

**West Geauga Board of Education
Work Session Meeting
Monday, October 14, 2013
7:00 p.m.
West Geauga Middle School Conference Area**

Roll Call

Board President Beers called the meeting to order with the following members present: Mr. Beers, Mrs. Dottore, Mrs. Gillmore, Mr. Kilroy and Mr. Kotowski

Approval of Agenda

2013-108

A motion was made by Mr. Kotowski and was seconded by Mrs. Gillmore, to approve the agenda.

Mr. Kilroy questioned the agenda format. He requested there be more time for remarks of the public at work sessions given their new format replacing committee meetings. He stated it was the Board President's option to answer questions. Mr. Beers responded with no comment.

Roll call: Yes: Beers, Gillmore, Kotowski

No: Dottore, Kilroy

Motion carried

Remarks of the Public

Tracey Roberts – St. Anselm parent unhappy with 1 hour and 30 minute bus run for her eight year old. Mr. Palmer responded that he and Mr. Russo were looking at the situation and will follow up with the St. Anselm principal

Anita Zurcher – Request town hall meeting for questions and answers on open enrollment. Still waiting for answer on largest class size

Mike Spies – People have more questions. Town hall meeting would be beneficial. Need to “right size” the District. Listen to the taxpayers. Election in November – no open enrollment decision should be made prior to the election.

Anthony Kosley – Teachers should be insulted by the news open enrollment students outperform West Geauga students. Open enrollment issue is not about race.

Paul Donato – Asked for details on how open enrollment helps the District. Supports contiguous – they are involved in our community due to geographic proximity

Joe Miller – Average cost to educate a student is \$12,000. Who is paying the difference from \$5,745 to \$12,000? Passed a permanent improvement levy last year to fix roofs. Should pursue consolidation with Newbury

Linda Kosley – If students coming in are doing better than ours, then teachers need reevaluated. Has 4 children and hears stories that kids don't report – threats, fights, inappropriate language, congregating near the Library

Robin Liberatore – St. Anselm parent. Bussing over past 2 years has become deplorable. Student spends 90 minutes on the bus. Requested reasonable bus transportation

Bernie Mandel – Open Enrollment statement

REMARKS RE: OPEN ENROLLMENT

People who have no facts to rely upon usually argue in generalities. That's what we see from those who are against open enrollment. What are the alleged problems?

1. *We are going to import a "bad element".*

We have had open enrollment in West G since 2006. Thus far, I have made inquiry and to my knowledge, there have been no incidents reported involving non-resident students. You can check this with the administration.

2. *The non-resident students will lower the grade averages of our schools.*

Proficiency percentages over the past three years:

Elementary	Resident 93%	Open enrollment 97.4%
Middle School	Resident 91.6%	Open enrollment 94%
High School	Resident 92.9%	Open enrollment 97.9%

The figures are easy to confirm.

3. *It costs us more money to teach non-resident students than resident students.*

Not true. It costs the system approximately \$10,000 per student. The state pays us \$5,700 per non-resident student, and \$2,960 per resident student. The argument is that it costs us \$4,300 per non-resident student. This figure is skewed because the \$10,000 cost includes extremely high cost for special needs students. You must also consider that some of the cost is fixed expenses. Those are expenses that are there, such as the cost of insurance or even maintenance, no matter how many students we have. It's like the airlines cost of flying. The cost of a flight, fuel, crew and maintenance is the same whether there is one passenger or one hundred—but the more passengers you have, the lower the cost per passenger. Open enrollment students actually lower the cost per student.

4. *Open enrollment students are taking resident students openings in athletics, band and other extra-curricular activities.*

Categorically untrue. Every activity that I have inquired about has not rejected any resident students.

5. *What will happen if we have open enrollment students and our resident student population grows in a particular grade so there is no room for the resident students?*

Understand that open enrollment students must reapply each year. Decisions to accept them are based on enrollment numbers. Once accepted, the open enrollment student does not get a pass for his or her educational career.

In addition to financial pluses, we have other advantages. If we have a fourth grade with 100 students and 4 teachers at \$50,000 per year, we would have a class size of 25 students, and the per-student teacher cost of \$2,000. If the total were reduced by 10% (the approximate number of non-resident students), we would have 90 students. We would have the choice of keeping 4 teachers, with a class size of 22.5 students at \$2,222 per student, or keeping 3 teachers, with a crowded class size of 30 students at \$1,666. The per student cost per student and class size is more beneficial by including open enrollment students.

