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Baldwin-Whitehall PTAs push for change in grading scale

By AL LOWE
For The Corridor

Baldwin-Whitehall Council of PTAs is circulating a petition asking the school board to require the middle school and high school to use a grading scale similar to other South Hills school districts.

According to B-W's current grading scale, 93 to 100 percent equates to an A, 83 to 92 a B, 70 to 82 a C, and 60 to 69 a D. The 10-point grading scale that the PTA prefers would stipulate 90 to 100 as an A, 80 to 89 as a B, 70 to 79 as a C, and 60 to 69 as a D.

The PTA's campaign sustained a setback, however, when an informal grading committee made up of teachers, administrators and PTA members recommended sticking to the current scale.

"We're disappointed but we're not down and out yet," PTA member Nancy Crowder said after the school board's post-agenda meeting on March 19, when Assistant Superintendent of Secondary Education John Wilkinson announced the com-

mittee's decision.

Wilkinson said he abstained from the vote, which favored keeping the current scale, 28-6.

The PTA believes adopting the 10-point system would boost self-esteem and lead to more scholarships and college acceptances. The group explains its position on its *bwpta.com* Web site.

Proponents of the current system said they contacted local colleges and found that admission officers make allowances for differing grading scales.

"What's the harm in changing it?" Crowder, a member of the grading committee, asked.

"If you help one child, it is worth it."

Crowder's group was encouraged by comments some board members made at the March 19 meeting.

"I never thought our grading scale inhibits college entry," board President Kevin Fischer said.

He said he believes there may be a difference in the awarding of more scholarships if a 10-

point scale is used, although others on the board disagreed with him.

"I'm a 90-to-100 guy," Fischer said.

Director John Egger noted that other area districts used the 10-point scale. According to PTA research, only Elizabeth Forward and South Park in the South Hills have grading scales similar to B-W's.

Board members said they wish the state Department of Education would set up a standard grading scale for all districts.

"The type of grading scale does not mean a lot in the educational system," Director George Pry said. "At the end of the day it all averages out."

Superintendent Lawrence Korchnak said his personal

experience was that teachers still give A, B, C and D students the same grades, even when the grading scale is altered.

"It's your decision that you're more comfortable with one grading scale or another one," Korchnak said.

He said he had no preference.

"I'll go with the committee," he said.