

**GUILFORD BOARD OF EDUCATION JOINT MEETING
WITH THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN, BOARD OF FINANCE AND
COMMUNITY TASK FORCE ON SCHOOL FACILITIES
TUESDAY, APRIL 22, 2008
GUILFORD HIGH SCHOOL LIBRARY, GUILFORD, CT**

Board of Education members present: Bill Bloss, Keith Bishop, Kathleen Nolan, Lou Iorio, Linda Sanacora, Barbara Dudley, Alan Meyers, and Ted Zuse.

Board of Selectmen members present: Carl Balestracci, Joseph Mazza, Salvatore Catardi, Veronica Wallace, and Cynthia Cartier.

Board of Finance members present: Michael Ayles, James O'Keefe, Louis Federici, David Egan, Kimberly Brockett and Ken Gamerman.

Agenda:

Presentation by the Board of Education and the Community Task Force on School Facilities to the Board of Finance and Board of Selectmen regarding Guilford High School and Adams Middle School Facility Options.

Chairmen Bloss stated that the Board of Education is currently considering the 7 options researched by the Community Task Force on School Facilities (CTFSF) to address the facility needs identified at Adams and Guilford High School. He explained that Board members are meeting with community members and parents in public forums to listen to input on the options. The forums include a presentation of the facility needs and potential solutions identified by the Task Force.

CTFSF chairs Mary Jo Kestner and Mauro Rubbo gave a presentation to the Boards that included an overview of the work of the CTFSF, an identification of the facility and program needs at Adams and GHS, the potential options to address the needs, the costs for these options, comparison data on facility expenditures in similar towns and a proposed timeline to bring a solution to referendum.

The following is a summary of the presentation:

Adams:

The educational space needs identified at Adams include:

- Insufficient/inconsistent classroom space
- Science classrooms not near teams
- Team configurations not effective
- Cafeteria deficiencies
- Lack of collaboration & office space for staff
- Music instruction & performance space
- Health services space

The facility issues identified at Adams include:

- Indoor air quality & ventilation
- Accessibility deficiencies
- Basement level water incursion
- Building security entry control
- Technology deficiencies
- Interior, windowless classrooms
- Inadequate # of restrooms
- 1937 windows
- Parking deficient for large events
- Energy consumption
- Bus drop-off & parent conflicts

Several options were evaluated to address the facility and educational space needs identified at Adams Middle School. The Task Force developed the two options that most effectively addressed the most deficiencies. In addition, the Board of Education requested that the group also consider addressing only the most immediate health and safety needs (Restricted Scope - Limited Needs) and a Grade Reconfiguration option.

New Construction: The existing facility was developed as a high school and its layout has proved challenging to the Team Teaching concept used in the middle school curriculum. Given the relatively small size of the current site, age and condition of Adams, and difficulty in adapting the current structure, a new facility is under consideration. A new site should be 27 acres, located north of I-95, and ideally would further consolidate the district's facilities - adjacent to Baldwin or GHS.

The cost to build a new middle school is estimated to be \$69,870,000 with a cost to Guilford, after State reimbursement, of \$50,870,000.

Renovate Like New: This option has been developed to address facility needs and educational needs, phasing and the reuse of the existing facility. The "Like New" option creates a three story wing that will accommodate 6 teams. The existing facility would be renovated and a portion of the 1955 edition would be removed. A new public entrance would be located to the south adjacent to administrative offices and a cafeteria with a stage would be added.

The cost to build a "Like New" middle school is estimated to be \$59,705,000 with a cost to Guilford, after State reimbursement of \$43,800,000.

Restricted Scope, Limited Needs: This option is intended to address the most pressing health and safety issues at Adams. Building security, indoor air quality and building code compliance improvements would be made. Program space improvements and additional square footage would be very limited and program areas identified as deficient would not be addressed. This option does not meet much of the criteria the Task Force has identified in its School Facility Goals and Standards (page 1). This option would be too large to complete over the summer and would require portable classroom space and other considerations.

The cost for this option is estimated to be \$28,246,060 with a cost to Guilford of \$19,368,323.

Grade Reconfiguration: This option would require redistricting to allow elementary schools to accommodate grades 1 -5. Baldwin would be added on to accommodate 6th, 7th and 8th grades. Adams would be renovated to become an early childhood center for Pre-K and Kindergarten. Calvin Leete would have an addition to accommodate 8 additional classrooms and a renovated cafeteria. In addition to these renovations, cafeteria capacity would need to be analyzed at the other elementary schools to accommodate a 5th grade lunch wave. The implications for art, music, PE, Special Education, and other special services staff would need to be studied.

The cost for this option is estimated to be \$72,706,060 with a cost to Guilford of \$51,716,595.

Guilford High School

The educational space needs identified at GHS include:

- Entry/Main Office location
- Cafeteria location & size
- Auditorium capacity
- Music/Theatre program spaces
- Lack of collaboration & office space for staff
- Guidance & Pupil Services space deficiencies
- Building is undersized based on State guidelines

The facility issues identified at GHS include:

- Building Image
- Indoor Air Quality
- Interior Circulation Conflicts
- Bus & Parent Drop-Off Conflicts
- Restroom Deficiencies
- Security - Building Access Control
- On-Going Roof Replacement
- Accessibility Deficiencies

Several options were evaluated to address the facility and educational space needs identified at Guilford High School. The Task Force developed the two options that most effectively addressed the most deficiencies. In addition, the Board of Education requested that the group also consider addressing only the most immediate health and safety needs (Restricted Scope - Limited Needs).

