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Change in Board meeting dates and locations

During January, the Board of Education began meeting in the library of North High School, 707 Vernier. To be more accessible to community members on both sides of the district, meetings will be held at North from January through June, then in South's Wicking Library from July through December. The dates of the meetings also changed to the second and fourth Mondays of the month, with a few exceptions for holidays. Dates, locations, directions and agendas for the 8 p.m. meetings and 6 p.m. work sessions are posted on the district website.

Senior Gold Cards available
Gold Cards continue to offer Grosse Pointe senior citizens the opportunity to attend, without cost, various school sponsored events throughout the year. Free admission to athletic functions and dramatic and musical productions is our way of thanking our local senior citizens for the many years of support they have provided the Grosse Pointe Public School System. To obtain an event calendar or a Gold Card, please call 313/432-3007.

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Educating the whole student

Looking around our district today, there are numerous examples of students challenged with social, emotional and cognitive objectives during the school day as well as before and after school. Each offering feeds a different aspect of the individual student's development. If you think of their education as a mosaic, then cemented into the strong mortar of the core instruction are these jewel programs. These offerings hook learners, enticing them to stretch and try new things. They provide answers to the "where am I going to use this" questions and they help students find interests and abilities they might not have discovered yet.

There are band and vocal concerts at every level, plays and musicals for secondary students, robotics competitions, athletic events, and science and social studies Olympiads. These

activities enrich the learning taking place in classrooms. This instruction impacts students as their idea of what



Maire students provide an uplifting experience at their Winter Concert.
-photo courtesy of Jay Lady www.stillwaterstudio.us

they can do, and the difference they can make in society, is formed.

Part of what we do is open those doors. We help students connect what they know, with what they discovered, and

— continued on page 4

Board responds to State budget forecasts

An expected flat revenue picture and escalating fixed costs led the board of education to pass a resolution focused on containing costs while increasing revenue within the district. At the December 14, 2006 board meeting, the

Grosse Pointe Board of Education gave a five point directive to the school leadership team emphasizing the need to demonstrate fiscal caution in the days ahead.

"The goal of this resolution is to demonstrate a commitment to cost containment while maintaining the educational excellence our community

expects," said Brendan Walsh, president of the board. "After six straight years of budget cuts and multi-million dollar

The goal of this resolution is to demonstrate a commitment to cost containment while maintaining the educational excellence

changes to maintain a balanced budget, there is no silver bullet. We must make some

difficult decisions."

The adopted measures seek to shield funds supporting classroom instruction, while limiting all other expenditures wherever possible. The board also encourages school leaders to seek additional funding from county, state, and federal sources to support

— continued on page 3

Board Bulletin

Living our Strategic Plan: putting it into practice

Welcome to a New Year! While many are still testing their New Year's resolutions, the school district is already almost halfway through the year. At this point students are signing up for next year's classes, the budget planning for next year is underway and the time for evaluation is upon us.

Measuring our progress

Just as the students undergo midterm and final exams, the district evaluates itself according to the strategic plan. Based on a multitude of outcome based goals, the strategic plan guides the direction and decision making of the district.

Goals are sorted by area. Student learning, student support, staff development, human resources, partnerships, finance, and technology each list and detail goals for the year. As the year progresses each outcome is graded. Progress toward each goal is measured. In this way, the Board has a metric to evaluate success in our vision for the district.

In addition to self-evaluation, the district accumulates feedback from a variety of national sources. Annually, this district is fortunate to be counted among the best in the nation. This is exceptional for a public school district without entrance criteria and we are very proud of our status.

Ultimately, the district is accountable to its students and parents. We look for individual test scores, awards and achievements from our students. Our honors and AP status is strong, and our success with struggling students is growing. As new more rigorous state graduation requirements kick in, our ability to challenge and support each

student will become increasingly important.

Doing our best each day is made easier with a plan in hand and a goal on the horizon. As always, we appreciate the support our families provide to the children who are our students.

