



**Grosse Pointe Board of Education**  
**Minutes of the Work Session of May 4, 2009**  
**Library, Grosse Pointe North High School**  
**707 Vernier, Grosse Pointe Woods, MI 48236**

<b>MEETING MINUTES</b>  <b>CALL TO ORDER</b>	<p>President Kosinski called the meeting to order at 6:36 p.m.</p> <p><b>Board members present:</b> Trustees Dindoffer, Gafa, Ismail, Kosinski, Minturn, Steininger and Walsh</p> <p><b>Also Present:</b> Superintendent Klein; Assistant Superintendents Allan, Harwood and Fenton</p>
<b>BUDGET PLANNING FOR 2009-10 AND BEYOND</b>	<p>President Kosinski stated that the goal of the Board for budget planning is to identify cost containment strategies while keeping excellence in education. She addressed the main reasons for the needed budget cuts as declining enrollment and the general operating budget fund decline. Mrs. Kosinski stated that another \$5.4 million in cuts or revenue enhancements will be needed next year to balance the budget.</p> <p>Dr. Klein began a presentation of the proposed 2009-10 budget noting Board Policy 6220 requires the Board to annually direct the administration to commence development of the ensuing year's budget by adoption of a resolution and budget development parameters. That policy states that these parameters shall: identify financial goals and objectives the Board requires in regard to specific cost reduction, revenue increases or other financially related objectives for particular budget elements; identify budget related strategies the Board prefers the administration pursue or avoid; and be as specific as possible in terms of objectives, but allow for flexibility in administration's approach to budget development.</p> <p>The primary function of the Grosse Pointe Public School System is to ensure the educational development of each and every student who attends district schools. As a result, the district will prepare a budget for 2009-10 which provides educational excellence for each student yet is responsive to realities of the current financial environment and anticipated state school aid; maintains a responsible level of fund equity; and utilizes a series of financial reports to identify trends and reflect best practices.</p> <p>The three areas of concern in this year's budget proposal are changes to the Community Education Program, funding for ice hockey time, and continuing to provide a paraprofessional vocal music accompanist at each high school.</p> <p>Mr. Fenton then reviewed the State of Michigan per pupil foundation amount for the current school year as well as the projections for the 2009-2010 school year. He noted that the Hold Harmless amount will remain the same (as it does not change per pupil). The non-homestead amount will decrease by \$34 and the foundation allowance will decrease by \$59. The district will receive</p>

federal stimulus funds of \$59 per pupil, which will provide the district with the same level of funding next year as this year, a total foundation allowance of \$10,184 per pupil.

Mr. Fenton reviewed some of the past budget cuts:

- restructuring the middle school day
- early retirement incentives
- health care savings/reductions in usage and prescriptions
- reductions in facility repair and maintenance
- moving school board elections to November
- technology initiatives
- requiring fees for secondary clubs and sports
- privatizing cafeteria services
- Hold harmless millage and sinking fund
- Increasing energy efficiency
- Increasing class sizes until 2006
- Eliminating fourth grade instrumental music
- Reducing the athletic budget by \$450,000
- Reducing purchased services by over \$500,000
- Reducing central office administrative, supervisory and clerical staff

Dr. Klein then reviewed the focus areas in the Board's 2009-2010 budget parameters:

- adjusting the district staffing to enrollment ratio to the 2006 level
- review of special education services and programs
- general operational cost efficiencies or revenue enhancements
- long-term financial solutions

Mr. Harwood discussed adjusting the student to staff ratio, to 18.6:1 of 2006-07. He noted the anticipated enrollment projections for 2009-10 total 8,193 students, a decrease of 452 students from 2006-07 levels. He added that the district layoff list was impacted by the following factors:

- teachers returning from leaves of absence
- job shares reduced from 6 to 4
- actual kindergarten enrollment not projections used for staffing
- shift to core classes from electives in secondary schedule requests
- Wayne RESA special education staffing reduction of one teacher of the cognitively impaired and three teachers of autistic students

Mr. Harwood added that the current teacher layoffs do not reflect the program cuts or changes in services. He noted that other changes in special education services are due to additional savings or revenue as a result of changes in enrollment, IEP requirements and the closing of Barnard Center at the Children's Home of Detroit.

