

**GILFORD SCHOOL BOARD MEETING
MONDAY, MARCH 6, 2006
GILFORD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
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The Gilford School Board held a regular meeting on Monday, March 6, 2006 at the Gilford Elementary School Tocci Library. Present were board members Sue Allen, Paul Blandford, Kevin Hayes, Derek Tomlinson, and Margo Weeks. Representing Gilmanton were Cindy Hatch and Zannah Richards. Administrators present were Paul DeMinico, Scott Isabelle, Jim Kemmerer, Sandy McGonagle, and Ken Wiswell. The Student Council was represented by Amy Drever.

OPENING

School Board Chairperson Paul Blandford called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m. and then led the Pledge of Allegiance

On behalf of the board, Paul thanked outgoing board member Kevin Hayes for his many years of service. Accompanied by unanimous applause, he presented Kevin with a token of the board's appreciation.

Margo Weeks made the motion that the board approve the minutes of the February 6, 2006 meeting. Derek Tomlinson seconded the motion and it was voted in the affirmative, with Sue Allen abstaining.

REPORTS

Gilford Elementary School:

Ken Wiswell complimented Sandy McGonagle on the photos included in her report.

Derek Tomlinson asked for clarification of the term "Responsive Classroom." Sandy replied that is a community-building model based on how business is conducted in the classroom on a daily basis, wherein students learn to take responsibility for creating the rules of the classroom and showing respect. Funded by budgeted professional development monies, an instructor from Durham will come and teach participants in two of the six components of the model.

Gilford Middle School:

Jim Kemmerer highlighted his written report with a mention of the *SWOOP*, a Grade 8 newsletter, another of their continuing efforts to find alternative means of communicating with the community. One more edition will issue before year's end. One of the newsletter's goals is to be as paperless as possible, being a web-based publication. The newsletter appears on the school's website as of today. Jim also noted that, encouraged by last year's attendance, efforts are under way to prepare for the summer program.

Paul Blandford observed that last year there was some crossover with elementary school students; Jim assured that the confusion that arose was as a result of transitions.

Kevin Hayes inquired whether there was a cost for the Leadership and Prevention program; Jim replied that the funds came from a grant.

Gilford High School:

Ken Wiswell related that his group has been very busy trying to make people aware of the impending trimester system and what it entails. These efforts will continue this and next week, with a goal to get into as many junior level classes as possible, in addition to the number of student sessions that were not as well attended as could have been. The faculty, in response to a recent survey, reports it is prepared to move into the trimester system by the start of next year.

Ken mentioned Gilford's participation in the First Robotics competition held at the Verizon center, noting that of 52 teams, Gilford finished 33rd and received recognition for the best rookie team. He commented on the outstanding camaraderie and cooperation between the teams, and the palpable team spirit.

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REPORTS

The founders were pleased to have an all-girls team from Canada, making it an international event.

Mentor Chris Drever enthusiastically addressed the board and described the event as “exciting and incredible; one of the greatest things we can do as educators.” He related that at the end of the first day, Gilford ranked 48th out of 52; by the following day they had climbed to 33rd. He noted that the team made the front page of *The Citizen*, and brought a copy to pass among the board members. He related that the governor, a senator, and congressman attended and spoke at the event. The New Hampshire State Police demonstrated their bomb disposal robot. Mr. Drever introduced the other mentors and the team members who attended the meeting, among which were Mike Andrews and Roger Bailey. Mr. Bailey presented Ken Wiswell with the trophy the team earned. Ken noted that this would be the first trophy in the school’s new academics awards display case.

Mr. Bailey declared that he had never had so much fun as he had at the event; “You can’t believe how much pressure, and how much you’re enjoying it.” He related that the mentors presented the team with options, and the teams made the choices. “I plan on being a mentor whether I have my kids involved or not. Coming from industry, I see how important this is, to get kids inspired to go into engineering and manufacturing positions.”

Meadows Committee Report:

Sue Allen related that the only action to report was the approval of a lacrosse request. The next meeting will be on March 8, hopefully to hear from a member of the group that oversaw the construction of athletic fields in Wolfeboro.

Endowment Report:

Derek Tomlinson reported that the committee’s paperwork, having gone through examination by legal counsel, is now in the hands of an auditor to ensure that all the correct verbiage associated with income tax considerations for non-profit organizations is in place. He related that Brenda Stowe had joined the committee, and brought a fresh viewpoint.

CORRESPONDENCE

Paul Blandford noted that Sue Allen’s photo appears on the current edition of New Hampshire School Board Association’s *FOCUS* publication as that organization’s new president.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment was offered.

OLD BUSINESS

March 14 Elections, Board Responsibilities:

Paul DeMinico reminded the board that prior to the election, ballots must be counted; after the election, votes must be counted. He asked for volunteers. Kevin Hayes, Paul Blandford, Margo Weeks, Derek Tomlinson, and Sue Allen offered their services as required. Dr. DeMinico will issue an email with scheduled times and personnel detailed.

Follow The Child Initiative:

Paul DeMinico reviewed the basis of this initiative as an alternative to No Child Left Behind as specifically aimed towards non-urban schools, and noted that his group’s next goal is to determine how to make the initiative work logistically. Essentially they will examine how to put together what data already exists on each student, and then how to ensure that data follows the student, all the while avoiding putting another burden on the teaching staff. He had distributed power point printouts and invited discussion.

Derek inquired as to the purpose of de-linking rural schools from urban schools.

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OLD BUSINESS

Paul reiterated that No Child Left Behind (NCLB) arose from an examination of inner-city schools, and an attempt to close a gap between the academic progress of minority students and middle-class students. Commissioner Lyonel Tracy views rural schools as having problems that are far different from urban schools, and thus should have a different approach: showing the progress of individual students rather than groups of students. Paul pointed out that in a school such as Gilford, with less than 1400 students, the staff ought to be able to know each student and plot his or her progress on a semester-to-semester basis.

