

GUILFORD BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING
MONDAY, September 26, 2011
GUILFORD HIGH SCHOOL LIBRARY, GUILFORD, CT

1. **Call to Order**

Chairperson Bill Bloss called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. Board members present were Mary Beeman, Keith Bishop, Bill Bloss, Barbara Dudley, John Ireland, Alan Meyers, Christopher Moore, Susan Renner and Ted Zuse. Administrators present were Anne Keene, Interim Superintendent of Schools; Rick Misenti, Principal, Guilford High School; Michael Biddle, Principal, Guilford Lakes; Paula McCarthy, Principal, Melissa Jones; Nancy Bishop, Principal, Calvin Leete; Vince Agostine, Principal, A.W. Cox; Kim Vigliotti, Dean, Guilford High School; Jake Jarvis, Athletic Director

Chairperson Bloss requested that the Board entertain Item 7.1 Introduction of New Teachers first on the agenda followed by 5.1 Report from Liaison from Local Veterans Group and 6.1 Introduction of Student Representatives.

7.1 **Introduction of New Teachers.**

Marilynn Sturgess introduced the new administrators and teachers to the Board and those present in the audience stood and were recognized. The new administrators and teachers introduced were Vince Agostine, Principal A.W. Cox School; Courtney Presti, Special Education, A.W. Cox School; Shauna Panella, Grade 2, Melissa Jones School; Jeffrey Tims, School Psychologist, Melissa Jones and Guilford Lakes; Jonathan Reinecke, Grade 4, Calvin Leete; Megan Caporossi, Math, Adams Middle School; Philip Day, English, Adams Middle School; Jacob Jarvis, Athletic Director, Guilford Public Schools; Kristy Kehoss, Social Studies, Guilford High School; Nicholas Ripa, Technology, Guilford High School; Angela Russo, English, Guilford High School; Kimberly Vigliotti, Dean of Students, Guilford High School; Marsha Turner, Literacy Coach, Guilford Public Schools. Mrs. Sturgess wished the new teachers well, and Chairman Bloss welcomed them to the Guilford public school system.

5.1 **Report from Liaison from Local Veterans Group.**

Ted Fessel made a presentation to the Board of behalf of the local veterans. He reviewed some of the accomplishments and activities for local veterans noting that he is particularly proud of the new Fisher House near the West Haven VA Hospital. He also saluted the achievements of the Guilford education system last year acknowledging the important role he believes education plays in helping the country move forward.

Mr. Bloss advised that Mr. Fessel is retiring this year, and he thanked him for his many years serving the children of Guilford as a crossing guard. In return, Mr. Fessel thanked the Board of Education for the letter that was sent to him acknowledging his service to the community and his country.

6. Student Representatives.

6.1 Introduction of New Student Representatives

Dr. Keene introduced Rebecca Wolenski, a Senior, and Michael Albergo, a Junior, the new student representatives to the Board, and she outlined some of the numerous activities they are involved with in school and the community.

Mr. Albergo reported on a \$125,000 Federal grant for drug and alcohol education recently received by the DAY. He also reported on the Learning Studio Research Program which will study ways to improve the classroom environment to enhance learning.

Ms. Wolenski reported that the college fair was held last week and it was well attended. She also reported on the High School Building Committee noting that an architect has been selected and a recommendation will be made to the Board of Selectmen.

2. Act on Minutes of:

2.1 August 8, 2011 (Special meeting)

2.2 August 8, 2011 (Regular meeting)

Upon a motion made by Mrs. Beeman, and seconded by Dr. Meyers, the Board voted unanimously to approve the minutes of August 8, 2011 (Special and Regular meetings).

3. Review and Approval of Expenditures for the Month of August.

Chairman Bloss noted that expenses for Health Insurance were high in August so the Board will need to watch this account. He also noted that there are some outstanding encumbrances for FY 2010-2011, but the fiscal year is close to being closed out.

Upon a motion made by Mrs. Beeman, and seconded by Dr. Meyers, the Board voted unanimously to approve the expenditures for the month of August as presented by Chairman Bloss.

