

**GILFORD SCHOOL BOARD SPECIAL MEETING  
MONDAY APRIL 15, 2019  
GILFORD HIGH SCHOOL LIBRARY  
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**The Gilford School Board held a meeting on Monday April 15, 2019 at the Gilford High School Library. Present were board members Jeanin Onos, Karen Thurston, Gretchen Gandini, Rae Mello-Andrews, and Chris McDonough. Administrators present were Kirk Beitler, Scott Isabelle, Anthony Sperazzo, Peter Sawyer, and Danielle Bolduc.**

**OPENING**

School Board Chair Chris McDonough called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance. Superintendent Beitler confirmed posting of the meeting.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

No comment was offered.

**CURRICULUM DIRECTOR POSITION DISCUSSION**

Chris McDonough opened the discussion.

Karen Thurston commented:

- Staff thinking should be taken into consideration with an explanation of how it helps them, which helps our students, which helps our scores
- staff who came before Board at last meeting spoke to the need for the position and all it has done for our schools
- this includes helping Gilmanton students transition to GHS
- we should take seriously their input

Rae Mello-Andrews commented:

- has looked at contract and is not sure we need the Director
- look at how we do things now; when you read the math couldn't we use math coordinator and math coach
- why don't we have someone from English, math, or social studies, and make one of them a chairperson and pay them a stipend
- would be a nice way of teaching people to grow into a leadership position; same with the technology people
- also sees that and the same thing with professional development
- we put groups together and work as a committee collaboratively and collectively, which might be a new way of thinking for some people
- might be more beneficial because then you are working with the people who know what is going on
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Karen Thurston responded:

- in the past this has happened; takes away from teaching time
- people are not accessible during the work day
- wants it on the record that she supports this position

Rae Mello-Andrews replied:

- could be done after school, especially if there is a stipend

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Jeanin Onos commented:

- realizes it could be difficult to fill if part-time, but is part-time an option

Gretchen Gandini commented:

- spoke about bouncing topic off of other people to get their thoughts; knows budget numbers are of concern
- we have tried hard to keep the budget numbers down
- appreciates that even with a declining enrollment, Gilford needs have changed
- there are now are more issues to deal with that the curriculum director handles
- believes that we could make do without the position, but would we be stepping backwards
- times have changed – focus now on testing, etc.
- it's an important role/position we should keep

Chris McDonough responded:

- 10 years ago the board eliminated assistant principal position at GES
- have also eliminated 19 teaching positions
- every year we start the budget season up 2-3 percent due to increases in wages, health insurance costs
- GSD has one of the state's highest cost per pupil; as such, we are in danger of losing Gilmanton students
- this would be devastating to our staff and students; positions would be cut, would lose opportunities for students - in sports, the arts, and curriculum
- paying stipends and having committees handle the tasks of that job would curriculum ball forward
- staff and administration could fill role

Karen Thurston replied:

- spoke to per pupil costs being high as we keep our special needs students in-district
- keeping our students all together is important; means we are totally inclusive
- spoke with the teachers; no one has volunteered to be on a committee to take the place of director
- staff are already out straight with teaching, including weekend time; we need to listen to what teachers are saying

Chris McDonough responded:

- does not feel that his proposal is detrimental to the staff; he does not want that to be misunderstood

Rae Mello-Andrews commented:

- spoke to the ineffectiveness of the prior director; staff stepped up at that time to make things work; can they do it again

Gretchen Gandini replied:

- wondered if schools would continue to improve without the position
- questioned eliminating it for a year, followed by re-evaluation at that time
- do we keep going forward; keep the needle moving forward, not take a step backwards
- sees trying something new again as a step backwards

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Rae Mello-Andrews responded:

- does not see it as a step backwards, it is looking outside the box; we need to try something new

Gretchen Gandini replied:

- staff approached her who said we have a need for this role
- feels this would be the staff who would step up to the role if we do not fill the position
- questioned this could lead to burnout of teachers
- feels elimination position would not be a smart move

Jeanin Onos responded:

- we ask our teachers to be innovative/work outside the box
- would they be able to find the efficiencies to cover the position

Gretchen Gandini replied:

- what would it look like if position was eliminated; how would we measure if cut was effective; time frame – 1 or 2 years?

Chris McDonough replied:

- based on assessments

Karen Thurston responded:

- District was concerned with tests scores in the past; all have gone up since this person was in the role
- under his guidance we have seen a new math program; seeing significant improvement in the success of our scores/how the tests are done

Chris McDonough responded:

- Eureka math started before Mr. Tucker arrived; program has been a huge step forward
- staff can identify where the problems are/know what to do to address issues
- chairperson of the committee could make sure the meetings happen, make sure the staff development is in place

Karen Thurston commented:

- part of Director's work is his continuum among the three buildings; no committee could focus on all three (3) buildings
- each school will only be working independently for its own school
- director made sure that everything was coordinated between all the schools/oversaw what each individual teacher needed
- no committee can do that; how will the teachers find the time
- we owe it to the families of students to give them the best education

Jeanin Onos replied:

- I respectfully disagree; there wouldn't be three committees, there would be one committee that would be continuum of them talking to each other
- There wouldn't be a reason to have three separate committees because you would be siloing the individual pool

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Anthony Sperazzo commented:

- being the high school principal he understands the budget responsibilities
- we are not filling two positions next year; this would lessen the impact of funding the Director's position
- Gilmanton pays 1/3 of the salary of the position
- We need a district-wide lens, which the position gives the district

Superintendent Beitler commented:

- appreciates the Board's struggle over this decision; it is an area with a variety of opinions, which he respects
- the Director's position focuses on instruction and curriculum; it is an important role to the district
- Superintendent's and Principals' roles do not allow time to be Director of Curriculum as well
- including administration could be done, but it can't be their focus
- administration must be available at the schools as needed for any contingency that arises

Rae Mello-Andrews made the motion that the Board eliminate the position of the Curriculum Director with the idea that we re-evaluate the need for the position as needed, with no time limit, so that we can see the impact of not having the position, based on data received; stipends to be determined. Jeanin Onos seconded the motion.

Gretchen Gandini asked if there would be a plan in place before school starts in the fall. All agreed that this would be needed.

Voting was as follows: Chris McDonough, yes; Jeanin Onos, yes; Rae Mell-Andrews, yes; Gretchen Gandini, no; Karen Thurston, no. Motion carries 3-2. The position would be eliminated.

Following the vote, further discussion ensued.

- There will be a presentation to the Board in future months with a replacement plan, what it looks like, what the stipends will be, and if there will be extra money for the administrators or outside contractors.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

No comment was offered.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Karen Thurston made the motion to adjourn. Jeanin Onos seconded; motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 6:53 p.m.

**Respectfully Submitted,**

**Jeanin Onos  
School Board Secretary**