

# Local News Election Coverage Spring 2005

March 29th - May 2nd

## WZZM 13 News

<i>Date</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Length</i>
4/18	Listed and showed picture of School board candidates, no other candidate information provided. Upcoming school board election candidate forum announced.	6:00 PM	:40
4/21	Report about candidate forum, candidates named w/ picture, no other information about candidates given.	6:00 PM	:54
4/21	School Board candidate forum report.	11:00 PM	:17
5/2	This story primarily about the millage vote in Wyoming concerning fire department services. GRPS board election mentioned but candidates not listed. Viewers directed to website for candidate information. Newsreader predicts that turnout will be low.	5:30 PM	2:41
5/2	Shorter version of story from 5:30	6:00 PM	1:40

## WOOD TV 8 News

4/21	Primarily a story about issues facing the GRPS board. Brief mention of upcoming board election. Viewers directed to website for candidate information.	11:00 PM	2:35
5/2	Brief story mentioning School board elections the next day as well as millage vote in Kalamazoo.	11:00 PM	:24

## WXMI FOX 17 News

4/29	Story about GRPS services privatization and upcoming election. Each candidate picture shown and position on privatization listed. Each of these descriptions last approximately ten seconds per candidate.	10:00 PM	2:18
5/2	Story about budget issues facing GRPS board. Brief mention at end of story about election on next day.	10:00 PM	2:40

### Ratio of crime stories to election stories:

March 29-May 2

<b>WOOD TV 8</b>	110: 1
<b>WZZM 13</b>	104:3
<b>WXMI FOX 17</b>	131:2

### Comparative Stories

March 29- May 2

<b>Terry Schiavo Case</b>	16
<b>Ted Nugent Trial</b>	17
<b>Pope</b>	80
<b>Jackson Trial</b>	28
<b>American Idol (FOX 17)</b>	18

## Summary

For the thirty days leading up to the May 3 election, the three local TV news stations broadcast only nine stories concerning the election. All nine of the stories mentioned the Grand Rapids public school board election, although often it was mentioned only in passing. Only FOX 17 provided any information about the school board candidates positions, giving about ten seconds per candidate describing their position on school privatization. None of the news stories featured the candidates speaking for themselves. Several times both WOOD and WZZM referred the viewer to their website for more information concerning the candidates. The only other election issues mentioned was a millage vote in Kalamazoo that was very briefly discussed in a WOOD 8 story and a millage vote in Wyoming was mentioned in two stories on WZZM 13. There were 174 school board elections in the West Michigan viewing area, the GRPS board was the only one reported on. There also were numerous millage issues that the local news reported on after the election, but the only millage issues reported on prior to the election were the ones in Wyoming and Kalamazoo.