

**GILFORD SCHOOL BOARD MEETING
MONDAY AUGUST 20, 2007
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The Gilford School Board held a regular meeting on August 20, 2007 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 Russ Knowles and Zannah Richards. Administrators present were Paul DeMinico, Scott Isabelle, Jim Kemmerer, Sandy McGonagle, and Ken Wiswell.

OPENING School Board Chairperson Sue Allen called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m., led the Pledge of Allegiance, and confirmed posting of the meeting.

Derek Tomlinson made the motion that the board approve the minutes of the July 30, 2007 meeting, with one correction. Margo Weeks seconded the motion and it was voted in the affirmative

REPORTS Meadows Advisory Committee
Sue Allen presented to the board the Meadows Advisory Committee's recommendation to appoint Rusty Ross for the two-year seat, and Mark Corry for the one-year seat. Kurt Webber so moved, Margo Weeks seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

CORRESPONDENCE No correspondence was received.

PUBLIC COMMENT No public comment was offered.

OLD BUSINESS No old business discussed.

NEW BUSINESS Introduction of new Elementary School Assistant Principal:
Paul DeMinico introduced new Assistant Principal Brian Ernest, who comes from the Wakefield School District. He replaces Scott LaLiberte, who took a principal position in another district.

Staff Nomination: this item was moved to non-public session.

Introduction to International Baccalaureate (IB) Program
Prior to introduction of the guest, Sue Allen confirmed that the board had no objection to members of the Endowment Committee being present to hear and observe the presentation, and to ask questions.

Paul DeMinico prefaced his introduction by stressing that the presentation was the first step in a year-long information-gathering process, providing information to the board, community, faculty, and student body about the IB program. Should the board in June of 2008 decide to pursue implementation, another year of application process would follow.

Paul introduced former colleagues Arthur Pontes and Joan-Mary Pontes, who are master teachers of IB at the Sturgis School on Cape Cod. The school serves a large cross-section of a student population of approximately 360, including special needs, general education, and higher-achieving students. He noted that Sturgis marks the fourth school that Mr. Pontes was instrumental in implementing the IB program.

Mr. Pontes pointed out that neither he nor his wife is an employee of the International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO); their only affiliation is that they are examiners. A main reason for making their presentation is that they both teach, and have found IB the best program with which they been involved. He

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has also been an Advanced Placement (AP) coordinator, and has taught AP history and English. He currently teaches IB history and English while Mrs. Pontes teaches two levels of IB mathematics. He noted that at Sturgis, since the implementation of IB it has achieved the number 53 position of the best 100 schools in America, and now has a waiting list. At Sturgis, all students take the IB program, as no other is offered.

The IB began outside the US, offering a way for travelers and people in the business and diplomatic communities to obtain a high school diploma. IB now has more American students than non-American students taking its exams, with 60 percent of exam-takers being US citizens. IB is expanding most widely and quickly in the US in both private and public schools, often as a challenge to the most able students in the school.

Advantages:

- IB's origins were different because it had to satisfy so many varied clients. The US seemed to offer the best educational practices, so large portions of its educational philosophy follow Dewey very closely. Students should be exposed to a large range of courses, they should be involved in choosing the courses they take, and should be involved in extracurricular activities.
- Because of the variety of assessment formats, 20 to 50 percent of a student's final grade is based on coursework that is graded before the final exam is ever taken, yielding an assessment not measured under exam conditions. Particularly with special ed students, if a student has a documented history of a particular educational need, he or she can take the final exams under special circumstances, e.g., extended time, use of computer, one-on-one proctor, and the like. There is a wide range of opportunities offered to special ed students to help them participate, or to "level the playing field." Mr. Pontes noted that the exam is the same, but given under different circumstances.
- By teachers becoming active participants they change too; further, by being involved with a student for a two-year period, they will learn the student's strengths and needs.

