

Our Mission

*Educating and inspiring each student
to navigate successfully in a global community.*

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, May 17, 2004

7:30 p.m.

MINUTES

The REGULAR MEETING of the East Grand Rapids Public Schools Board of Education, Kent County, Michigan, was held on Monday, May 17, 2004 in the Community Board Room, Woodcliff Center, 2915 Hall Street SE, East Grand Rapids, MI 49506.

Board of Education:

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

Absent: Mrs. Rosalie Stein

Administration: Dr. James Morse, Mrs. Christine Vettese, Mr. Doug Derks, Mr. Doug Jenkins, Mrs. Kathy Wisneiwski, Mrs. Joann Kuklewski, Mr. Mr. Mark Tompkins, Mrs. Linda Kehm, and Mr. Pat Cwayna

Meeting Called to Order

Mrs. Lent called the meeting to order at 7:31 p.m.

Recognition of:

East Grand Rapids High School students and their advisor, Ms. Janice Rocque, in the national competition of *We The People* for their outstanding performance – Dr. Morse, Mr. Denton, and Mrs. Lent

Mrs. Rocque gave a brief overview and power point presentation of the *We The People* team and concept.

EGR High School students won the State of Michigan competition in January and represented Michigan at the national competition in Washington, D.C. in the national *We The People* Competition finishing in the top ten in the nation. Actual placement of the East Grand Rapids High School team was 5th in the nation. The following were given certificates:

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Janice Rocque, Head Coach; Mary E. Blauw; Caitlin Carmody; Kaitlyn Day; Agot Aleer Deng; Kaaren Fehsenfeld; Brian Flynn; Kathleen Hooks; Christopher Khorey; Christopher Knape; Sarah Lent; Elizabeth Mann; Andrew Martin; Patricia Mears; Teresa Monticello; Derek Nelson; Leyton Nelson; Catherine Pease; Page Redford; Drew Russell; Molly Ryan; Irene Setchfield; Nicole Sherwood; Ari Siegel; Mia Siegrist; Karl Stark; Rebekah Stevens; Benjamin Tompkins; Michael Vranian; and Katherine Wiseman.

East Grand Rapids High School – East Vision – Hall of Fame Award from MIPA (Michigan Interscholastic Press Association) – Dr. Morse and Mrs. Kuras

The *East Vision* was given a Hall of Fame award from the Michigan Interscholastic Press Association. This is a result of high quality *East Vision* productions over the past 10 years.

Mrs. Mervene gave overview of how award was won. Actually entries had to win nine out of ten years. A plaque, from the Michigan Interscholastic Press Association, was presented to Mr. Cwayna by the following students: Chris Khorey; Kaitlyn Day; Ben Tompkins; Kevin Anderson; Kart Stark; and Katie Harger. Mr. Cwayna stated he is proud of the student newspaper, the students involved in this activity and Mrs. Mervene.

Middle School Art Student – Alanna Timmer – Dr. Morse, Mr. Camp and Mrs. Gersch

EGR Middle School student, Alanna Timmer won the American Vision Award from the Scholastic Art and Writing Awards. She utilized both digital photography and printmaking to create her piece titled, "*Portraits of Me*".

Mrs. Kuklewski introduced Mrs. Gersch and spoke highly of the art program at the Middle School. Mrs. Gersch explained that Ms. Timmer went through local, regional and finally national competition. Only two hundred out of thousands of entries received any award and even fewer attained the award that Ms. Timmer received.

Acknowledgment of Guests – None

Public Comments

Mr. Bill Lewis – 1063 Lucia Drive SE – First, he shared concerns about paint peeling at Lakeside Elementary School. Secondly, he commented about budget issues. He realizes there are no easy decisions. He feels co-curricular activities are essential core parts of education. He recommend to the Board to cut a "little out of a lot". He urged that the Board not cut programs. He suggests the Board do what it takes to get health costs down. He believes East Grand Rapids will not go in the same direction as Kentwood.

