

**GUILFORD BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING
MONDAY, JANUARY 14, 2008
GUILFORD HIGH SCHOOL LIBRARY, GUILFORD, CT**

1. Call to Order

Chairperson Bill Bloss called the meeting to order at 7:35 p.m. Board members present were Bill Bloss, Lou Iorio, Alan Meyers, Ted Zuse, Keith Bishop, Barbara Dudley, and Mary Beeman, Kathleen Nolan and Linda Sanacora.

Administrators present were Nancy Bishop, Anne Keene, and Tom Forcella. Also present was Accounting Manager Linda Trudeau, Business Administrator Andy Potochney and GEA President Debby Butler.

Selectwoman Cynthia Cartier administered the Oath of Office to newly appointed Board member, Linda Sanacora. Mrs. Sanacora will serve until November 2009.

2. Action on Minutes of:

- 2.1 December 10, 2007 (BOE Finance Subcommittee)**
- 2.2 December 10, 2007 (Regular Meeting)**
- 2.3 December 17, 2007 (Joint BOE/BOF Meeting)**
- 2.4 December 17, 2007 (Special Meeting – Interview BOE Candidates)**
- 2.5 December 18, 2007 (Special Meeting – Continuation of 12/17/07 meeting)**
- 2.6 December 20, 2007 (Special Meeting – Executive Session)**
- 2.7 January 7, 2008 (Special Meeting – Continuation of 12/18/07 meeting)**

Upon a motion made by Mrs. Nolan and seconded by Mrs. Dudley, the Board voted eight in favor of approving the minutes of December 10, 2007, (BOE Finance Subcommittee); December 10, 2007, (Regular Meeting); December 17, 2007, (Joint BOE/BOF Meeting); December 17, 2007, (Special Meeting – Interview BOE Candidates); December 18, 2007, (Special Meeting – Continuation of 12/17/07 meeting); December 20, 2007, (Special Meeting – Executive Session); and January 7, 2008, (Special Meeting – Continuation of 12/18/07 meeting). Mrs. Sanacora abstained from the vote.

**3. Review and Approval of Expenditures for the Month of December
Reviewer for Month: Lou Iorio**

Upon a motion made by Dr. Iorio and seconded by Mrs. Nolan, the Board voted eight in favor of approving the expenditures for the month of December as presented by Dr. Iorio and reviewed at the Finance Subcommittee meeting earlier this evening. Mrs. Sanacora abstained from the vote.

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

Kim Beckett addressed the Board as a member of the GPTA Special Education Committee. She explained that the committee includes parents of children with special needs at all grade levels. She noted that the committee sent a list of their priorities for the 2008-2009 Budget to Dr. Brett. Mrs. Beckett stated that the main priorities include a full-time speech and language pathologist for each building and most importantly for pre-K and a comprehensive reading program beginning at the elementary level that is language-based, multi-sensory, systematic, and phonetically driven.

Sarah Kellogg, also a member of the GPTA Special Education Committee, stated that she was disappointed to see a proposed reduction in Professional Development in Special Education from \$7,000 to \$2,000 in the 2008-09 Budget. She noted that her committee has sent correspondence to the Board recommending an increase in Professional Development for Special Education and asked that the Board reconsider its funding in this area. Mrs. Kellogg also noted that there is a lack of initiatives identified for Special Education in the 5-year plan.

Mrs. Kellogg read a letter from a concerned parent who noted the following items in the proposed 2008-09 Budget: an increase in the legal services Budget from \$40,000 to \$80,000; a decrease in the Professional Development Budget for next year; no plans identified for Special Education in the 5-year plan; and the identification of tuition as a significantly increased item in the 2008-2009 Budget.

Chairman Bloss asked Dr. Forcella to respond to the items noted at the upcoming January 28 and 29 Budget forums.

