

Our Mission

East Grand Rapids Public Schools, in partnership with students, parents, and community, will ensure that each student acquires the knowledge, skills, and strategies necessary to reach his or her full potential, and become a productive citizen.

REGULAR Meeting of the East Grand Rapids Board of Education

Woodcliff Center, 2915 Hall Street SE
East Grand Rapids, MI 49506. For Information -Phone 616-235-3535.

Monday, October 27, 2003

MINUTES

The REGULAR MEETING of the East Grand Rapids Public Schools Board of Education, Kent County, Michigan, was held on Monday, October 27, 2003 in the Community Board Room, Woodcliff Center, 2915 Hall St., SE, East Grand Rapids, MI 49506.

Board of Education:

Present: Mrs. Beth Lent, Mrs. Natalie Kuras, Mr. Brian Ellis, Mrs. Rosalie Stein, Mr. Charlie Denton, and Mrs. Stacy Trierweiler, Mr. Joe Camp

Administration: Dr. James Morse, Mrs. Christine Vettese, Dr. Ty Wessell, Mrs. Jeanne Glowicki, Mrs. Linda Kehm, Mr. Doug Jenkins, Mrs. Kathy Wisniewski, Mr. Pat Cwayna, Mr. Mark Tompkins, and Mrs. Julie Jewell

Meeting Called to Order

Mrs. Lent called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

Acknowledgment of Guests - None

Public Comments - None

Communications to and from the Board

A thank you card was received from Mark Tompkins (Principal of Wealthy Elementary) for the gift basket following his surgery. Also, a thank you note from Terri Criner (former secretary at Lakeside) for the book at Lakeside Library donated in memory of her sister. A thank you card was received from Chris LaMange (Teacher at Middle School) thanking the Board and Administration for the goodie basket following the birth of his daughter.

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High School Council President's Report

Ms. Steffie Kabat indicated homecoming was a success. The Seniors made several thousand dollars for graduation. Next week, Cystic Fibrosis penny wars begin. Jars will be placed in classrooms and each class will match donations. They hope to raise \$200. The Arts and Crafts show will be November 22nd. The show is always a big event and a big money maker for the student body. In December, the food drive will begin and information will be coming out about that service project.

EGREA President's Report

Mrs. Cynthia Bischoff commented about how positive the Diversity breakfast was and how she heard many comments about the helpful discussions. Seven people visited Wealthy from Wayne Westland Schools to look at differentiation and how child study helps keep Special Education numbers down.

Recognition of the East Grand Rapids Commended Students in the 2004 Merit Scholarship Competition

Dr. Morse introduced Glenn Mitcham, Senior Class Counselor. Mr. Mitcham stated these students represent the student leaders, captains, and leaders in the school. These students have scored in the 96th percentile or higher on the PSAT test

Dr. Morse and Mr. Ellis congratulated and presented Certificates of Recognition to: Ms. Holly A. Benedict, Ms. Katharine Christensen, Mr. Brian D. Flynn, Ms. Alice F. Gallmeyer, Ms. Kathleen M. Hooks, Mr. Adam M. Kirk, Mr. Matthew A. Kruer, Mr. Andrew J. Martin, Mr. Andrew M. Schad, Ms. Irene E. Setchfield, and Mr. Michael D. Vranian.

Recognition of Award to URS for the Jimmy Gerken Plaza

Mr. Derks, Assistant Superintendent for Business, introduced Mark Wrona of URS, who gave an overview of the award. He stated that this was the most gratifying project he has ever worked on and he is sorry it is over. The award is from the Michigan Chapter of the Society of Landscape Architects. There were 45 submittals with only 6 projects chosen to receive an award. He shared some of the very positive comments from the judges. Dr. Morse, Mr. Derks, and Mr. Camp accepted the award on behalf of the District. Certificates were also presented to Mr. Jim Schwass and Mr. Bill Schoonveld from OAK as well as to Norm Katerberg and Jason Flier both from Katerberg VerHage. Mr. Wrona also presented to the District the presentation board, which was submitted for the judging. This will be framed and displayed along with the certificate

Discussion Items:

Child Care Program Update

Mr. Derks introduced Mrs. Julie Jewell, Child Care Supervisor, and thanked her for her work. Mrs. Jewell passed out written reports and went over the statistics comparing last year from this year. There are 157 children enrolled in the childcare program this year

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compared to 139 last year. This year they have increased the program with less staffing due to budget reductions. Bright Beginnings, a birth through 5-year-old program funded by the KISD in Kent County, also meets two days per month in the Child Care Center space. Mr. Ellis commented that this is a great service to offer to the community and commended the Administration for starting the program and Mrs. Jewell for all of her work. Mrs. Stein says she hears rave reviews from co-workers and asked if we have ever thought about a 3-year-old program? Mrs. Jewell explained that 3 year olds need more care than the older children but in the future we could look at the feasibility of offering a 3-year-old program. Mr. Denton asked if transportation has been an issue this year with only one bus. Mrs. Jewell responded that it has not.