4. Public forum for Topics on Board Agenda Only.

None

5. Communications.

Chairman Bloss noted that a letter from Margot Burkle representing St. George Church and regarding transportation of students to private schools, was sent to the Transportation sub-Committee.

7. Interim Superintendent's Report.

7.2 Opening of School Update/Convocation.

Dr. Keene reviewed the communications and timeline concerning the opening of school which was modified due to Tropical Storm Irene. Regular communications were provided prior to the storm until the start of school. All communication possible was utilized to get the word out to the community. It was helpful that almost all parents' cell phone numbers are in the system; however, there is still a need to obtain additional cell phone numbers for staff.

In response to a question by Mr. Zuse, Dr. Keene noted that this experience showed her that it is important to be involved with the Town from the very beginning. They also discovered that there is a need for a back-up for the freezer. The freezer was full of food for the start of school and food would have been lost except they were able to get an extra generator to run the freezer.

Dr. Keene noted that the convocation was cancelled due to the storm and late start of school. School start-up went smoothly even without orientation and all schools except Baldwin have held back to school nights.

Mr. Ireland commented that all of the buildings did well in the storm. There was one issue with emergency lighting that could be addressed by the generator for GHS that will be utilized when the new school is designated as an emergency shelter.

Mr. Misenti explained that freshman orientation was re-scheduled. In addition, the Guidance Counselors are meeting with all freshmen in small groups and all students will receive this school introduction by the end of the month.

In response to a question by Mr. Zuse, Dr. Keene noted that make-up for two student days are already in the calendar and make-up for three staff days will be scheduled by the new superintendent.

7.3 Preliminary Enrollment Report.

Dr. Keene noted that October 1 is the date for the official student enrollment so this provides adequate time to verify some of the no-shows or absences. The count as of today is 3679 in the schools, down 15 students from the previous year, and 64 outplacements in vo ag, magnet and special programs down 15 students from the previous year. Kindergarten is down 38 students and this appears to be a trend. Dr. Keene reviewed the student count in the individual schools. The official report will be presented at the October Board of Education meeting.

7.4 Update on Special Education Program Review.

Dr. Keene explained that a letter went out to school faculty and staff explaining that the leadership of Guilford Public Schools and Futures Education are partnering to provide a study of the District's special education services. A contract and timeline with Futures Education has been agreed upon with work beginning September 27, 2011 in the Pupil Services office. In October a letter will go to parents to explain the process which will include surveys and focus groups with participation based on random selection. The study will be completed by the end of November and will be presented for consideration at the December BOE meeting. In response to a question, Dr. Keene agreed to obtain additional information on how interested individuals, who are not included in the random selection, can participate.

7.5 Update on Learning Space Research Program.

Dr. Keene explained that Guilford High School will be participating in a Learning Studio Research Program. Herman Miller partners with schools to study holistic changes to classroom spaces to transform the physical space and the way faculty use the space to enhance the education process. They will create a model classroom as a living experience and engage faculty in new thinking. They will collect data about effective learning environments and compare before and after information. Data collected will generate information to assist with decision making regarding classroom environment layouts. Guilford will be the first public high school to be a part of the study.

Dr. Keene explained that the Learning Studio Implementation Team will be meeting with the architect. The classroom that will be utilized in the program is a Math classroom which houses multiple courses with diverse students. The classroom will come on-line during the holiday break and will remain until the end of school.

In response to a question by Dr. Moore, Dr. Keene noted that there is no cost for the research. There are some costs associated with set-up and this will be covered by the GHS Building Committee. In addition, research is being done into possible grants to prep the room; anything purchased will be able to be utilized in the High School or another location.

7.6 Proposed Workshop Schedule.

Dr. Keene reviewed the Board of Education Proposed Workshop Schedule 2011-2012 that was provided to the Board members. March, April and May are open at this time for special topics.

7.7 CMT/CAPT Presentation.

Dr. Keene presented summary results of the spring 2010 Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT) and the Connecticut Academic Achievement Test (CAPT). She provided an overview of both tests, including their components. She also provided information about district reference groups and reported on the performance of Guilford students as compared to the District Reference Group (DRG) and the State.