Mr. Fenton then explained how the receipt of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (AARA) could affect the school district:

- the stimulus funding is only for two years
- this money must supplement, not supplant programs and services
- the target of this money is Title I and Special Education programs

- money will likely not be available for construction

Mr. Fenton reviewed the three different areas for reduction based on Board budget parameters. Each area included staff reductions as well as decreases in purchased services and supplies. Cuts for the three parameters areas \$5,461,000.

Mr. Fenton then discussed other factors that the administration considered to balance the budget. He noted the importance of the level of general fund equity for borrowing between the district's fiscal year and the State's. The Michigan School Business Officials recommend 15-20% fund equity, or three months of school district expenditures, similar to savings recommended for individual family budgets.

Mr. Fenton noted proposals that the central administration are **not** recommending: eliminating Community Education (programs and staffing will be reduced); eliminating extracurricular and high school sports; and increasing class sizes above the 2006-07 levels. He then provided further detail to clarify what **is** being recommended.

The proposal for Community Education:

- All classes advertised in the spring/summer brochure will run as scheduled.
- In the fall, the district will continue to run the aquatics programs, Safety Town, and other classes that directly support the instructional program and are not currently offered by other local organizations.
- The district is working with other community organizations to maintain course offerings in the community.
- Program staffing and registration will be handled at the administration building, with an emphasis placed on increasing online registration and payments.

The proposal for high school athletics, extracurricular and co-curricular activities:

- A portion of the accompanist for designated classes during the school day and for performances will be restored.
- Consideration of changes to the fee structure for athletics

The proposal for class sizes:

- The staffing ratio planned for 2009-10 is 18.6:1.

Dr. Klein summarized the four key principles underlying the proposed district budget:

- Excellent education requires a budget which provides for a well prepared staff, a rich variety of offerings, and well maintained facilities with a budget that is balanced as required by law.
- Wise stewardship requires appropriate fund equity.
- Cost containment will require adjusting expenses that outpace revenues.
- The Board continues its cooperative relationship with all employee groups.

Trustee Walsh noted the work of the Superintendent's Budget Council, asking Dr. Klein to explain to the community their importance and role in balancing a budget.

Dr. Klein thanked the following for their work on the budget council: central office staff, Mr. Fenton, Dr. Allan, Mr. Warras, Mr. Harwood, Mrs. Smith and Mrs. Fannon; elementary principals, Mr. Fitzpatrick and Mrs. Bur; middle school, principal Mr. Mulholland; high school principals, Mr. Diver and Mr. Bearden; and special education Co-Directors, Mrs. Banner and Ms. Mendola.

Trustee Minturn commented that each member of the Board has their own view of the proposed budget. He asked that, if Mrs. Kosinski was agreeable, each Board member state their views on which direction they would like the budget planning to proceed.

Mr. Minturn began by reiterating that the budget cuts are due to: declining enrollment and an increase in employee costs. He said that he is a supporter of extra-curricular activities and does not support the accompanist reduction or increasing fees for extra-curricular activities. He added that he does not support hockey team members paying the entire cost for ice time, nor is he happy about the proposal to layoff the North music teacher. He will, however, support partial ice time charges for hockey players similar to costs for other athletic participation. To offset the costs of partial ice time charges and keeping music accompanists, he recommends eliminating one central office administrator.

Trustee Ismail is in favor of phasing in partial ice time costs to players. He was interested in more details on the history of students in foreign language classes and how those classes are populated this year. Dr. Klein said that the information on student participation in foreign language courses would be provided. Mr. Ismail asked if the duties of the student activities director could be done as an extra pay for extra duty position. He also suggested reductions in central office accounts, noting particularly Blackberry costs.

