



Westlake Board of Education

Board Notes from Monday, Jan. 30, 2012, Organizational Session

Recitation of District Vision & Mission

Vision Statement: The Westlake City School District will provide a dynamic, student centered, 21st 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 Education for Excellence ... Empowering all students to achieve their educational goals, to direct their lives, and to contribute to society.

Hearing of the Public

1. Dave Albert: discussion on the appointment of a new board member should be done in the public.

Special Reports & Recognitions

1. Recognized the Jonathan Brick for attaining Academic All Ohio – Football and 2012 First-Team All Conference.
2. Recognized Girls' Varsity Soccer team and Coach Scott Jones for receiving the National Soccer Coaches Association of American Team Academic Award. 1st Place All-Academic in Ohio and 9th place All-Academic in the U.S.
3. Recognized the WHS boys' Varsity soccer team and Coach Mike Besu for receiving the National Soccer Coaches Association of America Team Academic Award. 10th place All-Academic Ohio and 53rd place All-Academic in the United States.
4. Recognized Charlotte Tate for being named to the 2011 High School Girls All-Region IV soccer Team.
5. Recognized Alec Ferrell for being named to the Second Team All-State boys' soccer team.
6. Recognized Lauren Golick for being named to the First Team All-State girl' tennis team.
7. Recognized Ralph Dunbar, WHS girls' tennis head coach, as 2011 Southwest Conference coach of the Year, 2011 Plain Dealer Coach of the Year, 2011 State Tennis Team Runner-Up.

Superintendent's Report

1. The district has continually pursued grant assistance with our goal of having our elementary schools become International Baccalaureate (IB) schools. Received formal notification we were awarded a \$40,000 grant for the IB program largely due to the work of Pam Griebel, Carol Froelich, Colleen Mudore, Ben Hodge, and Deb Wadden. Martha Holden Jennings Foundation grant. Since Pam Griebel has been Director of Academic Services she has helped the district attain \$700,000 in outside grant funding to support our CIP goals.
2. Supportive community members approached the district and developed Westlake Athletic Development Foundation to provide assistance outside the general fund to support our athletic facilities. The first project they are working on is to fund an artificial turf program inside the football stadium. They would like to see us assist their efforts with naming rights to the stadium and continue shared usage opportunities with the City of Westlake. They will do a fundraiser in February and will be approach businesses for donations.
3. Per our CIP goal to see our alumni are increasingly engaged in academic programs and giving, we are putting together an All-Class Reunion for next fall. Cathy Axcell will take the lead on that project. Citizens Advisory Committee recognizes it as a priority for the district and looking for ways to connect with alumni. Targeting Homecoming Week in September for the reunion.
4. CFO Mark Pepera recognized with a perfect audit. 4th perfect audit. As a result Auditor Dave Yost made a special trip to Westlake to present the Auditor's Award of Distinction.
 - a. Tom Mays indicated the clean audit presented the whole financial picture of the district.
 - b. Nate Cross: While this award reflects the fact Westlake isn't cooking the books and we do a good job of accounting for the dollars we spend, it has nothing to do with whether we are an efficiently run system or spending wisely.
 - c. Dr. Keenan: The State Auditor clearly noted when he presented the district with the Award of Distinction that if you want accurate information about the district, you can trust the district with that, it's honest and accurate information. We know that has to be combined with other strong fiscal practices to be an excellent district and believe in many instances the district has demonstrated that under Pepera's leadership. We've been recognized for 12 consecutive years for excellence in financial reporting, recognized as an Exemplary Saver by the state for being in the top 25% in utilizing consortium purchasing to establish savings – a model the state is promoting now for all school districts, this year the district also received the Ohio School Plan Best Practices Award for controlling risk and through insurance decisions. Pepera was part of an effort this year to refinance bonds this year to save ax dollars. The first several are for trusting you can believe what the district tells you the latter recognition is for excellence in using resources. Our bond rating was reaffirmed. Moody's said we had strong fiscal oversight that resulted in top 4% of districts in Ohio for managing money. Treasurer of the Year for Ohio for three years. Through those savings, millions of dollars the district is saving the community. However, we do know it's critical to build on to these types of things and remain committed to doing so and not resting on our laurels. We have years of a continuous improvement mindset here established and we understand the need to keep focused on being excellent in this area.

Treasurer's Report/Recommendations

1. CFO/Treasurer Mark Pepera presented the quarterly report and financial forecast
 - a. Compared to last forecast, restatements of services in purchased services categories. 50% of the way through the year. Tax valuation from the auditor dipped .63%. Signal if the valuation is dropping it ties into our revenue stream. More conservative in estimates

for real estate taxes. Revised revenue estimates with state aid revenue. On target with wages and expenditures. FY14 deficit improved to just shy of \$12,000.

