

**Prepared Notes for Board Meeting - Legislative**  
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Of course, superlatives fail when talking about Worthington Education Foundation event a week or so ago at the Shop of Worthington Place. I especially enjoyed having teachers discuss what they have done and are doing with the grants, including the full demonstration of Gelli Printing Plates which, I have to admit, wasn't obvious from the description at the Board Meeting and the whole "Women in Engineering display" was very cool as well. I'm looking forward to another year of grants and especially, to the revealing of "the big idea".

Last Monday, I went to Thomas Worthington's curriculum night. It is interesting how this event has changed over the years, in many ways highlighting the changes in education itself and in other ways, highlighting the difference that district policies have made over time for our kids.

I had two takeaways from the event. First is the emphasis on assessment and the ever changing requirements for graduating from an Ohio High School. If it is frustrating for district administrators, think how overwhelming it must be for parents and students. At least a third of the presentation was geared towards assessments which I think is just a sign of the times. The happier component of the presentation was the sheer number of choices and opportunities that students have in our high schools. It really was overwhelming between STEM, the EBA, Linworth, countless electives, countless athletic and other cocurricular activities, College Credit Plus, the Delaware Area Career Center and on and on. It was clear that we value choice here in Worthington which is a critical piece to those of us who advocate that we have schools that fit the kid rather than the other way around.

As if that wasn't overwhelming enough, the Gifted Services department put on a spectacular presentation last Wednesday detailing the opportunities and pathways for gifted or advanced learners. The key take away from this presentation was again, a large number of choices no matter what your passion, including honors classes, AP opportunities in math, science and social studies, IB, Credit Flex, College Credit Plus, internships, the experiential option of the Linworth program and so much more. All this choice highlights the importance of our guidance counselors who must try to ensure every kid finds those programs and opportunities that will allow him or her to maximize their potential.

Following our testing presentation two weeks ago, I attended Brookside's "Parents Night Out" which offered parents the opportunity to see what kids are going to have to know to take the PARCC assessments. It wasn't well attended but the parents who were there readily concluded that any 8 year old is going to be far more comfortable with the technology than they are. Technology may not be the problem, but time to complete the assessment might be. Most of us were struggling to complete the 4<sup>th</sup> grade practice test in the time allotted.

Finally, a quick work about the Governor's school funding proposal. As you know, the Worthington School District is enjoying its best financial condition in recent memory. In absolute terms, Worthington loses about 2.2 million dollars across the biennium, a shade under 1% of total general fund resources. This is about 5.3 million dollars better than the forecast because the forecast approved in October had already accounted for the phase out of TPP, all be it at a slightly faster rate than the Governor's proposal. What the forecast did not account for, however, is an increase in Worthington foundation aid under the Governor's formula due to the lifting of the cap. Netting it out, our forecast projected a loss of 7.5 million dollars, we're only losing 2.2 million dollars which represents a net gain to the bottom line of 5.3 million dollars, and that is as much of a rosy picture as one can paint about the Governor's proposal.

Unfortunately, the NEXT biennium will not be so kind to us although that too would be better than what was forecasted. If the Governor's proposal became law and survived into the next general assembly, two very dubious prospects by the way, Worthington still has around \$500K under the cap that would presumably be lifted. Since the forecast already takes the TPP reimbursements to zero, the uncapped foundation amount would provide a net gain over our forecast even as we lose real dollars in the process.

In any event, since the November forecast suggested the next levy would be required no earlier than calendar year 2018, there is nothing in the Governor's budget to suggest that this would be moved up and, in fact, might even be pushed back another year if levy extension was a district priority.

Ironically though, while news sites have been replete with story after story about how well this district or that district does, it remains impossible to do a real apples to apples comparison since we have to wait for the legislative language to come out. Core aid and TPP are only two parts of a very complex picture that includes transportation, preschool, casino revenue and other data components, any of which could be increased, decreased or eliminated. There is also the possibility that the Governor's proposal might be and probably is DOA in the legislature anyway as no one in Cleveland seems to want to pay an 8.5% sales tax or 8% here in Franklin County for that matter.

Moving forward, while we can and will certainly try, I don't see the state reversing course on TPP reimbursement as they see that money as just additional funds to redistribute. I think our high value lobbying targets are going to be a redefinition of how the state calculates "capacity" as more and more Worthington residents are house rich and cash poor and therefore, income should be a strong component of the formula. I also think that organizations such as the Alliance for a High Quality Education are going to be taking a look at just how much redistribution is merited. I close with a thought from the unusual combination of Mike Duffey and our Senior Advisor, Abramo Ottolenghi. The Governor's formula is treating a district's income as a collective attribute, however, just because Jennifer and Charlie are raking in the big bucks doesn't mean that Julie and Sam are. Income is, by definition, an individual attribute and at some point, the Governor's formula is going to have to acknowledge this or you'll have tons of seniors priced out of their homes by the inevitable redistribution. Time will tell.