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At its April 25th and May 9th meetings, the Board of Education (BOE) conducted an informational, first read of potential changes to BOE Policy 5111 entitled “Enrollment.” These changes, if adopted, would allow some non-resident staff members to enroll their children in the Grosse Pointe Public School System (GPPSS) under certain restrictions. The BOE has scheduled a vote on this policy change at its May 23rd meeting. The BOE Policy Committee and school administration have developed the following Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document to ensure that all community members have access to factual information regarding this potential policy change. To assist with readability the question is provided in bold with the response in regular text. All answers below are provided assuming that the currently proposed changes are adopted without amendment.

1. How can I access the actual proposed policy so that I can read it myself?

The proposed revised policy is available by clicking on the following link. The proposed changes are contained in paragraph E under “Residency,” at pages 2-3.

[Proposed Revised Board Policy 5111](#)

2. Which staff members would be able to bring their children to GPPSS schools?

Any current staff member who works at least half-time would be permitted to enroll a child or children in GPPSS.

3. Would the district extend this option to contractors (such as substitute teachers)?

No. Only direct employees who currently work at least half-time would be able to potentially take advantage of this policy change. Contractors such as noon aides, substitutes and coaches would not be permitted to participate in this program.

4. Would students enrolled under the policy be able to continue to attend GPPSS if their parent either left employment in GPPSS or fell below half-time employment status?

If the parent’s employment terminated or fell below half-time prior to the Fall student count date, the parent’s child’s enrollment would terminate. If either of these events occurs after the Fall count date, the student could continue to complete the school year in GPPSS as long as the parent pays the per diem tuition rate.

5. How would students enrolled under the policy be placed in specific grades and buildings?

Administration would assign students to particular buildings using staffing levels as the primary consideration. Administration would first complete in-district student transfers (as identified elsewhere in

Board Policy 5111). Following the completion of these transfers administration would place students of staff members. At no time would a staff member's child be given preference in terms of student placement over a resident student.

6. What if no openings existed in a building or in the district to enroll a staff member's child?

If no opening exists in the district at the grade level of a staff member's child, that child would not be permitted to enroll in GPPSS at that time. If a staff member prefers a building that has no openings at the applicable grade level, administration would assign the child to a building that has openings at that grade level.

7. Is this a version of Schools of Choice?

No – this has nothing to do with Schools of Choice. Schools of Choice is established in the Michigan Compiled Laws (MCL) 388.1705 and .1705c. The BOE has unanimously and regularly indicated its opposition to GPPSS ever using this statute to enroll students as Schools of Choice students. Enrollment of staff members is not covered by the Schools of Choice provisions.

8. What law governs staff members enrolling their children?

A completely different statute, MCL 388.1606(6)(j), provides districts the option to permit enrollment of children of staff members. There is no connection between this statute and Schools of Choice.

9. Do other peer districts provide this option to their employees?

Yes. The district conducted a survey of our peer districts in the tri-county area. This information was shared with the full BOE and can be viewed at the last page of the following link:

[Proposed Revised Board Policy 5111](#)

Note that all of the district's tri-county peer districts have provided this option to their employees for quite some time. Providing this option has not led to Schools of Choice being adopted in these districts. (Note that Troy School District participates in Schools of Choice at the kindergarten level and for the International Academy.)

10. Would the District place any academic or behavioral requirements on these new students?

Yes. Per the draft policy change incoming students would need to have a 2.0 GPA. Additionally, they could not have a suspension of greater than 5 days or an expulsion at their previous school. Finally, they must have demonstrated acceptable attendance at their previous school.

11. Do other reasons exist that would allow GPPSS to not permit the enrollment of a staff member's child?

Yes. A child would not be permitted to enroll if that enrollment would require the district to incur additional staffing costs.

12. Does adding another student to GPPSS increase district costs?

Generally, no. The marginal cost of adding one student in a class that is under capacity in GPPSS is \$0. For example, if a 3rd grade classroom only has 20 students enrolled the incremental cost (teacher salary, custodial salary, etc.) of adding the 21st student is \$0 since the BOE has established a target enrollment of

27 students in 3rd grade. On the other hand, if a staff member's child were the 28th child in the third grade, thus requiring an additional third grade classroom, the child would not be permitted to enroll.

13. It sounds like determining openings across the district could be confusing. Can administration handle this work?

Yes. Per current BOE Policy 5111 administration already completes this calculation for each classroom and grade level across the district on an annual basis. This calculation is already completed annually to satisfy the in-district student transfer process identified in this policy. This process has been reviewed by the BOE Policy Committee in past years to its satisfaction.

14. Concerns have been raised about the transparency and speed at which this change has been contemplated. Please explain the process and timeline.

As Dr. Niehaus has shared, this issue was raised as a result of an employee survey conducted during the summer of 2015. Following some general conversation at the public BOE meeting on April 18th the BOE Policy Committee considered possible changes to BOE Policy 5111 at its previously scheduled April 20th meeting. The committee was able to efficiently draft this policy since the district had previously developed a draft policy that was considered, but not enacted in 2006. The committee used the 2006 draft as a basis for the recommended policy. This policy was publically discussed at BOE meetings within the past month on April 25th and May 9th. Additionally, it was again reviewed and slightly revised at the BOE Policy Committee's public meeting on May 3rd. Typically BOE policies are only publically discussed once prior to the BOE taking formal action. This policy has been discussed at regularly scheduled BOE meetings on two occasions before May 23.