Guilford students performed higher than the State average on all tests. On the CMT's Guilford students performed at comparable levels as students in the DRG in all grades. Dr. Keene displayed graphs that showed how the students improved from year to year.

Dr. Keene explained that the CAPT test results show growth in Guilford's grade 10 students over time in all four areas tested including math, science, reading and writing. In addition, Guilford exceeds the DRG in all areas. The information obtained from testing provides information for the school to analyze and make adjustments and monitor student progress.

In response to a question by Chairman Bloss, Nancy Bishop noted that, while the testing information is helpful, teachers utilize daily assessments more than testing information, to look at individual students and their needs in order to help them advance.

Mr. Bloss questioned if data is available that would allow the school to look at individual students who have been identified as gifted and trace their progress through the years. He noted that while the school is required to identify these students, there is no system in place for follow-up. Dr. Keene noted that an effort would need to be made to gather this data, but it was possible to obtain this information.

Dr. Keene presented additional charts with extra data showing two different generations of testing data that is worth further review.

In response to a request, Dr. Keene agreed to analyze the data to determine how the 10th grade ranked in the percentage of students that met goal in all areas combined as compared to other Connecticut districts.

Dr. Meyers requested that the charts and the presentation be put up on the Board of Education website.

8. Board Agenda.

8.1 Update on New Superintendent's Start Date.

Chairman Bloss reported that the new Superintendent is scheduled to begin the Monday after Thanksgiving. Dr. Freeman has worked out an agreement with the Town of

Griswold to be able to begin the transition by spending some time each week in Guilford. He has been visiting the schools to begin to become acquainted with staff.

8.2 DISCUSS for POSSIBLE ACTION: Extension of Agreement with Interim Superintendent.

Chairman Bloss noted that the Extension of the Agreement with the Interim Superintendent will be discussed in Executive Session following new business on the agenda.

8.3 ACT ON 2011-12 District Goals.

Upon a motion made by Mr. Ireland, and seconded by Mr. Bishop, the Board voted unanimously to approve Guilford Public Schools Goals for 2011-2012

Dr. Keene advised that the goals are similar to those approved last year with a few changes that she reviewed.

8.4 RECEIVE Proposed 2012-13 Budget Timeline.

The Board received the Proposed 2012-13 budget timeline.

8.5 ACT ON Submission of Consolidated Grants Application.

Upon a motion made by Mrs. Renner, and seconded by Mrs. Dudley, the Board voted unanimously to approve the submission of the Consolidated Grants Application for a total of \$199,644, including \$120,125 for Title I, \$74,524 for Title II; and \$4,995 for Title III.

8.6 RECEIVE for POSSIBLE Action: Ratification of Clerical and Paraprofessional Contract Agreement.

Chairman Bloss noted that the Ratification of Clerical and Paraprofessional Contract Agreement is not ready for consideration so it will be tabled.

8.7 RECEIVE for POSSIBLE ACTION: Ratification of Custodial Contract Agreement.

Chairman Bloss noted that ratification of Custodial Contract Agreement will be considered in executive session.

9. Unfinished business.

None.

10. Reports of Committees.

10.1 Policy Subcommittee.

Mrs. Dudley noted that she will have items from the Policy Sub-Committee for consideration at the next meeting.

10.2 Facilities Subcommittee.

Mr. Ireland noted that the Town is replacing the communications tower at Melissa Jones School. Board members were provided with the design development plan for the tower. The work, which will make the tower bigger and more stable, will be completed next summer. There will be no expense for the Board of Education.

Mr. Ireland reviewed the projects completed this summer including Leete classrooms; Adams drainage, corridor and courtyard; engineering work; and floor at Cox and Adams. The fire alarm project has been carried over into the school year. Mr. Ireland agreed to provide a complete list of the projects at the next meeting. The next step is to look at goals for the upcoming year.

Mr. Ireland noted that the Facilities Director is collecting information on long term planning software that would have an application for the management of projects.