MEAP Scores - Mrs. Christine Vettese, Mr. Doug Jenkins, Mrs. Kathy Wisniewski (Enclosure #10)

Mrs. Vettese and Mr. Jenkins presented a power point presentation on the MEAP scores. The MEAP scores this year were a team effort with Mrs. Vettese; Mr. Jenkins and Mrs. Wisniewski. Dr. Morse thanked Mrs. Vettese for her positive reaction in handling MEAP data with the loss of Mrs. Elliott, due to budget cuts. The presentation provided an overview of the scores. Some of the tests were moved from one grade level to another so this is the first time we are getting scores in those grades. There is a website from the State for parents to access to check scores. It is called Michigan School Info Online for parents. East Grand Rapids scores tend to be highest in the state. Part of the presentation focused on the ten things we are doing right: 1. Strong building leadership. 2. Content experts in all buildings and at all levels (teachers). 3. Identify, plan and bolster students needing extra support. 4. Student achievement owned by teachers. 5. Assessments embedded in curriculum and daily work. 6. Intentional adjustments to curriculum. 7. Strong reading spillover. 8. KISD gap analysis building teams. 9. Parent communications and support. 10. Instruction office decoding the constant blitz of state and national mandates. The committee recognizes that now is not the time to sit on our laurels, now is the time to "Zoom" in by: 1. Energizing writing. 2. Promoting data sophistication. 3. Supporting building MEAP plans. 4. Activating the MEAP administrative team, Doug Jenkins, Kathy Wisniewski and Christine Vettese. The MEAP has been moved back to Department of Education from the Treasury Department. Mr. Ellis remarked that we have a great learning culture. We will have challenges with budget cuts. We need to keep what we have and keep going.

First Reading of Policy #8320 (Electronic Communication Devices) and Policy #5250 (Employee Use of Electronic Communication Devices) - (Enclosure #11)

Mr. Ellis reviewed the change in the law regarding communications policy. East is one of few districts to already have a policy. Policy #8320 - Mrs. Stein wondered about the wording, use of may or will, wanting to keep consistent with how other policies read. Mrs. Kuras suggested changing the title to "Student Use of Electronic Communication Devices" since policy #5250 specifically is geared toward employees. This policy will go before the Lead Team for another review of the language and be brought back to the Board in November. There was a concern of how employees will be informed of policy # 5250.

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Dr. Morse shared that Administrators will share the policy at staff meetings. Mr. Ellis stated the committee has started work on Policy #9250 - Use of District Facilities. The committee hopes to bring this to the November meeting for the first reading.

Action Items - Consent Agenda:

Approval of Minutes of REGULAR MEETING of 9/22/03 (Enclosure #12)

Mr. Denton moved to approve the minutes of the Regular meeting of 9/22/03 and Mrs. Kuras seconded the motion. The motion passed 7-0.

Approval of Payment of Bills for September 2003 (Enclosure #13)

Mr. Denton moved to approve the payment of bills for September 2003 and Mrs. Kuras seconded the motion. The motion passed 7-0.

Other Action Items:

Approval of Middle School Athletic Policy and Fees (Enclosure #14)

Dr. Wessell and Mrs. PK Mason gave a power point presentation of the committee recommendations. They introduced some of the members of the committee and shared the philosophy of no-cuts and the other items of the policy. It was felt that the fall tennis team should only be charged \$50 due to no transportation being provided for the 2003-04 school year. Mrs. Stein noted that the fees are for this year only. Club sports are now called non-funded sports.

Mr. Camp moved and Mrs. Trierweiler seconded the motion to approve the recommendations presented by the Middle School Advisory Committee and the fees of \$75.00 per sport with a family maximum of \$225.00 as recommended by the Board Finance Committee and Administration. Tennis fees for this year only will be \$50 due to no transportation. The policy is retroactive to the beginning of the 2003-04 school year. The motion passed 7-0.

