



**Grosse Pointe Board of Education**  
**Minutes of the January 10, 2005 Regular Board Meeting**  
**Wicking Library, Grosse Pointe South High School**  
**11 Grosse Pointe Blvd. Grosse Pointe Farms, MI 48236**

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**ORDER OF BUSINESS – 8:00 P.M.**

**I. Call To Order/Pledge of Allegiance/Roll Call**

President Dindoffer called the meeting to order at 8:00 p.m.

**Present:** Trustees Brennan, Broderick, Dindoffer, Ismail, Kennedy, Richardson and Vreede

**Also Present:** Superintendent Klein, Assistant Superintendents Allan and Fenton

The pledge of allegiance was led by Trustee Kennedy.

**II. Superintendent's Report**

Dr. Klein said that schools would be closed on Monday, January 17 in honor of the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday.

Dr. Klein also talked about how the decision to close schools in Grosse Pointe is determined. She said that it was dependent on many factors: the amount and type of snow; when it is expected to fall and/or end; the ability to clear the parking lots of the snow and/or ice; the ability to clear sidewalks around schools; the likelihood of freezing rain and its effect on roads, power lines and tree limbs; and the wind, temperature and wind chill. The Grosse Pointe municipalities plow the roads, side streets and many sidewalks, and the school system's maintenance crews are responsible to clear parking lots. Based on feedback from the Manager of Building and Grounds and the Assistant Superintendent who begin driving around the district at 4:00 a.m., a decision is made to open or close schools no later than 6:15 a.m. to accommodate those parents getting ready to drop students at Kid's Club.

Dr. Klein said that there would be a public forum for the community to ask questions and learn about revisions to the K-12 Language Arts Curriculum on Thursday, January 13, 2005 at 7:30 in Wicking Library.

Dr. Klein noted that all across the state, school districts were formally thanking their school boards during the month of January for the dedication and service to the districts they serve. Dr. Klein thanked the Grosse Pointe Board of Education for all that they do for the community of students and parents. She gave each a certificate and a notice that a tree would be planted this spring to honor their board service. She concluded by thanking Board Members for their service, dedication and commitment to the school system and its staff and students.

**III. Public Comments on Non-Action Items**

Patricia Lay-Dorsey, 86 Kerby Road, Grosse Pointe Farms, shared concerns on the time allocated for adult swim classes through Community Education.

Patricia Balchunas, 114 Mapleton Road, Grosse Pointe Farms, shared her thoughts on the Community Education swim schedule for adults.

John Doyle, 223 McKinley, spoke about the adult swim schedule coordinated through Community Education.

**IV. Public Comments on Consent Agenda Action Items**

No one came forward to comment.

**V. Public Comments on Regular Agenda Action Items**

No one came forward to comment.

**VI. Consent Agenda Action Items**

Dr. Klein noted that the following were contained in the Consent Agenda for vote:

**A. Human Resources Report**

The Human Resources Report included the appointment of one professional instructional staff member, the leave of absence of one classroom assistant, and two resignations.

**B. Business Items: Accounts Payable**

The Business Items were presented for Board approval.

**C. Minutes of the December 6 and 13, 2004 Board Meetings, and Closed Session Minutes of December 8 and 13, 2004**

The board meeting minutes and work session minutes were presented for approval (with corrections to the December 8 work session minutes).

**D. Approval of Pilot for Honors Journalism**

The Honors Journalism pilot was proposed as an alternative to the traditional Journalism course in the high school curriculum. Honors Journalism is a 10 credit course that will fulfill one year of the graduation requirement in English.

**It was**                      **Moved by:**                      Trustee Brennan  
   **Supported by:**                      Trustee Dindoffer

**THAT the Board approve the Consent Agenda as presented.**

**Ayes:** Trustees Brennan, Broderick, Dindoffer, Ismail, Kennedy,  
Richardson and Vreede

**Nays:** None

**Motion carried.**

**VII. Regular Agenda Action Items**

**A. Approval of Board Meeting Calendar Revisions**

Board Meeting dates were approved prior to establishing teacher and student vacation days for the 2004-2005 school year as part of contract negotiations.

The changes requested include moving the scheduled February 14, 2005 Regular Board Meeting to February 21, 2005, and the Tuesday, June 14, 2005 Regular Board Meeting date to Monday, June 13, 2005.

The Board is asked to approve the Revisions to the Board Meeting Calendar for the 2004-2005 school year.

