

Prepared Notes for Board Meeting

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First up tonight is a legislative update:

The conference committee regarding HB416, calamity day legislation, is due to meet on Tuesday, finally putting an end to the saga of whether 5, 7 or 9 calamity days is the right number. As I've opined to members of our legislature, this whole debate is absurd, because the legislature, in its wisdom, has already passed legislation that would permit up to 29, yes, 29 calamity days in Worthington next year. I'll say that again – thanks to the days to hours conversion, this Board could decide to cancel school for the entire months of August and May next year and that would be just fine with a legislature that has kept us on pins and needles trying to decide whether 5 days, 7 days or 9 days is the right answer for 2014.

Receiving a third hearing this week is House Bill 290 which would eliminate civil liability for a school district when members of the public use its facilities.

Receiving a second hearing is HB393, a new unfunded mandate, all be it a small one, that requires high schools to publish not later than the first day of April and not less than one page in length, a career decision guide for high school students that includes a discussion of various careers, paths to achieving said careers, average salaries in the region and other specific pieces of data. HB393 reads like a blizzard bag assignment as it attempts to micromanage a portion of the job of the high school guidance counselor. To demonstrate the level of micromanagement in this legislation, I'll just highlight one clause. The clause says that if our high schools publish a newsletter, the career decision guide must be part of it, but if we don't publish a newsletter, the career decision guide can be published on the web site. This is going to cause hundreds of school districts to stop publishing newsletters because of the extra cost of the career decision guide.

A few weeks back, I attended my very first meeting ever of the district's curriculum liaison council. At this particular meeting, the council heard two presentations, one of the third grade reading guarantee and one on the Worthington Academy. As community engagement committees go, the CLC is, by necessity and design, hi touch and hi impact and this meeting was no different. Each member provided a somewhat unique perspective on both topics and there's no doubt that having a committed group of knowledgeable parents providing input at the formulative stage of an ambitious project like the Worthington Academy can only improve the final product.

I attended the Thomas Worthington curriculum night presentation where Principal Gaskill played to a packed house with several important messages designed for parents and the incoming freshman class alike. First, TWHS offers a staggering array of opportunities. Second, 9th grade counts and third, it's never too early to start thinking

about life after high school, so there was emphasis on our relationships with Honda and Columbus State Community College as well as STEM and Business opportunities.

Speaking of STEM, I have to comment on the excellence that was on display from staff and students alike during Worthington Science Day. First was the sheer number of events, including design and the traditional science fair and the number of projects on display at the science fair was phenomenal. This doesn't happen by accident – it happens with the encouragement of teachers throughout the district. Second, our teachers and administrators were fantastic in the staging and support of this event, so much so that from the perspective of someone coming in the day of event to help judge projects, it seemed to go off without a hitch and finally, some of the projects themselves were quite humbling.

Of course, there was also pancake day and while I didn't flip, I did get to watch the pancake eating contest and I congratulate Kilbourne on breaking their 2 year losing streak in this important competition. Congratulations to the organizers of that event for their relentless support of extra-curricular activities in our district.

Finally, if it's March, it's musicals and Worthington was treated to two tour-de-force productions. As a decades long fan of high school theatre in Worthington, the production of "Singing in the Rain" featured some of the best choreography ever to grace stage of the Hottenroth so congratulations to our own Chloe Beck for her performance in that production. For their part, Kilbourne's production of "Beauty and the Beast" played to two sold-out audiences this last weekend in an extravaganza of imagery and sound that was awe inspiring. Both productions, including costuming, set design, use of extras and of course, the orchestras, was astonishing and everyone involved in these productions can be very proud of their accomplishment.