



**Grosse Pointe Board of Education  
Minutes of the Work Session of April 12, 2010  
Library, North High School  
707 Vernier, Grosse Pointe Woods, MI 48236**

<p><b>MEETING MINUTES</b></p> <p><b>CALL TO ORDER</b></p>	<p>President Steininger called the meeting to order at 8 p.m.</p> <p><b>Board members present:</b> Trustees Dindoffer, Gafa, Jakubiec, Pangborn, Steininger and Walsh</p> <p><b>Absent:</b> Trustee Minturn</p> <p><b>Also Present:</b> Superintendent Klein; Assistant Superintendents Allan, Fenton and Harwood; Executive Director Warras</p>
<p><b>REVIEW OF PROPOSED BUDGET HIGH LIGHTS FOR 2010-2011</b></p>	<p>President Steininger stated that in about ten weeks the Board will be voting on the district's budget for the next school year. He said he hopes that it is apparent that no one on the Board has chosen the reality that has been imposed upon the district by the Governor, state legislatures and random economic factors facing the country as a whole. "The apparent loss to the district of the promised 20j funds and the state-wide per pupil reduction has been a devastating reduction totaling approximately \$3 million. Compiled with the relentless increases in the human resources costs, reduction in staffing levels and programs are now inevitable," President Steininger noted. He added that it is also important to realize that in those reductions, there are no winning scenarios, only those with varying degrees of loss. This is not about a lack of Board desire to keep programs, small class sizes or staffing. Nor is it about the work quality of staff. It is about the how each of us can help at this difficult time. Options will be developed within the Board's financial constraints keeping the interest of all students at the forefront in the process.</p> <p>Treasurer Walsh then highlighted budget topics and recent budget changes since the last meeting of the Board in March. The most significant changes in Budget Draft #3 were the restoration of 1.0 additional Reading Specialist at the elementary level (leaving a total of 9.0) and additional staffing at the elementary level. (There are 3.0 teacher positions yet to be allocated at the elementary level.)</p> <p>Trustee Walsh noted that administrative requests for budget consideration included an increase in the textbook account; inclusion of secondary level department chairs and additional enrollment variation account funds.</p> <p>He stated the final health care actual to the budget is the most significant variable. Other important variables include: enrollment; 20J funding; state foundation allowance; state retirement rate; state fund equity legislation; state retirement incentive; health care; district union contracts; and unemployment costs.</p> <p>Trustee Walsh noted some of the significant changes from Budget Draft #1 to Draft #2 and then opened the floor for questions, concerns or recommendations from Board members.</p> <p>Trustee Jakubiec said that a significant change in his opinion for upcoming Budget Draft #4 would be to replace any fund equity that was used this year. He reminded the Board and the community that this present budget draft is fluid in nature and not set in stone. He expects, as should the community, more changes to come.</p>

Trustee Gafa said that she would like the department chairpersons returned to the budget and the central office curriculum specialists be removed to offset the cost. Department chairpersons could take on the responsibilities of the teacher specialists.

Trustee Pangborn was happy to see the elementary positions restored noting that K-3 staffing levels and programs should not be touched.

Trustee Dindoffer noted that subjects need department chairpersons who are experts in their subject matter to assist with those curriculum duties, but is not sure if cutting central specialists is the answer. She does not feel that assistant principals should be expected to take on the role of the specialists as they may not be familiar with every content area.

Trustee Jakubiec asked administration and the Board to look at how department chairs are structured for efficiencies.

Trustee Steininger concurred with Trustee Pangborn regarding the foundation that is needed at the elementary level.

Trustee Jakubiec spoke about the information from the Michigan Association of School Boards (MASB) and their advice that the \$268 per pupil reduction in school aid is likely for next year. He feels that it should be budgeted now and asked that the spreadsheets be updated to show this reduction in the model so that the Board can work with those numbers. He added that he could not support the budget moving forward without the consideration of the \$268 per pupil reduction included.

Trustee Dindoffer asked what the budget would look like with the \$268 per pupil additional funds cut and she would like to see the budget worked out both ways.

President Steininger suggested the Board and administration look at the budget with a \$268 per pupil cut and one without it.