Dr. Morse responded that Lakeside is on the list to be painted this summer.

Communications to and from the Board

Mrs. Lent stated that there is an addendum to the Agenda, item #16A Student Discipline. As Mrs. Stein is out of town, Mrs. Lent appointed Mrs. Kuras as Secretary Pro-Tem.

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Mrs. Kuras reported that a thank you card was received from Joyce Duncan for the gift basket following her recent surgery.

EGREA President's Report - Mrs. Cynthia Bischoff

Mrs. Bischoff stated it is fun to see the student's, as they get older. Watching the students receive certificates this evening she was remembering them when they were her students. The teachers are wrapping up in classrooms as school winds down.

Dr. Morse thanked Mrs. Bischoff for her work on retirement

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

Ms. Kabat is at a soccer game. Mr. Cwayna introduced the President for next year, Tom Bander. Mr. Cwayna stated that Mr. Bander is an exceptional young man, who has had a perfect score on the SAT test. Mr. Bander reported that there was a clean up day last Saturday at the high school and it went very well. He went on to say that the seniors are preparing for graduation.

Information Items

Budget Issues

Following input from the community forum on May 11, 2004, the Board will discuss:

Forum Summary - Mrs. Lent

Review of forum from last week. Mrs. Lent summarized what was looked at and discussed at the forum.

Further Information on the Proposed Budget Reductions - Mr. Derks

Mr. Derks presented information on Schedule B recommendations. Information will be on website tomorrow for community review. There are two types of Schedule B - athletic and non-athletic. The High School Schedule B reduction last year was \$5,816. The proposed list for Schedule B reductions at the High School total approximately \$24,000. All of the items listed happen after the school day. The Middle School proposed list totals approximately \$6,502. Board Questions: Mrs. Kuras asked for clarification of the \$30,445. Mr. Derks stated this is the total of the second column. He also clarified that the proposed \$30 fee would not cover cuts from the current year but only proposed cuts for next year. Mrs. Kuras thanked Mr. Cwayna for bringing many of these programs into the High School. She went on to say she feels these co-curricular programs are extensions of our academic program and that they are essential programs. She also mentioned that these activities were an important part of the Strategic Plan. She asked if the fee would guarantee protection of these activities? Mr. Derks answered he would have to look into it. Public schools cannot charge fees for programs but are able to assess fees for after-school voluntary activities. Mrs. Lent expressed thanks to the Booster and Club groups for stepping up this year to keep

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various programs going. The Board will discuss bringing back programs listed in both columns if the Recreation millage passes on June 14th. This discussion will take place at the meeting next Monday.

Mr. Derks reviewed the athletic portion of Schedule B reductions. A few suggestions from the Budget Committee were: higher pay-to-play fees; reserved seating at Memorial Field; advertising opportunities for vendors; and reducing or eliminating sports. Mr. Camp expressed his thanks to the Budget Committee for making the hard choices and thinking outside the box. Our community must preserve the academic programs, but if the millage does not pass then Schedule B items must go. Mr. Cwayna suggested the Board consider what has been eliminated and make sure the message is made to voters on what stays and what goes from Schedule B. Mrs. Kuras would like all four of the above options looked at, she stated our primary purpose is academics. Mrs. Trierweiler questioned if we can change to club status on more things? Dr. Derks responded that it is an option, but it depends on number of students involved in each particular activity. There is a fee charged for non-club sports and there is no fee if it is a club sport. Mr. Denton stated that the PTA's, Booster groups and teachers have all stepped up when there are tough times, but reminded everyone that we cannot count on this always happening. He feels we need to look at Schedule B in order of priorities. Mr. Ellis mentioned that we are facing this issue later than other schools due to the generosity of our Booster groups. He feels we are now at a crossroads and need our community to support the millage. The Booster groups cannot make up what the Recreation millage would provide.

