

**GILFORD SCHOOL BOARD MEETING
MONDAY APRIL 3, 2006
GILFORD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
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The Gilford School Board held a regular meeting on Monday, April 6, 2006 at the Gilford Elementary School Tocci Library. Present were board members Sue Allen, Paul Blandford, Derek Tomlinson, Kurt Webber, and Margo Weeks. Representing Gilmanton were Zannah Richards and Russ Knowles. Administrators present were Kirk Beitler, Paul DeMinico, Scott Isabelle, Jim Kemmerer, Scott LaLiberte, Sandy McGonagle, and Ken Roy. Student council was represented by Amy Drever

OPENING

Outgoing School Board Chair Paul Blandford called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and then led the Pledge of Allegiance

Paul introduced new board members Kurt Webber from Gilford and Russ Knowles from Gilmanton.

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

Election of Officers

Sue nominated Derek Tomlinson for board chair; Kurt Webber seconded the motion, which passed by majority vote, with Paul Blandford voting against.

Derek thanked Paul for his service as chair for the last two years.

Paul Blandford nominated Margo Weeks for vice-chair; Kurt Webber seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Margo Weeks nominated Kurt Webber for board secretary; Paul Blandford seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

REPORTS

Gilford Elementary School:

Sandy McGonagle supplemented her written report with a description of Plymouth State University's Tiger production. This team interviews school children statewide about what they perceive as serious issues. The team uses these words to write plays which are brought to the schools. This year's production was entitled "Safe and Sound All Around," and was well received by the students.

Sandy also reported the Grade 3 Wax Museum project, wherein each student studied a particular historical figure, wrote a speech about the figure, then appeared on campus dressed as that figure. The student would act as a wax figure, speaking only when touched on the shoulder, reciting their speech about the character. Sandy praised the students' involvement.

Gilford Middle School:

Jim Kemmerer highlighted his written report by advising the board that the school will be involved in National History Day, their initial efforts having been adjudged sufficient to move to the next level of competition, to be held at Plymouth State University.

He also described Multi-Cultural Arts Week, and complimented the Unified Arts team for their efforts. Over 20 presenters, some professionals, others lay people, came to the school to discuss their culture, background, and interests. The students were enthusiastic in their responses.

Jim also advised of the improved turnout at Community Night; Derek and Margo commented on the concept and execution.

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Gilford High School:

Kirk Beitler reported that work continues on the master schedule; the Guidance Department has held two college planning evenings; the final NHEAP tests will be conducted directly following vacation week on Tuesday and Wednesday; 56 students are taking AP exams; he complimented the production of Nora's Lost Hamlet.

Amy Drever noted that GHS has recently participated in a state-wide drama competition and received a "techhie" award. GHS will host all of New England during the last weekend of school vacation in April, with over 12 schools competing.

Meadows Committee: Sue Allen had no report, as the board had not met due to scheduling conflicts.

NECAP Test Results 2005:

Ken Roy, Curriculum Assessment director gave a Power Point presentation on the topic.

NECAP is a collaborative effort between New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont educators to bring together a team of assessment and content specialists in an effort to customize assessments for overall goals.

Ken stressed that single test results provide limited information for a school district: it is important to emphasize that the district is testing its students individually, and not comparing scores with those of other districts.

Of four levels of student achievement (proficient and above; proficient; partially proficient; and below proficient) Gilford Grades 3 through 8 students scored proficient and above as follows:

- 74% in reading, whereas the statewide average is 66%
- 71% in math, whereas the statewide average is 62%
- 65% in writing, whereas the statewide average is 50%

Ken remarked that the point is to improve on these scores.

Kurt Webber asked, since New Hampshire worked and shared costs with the other states, is the entire testing body available for comparison? Ken replied that he did not closely inspect the scores for the other states, but the scores are available. On the whole Gilford seemed to perform better than the other states. Paul DeMinico reiterated that the intent of the three-state consortium was not to compare state-to-state, as they consist of different populations with different cultural backgrounds.

"The idea is to compare Gilford School District in year 1 with Gilford School District in year 2, and to show an upward trend."

Derek Tomlinson inquired whether there is anything in the data, such as a technical reason, that would prevent one from comparing districts to districts, or should that habit be avoided. "People are going to make these comparisons, and it almost sounds defensive to say we're not looking at it that way." Ken replied that to compare, for example, to schools in Manchester would not be fair, since the populations are so different. "We want to put the emphasis on our kids' improvement." Margo Weeks concurred, adding that to make such comparisons would require adjustments for all the variables between the communities, and still the results would not be reliable.

Sue Allen commented that this is gains-based testing; like Commissioner Tracy's initiative, the tests watch the child through the years of school and focus on the gain the child is making each year.

Kurt Webber inquired whether comparisons were made at the state level. "It seems to me that you have to find out how New Hampshire is doing the right job for its students compared to those in other states. In the long run, our kids are going to be competing against kids from other communities." Paul DeMinico

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replied that there are baseline standards in this case, and expectations of exceeding those baselines. "There is a strict measure of how measurements are going to be taken."

