



GROSSE POINTE
PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM

Partners in Learning

Excellence in Education: Learning and Leading for Today and Tomorrow

Winter 2008

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Register now for fall

In order for your child to begin attending the Grosse Pointe Public School System next fall, please start the residency verification and enrollment process promptly. All forms are on the district website under the enrollment dropdown. Call 313/432-3083 today to make your registration appointment.

Kindergarten deadline is soon

Extended Day Kindergarten (EDK) applications and downpayments are due February 27. The lottery drawing will be March 2. Tentative sites for extended day kindergarten, based on enrollment are: Barnes, Defer, Ferry, Kerby, Monteith, Poupard, Richard and Trombly.

Project Find and Child Find

If your child age birth to six years is experiencing developmental delays, "Don't worry, but don't wait." Contact Acting Co-Directors of Student Services Rose Mendola or Sue Banner at 313/432-3856. Or, if you suspect your school-age child has a disability affecting his or her academic performance, notify your child's teacher, counselor, or principal or call 313/432-3856.

Grosse Pointe Public School System
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Midyear progress report shares exciting news



Dr. Brian Hunt and Fishbones restaurant sponsored a celebratory luncheon for 26 North students who have earned a 4.0 or above grade point average. Read more success stories below.

- photo courtesy of Renee Landuyt

In the administration building there is a large bell outside the enrollment office and when it rings, we know an incoming kindergarten student is ready to finish the paperwork portion of the enrollment process and go to school. As adults we know a great deal of thought has gone into that enrollment process.

In many cases, parents carefully considered the school system before purchasing or renting their home. Many visited schools to see where was the best fit for their child. Some started at local private or parochial schools and then joined the public school family at a later time. While this is the time of year when official open houses are held, our doors are always open. We are always eager to tell visitors about unique aspects of each school program and building.

For example, our elementary staff is excited about the character education and positive behavior support programs supported through a Wayne County Regional Educational Service Agency (RESA) grant. The local papers have been generous in providing space to tell the stories of additional outreach programs where students have shared

jackets and notes, collected food, or joined forces to conserve energy and natural resources through recycling programs. We will continue to provide updates on our website and in newsletters on how our students are practicing the skills necessary to be productive members of society, actively working to improve our community at large.

The elementary staff and parents have also been working together to effectively implement the new Everyday Math series. Through district and school parent nights, ongoing communication in classroom and school newsletters and websites, and videos taped in our own high school television production studio this process is moving forward smoothly.

Our middle schools have been busy hosting elementary and middle school instrumental and vocal music performances and celebrating the induction of National Junior Honor Society members. Upcoming middle school orientation nights are wonderful opportunities to explore all the possibilities of what the public schools can

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BOARD BULLETIN

Notes on Board operations and transparency

The Board of Education represents the interests of the local taxpaying community in relation to the efficient and effective operations of our public school system. Broadly and in a hierarchical sense, our teachers deliver the core educational services to our students. Administrators establish the educational objectives and oversee the teachers. The Board of Education provides the framework and expectations for the administrators by adopting policies. Ultimately the taxpayers oversee the Board.

This final aspect relies upon transparency, a responsibility that demands that the Board discharge our duties in full view of the public.

This responsibility is fulfilled by using various media forms to broadcast core Board operations. Great effort has been made on this front. Board meetings have been televised for years, but we have enhanced this by leveraging new media to deliver content in progressive ways. Did you know our board meetings can be subscribed to via iTunes? We were one of the first districts in the country to take this action.

On another front one of the main drivers for the overhaul of the district's policy manual was to enable its publication on the Internet. Now, for the first time, all district policies are publicly accessible via the web. All reports delivered to the Board (both financial and other) are posted on the district's recently redesigned website.