Derek remarked that, of the assessment areas being measured, the academic is probably the easiest to manage. He inquired whether the effort could be launched immediately with the academic measurements, so as to avoid having the entire program becoming bogged down while the methodology is being developed for the other areas.

Margo Weeks cautioned that the amount of data to be collected is extremely large, with a commensurate complexity in the mechanics of collecting and analyzing the data. She pointed out that the other areas, lacking a historical pattern of measurement and analysis to follow, will require an immense amount of time and effort to design, test, and administer. She wondered whether consideration of logistics is not premature. "More time needs to be spent in what I see as a tremendous amount of variables and criteria you think you're going to be looking at."

Paul replied that the team will return with recommendations concerning the logistics. "I don't want to jump into it without knowing all there is to be done. If we're going to do it, we're going to do it right." He noted that there is a space for Gilford to join the effort, the Commissioner seems to want Gilford to join, and Paul would like to see the school ready by the beginning of the next school year. Reiterating that with teachers learning NWEA, Tech Pass software, differentiated instruction and the like, he does not want to burden them further. "I want to take it one step at a time. We're not going to miss the boat on this."

Amy Drever asked for clarification about lessening the gap between middle-class and minority students: "What would be our objective?"

Paul replied that it would result in a major shift from looking at test results of groups of students to looking at test results of individual students. One of the effects of NCLB is that a school can be deemed a "school in need of improvement" based on the performance of particular sub-groups. "If we find students not succeeding in certain areas there are things we can do about it, rather than looking at amorphous groups."

Brief discussion ensued on the topic of the results of a survey done by Futuristics to canvass Gilford graduates about their experiences at Gilford and how they thought Gilford had prepared them for their current pursuits. Paul DeMinico reported that the results are published, appear in the report cards, and that this was the first year of the survey. When the next year's survey is completed, some areas may become red-flagged, but further surveys will be required before any conclusions can be drawn.

NEW BUSINESS

Staff Resignation:

This item was moved to non-public session.

Overnight Field Trip Request:

Ken Wiswell related that the Spanish Club had asked for permission to travel to New York City from May 11 through May 14; they would be out of school for Thursday and Friday. This results in one out-of-school day more than what the board has previously endorsed, but Ken pointed out that the group will be traveling by bus, which will take up most of a day in each direction. He

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NEW BUSINESS

recommended that the board approve the trip and the extra day.

Paul Blandford inquired how many students were planning to attend; Ken replied that eleven were going.

Zannah Richards inquired about the Spanish exchange program; Ken replied that the program had been dormant for some time due to lack of interest, so much so that the stipend had been removed from next year's budget.

Amy Drever commented that most of the foreign language clubs have 20 to 40 members, who engage in various activities. She observed that the aftermath of 9/11 made some parents reluctant to host exchange students.

Derek Tomlinson viewed the agenda as quite productive.

Paul Blandford observed that the agenda appeared more of a tour of New York City. He voiced concern that the trip appeared to be more of a sightseeing than a cultural or educational nature.

Margo Weeks shared Paul's impression, indicating that she did not quite see the connection with the trip and Spanish. She indicated that the notion of trips away merits discussion at a later date. She observed that this trip appears to have a well mapped out agenda.

Kevin Hayes made the motion to support the agenda and trip. Derek seconded the motion.

Zannah Richards inquired as to the cost; Ken replied that \$306 per person included transportation and accommodations.

Cindy Hatch observed that Gilmanton's Grade 8 class trip last year was to New York City, with 62 students attending. Only one parent declined to give permission; the students went and enjoyed themselves immensely, while some parents "sat at home and waited; we wrung our hands." Nevertheless, the trip was characterized as a great experience for the class.

Kevin's motion passed unanimously.

Paul Blandford echoed Margo's earlier point about further discussion and suggested that a future agenda item should include the issue of overnight trips, with a view towards establishing a defined policy.

Underage Drinking Forum March 28, 2006:

Paul DeMinico described this forum, which will be held at 6:30 at the Gilford Middle School Library. He noted that the Drug and Alcohol Task Force, of which Sandy McGonagle is chair, has been instrumental in bringing this issue to the forefront of the Gilford community. The results from the Youth At Risk behavior survey are now available and will engender community-wide discussion sessions, of which this is the first. In the spring, the Freedom from Chemical Dependency program will continue at the Middle School. All the events are designed to create an awareness of drinking and drug use, hopefully with the added benefit of being in time for the proms.

Derek inquired how Gilmanton is tied into this program, and observed that the Gilmanton community should be informed and be able to attend such meetings if they should desire. Paul replied that meetings with Dr Fensom and his group cover these types of issues as well as readiness and curriculum. Paul spoke highly of the meetings, noting that Dr. Fensom and his staff have been very much involved and accessible. Zannah related that she conveys issues discussed at the Gilford meetings to the Gilmanton meetings.

PRESS COMMENT

Ron Tunning from *The Laconia Daily Sun* inquired whether action would be taken when the board emerged from non-public session. Paul Blandford indicated that if action were taken on a staff resignation item, that Paul DeMinico would later inform the press.

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NON-PUBLIC SESSION At 7:07 p.m., Kevin Hayes made the motion to enter non-public session pursuant
RSA 91-A:3 II (a) (b) to the provisions of RSA 91-A:3 II. Margo Weeks seconded the motion, which
passed by unanimous roll call vote.

ADJOURNMENT

Respectfully Submitted,

**Sue Allen
School Board Secretary**