- b. Nate Cross: Moody's rating is just their opinion we can pay our debts. My problem is with the numbers themselves. Before GM went bankrupt, they had outstanding audits. It did not address sustainability of the business. Costs are increasing by \$10 million over 5 years. Question is what recommendation is to address issue pertinent to personnel. Contracts expire at end of year.
- c. Mays: Questions should relate to the forecast. It's our decision about planning for the future
- d. Cross: difficult to make the argument that personnel services/contracts has nothing to do with this forecast. What is your gameplan/timetable/approach to prepare ourselves for that negotiation that will need to occur by the end of the year.
- e. Pepera: Forecast takes into account what we know today. We have union contracts up at the end of the year. Strongly advise and won't make any recommendations in public, detrimental to negotiations process. Defer to superintendent for the gameplan.
- f. Dr. Keenan: Forecast gives our picture so we can set those goals. We work to be efficient and excellent in all areas. The same is certainly true for personnel. Each negotiation the district has worked to target savings in this area to be efficient and excellent. We added the spousal provision for health care two contracts ago, increased the caps on health care contributions significantly last negotiations and joined a health consortium saving millions of dollars. Of course we need to respond to the current economic circumstances to protect our mission and resources. I have always expressed we need to understand our market and make sure we're not an outlier in the market. The market has changed considerably since the last negotiation and we need to adjust, we have all validated and adopted that perspective. Use this forecast to consider what we are able to provide under current circumstance so we can work at negotiations strategy from there. Both associations know that and understand that. It has been noted a number of times that unfortunately because of a lack of concessions we can anticipate something a lot less gradual in order to get back to where we should be in the market;. Very hard to publicly talk about negotiation strategy and not the best practice to do so if you want to negotiate effectively. Our personnel expenses and costs need to get back in line with what the market has experienced over the past couple of years. There are a lot of ways to get to that and we need to be thorough in figuring out how to get there, but we do need to get in a better spot. .
- g. Cross: troubling to me looking at a \$15 million operating deficit. We've talked about an operating levy. What is your approach in terms of not addressing shortfall by an excessive tax, but how can we balance reducing costs and not ask for a huge millage request.
- h. Mays: Last year we met on this and they turned it back to the board and asked us where we wanted to be. Difficult for somebody in their position to tell us where we should be with a levy. That's our job. In order for them to advise us, we have to give them information about where we'd like to be. We've always looked at ways to increase revenue and decrease expenses. We were asked for unanimous support to enter into negotiations for concessions. We were able to get three votes, but not your vote or another member who is no longer on the board, which cost us. Inappropriate to make grandstanding comments. I agree we must continue to be vigilant in looking at expenses, increasing revenues.

- i. Dr. Keenan: I understand the frustration anyone has with school funding. You're going to come to a point where you keep reducing or increase revenue. Idea to make sure we demonstrate an understanding of using our resources as wisely as possible. We continue to work and it's on the forefront. We know it's critical to do things right. We'll continue to try to extend this out as we have. Strategy to push this out as far as we can push it out.
 - j. Cross: All school districts across Ohio get how to play this game. Looking at an operating deficit of \$15 million. Districts run the deficit up, cry that Armageddon is on the way and taxpayers have to bail us out. We should acknowledge there is a problem and deal with it. I'd rather ask for a lower number.
 - k. Mays: Our last levy was in 2006 and indicated it would last 3-4 years. We're doing something right. Challenge you to find one that goes 7-8 years between tax levies. There are districts that go to taxpayers every 3 years. Says when you tell a taxpayer you are extending a levy out, that does say something to our taxpayers. We have to be realistic to look at a plan
 - l. Cross: We ask for way too much from our taxpayers. Sooner rather than later we need to deal with this. I think we get the same story year after year how districts deal with this. I want to see spending reduced.
 - m. Dr. Keenan: What's not frustrating is we need to be fiscally responsible. What's frustrating is where you acknowledge the district is recognized for excellence in reporting and how we present fiscal data the honest way it should be presented, and then say we're sandbagging, asking for too much millage, and crying Armageddon. This is contradictory to what the auditor just recognized. Moodys and S& P just recognized, and you acknowledged. You're not hearing the other point. Ask for you to listen to the information in its entirety. Asking questions and not listening to the answer is not fair. We never cried Armageddon instead, we have been very open about our books and our challenges, we publicly lay out the options and vetted them publicly a number of times. Frustrating to take bits and pieces and disregard value part of it. To say all 615 districts are just crying and complaining is difficult to accept. Schools are one of the few entities that have to go back to taxpayers and ask for funding and demonstrate responsibility.
- 2. Approved the quarterly report and financial forecast
 - 3. Approved Then & Now certificates to Sitetech Inc., ARC, Great Lakes Crushing Ltd. Bricker & Eckler LLP
 - 4. Adjusted FY12 appropriations

New Business

- 1. Accepted gifts and contributions from:
 - a. American Field Service Club
 - b. Anonymous
 - c. CBC Foundation
 - d. United Methodist Women of the Westlake United Methodist Church
 - e. Advanced property Tax Compliance
 - f. Diane Kvasnicka
 - g. Matt Nussbaum
 - h. St. Ladislav Church 50+ Club
 - i. Azin Sharifi
 - j. Westlake Garden Club
- 2. Approved resignations for purpose of retirement – Judy Popelka