Making accessible what has already happened is only part of the transparency charge. Letting the public know in advance when we will be

meeting and what will be discussed is even more important. For the last two and a half years the Board has published a Planning Calendar that lists



every Board meeting scheduled, what primary actions will be taken and what reports we will receive. As the meeting gets closer, the final agenda is posted at the Board office the week preceding the meeting and materials are hyperlinked on the website to the specific agenda items. Meeting minutes, the official recording of what happened, are posted after their approval the following month.

One potential source of frustration is lack of clarity regarding responsibilities of the Board and the action we take, versus the responsibility and actions of the administration. Not every action taken in regard to school district operations involves the Board. For this reason we developed a schematic referred to as the Policy Based Governance Model.

This document delineates the Board's and Administration's discrete responsibilities and lists all of the actions that policies require of the Board, and all the reports policies

require to be delivered to the Board. If you ever have questions about who is supposed to do what and when, the Governance Model document is worth referencing. Knowing who is responsible for what certainly enhances the transparency of district operations.

Board election results

The Board would like to welcome the return of trustee Ahmed Ismail and the arrival of Judy Gafa after their success in the November elections. Their terms commence in January. We also extend a hearty thank you to Angela Kennedy for her four years of service.

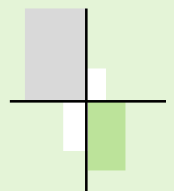
2008-09 Board of Education

Board of Education Officers for 2009 were elected at the January 26 meeting. They are posted in the mailing section of this document and on the district website.

Board meetings are typically the fourth Monday of the month at 8 p.m. January through June they are in North High School's Library, 707 Vernier. July through December they are held in South High School's Wicking Library, 11 Grosse Pointe Boulevard.

Agendas and meeting times are posted in the Administration Building at 389 St. Clair Avenue, and on the district website www.gpschools.org.

The Board of Education welcomes input through their email schoolboard@gpschools.org.



Midyear Progress, continued from page one

offer each and every student. Learning often extends beyond the school day with the phenomenal support of parents, teachers and staff in extracurricular activities like Destination Imagination and Lego League.

Another example of the quality of our students' work at the middle school level is the recently published collection of *Distinguished Essays*. These unedited student essays showcase both our students' talent, and the emphasis the district places on developing communication skills.

At the high school level, North High School just recognized 26 students for earning a 4.0 grade point average or better (see photo on page one). Also at North, 400 students participated in Challenge Day – an outstanding program that reinforces the vision that every child lives in a world where they feel safe, loved and celebrated. As we celebrate our students, we encourage them to “Be the Change” – a Challenge Day principle, and lead in a positive manner that reinforces the vision we have for our district. That feeling of belonging helps them stretch and grow.

As a district, we continue our commitment to providing the very best in fine arts instruction, even in these difficult economic times. Did you know that last year North High School's music program earned a Grammy award, and this year South is up for that honor? Had you heard that our art students earned over a half million dollars in college scholarships last year? These programs enhance the strong core academic curriculum and are part of the very fiber of our organization.

One thing that remains constant is the support of our community and parents.

Over 90% of parents at every level attend conferences each year. Also every year, hundreds of Gold Cards are requested so seniors citizens can enjoy an assortment of school drama, athletic and musical productions without cost. If you've been to one of our concerts or plays lately you have seen in the audience that important support for the mosaic of learning opportunities we provide. Parents also support our students through Parent Teacher Organization and Booster Club

activities, not to mention volunteering in our classrooms. We are grateful for every way our community shows it values our students and their education.

Each day we educate the community's children in our schools. We will do everything we can to meet their needs – whether that be support classes for struggling learners, implementing technology effectively in the classroom to engage today's generation with the tools for learning they are comfortable using, or continuing to provide academically challenging classes like our honors courses, 21 advanced placement classes and six foreign languages.

As we embark on another year of budget planning, we keep in mind the high expectations you have for our instructional program. Our funding is focused on classroom success for our students. Through wise fiscal stewardship, grants, and the generous support of PTOs, booster groups and the Grosse Pointe Foundation for Public Education, we will continue to maintain and enhance our tradition of excellence.