Trustee Dindoffer thanked the administration for their work on the budget knowing that difficult decisions were made to make it balance. She said she was concerned about foreign language offerings, noting that the district cannot eliminate a course in the middle of a sequence. She asked if the administration could provide a report of the foreign language course offerings by next January, 2010 with documentation on what the district proposed to maintain. She asked that business courses and science offerings be studied in a like manner.

Trustee Dindoffer said she supports staffing the accompanist at the high schools as it involves a co-curricular activity. She would like to find a solution to fairly appropriate the expense of ice time for hockey players among all student athletes.

Trustee Gafa feels that the choir accompanist should be maintained. She also suggested central office cuts, but not clerical time. She is also wondering if

hockey parents would be willing to work with the Board in paying partial fees for ice time. Her preference is to cut nothing, but the budget must be balanced.

Trustee Walsh framed the areas of the budget causing contention: the cost of ice hockey time, the accompanist at the high schools, and Community Education. He noted that Community Education had support in the community and asked if there could be a reconfiguration of the program, or could other organizations support the classes as well as the district. He suggested a study of current revenue from rental of our facilities to determine where opportunities to increase revenue might be found. Mr. Walsh would like delineation of all athletic costs and what it costs to run each program. He said that there should be a tiered structure and cost schedule. He also made note of the fact that revenue from tuition of children of non-resident staff attending Grosse Pointe Schools might have prevented this predicament as it has proven to be a successful revenue source in other districts. Mr. Walsh shared his opinion that given the financial projections from the state will mean that a reconfiguration of the high school schedule will be inevitable.

He supports the discussion with the GPEA for contract language to protect specialty positions such as North High School choir director.

Trustee Steininger said that he is in agreement with most of what Mr. Minturn supported. He added that he is opposed to athletic cuts of any kind as well as opposed to any extra-curricular cuts. He would like to see no charges for ice hockey time and no cuts to the high school accompanists. He would also like 1% of each year's budget to be allocated for athletics and extra-curricular activities.

President Kosinski said that the Board and administration need to work together on balancing the budget and agreeing on what will be cut. She would like to see a "facilities czar" position to oversee building rentals and community education programs as well as coordination with other community groups to offer programs. She added that reinstating the paraprofessional positions at the high schools for the accompanists may mean cutting the hall monitors in the buildings. Mrs. Kosinski also supports the discussions with the GPEA on specialty positions.

Mrs. Kosinski asked if there were special education cuts beyond the closing of the Children's Home of Detroit. Mr. Harwood discussed the additional cuts beyond CHD closing.

Trustee Kosinski said that athletic costs need to be tiered and anything above that needs to be absorbed out of the general fund.

Trustee Ismail said that a facilities director is sorely needed in the district. He added that foreign language classes need to be looked at and that the accompanist should be maintained. Mr. Ismail feels that the accompanists should not be "tie-barred" to cutting back hall monitors. Mr. Ismail also said that central office administrative spending needs to be looked at and asked

Mr. Harwood to work with GPEA on the North choir director position.

Trustee Minturn asked for a Board consensus on the direction they would like the administration to take with the budget. He asked fellow Board members who would support a budget containing:

- 1) \$350 per player fee for ice hockey time. Two Board members would not vote for this.
- 2) Consider a central office administrative cut. Five would support this.
- 3) Facilities costs

Trustee Steininger reiterated he would like 1% of the overall budget allocated for athletics and extra-curricular.

Mr. Walsh asked Mr. Steininger if he were looking for a policy in regard to this. Mr. Steininger replied that costs should be taken from the general fund every year. Mr. Walsh stated this was unnecessary and impractical. No other Board member expressed support.

Trustee Dindoffer asked for a report on the portion of other districts' budgets that are used for athletics to help her to make a decision. She is also interested in what the administration recommends.

Trustee Kosinski said she needs additional information to make an informed decision.

Trustee Walsh said that the athletics fees should be changed through a tiered structure.

Most Board members concur they would like additional information on all of these issues.

