

## **SUPERINTENDENT'S STATEMENT ON ARTICLE 7**

The wording in Article 7 on the Dresden School District Warrant is inaccurate in that it singles out the Hanover High School administration for actions that occurred in response to the events last June. Voters should be aware that in their work over the past eight months related to the illegal entry of the building and subsequent cheating incident, high school administrators Deb Gillespie and Ron Eberhardt took action and made decisions with my advice and consent and full support. Throughout this process we have acted in conformance with State law, school board policy, the rules set forth in the Hanover High Student Handbook, and the past practices of the high school in dealing with similar disciplinary issues. Voters should also be advised that in their investigation of cheating, the high school administration applied the same standards to all students interviewed and took disciplinary action against all students for whom there was a preponderance of evidence of cheating.

I believe our decisions and actions over the past several months underscore the district's and Hanover High School's commitment to academic honesty. I believe that our schools will be better institutions as a result.

Wayne Gersen  
Superintendent of Schools, SAU 70

## **REPORT TO THE BOARD ON THE INCIDENTS OF JUNE 2007 February 28, 2008**

Outlined below are the steps the Hanover High School administration took in response to the reported intrusion into the high school last June and the investigation into cheating that resulted from that incident.

### *Intrusion into Building*

The Hanover High School administration contacted the Hanover Police several times last spring, beginning with a report involving a vandalism incident in late May. The police investigated the vandalism. Several days later the administration reported to the police that screens were cut in an apparent effort to enter the school at the back of the building. Police investigated this incident as well. During this time period, responsible staff members reported to the administration that they could not find their keys. On a Sunday in late June, a faculty member saw students enter the building through a window. He called the police, but dismissed them when the students had a plausible reason for being in the building.

On the final day of the school year, following this sequence of events, the administration learned that a group of students had allegedly "broken into the building" to "steal final examinations". After conferring with Principal Deb Gillespie and Superintendent Wayne Gersen, Dean of Students Ron Eberhardt reported the intrusions to the police and requested that they investigate the alleged burglary in accordance with the [Memorandum of Understanding](#) between the Hanover Police and Dresden School District. This agreement, adopted as a result of the Safe Schools Zone Act was incorporated into Dresden School Board Policy [JGDA](#) in 1999. The Memorandum of Understanding requires school administrators to report burglary, which is defined as "... the unlawful

entry of a building for the purpose of committing a crime such as vandalism, theft, arson or assault”, to the police department. (For further information on this, see FAQs link)

### Investigation of Cheating

In June, 2007, the high school administration contacted the teachers whose exams had been compromised and informed HHS parents via email of the suspected cheating incident, naming the classes then known to have been affected and the teachers who taught those classes. The email asked parents or students to share any information they had about the incident.

Shortly after the email to all parents a letter from the teachers of Advanced Math and Chemistry was sent to the parents of all students in those classes (roughly 100 students) explaining how grading would be done for those courses as a result of reported cheating. The letter asked anyone with information to share it with the school.

When school opened at the end of August, the high school administration spoke with the entire student body on opening day and asked anyone who had information regarding the compromised examinations to share it with them in confidence. A copy of Ms. Gillespie’s remarks was sent home to parents via email.

A few weeks later, the high school administration met with the senior class to explain the steps they had taken regarding the intrusion into the school and regarding the cheating that had taken place. The seniors were again asked to share any information they had with the administration.

In September, when the administration learned the Valley News had secured a copy of the police investigation report of the alleged break-in, they contacted parents of all 48 students whose names were in the report. Many parents replied to that contact, but no additional information was forthcoming. The high school administration interviewed all of the students and some of the parents of students who were named in the police report. Some students admitted involvement and those students received the consequences for cheating in accordance with the student handbook.

In late October 2007 the high school administration received a list of 27 names of students who were alleged to have cheated in June 2007, most of who were included in the police report. The high school administration interviewed all of the students on this list and contacted all of the parents of students who were named on the list. Students admitted involvement and those students received the consequences for cheating in accordance with the student handbook.

The high school administration applied the same standards to all students interviewed and took disciplinary action in accordance with the student handbook against all students for whom there was a preponderance of evidence of cheating.

Deb Gillespie,  
High School Principal