



Grosse Pointe Board of Education
Minutes of the March 14, 2005 Regular Board Meeting
Wicking Library, Grosse Pointe South High School
11 Grosse Pointe Blvd. Grosse Pointe Farms, MI 48236

ORDER OF BUSINESS – 8:00 P.M.

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

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

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

Also Present: Assistant Superintendents Allan and Fenton
(Superintendent Klein was absent)

The pledge of allegiance was led by Trustee Dindoffer.

II. Superintendent's Report

President Richardson extended condolences to Superintendent Suzanne Klein on the death of her father over the weekend. Information on services or a memorial contribution may be obtained by calling the Superintendent's office.

Mr. Fenton began the Superintendent's Report by announcing that two topics would be presented. The first, a proposal to modify the 6th grade rotation, was addressed by Mr. Mullholland, Parcels Middle School principal, and Dr. Dib, Brownell Middle School principal.

Mark Mulholland elaborated on modifications to the 6th grade rotation as one cost cutting option for the 2005-2006 school year. The question posed was whether physical education should be a requirement, now offered every other day. Opposite that class is instrumental music, vocal music or drama. Mr. Mulholland noted there are five of those quarter rotation classes that students are able to take: computers, art, foreign language, lifeskills and technology. Another alternative was presented at the recent EPLC meeting by Mr. Andrew Taylor, Pierce teacher, but will probably not be considered. Mr. Mulholland said that if this proposal to modify the 6th grade rotation is accepted, increasing class size would be the next budget reducing option to consider.

Dr. Dib also answered questions of the board while elaborating further on details of the rotation.

Lee Warras spoke about the Parent Connect/Student Connect program now available to parents of secondary students. Students will now have the opportunity to register on-line. The Parent Connect segment of the program provides a great deal of student information on the Zangle database for parents in a view only mode.

Sharon Halicki, Information Systems Supervisor, gave a demonstration of Parent Connect. She explained that parents would receive a mailing explaining the use this program.

III. Public Comments on Non-Action Items

Dan McGuire, spoke about his concerns regarding grade school football.

Lisa Howell, 1239 Sunningdale, Grosse Pointe Woods, from the Aquatics Swim Club, shared concerns about their members being involved in decision-making involving swimmers and swim time.

IV. Public Comments on Consent Agenda Action Items

Dona Reynolds, 563 Shoreham, Grosse Pointe Woods, Brownell and Pierce Middle School teacher, shared concerns about the rotation modification proposal for the 6th grade rotation.

Renato Marchese, 20121 Scarlet Court, Mt. Clemens, and North High School teacher, thanked the Board for their involvement in getting the contract settled and asked that they expedite the settlement for the plant and secretary unions. Mr. Marchese shared concerns about the proposal for modifications to the 6th grade rotation. He also promoted the South Art Fest coming up and the North Art Show on May 16, 17, 18, and 19.

Margaret Rose, 439 Madison, Grosse Pointe Farms, and South and Brownell teacher, shared concerns about the proposed modifications for the 6th grade rotation.

V. Public Comments on Regular Agenda Action Items

No one came forward to comment.

VI. Consent Agenda Action Items

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

THAT Consent Agenda Items D) Approval of Study to Determine the Feasibility of Outsourcing District Technical Support, E) Approval of a Feasibility Study for a District Owned Wide Area Fiber Optic Network, and F) Middle School Proposal for Modification of Sixth Grade Rotation, be removed from the Consent Agenda and placed on the Regular Agenda.

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

Nays: None

Motion carried.

Mr. Fenton 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 .4 instructional staff member, the leaves of absence of two instructional staff (currently on leave), and the resignation of one special education classroom assistant.

B. Business Items: Accounts Payable

The Business Items were presented for Board approval.

C. Minutes of the Regular Meetings of February 7 and 21, 2005, Work Session Minutes of February 21, 2005, Closed Session Minutes of February 2, 2005, and Special Meeting Minutes of February 22, 2005

The Board is asked to approve the board meeting minutes, work session and closed session minutes as presented.

D. Approval of American Studies Course for Community School

The Board is asked to approve the American Studies Course for Community School as presented.

E. Approval of Introduction to Literature and Composition for Community School

The Board is asked to approve the new course, Introduction to Literature and Composition.

F. Bids

1) Pierce Gym Remodeling

the Board is asked to award the Pierce gym remodeling project to Bernco, Inc., for \$294,773.

2) South High School Science

The Board is asked to award the bid for the South High School science remodeling project to MICCO, LLC, for \$3,106,700.

3) Defer Lockers

The Board is asked to award the locker project for Defer Elementary School to Rayhaven Group for \$10,040.

