to the report he will submit when nominating an administrative candidate for the Board's approval. Mr. Bishop suggested that the proposed Regulation 4116 outlines the information. Dr. Forcella explained that the Board will receive a resume and the other materials that the

interview team has been given. Chairman Bloss added that the Board member(s) on the interview team would be expected to communicate information about the candidates throughout the interview process back to the Board.

Mr. Zuse stated that he supports the existing policy of the Board whereby the Board will meet and interview the final candidates nominated by the Superintendent.

Chairman Bloss responded that the hiring process recently completed, that resulted in the employment of Paula McCarthy as Principal at Melissa Jones, was very effective and based on the procedures outlined in the proposed policy and regulation.

Mr. Bishop added that he would be concerned about taking responsibility away from the Superintendent in the hiring process.

Mrs. Nolan noted that she believes administrative searches have been conducted thoroughly and thoughtfully in the district and she is confident that Dr. Forcella will continue this practice.

Dr. Iorio stated that, while he supports the proposed policy and procedures, he is sensitive to the suggestions made by Mr. Zuse. Dr. Iorio suggested that any Board member who would like to participate in the interview process would be able to do so.

Upon a motion made by Dr. Iorio and seconded by Mrs. Nolan, the Board voted five in favor of approving the revisions to Policy 4116: Appointment and Conditions of Employment. Mr. Zuse opposed the revisions to the Policy as presented.

7.7.2 (New) Regulation 4116: Appointment and Conditions of Employment (exhibit)

Upon a motion made by Ms. Migliacci and seconded by Mrs. Nolan, the Board voted unanimously in favor of approving New Regulation 4116: Appointment and Conditions of Employment.

8. Unfinished Business

None

10. Reports of Committees

None

11. Public Questions (four minute limit)

Doug Newman asked what the process and time frame is for hiring a new principal for the high school. Chairman Bloss reiterated the earlier discussion about Mr. Hall's resignation, the appointment of Mr. Neviasser as Acting Principal, and the search process.

Mr. Newman noted that the PTOs in the schools are buying SMARTBoards, playground equipment and other items for their schools. He asked if there is a Board policy that addresses which items should be budgeted and which items can be purchased by PTOs. Dr. Forcella explained that technology decisions include input from the district's Director of Technology.

Dr. Forcella suggested that the PTOs be given some guidance when making large purchases for the schools.

12. New Business

Mr. Zuse reported that the recent reading forum attended by Dr. Forcella, Board members and approximately 60-70 community members was very informative. He noted that one of the points made was that while 95% of students have the ability to read at or above grade level, very few districts achieve this rate of success. One of the reasons identified is the lack of training received by teachers, while in college, to teach reading in grades K-3.

Dr. Forcella commented that the district's belief system that all students can learn at high levels supports increasing reading levels. He also stressed the importance of professional development and planning time for staff.

Upon a motion made by Mr. Zuse and seconded by Ms. Migliacci, the Board voted unanimously in favor of adjourning at 10:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lorri L. Hahn
Clerk to the Board of Education