

MINUTES
GUILFORD BOARD OF EDUCATION
DISTRICT LEADERSHIP TEAM
SPECIAL MEETING FOR BUDGET DISCUSSION

JANUARY 23, 2008

IN ATTENDANCE:

GUILFORD BOARD OF EDUCATION: Mary Beeman, William Bloss, Barbara Dudley, Louis Iorio, Alan Meyers, Kathy Nolan and Linda Sanacora. Keith Bishop and Ted Zuse joined the meeting in progress

GUILFORD BOARD OF FINANCE: Jim O'Keefe

DISTRICT LEADERSHIP TEAM: Middle School portion -Anne Snurkowski, Catherine Walker, Kristin Skelly. Elementary Schools portion - Nancy Bishop, Michael Biddle, Merry Leventhal and Paula McCarthy. High School & Pupil Services portion – Richard Misenti and Patricia Brett. Facilities and Technology portion – Cliff Gurnham and Kevin Mitchell

BOARD OF EDUCATION STAFF: Thomas Forcella, Anne Keene and Linda Trudeau.

The meeting was called to order at 6:05 p.m.

Dr. Forcella explained that the format of the meeting. The meeting will be four parts, Middle schools in the first part, Elementary schools in the second part, the High School and Pupil Services will be third and Facilities and technology will be the final part. The meeting is to have a dialog of the needs of each school and of the budgets that have been submitted.

Ms. Snurkowski stated that the 2008-09 Budget request for Baldwin Middle School was not a big change from the 2007-08 Budget. Ms. Snurkowski discussed the reclassification of software to the District's budget and the combing of the new and replacement equipment accounts. She noted that the textbooks account is down from the prior year but that Baldwin is in good shape for textbooks. Ms. Snurkowski added that the District has purchased the materials required for the Foss Science kits. Site Improvement and the World Language program at Baldwin were also discussed. The schedule at Baldwin was discussed. Mr. Bloss questioned the number of Para-educators at Baldwin. Ms. Snurkowski stated that there are 10 to 12 Para-educators that work with all students and not just Special Education students. A discussion of the training required to have teaching assistants instead of Para-educators.

Mrs. Walker detailed how Para-educators are used at Adams Middle School. Mr. Bloss asked if any thought was given to staff reductions. Ms. Snurkowski stated that staff reduction was not considered when the budget was prepared. She stated that she would not reduce staff for Art, Music or Health and in order to make a decision about reducing Para-educators she would have to evaluate the incoming 5th grade class.

Mrs. Walker stated that Adam's Language Arts Supply account is increased and the music account has decreased from the prior year based on the spending history for those accounts. The textbook account, purchasing of textbooks on-line and the number of students with computers and Internet access at home were discussed. Mrs. Walker discussed the Site improvement request for Adams Middle School, which includes

painting lockers, renovating two bathrooms and modifying two Science classrooms. The detail of the request for the equipment line was also discussed.

Mrs. Walker stated she did not consider staff reductions when preparing the budget but thought to increase staff for Professional Learning Communities and for interventions. Mrs. Walker added that a reduction in staff would result in cutting into programs and would require a change in the current schedule. Mrs. Nolan asked if the change in the school calendar will help with coverage for Professional Learning Communities. Mrs. Walker and Ms. Snurkowski both stated that the change is very exciting and what can be done with the school schedules for those half-days. Mrs. Nolan questioned why Professional Development did not increase. Ms. Snurkowski and Mrs. Walker stated that most of the professional development is included in the District account or it is covered by grants. The added that there are plenty of professional development funds for their needs. The Industrial Arts class and periodicals were discussed. Mr. O'Keefe questioned why the percentage increase of Adam's benefits total is not equal to the increase for Baldwin. Dr. Forcella stated that it would be reviewed. Mr. Zuse asked for details of requested items that were not included in the Budget. Dr. Forcella stated that he had that information for every school and would provide the Board with a copy at the end on the meeting. Discussion of the staff increase request that was not included in the budget, to reduce the 5-teacher team to two 3-teacher teams was held.

Ms. Leventhal stated there was not a drastic change in the 2008-09 Budget request for Cox School. She added that a request for an increase of .4 Social Worker is included in the Budget to meet the needs of the students. Dr. Meyers questioned the increase in FTE's for certified staff. Dr. Forcella stated that the increase is for a Kindergarten teacher that is currently in place. Ms. Leventhal discussed the number of Para-professionals at Cox School and that they work with both regular and special education children. Mr. Bloss asked about staff reductions and what the impact would be. Ms. Leventhal stated that reductions were not considered and that reducing staff would increase the class sizes. Dr. Forcella added that the budget was a needs-based budget done based on the current enrollment.

Ms. Leventhal discussed the current use of recess aides and whether or not there is a benefit to using them. The teachers are more in-tune with the kids and can better monitor their behavior and social interactions. The teachers are missing that time to evaluate the social and emotional needs of the children while they are at play. Mr. Bloss stated that this is a contract issue and cannot just be eliminated. Dr. Forcella stated that the recess aides have cost more money then anticipated and that they need to find a way to deal with the issue.

Mr. Biddle discussed the use of Para-educators at Guilford Lakes and the Pre-K program. Mr. Biddle stated that there are no changes in staff, just movement of teachers between grades where needed based on enrollment. Mr. Biddle stated that other then electricity the budget over all has stayed the same. He added that the removal of software to a District account and the combing of the equipment accounts is a very good idea. Mr. Zuse asked about spelling programs in the schools. Mr. Biddle noted that each elementary school has \$4,000 in the budget for a word study program and that the District is looking at options. Mr. Zuse asked about the teachers receiving laptops this year. Mr. Biddle stated that they are and that the teachers are very excited about the laptops as well as the smart boards. The increase in the Nurse's account was discussed.

