

**GUILFORD BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING
MONDAY, MARCH 10, 2008
GUILFORD HIGH SCHOOL LIBRARY, GUILFORD, CT**

1. Call to Order

Chairperson Bill Bloss called the meeting to order at 7:37 p.m. Board members present were Bill Bloss, Lou Iorio, Alan Meyers, Ted Zuse, Keith Bishop, Mary Beeman, Kathleen Nolan and Linda Sanacora.

Administrators present were Anne Keene, Tom Forcella, and GHS Principal Rick Misenti. Also present was Business Administrator Andy Potochney, Director of Operation Clifford Gurnham, Director of Technology Kevin Mitchill and GEA President Debby Butler.

2. Legislative Update

State Representatives Debra Heinrich and Pat Widlitz updated the Board on recent legislation and other matters related to education at the State level. Representative Heinrich reported that there is a 4.5% increase in educational cost share funding, 100% funding of the Special Education Excess Cost Grant, and a bill being considered providing protection under the Good Samaritan Law for bus drivers to administer eppy pens to students.

Representative Widlitz spoke about the In-School Suspension bill under consideration and explained that the Superintendents' Association has asked for a year to implement this process. Representative Heinrich noted that there is some flexibility in the implementation including where the in-school suspension takes place and in defining the language "repeat offender" in the bill.

Representative Widlitz also noted the current changes being considered by the legislature to increase graduation requirements for CT public schools.

Representative Heinrich noted the significant achievement gap in reading in towns in CT and the accountability required to fund programs to address this gap.

Senator Ed Meyers' assistant Jacqueline Kozin was also in attendance and noted that the Senator was unable to attend.

3. Action on Minutes of:

- 3.1 February 11, 2008 (Regular Meeting)**
- 3.2 February 11, 2008 (Transportation Subcommittee Meeting)**
- 3.3 February 11, 2008 (Finance Subcommittee)**
- 3.4 February 25, 2008 (Workshop-Executive Session)**

Upon a motion made by Mrs. Nolan and seconded by Dr. Meyers, the Board voted unanimously in favor of approving the minutes of February 11, 2008 (regular meeting), February 11, 2008 (Transportation Subcommittee Meeting), February 11, 2008 (Finance Subcommittee), February 25, 2008 (Workshop - Executive Session).

4. Review and Approval of Expenditures for the Month of February
Reviewer for Month: Kathy Nolan

Mrs. Nolan noted that the Finance Subcommittee reviewed the February 2008 Financial Reports at their meeting earlier in the evening. Upon a motion made by Dr. Iorio and seconded by Dr. Meyers, the Board voted unanimously in favor of approving the expenditures for the month of February as presented by Mrs. Nolan.

9.3 DISCUSS Proposal for GHS Athletic Training Facility

Chairman Bloss, with the Board's agreement, moved this agenda item up to accommodate audience members wanting to speak on the subject.

Dr. Forcella explained that Mr. Misenti and Mr. Gurnham were investigating the feasibility of turning the portable building currently used by the theater department and GHS maintenance into an athletic training facility using money provided by private citizens. The main issues include the following: the lack of space available to store theatre props, costumes and equipment; the concern of athletes having to go outside to use the proposed facility, particularly in cold or otherwise inclement weather; the fire hazard concern of the Fire Marshall to store the theatre department's materials in the school; no lavatory facilities; and the potential that the building would be torn down in 3 or 4 years with the advent of a high school building project.

Dr. Forcella noted that Mr. Misenti will be meeting with all stakeholders in the process to discuss all of the issues.

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

David Valley, the GHS Theatre Arts Technical and Design Coordinator, spoke about the need for space for students and parent volunteers to build props and store stock props and costumes for reuse. He noted the importance of student involvement in all aspects of the theatre process including lighting, set-building and sound.

Gina Wallace, Co-President of TAPS, noted that the GHS Theatre Arts group is the second largest student group in the school. She spoke about the importance of storing and reusing sets and costumes, many created by students.