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

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 Contract with the Grosse Pointe Education Association

The administration has been negotiating with the GPEA (teachers' association) since May, 2004. Discussion has concluded with a successor agreement with the GPEA, which calls for language changes, benefit changes, and pay increases as discussed at closed work session with the board. This agreement will carry the teachers' contract through August, 2007.

The Board is asked to accept and ratify the 2004-2007 successor labor agreement with the Grosse Pointe Education Association.

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

THAT the Board Accept and Ratify the 2004-2007 Successor Labor Agreement with the Grosse Pointe Education Association

Mr. Lobert said he was very pleased to have reached this agreement. Mr. Fenton noted that Dr. Klein was also very pleased that the agreement was reached with the Grosse Pointe Education Association. President Richardson offered her congratulations to both sides for coming to an agreement. Mr. Lobert explained that both sides continue to work on the calendar portion of the agreement. He noted that the agreement sets forth two options to include a pre-Labor Day and a post-Labor Day start of school. Mr. Lobert said that administration, Board and GPEA representatives are in the process of looking at data that was taken from a web survey of parents. He said that the district anticipates announcing calendar dates by the end of March on the website as well as other means normally used for disseminating school information. The calendar will be for the duration of the contract which runs until June, 2007.

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

Nays: None

Motion carried.

B. Approval of Study to Determine the Feasibility of Outsourcing District Technical Support

The Board is asked to approve the proposal from Wright & Hunter to provide the preliminary research and develop and issue an RFP to assist the district in the evaluation of the feasibility of outsourcing district technical support, at a total cost of \$11,500.

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

THAT the Board Approve of a Study to Determine the Feasibility of Outsourcing District Technical Support

Mr. Fenton noted that there are currently eleven people employed in the technology department of the school system.

Trustee Ismail asked that this item be removed from the consent agenda and tabled because he feels that not enough information was presented regarding the bid process and how the study would be followed through. He suggested that information be done by via district phone calls instead of paying someone to do this study. Mr. Ismail also does not want to put Mr. Frantz in the uncomfortable position of working with a company that would ultimately cut his own department. Trustee Brennan is in favor of looking at the feasibility of this study, but not to pressure Mr. Frantz to 'take the lead' on this study. Mr. Brennan also feels that this could be done by making the calls for information internally. Mrs. Vreede felt that this study is being proposed so that a third party can examine how we support the district's technology needs. She said that although technology employees will be asked about their work, that is the only way to understand the dynamics of what is actually being done in the department.

Mr. Warras explained that the district's budget subcommittee was asked to aggressively pursue ways to reduce costs, one of which is the privatization of the district's technology function. Mr. Warras said that considerable outsourcing in the technology department is already being done. The security, firewall and high level networking is outsourced, some staff development, as well as some of the summer work. He added that we face the dilemma of how the district, with limited technical expertise, would move forward with the outsourcing of this department and not include Mr. Frantz, who is the one technical expert within the district. Dr. Allan noted that Mr. Frantz is not taking the lead on this issue. She and Mr. Warras are primarily responsible for implementing this proposal. Jim Frantz is the only person with the technical expertise to be able to do this study, but because he is short-handed by the loss of a network engineer, vacated three months ago, the district found that it would be impossible to do this study without the aid of a third-party. This third party can look at the operation with a more global view because they do not work in the environment and can judge the cost effectiveness more accurately.

Mr. Ismail commented further that he does not want anyone to get the idea that he is not for privatization. He said, however, that the school system has an opportunity to consult with like districts, as done for other issues, and that the district should be doing this first to tap into these resources instead of paying someone to do this study. He said he is opposed to the 'methodology' in which the district is looking for answers on outsourcing.

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

Nays: Trustee Ismail

Motion carried by a vote of 6-1.

C. Approval of a Feasibility Study for a District Owned Wide Area Fiber Optic Network

Mr. Fenton said that the board is being asked to approve the Wright & Hunter proposal for \$8,600 to develop a feasibility study for the development of a district owned wide area fiber optic network.

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

THAT the Board Approve the Feasibility Study for a District Owned Wide Area Fiber Optic Network

Mr. Warras explained that a wide-area fiber optic network is being used by many other districts. While working on the technology plan, one of the thoughts of saving money and increasing its ability to deliver services and broad band capability effectively was the idea of a wide area network owned by the district. In order to have as much information as possible so that the district can make a determination on how to proceed, an outside source with expertise was approached to perform the study. This was a recommendation by the Technology Cabinet.

