

**GUILFORD BOARD OF EDUCATION
MONDAY, APRIL 9, 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, Cynthia Cartier, Barbara Dudley, Louis Iorio, Alan Meyers, Naomi Migliacci (arriving at 8:15), Kathleen Nolan and Ted Zuse. Administrators present were Tom Forcella, Anne Keene, Nancy Bishop, Ian Neviasser, and Anne Snurkowski. Also present were Accounting Manager Linda Trudeau and Director of Technology Kevin Mitchill.

Action on Minutes of:

1.1 March 12, 2007 (Regular Meeting)

Upon a motion made by Mrs. Nolan and seconded by Mr. Zuse, the Board voted unanimously in favor of accepting the minutes of March 12, 2007, with one correction noted by Mr. Zuse. (Ms. Migliacci was not present for the vote)

Mr. Zuse noted that in item 7.7.1, Revisions to Policy 4116: Appointment and Conditions of Employment, the minutes state that "Mr. Zuse would be willing to compromise and support a policy whereby the Board would meet and interview the final candidate nominated by the superintendent." The minutes will be revised to read, "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."

1.2 March 26, 2007 (Workshop Meeting)

Upon a motion made by Dr. Meyers and seconded Mrs. Dudley, the Board voted unanimously in favor of accepting the minutes of March 26, 2007. (Ms. Migliacci was not present for the vote)

Mr. Zuse asked about a set of minutes potentially missing from a February 12 meeting. Chairman Bloss asked Mrs. Hahn to revisit the matter and communicate results to him.

**2. Review and Approval of Expenditures for the Month of March
Reviewer for Month: Kathleen Nolan**

Expenditures for the month of March are 65.55% of the Budget, totaling \$4,147,152.12 . Mrs. Nolan reported that total expenditures compared to other months is higher due to three payrolls in the month. Last year also contained three payrolls so the percentage comparison is balanced. Expenditures in March 2006 were 65.44% of the Budget.

Mrs. Nolan reviewed the following warrants: Warrant S030107 totaling \$661,348.07; Warrant S030707 totaling \$275,887.29; and Warrant S032107 totaling \$527,100.32.

She noted that expenditures on S030107 were for medical, life and disability insurance payments. On S030707 Mrs. Nolan noted the following expenditures: a payment to Tradesman of New England, LLC in the amount of \$4,950.90 for an energy management system at GHS; payments to CDI and Dell in the amount of \$1,938 and \$800 respectively for computers; and a payment of \$11,511.06 to McGraw Hill Corp. for Spanish and French textbooks.

Mrs. Nolan reported the following expenditures reflected in S032107: \$2,428.88 to Queue, Inc. for CMT materials; \$1,089.31 to Dell Computer for a projector and ceiling mount; \$29,432 to ERACE for adult education; and \$9,780 to A & W Sanitation for septic pump-outs at Jones, Leete, GHS, and Lathrop House.

Dr. Forcella stated that he will provide a report projecting expenditures through year end at the May 14 regular meeting.

Upon a motion made by Dr. Meyers and seconded by Mr. Bishop, the Board voted unanimously in favor of approving the expenditures for the month of March as presented by Mrs. Nolan. (Ms. Migliacci was not present for the vote)

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

Suzanne Carlson noted the Distinguished Music Educator Award Recognition on the agenda and acknowledged the hard work and dedication of all of the music teachers in Guilford. She also encouraged the Board's support for the overnight field trip request from the music department. Mrs. Carlson also urged the public to support the April 10 Budget Referendum.

4. Communications

Mr. Bishop read a letter he received from John Jagielski urging the Board to place barriers on the perimeters of the lawns at the schools and to draft a resolution to stop the practice of parking on the lawns. Mr. Jagielski stated that parking on the schools' lawns damages them, causing ruts in the grass and also damages curbs.

Board members expressed their support of developing a plan to stop this practice. Dr. Forcella will speak with Guilford's Chief of Police and report back to the Board.

5. Student Representatives

Representatives Jonathan Baker and Erin Staff reported that GHS is in the process of redefining the responsibilities of the student representatives and encouraged the Board's input. They reported that Acting Principal Ian Neviasser continues to focus on improving the learning environment at GHS. Students are being asked what they are learning in their classes and the reasons for the lessons.

Jonathan Baker recognized the efforts of the GHS Apple Pi Robotics team. In the team's first year they competed in Regional Competitions in Hartford, winning Rookie of the Year honors and the opportunity to compete in Atlanta on April 12 - 14.