Mrs. Bishop discussed the request for an increase of .4 Social Worker. Mrs. Bishop stated that 20% of the staff at Leete is part-time and that it is difficult not having full staff for meetings and professional development. The increase in teacher's salaries, due to

staff that is currently in place was discussed. Mr. Bloss asked about the impact of staff reductions. Mrs. Bishop stated that staff reductions would have a severe impact as Leete already has a large number of part-time staff. The World Language program at Leete and the salary increase of the program were discussed. Mr. Zuse questioned if Mrs. Bishop had the same issue with recess issue. Mrs. Bishop agreed with Ms. Leventhal comments regarding teachers missing the socialization piece. Dr. Forcella that this topic is worth evaluating and that a different model could have substantial savings. Dr. Meyers questioned the increase in the heating cost. Mr. Bishop explained that the new system heats the air as it comes into the building and that the circulators move the air throughout the building. This process will use more energy in order to improve the air quality and temperatures in the building. Mr. Bishop questioned the increase in the water budget. Mrs. Bishop stated that this was due to the irrigation and that the budget was developed based on the actual usage.

Mrs. McCarthy stated that the enrollment at Melissa Jones Elementary is stable. Mrs. McCarthy discussed the use of Para-educators at Jones. The importance of instructional technology for the students and the teachers was discussed. The Site Improvement request for Jones, which includes replacing the cafeteria windows were discussed. Mrs. McCarthy stated that there is a problem with getting the recess aides to come in as scheduled.

Mr. Zuse questioned the amount of time teachers spend making copies. Mrs. McCarthy stated that most of the copying is done by parent volunteers, other staff or other departments. Mr. Zuse questioned the amount the District spends on Instructional Supplies. He stated that compared to other Districts, Guilford is too low. Mr. Biddle responded that the budgets are based on the needs request of the teachers. Dr. Forcella stated that he is confident that the supply needs of the schools are being met. Dr. Meyers stated that, as discussed in other years, this is a needs-based budget and it should not be a spending war with other districts.

Mr. Misenti discussed the increase in textbooks for Math and World Language and to purchase writing journals. Mr. Misenti discussed the increase of \$20,000 to cover the In-School Suspension as required by the State and the set-up for the program. Mr. Misenti stated that there is an increase in the Budget for three new crew coaches and that the increase for Science is due to a position currently in place. Course offerings at Guilford High School, number and use of Para-educators and they School Nurse were discussed. Mr. Bloss asked what the impact of staff reductions would be. Mr. Misenti stated that it would increase class size and limit course offerings. The use of the Harkness Table and technology were discussed. SAT courses offered at Guilford High School were discussed. Mr. O'Keefe questioned if any of the Student Activity funds could be used for items in this Budget. Dr. Forcella stated that the Athletic Department uses the gate receipts to purchase equipment and for field and facility improvements. Mrs. Trudeau added that portions of the student parking fees are used to defray the cost of the security at Guilford High School.

Ms. Brett stated that the goal of Pupil services is to keep students in regular education. Ms. Brett added that it is a struggle between the increasing the use of contracted service to decrease outplacements and decreasing contracted services and increasing the number of outplacements. The number of outplacements was discussed. The increase in the needs of the Pre-K students was discussed. The transportation of Special Education Students was discussed. Mr. Bloss noted that all tuition costs, regular and Special Education, are included in the tuition line item. The reimbursement from the State for Special Education costs was discussed. Training of staff for interventions and the use of District and grant funds for Professional Development were discussed. The increase in

legal fees related to Special Education and ways to reduce those costs were discussed. Dr. Meyers asked if Special Education Transportation is put out to bid? Dr. Forcella stated that it is and that the District is looking at ways to reduce those costs. Mr. Bishop commented on the group of parents of Special Education Students that have joined together for support. Ms. Brett stated that she meets with them monthly and is working on issues with them as well as working to build trust and collaboration. How facilities are chosen for outplacements and those that are used more often were discussed.

Mr. Mitchill stated that the second year of the Technology Plan includes laptops for the Elementary and Middle Schools. As well as, mobile labs at GHS and the Elementary schools, smart boards and network printers. A description of what a smart board is and the number to be purchased was provided by Mr. Mitchill. The use of desktop computers verses laptops was discussed. Mr. Mitchill stated that approximately 200 laptops at \$1,250 each and 51 desktop computers at \$1,000 each would be purchased. The purchase of new copiers for the district was discussed. Policies for responsibility and use of laptops and data security were discussed. Organizations such as CAFE and CASBO will be contacted for samples of policies that could be used. Mr. Mitchill stated that the 2008-09 Budget includes the addition of a Computer Technician and that this position would provide the District with two technicians to cover the four elementary schools. Mr. Mitchill added that the plan would be to have one technician in each elementary school. The Software line item was discussed. Mr. Zuse asked if any equipment that was purchased has not been installed. Mr. Mitchill stated that only one smart board at Adams Middle School has not been installed.

Mr. Gurnham stated that a distribution system has been purchased to save the use of the cleaning chemicals. Mr. Gurnham discussed the items included in the Safety, Sanitation and Building Maintenance account. The in-ground oil tanks were discussed. Air monitoring, the purchase of two trucks and snow removal were also discussed. The roof replacement at Cox Elementary School was discussed. The HVAC system at Adams Middle School was discussed. Mr. O'Keefe stated that it was discussed at the last Board of Finance meeting that there should be a meeting of the Board of Education, the Board of Selectmen and the Board of Finance to discuss the projects. Mr. O'Keefe suggested that the meeting include the Standing Building Committee as well. Dr. Forcella stated that he would see about scheduling a meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 10:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Trudeau
Accounting Manager