

# Baldwin-Whitehall to gather data on proposed grading change

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For The Corridor

"Maybe, but not now," was the answer the Baldwin-Whitehall PTA received when it asked the board at its Aug. 8 agenda meeting to use a grad-

ing system similar to that used at other South Hills school districts.

Under the current system, 93 to 100 percent is an A, 83 to 92 is a B, 70 to 82 is a C, and 60 to 69 is a D. The PTA

prefers a scale used by other districts in which 90 to 100 is an A, 80 to 89 is a B, 70 to 79 is a C and 60 to 69 is a D.

PTA member Nancy Crowder requested that the board vote on it Aug. 15 and implement the new system for the 2007-08 school year. The school PTA members believe that student benefits could include self-esteem and academic scholarships.

Staff and board members said they didn't necessarily disagree with the idea but that time is needed to get input from teachers and principals.

"I'm not comfortable voting without input from educators," School Director Nancy Sciulli DiNardo said.

"It will be a little slower process. If not this year, then the next year," School Director George Pry said.

Over the summer, PTA members had polled 43 Allegheny County school districts and discovered 26 had the 10-point grading scale; they could not get data from four districts. Two South Hills districts, South Park and Elizabeth Forward, have a system similar to B-W.

They also talked with student Daniel Foyle and his father Shawn. Prior to the PTA raising the issue, Daniel had circulated a petition at the school and in the community to request changing the grading system. He said he quit because he was discouraged from petitioning by a school staff member.

Vice President Rich Caponi said there would be no vote on the matter next week.

The board, however, will vote on eliminating the valedictorian and salutatorian positions for graduation. The matter

had been studied and received much discussion at previous board meetings. The proposed change would affect the graduating class of 2010. Instead, distinguished graduates with a 4.2-grade-point average would be recognized.

The high school reform committee and administrators wanted the change to encourage students to take challenging courses instead of ignoring them in favor of concentrating just on getting high grades. "We have some great courses that kids are not taking advantage of," John Wilkinson, assistant superintendent of secondary curriculum, said.

During the time allotted to audience remarks, parent Shawn Foyle said, "You're changing things mid-stream. If I had a son that was affected, I'd want you guys' heads."