New student representatives, Jeff Cash and Marcus Pasay, were introduced to the Board by Mr. Neviaser. They will attend the remainder of the BOE meetings this school year and will serve for the 2007-2008 school year.

6. Superintendent's Report

6.1 Distinguished Music Educator Award Recognition

Dr. Forcella introduced Mr. Neviaser and Mrs. Snurkowski, principals of GHS and Baldwin Middle School respectively, to present the recipients of the Yale Distinguished Music Educator Awards: Carol Fonicello, Baldwin Middle School, Tahme Adinolfi, Guilford High School, and Mark Gahm, Guilford High School.

Mr. Neviaser noted that GHS Choral Director Tahme Adinolfi has been teaching at GHS for 21 years. She is recognized state-wide as a wonderful teacher and conductor and has received many awards including Outstanding Music Teacher of the Year by the CT Music Educators Association and Outstanding Conductor of the Year by the American Choral Directors.

Mr. Neviaser stated that Mark Gahm has been teaching in Guilford for nine years. Under his direction the GHS Concert Band and Wind Ensemble have received numerous regional awards. Mr. Gahm also conducts with the Greater New Haven Concert Band and Symphonic Wind Ensemble.

Mrs. Snurkowski explained that Carol Fonicello begins hundreds of students each year on a musical instrument. She noted the dedication Mrs. Fonicello has to her students and the significant role she plays in the transition of students from their first years playing an instrument through to high school. She noted the success Mrs. Fonicello has in instilling an appreciation for music in her students and a commitment to learning to play their instruments.

Chairman Bloss presented certificates to each of the music teachers, explaining that the awards are given by the Yale School of Music and sponsored by the Yale College Class of 1957. He explained that Guilford resident and member of the Yale Class of 1957, Augustus Kellogg, nominated the three Guilford teachers. Chairman Bloss noted the value of music education in the total education process and expressed the Board's pride in the fine music program in Guilford.

Chairman Bloss recognized Mr. Kellogg who expressed his pleasure in nominating the teachers.

6.2 Overnight Field Trip Request Report – GHS Music Department (exhibit)

Dr. Forcella explained that the GHS Concert Band and Symphony Orchestra requested his approval for a field trip to Washington D.C. in April 2008. He approved the request and asked that the music department provided specific information regarding the itinerary, chaperones, per student cost and fundraising activities.

6.3 Presentation on Proposal for New Student Information System (exhibit)

Dr. Forcella introduced Kevin Mitchill to present a proposal for a new student information system. Mr. Mitchill explained that a Student Information System Committee (including various staff members and a BOE member) analyzed the current and future information needs of the school district and of products available for the management of student information. He reported that the committee recommends the new web-based student information system, Powerschool.

Mr. Mitchill explained that the committee conducted research including a survey of CT schools to find out which information systems are currently being used. He noted that several schools are utilizing our current system, SASI. The committee evaluated ten systems based on criteria they established. Key components included the following: the system must be web-based; the system must be all-inclusive and utilize a single server; the system must be customizable for data including local assessments; and the system must be easily accessed by users.

The committee conducted online demonstrations of the identified systems and narrowed the potential systems down to three options. The committee met with representatives for each of the final products: Powerschool, eSchool Plus, and Star Student. Based on evaluating the three systems and the quotes for the systems, they recommended Powerschool. The quote for Powerschool was \$97,562 vs. \$233,730 for eSchool Plus. The committee determined that Star Student would not meet the needs of the district. Mr. Mitchill noted that 17 CT school systems including ACES and LEARN are currently using Powerschool.

Mr. Mitchill noted that the administration would like the Board to consider this item an exception to the bid process based on the committee's research and the many specific criteria needed to be met by the new system. He also asked the Board to expedite the approval process to allow time to implement the new system in time for the start of the 2007-2008 school year.

Chairman Bloss asked if there are any additional companies that could be solicited for this proposed new system. Mr. Mitchill stated that the committee carefully researched all potential systems to meet the needs of the district.

Mr. Bishop, the Board representative on the SIS committee, noted that the committee was very thorough in their evaluation of SIS products. He noted the ability of the proposed new system to provide parents with much information about their children's records and current

classes. He further noted that teachers will have access and the ability to input students assessments, and other important information including medical conditions.