Trustee Walsh stated that finding another \$2 million in reductions would involve closing a school and possibly having to move to a 6 period high school day or class sizes to 30 plus.

Trustee Pangborn addressed additional cuts to administration suggesting that middle management could be reorganized and that a committee be formed to oversee this.

Trustee Jakubiec said that it is fair to look at each position at every level, noting that the district has to do more with less. He does not think that this means that a school will need to be closed but discussion on this very real possibility needs to be addressed sooner rather than later. This can be started by looking at every level of employee and possible downsizing.

Trustee Pangborn asked that administration and administrative roles be changed or redefined. She said that one of her main reasons for running for the Board was to reduce and restructure administration. She asked about the possibility of principal sharing and the freedom to restructure administrative positions.

Trustee Jakubiec asked for an excel spreadsheet showing an additional \$2.1 million cut to the budget.

Trustee Walsh said that in the research he has done, Grosse Pointe Schools are not administrator-heavy compared to other like-districts. Grosse Pointe ranks in the middle of the grid in the number of administrators per district. He added that non-instructional supervisors have been reduced for the next school year.

Trustee Pangborn asked that a committee be created that looks at administration and the role each position has in the district.

Trustee Jakubiec said that it is critical that the Board look at all aspects of all administrative positions delivering the services needed in the best way possible.

Trustee Gafa said that she would not want one elementary principal to manage two schools because she feels that some responsibilities in each school would suffer.

Trustee Pangborn said that she is not asking for two elementary principals to share a job but rather other places for job sharing for administrators.

Trustee Walsh requested specific feedback and solutions, asking Mr. Harwood if cutting administrators were even an option at this point.

Trustee Pangborn asked that some of the job responsibilities be restructured and said that the Board's hands are tied because of existing contracts and seniority.

Trustee Walsh asked if Board members wanted elementary principals to share responsibilities. The majority of the Board agreed that they did not want elementary principals to share responsibilities.

Trustee Jakubiec said that if not this year, then next year, administration could share responsibilities. He added that there are also inefficiencies in the middle schools and if not a cut to principals, then consider cutting middle school assistant principals.

Trustee Pangborn said that by looking at each individual school and its needs, the district could realign staffing.

Trustee Dindoffer said that to create a budget with reductions of another \$2.1 million, all administrators would have to be eliminated to accommodate a cut of that proportion. Positions can be reviewed for efficiencies, but cutting administration to offset a sizeable cut is not practical and would cause other inefficiencies. The district needs to focus proposals for reductions on other expenses rather than administrators.

President Steininger said that the budget process as presented is a workable system for making budget decisions and he is not interested in a discussion on cutting administrators.

**It was Moved by:** Trustee Steininger

**Supported by:** Trustee Pangborn

**THAT the Board move away from discussion of administrative cuts (at this point.)**

Trustee Pangborn said although she seconded that motion, it was not necessary, as all Board members had an opportunity to voice their opinions.

Mr. Steininger then stated the Board was not going to discuss administrative cuts any further.

Trustee Walsh noted that "with an eye toward structure" the only way to budget for an additional \$2.1 million budget cut is to raise class sizes above what they are currently and asked Board members if that would be the direction in which they would like to proceed.

Trustee Pangborn asked at what grade level Trustee Walsh was referring to when discussing raising class sizes. Mr. Walsh replied that it was Trustee Pangborn's choice as to what level she would like to raise class size.

Trustee Jakubiec asked Mr. Walsh if he was suggesting that the Board not budget for the additional \$268 cut per pupil as recommended by the Michigan Association of School Boards.

Trustee Walsh replied that, yes, he is recommending that the Board **not** budget for a \$2.1 million cut for next year as proposed by the MASB.

**It was then Moved by:** Trustee Jakubiec

**THAT the Board discuss why they would develop a budget without the additional \$268 per pupil cut in state aid for next year as recommended by the Michigan Association of School Boards (MASB).**

Trustee Walsh asked Trustee Jakubiec if he were interested in raising class sizes to account for this cut.

Trustee Jakubiec said that he is interested in constructive dialog with the administration regarding how a budget realizing a \$268 per pupil cut could be achieved.