Board members asked why a feasibility study was needed. Mr. Warras explained that the question was whether or not it was feasible to do this instead of leasing. What would be the advantages or disadvantages? These are the questions the Technology Cabinet asked in determining whether or not to do the study. Dr. Allan explained that doing this study with Wright and Hunter will help the district to know what kind of redundancy will be needed in case things go out, and which design will give us the most effective system. Mr. Fenton explained that this study is just the first step of the process before the district would bid for the construction and assemblance of the fiber optic network. The Board also asked if there was an urgency to this study being done today, and whether or not the wide area fiber optic network needs to be being installed now, or can the district wait a few years?. Mr. Warras explained that it was a long “run-way” to prepare for the actual construction of this project. He anticipated that it would take at least three years once the construction for the wide area fiber optic network began. Mr. Frantz commented that if the Board wanted to put this study on hold for now, he would anticipate bringing it back to the board in July or August 2007 and still be within the timeframe of being able to build this. Mrs. Vreede felt the Board should wait on this study.

As the Board conferred on whether or not to table the item, Mrs. Vreede said that she would rather vote it down and wait for a new proposal at another time. Trustee Brennan felt that the sooner the district has the information, the better. He said he was persuaded to get the study done now. Trustee Broderick felt that it would be better to wait on the study.

Trustee Ismail asked if the administration had information from other districts that had already developed a wide area fiber optic network. Mr. Fenton said that the money this year (for this study) would come out of the technology fund. The implementation of the network (and a future study) system would come out of the sinking fund (per board approval) or the general fund. Trustee Dindoffer also expressed a desire to wait on this study as prices on leasing appeared to be lower than expected. Mrs. Vreede asked

that the money spent on this study be used instead on a .2 FTE in the classroom. Ms. Richardson said that she, too, was comfortable voting this item down, but wanted this discussion to be reflected in these minutes for future reference on the study for a district-owned wide area fiber optic network.

Ayes: Trustees Brennan, Ismail

Nays: Trustee Broderick, Dindoffer, Kennedy, Richardson and Vreede

Motion did not carry by a vote of 5-2.

D. Middle School Proposal for Modification of Sixth Grade Rotation

The Board is asked to approve the modification of the sixth grade rotation as presented.

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

THAT the Board Approve the Middle School Proposal for Modification of Sixth Grade Rotation

Mr. Fenton commented that this modification of the 6th grade rotation would reduce staffing by 1.2 FTE over the 3 middle schools as opposed to a possible reduction in staff of 4.2 FTE if the district increased class size by just one student.

Board members expressed their views on this proposal.

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

Nays: Trustee Ismail **Motion carried with a vote of 6-1.**

VIII. Items for Information and Discussion

A. Project Oversight Update

Mr. Broderick said that the Project Oversight Committee comprised of himself, Mrs. Vreede, Mr. Ismail, Dr. Klein and Mr. Fenton have been meeting regularly to discuss projects in progress and new projects going out to bid. Committee members review logistics, costs and funding options of all projects coming before the board.

Trustee Broderick noted that the committee has been focusing on the South site plan projects and the middle school science renovation projects. He said that this has been a long process, ongoing before the Project Oversight Committee was even established. Teachers, parents and district personnel have looked at these project plans and cost estimates. The committee has the benefit of insight from many other sources to assist them. Last week the committee discussed the South site projects which include the pool, multi-purpose room, and a number of related projects. This week the committee discussed middle school science renovation scope and proposals at each of the three

middle schools.

B. Revenue Enhancement Update

Mrs. Vreede said that the Revenue Enhancement Committee consists of herself, Mrs. Kennedy, and Mrs. Dindoffer as well as Mr. Fenton and Dr. Klein. She said that this new committee has utilized experts in this field within the school district parent community. Trustee Vreede added that the committee put out a quote for a bid in December for a fund-raising consultant. Next month, the committee is expecting to bring a recommendation to the board for a consultant that would work with the district with fund raising initiatives. This represents an opportunity for a near-term, (hopefully) fairly significant enhancement of revenue meant to complement and enhance the tremendous work already going on in the district.

C. Board Policy Sub-Committee Update

Trustee Dindoffer gave a general update. The Policy Sub-Committee consists of Ms. Richardson, Mrs. Kennedy and Mrs. Dindoffer as well as Dr. Klein. She noted that tonight a first reading of JHCA – Student Media is being presented for information and discussion only.

D. Revision of Policy JHCA Student Media (School-Sponsored Media and Non-School Sponsored Media)

Mrs. Dindoffer explained that this is the policy that governs student publications and covers all media, not just the printed media. With legal counsel review, the committee sought to define the criteria that would be considered as to how articles were judged if it were determined that one should not be published (or broadcast) and to establish a process and standard of review recognizing the importance of freedom of press and freedom of speech and the learning laboratories that are school sponsored media and non-school sponsored media for students. Ms. Richardson added that one of the things that was added to this policy is an appeal process for students who may be told that an article is not going to be published. The policy has specified to whom students would appeal and how long it would take, understanding that these are usually timely issues and needing an expedited process. It also recognizes school media and non-school sponsored media (student newspapers, the yearbook, and underground newspapers and pamphlets that could get distributed around campus) and addresses who makes the decisions to reject a newspaper article or verbal statement for broadcast and how these decisions are made.