Sandy McGonagle commented that the school will evaluate the questions that students answered incorrectly and tailor the curriculum in those directions. "It is important for us now to have this body of data to analyze."

Ken related that the district plans to continue on its current path: curriculum mapping, NWEA tests, Follow the Child Initiative, are still in progress. How Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) will be determined is yet unknown; however the scores seem to indicate that AYP levels have been achieved. "With any assessment, there's always room for improvement."

Margo asked for the reasoning behind having both NECAPs and NWEAs. Ken replied that different tests provide means of triangulation. Paul DeMinico interjected that NWEAs are formative, and provide immediate feedback to students and teachers; NECAPs are summative, or provide summary results of the year's efforts.

Zannah Richards inquired as to the time frame for testing. Ken replied that NECAPs tested in October, and NWEAs will be tested in September and May.

Amy Drever commented that in a previous district, her instructors began "teaching from the tests," sometimes at the cost of attention to the curriculum.

Derek inquired how many hours are spent on teaching students to take tests.

Jim Kemmerer replied that an exact number would be difficult; the school does instruct on the mechanics of test-taking, e.g., reading each question thoroughly, and answering those where the answer is clear first. He gave an example of a school district whose test scores were abnormally high due to the amount of preparation and emphasis on test materials; however "not much else is going on in that school." Paul DeMinico noted that New Hampshire favors local control, and holds that curricula should be developed at the local level. However, there are state-established frameworks to follow. Sandy added that the frameworks are developed by New Hampshire teachers.

Kurt Webber observed that social studies are not included in the tests. Paul DeMinico concurred, adding that there is a concern among social studies organizations because social studies is not part of No Child Left Behind, that it has been relegated to a lower level of importance.

Endowment Fund Report:

Derek announced that the bylaws and articles of association have been developed and adopted. Candy Edson has volunteered to be the group's auditor/CPA at no charge, resulting in a potential savings of thousands. Scott Isabelle related that he and Candy are completing the documents for submission to the state.

Derek also announced that the group has "a very strong lead on six figures of donations" to start the fund.

Superintendent Report:

The Long Range Strategic Planning Steering Committee will meet tomorrow to further develop goals for the immediate future, to include curriculum goals, assessment instruction, professional development, and community outreach. More news is expected in June.

The Under-Age Drinking Forum was held last Tuesday, the final of six forums statewide trying to focus on solutions. There is some legislation being proposed to address the issues. Although the turnout was estimated at 30, Paul hoped that more parents might attend follow-up meetings.

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Governor's Summit on Dropouts:

Paul DeMinico briefly outlined this recent conference, at which he, Sue Allen as president of New Hampshire School Boards Association, and Ken Wiswell, incoming president of the Principals' Association, attended along with community members, educators, and board members throughout state met to discuss 8 different areas related to the governor's focus on increasing the dropout age from 16 to 18.

Sue synopsised the discussions of her group, Roles and Responsibilities of Students and Parents. Paul related that there will be an as-yet unknown fiscal impact to implementing some of the summit's conclusions and proposals. Margo concurred, adding that when the notions of adequate education, structures, special education, requirements, and mandates are brought up, there is almost always an associated cost and a concomitant concern about the distribution of those costs.

Russ Knowles inquired whether the movement to trimester scheduling will complicate offering alternative education programs. Paul DeMinico replied that block scheduling lends itself better to such programs. Kurt Webber concurred, adding that from his experience, as long as a partner teaches the same material and is reaching the same objectives, block scheduling makes no difference.

Derek inquired into the consequences for Gilford. Paul DeMinico replied that Gilford's dropout rate is about 2 ½%, or roughly five students, as compared to 5% statewide. "That's about five students, and we have to find something for them."

Kurt offered that alternative education programs may appeal to other students who are not quite at the drop-out point, but are just coasting along. Sue remarked "it's having the student want to be in school, not have to be in school. So we need to be creative in how we teach."

CORRESPONDENCE

Paul DeMinico outlined NHSBA's Board Orientation on April 19 at 5:30 in Concord. Sue remarked that the orientation will focus on being a new board member and the expectations thereof.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment was offered or taken

Paul Blandford remarked that Scott Isabelle will require a third signature for payment manifests. A brief discussion ensued as to the review methods and responsibilities of that person. Derek Tomlinson volunteered to be the third signatory.

OLD BUSINESS

Youth Risk Behavior Survey: Executive Summary

School Nurse Meg Jenkins reviewed the recently-received results from the April 13, 2005 Youth Risk Behavior Survey taken at Gilford. An average of 411 students answered each question. Some critical areas she highlighted:

- Riding or driving while drinking: 21% statewide, 26% Gilford
- Carrying a weapon (knife, gun, or club) in past 30 days: 16.2% statewide, 18.3% Gilford
- Carrying a gun in past 30 days: 3.3% statewide, 4.9% Gilford
- Carried a weapon at school past 30 days: 6.5% statewide, 8.3% Gilford
- Binge drinking in past 30 days: 28.4% statewide, 35.3% Gilford
- Use of illegal drugs (heroin, methamphetamine, ecstasy) is higher at Gilford than statewide

Meg pointed out that it is important to take this data and base the school's programming on those needs. She noted that a town meeting was hosted last week to raise awareness; UpStream is hosting a drug awareness community forum on April 13. She noted that there appears to be interest in forming support groups for parents, and that training is available (and necessary) for parents to have

OLD BUSINESS

parent-facilitated support groups.

