

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

MINUTES OF THE GRANDVIEW HEIGHTS CITY BOARD OF EDUCATION

Special Meeting August 24, 2006

The Grandview Heights City School Board met in special session pursuant to the rules section 3313.16 of the Ohio Revised Code at the Grandview Heights High School library with President Suzanne McLeod in the Chair. This meeting was established at the regular meeting of the Board on August 8, 2006. Due notice of this meeting was issued to members of the Board and to the media.

Call to Order (I): President McLeod called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

Roll Call (II): The following persons were present:

Members Present: Suzanne McLeod, President
Kathy Lithgow, Vice President
Ron Cameron, Member
Gary Heydinger, Member
Anita Keller, Member (5)

Others Present: David Mancini, Interim Superintendent of Schools
Steve Andersson, High School Principal
Rachel Baker, Parent
Stephanie Brett, Parent
Karen Chakoff-McKnight, Parent
Donna Chambers, Parent
Cathryn Chellis, Technology Director
Bill Childs, Visitor
Carol Davis, Parent
Dana Ellis, Visitor
Allyson Engdahl, Parent
Susan Falk, Teacher
Dennis Gleason, Parent
Carolyn Gleeson, Parent
Leah Houser, Parent
Jeff Jones, Parent
Dave Jump, Parent
Kathy Kinnard, Athletic Director
Angela LaMonte, Parent
Carla Lane, Pupil Services Secretary
Mitch Levitt, Parent
Blanche Luczyk, Parent
Andrew Milner, Student
Brian Milner, Parent
Meg Pinney, Parent
Eileen Pruett, Parent
Leah Reynolds, Parent
Kristi Russ, Parent
Gary Senter, Parent
Joyce Senter, Parent
Julie Sheets, Parent
Bob Short, Visitor
Melissa Snider, Visitor
Ed Skeens, Visitor

Barbara Wills, Parent
Jon Wills, Parent
Alan Froman, Tri-Village News
David Knisley, Treasurer

Grading Scale Changes (III): President McLeod opened the discussion of the grading scale changes that the Board put in place at their regular meeting in July. Mr. Andersson reviewed the work that the committee of educators did last year regarding the grading scale. He said that the committee, who considered fifteen school districts in Franklin County, noted that class ranks are generally being eliminated. He said there were three recommendations made by the committee this past spring. 1) Maintain the class ranking system to have available for colleges. 2) Increase the GPA (grade point average) requirement to attend the scholarship dessert because the number of attendees has significantly increased over time due to grade inflation while the ACT and SAT scores have remained relatively constant. 3) Adopt a new grading scale that would standardize each of the grades separated by $\frac{1}{3}$ (.333) of a point with a 4.0 being the highest grade attainable. These recommendations were to be effective with the 2006-07 school year. Additionally, the administration recommended that multiple "valedictorians" with a 4.0 GPA be honored with the title of Magna Cum Laude and that students with a GPA of at least 3.5 be honored with the title of Cum Laude.

Stephanie Brett encouraged the Board to reinstate the valedictorian and salutatorian because that would be best for students. She said it would be acceptable to recognize additional students with Cum Laude. Ms. Brett noted that the committee of high school teachers who originally considered the grading scale met subsequent to their springtime recommendations and restated their desire to keep the weighted A+ grade. She said she is in agreement with the committee's determination because the weighted A+ grade is an incentive for high student achievement.

2006 graduate, Andrew Milner, said he agrees with Ms. Brett and that the weighted A+ grade, valedictorian and salutatorian should be reinstated. He said that the current seniors have worked hard toward those goals. He said that more work is required to achieve the A+ grade and that students learn more in the process.

Ed Skeens said he agrees with Ms. Brett and that the weighted A+ grade, valedictorian and salutatorian should be reinstated. He said that valedictorians and salutatorians are American traditions that are meaningful and important. He said that recognizing a number of students lessens the honor of the valedictorian and salutatorian.

Julie Sheets said she is concerned about comparing grades from two grading scales. She said she is in favor of reinstating the valedictorian and salutatorian.

