



Westlake Board of Education

Board Notes from Monday, 9/13/10, Work Session

HEARING OF THE PUBLIC:

1. Harry Applegate: Presidential address wasn't on the agenda. Not sure what it refers to.
 - a. Tim Sullivan had a question about the Presidential address to students tomorrow.

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

1. *Developing Agendas*: Tim Sullivan item to discuss how agendas are set.
 - a. Sullivan: Concern about all voices having an opportunity to be heard including dissenting voices. No secret the Board is split on many issues. A lot of problems are communication related. Over the last 7-8 months I feel that too much of what I've heard from Miss Winter has been not tolerant of dissent and not welcoming of alternative viewpoints. I think your leadership is far too partisan and not welcoming to all viewpoints. I think that views are being stifled one way or the other with illogical and ridiculous demands. Ask those stop. One way to stop them is for you to set the agenda with me. The illogical dissention of requiring a Board to speak as one. The leadership in pulling us together is lacking. Setting the agenda together might open up communications.
 - b. Carol Winter: You feel you have not been heard or given the opportunity to have your opinions listened to at Board meetings and the leadership isn't welcoming to that. You have brought up the co-manager point about dissention not being heard. It was a recommendation made by an administrator. Any concerns would've been heard at the Aug. 23 meeting. There's always been an opportunity for that. Your solution for minority members to be heard is you to meet with Dr. Keenan and myself to set the agenda. The Board president has very few roles beyond being a regular Board member. One is to set the agenda with the superintendent, the other is to run the meetings. The other role is to be the Board spokesperson. I think our process has worked. I can't recall any other Board member submitting an item on the agenda that has not been accepted. I think

the process that has been in place for the past 50 years is the most efficient process to be used. I recommend we continue on in the same vain we've been going. If a Board member has something they want on the agenda, I am more than happy to put that on. We should work together as Board member on productive communications. We all have a piece in how well/poorly those discussions have gone. I won't change processes now. It becomes an inefficient process.

- c. Sullivan: One other request is send first 6-10 minutes of Mr. Cross' floor time and review that for training purposes with OSBA. That will foster more collegial interactions. You need an independent observer sitting out there watching. What he sees is disbelief at what he's hearing, finds the demands ridiculous.
- d. Tom Mays: The article speaks for itself. We don't know who wrote the editorial.
- e. Sullivan: The WestLife newspaper is watching what they are seeing ad calling it ridiculous and calling the extension of what you want to have happen illogical.
- f. Winter: we are trying to follow best practice in governance.
- g. Andrea Rocco: for efficiency in meeting, can't we go onto next issue?
- h. Sullivan: At our board retreat, can we have the OSBA weigh in on Mr. Cross' initial floor time.
- i. Winter: Then we need to have OSBA weigh in on other items. Some of those actions do not fall under the guise of best practice. We're not going to do that. We are going to move onto the next topic.

2. *Full-Day Kindergarten*

- a. Dr. Keenan: District will support a full-day Kindergarten program next school year. Discuss things we're doing to prepare. Last spring sent out current kindergarten staff to full-day programs across the region to determine how those might differ. Looked at curriculum, materials, supplies, teaching strategies, etc. Heard over and over it can be quite a change for those who switch from a half-day program. Curriculum goes more in-depth and does not get broader. Probably spend more time in reading, math, enrichment and intervention, along with integrating Social Studies and science. There will be more push in Language Arts and math. Letting Academic Services Department and teachers lead that. We are working on physical location for all-day kindergarten.
- b. A big thing we are going to do is change our admittance day for school-age children. Can choose from Aug. 1 or Sept. 30. Currently we use Sept. 30. We think it's an ideal time to make the change to Aug. 1. Two months of developmental time makes it easier for kids to be prepared for kindergarten work. Tough part is a parent with a child born after Aug. 1 will have to wait a full year to enroll their child in school, unless they have their child assessed for early entrance. We'll have a policy subcommittee next week. Maybe 30-45 children would have to go through early entrance testing or wait a year. It's about developmentally what will be the best fit. Research says 5 ½ is the best age to be ready for kg instruction.

3. *Facility Updates*

- a. Business Affairs Director Dave Puffer: Aug. 30 we had 7 staff members go to Painesville Harvey High School and Kenston High School. Toured each building and talked to staff

about the facilities. Painesville designed by MKC. Kenston was not. Teachers, custodians, cooks made comments for inclusion in design process. Hoping to visit Mansfield Senior High School.