The survey results were given to the local chapter of SADD, the student council and Interact club. She observed that the students were alarmed at some of the test results, "which is good. We have student leaders in our school who are concerned and who want to make change, so to have captured them is good." The data will be available at the school and town libraries; a subcommittee will be formed to establish an educational program designed to coincide with prom and graduation season.

Paul DeMinico cautioned against forming any conclusions from the data, other than to bring about discussion on the issues.

Kurt Webber pointed out that, being a voluntary survey, some of the worst offenders probably did not participate.

Amy Drever related that some students "thought it was a joke," and that others answered untruthfully.

Paul DeMinico noted that the local Rotary Club assisted financially. He thanked the students for participating, because it impacts them.

Staff Resignations: This agenda item was moved to non-public session.

Calendar Revision, 2006-2007:

Paul DeMinico outlined the calendar revision for 2006-2007, brought about in large part by the provision in the new Collective Bargaining Agreement to add another day of instruction. The revision arrived at, in consultation with the union, the leadership team, and with Gilmanton, is:

- The prior Martin Luther King half-day will be discarded (it is now a full-day holiday for teachers) and put at the beginning of the school year
- One day from the beginning of school year will be combined with the additional day of the contract to yield two NWEA workshop days, October 30 and 31.
- The school year will end one day later, on June 14 2007

Discussion followed concerning the number and frequency of extended-day weekends in October and November.

Sue Allen moved that the board accept the revised 2006-2007 calendar. Zannah Richards seconded. The motion passed by majority vote, with Paul Blandford voting against.

NEW BUSINESS

St. Baldrick's: Combating Childhood Cancer

John Beland, Gilford's deputy fire chief, appeared with others to ask the board for permission to promote this event. The foundation raises money to help conquer childhood cancer through the Children's Oncology Group by soliciting pledge amounts in exchange for a person shaving his or her head in support of those children who are bald due to their treatment. Last year was the Gilford chapter's first participation. They had hoped to raise \$5,000, but due to community support they raised \$24,600, shaving a total of 54 heads. This year's goal is to raise \$35,000, and to find 100 heads to shave, making Gilford "The baldest town in New Hampshire." He asked permission to utilize in-house media, to put up posters, and to have informational packets available at the nurse's office. This year's event will have food and music planned; involvement of Boston and Manchester sports teams is also being sought. His group will appeal to the board of selectmen for a proclamation of June 3 as St. Baldrick's Day in Gilford, New Hampshire.

After the board was shown a three-minute video, Sue Allen moved that the board approve the district's involvement in St. Baldrick's Day. Margo Weeks seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

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NEW BUSINESS

Staff Nominations: This agenda item was moved to after non-public session.

Grant Acceptance:

Jim Kemmerer related that Councilor Ray Burton had mentioned that the Middle School's presentation to the committee for support of their sidewalk project had been received favorably, and that a grant of \$164,773 could be available, if matching funds of approximately \$34,000 could be raised locally. The proposal must pass one more intermediate evaluation, and will then be presented to the Governor's Council on May 3 for approval. At this point, the agenda item is for informational purposes only. However, Councilor Burton revealed that such proposals have never not been approved all the way through the process.

Joint Meeting at Gilmanton May 8, 2006:

Paul DeMinico reminded the board of the joint Gilford--Gilmanton meeting on May 8 at Gilmanton at 6:00, and solicited agenda items. The Gilford meeting will occur at Gilmanton after the joint meeting. The Gilford School Board meeting for May 1 will not occur.

Derek suggested revisiting the policy on overnight trips.

Zannah inquired whether more information on block scheduling will be available. Paul DeMinico agreed that, as the Gilford board has always been interested in enrollment figures, the joint meeting would be an opportune occasion. He encouraged those with other suggestions to submit them to him via e-mail.

Meadows Committee Charge and Membership:

Paul Blandford suggested changing the date and name to reflect the current date and board chair. Paul DeMinico indicated that the changes would be made, and that membership would be discussed in non-public session.

High School Graduation Date:

Paul DeMinico advised that if the date is not set soon, many will not attend; the risk is that any further snow days could affect graduation in terms of the minimum number of days a senior must attend school. Brief discussion ensued concerning Father's Day and the beginning of Motorcycle Week.

Paul Blandford moved that the board set graduation for June 10, 2006. Kurt Webber seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

**NON-PUBLIC SESSION
RSA 91-A:3 II (a) (b)**

At 8:08 p.m., Margo Weeks made the motion to enter non-public session pursuant to the provisions of RSA 91-A: 3 II. Paul Blandford seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous roll call vote.

ADJOURNMENT

Respectfully Submitted,

**Kurt Webber
School Board Secretary**