Meg Pinney said she is concerned about lowering the GPA from 1.75 to 1.67 for academic eligibility for extracurricular participation.

Bill Childs said he is an employee of the Ohio State University and that this discussion doesn't really matter. He said that ACT scores carry more weight than colleges will publicly state. Essays written by students are also meaningful to colleges along with letters of recommendation when considering student admission. He said the reason for this is that so many high schools have inflated their grading scales. Mr. Childs also suggested that Magna Cum Laude and Cum Laude be based upon a percentage of students instead of a certain GPA.

Eileen Pruett said she wants to rely upon the committee of teachers who are experts who recognize that the weighted A+ should be maintained. She suggested having a percentage of students as valedictorians instead of

eliminating the title of valedictorian altogether. She said she wants Grandview Heights High School students to compare favorably to other school districts.

Carol Davis said she is concerned that she did not know the grading scale was being considered by the Board of Education. She said that changes to the grading scale may be in order but the change should not happen so fast. She noted that no parents were on the committee that recommended keeping the weighted A+ grade. Therefore, the Board of Education has not listened to both teachers and parents. She encouraged paying more money to the District's data acquisition site in order to phase in any grading scale changes.

Karen McKnight said her children are worried about how everything they have worked for so far will translate under the new grading scale. Now it would be easier to achieve a grade of A.

Joyce Senter said that weights for grades in courses generally considered to be more difficult such as chemistry should be the same as weights for grades in other courses such as singers or band because different students have different areas of strengths.

Leah Reynolds said there are upper classmen in her son's freshman classes. Phasing in a grading scale change could result in her son getting an A in a class while upperclassmen could get an A+. She asked if anyone has studied possible results of the new grading scale.

Dana Ellis said her children have been guinea pigs for various changes in the School District over the years. She asked what kind of study has been done to see how Grandview Heights High School students will compare with other school districts in the opinion of colleges.

Jeff Jones said that the best way to determine correct answers to questions is to consult the experts. He said that Grandview Heights High School teachers and the high school principal recommended keeping the weighted A+ grade. Students are saying that the A+ grade matters to them. He recommended that the Board postpone the elimination of the A+ grade for at least one year while the Board further considers the matter. He said that the Board of Education has come to the wrong solution to the problem of comparing grades among dissimilar classes. Mr. Jones said it is acceptable to phase in the elimination of the valedictorian and salutatorian and phase in the use of Magna Cum Laude and Cum Laude to honor more students.

Blanche Luczyk encouraged the Board to delay the elimination of the A+ grade. She said if it is going to be eliminated, it should not affect the current seniors who have worked so hard to achieve that grade in the past.

Melissa Snider said that matters such as the grading scale should be considered every couple of years instead of every ten years.

Brian Milner said there is no reason to discontinue having valedictorians and salutatorians when there are students who strive to achieve these titles. He said that if they must be discontinued, it should happen effective with the current eighth grade class.

Angela LaMonte said her sons strive to achieve the A+ grades regardless of what colleges look for. She said she does not understand how the Board of Education arrived at its decision while the committee of professionals recommended keeping the weighted A+ grade. She said that GPA is still the best way to select graduation speakers.

Mr. Cameron asked Andrew Milner what affect having an unweighted A+ grade would have on students. Mr. Milner said that high school would have been much easier. He could have achieved an A simply by reading the book notes instead of reading the entire book. He said that while he and many other students would continue to work for the unweighted A+ grade, some students would not work as hard.

President McLeod said the School District is not re-figuring previous grades for students. The grading scale change would not be phased in because of technical limitations.

Ms. Lithgow said that in addition to the fifteen Franklin County school districts, she considered private schools as well. Her goal is to do what is best for students as they make their applications to colleges. She also compared Columbus School for Girls, Columbus Academy, Bishop Watterson and Olentangy Local Schools as she considered the grading scale matter (19 school districts). The Columbus School for Girls and the Columbus Academy will just this fall begin weighting their honors classes. Bishop Watterson has a variety of weights. Ten of the nineteen school districts have no A+ grades. Six have no weighted A+ grade. Only three have weighted A+ grades. Therefore, it appears that the Grandview Heights High School is padding its grading scale. Ms. Lithgow read a letter from former Grandview Heights High School Superintendent, Dr. Paul Kulik, that said weighting A+ grades for regular classes is not appropriate in that it weakens the grading scale. Ms. Lithgow said the Board of Education should further discuss the valedictorian and salutatorian elimination.

