

**GUILFORD BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 2010
GUILFORD HIGH SCHOOL LIBRARY, GUILFORD, CT**

1. Call to Order

Chairperson Bill Bloss called the meeting to order at 7:34 p.m. Board members present were Mary Beeman, Bill Bloss, Keith Bishop, Barbara Dudley, John Ireland, Alan Meyers, Chris Moore, Susan Renner, and Ted Zuse.

Administrators present were Tom Forcella, Anne Keene, Nancy Bishop, Marc Guarino and Andy Potochney. Also present was Accounting Manager Linda Trudeau and Director of Operations Cliff Gurnham.

2. Legislative Update

Senator Ed Meyer and State Representative Pat Widlitz provided a legislative update to the Board. Senator Meyer stated that there is strong bi-partisan feeling in the legislature to continue education funding through 2011. He noted that the State faces an enormous deficit (\$3.5 billion) in 2011. He encouraged Guilford to consider regionalization wherever possible to create efficiencies and eliminate duplication of functions.

Representative Widlitz stated that revenues are down state-wide. She noted that stimulus money will not be available next year. She stated that efforts are being made not to increase mandates as they will not be funded by the State.

Dr. Meyers suggested the implementation of a local income tax. Senator Meyer stated that he introduced a bill for a small local income tax with the stipulation that property taxes be reduced by the amount raised by the income tax. Representative Widlitz stated that she would rather “streamline” government than introduce a layer of taxes.

Mr. Zuse noted the proposed reductions in staff in the Board of Education’s budget and asked if there are any reductions in staff proposed at the State level. Senator Meyer responded that the Governor agreed not to lay off State workers before 2011.

Mr. Zuse asked about potential opportunities for municipalities to pool resources to purchase insurance.

Mr. Bishop asked about potential funding for school facility projects. Senator Meyer suggested that funding may be possible in 2010 and into early 2011. Beyond this date, he suggested that funding will be at risk.

3. Action on Minutes of:

3.1 January 4, 2010 (Finance Subcommittee)

3.2 January 5, 2010 (Facilities Subcommittee)

3.3 January 11, 2010 (Finance Subcommittee)

- 3.4 January 11, 2010 (Regular Meeting)**
- 3.5 January 12, 2010 (BOE/BOF Joint Budget Meeting)**
- 3.6 January 20, 2010 (Facilities Subcommittee)**
- 3.7 January 21, 2010 (BOE/DLT Budget Meeting)**
- 3.8 January 25, 2010 (Facilities Subcommittee/Adams Facilities Committee Joint Meeting)**
- 3.9 January 25, 2010 (Budget Forum)**
- 3.10 January 26, 2010 (Budget Forum)**
- 3.11 January 26, 2010 (Special Meeting-Executive Session)**

Upon a motion made by Mr. Zuse and seconded by Mrs. Dudley, the Board voted unanimously in favor of approving the minutes January 4, 2010 (Finance Subcommittee), January 5, 2010 (Facilities Subcommittee), January 11, 2010 (Finance Subcommittee), January 11, 2010 (Regular Meeting), January 12, 2010 (BOE/BOF Joint Budget Meeting), January 20, 2010 (Facilities Subcommittee), January 21, 2010 (BOE/DLT Budget Meeting), January 25, 2010 (Facilities Subcommittee/Adams Facilities Committee Joint Meeting), January 25, 2010 (Budget Forum), January 26, 2010 (Budget Forum), and January 26, 2010 (Special Meeting-Executive Session with one correction. Susan Renner was present at the January 21, 2010, District Leadership Team Budget Meeting.

4. Review and Approval of Expenditures for the Month of January
Reviewer for Month: Bill Bloss

Upon a motion made by Dr. Meyers and seconded by Dr. Meyers, the Board voted unanimously in favor of approving the expenditures for the month of January as presented by Chairman Bloss.

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

None

6. Communications

None

7. Student Representatives

The student representatives stated that the high school students have raised over \$3,000 for Haiti. They noted that Senior Capstone presentations will take place on February 9 at the high school. They reported that Emily Breeze has received the Prudential Spirit award.

8. Superintendent's Report

8.1 Acknowledge Donation from Touchdown Club (exhibit)

Dr. Forcella acknowledged the donation of \$775 from the Touchdown Club for the purchase of bumper plates for the GHS Fitness Center.

8.2 Shoreline to Africa Resources for Education

Dr. Forcella acknowledged the efforts of GHS student Alex Moscovitz and faculty advisor Ruth Heckman to collect sets of used textbooks from the Guilford Public School System and private donations to ship to African schools.