- Dr. C. Suzanne Klein, Superintendent

... teachers and youth alike join hands to create a school where every student feels safe, loved and celebrated

Superintendent of the Year

Dr. C. Suzanne Klein was named Superintendent of the Year for Region 9, which includes Oakland, Macomb and Wayne County except Detroit. The award was presented by Christopher Wigent, Superintendent, Wayne County RESA; Dr. Joan C. Sergent, Executive Director, Tri-County Alliance for Public Education;

and Barbara Lott, Vice-President of Tri-County



Alliance and Superintendent of Brownstown School District. Here Brendan Walsh presents Dr. Klein with flowers from the board.

Fall newsletter published online

The fall Partners in Learning newsletter is available on our website www.gpschools.org under *Our District*, under *Publications*. There you can also find an archive of editions from 2004 to the present.

Call for your Gold Card

Gold Cards offer the district's senior citizens the opportunity to attend various school events. Free admission to athletic functions and dramatic and musical productions is our way of thanking local senior citizens for the support they have provided the school system. To obtain a calendar or Gold Card, please call 313/432-3007.

Another clean audit

Representatives from BDO Seidman accounting firm shared key points of the annual audit at the November Board meeting, noting the district's fund equity, at 16.5% of the annual budget, is well within industry recommendations of 15-20%, and that our debt limit is well below the state imposed regulations. The report concluded, “the school district is very strong.”

District's foundation receives \$500,000 gift

The Grosse Pointe Foundation for Public Education (GPFPE) is pleased to announce receipt of its largest gift to date, in the amount of \$500,000 from the John and Marlene Boll Foundation.

Citing the past success of the foundation in its work to enhance various academic and enrichment programs for students and staff of the Grosse Pointe Public School System, the Boll family was anxious to continue its support of the GPFPE.

"After giving the Grosse Pointe Foundation for Public Education our first gift -- a \$50,000 challenge grant in support of the F.A.S.T. reading program -- and seeing how quickly the foundation was able to raise another \$50,000 from the community, we were very encouraged," said Kristine Boll Mestdagh on behalf of the family.

"When I saw the impact that gift made in improving reading support programs at all grade levels across our community's schools, I was further convinced the foundation's work in advancing the strategic goals of the district was critical and deserving of our continued support," Mestdagh added.

Of the half million dollars donated, \$200,000 will be used to complete the natatorium, gym and fitness center located at Grosse Pointe South High School. The remainder will be used in support of other GPFPE initiatives.

"On behalf of the Grosse Pointe Foundation for Public Education I would like to thank John and Marlene Boll for their generosity and for their vision and leadership in recognizing the key role that our foundation plays in the Grosse Pointe community. We look forward to working with the Bolls to direct the balance of their gift to further support the school district's strategic plan," said Lorna Utley, President of the GPFPE.

The GPFPE was established in 2006 as a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to providing private funding to support and enhance academic and enrichment programs and activities for students and staff of the Grosse Pointe Public School System. In two years, the Foundation has provided \$450,000 in gifts to the schools to support twelve programs across the district. For more information email ourfuture@gpfpe.org or call 313/432-3058.

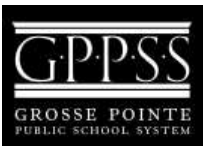
Pesticide Notification

As part of the Grosse Pointe Public School System's Integrated Pest Management Program (IPM), pesticides are occasionally applied. Under Michigan Regulation 637 as amended, you have the right to be informed prior to any pesticide application made to the school grounds and buildings. In certain emergencies, pesticides may be applied without prior notice, but you will be provided notice following any such application.

If you wish to be notified of pesticide applications during the 2008/09 school year, please submit the following information to the address below :

- Parent/Guardian Name
- Student Name
- Address
- Phone Number
- School Student Attends

Department of Support Services
Grosse Pointe Public Schools
389 St. Clair Avenue
Grosse Pointe, MI 48230



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