



## **Westlake Board of Education**

### ***Board Notes from Monday, April 14, Work Session***

#### **Vision Statement**

The Westlake City School District will provide a dynamic, student-centered, 21<sup>st</sup> Century learning environment. Our district will be characterized by high achievement, actively engaged learners, mutual respect, shared knowledge, pursuit of new skills and capabilities, collaborative learning, willingness to take action, a team commitment to data-driven continuous improvement, and tangible results.

#### **Mission Statement**

We Educate for Excellence ... Empowering all students to achieve their educational goals, to direct their lives, and to contribute to society.

#### **COMMON CORE PRESENTATION**

1. Pam Griebel, Director of Curriculum

#### **HEARING OF THE PUBLIC**

1. Harry Applegate: Pam did a nice presentation. I appreciate it. My concern is that we seemed to have lost focus on teaching content and have moved toward teaching to take a test. I've seen it from when I was in school to when my kids were in school and now my grandkids. The state dictates and we, in order to look good in the public's eye, means our children scored well on the test, which they were taught to take. They weren't taught content, but this is what's going to be on the test. There is a lot more to the world than that. We need to look outside the paradigm. How we've gotten to where we are today. If you believe the book is the Bible, that's true, but you need to look outside and find the answer.
2. Jack Stipek: Represent physical education staff. We had a meeting with Dr. Keenan and informed about recommendation for physical education waiver. We are opposed to that as a staff. We

would ask the board to reexamine this after we pass our next levy. We forwarded on research via emails. Confirmed that the waiver is a disservice to our \students. We feel every student needs physical education. Every child needs to graduate from high school and be prepared for a lifetime of physical activity. They need the skills, technology to be in that position. No bigger burden on our students when they graduate. Our physical education programs are not the same as what we grew up with. We have incorporated a 21st century program for every student that promotes lifelong fitness habits. Our entire physical education staff is urging the board to reexamine this. Athletics don't teach that skill or frame of mind. So many educational philosophies of our district include wellness and preparing children for learning. That's what we do in physical education classes. Our new physical education state standards mirror what we've been doing. We are dedicated and passionate about our careers and what we do.

#### **SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

1. We will probably have some delays and changes to our athletic schedule because of tomorrow's weather forecast. Makeup games on Friday may be planned for better weather even though it's a day off.
2. April 30: 20/20 Vision Committee will reconvene to make sure we continue to communicate the master facilities plan and the process. We do have a plan in place as a school district and some 2010 options the community-based group set forth. We want to communicate and revisit those just to revisit. April 30 will be at 7pm at LBMS, a portion providing a history – the community vetted 22 plans, down to 18, down to 6. Now at a grade level or neighborhood configuration discussion. Follow-up meeting on May 21 at 7pm at LBMS will be more listening to the community. What steps should we consider? It's time to touch base now that Phase I is nearing completion.
3. City Rec Commission survey about long-range recreation plans in the City of Westlake. The school district wants to visit how we can utilize some of our facilities to continue partnering with the community. We reached out about our Parkside site where we will be doing community education and expressed we would have property and facilities for the city to utilize, notably Hilliard Elementary to be part of Clague Park and potentially Bassett Elementary for senior or community center facilities. There is an option we'd be thrilled to explore with partnering. It would be mutually beneficial.

#### **TREASURER'S ITEMS**

1. Accepted amounts and rates as determined by the Budget Commission and authorizing necessary tax levies and certifying them to County Auditor. Based on our current debt service we need to adjust that rate to satisfy payments for the subsequent year. Reconfirms our operating millage rates. You have the option for a small restructuring. Raising the debt service would be realized by our taxpayers in 2015. If you choose restructuring, don't modify debt service rate. We are undercollecting what the community approved – 5.7 mills. Increasing the rate would take it to 6.4. We are still in a low interest rate environment. Board kept millage rate the same.

## BOARD DISCUSSION ITEMS

### 4. Superintendent Vacancy

- i. Carol Winter: There is a process most school districts follow. We had discussions on a possible interim. We have contacted representatives from search firms with a track record of success in Ohio – Ohio School Boards Association, Finding Leaders, and Hazard, Young & Attea Associates. We are expecting more information on those. Once we compile references we will publicly vet that at our April 28 Board meeting. I've heard from many they want a public engagement part in this process. All three firms have a component that is public engagement. We're still considering candidates for potential interim. Nothing has been decided.

