

**By Jan Schultz**

***The Imperial Republican***

After several months of discussion, school board members have changed policy regarding the awarding of GPA credit for high school vocal and instrumental music classes.

Music teachers Randy Hayes and Agnes Strand requested the board change school policy that awarded grade point average (GPA) credit only for one year in four of the CCS music classes—choir, show choir, band and jazz band.

The school board voted 9-0 at their Oct. 12 meeting to change the policy.

Now, students who get an “A” in band each of the four years he or she takes the class will get four years of “A” credit toward their GPA.

Previously, the student earned graduation credits each of the four years, but only received the “A” credit toward the GPA once.

The music teachers successfully convinced board members that their expectations grow with those students who take choir and band subsequent years.

They handed out information at the September meeting, reviewing their expectations as the student moves from first year of choir, to second and so on.

The teachers cited at least one case where a CCS student missed scholarship money because few of the music classes taken came with GPA credit.

On the other side, there had been concern expressed that the same class is, in effect, repeated when taken year after year.

Students in those four music classes, whether it’s their first or fourth year enrolled, meet during the same class period with the instructor.

In September, Paul Ekberg, the school’s Internet/technology consultant, asked if the board would allow a student four years of GPA credit for taking physical science as a freshman, sophomore, junior and senior. The school does not.

Bruce Vires, a former principal who now teaches math, said the policy was changed many years ago when parents complained their students were taking more rigorous courses and not in the top 10 percent of their class, while students taking more music and body conditioning classes were.

Based on last week’s discussion, it appeared the board and administration were satisfied with the teachers’ syllabuses.

Supt. Matt Fisher said the four music courses will likely now be identified on student schedules as choir I, choir II, choir III, and jazz band I, jazz band II, jazz band III, etc.

There was some slight disagreement when the policy change should start.

Supt. Fisher said it was the administration’s recommendation to start this semester, even though it is underway.

Board member Gregg Smith said he felt it should begin second semester, “so (students) know where they are at.”

He was concerned about changing the awarding/not awarding of GPA credit partway through the semester.

In the end, the board voted unanimously for the change in policy, and is effective for the first semester of the 2010-11 year.

At CCS, students can also take body conditioning and physical education classes all four years of high school. Like music had been, however, only one year of GPA credit is given.

### Other school board business

- Findings of the Americanism committee were unanimously approved, but the board spent some time discussing doing more review of the CCS textbooks from now on, rather than giving the annual report a “rubber-stamp.” Supt. Fisher said it is his duty to report to the board’s Americanism committee that the school’s textbooks are accurately reflecting American history, and he sees no issue with what is now being taught in the school. Board President Charley Colton said a few larger states, such as Texas and California, are dictating the content of history and social studies textbooks today, and that may not always reflect Nebraska “Americanism.” He didn’t believe it was at a critical stage now, but felt the committee should take a more critical look themselves at the textbooks each year. Supt. Fisher noted that teachers teach from their curriculum, not necessarily the textbook in its entirety. “Nothing says we have to teach every section of the textbook,” Fisher said.

- Three coaches were hired for the 2010-11 basketball and wrestling seasons. Matt Vlasin was re-elected head 7-8 and 9-12 wrestling coach. Rob Lueth was re-elected as the assistant 9-12 wrestling coach. Darrin Schultz was hired as freshman boys’ basketball coach. There was some discussion on need for an assistant jr. high wrestling coach. Supt. Fisher suggested waiting to see what the roster numbers look like.

- Dianne Radcliffe, a former elementary math teacher now retired, was appointed to serve on the Chase County Education Foundation. She replaces Rhonda Hill.

- First quarter parent/teacher conferences were held Oct. 4, several weeks earlier than in the past. Elementary Principal Nathan Vitosh said conferences were moved up this year due to some feedback from parents. If the conferences aren’t until later in the quarter, he noted, it may be too late to make adjustments to affect the first quarter grades if students are having problems. Supt. Fisher said it is a trend for schools to be hosting the conferences earlier. Fifty-five percent of K-6 parents and 40% for grades 7-12 participated.

- Activities Director Marc Mroczek said he is implementing an injury management plan for all team sports and school organizations that, in part, identifies which coach/sponsor is responsible for contacting parents in event of an injury, who goes with the student to the hospital, etc. All coaches/sponsors are also being required by his office to carry an emergency medical authorization form from each athlete or club member with them to out-of-town events. All coaches have completed a first aid class with School Nurse Angie Paisley, he added.

- The school’s website may get the assistance of a professional web designer. Supt. Fisher said they are looking at options to have it professionally maintained, but still have students involved, as well. CCS has a high school web design class taught by Nicole Long now, but each year with a new group of students, it takes some time to get them up-to-speed, Supt. Fisher said. Board members have expressed concern in the past about lack of up-to-date information on the school website, but several said at last week’s meeting they’ve seen improvement.