

Prepared Notes for Board Meeting

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So let's start with a policy update. Randy, Sam and I have met separately and together with various district administrators over the last few weeks. I'll go over a few observations on the process so far. The current policy manual is roughly 937 pages when you lay it all out. The NEOLA policy manual is going to come in at around 1500 pages with 437 policies. That implies that NEOLA is wordier, more detailed, way more prescriptive and by definition, much more of a micromanaging instrument than the OSBA equivalents. In addition, there are tons of policies or parts of policies for which there is no OSBA equivalent. While we will make every effort to highlight these for the board and the community, I suspect we're going to miss quite a few along the way.

Just a few examples to illustrate the situation. Policy 2114 mandates that the district and every building receive an "A" on the state report card for performance indicators. It also requires the Superintendent to provide an estimate as to how much it would cost to accomplish this, the implication being that if you just provided sufficient resources, the "A" would be forthcoming. I'm sure that Ms. Wene and her department would welcome the 6 page curriculum development/course adoption policies (#2210) that actually force a BOE decision on whether we want to "utilize a variety of learning resources to accomplish the educational goals" (or not). My personal favorite is the policy that attempts to define what a "controversial issue" is and whether it should be the Superintendent, Principal or Department Head who approves their inclusion in the classroom. There are literally dozens, maybe hundreds of these types of choices.

Sam and I will continue to power through the 1500 page book, but I think our overall approach is going to be one that increases administrative flexibility wherever possible.

Moving on, the last 2 weeks of the school year are a fantastic time to be a school board member just because of all the end of year activities. Last week, I went to the WKHS Choir Spring Concert and watched the students give an emotional farewell to Mr. Zabiegala, who is departing for Rutgers. One of Trent's edicts is that every kid have a trusted adult in the building and it was pretty clear that for a number of students at WKHS, it was Mr. Z. The next day, I spent a few hours wandering around the Senior Projects at WKHS and discovered we have at least one student who will be attending the US Naval Academy in Annapolis, and that's always pretty special. Other students had opportunities to intern at religious organizations, law firms and I spoke with two students who interned with the Ohio Democratic Party. Those were fun conversations. This year featured a record number of Senior Project Internships and to be sure, this program is the strongest antidote to senioritis ever invented.

Later that night, Mr. Kellenberger invited Board Members to attend Worthingway's Honors recognition and that's always a fun event, so thank you Nathan for that invitation.

On Friday, I went to my very first Superintendent's coffee where the topics of discussion ranged from High School Sailing (yes, that's a thing) to providing support in middle school for the First Lego League, a precursor to some of the robotic competitions that occur in high school. I also attended the some of the Walkabout presentations at Linworth for an annual reminder of what makes Walkabout so special. Two Seniors separately went off to Columbia (the country, not the city) to teach English in separate placements. Other seniors spent their walkabouts working with animals, charities and so forth and of course, we all heard about the amazing camping trip in Yellowstone. Walkabout continues to be a signature program in our district and our state.

Finally, speaking of robotic competitions, I attended the Ohio First Robotic State Championship on Saturday to watch the Worbots take on the best of Ohio. I never really thought robotics was a spectator sport but WKHS was absolutely packed watching these dueling robots from districts across the state do the battle. I didn't stay till the end but the Worbots did us proud, finishing in the runner up position.