Approval of a Resolution for a Food Service Co-op (Enclosure #15)

Mr. Derks explained to the Board the proposal to start a Food Service Co-op, with 70 school districts to be involved. Chartwells, our Food Service management company, will head the co-op and we will be the front district to fill out the necessary paperwork, etc. The State will not allow Chartwells to do this. It has to be a school district. There will not be much additional work for us. Mr. Derks is asking the Board to authorize him to proceed and he will bring back the formal documentation, which is being drafted by Thrun, Maatsch and Nordberg (Gordon Van Wieren), who also drafted language for the Great Lakes Co-op. There will be no compromise on the quality of food but we will be saving dollars by being able to buy commodities at a savings.

Mrs. Stein moved to approve and Mr. Camp seconded the motion to authorize the Administration to enter into agreements to establish the East Grand Rapids Public Schools Food Cooperative Commission. The motion passed 7-0.

Administrative Reports:

Superintendent

On-Line Policy Book Update (Goal #5)

The On-Line Policy book has been implemented and is being used throughout the district. It is working very well.

Assistant Superintendent for Instruction

Strategic Plan Update - Calendar and Survey Questions (Goal #1)

Mrs. Vettese gave a review of timeline. The survey will go out November 3rd to over 200 people. Three Focus Groups are planned with the staff group and community group meeting on November 18th, and the student group meeting on November 13th. Invitations for the Focus groups should go out this week. The Planning Committee will get all of the results and will begin meeting in January. Mr. Ellis suggested trying to get some recent graduates to be a part of the Student focus group. Everyone who volunteered will be involved in one way or another.

Community Dialogue on Diversity

Mrs. Vettese passed out a handout showing results of the evaluation of the program. There is some good feedback. She is hoping to have a continuing dialogue and inviting Steve Robbins, when he is well.

Assistant Superintendent for Business

A. 2003-04 Finance Update

Our current budget is tracking very well. A further update will be given in November. Also in November the Board will need to adopt an amended budget. We do this every year. We have received our first State Aid payment, which came in at 9% when we have completed 33% of the year. The State is experiencing severe financial woes, probably the worst financial situation in over 30 years. There may be an executive order of around \$205/pupil. One-third of the total state budget deficit is in school aid. We will expect to see various solutions proposed from the state over the next 30 days. We do not want to react until we get better numbers, but there will be an impact. Why the problems at the state level? Net revenues have gone down, estimated to be flat for next year, and also Proposal A issues. Mr. Derks urges citizens to respond to the Legislative alert and let their representatives know to look at revenue at the state level. The Finance Committee and Budget Committee will have options to present to the Board when we know what the target will be.

B. West Michigan Health Insurance Pool Update (Goal #2)

Mr. Derks distributed a copy of the Grand Rapids Press article about the Insurance Pool. At this time all the documentation is at the Insurance Commissioner's Office. Mr. Derks has received positive feedback at this point. Twenty districts are committed at this time. When he is given the green light, he will bring a recommendation to the Board for Administrators and non-union support staff to be involved.

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C. Special Education Transportation Update (Goal #3)

Region I and II are working well. We have not received any calls and he credits this to Sarah Gavin being very involved and handling her position very well. Sarah is one of three directors working on this coordination. We have no hard numbers of savings yet but will have more information in two or three months. Our significant savings will show up for next year. Sarah is working out of the KISD and East now only has two drivers on staff. All of the other drivers we had are employed by the KISD and are working out of there at this point. Region I and II bus services are managed by Kelly Dean and operated by KISD employees.

Late Agenda Item – Mrs. Lent presented two new resolutions from the MASB. Both of these will be voted on at the MASB Conference next week. Mrs. Lent asked the Board if they support both resolutions. The Board members agreed to support resolutions against National Athletic Tournaments and Unfunded State and National Mandates.

Board Representative Report

Diversity Report –

Mrs. Stein reported that the breakfast on Community Dialogue was very successful. Thanks to Mrs. Glowicki and Mrs. Vettese for their leadership and work.

Legislative Committee –

Mr. Denton stated that the Legislative Committee is focusing on budget constraints, No Child Left Behind and Special Education. The committee will come out with some suggestions for community and parents to contact legislators. There is a link on the EGRPS website in the PTA section.

Adjournment

Mrs. Lent adjourned the meeting at 9:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rosalie R. Stein
Board Secretary