- b. A number of tours scheduled for the middle school staff including Rocky River Middle School, Bay Village Middle School and three Columbus middle schools – Delaware Dempsey, Olentangy Orange and Dublin Karrer middle schools to see what they like and don't like about those buildings.
- c. Sullivan: any feedback on drawings?
- d. Puffer: Middle School
 - i. Gymnasium is significantly larger than our current gym. Goal to have seating for entire student body.
 - ii. Cafetorium – dining with a stage
 - iii. Receiving area will be shared with food service
 - iv. Music rooms near the gym – custodial office, restrooms, mechanical room
 - v. Academic wing – team approach
 - vi. Staff input – relocated restrooms, increased number of restrooms, increased size of special education rooms, gymnasium corridor on the inside of the building.
 - vii. Courtyards for outdoor learning spaces. All classrooms have at least one window.
 - viii. 20/20 Vision Committee concerned about jogs and corners in building. MKC trying to straighten out corners, but it impacts the roofline.
 - ix. This has 30 classrooms (currently have 29 with trailers).
- e. Nate Cross: How did you pick the schools you plan to look at? What kind of information is being collected? How does that impact what we see here? Enrollment is an issue we should be mindful of. There are issues the city will need to be on board with.
 - i. Puffer: Asked MKC type of schools they would recommend. Chosen based on representation. Ohio Middle School Association provided representative districts for our size. Questions are pros and cons.
 - ii. Still trying to get the footprint down and determine traffic flow.
- f. Winter: Having been a middle school teacher, design around teams is conducive to what school intends to do. Supports what we're doing. Like the input from staff and looking at other buildings. We are meeting with the city to provide them with information and our plans.
- g. Dr. Keenan: The building footprint will most likely be where we thought it would be. There is a best site for the students and traffic, and there is a best site for the neighbors we want to accommodate both as best possible, but I will recommend what is best for students first. We're building for enrollment projections as well as building to be flexible. These are bigger classrooms and dedicated special needs classrooms.
- h. Puffer: High Schools
 - i. Combination one-story/two-story building
 - ii. Make the building front noticeable and obvious, facing Hilliard Boulevard

- iii. Commons area to allow access to PAC and separate access to remainder of the building
 - iv. Three classroom pods – cluster classrooms by department
 - v. Going to WHS staff to get input on general layout and concepts. 225,000 square feet (not including PAC). 17,000 square feet more than current building.
 - i. Keenan: Commitment to Red Brick Arts Council to maintain the vision for an arts center. We're not adding programming or specialized rooms, but dialoguing about art spaces for community use. The footprint of the buildings will make sense to add classrooms down the road if necessary.
 - j. Puffer: Retained Bricker & Eckler for construction legal services. In response to concerns about conflict of interest. Senior partner provided us with guidance. Process of accepting bids – ORC requires completed bid form and assurity bond. Can require assumed low bidder. Agree we should require documents required by ORC. Other documents required of apparent low bidder being considered for award of contract. If they refuse to fill out associated documents they can be disqualified as non-responsive and go on to next lowest bidder. Reviewing with Bricker & Eckler best way to use forms effectively.
 - k. Bob Teitenberg/Turner Construction: More forms we make them fill out, more room for error. Limit the amount of trips you put in and put safeguards into second phase.
 - i. Design Schedule – Lists deliverables construction manager and architect need to meet. We'll be adding in time frames for city review.
 1. Schematic design – difficult to estimate because conceptual. Square footage type estimate.
 2. Schematic value engineering – sit down with team and determine any savings.
 3. Design development – at 70% complete.
 4. Line item for board approval after each step.
 5. Construction documents – 90-95%
 6. Bid documents – bid alternate development
 - ii. Process to proceed
 1. RFP process – vendor agreement
 2. Public bid-outs for contractors
 - l. Keenan: We're in the planning phase right now. This time next year things will really start moving. It will seem slow until then. Facilities site gives standard information. Blog gives information as it comes in. We'll post updates of neighborhood meetings and drawings. It has an interactive section. Comments will go to Kim and be answered through Keenan, Puffer, Turner or MKC. You can request to follow the site so you can keep updated so you don't have to keep checking.
4. *Bond Accountability Commission: Nate Cross*
 - a. One person spoke to a few weeks ago. Very involved with school district and may want to be a potential vendor. They felt they would be unable to participate in improving their community. I don't want to duplicate steps we're already taking. Want to move

forward at the next meeting to create an oversight mechanism. (Handouts). Proposed a volunteer group to oversee project.

