

Island principal's tenure rescinded

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In an unusual move, the Grand Island Board of Education on Monday rescinded tenure for an administrator and extended her probationary status for one year.

The vote was 5-2 to rescind the June vote approving tenure for Kerri Nowak, principal of Huth Road Elementary School, who has been with the district since August 2009.

Superintendent Robert Christmann and board President David Goris both declined to comment, citing the confidentiality of personnel matters.

Three women associated with the Huth Road PTA voiced strong support for Nowak during the public comment period.

Lisa Fabiano, Lee Cohen and Maura Rustowicz said Nowak is accessible and supportive of staff, students and parents, and they have heard no negative comments about her.

Board members Donna Tomkins and Emily Ciraolo, who voted against rescinding tenure, said they didn't see anything since the June vote that justified the action.

"[Christmann] gave her a great [job] evaluation. There's nothing in it to say that she was doing a bad job," Tomkins said.

"I could not in good conscience vote to rescind [tenure]," Ciraolo said.

After the vote, Cohen, who is chairwoman of the PTA's newsletter committee, told the board she was "disappointed" by the vote.

"Extending probation is a cop-out. ... I would think this would be demoralizing for Kerri to continue here," she said.

Nowak was principal of St. Benedict School in Eggertsville before joining the Grand Island district.

She is a former elementary school teacher in the Amherst Central School District, where she also had internships as assistant superintendent for instruction and assistant principal of Smallwood Elementary School.

In other business, the board adopted a tax rate of \$40.85 per \$1,000 of assessed valuation for the 2012-13 school year.

The rate is about \$1 higher than this year's, based on an equalization rate of 47 percent.