



Grand Island Central School District

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Board of Education Recap: Student Leaders Highlight School-Year Start and Board Reviews Superintendent Goals

The Grand Island Board of Education held its regular meeting on September 21, with students from across the district highlighting the start of the 2026–27 school year and board members continuing discussions about superintendent goals.

The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance led by Kaegebein Elementary School fifth graders Brooklyn Langworthy, Dawson Powell and Asher Vincent.

Students also shared updates from their schools. Veronica E. Connor Middle School student ambassadors and eighth graders Alyssa Leone and Samantha Szprowski discussed the school's WEB program, which helps welcome and connect younger students with older student leaders.

Grand Island High School student ambassador Olivia Govern provided an update on the first few weeks of the school year. She highlighted upcoming events, including the Senior Luncheon on Sept. 25 and Spirit Week next week. She also noted the strong start to the varsity football season, with the team currently 3-0.

Kaegebein students also explained two leadership opportunities at their school: the book vending machine and Safety Patrol. Reflecting on the school's focus on leadership, Dawson Powell said, "Kaegebein builds leaders and learners."

Board Business

During the business portion of the meeting, board member Jim Mulcahy raised questions about social studies curricula and why social studies syllabi are not currently posted on the district website. He also identified several books he believes English classes should cover.

Board member Mike Madigan requested copies of the district's history textbooks. The board indicated it had no objection to the request.

The board also welcomed Dan George, the district's new Assistant Superintendent for Business and Finance. During the finance portion of the meeting, Interim Business Superintendent Doug Whelan discussed new technology equipment, including Chromebooks and other IT purchases. The district also highlighted a recent donation for \$1,596.52 from Medical Health Associates of WNY, LLC for the Growing Readers program.

Superintendent Goals

A significant portion of the meeting focused on ongoing goal development for Superintendent Dr. Brian Graham.

Board President Jay Grover suggested that the board consider establishing fewer than five goals. Board members and Dr. Graham discussed several potential areas, including student achievement, attendance, BOCES participation and professional development.

Madigan suggested using state assessment results as the sole benchmark for student achievement. Dr. Graham noted that a number of students opt out of state assessments, which could affect how accurately the results represent the district's overall student population.

Grover said other data points, including i-Ready and additional measures, can provide useful information. Dr. Graham said, "Using one measure could be a challenge."

Trustee Joy LaMarca also supported looking at multiple measures.

"You have to pull from multiple areas," LaMarca said. "Some students learn differently."

Madigan also suggested including BOCES participation numbers as a superintendent goal. Dr. Graham proposed having High School Principal Hillary Kretz-Harvey present to the board about how BOCES opportunities are currently promoted to students.

Improving student attendance was another proposed goal. Madigan suggested a two-percentage-point improvement. Dr. Graham said Assistant Superintendent of Pupil Personnel Services Cheryl Cardone has year-to-year attendance data that could help establish an appropriate benchmark. The board agreed to include improved attendance as a goal area but will wait to determine a specific numerical target following Cardone's presentation.

Madigan also proposed a goal related to ensuring teachers continue to receive professional development after achieving tenure. Dr. Graham noted that professional development requirements are already addressed in the teachers' contract.

The board will review updated versions of the proposed superintendent goals and may vote on them at its next meeting.

Superintendent's Update

Dr. Graham highlighted what he described as an exciting start to the school year, including the varsity football home opener, the unveiling of the district's new Viking mascot and Spirit Week activities at the middle school.

The meeting also included a community comment regarding a potential local tax exemption for veterans who are 100% disabled and unable to work. The topic may be discussed by the board at a future meeting.