

GROSSE POINTE CIVIC NEWS

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF CITIZENS ASSOCIATION
OF GROSSE POINTE TOWNSHIP

VOL. 1

JUNE, 1924

NUMBER 12

Important Notice

The Annual School Election will be held, Monday, July 14.

The Annual Meeting of the School Board will be held in the evening immediately following the election.

BUREAU'S LETTER TO ASSOCIATION

Detroit, Michigan,
June 10, 1924.

The Citizens' Association of
Grosse Pointe Township,
Grosse Pointe, Mich.

Gentlemen:

The Detroit Bureau of Governmental Research has completed its study of the Rural Agricultural School District No. 1 of Wayne County and encloses herewith the report covering this, prepared by Mr. Solon E. Rose.

The study deals with the political and administrative organization and management almost exclusively. No attempt is made to evaluate the curriculum or estimate the building needs.

It is believed that if the recommendations contained herein are carried out, most of the causes for the justifiable criticism now current, will be done away with. Until such time as the administrative organization is placed on a sound basis, there is little reason to expect any material improvement in either the business or the functional efficiency of the school district.

The Bureau desires to thank the officers of the School Board and various citizens of Grosse Pointe for their assistance.

Respectfully yours,

L. D. UPSON, Director.

Detroit Bureau of Governmental
Research.

RURAL AGRICULTURAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 1 WAYNE COUNTY

Grosse Pointe Public Schools

A Study of the Administrative Organization and Management.

Introduction

The district was consolidated under the Rural Agricultural School Act in 1920. Prior to this, several independent elementary school districts existed. At present kindergarten and elementary schools and a high school (except the 12th grade which will be established in the next session) are operated.

The school census of 1922 gave a school population of 2086. At present the school membership is about 1400. The school population is distributed about 60 per cent to public schools, 20 per cent to parochial schools, 10 per cent to private schools, and 10 per cent not in school. Note: the school census includes ages in addition to those covered by the compulsory school law.

The percentage of public school children to school census is increasing and may be expected to approach the Detroit figure of 74 per cent.

The district is undergoing a fairly rapid and constant growth. The educational requirements are rising, not only to keep abreast of the public demand, the advances in the science of teaching and subjects added to the curriculum, but also to give a full high school course to those desiring it.

The problem of administration has changed from one concerned only with a group of neighborhood elementary schools to one demanding a complete system of school instruction from kindergarten through high school and comparable in quality at least with that of Detroit. The problem in other words is becoming increasingly complex and it is essential that vision, planning and business ability of a high order be used in order that the problem be adequately met and the inter-

ests and money of the public be fully protected.

The school district now operates 5 elementary schools and a high school—Vernier, Kerby, Hanstein (\$115,000 addition now being built) Cadieux and Trombley. A new school is under construction to replace Trombley. In addition, two elementary school sites have been selected. One is on the north side of Essex, between King and Queen Streets. This site is within the one-half mile square of two Detroit elementary schools, Ives and Guyton, the other is on the north side of Kercheval, between Cadieux and Notre Dame. Also a high school site on the north side of Grosse Pointe Boulevard, between Fisher and Kercheval. This latter school is planned to be a combination intermediate and high school eventually, to care for 7th to 12th grades. The policy of the School Board and Superintendent is to follow the 6-3-3 plan when school capacity of present elementary plant is reached. This plan calls for 6 grades in elementary, 3 in intermediate, and 3 in high school.

The new High School should be built in the near future. It appears that the next session will show a high school enrollment of about 200 and for the following year about 250. The building of an administrative headquarters in conjunction with this appears needful. It is suggested that plans be drawn to allow the building of the intermediate school some time in the future when demand warrants. The securing of this selected high school site has been held up by injunction proceedings, the hearing of which is set for June 17th, 1924.

The policy of the Board in securing sites now before the territory is built up is to be commended. This policy, however, should not be al-

Grosse Pointe Civic News

Grosse Pointe, Mich.

