



Westlake Board of Education

Board Notes from Monday, Jan. 4, 2010

SWEARING IN NEW BOARD MEMBERS: The oath of office was administered to Andrea Rocco and Nate Cross. Other Board members in attendance were Thomas Mays, Timothy Sullivan and Carol Winter.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS: Carol Winter was elected Board President for 2010. Tim Sullivan was elected Board Vice President. The Board authorized the Treasurer to file Form 904 (Certification of Members and Officers of the Board) for Nate Cross, Thomas Mays, Andrea Rocco, Timothy Sullivan and Carol Winter.

BOARD ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS: The Board adopted resolutions for a tentative Board meeting calendar for 2010 (Jan. 11, Jan. 25, Feb. 9, Feb. 22, March 8, March 22, April 12, April 26, May 10, May 24, June 28, July 12, Aug. 23, Sept. 13, Sept. 27, Oct. 11, Oct. 25, Nov. 22, Dec. 13).

Approved purchase of liability insurance for each Board member. Established a Board Service Fund for 2010. Appointed Nate Cross as OSBA legislative liaison. Appointed Tim Sullivan and Andrea Rocco to Policy Subcommittee. Appointed Carol Winter and Tom Mays to Curriculum Subcommittee. Appointed Tom Mays to Tax Incentive Review Council.

ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS: Approved bond of Board members, Superintendent and Director of Business Affairs. Purchased liability insurance for Treasurer, administrative staff, volunteers, Superintendent, teaching staff, support staff. Authorized Treasurer to secure advances. Authorized transfer of funds. Approved standing authorizations. Approved permitting board members, Superintendent and Treasurer to attend appropriate seminars and conferences. Appointed school attorneys (Ulmer & Berne, Chester L. Sumpter & Assoc. LLC, Squire Sanders & Dempsey, Kadish Hinkel & Weibel, Pepple & Waggoner, Brinda McIntyre & Seed LLP). Approved Board membership in OSBA, OSBA Legal Assistance Fund, Greater Cleveland School Boards Association, Alliance for Adequate School Funding and Westlake Chamber of Commerce. Appointed Superintendent as purchasing agent/authority. Appointed prevailing wage coordinator, asbestos coordinator, ADA compliance officer,

safety coordinator and records retention officer. Appointed Title IX hearing officer, nondiscrimination hearing officer, sexual harassment hearing officer, suspension hearing officer, expulsion hearing officer.

Reaffirmed vision statement and mission statement for Westlake City Schools. Reaffirmed Board of Education belief statements. Reaffirmed framework for Board operations. Approved 2010-2011 tax budget.

Organizational meeting adjourned.

SPECIAL MEETING

CONTINUED DISCUSSION ON MAY BOND ISSUE TO ADDRESS FACILITY NEEDS:

1. Dr. Keenan gave a brief overview on facilities. Concern on facilities presented in Aug. 2007 by BOE. Secured data that supported issues were deeper than aesthetics. 2008 Lesko study listed 168 systems failing in 10 facilities, and 156 (93%) of them documented as below adequate; 56% documented as low. Began community engagement process. Sought four professional assessments and community assessments. All recommended immediate action.
2. Bob Dykes of TRIAD Research discussed December poll of community. The results represent the sense of the community and are based on calls to 400 registered voters. Voters have very strong positive view of the quality of education (89% rated education excellent/good); 78% agree the Board/district are good financial stewards of taxpayer dollars. Voters were asked about a \$120 million or \$84 million bond issue and clearly did not support the larger issue, but may support the smaller issue. Informing voters of the need for repairs and improvements, the crowded environment, safety and quality improvements will help increase support. Voters do not have a clear understanding of the condition of the buildings or what would be done with the buildings. Cost is not the sole factor in voter decisions. People clearly saw clear deficiencies in the schools and don't want them. Ultimate recommendation is to move forward on the \$84 million proposal.
3. Board discussion:
 - a. Carol Winter said a phased approach is responsible and will address facilities and provide savings in maintenance fees. The plan addresses space and safety issues. The survey gives us ammunition to move forward. If we don't address the facilities in a responsible manner, we will have to take away from programming. This is an opportunity.
 - b. Tim Sullivan indicated he is not prepared to support a \$84 million phased bond issue. Is there a middle ground between a large investment and a permanent improvement levy? Combination of timing, scope, cost, priorities do not convince me to support placing an issue on the ballot at this time. He would address the high school, middle/intermediate schools, or the grade schools in a three-phased, \$40 million issue.