Trustee Walsh asked Mr. Fenton where he would look to supplement a \$2.1 million cut.

Mr. Fenton said that the only way to realize an additional cut of that magnitude is to lay off more employees.

Trustee Walsh asked about the effect those cuts would have on raising class size.

Mr. Fenton responded that more layoffs would definitely impact class size.

Trustee Dindoffer said that the largest expense in the district is for the teachers teaching in the classrooms. She said that she too, would like to see a proposed budget draft that realizes a cut of \$2.1 just to see what additional areas would be affected without changing class sizes.

Mr. Fenton said that that proposal would go back to cutting reading specialists and the other proposed cuts that were listed in Budget Draft #1.

Trustee Jakubiec asked why the Board would not bring a model forward with this sizeable cut for next year. He also asked for the information on class size for the high schools. Dr. Klein asked North Principal, Tim Bearden, to come forward to discuss North's class sizes.

President Steininger asked Trustee Walsh for his rationale for not including an additional \$2.1 million reduction.

Trustee Walsh replied that the Board's proposal to the teacher bargaining unit for a contract settlement which could result in concessions could affect the approach with further budget cuts.

President Steininger agreed with Mr. Walsh that, at some point, cost structures need to get in line with the economy. Staffing costs is one of those areas that need to line up with the economic situation facing all school districts.

Trustee Jakubiec asked administration to raise the high school class size by one student to bridge half of the \$268 reduction that will possibly go into effect for next year. He asked the administration to plan for the worst and take half of the total amount (\$1.2 million) from the teaching staff and the other half from other areas.

As class size was discussed further, Trustee Walsh noted that slides 23 and 24 of the

budget information presented this evening discuss class size at all levels adding that high school class size for this year was 26.5 students on an average and 27.6 for next year.

Trustee Dindoffer said that, to the extent that staffing needs to be looked at, the district cannot restrict the view to the high schools only.

Trustee Jakubiec agreed, noting that he is only using the high school as an example. Trustee Jakubiec asked that the district comprehend the possible \$268 cut and determine what percentage of staffing would need reduction at half of the projected cut of \$2.1 million.

Mr. Fenton said that he needs direction from the Board at this time because adding just one student to each high school section will generate significant changes to the budget and staffing with only two weeks before layoffs are determined.

Mr. Harwood said that with the parameters established previously by the Board and given to the administration, the teacher staffing totals 551 FTE's. To be able to address the reduction of the \$1.2 million, the administration would need to look at an additional 20 teacher layoffs.

Trustee Jakubiec asked the administration *not* to "scrap" the Budget Draft #3, but rather comprehend the possible \$268 cut by coming up with an additional 10 teacher FTE's to cut knowing that some will most likely be called back prior to the new school year.

Mr. Harwood noted that individual teachers would have to be identified who would be affected by that proposed cut (mentioned by Trustee Jakubiec), with the issue that those possible cuts may typically not happen until February of 2011. Thus the district could be half way through the next school year with a reduced staff before that potential cut would become a reality.

**It was moved by:** Trustee Steininger

**THAT the Board direct the administration to identify the next 10 to 15 positions that could potentially be affected by a possible additional \$2.1 million reduction in the proposed budget for the 2010-2011 school year.**

**By a roll call vote,**

**Ayes:** Trustees Dindoffer, Jakubiec and Pangborn

**Nays:** Trustees Gafa, Steininger and Walsh

**Motion failed for lack of support.**

#### **Bond and Sinking Fund Projects**

Mr. Fenton gave an update on the bond and sinking fund projects to date. Projects were discussed by building and actual funds spent to date on each project. He then reviewed system-wide projects in the same manner, followed by those going out for bid and the anticipated bid and award dates. This report is available on the district website for viewing.

Mr. Fenton concluded by highlighting the projects in process and their anticipated completion dates. He also noted that projects for the bond fund are winding down and, when completed, the district will be focusing on projects from the sinking fund over the next 5 years. Financing for continued energy projects will also continue to be reviewed. The district has had four energy bonds during Mr. Fenton's 30 year tenure in the district, replacing boilers, windows, etc. in the schools.

