

**GUILFORD BOARD OF EDUCATION  
MONDAY, JULY 9, 2007  
GUILFORD HIGH SCHOOL, GUILFORD, CONNECTICUT**

**1. Call to Order**

Chairman Bloss called the meeting to order at 7:45 p.m. Board of Education members present were Keith Bishop, William Bloss, Cynthia Cartier (arrived at 8:30), Barbara Dudley, Louis Iorio, Alan Meyers, Naomi Migliacci, Kathleen Nolan and Ted Zuse. Administrators present were Tom Forcella and Anne Keene. Also present were Accounting Manager Linda Trudeau, Director of Facilities Clifford Gurnham, and Technology Director Kevin Mitchell.

**Action on Minutes of:**

- 1.1 June 11, 2007 (Finance Subcommittee)**
- 1.2 June 11, 2007 (Regular Meeting)**
- 1.3 June 18, 2007 (Policy Subcommittee)**
- 1.4 June 19, 2007 (Executive Session)**
- 1.5 June 25, 2007 (Workshop Meeting)**

Upon a motion made by Mrs. Nolan and seconded by Mrs. Dudley, the Board voted unanimously to approve the following minutes: June 11, 2007, (Finance Subcommittee); June 11, 2007, (Regular Meeting); June 18, 2007, (Policy Subcommittee); June 19, 2007, (Executive Session) and June 25, 2007, (Workshop Meeting) with one change noted by Mr. Zuse. Mrs. Cartier was not present for the vote.

Mr. Zuse noted that the vote on item 7.2 on page 5 of the June 11, 2007, minutes should read "Upon a motion made by Mrs. Cartier and seconded by Ms. Migliacci, the Board voted eight in favor to certify ... vending machine or school store. Mr. Zuse opposed the motion."

**2. Legislative Update**

Senator Ed Meyers provided an update on education issues discussed and addressed during the most recent legislative session. He reported that the minimum ECS grant has been increased from 6% to 9%. Guilford will realize a 4.5% increase in ECS funding from \$2.8 to \$3.1 million. The legislature is also working to close the underachievement gap that exists between many districts in CT. Senator Meyers also noted that the state is currently studying high school graduation requirements. Suspension and expulsion policies are also being studied with an emphasis on increasing the number of in-school vs. out-of-school suspensions. Senator Meyers reported that he has introduced a bill to monitor the use of restraints and seclusions in school to address behavioral issues. Finally, Senator Meyers reported that he introduced a bill restricting the use of pesticides on school grounds through grade 8.

Dr. Forcella and Dr. Keene addressed the issue of restraint and seclusion practices in Guilford's schools.

**3. Review and Approval of Expenditures for the Month of June  
Reviewer for Month: Alan Meyers**

Dr. Meyers noted that expenditures through the end of June are 99.06% of the budget as compared to 98.68% in the prior year. During the month of July we will be receiving and paying invoices applicable to 2006-07. Dr. Meyers stated that there is a projected surplus of \$50,000 to \$100,000 once all invoices have been paid.

Upon a motion made by Dr. Iorio and seconded by Mrs. Cartier, the Board voted unanimously in favor of approving the expenditures for the month of June, as presented by Dr. Meyers. Mrs. Cartier was not present for the vote.

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

David North addressed the Board regarding the proposed Language Arts Curriculum suggesting that it does not address the goals of the district's mission and is not ready to be "rolled out."

**5. Communications**

Chairman Bloss noted that Board members have received several communications related to the Language Arts Curriculum. He also noted the receipt of several communications related to the Wellness Policy and a misunderstanding of future actions of the Health Advisory Committee. Dr. Meyers explained that the committee plans to study what children are eating and being served during after-school activities at the schools, but that no changes are planned at this time.

Mr. Zuse asked if the district has any data on the change in the quality of food being served since the introduction of the Wellness Policy, explaining that some of the communications received suggest that the quality of the food is not as high as it was prior to the policy implementation. Dr. Meyers responded that the goal is to serve nutritionally sound food while trying to please the tastes of the students.

Chairman Bloss asked that a discussion on the Wellness Policy be planned for the October 2007 Board agenda.

Mr. Bishop noted a communication he received regarding athletic policies in the district.

Mr. Zuse noted a correspondence from the president of the Guilford Basketball League regarding the proposed changes to the building use guidelines for the school facilities.