Dr. Heydinger said that class ranking will not be influenced by the elimination of the A+ grade. The elimination of the valedictorian will not eliminate having a class rank. The A+ grade is more of an issue now because of having .333 spreads instead of .25. He said the erratic grade point scale supporting the grades was more of a concern to him instead of having an A+ grade.

Ms. Lithgow said .05 would be the difference in GPA for her study group. It did not change the rank of students. She said that Upper Arlington High School will not print class rank on its grade cards. She said that Grandview Heights High School should continue the use of class rank until a better way is developed to communicate student performance to colleges.

Mrs. Keller said that if the A+ grade is weighted, then she is concerned that the inflated grading scale could work against Grandview students compared to students in school districts without the inflated grading scale. She said that regardless of how many students are determined to be honored as "valedictorians" the first student who does not meet the threshold will be upset. Therefore, more discussion needs to happen about the elimination of the valedictorians and salutatorians.

Mr. Cameron said that in his seven-plus years on the Board of Education, more constructive input has been received about the grading scale changes than any other issue. He said that the valedictorian and salutatorian elimination should be phased in so that students working toward that will not be harmed. The valedictorian and salutatorian should be eliminated eventually in favor of Magna Cum Laude and Cum Laude. He said he is opposed to eliminating the A+ grade but wants to eliminate the weighting of the A+ grade. Mr. Cameron said that the ACT and SAT scores and the rigor of the courses taken are the most meaningful pieces of student information for colleges. He said that nobody has successfully argued against eliminating the extra weight of the A+ grade. The consensus of the committee continues to be having the A+ grade. Mr. Andersson said that the teachers can adapt how they issue those grades.

President McLeod said grades do not always reflect learning. The grade inflation does not benefit students. The strength of their schedule, then GPA, then extracurricular activity participation, then standardized grades are what colleges look for as students apply. She said keeping a weighted A+ when those are being phased out is a disservice to Grandview Heights students. Keeping a non-weighted A+ grade will continue to be an incentive

for students. She said that the matter should be considered more frequently. Ms. Lithgow added that the school profile will note any difference in grading scale for communication to colleges. Mr. Cameron said that the most important schools to which Grandview compares itself (Bexley, Worthington, Upper Arlington and New Albany-Plain) all have the A+ grade without any additional weight. President McLeod said this policy change appeared on the agenda one month and was considered for action by the Board the following month in customary fashion. Dr. Heydinger said that a C- grade still determines academic eligibility for extracurricular activity participation. Additionally, the GPA of 3.5 continues to be the minimum for honor roll. Ms. Lithgow said that the unweighted A+ grade would still be communicated to colleges and that numeric grades still appear on grade cards.

MOTION 06-100: Mr. Cameron moved to reinstate the A+ grade without any extra weight.

Mrs. Keller seconded the motion.

On roll call, the members voted as follows: Cameron, yes; Heydinger, yes; Keller, yes; Lithgow, yes; McLeod, yes. 5 yes.

The president declared the motion carried.

MOTION 06-101: Dr. Heydinger moved to reinstate the valedictorian and salutatorian for the 06-07, 07-08 and 08-09 school years while having Magna Cum Laude and Cum Laude as recommended with the valedictorian and salutatorian to speak at the graduation ceremony.

Ms. Lithgow seconded the motion.

On roll call, the members voted as follows: Heydinger, yes; Keller, yes; Lithgow, yes; McLeod, yes; Cameron, yes. 5 yes.

The president declared the motion carried.

Mrs. McLeod noted that Magna Cum Laude represents a GPA of 4.0 and that 3.5 to 3.999 is the GPA for Cum Laude as recommended. Ms. Lithgow said it is more fair to use GPA instead of a percentage to determine Magna Cum Laude and Cum Laude. Dr. Heydinger said that the Cum Laude threshold is 3.5 GPA. President McLeod noted that Dr. Heydinger pointed out in his addendum item to the agenda some other matters that should be considered but not necessarily tonight.

