

April 17, 2008

Baldwin-Whitehall

Directors commend students, discuss grading scale

By AL LOWE
For The Corridor

Baldwin-Whitehall school officials recognized elementary school students April 9 for their politeness and courtesy, but that did not stop board members from arguing later in the meeting.

The argument was over removing from the agenda a vote for approval of a 10-point grading scale for the district's middle and high schools a board member's insistence to vote on it anyway.

The 10-point grading scale (90 to 100 for an A, 80 to 89 for a B, etc.) was recommended by the PTA over the current scale (93 to 100 for an A, 83 to 92 for a B) in hope of increasing eligibility for college scholarship and increasing student self-esteem.

Despite this argument among directors, the start of the meeting was a model of courtesy as nine McAnnulty Elementary students were announced to be recipients of the annual Debbie Simeone Good Manners Awards. They are DaMor Alston, Daylen Alston, Russell Cyprowski, Cameron Greenaway, Maria Perallo, Joshua Robinson, John Sabo, Domenic Sciarretti and Aaron Sukitch.

Much to the surprise of superintendent Lawrence Korchnak, retired cafeteria worker Debbie Simeone took over the awards

ceremony.

"They told me when you get to be a superintendent you get to do things, but this isn't happening," he joked.

Simeone told the audience that, when she came up with the idea for the awards several years ago, it was rejected by the principals and Superintendent Donna Milanovich. So she attended a meeting, and approached the board. She got her chance to speak at 10:40 p.m. and won over the board.

Each student received a certificate, was applauded and shook hands with board members.

Korchnak also complimented the work of art students who have done well in recent competitions. "This is a magnificent school district," he said.

Under Korchnak's recommendation, the board pulled the grading scale from the agenda due to unanswered questions. The superintendent said he wants to participate in the decision.

That didn't stop Director Kevin Stiffey from motioning that the board adapt the grading scale.

"We owe it to the superintendent to give him the time he requested," Director John Schmotzer said.

Korchnak said he will reconvene the committee that is studying the matter and come back to the board with a recom-

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mendation in January.

Director Nancy Sciulli DiNardo motioned to table Stiffey's motion. Board President Kevin Fischer, DiNardo, John Schmotzer, George Pry and Ed Moeller voted to table. Stiffey, John Egger, Martin Schmotzer and Diana Kazour were opposed.

During a discussion after the vote, DiNardo commented that what Stiffey said was personal.

DiNardo said her remark was misunderstood. Fischer stopped debate on the subject.

In other business, the board agreed 6-3 to purchase an electronic date stamper at a cost not to exceed \$650. Egger, Moeller and John Schmotzer dissented.

John Schmotzer announced that participating school districts voted to choose him over Bethel Park Director Charles Koch as school board trustee

of the southeastern region for the Allegheny County Schools Health Insurance Consortium.

The board unanimously approved the boy's lacrosse team as a district-sponsored sport starting with the 2008-09 school year.

The board also asked staff to compare office rentals at the former Wallace School with the operating expenses and to report back to them.