Mr. Derks discussed an e-mail he received from Tom White (MSBO) regarding the revenue consensus in Lansing tomorrow. The state is now \$30-\$60 million short in the current year, which if taken out of our current year foundation grant would be approximately \$30/pupil. The state may begin next year with a shortfall. The feeling is we are not out of the woods with our Foundation Grant of \$6,700 for next year. We This community has a great opportunity for local control in the form of the Recreation millage on June 14th.

First Reading of Revised Policies - Mr. Brian Ellis

The Policy Committee is recommending a first reading of revised policy #7648 with a review of the changes to Rules and Regulations of Policy #8055-R.

Policy #7648 - Dual Enrollment - Mr. Denton questioned the dual credit, does it have to be only Michigan post-secondary, what about Stanford, Northwestern courses? Will this be allowed? After discussion by the Board it was decided to change both the policy and the rules and regulations to read: "By an accredited post-secondary institution". The policy will be revised to reflect this change. Mr. Denton, also wanting to be proactive and taking into account that the State may change its testing from what we have now, suggested that the rules (#4) of this policy change to read "state approved assessment programs" rather than "MEAP subject area testing".

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Policy #8055-R - A change was made in the number of school days (from 5 to 30) a student could request a grade change and the wording "receiving the report card" was changed to read "grade being issued by the school".

First reading and review, no Board action needed.

Action Items - Consent Agenda:

Background: In order to save time during the meeting, we are using a Consent Agenda. Items in the Consent Agenda include those that are considered routine or have been previously discussed by the Board of Education. Any Board Member may request to have any item removed for a separate discussion and vote.

Recommendation: Motion to approve items in the Consent Agenda Numbers 10 through 14.

Approval of Minutes of REGULAR MEETING of 4/26/04 (Enclosure #10)

Mr. Camp moved to approve the minutes of the Regular meeting of April 26, 2004 and Mrs. Trierweiler seconded the motion. Motion passed 6-0.

Approval of Minutes of SPECIAL MEETING of 5/11/04 (Enclosure #11)

Mr. Camp moved to approve the minutes of the Special meeting of May 11, 2004 and Mrs. Trierweiler seconded the motion. Motion passed 6-0

Approval of Payment of Bills for April 2004 (Enclosure #12)

Mr. Camp moved to approve the payment of bills for April 2004 and Mrs. Trierweiler seconded the motion. Motion passed 6-0.

Approval of a Foreign Exchange Student from Brazil (Enclosure #13)

Mr. Camp moved to approve the recommendation by the administration that Ms. Andrea Korytnicki from Brazil be enrolled at East Grand Rapids High School for the 2004-05 school year, and Mrs. Trierweiler seconded the motion. Motion passed 6-0.

Approval of Breton Downs Student Trip (Enclosure #14)

Mr. Camp moved and Mrs. Trierweiler seconded the motion to approve the Mackinac Island trip as outlined on Enclosure #14 as recommended by the Superintendent. Motion passed 6-0.

Other Action Items:

Approval of Resignations for Retirement Purposes

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The Board of Education approved an Early Retirement Incentive at the April 28th Board meeting. Since the deadline to receive resignation letters is May 14, 2004, the enclosure will be provided at the Board meeting on Monday (5/17/04) evening.

Dr. Morse reported that he had received 6 letters of resignation. Therefore, the early retirement incentive would be offered at 40%. He thanked them for their years of service and mentioned that now the district is able to layoff fewer teachers for next year.

Mr. Ellis moved to approve teachers eligible for the Early Retirement Incentive and to thank them for their service and dedication to the students in East Grand Rapids, and Mrs. Kuras seconded the motion. Motion passed 6-0

Approval of Acceptance of Gift for EGR High School Football Team (Enclosure #16)

Mr. Peter Stuursma was given a donation of 130 jerseys and 75 game pants from Adidas and David Howitt of Betlin Quality Athletic Uniforms. The total value of this gift is \$12,600.00.