**6. Student Representatives**

None

## **7. Superintendent's Report**

### **7.1 CTFSF Update**

Dr. Forcella reported that the CTFSF discussed a third option to renovate GHS. He stated that the task force will begin to discuss the costs associated with the different options. The goal is to provide preliminary cost estimates to the Board at the August 2007 meeting.

### **7.2 Calvin Leete Project Update**

Cliff Gurnham provided information to the Board on the Calvin Leete project explaining that all of the equipment to be installed is on site with the exception of some induction units. Currently the work is on schedule. A few areas of concern have arisen including unexpected asbestos issues, but these issues should not cause delays or excessive cost increases.

Mrs. Dudley asked how much time the teachers will have to put their classrooms together before school starts. Mr. Gurnham explained that the goal is to have the classrooms ready to move back into by August 20.

Mr. Zuse asked if there is a performance contract with the contractor. Mr. Gurnham responded that several performance expectations are noted in the contract and he would need to revisit the contract to identify where specific completion dates are noted.

Dr. Forcella stated that now that the ceilings in the Leete building are opened up to work on the duct work, etc., it would make sense to wire the building now for its new planned communication system.

Kevin Mitchill explained that the Town's Standing Building Committee will replace the existing data wiring with new materials. The additional wiring needed for the new communication system is in the technology budget for 2007-2008. Mr. Mitchill reported that the existing wiring to be replaced by the Standing Building Committee will cost \$19,000. Any additional costs associated with replacing the existing wiring will be met with money from a state grant. The cost for the new communication system and wiring will be approximately \$42,000.

### **8.4 ACT ON Authorizing Superintendent to Approve Bid for Calvin Leete Data Wiring and Phone System.**

The Board moved agenda item 8.4 to act on the wiring bids following the Calvin Leete update. Upon a motion made by Dr. Meyers and seconded by Mrs. Cartier, the Board voted unanimously to allow Dr. Forcella to approve the bids for the communication system at Calvin Leete with the understanding that Dr. Forcella will inform the Board of the selection when made.

**7.3 Overnight Field Trip Request Report – GHS Boys Varsity Hockey Team (exhibit)**

Dr. Forcella informed the Board of a request he approved for the GHS Boys Varsity Hockey Team to participate in the Maine High School Invitational on December 28 and 29, 2007. The team will leave on December 26 and return on December 29. The total estimated cost for the trip will be \$7,500 and will be funded by the organization and participants.

**7.4 Report on Projected Elementary Class Sizes (exhibit)**

Dr. Forcella noted that there have been additional enrollments in the first grade at Calvin Leete School. The administration is monitoring these classes, currently at 22 students per classroom.

Dr. Forcella will provide the Board with an update on 2007-2008 enrollments at the August 13, 2007, meeting.

**7.5 Proposed Changes to Facility Use Guidelines/Fee Schedule (exhibit)**

Dr. Forcella explained that in order to provide for the equitable use of the school buildings by town and private organizations Andy Potochney researched the fee structures and guidelines followed in surrounding towns, particularly for weekend use, and has recommended revisions to our forms and procedures.

Dr. Forcella explained that, in addition to revisions in the fee structure, limits were placed on the number of days that non-town agencies and groups will be allowed to use a building per application (a maximum of eight days). Non-town groups will now pay a fee for the use of school facilities during the week and on weekends.

Dr. Forcella noted that the building use needs of all of the local youth organizations during specific time frames/seasons will be identified in advance to plan for equitable use. He added that Guilford youth groups will be given priority over other organizations when requesting building use.

Dr. Forcella noted that the Board will need to approve the proposed fee structure at the August 2007 meeting.

**8. BOARD AGENDA**

**8.1 ACT ON Personnel Items (exhibit)**

Upon a motion made by Mrs. Cartier and seconded by Mr. Bishop, the Board voted unanimously in favor of ratifying the resignation of Katharine Patterson, Baldwin math teacher, for the purpose of retirement, effective August 31, 2007.

Upon a motion made by Mr. Zuse and seconded by Mrs. Dudley, the Board voted unanimously in favor of ratifying the resignations of Karen Feiss, Baldwin language arts teacher; Amy Riviere, Guilford Lakes grade 1 teacher; and Diane Foster, GHS math teacher, all effective August 31, 2007.

Upon a motion made by Mrs. Dudley and seconded by Mrs. Cartier, the Board voted unanimously to ratify the appointment of the following teachers: Colleen Delaney, Cox/Leete psychologist; Amanda Mazzarella, Leete grade 3 teacher; Ernest Smoker, GHS science teacher; Vincent Mascola, Cox grade 2 teacher; Daniel Shay, GHS math teacher; Barbara Tokarska, GHS math teacher; Laura Bernardi, Baldwin language arts teacher; and Dominique Argo, Adams language arts teacher, all effective September 1, 2007.