3. Approved FMLA – Michael Bee, Duane Denn, Jan Goggins, Christine Wrightsman
4. Classified employment – Virginia Fadenholz, Jim Montgomery
5. Certified employment – Barbara Detwiler
6. Classified substitute resignation of Tammy Bittner, Laurie Bowles, Sharon Flaherty
7. Certified substitute resignation – Laurie Bowles, Dennis Lais, Sharon Flaherty, Stephanie Lekas
8. Classified substitutes – Kimberly Burke, Donna Corrigan, Steve Maler
9. Certified substitutes – Racha Alameh, Matt DeChicco, Megan Murphy, Lindsay Sereika, Andrea Navin, Katherine Barnes, Kathryn Killiany, Rodica Nan, Carla Stanko, Ashley Pease, Susan Bruckner, Lianna Madigan, Stephanie Roberts, Christine Holly, Laura Toner
10. Reclassification of certified staff members – Catherine Boettcher, Amanda Caunter, Melissa Crist, Daniel Grigson, Kelly Kins, Hannah Lozada, Amal Mustafa, Simon O'Doherty, Hun Piazza
11. Approves resignation of supplemental employment by Christine Filmer
12. Approved supplemental contract employment of Ronald Wilson and Kelly Atkinson
13. Approved certified home instruction by Brooke Romp
14. Approved employment of Title I Summer school tutor at St. Paul Lutheran school – Lisa Luzier
15. Approved step increase for Project Link Leader Judith Mack
16. Approved department co-chair resignation of Christine Filmer
17. Approved department co-chair appointment of Kelly Atkinson
18. Approved resignation for purpose of retirement of David Puffer
19. approved employment of Stan Lipinski as interim director of business affairs
20. Approved employment of Dave Puffer as district supervisor of construction projects
21. Approved agreements for admission of tuition pupils and purchased services with Jay Berk, PhD & Associations, academic instruction
22. Approved WHS program of studies for 2012-13
23. Approved compensation for athletic workers
24. Approved officiating rates for SWC contests
25. Resolution to award contract for electrical bid package MS-08. TABLED.
26. Approved construction change orders for Great Lakes Crushing Ltd.
 - a. LBMS site, \$16,969, additional removal of buried debris
 - b. LBMS site, \$35,339.74, additional bus loop/driveway repairs
 - c. LBMS site, \$98,761.95, southwest parking lot stone & lime kiln dust placement
 - d. Met 62% of contingency on middle school project

Master Facility Plan Phase I Report

1. Dave Conant/Turner Construction: Middle school pad 100% complete. Site utilities are ongoing. Awarding contracts for shell of the building.
2. Jeff Johnson/Turner Construction: 95% done with building pad at the high school. Expect to top out the end of this week. Looking at starting foundations Feb. 13. Mobilizing on site next week.
3. Pepera: Accrued over \$350,000 in interest. On target although rates are subpar. Delays cause issues from a construction standpoint, but good for investing.
4. Dr. Keenan: renovation projected to be approximately \$9 million, now approximately \$7 million. Noted doing all site work as part of middle school project, so not part of renovation project now but MS project budget. Very confident we are giving exactly what we promised through all of our processes.

Director of Business Affairs Report

1. Dave Puffer: Finished 5 ½ years in the district. Pleased I am able to continue serving the district. Found in Westlake the district enjoys a number of exemplary things: board of education, administrators, staff, parents and students. Made my job a lot easier. Owe a debt of gratitude to those folks. I hope I'm leaving the district in a better place. Strived for an environment of teaching and learning. Recognize Lisa Zuk, my administrative assistant, who has been a God-send. The district will be in good hands with the interim. We've done some good things and I look forward to finishing the project.

Board Items

1. Club hockey request
 - a. Tom Mays: In December presented a couple concerns, to be considered a Varsity sport and recognize players with Varsity letters.
 - b. Dr. Keenan: Great organization for the district to work with. Throughout the process we revisited the board policy. They want to compete in the Greater Cleveland High School Hockey League. Athletic Director Tony Cipollone presented to that group and saw the club approved as a member of the league. Policy says due to club status, teams are not eligible for district awards or recognition. We felt that should be amended and recommended change in policy. Changed due AD may create awards for club sports at district awards programs. Forum to recognize them with their peers and will develop an award type or system that can apply to all club sports.

Hearing of the Public

1. Dave Albert: Have we entertained the notion of shifting from regular books to e-readers? Asked for meeting time change.

Adjourned to Executive Session

1. To discuss pending litigation
2. To discuss appointment of personnel due to Board of Education vacancy

No action was taken following the executive session.

NEXT REGULAR MEETING: The next meeting of the Board is the organizational meeting on Monday, Feb. 13, at 5:30pm.

For more detailed information on these items, visit
<http://beta.westlake.k12.oh.us/boe/meetingschedule/default.aspx>