- c. Tom Mays said our mission statement dictates we provide a 21st century learning environment. Our facilities do not provide that now and we will fall behind. Through surveys, voters have indicated they will support an \$84 million bond issue. There will be debt falloff when we go for the second phase, which means three elementary schools will be built for free. Prefers a \$120 million issue, but understands and supports an \$84 million issue.
- d. Nate Cross has been involved with the focus group and 20/20 Vision Committee. We need to be unified in going to the community. He has more questions. Is there a lower cost alternative proposal? He has questions about OSFC standards and guidelines, consultant interpretation of data and their recommendation, can we do the same thing for less?
- e. Andrea Rocco asked Board members what they would cut to pay for facility maintenance issues.
- f. Dr. Keenan said he very strongly recommends following the recommendations provided from the process and the direction given from four professional groups, the OSFC, three community groups and now the community survey. He believes the process the district committed to over the past two years met its intended purpose of providing direction based on the merits of data, community, educator and professional input. In response to a request about immediate needs he deferred to Business Manager, Dave Puffer, who pointed out that it was assessed that the immediate needs to correct facility issues is \$44 million. Dr. Keenan then stated the district would be looking at just over \$3 million annually (6% of our budget) to address the bare minimum safety and envelope issues, and this would actually allow the cost gap to widen as the other needs would have to be left unattended while making cuts to district programming and transportation, something he doesn't recommend before following the advice from the process. He also noted that in two years the district will have no less than seven trailers for classrooms to account for space needs and State requirements for kindergarten. The process is based on data and facts. We worked through this process for two years. He emphasized a position on this needs facts to back up opinions, those facts have been sought and they all point to supporting the two phase proposal from the 20/20 committee.
- g. Turner Construction representative discussed OSFC standards. OSFC provides a template of a model school district. They do provide restrictions on certain things. The value of engineering is to design a school that fits Westlake. Design process will take 14-18 months.
- h. MKC said soft costs are about 15% of the square footage estimates.
- i. The Board will vote on Jan. 11 on what to place on the ballot.

RESOLUTIONS: The Board approved a resolution authorizing the Board President, Treasurer and the Superintendent to prepare and file preliminary materials in connection with applications for consent.

HEARING OF THE PUBLIC:

1. Cathy Axcell: You are to vote at all times in the best interest of the school district. You have data, professional groups and community groups telling you to go for an \$84 million ballot issue. I feel some Board members are choosing to pick at some of the data that supports your views on the economic times. It is not acceptable that the groups spent over 2 years on this process and there are still questions. There are people waiting in the wings to get it done in a grassroots approach. Please place your vote as a yes for this \$84 million bond issue so we can make a difference.
2. Christie Wiedt: I am tired of band-aids on our buildings. There are a lot of safety issues I am concerned about in our schools. I encourage you to vote yes.
3. Duane Miller: 7 years ago a Board was presented with the option to build the PAC. They were split on giving the people the vote on the PAC. The presence of those in support of the PAC was convincing enough for the Board to place the issue on the ballot. Through efforts of a lot of people, that issue was passed. It would be unconscionable not to give the people a chance to speak. You were elected by a majority, not a minority. If you know the opinions of the majority of your electors, you need to abide by that and not let your personal opinions get in the way. It rains in my classroom. Today it snowed in my classroom.
4. Laura Steinbrink: Leadership is lacking on both sides of the equation. If we are committed to a 5-0 vote, this Board needs to figure out how to get there. Create decision-making criteria before you make a decision. The purpose of the Board is to make decisions in the best interest of the kids and to spend the citizens' money. It is the citizens who decide whether to spend their money. It is not your role to decide if we have that choice. Voting no to place a bond issue on the ballot because you have other opinions on how to spend it is not the question on the table. I don't think people understand how the Board intends to spend that money. Request you spend time thinking about how you will come to consensus and do it.
5. Dwayne vanDyke: 1977 graduate of WHS, attended Hilliard Elementary, Parkside Junior High. Owner of vanDyke Architects. To be competitive as a region, we need a quality of life to attract and retain our youth. Providing a top notch educational system focused on our future is important. We need to prepare students for the global economy of the 21st century. Our classrooms are an embarrassment. I speak in favor of a two-phased project promoted by the 20/20 Committee. The problem will not go away, maintenance issues will increase. Construction costs at an all-time low. You have a unique opportunity that will soon disappear. Inflation will come back and construction costs will zoom. You have a cross section of community leaders study this for 2 years. Trust their judgment. Differences between new construction and substantial renovation can be insignificant. The amount of work needed will go beyond what a 1 mill levy or less will address through a permanent improvement levy. Accept the 20/20 committee recommendation. There is not a cheaper alternative to address the issues long-term. The needs are district-wide and need to be addressed consistently.

DISCUSSION: Pam Griebel presented information on Race to the Top federal grant proposal. The state has opened the grant process up to all school districts. \$4.3 billion in federal grant money given to states. 50% of Ohio's grant, if received, can be awarded to local districts. Commitments involve student

data, curriculum maps, student achievement, teacher evaluations. Application deadline is Jan 8. A special meeting would be required if the district plans to pursue. Westlake would be looking at \$32,000 if we apply and receive an award.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: An executive session was called to discuss personnel.

NEXT REGULAR MEETING: The next meeting of the Board will be Monday, Jan. 11, at 5:30pm at the Westlake Schools administration building.

For more detailed information on these items, visit

<http://www.westlake.k12.oh.us/AdminBldg/BOE/BOESched.htm>