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Baldwin-Whitehall

PTAs continue to push for change in grading scale

By AL LOWE
For The Corridor

Cindy Depretis of the Baldwin-Whitehall Council of PTAs frequently attends school board meetings as an audience member and feels like she wants to scream.

She and PTA members support a 10-point grading scale for students and have obtained more than 100 signatures on a petition asking the school board to convert the system used at Harrison Middle and Baldwin High schools.

Currently, 93 to 100 percent equates to an A, 83 to 92 a B, and 70 to 82 a C. Under a 10-point grading scale, 90 to 100 would be an A, 80 to 89 a B and 70 to 69 a C. A D grade is 60 to 69 under both systems.

The board could vote to make a change at its April 15 regular meeting.

She told the board at its April 2 agenda meeting that

she feels frustrated and wants to scream because when the board considers making any academic changes the “No. 1 question” it asks is what are surrounding school districts doing? “I don’t care what subject is being discussed you ask this. It is not being brought up on this one.”

Surrounding school districts — except for South Park and Elizabeth Forward — have embraced and adopted the 10-point system. B-W PTA research showed that 30 of 43 Allegheny County districts are at a 10-point grading scale or lower. Results of their research are shown on their bwpta.com Web site.

Parents and PTA members argued their side before the board at the April 2 meeting.

An argument against making the grading change is that college admissions officers make allowances for differing grading scales.

“We feel someone is slipping through the cracks,”

said Depretis, whose husband, Baldwin Councilman David Depretis, also attends board meetings.

An informal grading committee made up of teachers, administrators and PTA members recently recommended sticking to the current system. Board members privately noted that the committee members favoring the current system have not attended board meetings to make their case.

Christina Gruber of Baldwin said her son is told in school that he does not have to be perfect but the grading scale contradicts this. “There’s too much pressure being put on children.”

Parent Skip Brown of Whitehall is a Keystone Oaks graduate who received a basketball scholarship to Davidson College. “I recently recalculated my old report cards. Under the Baldwin-Whitehall grading system, my 3.8 would have been a 3.1.”