

GRADES

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“Weighted grading has been around for a long time,” Everson said.

While the system has gained support from affected students and staff at Falls High School, some students in the respective grades weren’t as thrilled.

Junior and seniors enrolled in the Post Secondary Enrollment Option Program at Rainy River Community College approached the board Monday with a request to consider weighting their grades as well.

“Classes that are being weighted follow the exact same course outline as the college classes,” said PSEOP student Madison Foss. “But the college classes are not being weighted.”

In September, FHS math teacher Timm Ringhofer told board members PSEOP grades would not be weighted under the committee’s proposal.

Along with seven of her classmates, Foss told the board they are each taking 17-18 credits at the college and found it unfair that their grades would not be weighted under the new system.

Foss said when she previously met with Superintendent Nurdy Nelson and counselor Thane Grewatz, she was told the grades at RRCC are not the high school’s to weight and administration doesn’t have control over the classes at the college. She argued

that concurrent enrollment classes, or college-level courses taught at the high school for a college credit, would include weighted grades.

“I would like to ask the board if they have any control over the classes at the high school when they are community-college approved?” Foss asked of concurrent enrollment courses. “I believe you have just as much control over what goes on in the high school classes as you do at the college if they are university approved.”

Foss said if administrators at the college approve concurrent enrollment at the high school, they approve the curriculum for that course and it should be no different than classes taken at RRCC.

Nelson, however, reiterated concurrent enrollment classes are taught at the high school and follow the high school’s grading procedures.

“(FHS administration) doesn’t interfere with (RRCC) grades,” he said.

In addition, Foss said she was told by an FHS staff member that “no other schools weight grades of PSEOP students.”

Foss said she emailed the Minnesota Department of Education and was told, “it is up to the districts to make their own policies. Not all districts choose to use weighted grades...There is no rule, however, either from the state or from the Minnesota School Board Association directing schools not to weight PSEO grades.”



STAFF PHOTO BY EMILY GEDDE

Post Secondary Enrollment Option Program student Madison Foss, center, asks the Falls School Board Monday to consider weighting the grades of Rainy River Community College students enrolled in the PSEOP in addition to Falls High School students. Foss was accompanied by seven of her classmates.

“So there is no other school that weights (grades) according to the (FHS) office people I talked to, but it is up to the district to or not to weight them,” she said.

In other business Monday, the board agreed to consider hiring a consultant to help the district set long-range goals.

Board members agreed a presentation and a quote from the consultant needs to be established before moving forward.

Jenn Windels is a member of the Blue Ribbon Panel, which is a made up of 22 community members who meet to brainstorm ideas to better the Falls school district. In August, she said the panel suggested that a professional consultant be hired to best discuss what

kind of goals need to be set for the district and how to communicate those goals with community members.

Windels presented the board Monday with a list of reasons a consultant would be beneficial to the district. The list includes:

- Strategic planning can place Independent School District No. 361 on a path towards greater success.
- To gain more ownership and investment in the district, it is worthwhile to collect input from all those invested in the success of the school – administration, teachers, support staff, students, families and community members.
- The information put forward will be streamlined to assist in creating specific short- and long-term goals

for the school district.

- A well developed strategic plan will illustrate the direction of the district to all those involved and will serve as a guide for policy making and resource allocation.
- A three- to five-year plan will guide the district leadership despite possible changes in sitting board members or changes in administrative positions.
- A plan can illustrate to families and community members that the district is making clear and positive changes which may help with student retention
- Hiring an outside consultant who is perceived as experienced and objective helps make the process appear well organized and transparent.

Board members agreed with Windels and took her suggestion of contacting a consultant based out of St. Cloud.

“If we’re going to hiring a consulting firm to work on a strategic plan, we don’t want to put it off for very long,” board member Gordy Dault said. “We need to get going.”

Board member Michelle Hebner said long-range planning has been on the board’s radar for several years. She said with changes in administration, bringing in an outside source to create a plan that could be maintained, despite staffing changes, would be a benefit to the district.

Also Monday, the board agreed to hire Kelly Blair as the head boys and girls golf coach for the 2014 golf season.

Blair is a 2012 FHS graduate and will replace Bill Mason, who resigned from the position in August. Mason held the coaching position for 18 years.