Dr. Forcella announced that the new GHS Principal, Rick Misenti, has 18 years of experience as a high school principal in Florida. He implemented the same *Learning Community Model* that will be implemented in Guilford. He has a successful track record of improving student performance in his schools.

## **8.2 ACT ON Bid Recommendation for Boiler Cleaning: 2007-08 (exhibit)**

Mrs. Trudeau reported that four vendors submitted bids to clean and calibrate the boilers at all GPS facilities. Air Dynamics, Inc. was the low bidder and has satisfactorily performed work on the boilers in the past.

Upon a motion made by Mrs. Nolan and seconded by Mrs. Dudley, the Board voted unanimously to approve the \$7,800 bid submitted by Air Dynamics, Inc. for boiler cleaning.

## **8.3 ACT On Bid Recommendation for Custodial Supplies: 2007-08 (exhibit)**

Mrs. Trudeau explained that 15 vendors submitted bids for the 107 custodial supplies on the bid list. 13 vendors successfully bid the lowest price for at least one item.

Upon a motion made by Dr. Meyers and seconded by Mrs. Dudley, the Board voted unanimously to approve purchases from the 13 vendors who submitted the lowest bids for 107 custodial supplies.

## **8.5 ACT ON Approval of Budget Transfers 2006-2007 (exhibit)**

Upon a motion made by Mr. Zuse and seconded by Mrs. Dudley, the Board voted unanimously to approve \$31,000 in 2006-2007 budget transfers requested by Mr. Potochney.

## **8.6 ACT ON K-12 Language Arts Curriculum**

Dr. Forcella provided an overview to the Board on the K-12 Language Arts Curriculum and the development process. He reminded the Board that a diverse curriculum committee representing faculty, parents, Board members and administrators met regularly, conducted extensive research and developed a relevant, rigorous curriculum that is defensible to the

community, parents and the Board. During the development process, the committee sought input from staff, held forums for the community and responded to questions from a variety of stakeholders.

Dr. Forcella explained that the proposed Language Arts Curriculum meets state guidelines, is aligned with the district's mission and incorporates the goals and philosophies of the National Reading Panel and many other experts.

Dr. Forcella noted that significant emphasis will be placed on the implementation of the new curriculum including the following: Curriculum notebooks will be created for administrators; data will be analyzed to determine the impact the new curriculum has on CAPT and CMT results; LA facilitators will hold monthly meeting with faculty and Dr. Keene; and two to three facilitators will attend the University of Pittsburg for professional development on implementing the curriculum under the learning community model.

Dr. Forcella further noted that the curriculum must address the needs of all students. Interventions must be clearly defined and strategies developed to meet the individual needs of all students. A guide will also be developed for parents to access the grade level expectations and understand the curriculum.

Dr. Forcella stated that the LA Curriculum is a living document and will continually be updated and revised as needed. He noted that it might be more productive and logical to conduct parent input sessions early in the development process.

Dr. Forcella concluded his overview by stating that he supports the new curriculum and believes it will increase student achievement in both reading and writing.

Dr. Keene noted that Baldwin Reading Specialist, Shawn Smith, and Board member Naomi Migliacci, both present, were members of the committee and would be able to answer questions from the Board.

Dr. Keene explained that a classroom continuum will be developed in addition to the intervention strategies for teachers. She also explained that an emphasis will be placed on reading in content areas and reading strategies for older readers in grades 4-12.

Ms. Migliacci stressed the importance of using the right strategies for students and of working with different subject areas to increase reading comprehension. She also noted that assessments, a parent guide and the teacher's guide are all key to the successful implementation of the curriculum.

Mrs. Nolan asked if phonetics are included in the curriculum. Dr. Keene responded that phonetics has been carefully identified as a part of the process, and that teaching is always about individual student needs and many strategies will be used to meet those needs.

Dr. Keene will provide an update to the Board on the implementation of the Language Arts curriculum in January and again at the end of the school year.

Mrs. Dudley expressed her support of the curriculum and the integration of reading and writing together. She stated that the new curriculum emphasizes literature and a commitment to reading throughout high school. She also stated that the curriculum is a significant improvement over our current program.

