

**GUILFORD BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING
MONDAY, MAY 11, 2009
GUILFORD HIGH SCHOOL LIBRARY, GUILFORD, CT**

1. Call to Order

Chairperson Bill Bloss called the meeting to order at 7:38 p.m. Board members present were Bill Bloss, Mary Beeman, Keith Bishop, Barbara Dudley, Lou Iorio, Alan Meyers, Kathleen Nolan, Linda Sanacora and Ted Zuse.

Administrators present were Tom Forcella, Anne Keene, Nancy Bishop, Merry Leventhal, Marc Guarino, and Anne Snurkowski. Also present were Business Administrator Andy Potochney and GEA President Debbi Butler.

Chairman Bloss asked the Board to add agenda item 8.2 Act on Letter Requesting that the Guilford Education Association Enter Into Mid-Session Bargaining. Upon a motion made by Mrs. Nolan and seconded by Mr. Bishop, the Board voted unanimously to add agenda item 8.2 Act On Letter Requesting the GEA Enter Into Mid Session Bargaining.

2. Action on Minutes of:

2.1 April 6, 2009 (Finance Subcommittee Meeting)

2.2 April 6, 2009 (Regular Meeting)

2.3 April 27, 2009 (Facilities Subcommittee)

2.4 April 27, 2009 (Workshop Meeting)

Upon a motion made by Dr. Meyers and seconded by Mrs. Dudley, the Board voted unanimously to approve the minutes of April 6, 2009 (Finance Subcommittee Meeting), April 6, 2009 (Regular Meeting), April 27, 2009 (Facilities Subcommittee Meeting), and April 27, 2009 (Workshop Meeting) with one correction to the April 27, 2009 Facilities Subcommittee Meeting. The last paragraph on page one should read, "Mr. Zuse stated that Maine uses students for painting," not ". . . uses students to painting."

Chairman Bloss requested that the Board address agenda item 8.7 at this point in the meeting.

8.7 RECEIVE Request for Foundations of Economics AP Edition Textbook (exhibit)

Dr. Keene introduced Guilford High School Social Studies Chair Ralph Russo and Social Studies teacher Michael Dalton to explain the selection committee's choice of "Foundations of Economics AP Edition," as the text and associated resources for AP Economics.

Russo and Dalton explained that the text includes in-depth coverage of the principals that are on the AP Microeconomics exam, includes extensive online support, a 500 page AP Study Guide, and a variety of teacher support material.

The text will be available at Central Office and will be included as an Act On item on the June 8, 2009, Board agenda.

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**3. Review and Approval of Expenditures for the Month of April
Reviewer for Month: Linda Sanacora**

Upon a motion made by Mrs. Beeman and seconded by Mrs. Dudley, the Board voted unanimously to approve the expenditures for the month of April as reviewed by Mrs. Sanacora.

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

None.

5. Communications

Chairman Bloss noted that Board members had received communications with suggestions on ways to save money and correspondence regarding the possible elimination of middle school sports and participation fees.

6. Student Representatives

Marissa Mohrer and Elizabeth Savrann reported that SADD week would be the week of May 17-21 at the high school with various events planned to demonstrate the consequences of making wrong choices particularly with regard to substance abuse.

The students reiterated the honor of Governor's Scholar given to GHS student Jacob Stern, and the recognition of Katherine Crabtree and John Landock as scholar athletes. They also stated that the GHS Math Team placed fourth in the State in recent competition.

Dr. Meyers noted that he is very impressed with this year's student representatives and their contributions to the Board.

7. Superintendent's Report

7.1 2009-10 Budget Update

Dr. Forcella explained that the Board of Education was asked by the Board of Finance to reduce the 2009-2010 Budget by \$1,178,000 following the failed referendum of April 21, 2009. He presented a proposal to the Board that included staff and non-staff reductions. The list of possible reductions included the following: a reduction in the medical insurance payment to the Town of \$66,000; a reduction in professional development by \$48,000, the elimination of one bus; further reductions in supplies and materials; reductions in the purchasing of library books and periodicals; the elimination of middle school athletic (approximately \$46,000); and the elimination of 21 employees including 11 certified staff (8.3 FTE) and 10 non-certified staff (9.5 FTE).

Dr. Forcella noted that discussions with bargaining groups have yielded tentative agreements for wage concessions from the paraeducator/clerical staff, custodians, and administrators. He stated

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that conversations are ongoing with the teachers' union. Dr. Forcella stated that wage concessions currently agreed on total approximately \$150,000.

Dr. Forcella noted that if all employee groups were to make concessions many staff positions and programs could be restored.

Dr. Meyers stated that middle school sports are too important to make a quick decision to eliminate and suggested that public input should be requested first. He asked that these sports programs not be eliminated from the Budget.

Mr. Bishop expressed concern regarding families ability to pay to have their children participate in extracurricular activities.

Mrs. Dudley stated that she would support dialogues on these programs.