How it works:

- IB is offered for Grades 11 and 12 students.
- Each IB course is offered at a standard (150 classroom hours) and at an advanced (240 classroom hours) level.
- IB is offered in two programs: a certificate program and a full diploma program.
- The full diploma program requires taking six different courses, including foreign language, experimental science, math and computer science, and arts or electives. In addition, there are three "core" requirements, including a 4,000 word research paper, a "theory of knowledge" course, and a Creative Action Service (CAS) extracurricular component.
- The certificate program includes the six classes, but omits the "core" requirements.
- Comprehensive exams are given at year's end, are externally evaluated, and are internally changed year-to-year.
- A third way to participate is to take the courses, do all the work, but not necessarily participate in final exams. This method suits those students with after-school obligations, such as a job.

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The full diploma program also teaches the skills necessary to conduct research: how to write, how to take notes, how to answer research questions—those skills that are expected by college professors.

The Theory of Knowledge is an additional course requiring 100 hours over two years, and is designed to make students think about how all knowledge is connected. It is thought of as a mini-philosophy course for high school students. While there is no exam in this course, a paper is required, and students discuss how various subjects are teaching them, examining the way of thinking in various disciplines.

An important element is global awareness, or one's connection to the outside world, encouraging appreciation of perceptions of other cultures.

The Creativity Action Service (CAS) element requires 150 hours over the two years, with at least 50 hours in a creative activity, 50 hours serving the community, and 50 hours involving action, which often becomes sports participation. There are things that cannot be taught in the classroom, things a student needs to learn outside in interaction with others.

Kurt Webber inquired about the possibility of taking more than six exams under the full diploma program. Mr. Pontes replied that a few students have been known to take seven, but "it takes juggling." For a student whose post-secondary studies will require taking more than one science, that extra science course would have to be taken before Grade 11. IB's philosophy does not foster early or over-specialization.

Mr. Pontes invited board members to inquire of their alma maters whether IB students are admitted, to get an idea of how well IB students are accepted at colleges and universities. "Colleges are generally dying to get their hands on IB students: their success rate is so good, and they are unlikely to flunk out of college."

Assessments are varied and comprehensive. Aside from end-of-course exams, students give class presentations, create portfolios, conduct projects, record oral commentaries, keep research workbooks, perform practical lab work, give art shows, participate in oral examinations, give recorded performances, write musical compositions, and give drama performances. Many of these are sent off to an external IB examiner for grading. This grading also reflects on teacher performance: a teacher gives a predictive evaluation at the beginning of a year, and any grade falling more than a point above or below the prediction is re-graded by another external examiner.

Kurt inquired as to fees.

Mr. Pontes described a general membership fee of around \$8,000, as well as per-student fees, and exam fees, totaling about \$30,000 yearly for all fees at Sturgis, with each student taking an average of five exams per year.

Paul DeMinico categorized the annual fee at around \$8,000 for a school Gilford's size; exams fees at \$60 per exam; a professional development category involving the training of staff members at about \$8,000; and a fourth category referring to instructional materials, more in the nature of a one-time fee. He indicated that the endowment committee could be of assistance in this last regard. He acknowledged budget sensitivities, and indicated there are ways to manage the budget such that costs would not become a predetermined disqualifier.

Changes:

- Students are changed because of the nature of the program: they learn skills as they go along
- Teachers become more like coaches.
- Students must assess their own strengths and weaknesses, which exercise

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helps them decide which of the two levels of class they will take.

- Students are encouraged to ask questions and be critical.
- Students must express themselves orally in formal settings.
- Students must defend their views in a rational manner.
- Students must be active in the learning process.
- Students learn to think about learning and what it means “to know” something.
- Students gain self esteem.
- Exams are thorough and require long-term memory, a logical approach, and analytical skills. The exams are graded by external graders, and meet high level international standards.
- Teachers become active in choices of areas of the curriculum to be studied; reevaluate curricular assumptions; and become involved in IB subject curriculum review.
- Teachers become advisors and mentors to students.
- Teachers model as well as mentor students.
- Teachers must teach skills and must place learning within the context of the questions that lie within each discipline.
- Teachers must learn how to apply the IB criteria: they have to know the criteria and they get help by constant feedback.
- Teachers must encourage students to become independent thinkers and to question.
- Teachers are required to encourage student participation in the presentation of the course material.
- Teachers are forced to change the way they teach: they can’t always instantly give an answer, but they must encourage the students to see what they know themselves. This promotes learning how to ask questions.
- Effective learning becomes acceptable: it is exciting to be in a “smart” school.