Increasing community involvement
Our efforts to increase the community's involvement in our business have expanded! Our web site is undergoing renovation based on your input. Our meetings are broadcast on Comcast Channel 20 and available on pod cast via the website. Meeting agendas and materials are available for download from the website.

There is an additional avenue for communication thanks to the efforts of our high school television production classes. Dr. Suzanne Klein, Superintendent, has begun a series of television shows that will air in conjunction with the Board meetings. This is a way to maximize our communications as well as exercise our students' capabilities with TV production. Various topics will be featured including some that occur perennially. Transcripts of the features will be posted to the web site.

Updating policies and procedures
The Board will undertake a review and updating of district policy over the next year. Many areas of interest will be addressed and citizens are invited to stay involved as works begins on each new section of the policy manual. As soon as a framework is established for meeting locations and schedule, it will be posted to the web. As policies are reviewed and approved, they will also be posted to the website.

2007-08 Board of Education

Brendan Walsh, President
Alice Kosinski, Vice-President
Ahmed Ismail, Secretary
Fred Minturn, Treasurer
Joan Dindoffer, Trustee
Angela Kennedy, Trustee
Charles Sabino, Trustee

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

Directions, agendas and additional meeting times are posted in the Administration Building at 389 St. Clair Avenue, as well as on the district website www.gpschools.org

The dates for 2007 are:

At North High School:

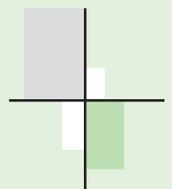
February 12 and 26
March 12 and 26
April 16 and 30
May 14 and 29*
June 11 and 25

At South High School:

July 9 and 23
August 13 and 27
September 10 and 24
October 8 and 22
November 12 and 26
December 10 and 17*

* indicates off-normal schedule to accommodate a holiday or other issue

One of the easiest ways to contact the Board of Education is through their email schoolboard@gpschools.org



Board responds, continued from page one

A call to cost containment without sacrificing educational excellence

state mandated programs that are not fully funded.

In addition to seeking outside money for unfunded mandates, the board

strongly

encourages the

Superintendent's

Budget Council

to reduce non-

teacher

personnel

resource levels by the equivalent of 5%

or approximately \$1 million. The

district will also look for savings in

copying and printing, programming

outside the school day and contracted

expenses, while seeking to contain

necessary expenditures through

utilization of a thin client

technology approach and

the purchase of

reconditioned, warranted

computers.

Dr. Suzanne Klein, Superintendent,

affirmed the board's action,

"Responsible money management

requires hard decisions, especially in

light of the recent State Revenue

Estimation Conference held January 18.

Our board recognizes the harsh

financial realities in education today.

This resolution demonstrates a desire

to be both responsive and proactive.

We are fully aware of the series of

financial situations that have

accumulated to impact revenues for the

district. At the same time, we are being

proactive through cost containment,

streamlining expenditures, and

increasing revenue through PTO and

booster fundraising and the

mobilization of our new Grosse Pointe

Foundation for Public Education."

Over 85% of the Grosse Pointe School system budget is devoted to employee

costs. Curricular materials,

maintenance of our historic buildings,

and supplies make up less than 20% of

the budget. The

board will soon begin

contract negotiations

with the various

unions and employee

groups as contracts

expire in August.

With State mandated retirement costs

and health insurance expenses

continuing to rise, the board will

maintain its tradition of working

collaboratively with its employees

through their elected representatives to

address

Our ongoing goal is providing

educational excellence

within our financial means

these

important

issues.

The district also includes our staff and

community in budget discussions and

welcomes their input and problem-

solving at Board Meetings and through

letters sent to 389 St. Clair Avenue, and

email to the Board at

schoolboard@gpschools.org .

Finally, the resolution encourages the

leadership team to embrace a mindset

of controlling expenditures.

"Our ongoing goal is providing

educational excellence within our

financial means," said Superintendent

Suzanne Klein. "One of the tenets of

our strategic plan is to act as wise

financial stewards. We will not sacrifice

the quality of our program, but we

must continue to act responsibly with

our funds."