**It was Moved by:** Trustee Vreede  
**Supported by:** Trustee Broderick

**THAT the Revisions to the Board Meeting Calendar for 2004-2005 be approved as presented.**

**Ayes:** Trustees Brennan, Broderick, Dindoffer, Ismail, Kennedy,  
Richardson and Vreede

**Nays:** None

**Motion carried.**

**VIII. Items for Information and Discussion**

**A. Millage Renewal and Restoration**

Mr. Fenton explained that these millages are very important because they provide 23% of the school system's operating budget. The first request is for a "gap" millage (called "hold harmless millage" on the ballot) of 8.0784 mills on homestead property for five years. This "gap" millage proposal combines the "gap" and technology millage proposals of five years ago. In 2004-2005, the "gap" and tech millages provided \$1,893 per pupil.

The second request is for renewal of a non-homestead property millage of 16.7875 mills for five years. The number of mills has been reduced from the authorized 18 mills by the

Headlee amendment. This proposal affects only business and commercial property, rental homes, and second homes. It does not affect homestead property homeowners.

The third request asks voters to restore the original 18 mill levy on non-homestead property in order for the school district to receive its full foundation grant from the state. It does not affect homestead property homeowners. All of the money raised by these three millages directly benefits only Grosse Pointe School students, not the county or state.

Mr. Fenton added that a state cap on per pupil expenditures and the requirements of the Headlee amendment prohibit the school district from asking for more money per pupil than it did five years ago. Because all three millages expire on June 30, 2005, the millage rate on that date is considered to be zero, so any amount asked for is termed an increase. If enrollment stays the same, the “gap” (hold harmless) millage will raise \$16,450,000, the same amount that was raised in 2004-2005.

Local municipalities, not the school system will run the school elections. The last day to register for this election is January 24, 2005. Absentee ballot applications are on the district website as well as in the city municipal offices. Residents should contact their local municipality about the location of voting precincts.

Mr. Lee Warras, Director of Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment and Technology gave an update on the technology plan and milestones from 1995 to 2000. He said that the first set of priorities for the technology plan were to provide funding, provide access to students and staff, and provide technology tools to support teachers and student learning. Funding was accomplished by passing a millage dedicated to technology for 5 years at \$2.5 million per year. Milestones achieved were: an infrastructure was completed in all buildings; five computers were provided in every elementary classroom; 3-8 computer labs were secured in every secondary school; and a computer, monitor and VCR were placed in every classroom. In addition, the K-12 computer education curriculum was developed, comprehensive staff development programs were implemented and instructional software was provided. Priority projects were to maintain funding, improve communication and increase support for staff and students. These were accomplished as a second five-year millage was passed. Communications in the district were improved by installing a private phone system in every classroom with integrated voice mail and e-mail. An enhanced wide area network was leased, and an upgraded district website developed. Technology in the classrooms improved as new courses were offered, and district operations improved with new software programs.

Mr. Warras also highlighted K-12 technology trends and benchmarks, and comparative and interview data which included future technology needs. He offered suggestions to cut costs in technology areas, and discussed how much of the total budget will be needed to maintain the status quo.

Mr. Warras concluded his report by summarizing the next steps needed: to bring the technology plan to the board; submit the 2005-2008 technology plan to the state for approval in February, 2005; finalize a plan to continue technological improvement in light of budgetary constraints; and determine the budget allocation for technology for 2005-2008.

## **B. Project Oversight Committee Update**

Mr. Broderick presented a report which explained the status of projects throughout the district. Projects discussed were: middle school science labs; Brownell multipurpose room; South site plan; maintenance building relocation; North pool citizen concerns; Brownell windows; and South lockers.

The next meeting of the Project Oversight Committee will be on January 18, 2005, where the committee will be reviewing the middle school science labs, and on January 27, 2005, when they will talk about the North pool repairs.

## **C. Budget Committee Update**

Mrs. Vreede said that the Budget Sub-committee continues to meet on a regular bi-weekly basis. The school board along with Dr. Klein, Mr. Fenton, Dr. Allan, Mr. Lobert and Mr. Warras conducted a budget work session on Saturday, January 8, 2005. She said that at that meeting the Board briefly reviewed the history of the budget reductions over the past four years and the latest budget update from Lansing. Mrs. Vreede added that the next State Revenue Estimation Conference takes place on January 13, 2005 in Lansing. The group also reviewed Mr. Fenton's analysis of the budget situation including the anticipated shortfall, and the district's current financial state. The shortfall is projected from a 'best-case' situation of \$2.3 million from a 'most likely' case situation of \$3 million to a 'worst-case' situation of \$5.3 million.

The group reviewed preliminary draft input from the Strategic Planning Committee process including the draft, mission and guiding principles. This discussion continued in a work session this evening prior to the Board meeting, reviewing the items under consideration for optimization or modification as well as a discussion of the role of fund equity. The administration will review the areas discussed and provide the next level of detail for consideration. Mrs. Vreede added that the budget committee was accelerating the budget process by at least a month this year.