15. Would the district receive funding for students that enroll in the district under this policy?

Yes. The district would receive the state foundation allowance for each child that enrolls in the district under this policy. This amount differs per child, but is typically about \$7,900 per child.

16. Would the district receive additional Hold Harmless funds for children enrolled under this program?

No. As a Hold Harmless district GPPSS is one of twenty-nine school districts that do not receive 31-A At-Risk funding. The district does not receive 31-A funding for any children, either resident or non-resident, within the district.

17. Would the district receive additional Sinking Funds for students enrolled under this program?

Sinking funds are not received by the district on a per-student basis. Money from the Sinking Fund is provided to the district as a function of property values across the district. Enrollment has no impact on the Sinking Fund.

18. Why would the BOE consider making this policy change?

The members of the BOE Policy Committee have publically stated that they see this as a potential benefit to the district's employees. Additionally, the district would see an increase in revenue due to this policy change because of the state per pupil foundation allowance.

19. How many students would be enrolled under this program?

This is dependent on the number of open slots as described above as well as staff interest. The District estimates that between 30 – 50 additional students may enroll under this program.

20. It seems unfair that only non-resident employees would receive a benefit under this program. Is it illegal for the district to offer this option to only some employees?

This matter has been reviewed by the District's legal counsel and has been identified as compliant with all applicable laws. It is specifically authorized by the Michigan statute identified above. Additionally, as noted above, this opportunity is in place in all GPPSS peer districts (and many non-peer districts as well) and has not encountered any legal challenges.

21. It still seems unfair that only some employees can participate in this program. Is it unfair?

No. Many employee benefits are only available to some employees, or are beneficial to some employees more than others. For example, single employees can take advantage only of single person health care coverage, while equivalent employees with families can obtain full family insurance that costs more than twice as much. Other employees whose spouses have better or less expensive benefits do not take advantage of benefits offered by the district. The fact that, because of their individual circumstances, not all employees can take advantage of all benefits the district offers does not make the offer of those benefits unfair. Additionally, all employees will benefit from the additional district revenue available under this program.

22. Would this policy change impact the percentage of staff that lives in the district?

A remarkably high percentage (65%) of current staff members lives within the GPPSS boundaries. The district believes this change to Board Policy 5111 will not negatively impact that percentage. In fact, the district believes once employees realize the difference in amenities our community offers our students, they will move their families here to engage even more fully in the Grosse Pointe Public School System community.

23. How would this revised policy impact teacher and employee recruitment and retention?

This policy change would be an additional recruiting tool to attract talented teachers to the district. As teacher and employee compensation has decreased in GPPSS over the past several years building a competitive compensation package has become a greater priority. As an addition to the district's benefit package this will better position the district to recruit and retain talent in the competitive environment in which the district operates.

24. Is this proposal a topic that either must be or should be collectively bargained with the district's unions?

There is no legal requirement to bargain this with unions within the district. Currently, the decision to either participate or not participate in a process that would allow staff member's children to attend the district is a management decision. Placing it within the realm of collective bargaining would in fact erode the district's prerogative by not allowing the district to engage or remove this benefit as the district sees fit.

25. Will residents of GPPSS see an increase in their taxes under this program?

No. The decision to either pursue or not pursue this program will not impact any of the tax rates that residents pay.

26. Is it possible that this program could be more popular with staff than the estimate of 30-50 students per year? If so, how would the district control this program to ensure that it does not become a financial liability to the district?

As noted in question #13 above the district currently has experience and a process regarding placing students in schools other than their assigned home school. In the event more staff wishes to participate than there are open slots for students these staff members would not be allowed to bring their students to GPPSS. Openings for in-district transfers as well as openings for students under this potential program are determined annually by administration in such a way that additional staff will not be needed.

27. In question #9 above it is noted that all of GPPSS's peer districts have this type of program as a benefit for their employees. Did any of these peer districts share any concerns/negatives with GPPSS regarding this program?

None of the GPPSS peer districts noted any concerns or had any negatives to share regarding their program to allow staff members to enroll their children in their district. In fact, each of them expressed surprise that GPPSS did not already offer this program,

28. In question #21 above it is stated that, 'all employees will benefit from revenue under this program.' Please provide a more detailed explanation of this statement,

All employees as well as all residents of this district benefit whenever additional revenue is brought into GPPSS. Benefits include greater job stability and increased certainty regarding the future of programs and facilities. Additionally, in GPPSS all employees have an indexed salary structure that is tied to the overall financial health of GPPSS. Anytime the financial health of GPPSS improves employees are faced with a decreased likelihood of further compensation reductions.

29. In question #22 it is stated that it is a benefit to GPPSS when staff members live in the district. Could you expand on that statement?

Everyone in the community benefits when staff members live in GPPSS. Residents benefit whenever anyone moves in to the district through increasing property values. Finally, staff members who are both employees as well as residents are more fully engaged in the community.