	<p>The use of wind and solar alternatives is also being investigated as well as lighting. He is working with Barton Malow on these options as well as cooperating with other fundraising groups to renovate the green houses in these buildings in the district.</p>
<p><b>RESIDENCY AND RE-REGISTRATION</b></p>	<p>Mr. Fenton said that at a recent meeting with Trustee Jakubiec, he asked him to develop a proposal for the system wide re-registration for all students in order to verify residency eligibility. At that meeting various options and residency issues were discussed. He noted that although the full Board had not directed him to draft a proposal, he has provided information for the Board to review so that they may advise the administration as to the next steps (if any).</p> <p>A total system-wide re-registration was conducted five years ago resulting in a structured process for verifying student eligibility which continues to be followed in the district today.</p> <p>Mr. Fenton noted that a common misconception is that the student has to reside in the district to attend the school system. A student is entitled under state law to attend school in a district where a parent or a full legal guardian resides, even if the student lives outside the district. However, owning property while living outside the district does not meet the residency requirements.</p> <p>Investigations occur at all three levels throughout the district and all names submitted to the administration are carefully reviewed and investigated, including anonymous residency violation “tips”. Information about or results of investigations are not shared with the public as it is a violation of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act.</p> <p>Mr. Fenton added that the district does not participate in Schools of Choice and does not allow staff member’s (who reside outside of the boundaries of the district) children to attend the district.</p> <p>Possible plans discussed for 2010 were:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Re-registration at each school: Although this might seem a desirable option, many of the schools’ staff is being reduced and many do not work during July making the logistics of this plan difficult. Also, decentralizing the process leaves the possibility of a process that is not consistent or uniform. Enrollment forms need to be notarized and there are not enough notaries to staff all of the schools.</li> <li>2) Re-registration during May and June at school activities: This could include concerts, social activities and other school related gatherings. It would be desirable for central office to do the re-registrations at those buildings activities to maintain consistency, but again the district does not have enough notaries to guarantee that these events could be staffed appropriately.</li> </ol> <p>Trustee Pangborn asked about the tuition fees for students found not be eligible to attend school in the district. Mr. Fenton explained there are tuition fees for two categories of students: seniors finishing their last year who attended school in the district previously and are no longer eligible residents of the district and those who pay tuition because they are moving into the district but have not completed the necessary paperwork or finished closing on a property in the district.</p> <p>Trustee Pangborn added that she would like the tuition fees raised as a deterrent.</p> <p>Trustee Jakubiec said that the intent of the re-registration is to keep the community strong to educate the children of the residents of the district. This is why the residency policies are in place and the district needs to act on those policies and keep the structure in place. Mr. Jakubiec added that his goal is working with the administration on a re-</p>



	<p>registration program to help strengthen the community and make sure that people that are stakeholders in the community are participating in the educational experience in the schools.</p> <p>Mr. Fenton noted that the cost to implement a district-wide re-registration would be approximately \$40,000 which has not been budgeted for at this time. He responded to President Steininger's question about cost effectiveness of the proposed plan stating that he does not think this re-registration process would be cost effective in light of the fact that the district has employed a staff member to do residency verification on a daily basis.</p> <p>Trustee Pangborn asked about renters without leases to which Mr. Fenton replied that those residents receive an individual home check and an affidavit from the landlord is required.</p> <p>Trustee Dindoffer suggested that the legal opinions from Mr. McInerney regarding enrollment and re-registration be forwarded to new Board members for reference regarding this issue.</p> <p>Trustee Walsh clarified that the topic is about "enrollment eligibility", not residency eligibility.</p>
<b>PUBLIC COMMENTS</b>	<p>Rodger Hunwick shared his thoughts, opposing the re-registration proposal and the costs involved in the process as there is a staff person hired to perform residency checks.</p> <p>Trustee Jakubiec responded to the speaker, noting that the Board is pursuing a re-registration process because the residents want the district to re-register every student. He does feel that the \$40,000 fee stated this evening is high and would like the administration to look again at how to reduce the cost as well as how to make the process more user friendly for the parents.</p>
<b>COMMENTS FROM BOARD MEMBERS AND SUPERINTENDENT</b>	<p>Trustee Jakubiec said that there are many reasons to pursue the residency check but the most important is that residents are requesting that the Board do this.</p> <p>Trustee Jakubiec also asked that the administration provide information on:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) activities coordinating functions at the high schools to see how they could fit into other existing positions that the district is keeping</li> <li>2) Non contract groups to see how those functions could be rolled into existing positions</li> <li>3) How the South parking lot attendant costs fit into the latest budget draft</li> <li>4) How the hall monitors' functions could be picked up by other functions in the school building</li> <li>5) How to provide the right notices to the employees (to enable the district to have options to create a balanced budget)</li> </ol> <p>Trustee Jakubiec said that hopefully the district will not have to come to that point, but if the district must layoff or terminate positions for a balanced June budget, the administration and Board will have to provide the right notices.</p> <p>Trustee Jakubiec is disappointed with the way the budget process had proceeded - without more discussion with the administration for other options.</p> <p>He is also not happy with the direction of the district for kindergarten. He stated that in February the Board agreed to allow all day kindergarten, to save families the money they were paying for EDK tuition. Trustee Jakubiec was not happy with the original Barnes proposal or the new proposal to have half day kindergarten in two other elementary</p>