Mrs. Nolan asked how long it will take the district to implement the new system. Mr. Mitchill responded that he and his staff will be trained on the new system and specific staff members will be trained on certain functions. General teacher training will be done by the GPS technology staff.

Dr. Meyers asked where the \$97,000 will be reflected in the Budget. Dr. Forcella explained that a portion of the money originally allocated to upgrade our current SIS will be applied toward the purchase of the new system and the balance will come from the technology budget.

Mr. Zuse asked if it would be possible for Board members to look at the product online. Mr. Mitchill responded that he will look into the possibility and email his findings to the Board.

Dr. Forcella asked that the Board consider this proposal as an action item at the April 23 workshop meeting.

7.1 RECEIVE Proposal for GHS Varsity Crew Team (exhibit)

Chairman Bloss asked the Board to consider this Board Agenda item at this time as a courtesy to those presenting the proposal, GHS Athletic Director Cbip Dorwin and crew team coach Will Thompson.

Mr. Dorwin explained that GHS has had a club crew team for three years that has competed with varsity crew teams state-wide. He is requesting that the Board consider making crew a varsity sport.

Mr. Thompson explained that the program has grown from 27 athletes in its first year to 61 in the current year. He noted that both the girls and boys teams have enjoyed much success over the past three years and it would be very meaningful for the students to be recognized as varsity athletes.

Mr. Thompson reviewed the potential expenses for the district associated with a varsity crew program and Mr. Dorwin confirmed that the costs are in line with those of other varsity programs.

Mr. Thompson explained that the coaching staff follows the protocol of the US Rowing Organization, and coaches will be certified by the State Department of Education.

Mr. Zuse asked for information regarding the ongoing costs for the program. Mr. Thompson agreed to compose a spread sheet outlining all costs.

The Board will consider action on this item at the May 14 regular meeting.

6.4 CTFSF Update

Dr. Forcella explained that the CTFSF is currently evaluating various options for the school facilities incorporating possible grade reconfiguration. Preliminary options will be presented at the CTFSF meeting on April 11. Dr. Forcella suggested that the Board meet with the CTFSF at the April 23 workshop meeting to review these options.

Chairman Bloss suggested, and the Board agreed, that the policy committee meetings be moved to 6:00 p.m. on April 23 and the workshop meeting time be moved to 7:00 p.m. to accommodate additional agenda items.

6.5 Professional Development Update

Dr. Forcella reported on the March 23 professional development day for staff. He explained that the Principles of Learning being studied by the District Leadership Team at the University of Pittsburgh will begin to be incorporated into the schools. Administrators and staff will be setting clear expectations in classrooms and developing professional learning communities within each school as defined by the Principles of Learning to improve instruction.

Dr. Forcella explained that Mr. Neviasser led a discussion with staff on March 23rd evaluating the current culture at GHS and the expectations for the future. Students will also be part of the process, as they are randomly asked what they believe expectations to be at the high school and their perception of what they are learning in classrooms and why. The administration is committed to creating a high performing, professional learning community. Classroom visits will continue throughout the district and dialogue will continue regarding structures within the district to accommodate professional development, more time to address student needs and more time for teacher collaboration.

Mr. Zuse asked if the Board may receive a summary of the feedback from staff and students at the high school. Dr. Forcella stated that Mr. Neviasser and his staff will be compiling these results and will pass them on to the Board.

6.6 Update on Director of Finance and Business Services Vacancy

Dr. Forcella explained that the search for a new Director of Finance and Business Services has been reopened. He stated that the district is committed to identify the best person for this visible position, noting that he or she must be able to work effectively within the school system, and with various Town boards and the community. Dr. Forcella expressed his thanks to Linda Trudeau for her extra effort and work during this transition process. He noted that Andy Potochney continues to work per diem.

6.7 Update on High School Principal Search

Dr. Forcella explained that advertising will begin in national publications for a new high school principal. The search process will follow the Board policy for hiring administrators

including input sessions with staff and the community. The first input session will take place for parents on May 2, hosted by GHS Connection. Dr. Forcella anticipates recommending a candidate to the Board by the end of this school year.

Dr. Forcella explained that there will be an application process for those interested in serving on the interview committee.

6.8 Update on 2007-2008 Budget

Dr. Forcella noted that the World Language program and the technology initiative remain in the proposed budget. Reductions in site improvements were made to meet the Board of Finance recommended decrease of \$380,000.