Other items the policy committee has been considering include a recently passed resolution by the State of Michigan regarding the Michigan Merit Scholarship requirement that high school students complete 40 hours of community service in order to qualify. School boards are asked to pass a policy regarding what would qualify and what would not qualify as community service.

The committee has also been looking at the gifts policy, facilities use policy, and rental policy.

E. Approval of Field Trip – North High School Students to Pelee Island, Ontario, Canada

Because the United States State Department continues to extend its “Worldwide Caution” for Americans traveling outside the U.S., the Board’s “Study Warning” (Policy IFCB) banning foreign field trips remains in place for students. However, a few exceptions to the “Study Warning” have been made on a case-by case basis since 2001, so that Grosse Pointe students were able to take advantage of valuable learning experiences. This spring, an exceptional opportunity is available for North High School history students to learn, first-hand, the history and anthropology of nearby Pelee Island in Ontario, Canada. Mr. Crosby Washburne, North teacher, has asked to lead a group of North students to the island, learn about its unique ethnography, and participate in a “dig”. If approved, the field trip would take place from Wednesday, May 11, 2005 until Sunday, May 15, 2005. About 10-12 students would be involved (with 3 adults). In order for North students to travel to Canada, the Board must waive its “Study Warning” for this field trip.

The Board decided to vote on this item now instead of waiting until the April Board meeting.

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

THAT the Board approve the Field Trip of North High School Students to Pelee Island, Ontario, Canada

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

Nays: None **Motion carried.**

IX. Future Meetings

A Conference Meeting of the Board will be held on Monday, April 4, 2005 at 8:00 p.m. in Wicking Library of Grosse Pointe South High School followed by a Regular Meeting of the Board on Monday, April 11, 2005.

X. Other Comments from Board Members and Superintendent

Trustee Vreede said that proposals from Lansing indicate increasing the per pupil funding. She asked Mr. Fenton if he could elaborate on this latest announcement.

Mr. Fenton said that the \$175 per pupil increase or \$1.5 million total has been suggested by Governor Granholm’s office. Mr. Fenton said that he is a little skeptical however, because offsetting that is the mandatory retirement increase which will be up to 16.25 % and will cost the district \$850,000.

Mrs. Vreede thanked the teaching staff for their professionalism as they worked through the bargaining agreement. She thanked those that came to speak this week and last week and asked that they continue to share how they feel the board does business.

Trustee Kennedy had no comment.

Trustee Broderick congratulated the North and South athletes on their successes saying that they are demonstrating good skills and success and deserve to be congratulated.

Trustee Dindoffer wished North High School the best of luck in the basketball tournament. She congratulated South's swimming team who came in fourth in the state this weekend. Luke Richard came in first in the state and a number of other swimmers placed including the son of Ms. Richardson-Rossbach. She also congratulated the South's girl's hockey team and the DECA. She thanked Bill Cayo for his efforts to build a fine program there. "People like Bill Cayo, Bill Thompson and other coaches and teachers – you are our greatest resource and we appreciate everything you do." She thanked those who worked on the negotiations also.

Trustee Brennan had no comment.

Trustee Richardson said that it was a remarkable victory for the South boy's swim team where they placed 4th in the state. Among the most notable results were Luke Richard who finished first in the butterfly with a time that was so fast that if he had been swimming in college he would have qualified for the NCAA meet. Eight young men achieved all state status as a result of their finishes. Diver Justin Linney made it into the final eight. She agreed with Mrs. Dindoffer and said that we have to recognize that the adults who lead these young men into pursuits like this are very special individuals. Chad Heppner and Bill Thompson are excellent teachers in the district who recognize that the sport is not just about the sport, but about building a culture of teamwork and of learning to support each other. She said that as a parent, she is grateful that her son had this opportunity to learn from these men as they invest these and other values in these young men.

Ms. Richardson also noted that Destination Imagination took place this weekend and will proceed to the state event.

She added that the Grosse Pointe South choir will be leaving for its trip to New York City in about eight days, where the choir will be the host choir for the national showstoppers competition. There are 65 students from South participating in this- truly a remarkable show of talent and support from this district. One of the many parents worth mentioning is Andi Sullivan, the woman behind the costumes, who puts in immeasurable time, dedication, and quality in making the costumes for South's choir. Grosse Pointe North choir is sending a vocal jazz ensemble to a "Jazz Invitational" at Western Michigan this weekend.

On behalf of the administration and the Board, Mr. Fenton extended condolences to Dr. Klein and her family on the passing of her father. He said that the thoughts of the district are with her this evening.

XI. Adjournment

There being no further business, President Richardson adjourned the meeting at 11:14 p.m.

Board Secretary