

GILFORD SCHOOL BOARD MEETING
MONDAY September 4, 2007
GILFORD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
PAGE 1

The Gilford School Board held a regular meeting on September 4, 2007 at the Gilford Elementary School Tocci Library. Present were board members Sue Allen, Paul Blandford, Kurt Webber, and Margo Weeks. Representing Gilmanton were Walter Mitchell 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 6:00 p.m., led the Pledge of Allegiance, and confirmed posting of the meeting.

Walter Mitchell made the motion that the board approve the minutes of the August 20, 2007 meeting. Paul Blandford seconded the motion and it was voted in the affirmative.

REPORTS

Gilford Elementary School
Sandy McGonagle submitted her report as written.

Gilford Middle School
Jim Kemmerer added to his written report that two spelling programs are being piloted at GMS, for grades 5 and 6, and grades 7 and 8, making GMS the only middle school in the state to have spelling programs from grades 5 through 8. He noted that students will also begin keeping literacy portfolios, which will be used in tracking individual growth and as assessment vehicles.
Sue Allen inquired about enrollment figures. Jim replied that current enrollment is 390, a decrease of ten from an average of 398 to 402.

Gilford High School
Ken Wiswell emphasized in his written report the letter from New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) notifying that GHS will be evaluated March 15 through 18, 2009, following the 10-year accreditation practice.. He also noted that some GHS staff attended a Follow the Child conference this past summer; while not participating fully as a team, they did attend workshops. He noted that it “was a great experience for us.” The focus of the entire conference was on literacy, which complements a leadership goal to implement a state-wide literacy plan K-12. A transition towards a coaching approach will allow cost-sharing and be a uniform discipline across grade levels.
Ken reported that as of September 1, GHS enrollment was at 572, reflecting a decrease of three from last year’s 575. He also reminded that the Back to School Night is Thursday, September 6.

Walter Mitchell related that Gilmanton’s elementary and middle school enrollment is up 28 students.

Meadows Advisory Committee
Sue Allen reported that the committee’s next meeting is on September 12. There was nothing to report since the committee’s last meeting.

Superintendent’s Report
Paul DeMinico informed the board that Curriculum Director Sandy Drouin will be making a brief presentation at the next meeting concerning assessment, including greater detail on Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) and recent Advanced Placement (AP) test scores. Paul noted that while last year’s middle school math assessments did not meet AYP due to the performance of a small sub-group, that

REPORTS

threshold was reached this year. More recently, the elementary school reading assessment did not meet AYP, due again to the performance of a small sub-group. Sandy McGonagle confirmed that the educational disabilities group (which reflects a significantly large sub-group of 11 students in grade 3, 20 students in grade 4, 16 in grade 5) did not meet AYP; however those scores were released in January, so there was a five-month period in which the scores were analyzed and instructional strategies changed. She and Paula Dickinson addressed the NECAP scores, and coordinated with each grade level team. The Special Ed personnel did item-analyses of students' strengths and weaknesses. Her hope is that by making the instructional changes over the remainder of the school year, the students' performances will be reflected in this October's test scores.

Sandy also informed the board of some anomalies that could result in score changes: one student's scores were reported and counted, even though that student was not and has never been a GES student; zero scores in reading and math were accorded a student that the faculty believes was capable of scoring higher. She has been in contact with the State and expects some adjustments will be made. Further, Paula Dickinson has indicated that the margins are very small, so she and Paula believe that a difference can be made in the scores.

Accommodating test anxiety or other special testing needs is another source of frustration for the special ed staff: last year only one student qualified for an alternative testing plan.

Paul commented that he remains very proud of Gilford's performance, particularly in the larger picture of school success: students are attending some of the top universities in the US; the dropout rate is a very low one percent (although he allowed that one percent is perhaps still too high); and students are involved in a wide-ranging span of extracurricular activities.

Paul advised that an examination of growth model, which is coming next month, will reveal that all growth targets have been met, reflecting a positive difference between the federal AYP standards and New Hampshire's own growth model.

Paul closed his comments by relating that the high school was not tested, due to the transition from NHEIAP to NECAP; in that case, determination of AYP is based on graduation rates, which Gilford has increased sizably. He noted that next year, "the targets are going up, which will have an effect on schools in general, and in their ability to make AYP."