Ms. Richardson thanked Mrs. Vreede for her organization of the work session on Saturday and noted that it was time well spent.

## **D. Revenue Enhancement Committee Update**

Trustee Vreede said that the next meeting of the Revenue Enhancement Committee will be this Friday, January 14, 2005 from 8:30 to 10:30 a.m. at 389 St. Clair. She added that this committee has begun development of a fund raising program, noting that advice is being asked of experts and that more information on this is forthcoming.

## **E. High School Diplomas for World War II and Korean War Veterans**

To provide special recognition for the service and sacrifice of military veterans of WWII and the Korean War, the recently amended Public Act 181 of 2001 authorizes the board

of a Michigan school district to award a high school diploma to a WWII or Korean War veteran.

The law permits a WWII veteran who left a high school in our district between December 16, 1940 and December 31, 1946, for immediate military service and who did not subsequently receive a high school degree to now apply for a diploma. Korean War veterans who left high school in the district between June 27, 1950 and January 31, 1955 may also apply. Family members may also apply on the behalf of a living or deceased veteran.

#### **F. Revised Rates for Extended Day Kindergarten**

The tuition rate for the 2005-2006 Extended Day Kindergarten Program will be \$2,950. This is an increase of \$225.00 from the 2004-2005 school year. Tuition fees are used to pay the costs of classroom salaries and benefits, and extra supplies for the additional half-day the children are in school. This will also help cover some of the indirect costs such as heat, lights, and administration costs.

#### **G. Enrollment Update**

Mr. Fenton said that the enrollment should be steady for next year, with possible variances of 50 students either way, but basically would remain about the same as this year. He said that the increase seemed to be in the 6<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grades this year, and the elementary enrollment was down 25-30 students. Mr. Fenton said it was still a little early to determine accurately how enrollment would fall for next year.

#### **IX. Future Meetings**

A Conference Meeting of the Board will be held on Monday, February 7, 2005 followed by a Regular Meeting of the board on February 21, 2005 (as was just approved this evening) at 8:00 p.m. in the Wicking Library of Grosse Pointe South High School.

#### **X. Other Comments from Board Members and Superintendent**

Trustee Brennan had no comment.

Trustee Ismail thanked the community members who came to the budget meeting on Saturday. He thought it was a productive session and said he appreciated the public being involved.

Trustee Dindoffer congratulated Mrs. Vreede for designing an effective discussion for the budget presentation on Saturday. She also thanked Mr. Fenton for his hard work, and Mr. Warras for the technology information he presented. She reminded the community of the 'renew, renew, restore' message for this February's election.

Trustee Broderick noted the countdown to the millage date. Over the next two months, he said that there would be various opportunities to hear about the millage at PTO and Booster Club meetings as well as two community forums. Mr. Broderick mentioned that

there would be a millage presentation tomorrow, January 14<sup>th</sup> at the Services for Older Citizens office (in the Neighborhood Club building) at 11:30 a.m., and a forum on Wednesday, January 12 at 1:00 p.m. at 389 St. Clair. The second forum would be on Thursday, January 27<sup>th</sup> at 7 p.m. at the Administration Building. Trustee Broderick encouraged voters to become knowledgeable about the election on February 22<sup>nd</sup>.

Trustee Kennedy said that the community has cause to celebrate. Two students, Jennifer Ryan, a 5th grader from Maire, and Kelly Ansell, a 6<sup>th</sup> grader from Pirece, spearheaded an effort that raised over \$1,600 for the Red Cross Tsunami Relief Effort by selling hot chocolate and baked goods on a Friday evening. Many others, including Maire teachers, helped with this effort.

Trustee Vreede spoke about the district mission statement. She said that a lot of time was spent on the vision, draft principles and mission. Mrs. Vreede added that it is very important to become knowledgeable and participate in the upcoming forums about the millage and it is crucial that the community vote to 'renew, renew and restore' through these millages. She also added that she recently read a position paper written by State Superintendent Tom Watkins about school funding, which she thought would be a rich resource for others to read.

Ms. Richardson noted that she recently read about Dr. Pamela Lemerand's retirement in June of this year. She said that Dr. Lemerand would be a great loss to the district and that she has benefited many families. She wished her the best in her retirement.

Dr. Klein added to Mr. Broderick's information about millage information being distributed. She reminded the community about the forum on finance being offered by Mr. Fenton on January 20, 2005 at 7:00 p.m. in the Administration Building. She welcomed residents to attend this meeting.

## **XI. Adjournment**

There being no further business, President Richardson adjourned the meeting at 10:19 p.m.

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**Board Secretary**