

**GILFORD SCHOOL BOARD MEETING
MONDAY JANUARY 6, 2020
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The Gilford School Board held a regular meeting on Monday January 6, 2020 at the Gilford High School Library. Present were Board members Gretchen Gandini, Jeanin Onos, Rae Mello-Andrews, and Karen Thurston. Administrators present were Kirk Beitler, Scott Isabelle, Anthony Sperazzo, Peter Sawyer, Danielle Bolduc, and Brenda McGee. Gilmanton Board members present were Michelle Heyman, and Malcolm MacLeod. Student Council Representative present was Alex Cheek.

Opening

School Board Vice-Chair Gretchen Gandini called the meeting to order at 6:17 p.m. Superintendent Beitler confirmed posting of the meeting.

Karen Thurston made the motion that the Board approve the minutes of the December 2, 2019 meeting. Michelle Heyman seconded the motion. Following no discussion nor corrections, the motion passed in the affirmative with Rae Mell-Andrews abstaining.

Student Report

Alex Cheek stated that final exams were completed and Trimester 2 has begun. He said the Granite State Music Festival, which consists of seven participating schools, was a success. Choosing classes for next year will be starting soon; next year's freshmen meet next week. Students are already starting to talk about Winter Carnival, which is the week before February break. All are looking forward to it as it brings classes together and increases school spirit.

Public Comment

Public comments were made by the following Gilford residents:

Nicole Hogan spoke on the transgender policy, stating she feels we should learn as much from research as possible. Ms. Hogan spoke in favor of the policy, saying she hopes to see acceptance of the transgender population in our schools, and that it is doing the right thing to pass this policy. She stated that she feels the administration and personnel in the schools will make the best decision for the students.

Kyle Sanborn spoke against the policy, as he feels the policy still contains wording and portions that should go back to the policy committee for revisions, that it is unacceptable as written. Mr. Sanborn stated that he believes it is against FERPA law, and specifically stated that he is against the gender-fluid wording. Mr. Sanborn also commented that he feels it violates Title IX in athletics, and he believes that Senate Bill 263 covers more than just gender identity. Mr. Sanborn stated that he wants all provisions of Senate Bill 263 to be covered in this policy.

Adrianna Antonopoulos spoke in favor of transgender rights, stating that she is happy that the Board is addressing the issue and moving forward.

Skip Murphy spoke about his concerns in relation to the transgender policy. Mr. Murphy stated that in his opinion, free speech is still being affected regarding the required use of pronouns chosen/used by transgender students. He would like the Board to address his question of transgender terminology and possible

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consequences if the terminology is not used. Mr. Murphy commented that he believes that it is not the government's role to enforce something upon somebody that they don't feel to be true. He suggested Bill SB 263 addresses a comprehensive plan for all protective classes, and he wants the District's policy to go back to the Policy Committee to add these other protective classes to the policy.

Adrianna Antonopoulos spoke again in favor of the policy and also handed out a flyer with a resource available for more information on the topic.

Matthew Wood spoke about the new locker rooms and asked how they would change the facilities to align with the policy. Mr. Wood asked what it would cost when adding-in renovations to the current bathrooms being used and how much more this would add to the budget.

Denise Wallston stated that she has a disabled child, and she understands that all students need to be accommodated. She asked how the physical accommodations will be covered, specifically what will the cost be and what will be done to protect transgender students, gay students, etc. Ms. Wallston said that she believes there is a large financial burden that goes with implementing the policy.

Bethany Cote spoke in support of providing equal rights to all students, including transgender students. She has three children in the district and does not feel that any transgender rights instituted will cause her children to be uncomfortable or unsafe. Ms. Cote stated that laws have been passed, and that the Board should pass a policy to meet those laws. She stated again that she is in support of transgender children having a policy to protect them, asking the Board to pass the policy, understanding that not all may feel as she feels. Ms. Cote stated that transgender people are protected by law now, times are changing, and we must provide equal rights for all students.

Gaye Fedorchak commented that she supports the policy with one exception, that the policy does not have a fiscal impact included at this time; it is just the policy being voted on, but that there will be fiscal implications later. She also stated that she feels individual plans and parental contact should be in the policy, and for additional policy work to be done that covers other protective classes. Ms. Fedorchak stated she is concerned about the statement, "consistently expressed gender identity," that is in the policy. She said that she believes that an individual plan for the transgender student should be available to the students based on the age of the student, and also wants trans-fluid v transgender clarified.