H. P. Breitenbach, Consulting Editor.
Lincoln Maire, Editor.

Printed once a month as the official publication of the Citizens Association of Grosse Pointe Township, under the authority of the following board of directors:

H. P. Breitenbach, President.
Dr. L. E. Maire, Vice-President.
Wm. M. Mertz, Secretary.
Jos. L. Hickey, Treasurer.
Richard P. Joy Chas. Parcels
Oscar Webber.

lowed to load up the school district with too heavy a capital burden, and in no case should a purchase of site be considered warranted unless there be ample indications that a school will be needed on such site within 5 years. The sites should be used as playgrounds.

It is recommended that,

1. The policy of the School Board in securing school sites should be limited to the indicated needs of the next five years.

2. The location of a new elementary school within the one-half mile square of a Detroit elementary school should be held up until the feasibility of making a co-operative arrangement with the Detroit School authorities to care for the school needs of this section is found impracticable. There is no reason to expect any difficulties in securing such an arrangement.

3. School sites should be developed and used as community playgrounds until put to school uses, in cases where such will serve a real need.

4. The Trombly school and site should be placed on sale.

School Health Work

The Health Department of the Grosse Pointe Health District, takes care of the needs of the public school children. This work appears to be excellent both in plan and execution. However, the health district embraces only the villages while the school district includes all of Grosse Pointe and part of Gratiot Townships. This means that the health district is doing considerable work beyond its boundaries. While the work must be continued, it would appear that this anomalous situation should be corrected either by an extension of the health district to be coterminous with the school district or by some system of apportioning costs.

The cost of health work in the schools is to some extent propor-

tioned by having the Health Officer of the Health District also the Health Officer of the Township, and by the Township Poor Commission paying for special medical services of school children in townships outside of village. This of course is only a partial equalization as the township money is collected from both the villages and the outlying territory.

It is recommended,

1. That the school district pay to the Health District the cost of school health work in order to properly place the cost of this service.

The Business Administration

The organization shows a confusion of authority and responsibility.

The Superintendent, as the active manager, is responsible for the maintenance of the school plant and should have under his authority the janitors and other employed men. These are now directed by the School Board Secretary.

The school records and accounts are not kept at the school headquarters, but in the homes of the Secretary and Treasurer.

The Superintendent should have an assistant to act as aid for both administrative and other duties. This should allow the Superintendent to give the time necessary to observe, inspect, help and instruct his staff and their work and so to increase the efficiency and efficacy of the schools. At present the Superintendent is tied down to detail to too great an extent to permit him to give needed attention to supervision, inspection and building up of the school system. The qualifications of this proposed assistant should include familiarity with school accounts.

The placing of an assistant in the Superintendent's office should at the same time permit much of the work now performed by the school Secretary and Treasurer to be handled in the Superintendent's office. The provisions in the general school law (compiled laws of 1915, article 5736) specifying the duties of the Superintendent "(b) to assist the Board in all matters pertaining to the general welfare of the school and to perform such other duties as the Board may determine," clearly empowers the Board to use his services and through him the services of his clerk to carry out much of the routine detail work.

The records kept by the clerk and the treasurer in their homes (frame houses) are vulnerably exposed to fire, theft, and other hazards and they are not readily accessible either to the school officers or to the public at regular hours. All the school records should be kept in a fireproof vault near the Superintendent's office (which is located in a modern, fire resistant building).

It is recommended,

1. That the Superintendent be given complete authority over the maintenance and janitorial employes with the right to employ and discharge.

2. That the Superintendent be furnished with a clerk to handle the detail work of his office and such other work as the Board of Education may direct.

3. That all school records be kept in a suitable fireproof vault or safe and in proximity to the office of the superintendent.

Financial Reports, Public

5809 Compiled Laws — 1915. "Previous to the first Monday in August of each year, the Board of Education in each graded school district shall cause to be published in a newspaper an itemized financial statement of the receipts and expenditures of said district during the preceding school year."

This provision of the law is held to be applicable to the Grosse Pointe school district, and it is recommended that,

Full publicity be carried out for the information and protection of the public and for the protection of the officials concerned and so that they may receive due credit.