8.3 Curriculum Update

Dr. Keene stated that there is a new Physical Education assessment mandated by the State of Connecticut providing an alternative to the mile run. Students can opt to do sprints instead.

Dr. Keene stated that the district is currently piloting a new AP Economics class and will make a recommendation on the future of this class at the end of the school year.

Dr. Keene stated that recommendations are currently being considered by principals to serve on the Science Curriculum review committee. She noted that an organizational meeting will take place in March 2010, review and writing of the curriculum will take place during the next school year, and the revised curriculum will be presented to the Board in Spring 2011.

Dr. Keene reported that the Math Curriculum approved by the Board in Spring 2009 was implemented in Fall 2009.

Dr. Keene reported that the Sitton Spelling and Word Work program adopted by the district in 2008 was implemented in Kindergarten in Fall 2009.

Dr. Keene explained that a large committee has been meeting regularly to develop a guideline handbook on the Response to Intervention (RTI) process in Guilford's schools. A draft of the handbook will be presented to the District Leadership Team in March and presented to the Board later this spring.

Dr. Keene stated that CMT and CAPT testing will take place in the district from March 1 - 12. She noted that a calendar with the test schedule is available on the district's website.

Mr. Bishop asked if parents are able to access links in PowerSchool to CMT and CAPT materials.

Dr. Keene responded that links to CMT and CAPT information is available on our district site and she will investigate the possibility of including this information through PowerSchool.

Mr. Zuse asked about the public's accessibility to the Board of Education's workshop meetings as they are not publicized. Dr. Forcella responded that the public is welcome at all workshop meetings.

Dr. Meyers asked about the status of the Asset Survey taken by students in grades 7 through 12 earlier this school year.

Dr. Forcella stated that when the district receives the results from the survey, a forum will be planned to share the information with the Board and the public.

Chairman Bloss asked about the approximate time students will spend taking CMT and CAPT tests each day.

Dr. Keene responded that the time varies depending on the test and the schedule. Individual tests vary in length from 25 minutes to 75 minutes. On average students will spend 45 to 90 minutes taking tests daily during the testing window.

Mrs. Renner asked if there is a curriculum timetable that guides the review and revision process.

Dr. Keene responded that the Board's Policy Manual identifies the time frames for comprehensive reviews of curriculum on a rotating schedule.

Mr. Zuse asked if the CMTs evaluate spelling.

Dr. Keene responded that the CMTs do not specifically evaluate spelling and the district will need to review local assessment data to determine the effectiveness of the Sitton program.

Dr. Keene stated that she will provide an update on the spelling program at the March 8, 2010, regular meeting.

9. Board Agenda

9.1 RECEIVE Textbook Recommendation: Geometry (exhibit)

Dr. Keene introduced the "Geometry" textbook from Holt, Rinehart and Wilson recommended by the selection committee at Guilford High School for use in the Geometry course. Dr. Keene noted that Math Department Chair Donna Pudlinski was not available for tonight's meeting but will respond to any questions from the Board prior to the March 8, 2010, regular meeting.

Marc Guarino explained to the Board that the proposed textbook provides real world examples, differentiated materials, and interventions and checks for understanding.

Dr. Meyers asked if the book is available for students online. Dr. Keene responded that students can access the book online once the school system purchases the hard copy and subsequent online license.

Dr. Meyers suggested that GPS consider online alternatives to hard copy textbooks when possible.

A brief discussion about students' accessibility to technology followed.

The Board will act on the textbook recommendation at the March 8, 2010, regular meeting.

9.2 ACT ON Non-renewal of Non-tenured Teachers

Dr. Forcella noted that the list of non-renewals of non-tenured teachers reflects the non-tenured teachers affected by the proposed reductions in the 2010-2011 budget.

Upon a motion made by Dr. Meyers and seconded by Mr. Ireland, the Board voted unanimously to approve the non-renewal of non-tenured teachers as presented.

At this time, GHS students came to the podium to announce that they had just completed a fundraiser concert for the earthquake victims in Haiti. The students announced that the total of the donations raised by the efforts of GHS students was \$4,500. The Board applauded the efforts of the students.

9.3 APPROVE Donation of \$2,685.00 from the GHS Music Boosters to the GHS Voices (exhibit)

Upon a motion made by Dr. Meyers and seconded by Mr. Ireland, the Board voted unanimously to approve the non-renewal of non-tenured teachers as presented.

