

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 Community Board Room, Woodcliff Center,
2915 Hall SE, East Grand Rapids, MI 49506
Phone 616-235-3535.

Monday, April 26, 2004

MINUTES

The REGULAR MEETING of the East Grand Rapids Public Schools Board of Education, Kent County, Michigan, was held at 7:30 p.m. on Monday, April 26, 2004 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, Mr. Charlie Denton, and Mrs. Stacy Trierweiler

Absent: Mrs. Rosalie Stein, Mr. Joe Camp

Administration: Dr. James Morse, Mrs. Christine Vettese, Mr. Doug Derks, Dr. Ty Wessell, Mrs. Jeanne Glowicki, Mrs. Linda Kehm, Mr. Doug Jenkins, Mr. Pat Cwayna, and Mrs. Jann Van Airsdale

Meeting Called to Order

Mrs. Lent called the meeting to order at 7:32 p.m. She announced an adjustment to the agenda, item #20 is being postponed pending further study and there is also an addendum to the agenda, item #15A. As Secretary Mrs. Stein was absent this evening, Mrs. Lent appointed Mrs. Kuras as Secretary-Pro Tem.

Acknowledgment of Guests - There were no guests to acknowledge.

Public Comments - This item is moved into the Information Items section.

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Recognition of Mr. Mark Pullen and Lakeside Students for National First Place Award in MathFax Competition "This is what EGR schools are all about, the children", Dr. Morse said. Mr. Pullen gave an explanation of what the kids did to win this competition. Dr. Morse, Mrs. Lent and Mrs. Trierweiler presented certificates to the following team members: Mr. Mark Pullen, Advisor; Ms. Ann Kuske, Assistant Advisor; Ms. Kristen Sytsma, Assistant Advisor; Sam Alkema; Anna Bair; Brandon Belke; Cormac Bevins; Drew Bremer; Stephen Collins; Megan DeBruyn; Mary Kate Davis; Maggie Doele; Yiqing Dong; Lindsey Elkins; Natalie Ellis; Sam Forstner; Lauren Gallagher; Connor Genter; Troy Gotch; Lizzie Gray; Cailin Harro; Mackie House; Charlie Kaser; Charlotte King; Isabelle Kriekaard; John Kruer; Laura Kruer; Douglas Kubiak; Alexandra Kuske; Jennifer Lewis; Taylor Mead; Nick Moaier; Kiellie O'Mara; Carl Powsner; Miles Roberts; Karl Schneider; Peter Stewart; Taylor Sytsma; Spencer Telford; Scott Vogel; Margaret Wharton-Bickley; Will Yardley; Kelly Zanot; Elliott Zimmerman; and Kokie Zimmermann. Mr. Pullen gave trophies to the top 12 in the Lakeside group: 11th place (tie) Charlotte King and Yiqing Dong; 10th - Miles Roberts; 9th - Catlin Harro; 8th - Natalie Ellis; 7th - Megan DeBruyn; 6th - Connor Genter; 5th - Douglas Kubiak; 4th - Taylor Sytsma; 3rd - Taylor Mead; 2nd - Spencer Telford; and 1st - Karl Schneider who also placed first in their division and placed 2nd in the nation.

Recognition of:

A. Teacher Appreciation Week - May 3-9, 2004 - Dr. Morse

B. Parent and Volunteer Appreciation Week - May 10-15, 2004 - Dr. Morse

Mrs. Kuras moved to approve the motion to recognize our teachers and also our parents and volunteers in our schools and to thank them for their support and work with our children. Mrs. Trierweiler seconded the motion. Dr. Morse and Board members thanked Cynthia Bischoff and the teachers for their dedication and student achievement. They also thanked parents and volunteers for their support of the schools and the children. The motion passed 5-0.

Acceptance of Grants from the East Grand Rapids Schools Foundation

At the March 24, 2004, East Grand Rapids Schools Foundation meeting, the Foundation board awarded the spring grants. Mr. Jeff Schad gave a brief report on a grant award given last fall and a brief overview of the spring requests. Grants were awarded to mainly core academics this time around. (Enclosure #6)

Mr. Denton moved and Mrs. Kuras seconded the motion to accept the grants awarded by the East Grand Rapids Schools Foundation as listed in Enclosure #6 and to thank the Foundation for its generous support of East Grand Rapids Schools. The motion passed 5-0.