New Construction: Ms. Kestner and Mr. Rubbo explained that this option offers unique possibilities to create diverse learning environments for new and existing programs. New construction would allow the district to build a more compact, energy efficient facility that would reduce operating costs over time.

A new facility would likely be located on the existing high school site as it includes numerous improvements and is the appropriate size for our current and projected student population.

The cost to build a new high school is estimated to be \$112,093,550 with a cost to Guilford, after State reimbursement, of \$79,500,000.

Renovate Like New: This option includes some level of renovation to the entire facility with the expectation that it will perform “like new.” The current Like New Renovation scheme has been developed to work within the existing structure as much as possible. New space is strategically added to improve circulation as well as program space. Highlights include the creation of a cafeteria/student commons, a 600 seat auditorium and improved facilities for performing arts, an expanded media center, and new construction at the front of the building to create a secure entry.

The cost to renovate like new at the high school is estimated to be \$93,700,000 with a cost to Guilford of \$65,500,000.

Restricted Scope, Limited Needs: This option is intended to address the most pressing health and safety issues at GHS. Building security, indoor air quality and building code compliance improvements would be made. Program space improvements and additional square footage would be very limited and program areas identified as deficient would not be addressed. This option does not meet much of the criteria the Task Force has identified in its School Facility Goals and Standards (page 1).

This option would be too large to complete over the summer and would require portable classroom space and other considerations.

The cost for this option is estimated to be \$60,700,000 with a cost to Guilford of \$42,905,000.

Following the presentation by the CTFSF members of the Board asked questions.

Mr. Balestracci asked if the septic problems would be addressed if Adams were renovated. Mr. Rubbo responded that they would be addressed.

Mr. Balestracci asked for a more detailed depiction of the parking capacity with the “renovate like new” option for Adams.

Mr. Ayles asked about available sites to build new schools.

Mr. Catardi questioned spending \$70 million to build a new Adams.

Mr. Federici asked about additional costs that would be incurred by building a new Adams.

Dr. Iorio commented that the contingencies estimated for new construction are probably higher than the actual costs as there will not be as many unknowns with new construction.

CTFSF member Sid Gale commented that life time efficiency costs could mean increased savings in the long term if a new facility were to be built.

Mr. Gamerman stated that the restricted scope options will not address any of the programming needs identified at Adams or GHS.

A discussion took place about potential sites to locate a new high school. Ms. Kestner stated that preliminary research has been done to identify a few locations in town. She added that locating a new high school at the existing high school site would be most feasible.

Dr. Meyers suggested building a new high school at the existing site and renovating the old high school to become a 7th and 8th grade middle school. There was discussion about the loss of fields and parking with this option.

Mr. Catardi asked if anyone has spoken with Branford High School as they have undergone recent renovations. Mr. Rubbo responded that he has had some discussion with them, but noted that their renovations were not as extensive as those needed at GHS.

Chairman Bloss noted that the actual impact on tax payers for a school construction project may be less than estimated due to federal reimbursements on property taxes.

Mr. Catardi noted the importance of developing specific uses for Adams if the facility is no longer used as a school.

Mr. Balestracci stated that it will be important to consider the continued development of property in the downtown area, particularly on State Street, when considering building on the existing Adams site. He noted that the area may not be suited to handle this level of use.

Mr. Gamerman expressed concern that the proposed time frame of December 2008 to bring a proposed project to referendum is too short. Mr. Ayles noted that a referendum by February or March of 2009 would still allow time to make revisions and vote again, should the first proposal fail.

Mr. Ayles asked how the educational specifications were developed. Dr. Forcella explained that the architectural firm Fletcher Thompson interviewed staff and administrators to determine needs. These needs were evaluated and prioritized.

Mr. O'Keefe encouraged Board members to express their opinions and begin to make decisions about the best options for the two schools. He stated that he believes that GHS should be addressed first with new construction. He also stated that he does not believe that the restricted scope options should be considered for either school and also expressed concern about renovating the schools due to unforeseen problems that may be discovered in the process.

Mr. Ayles stated that the best solution would be to address the needs of both schools at the same time as they both have major problems.

Mrs. Cartier suggested that the estimated costs for the various options should be further developed.

Mr. Balestracci stated that the educational programming needs should drive the decisions on the facilities.

Mr. Balestracci noted that the Town continues to look to acquire land around Bittner Park. He stated that it is a priority for the Town to build a road between Long Hill Rd. and Route 77.

Mr. Gamerman summarized that, as a result of the night's comments, it is clear that the Boards collectively support some action on the school facilities.

The groups agreed that meeting again in 6 weeks would be appropriate.

Mr. O'Keefe stated that Town Finance Director Sheila Riegelmann has confirmed that it is possible to extend a bond to 25 or 30 years. He also noted that a memo can be included on residents' tax bill denoting the portion of the tax for school projects.

Mr. Federici stated that the educational goals must be met by the option chosen. He requested more information on the energy and life cycle costs that would be incurred with new construction.

Chairman Bloss invited members of the audience present to speak.

Chris Moore told the Boards that a group of citizens has formed in support of improving the school facilities.

Michael Scott stated that the CTFSS has been very thorough with their process and he is encouraged by the support shown by the Boards.

Charles Glass stated that he believes the Boards' history of being "as frugal as possible" has led to the current condition of the school facilities. He noted that the citizens/parents will get the vote out to support new projects.

Mrs. Dudley noted that only 17% of registered voters voted in the April 8, 2008 Budget Referendum and suggested that much work needs to be done to increase voter turnout.

The meeting adjourned at 10:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

Lorri Hahn
Clerk to the Board of Education