

Prepared Notes for Board Meeting –
May 7, 2012
Marc A. Schare –
614 791-0067
marc9@aol.com

Tonight, we'll start with a short legislative update. Tonight, the Ohio Senate will introduce their substitute for the education portion of the Mid-Year Budget Review. The key issue of the A-F report card, 3rd grade reading guarantee and funding were still being discussed according to Senator Lehner's office.

Along with our Superintendent and Treasurer, I attended the Worthington Chamber's Lunch and Learn session where Rep. Duffey had a very interesting take on school funding. As you may know, Westerville's pro-levy group, "Our Community, Our Schools", has been actively engaged in lobbying the legislature to increase state funding for education, thus joining every other education group in the state in that endeavor. Rep. Duffey indicated that for every dollar in state income tax that Worthington School District residents pay downtown, a small fraction will get redistributed to our school district. The number is in the ODE CUPP report and for FY10, the last year available, it was 18.11 cents. If you want a dollar to go to the school district through the income tax, it would take 5 dollars from district residents to make that happen. Despite our best efforts, that dynamic isn't likely to change anytime soon. Clearly, local levies are better for a district like ours.

In addition to the Chamber event, I did get to two of the community conversations, one at Evening Street and the other at Granby. While it's obviously better than nothing, I am a bit concerned that we are not making a financial case for the levy. The case is clearly a good deal more complicated than "The State took all of our money" which appears to be the gist of the argument to date. In years past, we would offer as much or as little financial information as the recipient wanted, both in written communications and in public forums. It's my hope that we continue to do this.

Speaking of financial information, the finance committee met last week and reviewed a draft of the forecast upon which the levy will be based. The new forecast is about 11 million dollars better than the old forecast which will allow us to hold the levy down to a "reasonable" millage, a key part of our "Reasonable levys at reasonable intervals" strategy that we initiated back in 2006. There are a handful or two of genuine policy questions that are still to be determined such as whether we should include casino money in the forecast and whether we should abandon the cost shifting strategy employed in the last bond issue. Those questions will be discussed at the Treasurer's Advisory Committee tomorrow night.

Finally, I want to offer my personal welcome to Ms. Coombs and Ms. Partlow. Ms. Partlow comes to us at a challenging time in our district and she will lead a building with

a higher percentage of children in poverty than our community and our staff is used to. It was interesting to read this blog post from the New Albany Superintendent:

Referring to Dr. Partlow as a much beloved member of the staff, she writes:

“Dr. Partlow’s leadership impact on this district has been extraordinary”, Superintendent Domine shared. “Over the years, she has led our district through extensive curriculum, assessment, instruction, special education and gifted work. Dr. Partlow has given immeasurable time and effort to support our students and staff. She will be missed and we hope the entire community will join us in congratulating her on her professional accomplishments.”

Honestly, I almost feel guilty stealing you away. Thank you for coming and welcome.

For Ms. Coombs, I will offer this thought. Last Wednesday, a much beloved leader in our own district, Jim Baker had a retirement party in this very room. Jim’s legacy at Liberty Elementary is, in part, an aggressive school renewal plan, Liberty Leaps, which is grounded in best practices such as an extended school day, flexible grouping, in some cases across grade levels and a focus on technology. Your outstanding record at Weigel certainly speaks for itself but all that does is create an expectation among some board members that you will, indeed, take Liberty Elementary to the next level. Welcome to you as well.