The School Budget

Compiled Laws 1915, Article 5688, Section 21—"It shall be the duty of the Director (synonymous with president by the General School Act) of each school district to present at each annual meeting an estimate of the expenses necessary to be incurred during the ensuing year by the Director as provided by law, and for the payment of the services of any district officer."

The budget has not been prepared in full heretofore. In 1923 the District School Board at the annual meeting presented a budget for \$200,000 to maintain and operate six schools in district 1 of Wayne County. The budget was approved. Following is a copy as printed for distribution by the Treasurer of the Board.

Budget for Rural Agricultural School District No. 1.	
Principals and Teachers.....	\$76,000
Janitors	9,200
General Expense	33,000
Interest	38,900
Light and Power.....	2,200
Fuel	4,100
Telephone	700
Water	600
Transportation	4,500
Tuition	4,000
Janitor Supplies	1,800
Sinking Fund	25,000
Total	\$200,000

The Board explained at the time of submitting this budget that the figure of \$200,000 was exclusive of the primary fund which according to the school census will be slightly over \$20,000. The budget for the fiscal year (1922-23) was also \$200,000 aside from the primary fund.

It is noted that no attempt is made to reconcile the previous year's expenditures with the contemplated expenditures; that no consideration is given the amount of the money on hand; that while in the "Financial Report for the Year Ending July 9th, 1923," the item "Paid for general purposes (from general fund) is \$58,475.00" the total of comparable items on this "budget" is \$89,600 with no explanation of the increase and that in general informative analyses and comparisons are lacking.

There exists every reason why the budget should be fully prepared and a complete budget procedure carried out. Only through preparing in advance and after due deliberation, a definite plan for school work for the new year, and by soliciting the advice and support of the citizens in that program, can the best results be expected. The program must be given publicity in order that the co-operative forces in the community may accept and support it. The needs of the schools, the expansion of function and plant, the salaries of teachers and current problems should be matters of interest for solution by the community as a whole, and the schools be thus identified with the community life in a way that is rightful and proper.

A budget should be a "formal statement of the financial program of a district for a fiscal period, comprising a statement of authorized municipal expenditures for that period correlated with estimated revenues for meeting them."

It is obvious that such a statement requires forethought, analysis of past expenditures and organized record keeping. The initial step is to determine the school needs and policy. From this the program is laid down and then the cost estimated. The program should be expressed in terms of activities and the units of services to be rendered, showing costs per unit of service.

A budget should consist of (1) proposed expenditures, and (2) estimated income. These must be reconciled. For expenditures to be either markedly in excess or markedly less than revenue is bad practice. The first leads to insolvency and the second to waste of community resources.

The budget should be prepared by the Superintendent, submitted to the President and subject to review by the Board. This should include separate listing of requests for all items under each division of school accounts. In submitting this budget to the Board, the President or Superintendent should explain all new or increased items. The review of the budget by the Board should include a public hearing of which the public is informed and general discussion should be permitted before the budget is passed.

Similar to the budget an annual plant inventory, building survey and building planning program should be submitted. The latter looking ahead for a period of five years.

It is recommended,

1. That the Superintendent prepare complete detailed and classified requests for the ensuing school year, together with estimated revenues, and submit this to the President.

2. That the President prepare the budget, including therein the Superintendent's estimates for the next year, and the actual expenditures for the past year, with increases or decreases indicated.

3. That the Board review the budget and have the Superintendent explain his requests.

4. That provision be made for a public hearing on the budget.

5. That the Superintendent submit an annual report, with his budget, showing plant inventory and building needs.

Accounting

Accounting records of the school district are kept. Further information as to cost of instruction in each school, cost of supplies and

equipment and cost of operation and maintenance of buildings, etc., is, however, desirable. If more detailed information were available so that standards could be established and comparisons made from year to year and with outside schools, it would doubtless result in increased efficiency and allow a ready evaluation of current business efficiency.

These records should preferably be kept by the proposed assistant to the Superintendent.