Mrs. Kuras moved to accept the gift of jerseys and game pants, with a value of \$12,600.00, from Adidas and David Howitt of Betlin Quality Athletic Uniforms, and Mrs. Trierweiler seconded the motion. Motion passed 6-0. Mr. Camp asked if there were any strings attached to this donation. Mr. Cwayna stated there was not and that there is a local connection to the donor. Usually the team boosters pay for uniforms so this is money saved for them. Dr. Morse will send a thank you letter to the donor and he also expressed his thanks to Peter Stuursma for making this happen.

Dr. Morse stated he just got word that there is a bill in the House now that would allow the sale of property that the school owns. If this is the case, EGRPS owns property in Oceana County property, which we may want to look at to sell.

Student Discipline

Dr. Morse explained that the High School is recommending expulsion for two students. Brian Proctor's parents waived their right for a hearing and are accepting an expulsion. Clint Tompkins and his parents are scheduled to meet with the Board on Tuesday, May 18th at 5:30 p.m. Mr. Denton moved and Mrs. Trierweiler seconded the motion to expel Brian Proctor student for the remainder of the 2003-04 school year upon the recommendation of the Superintendent. If Brian completes his academic credits at another accredited institution, he may receive his diploma by August 2004 or no later than August of 2005. Motion passed 6-0.

Administrative Reports

Superintendent

High School Graduation - May 27, 2004

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High School graduation will be on Thursday, May 27th. This is the largest senior class since the 1970's with approximately 262 students. Weather permitting, the ceremony will be held at Memorial Field. Dr. Morse stated that it might be struggle to get the ceremony finished, as is our goal, in an hour with this large of a class.

Dr. Morse reported that the "Save Our Schools" forum was excellent and that it had good attendance. He said that the presentation was outstanding and very informative. All panelists agreed that there is a need to tweak Proposal A to provide funding for Public Schools.

Assistant Superintendent for Business - No Report

Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum

Update on Schools of Choice for 2003-04

Mrs. Vettese indicated that this year, as in years past, there was a high interest by families wanting to get students into East Grand Rapids Public Schools. We had a total of 148 applicants. The High School was the most sought after, with 49 applicants for 3 positions. There was an emphasis on bringing families into district. We accepted 11 siblings of current choice program students, 29 choice students and we also accepted 14 siblings of the 29 choice students. The administration is recommending 54 total students. The breakdown shows that only 15 of the students are coming from public schools, all the others are from parochial and private schools. Mrs. Kuras had a question about the numbers. The numbers provided in the attached sheet are correct. Mr. Derks indicated that revenue wise these numbers will bring in \$362,000 total. Mr. Ellis mentioned that we might, in future years, want to look at 9th grade to bring in more at that grade level. Dr. Morse mentioned that in June we might take in some additional students through Section 6.

MEAP Scores (Enclosure #19B)

Mrs. Vettese and Mr. Jenkins provided a review of the MEAP scores. From the comparative analysis with the state, East Grand Rapids students are consistently ahead of the state. One special recognition needs to be made and that is that Lakeside Elementary attained a perfect score in science for the second year in a row. Following guidelines for No Child Left Behind, we are sold in math and reading. Mrs. Vettese reminded the Board that we do not teach to test but we teach to learning. Our new Strategic Plan has the district looking at our assessment program in the next four years. This is especially important with the state requiring more testing and No Child Left Behind requirements. Applause to East Grand Rapids Public Schools teachers, students, administrators and the Board for the MEAP scores. Mr. Ellis wanted to see the data of the KISD with East Grand Rapids Public Schools removed to see how this comes out. Mr. Jenkins indicated that that information in not being provided anymore. Mrs. Kuras thanked Mr. Jenkins, Mrs. Vettese and the Instruction Office staff for all of their hard work.

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Board Representative Report

Mr. Ellis represented East Grand Rapids Public Schools at the KISD for their budget discussion. The ISD passed out sheets showing what they provide to each school district. Copies will be passed out to all Board members.

Adjournment

Mrs. Lent had to leave the meeting unexpectedly. Mrs. Kuras, acting as President Pro Tem, adjourned the meeting at 9:24 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.

Superintendent's Office - 5/21/04