Doug Newman congratulated Linda Sanacora on her appointment to the Board. Mr. Newman stated that he was pleased with the State of the Schools address. He also noted the need for new training for teachers in the area of Reading as well as new Reading assessments.

5. Communications

Chairman Bloss noted a communication received from someone urging the Board to initiate a Chinese Language program.

Mr. Zuse noted a communication received from a parent concerned about the lack of seat belts on school buses.

Mr. Bishop noted a communication received from Doug Newman regarding how the Finance Subcommittee reviews monthly expenses.

Dr. Meyers thanked Doug Newman for sending newspaper articles to the Board.

Chairman Bloss stated that he received a letter from citizens proposing the building of an athletic training facility at GHS. He asked that this topic be included on the February 11, 2008, agenda.

6. Student Representatives

Marcus Passay reported on activities at Calvin Leete and Adams Middle Schools.

7. Superintendent's Report

7.1 CAPSS/MSSA Student Awards Presentation

Dr. Forcella and Chairman Bloss presented the CAPSS/MSSA student awards for academic excellence to GHS seniors Rebecca Krumholz and Brian Rosen. Dr. Forcella explained that each Connecticut Superintendent of Schools selects one male and one female from their high school for the recognition. He noted each student's many accomplishments throughout their high school careers. Chairman Bloss then presented each student with their award.

7.2 CTFSE

Dr. Forcella explained that the facilities task force is preparing a presentation for the Board during a special meeting in February to identify the needs at both GHS and Adams and present several possible solutions.

Mr. Zuse noted that the task force has expanded the options it is considering and this has required some additional preparation for their presentation. He urged the task force and the Board not to go beyond the month of February to make the presentation.

7.3 State of the Schools Follow-up

Dr. Forcella stated that it was very positive to see the number of people (approximately 150) who attended the first State of the Schools address at GHS on January 10, 2008. He said that he looks forward to presenting a similar report annually to the community. He also thanked staff members Kevin Mitchill, Bruce Scranton, and Lorri Hahn for their help in putting the program together.

7.4 Strategic Plan Update

Dr. Forcella explained to the Board that he met recently with community members involved in the development of the district's Strategic Plan. He stated that the goal will be to integrate the SP plans identified with the district's new initiatives.

7.5 2008-2009 Budget Update

Dr. Forcella presented a PowerPoint slide show to highlight the key components of the proposed 2008-2009 Budget. He summarized the Budget process as a collaborative process based on need. He explained that building level and central office level reviews were conducted. Priorities have been established based on the district's vision and

mission. Dr. Forcella noted the following as Budget priorities for 2008-2009: Technology; Professional Development; Facilities; Professional Learning Communities; and Instructional Supplies/Textbooks.

Dr. Forcella presented a summary of enrollments by school for 2007-2008 and noted that the projections for 2008-2009 are that the enrollments will remain stable. He also presented a five-year staffing plan.

Dr. Forcella noted that the following fixed costs account for 91.34% of the Budget: Salaries, Benefits, Buses, Utilities and Tuition. He reported increases in the following categories: Salaries (4.03%); Benefits (8.41%); Purchased Services (11.98%); Tuition (22.69%); Supplies (14.18%); Capital (69.96%); and Transportation (9.84%).

Mr. Zuse asked for a list of unmet needs. Dr. Forcella stated that he will have that list available at the January 23 Budget meeting.

7.6 Review Workshop Meeting Schedule

Mr. Bishop noted that the Board may need to allocate more meeting time to facilities. Chairman Bloss noted that there may be adjustments made in the Workshop schedule.