Mr. Zuse asked if the curriculum committee has made any significant changes to the draft since it was presented to the Board in May. Dr. Keene responded that typographical changes have been made, additional definitions have been included and additional work has been done on implementation strategies, but that the main content of the curriculum document remains unchanged.

Dr. Forcella explained, in response to a question from Mr. Zuse, that the implementation plan will be developed in time for the start of the school year. Both Dr. Forcella and Dr. Keene stressed that adjustments and additions to the implementation plan are ongoing. These changes will be reported to the Board during regular curriculum reports.

Mr. Zuse asked how much of the National Reading Panels' recommendations and findings are included in the new Language Arts curriculum. Dr. Forcella responded that the goals of the NRP have been considered and incorporated throughout the development process along with many other resources including Connecticut's Blueprint for Reading Achievement and the State frameworks.

Dr. Forcella, responding to a question from Mr. Zuse regarding individual teaching styles, explained that the development of professional learning communities within our schools will foster collaboration and a shared knowledge base of effective teaching and learning strategies.

Mrs. Cartier expressed concern about consistency between grade levels and between individual classrooms when interpreting the goals of the curriculum and delivering instruction. Dr. Keene explained that ongoing planning, collaboration and observations among teachers within grades and at monthly school-wide meetings will enable all teachers to share expectations and strategies with each other.

Dr. Meyers expressed his support of the curriculum citing the following reasons: the work of a "blue ribbon" committee to develop the curriculum; the endorsement of the curriculum by two Board members who are professional educators (Mrs. Dudley and Ms. Migliacci); the understanding that the curriculum is a living document subject to change; and the establishment of an implementation plan that includes regular updates to the Board.

Mr. Zuse expressed his support for the curriculum document, his excitement about the potential outcomes, and also concern that the document lacks clarity regarding expectations and detail. He also stated that he is optimistic that the document will continue to evolve and become the curriculum document it needs to be. Dr. Keene explained that specific outcomes and expectations are identified throughout the document, and cited examples.

Dr. Iorio agreed that the curriculum document is a work in progress, but believes that the document identifies standards and goals and is adaptable. He expressed his support for adopting the new curriculum.

Mrs. Cartier expressed her support with the following provisions: ongoing evaluation of the curriculum and its implementation by the committee; simplification of the format of the document; and assurance that content is taught consistently throughout the grades with measurable assessments.

Dr. Forcella noted that the evaluation of the implementation process will be done by the District Leadership Team and the evaluation and review of the curriculum can take place within the curriculum committee. He also noted that the format used for Language Arts is consistent with the format used for the other curriculum documents in the district. He suggested that a simplified, more user-friendly document may be developed for parents.

Chairman Bloss explained that he has read the Connecticut Blueprint for Reading Achievement and compared its content to the proposed LA curriculum. He noted that many of the recommendations and goals of the CT Blueprint are included in the proposed curriculum. He also stated that after viewing curriculum documents from high achieving school districts in CT including Avon, Westport, Madison and New Canaan he believes that our document is consistent with them and in many cases our expectations are more clearly defined. Chairman Bloss agreed with other Board members that the document continually be evaluated and modified as needed.

Upon a motion made by Mr. Bishop and seconded by Dr. Meyers, the Board voted eight in favor of adopting the K-12 Language Arts Curriculum. Mr. Zuse opposed the motion.

## **8.7 ACT ON Recommendations from Policy Subcommittee:**

**8.7.1 Removal of Regulation 5426(a-k): Job Descriptions-District Medical Personnel (exhibit)**

**8.7.2 Revisions to Policy 5218: Promotion/Acceleration/Retention (exhibit)**

**8.7.3 Revisions to Regulation 5326: Dress and Grooming (exhibit)**

The Board agreed to receive the Policy Subcommittee recommendations and carry over action on the removal of Regulation 5426, revisions to Policy 5218, and revisions to Regulation 5326 to the August 2007 Regular Meeting.

## **9. Unfinished Business**

Mr. Zuse asked about the progress on the demographic study. Mr. Bishop explained that the work is ongoing and the goal is to complete the study in August.

Dr. Forcella stated that enrollments are stable in the district in response to a question from Mr. Zuse.

**10. Reports of Committees**

None

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

None

**12. New Business**

Dr. Meyers expressed his pleasure at the conduct of the students, faculty, administration and Board Chairman during the 2007 GHS graduation ceremony.

Upon a motion made by Mrs. Cartier and seconded by Ms. Migliacci, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn to Executive Session at 10:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lorri L. Hahn  
Clerk to the Board of Education