Communications to and from the Board

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Thank you cards were received from: Melissa Sayre (Breton Downs 1st Grade Teacher) and family for the book in the library in memory of her brother-in-law; Cari Begin (Middle School Science Teacher) for the book in the library in memory of her grandfather; and Susan O'Connor (Lakeside Kindergarten Teacher) for the book in the library in memory of her brother-in-law.

Item #20 - Approval of Bleacher Bids for Memorial Field was postponed pending further study.

The following additions to your calendars were noted: May 11th Community Budget Forum beginning at 5:30 p.m. to be held in the High School Little Auditorium and on May 13th the Save Our Schools Forum sponsored by the Kent Intermediate Superintendents' Grassroots - Legislative Committee. This forum will be held in the East Grand Rapids High School Performing Arts Center beginning at 7:00 p.m.

High School Student Council President's Report - Ms. Steffie Kabat

No report this month. Ms. Kabat is playing in a soccer game in Lowell.

EGREA President's Report - Mrs. Cynthia Bischoff

Mrs. Bischoff thanked Mrs. Christine Vettese for the work on the science curriculum. The curriculum looks very good for next year. She thanked the Foundation for awarding grants. The Association is watching negotiations in other districts as our negotiations are coming up quickly.

Information Items:

Presentation of the East Grand Rapids High School Annual Guidance Report - Mr. Larry Fisher

Dr. Morse stated that Larry Fisher has done an outstanding job this past year in the Guidance Department. He thanked him for his work with the students. Mr. Fisher stated that the annual report is now on-line. They have printed very few paper copies. Mr. Fisher reviewed the report. Board members gave positive comments about the report, the Guidance Department and staff. Mr. Cwayna commented positively on the report and the school system in general. He mentioned that the Tradition of Excellence continues and is embedded in this community, the staff and the students.

Public Comments - Bill Lewis - 1063 San Lucia Drive SE - Commented about the Recreation Millage and budget issues including the cost of health insurance.

Update on 2004-05 General Fund Budget - Mr. Derks and Dr. Morse

Mr. Derks thanked the Budget Committee for their work. He reviewed the presentation and mentioned that it will be on website. Some of the information was taken from the

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Citizens Research Council website (www:crcmich.org). Dr. Morse stated his main goal is to maintain top academic programs, but he cannot guarantee to the Board this will happen with the under funding by the State. He feels this will be a serious situation for the next few years, not only for us but also for districts all over the state. Mr. Denton asked what employees would be eligible for the insurance through Western Michigan Health Insurance Pool (WMHIP)? At the onset it would be administrators and nonunion staff. Of the proposed cuts Mr. Denton is concerned with Schedule B cuts and would like to see a list of suggestions. He stated that some of the proposed cuts are contrary to our Strategic Plan - Foreign language, decreased classes, and elementary reading support. Mr. Derks said at the next meeting he would show what cuts the Budget Committee looked at and considered but did not make. Mrs. Trierweiler said she feels uncomfortable with cutting reading support and that fees are getting more and more expensive. Mr. Ellis feels we are on the cusp with our programs and questioned if we will stay at the top or allow erosion to happen? Mrs. Kuras feels the numbers are not getting any better. She thanked the Budget Committee for putting some additional custodial help back into the budget. Mrs. Lent stated it is discouraging, especially since we are no longer streamlining but now are forced to cut items, which will affect daily learning. We may need to re-examine our priorities but we must remain child focused.

Action Items - Consent Agenda:

Approval of Minutes of REGULAR MEETING of 3/29/04 (Enclosure #12)

Mrs. Trierweiler moved to approve the minutes of the Regular meeting of March 29, 2004 with the noted correction to the Assistant Superintendent for Instruction report and Mrs. Kuras seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0.

Approval of Payment of Bills for March 2004 (Enclosure #13)

Mrs. Trierweiler moved to approve the payment of bills for February 2004 and Mrs. Kuras seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0.

Approval of Resolution to Appoint Election Inspectors for the Annual School Election

Mrs. Trierweiler moved to approve the appointment of the Election Inspectors listed in Enclosure #14 for the June 14, 2004 Annual School Election and Mrs. Kuras seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0.

Approval of Medical Leave of Absence - Mr. Matthew W. Marlow

Mrs. Trierweiler moved to approve the recommendation to grant a medical leave of absence beginning May 7, 2004 through the end of the 2003-04 school year as requested by Mr. Matthew W. Marlow and Mrs. Kuras seconded the motion. The motion passed 5-0.