7.7 Curriculum Update

Dr. Keene presented the following comprehensive reviews to the Board:

Language Arts: Teachers are using the revised K-12 Language Arts Curriculum, approved on July 9, 2007, to plan instruction and to create goals in their professional learning communities. Teachers have completed approximately 100 feedback forms on the implementation of the curriculum to date, and the committee reconvened in January to review progress. Most comments on the feedback forms asked for clarification of particular strategies or assessments recommended in the curriculum document. The Language Arts Committee drafted a *Frequently Asked Questions* document, which will be distributed to all staff by February 1, to respond to the feedback forms. Additional staff development has been provided in the following areas: written response to text; making text connections; narrative writing; and literacy in the content areas. Future professional development is being planned for spelling and word work. Elementary staff have coordinated their efforts during monthly grade level language arts meetings, which began in September and will continue until the end of the school year.

Mathematics: Benchmark assessments have been developed for grades 4-7 and field tested in the classroom. Each assessment addresses numerical reasoning, geometric reasoning, algebraic reasoning, and statistical reasoning. The results of the assessments will be analyzed by professional learning communities and may influence 2008-2009 mathematics revision.

Dr. Keene presented the following targeted review in Science:

The science curriculum at grade 6 has been adjusted to include more inquiry skills related to the physical science strand. Teachers will be using the FOSS Chemical Interactions module to help support the change. The Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT) science exam for grades 5 & 8 will be administered for the first time in March 2008.

In response to a question from Mr. Zuse, Dr. Keene explained that grade level expectations for Language Arts for parents will be available at the end of the school year.

Nancy Bishop told the Board that the Language Arts Curriculum has been embraced very positively by her staff.

8. Board Agenda

8.1 ACT ON Personnel Items (exhibit)

Upon a motion made by Dr. Iorio and seconded by Mrs. Dudley, the Board voted unanimously in favor of ratifying the resignation of Christine Scaccia, Guidance Counselor, GHS, effective January 16, 2008.

Upon a motion made by Mr. Bishop and seconded by Mrs. Dudley, the Board voted unanimously in favor of ratifying the appointment of Jennifer Dahl, Language Arts, Adams Middle School, effective December 17, 2007.

8.2 ACT ON Bid Waiver for the purchase of a GCC Laser Pro Spirit from Tech Ed Concepts, Inc. for GHS Technology Department (exhibit)

Upon a motion made by Dr. Iorio and seconded by Mrs. Nolan, the Board voted unanimously to waive the bidding for the purchase of a GCC LaserPro Spirit from Tech Ed Concepts, Inc. for the GHS Technology Department as the Board received documentation from GCC America stating that Tech Ed Concepts is the sole source provider for LaserPro Laser Engravers in Connecticut.

8.3 UPDATE – Use of Schools as Polling Locations

Mrs. Nolan reported that Dr. Forcella, Carl Balestracci, Clifford Gurnham, Louise Graver, Helen Quinlan and she met to address concerns raised as a result of using the schools as polling locations during the November 2007 elections. Mrs. Nolan noted that A.W. Cox and Melissa Jones were the two schools of particular concern.

Mrs. Nolan stated that the group agreed that a uniformed police officer should continue to be present at each of the schools used as polling locations on election days. She also reported that prior to the February 5 primaries a security door will be installed at Cox where the polling equipment is stored. Mr. Gurnham will replace lighting outside at

Melissa Jones, place mats on the gym floors to absorb water and will have exit door lighting installed at Baldwin. John Volpe will have new signs installed at Jones and Cox to direct voters to the polls.

8.4 DISCUSS Meetings with State BOE Regarding High School Graduation Requirements

Chairman Bloss explained that the State BOE is proposing increased core curriculum requirements for graduation and other changes that will result in increased costs to our district.

Mr. Zuse suggested not supporting the State's proposal as our district is establishing our own assessments.

Dr. Forcella noted that a public forum will be held by the State BOE at North Branford High School on February 7 at 6:30 to gather input. He reported that the State Commissioner of Education presented the new requirements to a group of superintendents on the shoreline. Dr. Forcella stated that the most notable reform is the movement toward high stakes testing whereby students will be required to pass certain exams prior to graduation. He noted that these requirements mirror those of Massachusetts.