9.4 ACT ON Plans and Educational Specifications for the Roof Replacement at the Adams Middle School including the Filing of the ED049 and Submission of the Project to the Board of Selectmen (exhibit)

Mr. Gurnham noted that the filing will be for ED042 and not ED049 plans.

Mr. Zuse asked if the education specifications reflect the changes recommended by the Facilities Subcommittee. Mr. Ireland responded that they do reflect the changes.

Upon a motion made by Mr. Ireland and seconded by Dr. Meyers, the Board voted unanimously to approve the plans and specifications for the Adams Middle School partial roof replacement including the filing of the ED042 for the local review process.

9.5 ACT ON Recommendation from Facilities Subcommittee for GHS Design RFQ

Mr. Zuse confirmed that this action does not commit the Town to spending any money at this time.

Mr. Ireland noted that input for the RFQ was received by Town committees including the Standing Building Committee.

Upon a motion made by Mr. Ireland and seconded by Mr. Bishop, the board voted unanimously to approve the GHS Design RFQ better defined as the Architectural/Engineering Design Services For The Schematic Design, Plans And Specifications For A New High School for bid from potential firms for response no later than March 5.

9.6 ACT ON Request to Appoint BOE Member to Energy Task Force

Mr. Ireland noted that he is currently a member of the Energy Task Force. He would inquire about the role he might assume if he were to remain on the Task Force and potentially represent the Board of Education.

9.7 ACT ON Ratification of Nurses Contract

Chairman Bloss asked that the ratification of the Nurses' Contract be held over for action at the February 22, 2010, workshop meeting.

9.8 ACT ON: 2010-11 and 2011-12 School Calendars (exhibits)

Dr. Forcella noted that he received general feedback from the public on the proposed calendars. He noted a change in the April vacation on the 2011-2012 calendar from the 2nd week of April to the 3rd week.

Dr. Forcella stated that he received correspondence asking that the early release days for professional development be moved from Wednesdays to Fridays. He explained that the professional development days correspond with faculty meeting days. He also noted that when early release days are on Fridays the rate of student absenteeism goes up considerably.

Mr. Bishop commented about the possibility of combining the February and April vacation into one vacation March.

Upon a motion made by Dr. Meyers and seconded by Mrs. Dudley, the Board voted unanimously to approve the 2010-2011 and 2011-2012 School Calendars.

10. Unfinished Business

None

11. Reports of Committees

11.1 Policy Subcommittee

Mrs. Dudley stated that the Policy Subcommittee has been reviewing policy related to suicide intervention, health services, and sex offenders on school grounds.

Mrs. Dudley noted that the Guilford Youth Mentoring program celebrated its 10 year anniversary in January. She noted that the program currently has 160 community volunteers.

Mrs. Beeman added that mentoring is a very rewarding experience and urged people to consider volunteering an hour of their time once each week to mentor a child.

Dr. Meyers acknowledged the work done by the Guilford Fund for Education at the Spelling Bee, noting that the organization raised \$10,000.

Dr. Moore asked that the Policy Subcommittee include cyber-bullying in the policy manual.

A brief discussion followed regarding Facebook, blogs and other technology tools and the Board's ability to regulate these Internet activities.

11.2 Facilities Subcommittee

Mr. Ireland said that the committee is working on a list of nominees to serve on the Selection Committee to choose an architecture firm to develop designs for a new high school.

Mr. Ireland noted that the oil tank replacement at A.W. Cox Elementary School was nearing completion. He stated that the change to natural gas will save thousands of dollars annually and reduce emissions.

Mr. Ireland noted that the educational specifications for the high school are being reviewed for the long term.

Mr. Ireland noted that the Facilities Subcommittee is considering the replacement of the Adams oil tank in the next few years.

11.3 Finance Subcommittee

Dr. Meyers noted a conversation at the subcommittee meeting to send an RFP for legal services for the district.

11.4 Liaisons to Town Committees

Mr. Ireland noted the establishment of an Energy Task Force for the Town.

12. Public Questions

None

12. New Business

Dr. Forcella reminded the Board and the public that the third State of the Schools presentation would take place at 7 p.m. at Guilford High School on February 11, 2010.

Chairman Bloss noted that the Board of Education will present its budget to the Board of Finance at their February 16 meeting. He also noted that the Board of Finance will hold a public hearing on the budget on March 2, 2010.

Upon a motion made by Mr. Zuse and seconded by Mrs. Dudley, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn at 9:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

Lorri Hahn
Clerk to the Board of Education