CORRESPONDENCE

NEASC Letter: GHS Self-Study and Evaluation

Paul DeMinico directed the board to this correspondence from New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC), which reviews the ten-year evaluation cycle, commencing this year with self-study. Similar to the New England League of Middle Schools (NELMS), NEASC also visits the schools and assesses them against a set of established criteria.

Ken Wiswell added that the school is on-schedule with the suggested time lines. The next big step is a visit from a member of the Commission on Secondary Schools on October 17. That individual will speak to the faculty, steering committee, and chairs of each of the standing committees. Following that is a survey phase, which will survey the students, community, parents, and staff. With the survey results, the school and community members will write seven extended essays and submit those as Gilford's self-study.

Kurt Webber inquired how he could contribute. Ken replied that a special school board meeting is held with the visiting committee on Sunday March 15; all board members are expected to attend. At the meeting, the committee has a list of questions to which the board members will respond. He further noted that board members who are also parents of GHS students have an opportunity to volunteer

GILFORD SCHOOL BOARD MEETING
MONDAY September 4, 2007
GILFORD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
PAGE 3

CORRESPONDENCE in the capacity of community representatives when the essays are written.

Letter to Mrs. Davy
Paul DeMinico informed the board of this letter per policy.

PUBLIC COMMENT No public comment was offered.

OLD BUSINESS

Board Meeting Schedule

Sue Allen sought a motion to approve the meeting schedule as follows:

- October 1 Gilford/Gilmanton joint meeting at GHS
- November 5 at GES
- December 3 at GES
- January 7, 2008 at GES
- February 4, 2008 at GES
- March 3, 2008 at GES
- April 7, 2008 at GES
- May 5, 2008 at GES
- June 2, 2008 Gilford/Gilmanton joint meeting at Gilmanton

Margo Weeks moved that the board accept the schedule as proposed. Walter Mitchell seconded.

Zannah Richards pointed out that Gilmanton typically meets on the second Monday of the month. Margo amended her motion to reflect the June Gilmanton meeting as June 9; Walter again seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS

In-Service, Early Release Time Requests

Paul DeMinico referred to information in members' packets. Traditionally the board has been asked to approve the use of early release time. The bulk of requests revolved around curriculum, including Tech Paths, NWEA tests, MAPP testing, and, notably, NEASC.

Walter Mitchell inquired, as the parent of a new high school student, what the actual early release time is. Ken Wiswell replied that it is 12:06 p.m.

Paul Blandford moved that the board adopt the early release times. Walter Mitchell seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Overnight Studies Request

Jim Kemmerer referred the board to a comprehensive request by Jo-Ann Belanger for a trip for 30 students to Quebec City in April 2008. Jim noted that the Visit Canada tour company has been used before, and was found to be highly professional and organized. The request encompasses Friday through Sunday

Margo Weeks moved that the board approve the trip. Kurt Webber seconded the motion.

Sue Allen noted she could not find a cost in the materials; Paul Blandford concurred. Jim related that the students hope to raise \$2,000 in-house, bringing the cost down to approximately \$399 per student. Scholarships will be offered to students with financial hardships.

Walter inquired about passports. Jim replied that because the group will be a school-sponsored study group, only photocopies of birth certificates will be required. Passports will be required in 2009 or 2010.

The motion passed unanimously,

Budget Timeline

Scott Isabelle distributed a budget timeline, noting that the superintendent's

GILFORD SCHOOL BOARD MEETING
MONDAY September 4, 2007
GILFORD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
PAGE 4

budget should be presented by October 15. He proposed that the board meet on October 23 to review the budget, with a possible spill-over date of October 24. After brief discussion, the consensus was to meet on October 23 at 5:00, and determine a second meeting date and time if it proves necessary.

NEW BUSINESS

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

At 6:33 p.m., Margo Weeks made the motion to enter non-public session pursuant to the provisions of RSA 91-A:3 II (c) (e). Kurt Webber seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous roll call vote.

ADJOURNMENT

Respectfully Submitted,

Kurt Webber
School Board Secretary