There are other concerns that have been expressed, but unfortunately I have only been allotted 5 minutes.

There are cogent arguments for each alleged problem with open enrollment. I'm sure that they were examined by all of our school board members who every year have voted unanimously to have open enrollment.

In conclusion, there doesn't appear to be any merit to the arguments being voiced against open enrollment. Indeed, at this time, it seems to be beneficial. I have faith in our Board to do the right thing each year that open enrollment comes up for a new vote.

I must also say that what I have talked about tonight I have expressed as a concerned citizen and property owner in the District and have a vested interest in our community. I am not stating the Board's position.

Bernard Mandel
Russell, Ohio

2013-109

A motion was made by Mr. Kilroy and was seconded by Mrs. Dottore to have an open community meeting to discuss open enrollment.

Discussion followed:

Mr. Kotowski stated the Board does not hold political meetings. The Board is a governance agency. He suggested the Superintendent address the issue with an informational meeting.

Mrs. Dottore suggested a community meeting similar to one held two years ago when several hot topics were being discussed

Roll call: Yes: Dottore, Kilroy

No: Beers, Gillmore, Kotowski

Motion failed

2013-110

A motion was made by Mr. Beers and was seconded by Mr. Kotowski to have a presentation by Superintendent Palmer to communicate facts and information surrounding open enrollment and student population topics

Discussion followed:

Mr. Beers stated questions may be asked of Mr. Palmer. Mr. Palmer felt he would be prepared for the informational session prior to the election date. Mr. Beers directed those with political interest in this issue to the League of Women Voters forum being held the following Monday.

Roll call: Yes: Beers, Dottore, Gillmore, Kilroy, Kotowski

Motion carried

New Business

Review and Discussion of Board Operating Protocol

Mrs. Dottore asked Mr. Kilroy if he had any questions regarding the protocol document that was passed at a prior meeting he was unable to attend. Mr. Kilroy voiced his displeasure at the lack of consideration displayed by voting in his absence, citing other meetings when votes were delayed. His belief is communication and transparency may be reduced by the document. Mrs. Dottore assured the Board everyone's points were taken into consideration and the final document is a result of compromise. It will continue to be reviewed. Mr. Beers stated he did not want the vote delayed. Mr. Kotowski stated he has missed meetings and did not ask to have votes rearranged.

At that point, every Board member, the Superintendent and Treasurer signed the operating protocol acknowledgement.

Standing Committee reports

Policy Mr. Palmer and Mrs. Dottore to meet on October 16, 2013

Finance committee meeting on Wednesday, October 23, 2013 at 9:30 a.m.

Operations committee meeting on Thursday, October 17, 2013 at 8:00 a.m.

Curriculum – Mrs. Gillmore met with Mrs. Benincasa and Mr. Palmer on September 18, 2013. Discussion items included the West Geauga high school designation as high performing and a National Blue Ribbon School. This designation validates the hard work of staff, students and families. Mrs. Benincasa will present a curriculum report at the November Board meeting.

Personnel – Mr. Palmer and Mr. Beers met and discussed performance based compensation. Further discussion will take place at the November Board meeting. A discussion about timing ensued, with Mr. Kilroy clarifying his intention was to move forward with PBC, but not move forward with increases until the Board is in place in January 2014.

Long Range Plan and Enrollment

Mr. Palmer stated there have been several questions regarding enrollment in the past several weeks. He believes an informational meeting is important. Several questions had been emailed and the answers were returned by email and posted on the District website. Mr. Palmer handed out open enrollment figures for 2012, 2013 and the current year. He stressed the negotiated agreement allows children of employees to attend West Geauga Schools, but it is not legal to have an open enrollment policy of only “children of employees.”

Regarding the long range plan, more than 60 community members and employees spent a great deal of time creating a long range plan. The plan incorporates putting together an appropriate learning environment for our students. Administrators are gathering information. Keeping students in the forefront is of utmost importance. Class size is an element of both open enrollment and the long range plan. The Board will review the open enrollment policy yearly and all of this information will tie into the long range plan.

Mrs. Dottore mentioned the enrollment study that was done a couple years ago and asked that Mr. Palmer include that in his information. She also requested that financial information be included in as simplified a fashion as possible.

A motion was made by Mrs. Dottore and was seconded by Mr. Kilroy, to adjourn the meeting at 8:10 p.m.

Roll call: Yes: Beers, Dottore, Gillmore, Kilroy, Kotowski

Motion carried

Board President

Treasurer