When students and teachers change, the learning climate changes for all.

Similarities and differences between AP and IB:

- Both are honors courses.
- Both are assessed externally from the school.
- Both require long exams at year’s end.
- Both offer the possibility of college credit.
- Both are usually seen as programs for advanced students.
- IB is a two-year program, rather than series of one-year tests.
- Most IB courses are offered at two levels.
- IB students are offered a degree of teacher choice.
- IB teachers are a part of grading, and as such are involved in the “owning” rubrics and standards of IB.
- Final IB grades are a composite made up of teacher assessments and externally graded materials.
- Highly qualified IB teachers can become examiners.
- IB offers an international perspective.
- IB courses are revised every five years with teacher input.
- IB offers a flexibility in schedules (150/240 hrs).
- IB is a program; AP is a set of exams in individual subjects.
- AP will teach how to answer questions; IB will teach how to ask them.

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- Theoretically a student can take AP classes in 8th or 9th grade; IB does not afford that opportunity.
- One difference between IB and AP is how progress is assessed, and the kinds of things that are assessed among others.
- A different mindset emerges: awarding points rather than taking points away when grading.
- All IB exams are returned, unlike AP where only certain portions are returned. The reason is that AP uses the same tests for several years consecutively. IB changes its questions every year.
- AP wants to determine what students don't know, whereas IB wants to determine what students do know, resulting in a difference in the way tests are designed.
- IB has a philosophy and internal coherence, a series of checks and double-checks.

Margo inquired what IB's philosophy is.

Mr. Pontes replied that it is essentially to create a heavily involved body of students who are aware of their own learning styles, who are involved in a global view, who understand that they are members of greater community in which thinking and education are goals in and of themselves.

Derek Tomlinson inquired of the student to teacher ratio at Sturgis.

Mrs. Pontes replied that her classes have not been fewer than 16 or more than 20.

Mr. Pontes replied his had been not fewer than 16 or more than 19.

Greg Dickinson of the Endowment Committee inquired whether students can participate in both AP and IB, or how a school can change mid-stream.

Mr. Pontes related that many IB schools offer both AP and IB.

Paul DeMinico offered that at his two previous postings in The Hague and in Bangkok, both were AP schools that switched to IB despite an avid group of AP advocates, both on faculty and in the community. After deciding to "let the marketplace take its effect," both schools observed a shift from AP to IB. A contributing factor was the sense that IB fostered achievement, it became "cool to achieve," students wanted to achieve in the most rigorous program of study, and recognized IB as the more rigorous program. He indicated that his interest in exploring IB for Gilford was not based on his overseas experience, but rather because of accreditation comments (1) about paying more attention to general ed students because a number were "falling between the cracks," the special ed and honors students having already been well accommodated, and (2) that students should be provided with more experiences with differences in culture.

Mr. Pontes thanked the board for the opportunity to give the presentation and invited the board and faculty to come to Sturgis and talk with its school board members and its teachers, or better still, talk to its students.

Account Transfer

Paul DeMinico advised that the anticipated account transfer request became moot when it was discovered that the account already held a sufficient amount to achieve the desired goal. He reviewed that the Field Hockey program has grown from 11 participants two years ago to nearly triple that at present, representing a resurgence due to many factors, not least of which is the coach. The original request would have been for \$900 to \$950 to provide Junior Varsity games for younger participants. The JV games would be instrumental in generating needed enthusiasm for that program to flourish.

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NON-PUBLIC SESSION At 7:38 p.m., Margo Weeks made the motion to enter non-public session pursuant
RSA 91-A:3 II to the provisions of RSA 91-A:3 II. Kurt Webber seconded the motion, which
passed by unanimous roll call vote.

ADJOURNMENT

Respectfully Submitted,

**Kurt Webber
School Board Secretary**