A comparison of the accounting records now in use with the "Uniform School Accounting Report" published by the National Bureau of Education, discloses a dearth of pertinent analysis and information that should prove to be of the greatest value.

It is recommended,

1. That the schools maintain complete financial records in the office of the Superintendent.

2. That a complete financial audit be made at once and submitted with the current annual report.

3. That in connection with the audit there be outlined a complete system of accounting procedure that will be informative and that this system be installed.

School Purchasing

"Purchases are made through recommendation of Superintendent when O. K.'d by Board and certified by President and Secretary, and then, by Superintendent in nearly all cases."

School Taxes

Compiled Laws 1915, Article 5676, Section 9. "The District Board shall have authority to vote such taxes as may be necessary for the regular running expenses of the school, which shall include....."

This section by the following ruling is applicable to Rural Agricultural Schools, since every point in the general law is complementary to the special legislation and is necessary to give it complete operation." (The People vs. Board of Education of Detroit, 181,408 also Burton vs. Klock, February 1915.)

This Act does not warrant the raising of taxes to create a surplus of any description other than a reasonable amount to provide for contingencies and even this might well be left to be cared for as a deficiency in the next year's budget. The law does not grant permission to raise other than "necessary" tax money

for school purposes, and the Board should limit its requests to the sums shown as necessary by the estimate of expenses.

The general fund amounted, July 9th, 1923, to \$138,245.78. This fund was in fact a surplus. Over \$20,000 was received during the year ending July 9th, 1923, from primary school fund. Substantially the same amount may be expected from this source for the current school year and the next school year. So that at the beginning of the last school year, the general fund and the primary school fund (to be received from the state) made available approximately \$158,000 to the school district for the current year's expenses. In addition \$200,000 was levied in taxes. The expenses of the year ending July 9, 1923, were \$140,922.78. If the expenses prove to be substantially the same for the current year as for the last year, there was at the beginning of the current school year a margin of about \$17,000 in the General Fund to pay all necessary expenses for the year without raising any money whatsoever by school taxes.

This margin of \$17,000 appears more than ample to care for any contemplated or actual expansion of program, etc., for the current year. However, in that the tax money to be raised does not become available until the middle of the school year, a surplus sufficient for one-half the school needs should be carried. This is estimated to be about \$80,000, less about \$20,000 to be received from the Primary School Fund, or a net of about \$60,000 is needed at the start of the fall term.

In view of the above and of the fact that the general fund has again been largely increased, *it is recommended that at the next annual meeting of the school board, the board assess no school taxes other than necessary under above considerations.*

The tax rate for Grosse Pointe schools in 1922-23 was \$3.50 per \$1,000.

In case the above recommendation is not carried out by the School Board it is believed that the assessment of taxes for school purposes can be held up by court proceedings. An injunction in restraint of such assessment might well be asked and the board required to show the necessity for collecting tax revenue in excess of needs for the next school year.

The School Board

The Board consists of five members elected at large for a term of two years, with a compensation of \$300 per year.

President, Mr. George Defer, additional salary \$300.00.

Secretary, Mr. Chas. A. Paye, salary \$2,400.000.

Treasurer, Mr. Chas. A. Poupard, salary \$1,200.00.

Members, Mr. John F. Kerby, Mr. Walter G. Merdian.

The essential ingredient in the success of any school organization is the ability and integrity of the directing personnel. It is customary for the best qualified men of the community to be drafted for such honor and service. There is no need to burden the community with the cost of making the position of School Board officers and memberships tempting from a pecuniary standpoint. There is every reason to believe that leading and well qualified citizens of Grosse Pointe are available, as there are in other communities, who would be glad to give their services to the School Board. While many families use other than public schools, this detracts only to a minor extent from the importance of, and community interest in, public education.

Board membership requirements include business ability, broad sympathy and interest in educational aims, methods and procedure. There is little or no connection between political qualifications and school board qualifications. It has become axiomatic that schools and politics must be kept apart. The law establishes a school organization entirely divorced from all others, and shows in many detailed provisions the basic intention to keep the school organization distinct and separate from all other local governmental divisions.