Mr. Bishop expressed concern about continuing to take money away from facility maintenance and supplies and equipment.

Dr. Meyers recommended the scheduling of a Special Meeting of the Board that same week.

Mr. Zuse suggested that the Board should communicate the specifics of the revised budget to the public. Dr. Forcella recommended considering action on general program categories and staff without identifying more specific reductions tonight.

Dr. Iorio stated that he would not layoff employees in groups that have made tentative concessions.

The Board agreed to meet on Thursday, May 14, 2009, at 7:30 p.m. with a tentative location of the Guilford High School Library.

8.2 Act On Letter Requesting that the Guilford Education Association Enter Into Mid-Session Bargaining

Upon a motion made by Dr. Meyers and seconded by Mrs. Dudley, the Board voted unanimously to send a letter to the Guilford Education Association requesting that the union agree to engage in mid-term negotiations with regard to salary concessions for the 2009-10 fiscal year.

Mr. Zuse expressed his gratitude to the teachers and his personal regrets that the Board and the teachers are in this position.

Mrs. Dudley expressed similar sentiments and hopes for dialogue to move us forward.

Mr. Bishop extended his thanks to all of the employee groups.

Dr. Meyers reviewed some of the district's recent accomplishments of smaller classroom sizes and the implementation of World Language in the elementary schools and also thanked the teachers for their hard work.

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At this point in the agenda, Chairman Bloss suggested that the Board hear public questions.

11. Public Questions (four minute limit)

Ray Luden asked if there are laptop computers included in the 2009-2010 Budget. Dr. Forcella responded that there are not. Mr. Luden asked if there were going to be any concessions made by the teachers. He suggested that the unions look at the big picture and help the town.

Joe Petrowski asked Dr. Forcella what the food accounts for Central Office and the Custodial accounts were used for. He also asked if the substitute account would be increased, and if there would be an early retirement plan offered next year. Mr. Petrowski talked about the condition of the school buildings and suggested that staff were not protected under some of the conditions. He expressed his hope that the entire (GEA) membership is making decisions on concessions.

Dennis Culliton identified himself as a GPS teacher and stated that teachers cannot be asked to provide every service if there are concessions. He stated the importance of supporting the union. He commended the Board on the smaller class sizes and hopes that this situation continues.

Vincent Mascola asked the Board if there would be a written guarantee of no layoffs for employees in unions where concessions are made. He also asked what would happen to the agreed on concessions should the Budget fail.

8.3 ACT ON 2008-2009 Budget Transfers (exhibit)

Upon a motion made by Mrs. Nolan and seconded by Mrs. Dudley, the Board voted unanimously to approve the 2008-2009 Budget Transfers recommended by the Business Administrator.

8.4 ACT ON Personnel Items (exhibit)

Upon a motion made by Mr. Zuse and seconded by Mrs. Dudley, the Board voted unanimously to ratify the resignation of Marilynn Sturgess, Instructional Coordinator, effective August 31, 2009.

Upon a motion made by Mrs. Dudley and seconded by Mrs. Beeman, the Board voted unanimously to ratify the resignation of Diana Gregory, GHS Mathematics teacher, effective April 6, 2009.

8.5 ACT ON 2009-2012 Technology Plan (exhibit)

Upon a motion made by Dr. Meyers and seconded by Mrs. Dudley, the Board voted unanimously to accept the 2009-2012 Technology Plan.

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8.6 ACT ON Approval of the Calvin Leete Elementary School Revised Roof Replacement Specifications and Plans for Local Review and ED042 Application Process

Upon a motion made by Mr. Zuse and seconded by Mrs. Beeman, the Board voted unanimously to approve the Calvin Leete Elementary School revised roof replacement specifications and plans for local review and the ED042 application process.

8.7 ACT ON Submission of IDEA Grant (exhibit)

Upon a motion made by Mr. Zuse and seconded by Mrs. Dudley, the Board voted unanimously to approve the submission of the IDEA Grant.

9. Unfinished Business

Dr. Meyers asked if the basement at Adams Middle School has remained dry. Dr. Forcella responded that it has and that the air quality continues to be monitored.

10. Reports of Committees

Mrs. Dudley reported on the national conference for Boards of Education in San Diego, CA she attended through LEARN. She noted that she attended many valuable workshops on subjects including green schools and Internet safety. She noted there were over 5000 participants and encouraged other Board members to consider attending a conference in the future.

Mrs. Beeman reported that the Standing Fields Committee has toured all of the town's fields. She noted that the high school's turf field has served to reduce the wear and tear on the other fields in town.

Mr. Bishop noted that the Adams Middle School Task Force will meet on May 12. He requested time to update the Board and the public on their work at the next regular board meeting.

12. New Business

None

Upon a motion made by Dr. Iorio and seconded by Mrs. Dudley, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn at 9:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

Lorri Hahn
Clerk to the Board of Education