



Westlake Board of Education

Board Notes from Wednesday, 2/17/10, Work Session

NEW BUSINESS: Approved general liability insurance for adult support groups. Approved certified FMLA for Natalie Rini and Patty Seljan; classified resignation for purpose of retirement for Judith Sobera and Jerry Slabaugh; classified employment of Sandra Houser; amended classified employment for Shelly Perkins, Catherine Rasmussen and James Muzychak; supplemental contract resignations for James Walsh; supplemental contract employment for Gregory Stringer and Jennifer Butler. Approved renewal of agreements with AT&T for 60 months for Centrex, Long Distance and T-1 lines services.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT: PAC hosting Dr. Michael Roizen from Cleveland Clinic tonight. He will work with our students after his presentation and be interviewed by our students. Another example of our schools and community working together. Our special needs preschool will be curling in honor of the Olympic Games tomorrow.

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

1. CIP 2010-2012: 10th year of using this plan. Guides the district for budget, curricular decisions. Focus areas on planning and curriculum, measuring progress of students and varied learning needs. Parkside Principal Mark Bregar the administrative leader. Going to work with Cleveland Heights/Mentor group on appreciative inquiry, focuses on organization strengths and uses a process to engage a larger group, including community leaders and a summit of 100+ community/school representatives. Should take 4-10 days to write a new CIP and present it to the community. Meeting with the partners next week to lay out a calendar. Summit likely in early June. Tom Mays and Carol Winter will represent the Board in this process.
2. Extended Learning Opportunities – 2008-2010 CIP: We have accomplished summer programming enrichment, planning for all-day kindergarten, partnership with Bay Village Schools for enrichment opportunities, project-based learning (STEM grant), post-secondary options, preschool, financial literacy, entrepreneurial skills. Still need to tackle gifted education and global awareness.

Global awareness involves language. Attended national conference on education.

Characteristics of a global learner: strong core content knowledge, interdisciplinary context to learn that knowledge, global knowledge and disposition (investigate the world further than US and Europe, recognize other cultures, solve real-world problems with other cultures).

International baccalaureate is something we're looking at. Concept to have education to meet an international standard. Now have middle and primary years programs. We are missing language at the elementary level.

Academic Services Director Pam Griebel: Extended learning committee grew out of CIP and met twice with third meeting in March to set the direction on presenting this to CIP committee. Study group determining best course of action in global learning and International Baccalaureate (IB), including language. Looking at distance learning to share a Mandarin Chinese teacher. Also looking at schedules to make world languages program more rigorous at an earlier age. Would like to push languages down into the elementary level. Optimal learning level for languages is ages 3-8. We are making standards more rigorous and measuring against international standards. Admission requirements are more rigorous at our universities, so we need to up the ante. Needs to be a natural, seamless piece to what we're already doing. Purchased an online program to participate with students from around the world on projects. Making ourselves aware we are part of a larger human population. Our students compete internationally for jobs and college admissions.

There is an expense to being an IB school. Need staff development, application phase, external review. Oberlin Schools are in the first year of this process. Shaker Heights and Aurora also involved. It takes districts 3-4 years to study the option. We'd need to decide whether to be an IB school or pursue the diploma route (recognized for rigor, on par with AP tracks). Rocky River, North Olmsted, Berea interested in sharing resources with us on this.

If we pursue this, we are about 4 years out from implementing it. The IB program would touch every student. The high school diploma program would touch those students who pursue it.

3. Facilities: Lesko gave us a 2008 report and told us immediate needs = \$44 million, these are strictly building code issues. Director of Business Affairs Dave Puffer put together a plan for \$15 million a year for five years to address the most critical needs out of that the best he could focusing on what he felt must be done first. Immediate needs mean seriously violating code, handicapped access or more damage. We don't have a budget to take care of immediate needs, which Lesko considered wasteful with patching a \$126 million total problem.

We have been using \$450,000 capital budget doing large projects. Andrea Rocco indicated in 2001 the Board realized there was no fund for capital improvement projects to address serious facilities needs. But that became one of the first areas to dip into to meet unfunded mandates, including No Child Left Behind. We've done the best we can with what we can. Dr. Keenan indicated this year's \$450,000 bought trailers, replaced pipe, doors and other smaller things that were not major capital projects. It has not been enough to play catch-up. The PAC is an example

to point to when we considered things like do one little bit at a time and to be more gradual with tax increases while making improvements, we have the advantage of hindsight to see here the realization that this process results in us falling further behind and the expense becomes even greater. The 1996 bond issue built the Transportation Department, moved the administrative offices out of the Red Brick, patched roofs and other problem areas to get by, same result from this smaller incremental process.

This issue will keep us in the bottom 25% in taxes in the county, allow us to use current funds to go to other facilities to maintain them. From what we can predict now, the millage increase will be close to match a dropoff in 2018. This is dependent on getting the first phase done now so we can utilize dollars to address needs in a smaller number of buildings. Our operation expenses would be more controlled. It takes into account past decisions, patching solutions.