### 5. Levy Considerations

- i. Winter: Now that we have the teacher contract approved, we can look forward.
- ii. Dr. Keenan: We've been talking about this since 2010. We've made quite a few adjustments. Delinquencies we were made aware of impacts us. Our position hasn't changed with the goal of keeping that under a double digit, which means changing some of our spending, contract situation and some reductions. You will still be in a position to make decisions about what you want to bring back. June is the time to officially reduce staffing and programs for next school year, other than operational changes made already. We've reduced through attrition. You will have the option with the combo of reductions, changed planned spending and delinquent taxes, you will have the ability to go in August or November with a lower millage than was on the ballot the last two times. If you want to bring all of those back, we'll be more around the 7 mill range. If you keep reductions and make it a new way of doing business, also working on an option to have close to same millage and extend this to next spring. With that comes the hazard of deeper cuts because not collecting for another year and millage would go up.
- iii. Mark Pepera: Some of those variables are important to explore. Think about duration. How long do you envision this lasting? Is there a threshold? We do have things in place to give you more estimates on April 28.
- iv. Winter: if we go with a lower millage in the fall, what is the duration?
- v. Dr. Keenan: you may have to understand reality is different in respect to the levy cycle. There is a lot to consider about how often to go to the taxpayer v. how much millage you put on. You have all asked about combining a levy with a permanent improvement portion to take care of our facilities and our educational program at the same time. If you go with a lower millage, you won't have the budget projections you have and the frequency of going back to voters will increase of course this will have to be combined with continued changes in spending – if those weren't present then projections indicated we would have

run out of \$ in 2010. Many of our surrounding communities have done that successfully.

- vi. Pepera: PI levy means further defining your operating levy. We currently spend operational dollars on capital improvements. The thought is having a dedicated revenue stream for facilities to more significantly address issues. Unless you materially change assumptions about levy needs, if you consider an option this fall v. next spring, if an initiative passes this fall we collect in 2015. If we wait until the spring we won't collect until 2016.
- vii. Dr. Keenan: August is still possible, but if you do August a lot of decisions would need to be made in very near future. Filing deadline is May 7. Aug. 6 is filing deadline for November after Aug. 5 ballot.
- viii. Barb Leszynski: our levy cycle is not as frequent as surrounding communities, but I don't think they've had the levy failures and drastic cuts we have. How hard would it be to give us a scenario of bringing back busing within one mile.
- ix. Pepera: Are we bringing it back with no other reductions or does something else have to be adjusted to bring it back?
- x. Dr. Keenan: no matter what reduction plan is approved, you can make adjustments by reducing in another area. That's how we've taken this for so long, but we've reduced along the way.
- xi. Tony Falcone: we've made a laundry list of cuts over past 4-6 years.
- xii. Tom Mays: we haven't had an increase in taxes due to an operating levy since 2007. We've made cuts where necessary. It's been very difficult for this district, board, community. We're going to do whatever is necessary to continue educating for excellence with what we have.

#### **POLICY REVISION**

- 1. First reading for change in graduation requirements regarding a physical education waiver.
  - a. Dr. Keenan: we have a physical education staff and program that is ahead of its field. We have our Wellness Committee, wellness programs with the community and at our buildings. Some have worked on menus with our cafeteria to tie in wellness standards with our curriculum. I've met with all of them about making this recommendation tonight. We're now in a situation with combined reductions from 2010, cuts from state and two failed levies, we are at \$7 million in reductions. I am recommending now to consider this policy about waiving physical education requirement if a student has participated in two seasons of interscholastic activities.
  - b. Leszynski: I was concerned about accountability of the students, but I understand you worked that out.

#### **HEARING OF THE PUBLIC**

- 1. Ann Beyer: Thank Dan for the gift of his leadership. He has been amazingly data driven, solicited input from everyone in the community in every one of his decisions. He has raised the bar.

Thank administrators and teachers for their responsiveness to the needs of the community. Thank staff and teachers for excellence in teaching they provide our students. They have set my children on fire. You'll see evidence of the terrific education our children get from our teachers. Westlake Schools are a great value for our tax dollars. I moved to Westlake for a sense of community, the school quality, the strength of the finances of our city and schools. A great community is the sum of its parts. Call on the entire community to join together. We all lose when one of those strengths is diminished.

The Board adjourned to executive session for the purpose of discussing employment of a public employee (superintendent vacancy). No action was taken. The Board also held an executive session to discuss OAPSE negotiations. No action was taken.

Meeting adjourned.

**NEXT REGULAR MEETING:** The next meeting of the Board is Monday, April 28, 2014, at 6pm, at the Administration Building.

For more detailed information on these items, visit

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