MOTION 06-102: Dr. Heydinger moved to have the minimum GPA of 3.5 as the designation for honor roll.

Mr. Cameron seconded the motion.

On roll call, the members voted as follows: Keller, yes; Lithgow, yes; McLeod, yes; Cameron, yes; Heydinger, yes. 5 yes.

The president declared the motion carried.

Grandview Heights Turf Project Fund-raising (IV-A-1): The superintendent recommended the approval of the turf fund-raising project. Donna Chambers described the fund-raising activities for the installation of artificial turf at Anderson Field. President McLeod said that the School District reserves the right to refuse any sponsor. Additionally, she said that no sponsor may be permitted that would compete with Pepsi products since the District has an exclusive pouring contract with them.

MOTION 06-103: Ms. Lithgow moved to approve the Grandview Heights Turf Project Fund-raising Committee's proposal as it is contained as an addendum item to these Minutes with the restrictions noted above by President McLeod. Mrs. Keller seconded the motion.

On roll call, the members voted as follows: Lithgow, yes; McLeod, yes; Cameron, yes; Heydinger, yes; Keller, yes. 5 yes.
The president declared the motion carried.

Touchdown Club Parking Passes (IV-A-2): The superintendent recommended the approval of the Touchdown Club parking pass sale. President McLeod said that representatives from the State Auditor's Office have requested that the Board of Education give official approval of such fund-raising projects. She noted that the authority given tonight is for this football season only.

MOTION 06-104: Ms. Lithgow moved to approve the following resolution:

WHEREAS the Board of Education recognizes the support of the Touchdown Club for students in the Grandview Heights School District; and

WHEREAS the Board of Education acknowledges the generous contributions made by the Touchdown Club to benefit the School District's extracurricular activities;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Education continues to authorize the sales of stadium parking passes as a fund-raising activity by the Touchdown Club for the 2006 football season during home games.

Dr. Heydinger seconded the motion.

On roll call, the members voted as follows: McLeod, yes; Cameron, yes; Heydinger, yes; Keller, yes; Lithgow, yes. 5 yes.
The president declared the motion carried.

Personnel (IV-B): The superintendent recommended the approval of four items of personnel.

MOTION 06-105: Ms. Lithgow moved to approve the following items of personnel:

1. Resignation: Approve the resignation for the 2006-07 school year of Leslie Ziss as .50 FTE permanent substitute.
2. Tutor Contract: Employ Leslie Ziss as a tutor for the 2006-07 school year, 3 hours per day, Class IV, Step 6, effective August 23, 2006.
3. Classified Employees: Employ the following for the 2006-07 school year:
 - a. Christine Wakefield as a cook, 2 hours per day, Step 1, effective August 21, 2006.

Employ the following substitutes for the 2006-07 school year:

- a. Anthony Dorsey, food service substitute effective August 23, 2006
 - b. Barbara Hughes, food service substitute effective August 23, 2006
 - c. Joyce Senter, food service substitute effective August 23, 2006
4. Employ the following persons on supplemental duty contracts for the 2006-07 school year:
 - a. Mark Johnson, Newspaper Advisor HS (1st sem.) VII-1-3 \$1,039.29
 - b. Mark Johnson, Newspaper Advisor HS (2nd sem.) VII-1-3 \$1,039.29

Mr. Cameron seconded the motion.

On roll call, the members voted as follows: Cameron, yes; Heydinger, yes; Keller, yes; Lithgow, yes; McLeod, yes. 5 yes.

The president declared the motion carried.

Adjournment (V): President McLeod called for a motion to adjourn.

MOTION 06-106: Mr. Cameron moved to adjourn.

Mrs. Keller seconded the motion.

On roll call, the members voted as follows: Heydinger, yes; Keller, yes; Lithgow, yes; McLeod, yes; Cameron, yes. 5 yes.

The president declared the motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 9:17 p.m.

ATTEST: _____
President

Treasurer