Dr. Forcella noted that Guilford is already practicing many of the State's new proposed initiatives including embedded professional development, using data in decision making, and using standards-based assessments to determine competency. He added that the majority of our students are meeting the proposed credit requirements currently.

Dr. Forcella stated that he would like to learn more about the requirements and noted that it would be his wish that the State address the issue of start times at the secondary schools. He expressed his interest for the State to work with districts to make high school start times later to improve student performance. He also stated that it would be beneficial for the State to encourage individual districts to develop programs and cultures that focus on learning for individual students and that this approach could lead to a better model that might be used state-wide.

Mrs. Dudley noted that the President of the Connecticut Association of Boards of Education (CABE) believes the State's new plan raises a number of questions.

Chairman Bloss suggested that information on the February 7 public forum be circulated to the Board members and the parents.

8.5 RECEIVE 2008-09 School Calendar Draft (exhibit)

Dr. Forcella explained that the Calendar Committee developed the calendar to include dates dedicated to professional development for staff. The equivalent of four single session days (early dismissal days for students) have been built into the 2008-09 for

professional learning communities to collaborate and for additional professional development opportunities.

Mrs. Dudley noted that the Calendar Committee evaluated all options and agreed on the draft presented. In response to a question from Chairman Bloss regarding the consideration of eliminating April vacation, Mrs. Dudley responded that the issue was discussed by the committee and it was determined that April vacation should continue. She noted that the April recess provides an important opportunity for children to be separated from each other to reduce the spread of illnesses.

Mr. Zuse noted that he has heard comments from parents that they would prefer that classes start after Labor Day instead of the Thursday and Friday prior to the holiday weekend. He also expressed concern that because the school year does not end until June 24, 2009, this will impact students' ability to obtain summer jobs.

Mrs. Dudley noted that the proposed calendar is very similar to those of recent years and that the last day of school is only two school days later than this year.

Chairman Bloss asked that the 2008-2009 School Calendar Draft be included on the February 11, 2008, agenda as an Act On item.

8.6 DISCUSS BOE Committee Assignments

Chairman Bloss asked that Board members review the assignments and send any comments to him by Wednesday, January 16.

9. Unfinished Business

Dr. Meyers stated that he will be meeting with parents to discuss recess at Baldwin. Chairman Bloss asked that the topic be included on the March 10, 2008, agenda.

10. Reports of Committees

None

11. Public Questions (four minute limit)

Doug Newman suggested that new carpet and furniture be considered in the next Budget for the teachers' lounges. He expressed concern that a potential recommendation to implement recess at Baldwin could be put on hold for the 2008-09 school year because it is not included in the proposed Budget. He suggested that there be a placeholder for anticipated expenses to implement recess at Baldwin.

Mr. Newman commented that an outside group should evaluate the Board's expenditures rather than assigning the responsibility to a Board member each month.

Mr. Newman stated that he believes that when a Board member vacates his or her seat, the Board should not have to fill that vacancy with someone from the same party affiliation. He suggested that the best possible candidate should be appointed regardless of their political affiliation. He suggested that the Board take a position on this issue with the Charter Review Commission.

12. New Business

Mr. Zuse asked what the role of parents will be in the Professional Learning Community model. Dr. Forcella explained that increased communication and defining the opportunities for parental involvement will be developed by a group of interested parents and GPS. He stated that this work will most probably take place over the summer.

Mr. Zuse asked if students will be able to bring their own laptops into the school and access the wireless network in the school. Dr. Forcella responded that the district is not at this point yet.

Mrs. Beeman suggested that the sound system issues in the GHS library be addressed prior to the next meeting.

Chairman Bloss stated that the Board will discuss the possibility of moving the location of the regular monthly Board meetings to the Adams Middle School chorus room.

Upon a motion made by Mr. Bishop and seconded by Mrs. Nolan, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn at 10:00 p.m.

Respectively submitted by:

Lorri Hahn
Clerk to the Board of Education