10.3 Finance Subcommittee.

Mr. Bishop reviewed some of the monthly bills noting that there were no items that were outstanding.

10.4 Report from Liaison to GHS Building Committee.

Mrs. Beeman noted that the GHS Building Committee is meeting on a weekly basis. After going through an RFQ and RFP process, they have made a recommendation for the project architect. The Board of Selectmen and Town Counsel will be developing a contract. She noted that the design will take approximately one year with construction to take two years. The Communications sub-Committee is looking at ways to encourage questions, concerns and input from the community. There is a forum on the website that the community can use to provide input or ask questions or they can attend the meetings which are held on Tuesdays at 7:00 p.m. Agendas and minutes are available on the Town website. There will be student representatives from each class, and there will also be faculty representatives involved. Mrs. Beeman noted that an issue that needs further research is the existing septic system which may be insufficient for the new school.

10.5 Liaisons to Town Committees.

Mr. Ireland reported that representatives from the Board of Selectmen, Board of Finance and Board of Education will be attending the Standing Building Committee which will be held at 6:00 p.m. on Tuesday, October 4.

11. Public Questions.

Kim Beckett commented on the Futures Education study. She questioned if there had been any follow up on the e-mail from an out-of-state special education advocacy group expressing concerns with Futures Education. Chairman Bloss noted that the e-mail had been sent to the contractor, and they had responded.

Dr. Meyers commented that this was a non-issue and concerns were of unknown merit. They clarified that the recommendations made were consistent with federal and state law.

Chairman Bloss commented that the Board has hired this company to provide an outside review to give advice of how we can improve services. The final report will be available for the public.

Mrs. Becket also discussed the need for additional assistance at Guilford High School for transition assistance for special education students. She was advised by Dr. Brett that funding to provide staff for this assistance was included in the budget for the past few years but the position had not been funded. Dr. Keene commented that she is not aware of this request but she will research this item and contact Mrs. Becket. Mrs. Becket commented that she believes it is important to provide our special education students with a platform to pursue future education and employment opportunities and she would like to see a program in place as soon as possible.

12. New business.

Mr. Ireland suggested that consideration be given to looking into and pursuing opportunities available for on-line instruction. There has been substantial success in colleges and universities with providing options to learn at home.

Dr. Keene advised of a grant from GFFE that would help teachers with technology integration. They district will continue to explore the role of technology in classrooms. Dr. Keene will contact Mr. Mitchell about possibly providing regular technology reports to the Board. She also suggested that this might be a good workshop topic for the future. Mr. Ireland suggested that it would be important to integrate technology options into the new high school.

13. **Executive Session.**
 - 13.1 **Contract Negotiations: Food Service**
 - 13.2 **Residency Issue**
 - 13.3 **Update on Expulsions.**

Upon a motion made by Mrs. Beeman, and seconded by Mrs. Dudley, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn to executive session at 10:00 p.m.

Upon a motion made by Mr. Bishop, and seconded by Mrs. Renner, the Board voted unanimously to return to public session at 10:07 p.m.

Upon a motion made by Mr. Bishop, and seconded by Dr. Meyers, the Board voted unanimously to provide monthly compensation of \$5,000 to the Interim Superintendent of Schools for additional duties beginning September 1, 2011, and continuing until the Superintendent of Schools begins his assignment.

Mr. Bishop presented the Custodial Agreement between the Board of Education and Local 1303 of Council #4 American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees for the period September 1, 2011, through August 31, 2014. The three-year contract includes salary increases of 1% in year one; 2% in year two; and 2% in year three. Mr. Bishop also described the employee increase in insurance co-pays and adjustments to other benefits.

Upon a motion made by Dr. Meyers, and seconded by Mrs. Dudley, the Board voted unanimously to ratify the Custodial Agreement for the period of September 1, 2011, through August 31, 2014.

Upon a motion made by Mr. Bishop, and seconded by Mrs. Beeman, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn at 10:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

Terry Holland-Buckley
Clerk to the Board of Education