Emily Breeze, GHS sophomore, stated that the theatre arts program needs more resources, not less. Despite the lack of some resources, she believes that the program is outstanding because of the students and parent commitment.

Kate Summerlin stated that her daughter has been actively involved in the theatre program for three years. She noted the skills learned and used by students to create costumes in space that is

not conducive to the process. She urged the Board to send a message to the students that what they do is important.

Naomi Morduch-Toubman, GHS sophomore, explained that the storage space is currently much too small for the theatre department's needs and the proposed new space would be even smaller. She also noted the challenge of moving props from the workspace to the auditorium, particularly in bad weather.

Marian Breeze suggested that a committee of parents work to address this problem and save the Board's time having to analyze the issue. She also extended an invitation to the Board to observe the theatre students working on the weekend.

Claire Murdoch encouraged all interested parents to work together on this issue. She also suggested that there be better communication from the Board to those affected by the proposed issue.

Fred Trotta explained that as one of the parents proposing the training facility it was never his intention to cause any harm or inconvenience to the theatre department. He noted that all concerned parents will be meeting with Mr. Misenti on March 19 at 2 p.m. to discuss the situation and possible solutions that would be equitable for everyone.

Mark Larkins noted that the parents proposing the training facility understand that it may be torn down in a few years and noted that the plan does include lavatory facilities. He also noted the importance of working together and not wanting to disrupt the work of the theatre department.

6. Communications

Mr. Zuse asked about the process for advertising and hiring coaches. Dr. Forcella explained that there is local advertising for coaches and information on the GPS website's employment page. He noted that there are selection committees including parents. Candidates are interviewed and a recommendation is made by the Athletic Director to the Superintendent on the best candidate.

7. Student Representatives

Marcus Passay reported on activities at Melissa Jones and Adams Middle School including CMT testing, the Adams' Spelling Bee and the 31 students that will attend the Southern Regional Music Festival.

Jeffrey Cash reported that the music department will perform at Woolsey Hall on March 19 and travel to Washington D.C. in April. He also noted that the musical "Suessical" will be performed at GHS April 30 – May 4.

8. Superintendent's Report

8.1 Report on School Security Grant Program (exhibit)

Dr. Forcella stated that the district will receive a grant from the Connecticut Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security to improve security issues at Melissa Jones, Baldwin, and A.W. Cox. The School Security Grant award is in the amount of \$12,300 and will be divided equally between the three schools. He noted that improvements will include an increase in visibility of entranceways, key fobs for use at the main entrances and video cameras at the main entrances. He noted that the systems can be expanded in the future.

Mr. Zuse asked that the Board's Facility Subcommittee look at such grants and the overall security needs of all of the schools.

Dr. Forcella asked Mr. Gurnham to provide a brief update to the Board on the flooding that occurred at Adams Middle School on March 8 and 9. Mr. Gurnham explained that, due to the heavy rain on Saturday, March 8, the lower basement level of Adams was flooded in classroom and office areas at two separate times during the day. He explained that GPS maintenance staff, the fire department, Clean Harbors (a hazardous waste management company), the elevator company, J.P. McGuire (a water clean-up company), and Mystic Air Quality were all needed to address the flooding.

Mr. Gurnham noted that the roof project scheduled for Adams this summer includes down spouts and catch basins that should help to control the flooding issues.

8.2 Timeline for Building Options Input

Dr. Forcella explained that two public forums and facility tours have been scheduled at GHS on March 19 and Adams Middle School on March 27. He noted that these and other future forums will provide opportunities for public input to the Board on the facility options proposed by the Community Task Force on School Facilities.

Mr. Zuse asked for reports from other towns on the life cycle costs of renovated and new buildings. He also requested that the CTFSF prioritize the identified needs at the two schools.

