

District to share transportation chief with Ken-Ton

By **Laura E. Winchester**

Suburban Correspondent

Updated: April 26, 2012, 8:06 AM

The Grand Island School District will share its transportation director with the Kenmore-Town of Tonawanda school system starting in July.

Grand Island Superintendent Robert Christmann made the announcement at Monday night's School Board meeting that the salary and benefits for Jack Burns will be shared 50-50 between the two districts, saving both of them money.

John O'Connor, Ken-Ton transportation director, is retiring.

Burns, who just received an award of excellence from the Western New York Educational Service Council, has been with Grand Island for nearly 30 years. He is the most senior of Western New York school districts' transportation supervisors.

Grand Island's transportation department has about a \$2 million budget and some 80 employees who clock about 750,000 miles a year on its 68 buses. Christmann said details of the Burns' contract and work schedule are being worked out by both districts, whose boards must approve the contract.

A year ago, the Akron Central School District began sharing its transportation supervisor, John Wideman, with the Clarence Central District after the latter's transportation supervisor retired. Such collaborative arrangements are being considered by several area school districts as a way to trim costs in the face of dwindling state aid and restrictions of the state's new tax levy cap.

In other business, Christmann said there was a retirement "unaccounted for" in the proposed 2012-13 budget, so he recommended restoring the half-time senior library clerk to full-time status and adding back 10 monitor hours. Those costs are estimated at about \$60,000.

Christmann also announced that Assemblyman Sean Ryan, D-Buffalo, whose district includes Grand Island, secured a \$75,000 grant that will be used to buy more equipment for the district's Lead the Way Pre-Engineering Program.

The superintendent said he would update the board in two weeks on the district's measures to enforce the student dress code. Christmann emphasized that all adult staff need to report violations to the main office.

Board member Joan Droit suggested that students who change into more appropriate attire be required to place their inappropriate clothing into a bag kept at the main office "so they can't change back" once they leave the office.

Board member Tak Nobumoto said, "A lot of students think it's a joke. . . . We need to know how many are being reported and how many are being sent home [to change]."

Christmann also said the district needs to be careful about reporting students dressed inappropriately to their parents because "some leave their homes [dressed] as nuns and then hit the lavatory [at school] and leave as non-nuns."