The board also agreed to hire Jay Boyle as the assistant girls basketball coach.

A recommendation to re-hire Boyle as the coach had previously been put on hold twice by the board amid concern over the situation with teachers who coach being out of the classroom too often.

Boyle, a math teacher at Falls High School, has coached all three seasons as the head football coach, assistant girls basketball coach and an assistant track and field coach.

COUNCIL

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charge different rates for different uses, and said the council has the right to charge a lower rate to users who are taxpayers.

Falls Mayor Bob Anderson questioned whether grocery stores that provide water-jug filling services are charged a higher water rate.

In addition, he said Horne is a water customer of the city.

“What he does with the water should not be any concern to us,” Anderson said.

Anderson noted that the city’s water plant was funded with tax increment financing money, which captured the increase of taxes on an expansion of the Boise paper mill in 1989-90. He noted that while the city captured the additional taxes, the Falls school district and Koochiching County did not receive the tax increase resulting from the expansion.

“It made an economic difference in the political subdivisions,” he said.

Jaksa invited Horne to attend a water-rate discussion at 9:45 a.m. Thursday when the council will meet to discuss the 2014 budget.

On the other issue, Jaksa

withdrew a motion directing Shermoen to draft an annexation petition for a portion of property east of the city known as the multimodal district.

Anderson said before moving forward with the petition, a committee made up of parties involved in the annexation has just organized and is working to identify and resolve issues involved and concerns voiced by area residents.

He suggested that the council allow the committee to consider the issues, several of which he called fair and legitimate concerns, and include resolution in the annexation petition.

Jaksa asked that she and Rognerud, as members of the city’s Land Use and Legislation Committee, be included in the annexation meetings. She suggested that the push for annexation is moving backwards as more requirements involved in the annexation of the property are considered and issues identified.

That prompted Anderson to note that city and county officials are working together, instead of against one another, on this annexation process. He wondered if the council would prefer to file suit against the county, as it

did in a previous annexation process.

Rognerud told Anderson his comment was uncalled for.

Other councilors agreed that the resolution of issues should be included in the annexation petition before it moves forward.

Shermoen said the process now in place is appropriate and more about the issues and considered resolutions would be known in November.

Anderson said he believed a number of concerns raised by area residents could be addressed “and not have folks feeling like they are being pushed.”

In other business, on a 4-1 vote, the council agreed to pay the expenses of Jaksa to attend a Minnesota Transportation Alliance meeting in St. Cloud. Anderson voted no, saying he was not sure attendance, or becoming a member, was valuable to the city.

In related business last week, the council agreed to pay expenses for Jaksa to attend the Select USA 2013 Investment Summit in Washington D.C. and the full council to attend the 2013 Coalition of Greater Minnesota Cities. Anderson voted against both motions.

HALLOWEEN HOOPLA



STAFF PHOTOS BY EMILY GEDDE

From left, Kylan Boorman, Caidence Hanson and Kyla Wood grab pumpkins from Harvey Kennedy’s trailer. Kennedy donates pumpkins every year for pumpkin math done by first graders and their families.



Macy Zika has a big smile on her face as she claims her pumpkin of choice.

RANIER

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on the project in the past, and she said the project would be the wrong business for the location.

“I think that Ranier should make a stand on it, because that could be the worst thing that ever could happen to Ranier,” she said.

The project could have

a better location than the scenic Ranier entrance, Councilor Tony Cole said.

“I think the location could be better chosen than at the entrance of Ranier,” he said.

Councilor Todd Columbe said he agreed with everyone else’s concerns, and the project would be better served at a different location.

“It’s just ridiculous, you’ve got the park service

right there, I think it could be in a better spot somewhere else in Koochiching County,” he said.

The area in discussion should be home to some type of business, Wagner said, but a project like RECAP isn’t right for the site.

“We should encourage some type of business,” he said. “But obviously we should have some say in what type of business should locate there.”

CHIROPRACTIC UP NORTH

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CHIROPRACTIC UP NORTH

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Happy 6th Birthday AVA!

We Love You So Much Peanut!
Mommy, Daddy, & Liv
(Lola & Bitty Kitty too) 🐾