This separation is complete including elections, administration and finances. In Grosse Pointe, the identification of the Board membership with the Township and Village governments by the dual holding of office, violates this principle. This principle has been embodied in many legal provisions designed to compel separation. The State of Michigan is no exception and the Rural Agricultural School Act is the only school act in which a direct prohibition of dual office holding for School Board members is not included.

Dual holding of office (with respect to School Board members) is to be especially condemned when the offices are of political divisions which are not coterminous.

The members of the School Board hold other offices as follows:

The President of the School Board is also the President of the Village of Grosse Pointe Park. (The school district comprises about five times the territory embraced in the Village).

The Secretary is also the Clerk of the Township of Grosse Pointe, and in addition is a member of the Board of Review of the Village of Grosse Pointe.

The Treasurer is also the Supervisor of the Township of Grosse Pointe, and in addition is a member of the Board of Review of the Village of Grosse Pointe.

One of the other members of the School Board is a member of the Board of Review of the Township of Grosse Pointe. (He also holds a position with the Village of Grosse Pointe Farms.)

The other member is a member of the Council of Grosse Pointe Park.

It appears inevitable that the interests of the school district should from time to time, be at variance with that of the other governmental divisions. No public official should be allowed or required to serve in any such dual capacity. An illustration of such difference in interests arising in connection with the selection of school sites and the building of new schools. The law provides that the Board shall make choice of sites. The School Board is expected to provide a balanced, impartial and economically sound school plant for the entire district while each village naturally tries to obtain the maximum of school facilities. Hence when village officials serve as Board members it is inherently to be expected that village partisanship and political expediency may enter into the selection of sites and building plans and this factor may force the decision.

Again the holding of office on Township Board and on the School Board by the same person is against the public interest in that the duties of the two are in some respects incompatible. An example of this lies in that "the Township Board is vested with the powers and duties formerly given to school inspectors." (See page 250, Township Officers' Guide). For the Town-

ship Board, acting as school inspectors, to pass on the work of certain of their own members who are on the School Board is to largely nullify the intent of this provision. Again the many specific provisions of the law relating to the duties of the Township Supervisor and the Township Clerk with relation to the school district are such as to make such dual holding of office, against the public interest.

School Board Compensation

The law does not prescribe the compensation of the Board in Rural Agricultural School Districts. The Act of 1917 did carry over the provisions of the Act for township school districts (5928-Section 20), limiting the compensation of Board members, but the Act was amended in 1921 and this provision was omitted. The amending of the Act to omit provisions of the township school Act (Sections 20 and 21), was in the nature of a legislative "joker." This matter is of special interest in that the Grosse Pointe school district is from all aspects essentially a township school district. The boundaries, while not coterminous with the township are practically the same, inasmuch as that part of the school district outside the township is relatively small both in area and population. The population of the district is almost wholly urban and suburban.

The salaries paid the members of the local School Board and the additional compensation paid the officers is believed to be unique. The State law for Rural Agricultural Schools does not either permit or forbid this, but the law for township school districts does specify for comparable service for Township School Districts a maximum of \$125 for Secretary, \$100 for Treasurer, and \$2.00 per meeting for members. The purpose of this compensation is of course not so much to pay for the services rendered but rather to recompense the Board members for expenses incidental to their service.

The compensation now paid the local School Board represents a compromise. An attempt was made to secure a salary of \$1,000 per annum per member, but this was prevented by concerted citizen action in public meeting. There is no assurance that such an attempt will not be repeated.

"Rural Agricultural" School District

It is an obvious misnomer to call this school district "Rural Agricultural" as it is neither rural nor agricultural.

There are no attempts made to conform to many of the provisions of the Rural Agricultural School Act. "They shall . . . have suitable equipment for the teaching of agriculture . . ." Agriculture is not taught. The school lands are not cultivated. No live stock is kept. Other provisions and intents of the law are ignored. No State aid is secured. Apparently there are but two features of this act which are made use of in the Rural Agricultural School District No. 1, (Grosse Pointe School District). These are, it appears, to permit (by not expressly forbidding) (1) township officers to serve on the School Board, and (2) substantial compensation to be paid the Board members and officers. Both of these features are bad. They are inherently against the best interests of the School District.