- b. I didn't see any of these items or groups cited were responsible for selecting contractors or vetting conflicts of interest. Responsibility to assure contract process is fair remains arbitrary. Seems if we had really good measures/steps in place, we would not have seen an issue evolve like the potential recommendation for co-managers. Provides ample justification.
- c. CFO/Treasurer Mark Pepera – have you communicated your unanswered questions?
- d. Cross – there are a number of questions I can address.
- e. Winter – Pepera is our treasurer and you brought up his name and made insinuation there was wrongdoing. In best interest of moving forward, don't bring that up again unless you have something to present.
- f. Cross – I don't believe anything was illegal or unethical. (asked to stay on task with BAC). There are two things I take issue with:
 - i. Core construction team – don't believe accountable to community. One member who has fiduciary relationship with the district, two school board members. This group created as a neutral body is anything but. It's not there to vet conflict of interest.
 - ii. Non-procurement form – Necessary, but limited information required from vendors.
- g. Recommends treasurer's bond accountability and oversight committee
 - i. Committee will check off things are done and done correctly. Will add transparency to the process.
 - ii. Each board member appoint one person.
 - iii. Meets quarterly with Mark.
 - iv. Issues annual report and communicate directly with the board
 - v. Specific tasks, roles & responsibilities noted in handout – leaving open-ended
 - vi. Independent group to review as a checklist types of things the district is asking for are provided and respected to eliminate potential conflicts of interest
 - vii. What we're doing is not adequate
- h. Winter – We need time to look over the document. My recommendation is to save this for the next work session to talk about it. Looking at best thing to bring value to our district. We all want the right balance to make sure the job gets done on time, on/under budget.
- i. Cross – That's 4 weeks from now. If there's sincere interest to do this. We could establish a model to show we are great stewards to the community.
- j. Keenan – If that's what you choose, but I want to note it looks like more of an audit. If there's an accountability/oversight commission, just know that at least twice a month we'll be visiting any or all of these issues with the Board who are all accountable to the community.

- k. Cross – not a day that goes by that another community trusted but didn't verify. If we have some kind of oversight to make sure we're doing our due diligence, it helps the Board and anyone who works for the district and the public in general.
 - l. Sullivan – My concerns are layers of transparency. So many layers, the less transparency you have. I still don't understand the form. Once I see the form I can make a decision on whether it asks the right questions. I would like to have one form the contractor fills out I can understand.
 - m. Keenan – There are a great number of measures for transparency. You have indicated a couple of times that you are waiting for the form. You, along with all of the Board, were provided the form prior to you asking for it, it was in your packet. The other form we just received from our attorney I believe today but Mr. Puffer indicated you could see it. We hire legal counsel Bricker & Eckler with questions to ensure doing it the correct way. Recommendations will likely align with what they say. There's a need from our Board to feel more secure with those things. Decide as a Board how hands on you want to be in the day to day process. This is slow compared to a year from now. You may want to have a series of special meetings. If there's something you feel I haven't provided you, let me know.
5. *Advertising & Alternative Revenue – Dr. Keenan*
- a. We don't have a policy.
 - b. Solicited advertising through TV studio
 - c. Home Team Marketing
 - d. Scrolling bulletin board in the gym for small ads secured by Boosters
 - e. Being approached about website – LLK. Consider web-based advertising and dedicate to website maintenance and equipment/technology for the web
 - f. Using lunch trays/placemats for advertising (@ \$1,500/month potential revenue)
 - i. Winter – not generally supportive of advertising directly to our kids
 - ii. Mays – advocate for marketing. Not a big proponent unless it's higher education
 - iii. Rocco – as long as ads are educationally oriented or local businesses
 - iv. Cross – more open to non-profit institute of higher learning than for-profit business
 - g. Partnership Advisory Committee – meeting Sept. 30
 - h. Alumni Association – liaison from Board to association
 - i. Hplex still working on health center plan to partner with us
 - j. Clearwire
6. *Oct. 11 work session*
- a. Winter – propose since next regular meeting is Sept. 27 and Oct. 2 is our retreat, that will be a work session type retreat
 - b. Dr. Keenan – topics to address include cost per student, international baccalaureate program/world language, all-day kindergarten
 - c. Move branding guide and Bond Accountability Commission to Sept. 27 meeting
7. *President Obama's address*
- a. Tuesday, Sept. 14