schools. He stated that as a district, our job is to educate the resident children. If the residents can fill a half day session of kindergarten at any of the schools, he believes the Board should provide it at that home school.

Trustee Pangborn said she was unhappy with how the all day kindergarten process was finalized. She would like district parents polled as to whether they would like their child to attend a half day kindergarten program at their home school. Mrs. Pangborn also felt that the advertisement in the local paper promoting all day kindergarten was disrespectful to the parents who prefer half day kindergarten.

Trustee Gafa responded to Trustee Pangborn by referring to a report from Mr. Warras which states that principals had asked for re-confirmations from parents on their preferences for kindergarten programs. She also noted that the staff at each building did a follow-up phone call to each family interested in the district kindergarten program to verify their choice of a half day or a full day program. She said she does not see sufficient numbers to support having a half day kindergarten program option in every school.

Trustees Walsh and Dindoffer had no comment.

Dr. Klein underscored Trustee Gafa's comments that parents were contacted and asked to confirm their preference for a half-day or full-day kindergarten program. Dr. Klein also addressed Trustee Pangborn's concern noting that many of the parents that attended the kindergarten meeting indicated they wanted a half-day program may not have registered yet which could account for the differences in numbers. The district report reflects only those students whose parents have actually enrolled their children in a kindergarten program.

Dr. Klein said that the current kindergarten half day program is a fine instructional program. The recommendation to offer a full day kindergarten program was recommended to meet increasing curriculum demands. Based on feedback from parents, a group of parents has requested the half day program and the district is working to accommodate those requests. At this point, enrollment does not warrant half day programs in each elementary building.

Mr. Warras said that the current enrollment numbers have been verified in order to determine the kindergarten needs of the district. At this time, a full day kindergarten program will take place in each elementary building. Richard and Mason will house half day kindergarten programs for those parents wishing to place their child in a half day program. He believes that the administration has done what the Board and the community has asked the district to do, provide a full day and a half day option for students.

Dr. Klein then shared news from Brownell Middle School. Three students there have had an experiment they designed chosen to be done by NASA astronauts. These students will be part of a teleconference later this week to talk about their design and plan for the experiment.

Dr. Klein noted that there are many school concerts and musical events planned for parents and the community to enjoy. As spring comes to a close, there will also be many wonderful award ceremonies, recognitions and events for parents and community members to attend.

Trustee Steininger said that it is naïve to think that the budget will have a "fairy tale" ending. The kind of excellence that this district is built on does not get that way by



	building itself on fairy tale endings. He said that the district has to have a methodology to increase the revenue stream or keep cost controls in place. If that is not done, what is at risk is the district's ability to deliver that educational experience that is so often spoken of. He would like everyone to understand that the Board's true objective is coming to grips with the current budget crisis.
<b>ADJOURNMENT</b>	President Steininger adjourned the meeting at 10:49 p.m.

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**Board Secretary**