The absurdity of keeping the Grosse Pointe Schools under the Rural Agricultural School classification and Act is manifest and may be embarrassing in future dealings with the State.

It is strongly recommended that at the next election in the School District, every effort be made to secure by ballot a change in the classification of the Rural Agricultural District No. 1 to "Grosse Pointe Township School District."

If this change be accomplished it will automatically cause the elimination of dual office holding as between the Township and School Board. It will reduce the salaries of Board members and officers to nominal sums, and it should aid in placing the records and accounts under the Superintendent, (where they properly belong), in that the Secretary and Treasurer could not be expected to do the detailed work they now do for \$100 a year. Also, it will be an advantage in that in general, the State Law for Township School Districts is more suitable and provides more safeguards than the Law for Rural School Districts.

It is recommended:

1. That the school district classification be changed to that of a township school district.

2. That the "dual holding of office" be abolished, not only as between the township and the school district but also as between the villages and the school district.

3. That more public interest be aroused in school matters.

ASSOCIATION MEETING.

On Monday evening, June 16, the Citizens Association held its annual meeting and election of directors at the Cadieux School.

The minutes of the first meeting held a year ago at the time of the organization of the Association were read and a report on the progress of the year rendered by the secretary. The financial report as audited by the public accountants, Ernst and Ernst, was submitted by the treasurer.

In the election of officers, Charles Parcels, whose one year term expired was elected for a two year term to succeed Oscar Webber. Mrs. H. H. Sanger and Raymond Dykema were also appointed members of the board.

At a subsequent meeting of the new board of directors held at the Board of Commerce Building, June 24, the same officers for the past year were reappointed for the ensuing year, namely: H. P. Breitenbach, President; Dr. L. E. Maire, Vice-President; Wm. M. Mertz, Secretary; and Jos. L. Hickey, Treasurer.

It was the expressed desire of the members present at the June 16th meeting that the Association endeavor to investigate the situation brought about by the large increase in the tax assessments made by the State Tax Commission.

It was also the expressed wish of the meeting that a committee be appointed to study the registration list of our school district for the purpose of instructing school electors.

Committees for these investigations have been appointed by the President of the Association.

SCHOOL REGISTRATION.

The board of education has caused to be published a notice that they will meet to hold registration for all those who are not now registered as school electors, in the school district, No. 1 Township of Grosse Pointe, on Saturday, July 12, from 8 A. M. to 8 P. M., at the following places:

Precinct No. 1.—Town Hall, Corner of Roosevelt Place and Maumee Avenue, in the Village of Grosse Pointe.

Precinct No. 2.—Municipal Hall, corner of Jefferson and Maryland Avenues, in the Village of Grosse Pointe Park.

Precinct No. 3.—Municipal Hall on the Kirby Road in the Village of Grosse Pointe Farms.

Precinct No. 4.—Municipal Building, at the corner of Lake Shore Road and the Vernier Road, in the Village of Grosse Pointe Shores.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

The following questions have been asked of the Civic News. The answers were obtained from the Secretary of our School Board:

1. What are the qualifications of a school elector?

A citizen of the United States of voting age, having resided in the district three months or more, who is paying taxes or is a parent or guardian of a child of school age.

2. What are the qualifications of a candidate for the School Board?

A candidate must be a qualified elector paying taxes.

3. When must a candidate file his intentions?

At least ten days before the election.

4. Is there a school registration in our district?

The township records have been used for this purpose. There has never been a separate school registration list.

5. When can an elector register?

July 12 from 8 A. M. to 8 P. M. in his respective precinct which is the place of his customary voting.

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CITIZENS ASSOCIATION

GROSSE POINTE, MICH.

"Governmental research applies citizen interest for effective and economical government 365 days in a year instead of only on election day."

—The Citizen and the Government.

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