Angelo Farruggia spoke, saying that there is not a major divide on the issue; both sides want what is best for the students. He believes people have issues with parts of the policy, commenting that he believes the policy is detrimental to both sides. He stated that he does not feel it is an equal rights issue, nor does he think that all kids are okay with this as previously stated. Mr. Farruggia commented that he feels that the purpose of the policy has backfired, that no one is being helped, that the policy is too abstract, and that the policy is illegal. Mr. Farruggia stated that he wants all protected classes to be covered and the transgender policy is infringing on others' rights. He expressed that he would like to see financial obligations addressed before the policy is approved.

Gretchen Gandini addressed the financial comment, stating that no finances have been discussed by the Board and no consultants have been contacted. Mr. Beitler agreed with Mrs. Gandini's statement.

Public comment closed.

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Superintendent's Report

Kirk Beitler read his report as written.

Student Learning

Mr. Beitler stated that we have been approved for two Robotics grants from the New Hampshire Department of Education. The middle school robotics grant is for \$2,535.00 and the high school robotics grant is for the amount of \$11,090.00. Karen Thurston made a motion to accept the grant from the New Hampshire Department of Education for the middle school in the amount of \$2,535.00; Rae Mello-Andrews seconded. Motion passed 4-0. (Gilmanton Board members abstained. This grant does not affect Gilmanton students.) Karen Thurston made a motion to accept the grant from the New Hampshire Department of Education for the high school robotics in the amount of \$11,090.00; Michelle Heyman seconded. Motion approved 6-0.

Families and Communities

Mr. Beitler reported on the work done by the Gilford and Gilmanton School Boards on the AREA agreement.

Resource Management

Superintendent Beitler stated that we are fully staffed in all positions at this time. We have hired several paraprofessionals to support teaching and learning in our schools. We will start to advertise for some of the teaching openings that we will have, based on retirements, in the next month. Business Administrator interviews will happen this month and Mr. Beitler will have a candidate for the Board's consideration at the February meeting.

Safety and Facilities

Fire inspection reports have been uploaded to the School Board's google drive folder. We are in good standing with the fire inspections that were completed by the Gilford Fire Department.

Principals' Reports

Gilford Elementary School – Danielle Bolduc submitted her report as written.

Gilford Middle School – Peter Sawyer submitted his report as written. Mr. Sawyer stated that GMS eighth grade students will be starting to prepare for high school next month by choosing their freshman year classes.

Gilford High School – Anthony Sperazzo submitted his report as written.

Business Administrator's Report

Mr. Isabelle reported on the federal grants that have been submitted by the Gilford School District and have been approved. He is asking for the Board's approval of these grants.

Rae Mello-Andrews made a motion to accept the IDEA grant in the amount of \$212,072.13; Karen Thurston seconded. Rae Mello-Andrews made a motion to accept the remaining grants: Preschool Consolidate Grant for \$1,960.97; Title I Consolidated Grant for \$153,782.46; Title II Part A Consolidated Grant for \$55,900.00; and Title IVA Grant for \$33,070.77; Karen Thurston seconded the motion. The motions passed 4-0, with 2 abstentions.

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Scott Isabelle stated that financial statements are posted on the District's website. He commented that when looking at the Buildings and Grounds and Special Educations budgets, they show that the new hires are making the budget tight.

Policy– First Reading

JFA – Admissions Procedures – Current GSD policy; suggest replacing with NHSBA sample policy.

JFABD – Education of Homeless Children and Unaccompanied Youth – NHSBA sample policy; suggest replacing current GSD policy with this sample.

Gretchen Gandini asked the question as to who is the District's homeless liaison. Kirk Beitler replied that it is Esther Kennedy.

Policy – Second Reading

JBAB – Transgender and Gender Non-Conforming Students – GSD proposed policy.

Mr. Beitler spoke about the discussions that have taken place with the public. Jeanin Onos made the motion to approve the policy: Transgender and Gender Non-Conforming Students; Rae Mellow-Andrews seconded. Motion passed 5-1.

GBEF – Employee Use of District Issued Computers & Devices – Sample policy; we do not have this policy.

Rae Mello-Andrews made the motion to approve the policy: Employee Use of District Issued Computers and Devices; Jeanin Onos seconded; motion passed unanimously.

Public Comment

Gilford resident Betty Tidd congratulated the Board on voting for the policy. She stated that she is thankful we (the District) have a policy that will protect all of our students. "Now comes the implementation of the policy. That's the hard part," she said. Mrs. Tidd requested the Board let the teachers address the new policy as part of the curriculum.

Public comment closed

Non-Public – RSA 91-A:3II (c)

At 7:16 p.m., Jeanin Onos made the motion to go into non-public session; Malcolm MacLeod seconded. Voting was unanimous; motion passed. 6-0.

Adjournment

Jeanin Onos made the motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:29 p.m., seconded by Karen Thurston. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

**Jeanin Onos
School Board Secretary**