Did you hear ... The Board of Education recently authorized refinancing the bond. While the district won't realize a financial benefit, the estimated 4% refund (\$1.8 million) will be passed directly to taxpayers over the remaining life of the bond.

A Budget Primer

For six years, the district has both increased revenue and made cuts in order to maintain a balanced budget. Some of these initiatives include:

- Restructuring the middle school day
- Offering early retirement incentives
- Moving school board elections from May to November
- Implementing technology initiatives (reduced staffing, refurbished machines, changes to the server)
- Closing Comtec to realize copying and printing savings
- Instituting fees for athletics and clubs at the middle and high school levels
- Privatizing cafeteria services
- Passing the Hold Harmless Millage
- Passing the Sinking Fund
- Increasing energy efficiency through bond and sinking fund initiatives
- Increasing class sizes at all levels
- Eliminating Fourth grade instrumental music instruction
- Transferring monies from Fund Equity
- Reducing the athletic budget by \$450,000 over the last five years
- Reducing purchased services and supplies by over \$500,000

If you have any suggestions or comments you would like to share as we work through this budget process, please mail them to the administration building at 389 St. Clair, Grosse Pointe 48230 marked "Budget Ideas" or email them to budget@gpschools.org . We welcome your participation in this ongoing dialogue.

High School Day Study

During January and February, the work of the high school day study committee continued. A primary activity was a series of site visits to high schools operating with different schedules. An update to the Board of Education is anticipated in March.

Register now for Kindergarten

If you have a student who will be in the class of 2020, please call 313/432-3083 to set up your registration and enrollment appointment. All forms and instructions are available on the district website.

District explores elementary foreign language

Community members, teachers, administrators, and the Board of Education have all expressed interest in providing a foreign language experience for elementary students. This spring, the foreign language committee is sharing two ideas that are both educationally sound and financially feasible.

The Board had previously approved a foreign language plan, but the proposal was not implemented because of lack of funding and time in the school day. That proposal was based on Standards for Foreign Language Learning: Preparing for the 21st Century by the American Council on the Teaching Foreign Language, Inc. During 2005/06, a modified proposal was brought forth and additional feedback was gathered through a web survey, a public forum, and research on other districts' programs.

This year, the district took last year's feedback and added input from Jackie Moase-Burke, Oakland Intermediate School District's World Language

Consultant. She is currently part of the team writing the State standards for foreign language.

The committee's recommendation is to implement foreign language instruction into the fourth and fifth grade specials rotation. Unlike last year's proposal, this would not eliminate the library rotation, but would return K-5 library time to the level before block scheduling was implemented. This exploratory program would provide an introductory experience in modern and classical languages that are available in the secondary programs and hopefully motivate further language study.

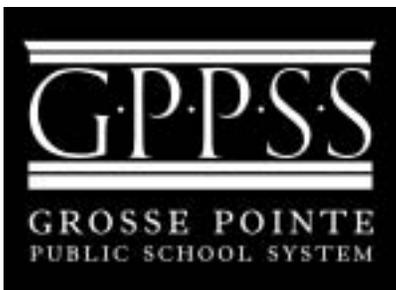
The district is also discussing a partnership with the Confucius Institute at Wayne State University. Volunteers, recruited by Wayne State and the district, would provide enrichment activities and exposure to the Chinese language and culture for elementary and middle school students. Some funding would be provided by the Chinese government through the Confucius Institute.

Character, from page 1 find new things to explore. I'll share three quick examples. Brownell's Auto Show, held the same week as the NAIAS, challenged students with a multistep process equivalent to a 20-page research paper. Classroom learning is also correlating directly with real world



issues in the Darfur fundraising program by North geography students. They plan to raise \$4,000 - a penny for each of the 400,000 people who have died in the last three years - using their marketing, research and communication skills. Pierce's Life Management class also recently completed a community service assignment. One group raised \$600 for the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation, two other groups raised \$400 each for the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society and Hermelin Brain Tumor Center, utilizing similar skill sets. I invite you to learn more about how our students are expanding their horizons inside and outside classrooms.

— Dr. C. Suzanne Klein, Superintendent



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