

Staffing process begins for Oxford's first high school

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OXFORD — The town's first high school may not have opened yet, but it already has its department heads.

The Board of Education last week agreed to hire four educators as Oxford High School department chairs.

Stephen Barone, now a teacher in Cheshire, will serve as the social studies chairman.

Frank LaBanca will leave his post at Newtown High School to head the science department.

Kelley O'Neal, a former teacher at East Hartford High School who is now living in Tucson, Ariz., will run the English department; and Margaret McCarthy-Surat will take over as the math

department chair upon leaving her post at Crosby High School in Waterbury.

Oxford schools Business Manager Rich Carmelich said the teachers will be paid on a per-diem basis.

"Our plan is to bring them in on a per-diem basis to work when we can get them," Carmelich said about the new staffers as they work on the school's curriculum the rest of the academic year. "It's just to help put together the textbook needs and program the studies on an as-needed basis."

The four will be on salaries when they join the school staff full time next July, he said.

Other high school staff will be hired by early spring.

Board of Ed hires four educators to serve as department heads

Carmelich said, but won't come aboard until July 1, the start of the 2007-08 academic year.

The new department chairs will help hire the staff.

The board voted in June 2004 to name Frank Samuelson the high school's first principal.

In other action last week, the school board also voted to table authorizing bids for furniture, fixtures, equipment and technology.

Board members said they want to have a joint meeting with the Oxford High School building committee to review what equipment the school will need when it opens next fall.

The building committee should agree on what the school needs.

The selectmen and the Board of Finance will be invited to sit in on the meetings.

"It's better to come back to this and say what we really need," Schwab said. "I want to put the right number out to bid the first time. I don't want to play games with this."

Costs for furniture and technology have been under discussion by school officials as the high school's price is expected to exceed the \$43.9 million approved by voters two years ago.

First Selectman August Palmer III said he wants the selectmen and Board of Finance to talk with Building Committee Chairman Ed Hellauer about those costs as a way to keep the school on budget.