- b. Sullivan
 - i. Disappointed in the district's decision to show this during school day
 - ii. Our performance index decreased by .1
 - iii. Takes away from curriculum
 - iv. Sends a message that strong education of our students is not a significant enough priority and we have other priorities to put in place.
 - v. We're sending a message that our children's education time, starting tomorrow, is for sale to the highest political bidder. We've always had a seal between children's education and political activities. Once we break that we'll be under pressure from different partisan political groups and individuals to have a piece of our children's education time. We'll take up valuable time and decide which political groups to favor.
 - vi. Don't believe anything as a non-political speech from the President. Giving the option to opt out means it's divisive. Instead of picking an action to show how we work together, we have adults advancing partisan political agendas and willing to hurt education of our students and willing to damage the harmony of our school district.
 - vii. I would like this to go to a vote and vote against showing this speech tomorrow.
- c. Cross – I have similar concerns. When realized speech would be in schools, hard to believe this fits into our curriculum. Last year it wasn't seen as appropriate. We're still in a polarized environment, it's viewed politically, we shouldn't do it. To opt out puts a burden on that child. Staying in school is not an issue in Westlake. We have a high graduation rate. I respect the office, but reality is it's an election season and this president is giving political speeches.
- d. Andrea Rocco – this is a decision of the administration, not the Board. It's not the Board's place to comment or have a motion. Many of your points don't make much sense. Interesting two gentlemen on the board who often seem quite political don't want the President to speak. He's still the leader of the free world and his message is kids should stay in school. We talk about many types of behaviors we hope our kids aren't involved in – DARE program. I trust the people we've hired and that they trust they've hired the right people to make these decisions.
- e. Mays – Agree we've hired the right people. Agree with Sullivan never good to put someone's agenda over kids. Great respect for the office. The kids need to see the President in a light other than coming on TV and speaking about war, terrorism, bad economy, oil spill. Any good statements, throw out the political side. Anything said to our students that allow them to feel good about themselves and to strive to reach that office someday. You can't put political agenda over wellbeing of our students and that's why we've hired Dr. Keenan.
- f. Winter – Don't think this needs to be a political decision. WE are a political entity. We are all political officials. WE are all about the what of running the district and the employees are all about the how of running the business of education. I don't think our job. Asked Dr. Keenan to run the district.

- g. Dr. Keenan – His message is to achieve and strive for excellence, which is a match to our mission statement. Our performance index for the report card, second highest we've ever had. We were .1 below. Extremely disappointed not highest in the state. We should spend some time as a board understanding the difference between a sustained process and 10-20 minutes in the school year. We can accommodate shortening recess time or shorten other times to accommodate that. We have a board policy that allows students to opt out of anything. Last year we didn't have a lot of information and got it late. Hope people would honor and respect the office.
- h. Vote to not show the speech
 - i. Sullivan - yes
 - ii. Cross –yes
 - iii. Mays – no
 - iv. Rocco – no
 - v. Winter – no
 - vi. Motion did not carry

ACTION ITEMS:

1. Approved FY11 additional temporary appropriations
2. Adjusted Fy11 temporary appropriations
3. Adopted FY11 permanent appropriations and five-year forecast
 - a. Still looking at fall 2012 operating levy

HEARING OF PUBLIC:

1. Harry Applegate – asked Dr. Keenan about potential parochial and private students who will come to Westlake for full-day kindergarten. Historically we've seen a large bump in first grade.
 - a. Dr. Keenan – tough to determine how that will hit our enrollment down the road. Full-day kindergarten is a recruiting effort for private schools.
 - b. Applegate – pleased with better decorum at this meeting. Disappointed at what has occurred. Heard discussion at last meeting about individuals and conflict of interest. Didn't understand. Found out by reading in newspaper. Find it irresponsible to impune the integrity of our fine treasurer. You cast aspersions on members of this community because they chose to support these schools. There was no conflict of interest in the bonds. Part of Sept. 8 discussion with OSBA was how schools could work with community members to integrate them into bond sales. We shouldn't be telling members of our community you shouldn't participate in our schools. Still free speech. Writing a letter to the editor should have nothing to do with it.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: To discuss Superintendent goals for the school year. No action was taken following the executive session.

NEXT REGULAR MEETING: The next regular meeting of the Board will be Monday, Sept. 27, at 5:30pm at the Westlake Schools Administration Building.

For more detailed information on these items, visit

<http://beta.westlake.k12.oh.us/boe/meetingschedule/default.aspx>