

GHS dances get bumped after no-grind rule takes toll

Written by Steve Ostermann

Wednesday, 20 January 2010 18:04

Student Council ends events when policy leads to declining attendance

There won't be a Sweetheart Dance at Grafton High School next month, and there may not any more dances the rest of the school year except for prom.

Citing a dramatic drop in attendance due to students objecting to a school rule that prohibits "grinding" on the dance floor, the school's Student Council recently decided to discontinue sponsoring dances.

Council President Lucretia Limerick told the School Board last week that the rule adopted last fall by the administration wasn't well received by students.

"We only have 40 people attend the Halloween dance, and it isn't worth it if we can't get more," said Limerick, a senior who appeared before the board to give a report on council activities.

"Kids got mad and decided not to come. They said it was because they aren't allowed to grind."

Limerick said the council has traditionally sponsored dances to raise money, but declining attendance made it impossible to cover the cost of holding the events. The lack of students' interest led council members to decide it "isn't worth it to put in the time" organizing dances, she added.

Grafton High School Principal Ken McCormick confirmed that the Sweetheart Dance, a Valentine-themed event, has been cancelled and two other dances — a March event and the Spring Fling — "are both up in the air."

"I think it would be safe to say students have decided not to come because of the rule," McCormick said. "But it was something we decided to adopt after some inappropriate behavior at the homecoming dance."

McCormick said the no-grinding rule was enacted to prevent suggestive behavior between dance partners. The rule requires students to keep "a visual or basketball's distance between them" when one dancer has their back turned to the other, he said.

Complaints by chaperones and other adults attending the homecoming dance prompted the rule, which McCormick called "very appropriate."

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“We want students to hold dances, but there has to be some guidelines for behavior,” he said.

Grafton High usually has seven dances per school year, most of which are held in the cafeteria. Attendance ranges from 120 students for the Sweetheart event to as many as 250 for homecoming and Halloween, McCormick said.

Limerick said last week the council was unlikely to sponsor any dances the rest of the year unless attendance increases, but it is willing to reconsider.

The council’s decision should not affect prom, McCormick said.

“We don’t expect any problems with prom,” he said. “It’s a more formal event attended by students who really look forward to being there.”

Some students and officials have suggested that other school groups, such as Distributive Education Clubs of America (DECA) or cheerleaders, take over sponsoring dances. But McCormick said that appears unlikely.

“A lot of them are already committed to other activities,” he said. “If no one else is interested in sponsoring dances the rest of the year, they just won’t be held.”