



**Grosse Pointe Board of Education**  
**Minutes of a Special Meeting, Friday, June 15, 2012**  
**Board Room, Administration Building**  
**389 St. Clair, Grosse Pointe, MI 48230**

**MEETING MINUTES**

<b>CALL TO ORDER</b>	<p>President Gafa called the meeting to order at 7:07 a.m.</p> <p><b>Board members present:</b> Trustees Dindoffer, Gafa, Jakubiec, Pangborn, Roeske and Walsh (Trustee Valente arrived at 7:22 a.m.)</p> <p><b>Also Present:</b> Superintendent Harwood; Assistant Superintendents Dean; Grosse Pointe South High School Principal Matthew Outlaw</p>
<b>DISCUSSION OF RESOLUTION REGARDING DISCONTINUANCE OF PROBATIONARY TEACHER SERVICES</b>	<p>Dr. Harwood began the meeting by summarizing the concerns of a 2-year probationary teacher, Mr. Steven Cross, who sent written correspondence to parents regarding band programs that would be significantly reduced or eliminated due to a reduction in his full time assignment from 1.0 FTE to 0.9 FTE. Dr. Harwood reviewed the proposed resolution regarding discontinuance of probationary services and noted the concerns that Mr. Cross has not sufficiently demonstrated adequate professional judgment. Mr. Cross received tenure in a previous district and is currently a probationary teacher in the Grosse Pointe Public School System. Dr. Harwood indicated to the Board members that the district did not have to demonstrate cause for dismissal with a probationary teacher.</p> <p>Trustee Roeske inquired about if this had happened 3 months ago, what typically would happen. Dr. Dean explained to the Board members how a non-renewal of employment typically takes place. Both Dr. Dean and Dr. Outlaw shared with the Board members a copy of Mr. Cross' evaluations for both 2010-2011 and 2011-2012. As indicated by Dr. Outlaw, all student and classroom interactions were considered effective or highly effective on an evaluation process that concluded prior to April 30, 2012. Dr. Outlaw noted that if the letter sent to the parents had occurred prior to April 30, 2012, then the demonstration of poor professional judgment would have been reflected in the current 2011-2012 evaluation. The concern expressed by Dr. Outlaw is in regard to how Mr. Cross works with his colleagues.</p> <p>Trustee Pangborn asked about how many letters have gone out to boosters like this one in the past. Trustee Valente expressed that this letter by Mr. Cross is a blackmail document by sending it to the parents of the band students. She indicated that she felt it is insubordinate. Trustee Valente addressed the evaluation form that is currently being used for teachers in the district and expressed that the form should encompass staff behaviors that occur both in and outside of the classroom. In modifying the teacher evaluation form in the future, Trustee Valente recommended remember these concerns in the future and how it would be recorded on a teacher evaluation form.</p> <p>Trustee Walsh indicated that he had previous brief correspondence with Mr. Cross through his interactions, as a parent, at Pierce Middle School. Trustee Walsh noted that the effective/ineffective rating is immaterial to this issue and that is not why we are terminating. He has spoken to other colleagues of Mr. Cross in the field. It has to be relevant that this is a high profile situation and we cannot remain silent on this issue.</p> <p>Trustee Jakubiec stated that this representative (in reference to letter by Mr. Cross) indicates</p>

that he is unwilling to do what he has done in his probationary period. He is paid for Extra Pay/Extra Duty (EPED) as part of his assignment. Trustee Jakubiec further stated that this is part of his duties and he is paid to take students to festivals. The teacher (Mr. Cross) has come out and said what he did during his probationary period is not what he intends to do beyond the probationary period.

Trustee Pangborn asked administration if he does have a right to say that he is not going to festivals. Dr. Outlaw and Dr. Dean indicated that Mr. Cross does not have that right. At that time, Dr. Outlaw also noted for the Board members that the information in the pre-2010 reference in the document written by Mr. Cross was not correct and that Mr. Cross' predecessor in the band director role took objection to what was represented in the past. Dr. Outlaw further expressed that he felt that Mr. Cross' actions were creating a wedge between the School Board, administration, and parents and stated that this was an inappropriate communication with parents. Trustee Jakubiec stated that he has no concern about staff talking with parents about cuts. His concerns are about his unwillingness to do what he has done during his probationary period.

Trustee Dindoffer inquired that the items listed are Extra Pay/Extra Duty (EPED) items. This was affirmed by administration. She further inquired whether these items have been cut. The administrators indicated that they have not been cut from the budget. Trustee Dindoffer agreed that the letter is offensive and in the private sector we can say "No thank you." Dr. Dean responded by stating he felt that the letter was unhealthy and we now have the opportunity to ask the question - do we want to ask the question for the next 28 years and will these poor decisions continue.

Trustee Dindoffer further discussed the proposed resolution presented by legal counsel. She expressed concerns about the resolution in the fact that it included the phrase "the teacher's work is not effective." It was pointed out to her fellow Board members that it is referenced in paragraphs 2, 3, and Section 1 of the document. Trustee Dindoffer expressed concern that Mr. Cross' teacher evaluations had not indicated that he was an ineffective teacher. Trustee Dindoffer proposed striking these references from the resolution document.

Trustee Walsh inquired as to the need of the resolution and that when teachers are not renewed, they appear on the human resources report with a Board motion to approve the report. Dr. Dean indicated that this was the proposed resolution by legal counsel. Trustee Walsh indicated that the Board does not have to indicate the reason for the non-renewal and that a resolution was not necessary and a motion approved by the board to discontinue employment without stating the reason would provide the same outcome as a resolution.

Trustee Dindoffer questioned the legal counsel's decision to include the "not effective teacher" component in the resolution. Dr. Dean indicated that he would try to reach legal counsel on the phone to allow for immediate interpretation. Dr. Dean proceeded to reach legal counsel but obtained only his voice mail.

Trustee Walsh read a proposed motion for consideration by the Board members that stated, "That the Board discontinues and terminates the employment of Steven Cross in accordance with the rights afforded in the Michigan Teacher Tenure Act.

Trustee Gafa expressed concerns that the legal counsel representative recommended a resolution that the Board has in front of them. Trustee Gafa stated that changes to the resolution or to make a motion apart from the resolution drafted by legal counsel is of concern for her.

Trustee Roeske requested that Trustee Walsh reread the proposed motion. After reading the

	motion to the other Trustees, Trustee Walsh made the motion and it was supported by Trustee Dindoffer. Trustee Gafa requested a roll call vote.
<b>MOTION</b>	<p>It was Moved by: Trustee Walsh Supported by: Trustee Dindoffer</p> <p>THAT the Board approves to discontinue and terminate the employment of Mr. Steven Cross in accordance with the rights afforded in the Michigan Teacher Tenure Act.</p> <p>Ayes: Trustees Jakubiec, Walsh, Valente, Roeske, Pangborn, and Dindoffer. Nays: Trustee Gafa Motion carried by a 6 – 1 vote.</p>
<b>PUBLIC COMMENTS</b>	No one came forward to speak at this time.
<b>ADJOURNMENT</b>	President Gafa adjourned the meeting at 8:17 a.m.

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Board Secretary