President Kosinski summarized the Board's thoughts on the issues discussed:

- Community Education will be restructured with some classes and/or programs being offered by the district and some by other community organizations.
- Only one Board member is willing to cut the accompanist at the high schools; other Board members support at least a part-time position.
- All Board members want a tiered pay-to-play sports arrangement and extra-curricular activities system. No one wants the full cost of ice-time charged to the players.

Trustee Walsh advocated looking at further cuts to central office services as well as restructuring the activities director position at the high schools to extra pay for extra duty.

Trustee Steininger would like ice hockey time paid in full for hockey players by setting aside 1% of the district budget for athletics. He is in favor of cutting central office costs as well as cutting transportation costs and legal bills.



	<p>Trustee Dindoffer commented that there is no enrollment variation account budgeted this year and asked about what would be done if enrollment changes.</p> <p>Mr. Fenton and Dr. Klein both commented on this issue, noting that enrollment changes will be monitored carefully and staffing reductions or additions made as needed.</p>
<b>PUBLIC COMMENTS</b>	<p>Allen Snella, Grosse Pointe Park, shared his thoughts on proposed fees for ice time.</p> <p>Cindy Pangborn, Grosse Pointe Woods, shared comments about athletics coaches as independent contractors, administrative salaries and benefits, and recommended a 7% decrease in central office services.</p> <p>Christina Swenson, Grosse Pointe Farms, supported keeping the high school accompanists.</p> <p>Elyse Croce, Grosse Pointe Farms, supports the South choir and keeping the accompanist.</p> <p>Kay Raulston, Grosse Pointe Woods, is in support of keeping the Community Education program as it is.</p> <p>Lisa Carmer, Grosse Pointe Woods, shared her concerns about the upcoming teacher contract negotiations. She was in favor of the proposal for athletic fees to be tiered for all groups.</p> <p>Ann McReynolds, Grosse Pointe Park, spoke in support of the accompanists at the high schools.</p> <p>Jeannie Lewandowski, Grosse Pointe Park, spoke in support of equal participation fees for athletes.</p> <p>Nicole Pytel, Grosse Pointe Woods, supported the accompanists' positions at the high schools.</p> <p>Jack Weston, Grosse Pointe City, supported retaining the accompanists at the high schools.</p> <p>Rich Shettler, Grosse Pointe Woods, spoke to school building reorganization and will support the board in their decision.</p> <p>Gary Marowske, Grosse Pointe Farms, is in support of the accompanist position at South High School.</p> <p>Hilary Kadrich, Grosse Pointe Woods, supports the choir accompanist position.</p> <p>Laura Bartell, Grosse Pointe Shores, supports the North vocal music program and its staff.</p>

	<p>Stan Harr, Grosse Pointe Shores, supports the North High School accompanist and the entire choir program.</p> <p>Rudolph Menchl, Grosse Pointe Park, supports the accompanist, specifically at South.</p> <p>Mickey Shield, Grosse Pointe Park, is in support of hockey ice time and the costs of all sports being shared equally, possibly in a tiered system. Mrs. Shield also shared other strategies to cut costs and increase revenue.</p> <p>Tim Lupo, Grosse Pointe Woods, is in support of the current North vocal music staff to ensure continuity and excellence.</p> <p>Tom Jakubiec, Grosse Pointe Woods, shared his concerns about the children of non-resident staff attending the Grosse Pointe Schools and other issues of concern to him.</p> <p>Claire Schreiber, Grosse Pointe Woods, shared her support of the accompanist at North.</p> <p>Pam Montgomery, Grosse Pointe Farms, supported the choir program and accompanist at South.</p> <p>Bryan Kadrich, Grosse Pointe Woods, spoke in support of Mr. Henri, North's vocal music teacher and the North choir program.</p> <p>Scott Dornbrock, Harper Woods, spoke in support of equal costs for all sports programs including ice hockey time.</p> <p>President Kosinski concluded with the statement that these are hard economic times. The Board is very close to a final budget product and, while not everyone will be happy, the Board will do the best they can to consider all options before making final budget decisions.</p>
<b>ADJOURNMENT</b>	President Kosinski adjourned the meeting at 9:21 p.m.

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**Board Secretary**