Chairman Bloss suggested a Board workshop to review and consider all options. He also suggested that Board members visit area schools that have undergone similar construction as that being proposed for Guilford.

Mrs. Beeman stressed the importance of focusing on the public forums for input to the Board in March and April. Dr. Forcella noted that once the Board has heard from the community, they can reflect on the input in May, and potentially propose an option by the summer.

9. Board Agenda

9.1 ACT ON Personnel Items (exhibit)

Upon a motion made by Dr. Iorio and seconded by Mrs. Beeman, the Board voted unanimously in favor of ratifying the resignation of Judith Sullivan, Physical Education Teacher at GHS, effective August 31, 2008 (for the purpose of retirement).

Upon a motion made by Mrs. Nolan and seconded by Dr. Iorio, the Board voted unanimously in favor of ratifying the appointment of Stacy Miller, (0.2 FTE) art teacher at Baldwin Middle School, effective February 13, 2008.

9.2 ACT ON GHS AP Chemistry Textbook Request (exhibit)

Upon a motion made by Mrs. Nolan and seconded by Mrs. Beeman, the Board voted unanimously in favor of approving the adoption of the GHS AP Chemistry Textbook as requested and recommended by Sarah Suerth, GHS Science Department Chair.

9.4 ACT ON Bid Waiver for Purchase of Rapid Communication System (exhibit)

Kevin Mitchill explained that, in an effort to increase communication between the schools and parents, the district is planning to implement a "Rapid Communication System." This system, Alert Now, will allow administrators to get messages out to parents via phone, cell phone, email and text messaging automatically in a matter of minutes. The annual cost for the usage of Alert Now is \$9,894 for a three-year term.

Upon a motion made by Mr. Bishop and seconded by Dr. Iorio, the Board voted unanimously in favor of waiving the bid for the purchase of a Rapid Communication System from Alert Now.

9.5 APPROVE \$2,700.00 Donation from Guilford Fund for Education to the Guilford Public Schools (exhibit)

Upon a motion made by Mr. Zuse and seconded by Mrs. Nolan, the Board voted unanimously in favor of approving a \$2,700 donation from the Guilford Fund for Education for the purchase of a Classroom Performance System for a social studies teacher at Baldwin. The system is a wireless response system that will allow students to actively participate in class discussions using a wireless touch pad and will help the teacher collect data quickly and efficiently.

9.6 APPROVE \$7,000.00 Donation from Guilford Fund for Education to the Guilford Public Schools (exhibit)

Upon a motion made by Dr. Iorio and seconded by Mrs. Nolan, the Board voted unanimously in favor of approving a \$7,000 donation from the Guilford Fund for Education to contribute toward the purchase of a laser cutter to be used in the technology department at Guilford High School.

9.7 ACT ON Proposal for Copier Lease (exhibit)

Chairman Bloss summarized that the district received quotes from six vendors to lease 25 copiers.

Upon a motion made by Dr. Meyers and seconded by Dr. Iorio, the Board voted unanimously in favor of approving the copier lease proposal from CBS as presented by Mr. Potochney.

10. Unfinished Business

Mrs. Sanacora asked Dr. Meyers and Mrs. Dudley if there has been any further progress on instituting recess for the 6th grade students at Baldwin. Dr. Meyers responded that they will follow up with Mrs. Snurkowski before the start of the next school year to discuss this possibility.

Mr. Zuse asked Dr. Keene when the Board would receive a document explaining the scope of the K-12 Language Arts curriculum that includes expectations for student learning. Dr. Keene explained that a continuum will be completed during the summer and presented to the Board in fall 2008.

Chairman Bloss noted that this should be an agenda item in the fall.

11. Reports of Committees

None

12. Public Questions (four minute limit)

None

13. New Business

Upon a motion made by Mrs. Nolan and seconded by Mrs. Dudley, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn to executive session at 9:35 p.m. The Board adjourned from executive session at 9:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

Lorri Hahn
Clerk to the Board of Education