Approval of a Medical Leave of Absence – Mrs. Mary Ann Conklin

Mrs. Trierweiler moved to approve the recommendation to grant a medical leave of absence beginning April 26, 2004 through May 21, 2004 as requested by Mrs. Mary Ann Conklin and Mrs. Kuras seconded the motion. The motion passed 5-0.

Other Action Items:

Approval of the Strategic Plan for 2004-2008

Following the work of student, staff, and community focus groups, surveys of staff and community, and the concentrated efforts of a 30-member Strategic Planning committee, a 2004-2008 Strategic Plan is being brought forth. This document will provide a blue print for the success of the district over the next four years. Mrs. Vettese and Mr. Jenkins reviewed the plan.

Mr. Denton moved and Mrs. Trierweiler seconded the motion to approve the Strategic Plan for 2004-2008. The motion passed 5-0.

Approval of an Early Retirement Program

The Teachers' association has requested a retirement incentive this year. The Finance Committee and Administration are recommending a retirement incentive for the 2003-04 school year. (Enclosure #17)

Mrs. Kuras moved and Mr. Ellis seconded the motion to approve the Retirement Program as presented in Enclosure #17 upon the recommendation of the Superintendent. The motion passed 5-0.

Approval of the Resolution to Set Matters to Be Voted On in the Annual School Election (including Recreation Millage)

The administration requests approval by the Board of Education to set the matters to be voted on in the Annual School Election on Monday, June 14, 2004 (Enclosure #18) Mrs. Lent read statements from absentee members: Trustee Joe Camp and Secretary, Rosalie Stein. Both indicate in their statements they are in favor of a Recreation Millage. The items on the agenda for the election are: two Board seats open and a Recreation Millage. Discussion from the Board.

The Board discussed the addition of .45 mills as option for a second ballot. No action was taken.

Mr. Ellis moved and Mrs. Trierweiler seconded the motion to set the matters to be voted on in the Annual School election on June 14, 2004 as listed in Enclosure #18, with

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addition of Enclosure "C", ballot language for 1.4 mill Recreation Millage. The motion passed 5-0.

Approval of KISD Special Education Itinerant Staff Plan

Over the last several months a Special Education Itinerant Committee has developed a program making our Special Education Itinerant staff dual employees with KISD. By entering into this agreement, we will be partnering with KISD for this service and receiving additional reimbursement for services from the State. (Enclosure #19)

Mrs. Trierweiler moved and Mrs. Kuras seconded the motion to approve a resolution to authorize the President and Secretary of the Board of Education to execute on behalf of the Board of Education the Special Education Services Agreement with the Kent ISD to obtain special education programs and services, such Agreement to be effective July 1, 2004. The motion passed 5-0.

Appoint a Board Member to Represent East Grand Rapids Public Schools at the Kent Intermediate School District Budget Review Meeting

Each year, the KISD holds a Budget Review Meeting and each district within the Kent ISD sends a representative to vote on the budget for the next school year.

Mrs. Kuras moved and Mr. Denton seconded the motion to appoint a Mr. Brian Ellis, Treasurer, to represent East Grand Rapids Public Schools at the Budget Review Meeting on Wednesday, May 5, 2004 at 7:00 p.m. The motion passed 5-0.

Administrative Reports:

Superintendent - No additional report at this time.

Assistant Superintendent for Business

Nomination forms for the Support Staff Employee of the Year were handed out to Board members. The deadline is May 21st and the employee will be recognized at the August staff meeting.

Assistant Superintendent for Instruction

A reminder to get tickets for the musical at the high school, 42nd Street. Tickets are going fast.

Tomorrow is the grand finale meeting of differentiation.

A. Middle School Health Curriculum

Mrs. Vettese reviewed the contents of Attachment 24A. Many thanks to our teachers for this new plan which will provide a stronger curriculum.

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B. Schools of Choice Update

With the deadline to accept applications for Schools of Choice being May 7th we currently have over 100 applications. At the high school we have 36 applications for 3 openings and at the middle school 30 applications for 9 openings. We have the highest number of applications for grades 6 and 9. We have received 11 applications for the 16 openings in 1st grade. All of these application numbers will increase before the due date of May 7.

Board Representative Report - No reports at this time.

Adjournment

Mrs. Lent adjourned the meeting at 10:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Natalie Kuras, Secretary Pro Tem
East Grand Rapids Board of Education

* Minutes for this meeting will be available in the Superintendent's Office at 2915 Hall Street SE, East Grand Rapids, MI 49506.

** If you plan to attend and have a special need and require accommodation to attend this meeting, please contact Dr. James Morse, Superintendent, at 235-3535.

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