BOARD AGENDA (continued)

7.2 ACT ON Personnel Item (exhibit)

Chairman Bloss noted the great service Mrs. Dostert has given to the Town of Guilford, most specifically to her student and as a leader for the staff as GEA president.

Upon a motion made by Mrs. Cartier and seconded by Ms. Migliacci, the Board voted unanimously in favor of ratifying the resignation of Rose Dostert, Adams Middle School Language Arts Teacher, for the purpose of retirement effective October 31, 2007.

7.3 ACT ON Grade 5 Social Studies Textbook Recommendation (exhibit)

Chairman Bloss asked if additional textbooks can be purchased in a timely manner if it is determined that there are not enough copies. Dr. Keene explained that the publisher can provide additional books within 10 days if needed.

Mr. Bishop expressed his support of the recommendation.

Mr. Zuse asked about the use of the textbook. Dr. Keene explained that the textbook is a resource and is used to support the 5th grade social studies curriculum. Students will not read the entire textbook. Mr. Zuse expressed concern that students will not be able to access the textbook online and there may not be enough hard copies for all those needing them.

Mrs. Dudley suggested that the process has been well-researched by the teachers and Mrs. Snurkowski and she supports their recommendations.

Mrs. Snurkowski addressed the Board stating that on those nights when reading from the textbook is assigned to students, those students may print out the assigned pages online, allowing them to highlight and make notes directly on the pages. This process will also reduce the amount of time a student would need to utilize the family computer.

Upon a motion made by Dr. Meyers and seconded by Mrs. Dudley, the Board voted unanimously in favor of approving the adoption of the recommended Grade 5 Social Studies textbook.

7.4 APPROVE \$6,300 Donation from Guilford Fund for Education to the Guilford Public Schools (exhibit)

Chairman Bloss reviewed the projects that will be supported by the GFFE including the following initiatives: GHS Apple Pi Robotics Team; Guilford to Iraq Online Exchange; the purchase of a SmartBoard and a film series sponsored by Students for Health and Social Justice.

Upon a motion made by Dr. Meyers and seconded by Mrs. Dudley, the Board voted unanimously in favor of approving the \$6,300 donation from the Guilford Fund for Education to the Guilford Public Schools.

7.5 RECEIVE 2006-2006 Annual Report (exhibit)

Dr. Meyers noted a correction to the section of the report stating that Naomi Migliacci was elected as a democrat to serve a four-year term. The annual report will be revised to state that Ms. Migliacci was appointed to serve until November 2007 and that she is a republican.

8. Unfinished Business

Dr. Meyers expressed his appreciation to the Guilford PTA for distributing signs supporting the education budget and encouraging residents to vote on April 10.

9. Reports of Committees

Naomi Migliacci reported on the work of the Language Arts Curriculum Committee. She stated that the committee met from 8:30 to 3 p.m. on March 28 and subcommittees will continue to meet to complete their tasks. She explained the importance of making sure that all components of the curriculum and recommendations for each grade level have continuity as they flow into the next grade and across the curriculum.

Ms. Migliacci stated that the committee will have a proposed curriculum to present to the Board at the May 14 regular meeting.

10. Public Questions (four minute limit)

Roger Babbit addressed the Board asking for more information on the initiative of taking students out of classrooms to ask for their input on the lessons being taught. Dr. Forcella explained that part of the process of gaining information about teaching and learning and of setting clear expectations, involves asking for student input. He stressed that the goal is to evaluate overall school and district performance and not individual teacher performance.

Dr. Forcella encouraged Mr. Babbit to schedule a time to meet with him to discuss the district's goals and the work being done with the Institute for Learning to improve learning and help all students achieve at high levels.

11. New Business

Mr. Bishop reported that he has received questions regarding the athletic policy pertaining to potential conflicts that arise for student athletes who want to participate in educational or humanitarian trips during their sport's season. Dr. Forcella explained that the Athletic Department has developed a consistent policy for addressing this issue for all sports.

Mr. Bishop also reported that a Destination Imagination team from Guilford will be attending the finals in this academic competition.

Mr. Zuse reported that he has received correspondence regarding the use of gymnasium space by community organizations and suggested that the Board may want to review this process.

Upon a motion made by Mrs. Dudley and seconded by Ms. Migliacci, the Board voted unanimously in favor of adjourning at 9:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lorri L. Hahn
Clerk to the Board of Education