If the issue does not pass, we essentially have to choose between not addressing the needs, which I don't believe is an option or working together to determine what cuts will need to be made to address some of these critical problems. If we don't start thinking now, we'll make decisions on a short, emotional timeline. There are budget planning considerations. Need to start the conversation to give the all of us, including the Board, time to think about this. The \$15 million is a starting point to decide what to do to address the most critical needs. \$66 million is the state minimum standard for keeping the same square footage and meeting educational standards and building codes. \$44 million was Lesko's interpretation of immediate needs based on building codes. The maximum threshold I figured we could start with over a five year period was \$15 million. This is a starting point to address critical needs and I wanted to begin discussion to gauge the Board's comfort with related cuts vs. risking further deterioration.

Dave Puffer: In 2001 the district had an OSFC assessment. Spring 2001 the OSFC construction manager gave us a report on what to do. In 2003 the district formally withdrew from the project due to budgetary reasons. In 2007-08, contacted Lesko to update the 2001 OSFC assessment. They identified \$66 million worth of things that need to be done to address current code and educational standards. They said \$44 million would address building code, fire code and handicapped access. We backed into the \$15 million by taking \$3 million over 5 years to address safety and building envelope issues. Over the last decade the district did what it could given budgetary constraints. Summer 2006, major project was paving the Dover parking lot (which was a gravel lot). Summer 2007 \$78,000 Holly Lane roof repair turned into a \$310,000 replacement because the project was deferred for so long. These items are necessary to provide an adequate teaching and learning environment – safe, dry, accessible. We may have problems adding mobile units to LBMS and Dover because of electrical problems. Three motors in the last week burned out, freezing heating coils. Had flooding in Parkside gym and lost Dover HVAC. Even if we had \$750,000 in the capital budget, it has to cover 9 buildings. We're doing everything we can.

Suggested we talk about this now because for summer 2010 projects, we'd be going out to bid now for them. If we wait until May, we won't have the ability to do major projects this summer.

Dr. Keenan: Going back to May 2006 levy, the district had to submit something to state to show we could operate without a deficit. Things listed as cuts included: initiate student fees, reduce and eliminate equipment (technology), reduce permanent improvement money, eliminate bus replacement, eliminate summer programs (preK and reading), reduce extended time, eliminate field trips, reduce custodial supplies, eliminate non-required travel, reduce overtime (transportation, facilities), reduce instructional supplies and texts, eliminate PEP behavioral consultant, eliminate summer help, reduce bussing to state minimums, close buildings after school, reduce communications office budget, eliminate curriculum and staff development, reassign resource teachers, loss of staff, reduce support staff, pay to play athletics, pay to participate co-curricular, restructure administrators, eliminate PAC supervision. This would add up to \$2.5 million today. That leaves us \$1 million to \$500,000 short.

Nate Cross: Per pupil expenses. Look at expense reductions and look at goals in that parameter. We don't want to hurt performance and progress. Administrative expenditures, reduce that by 10%. Dr. Keenan said he will work with Mr. Pepera to provide a breakdown.

Tim Sullivan: We should look at the big picture. Maybe we should make specific expenditures the focal point of what we're looking at.

Andrea Rocco: You can't arbitrarily compare our cost per pupil to other districts.

Dr. Keenan: We all are looking for ways to cut costs. This is something that is done regularly with the Board. Mark Pepera gives you quarterly adjustments line by line.

Treasurer Mark Pepera: Our business is to educate kids and we're people oriented. 80% of our budget goes to personnel. It's impossible to make cuts without touching programming. These numbers do not include inflationary components.

Carol Winter: We need to decide how much to cut and what those cuts would be. On the agenda for March work session.

Carol Winter: Andrew Mangels wrote a letter of thanks to the district about the partnership between the library and the schools for the Jim Gill concert.

HEARING OF PUBLIC:

1. John Finucan: Moved here from Avon Lake. I have children at the elementary level. Back in 1996, were there recommendations to address the buildings then? I recommend the Board keep it at a 20,000 foot level and let Dr. Keenan do his job and remember the duty of a Board member is to make decisions in the interest of the students and not to make financial decisions for the community. Fiduciary responsibility is to the students, not the taxpayers.
 - a. Andrea Rocco: The bond issue was meant to sustain the buildings for 7 years. They didn't know about the influx of the variety of students we now have (special needs, English as a Second Language). We didn't know back then we'd face all of these unfunded mandates.

- b. Dr. Keenan: There was no OSFC until 1997, which came from tobacco settlement money. There is a realistic chance in 2017 when our number comes up, the money won't be there.
- 2. Tom Mays: Campaign committee wants to know how many signs each board member can place, or if you want them to place signs for you. Provide those addresses to Cathy Axcell.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: The Board adjourned into executive session for the purpose of discussion of evaluation of the Superintendent and employment of a public employee.

NEXT REGULAR MEETING: The next meeting of the Board will be Monday, Feb. 22, 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>