

Prepared Notes for Board Meeting

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Marc A. Schare

614 791-0067

marc9@aol.com

We have some committee updates today, but before we get to that, I want to talk a little bit about our administration's activism regarding the 3rd grade reading guarantee.

A week ago Sunday, while most Americans were celebrating Mother's Day, Jennifer Wene was hard at work writing testimony regarding Senate Bill 21, a little known piece of corrective legislation for the third grade reading guarantee. Her testimony was nothing less than a tour-de-force of everything that was wrong with the legislation and, most importantly, how it can be fixed. Monday night, Dr. Tucker and I watched Jennifer testify in front of the House Education Committee. Her testimony lasted 15 minutes and the panel engaged her in questions for another 30 minutes after that for a total testimony of nearly 45 minutes. Since SB21 was an improvement on the original bill, it passed the committee and the full house with no opposition, however, the members of the panel are now fully aware of the aspects of the legislation that are most problematic for those tasked with its implementation and I would expect to see another "corrections" bill as we move closer to the time of mandated, non-appealable, no input from parents or teachers retentions in the state of Ohio.

Along those same lines, and I take this as a point of personal privilege, I testified on the broader topic of the tradition of local control of public education. The third grade reading guarantee is a perfect example of the minimization of local control in the state. If we can't control retention decisions, there is little left to this tradition, a point I made publicly during testimony and privately to the State Superintendent and several members of the legislature over the last week. The pushback from Superintendent Ross and coincidentally editorialized last Saturday in the Dispatch is that local school districts simply cannot be trusted to do what is right for kids. My argument back is "Trust but Verify" and for those districts that are not doing right by kids, a heavy hand may be appropriate, but leave Worthington alone to do what is right for every individual child. In other words, just about the only thing that's "local" in "local control" is the funding, and that's a pity, at least in Worthington.

Speaking of local control, I attended Fordham's panel discussion on education reform in the state and the subject came around to a survey completed by 344 Ohio Superintendents. 20% said the third grade reading guarantee will bring fundamental improvement to K-12 education in the state while 77% said that high retention rates will force the law to be scaled back. The survey results are fascinating and I'd encourage anyone with an interest in education reform to download the full report.

So, on to the committee reports. The evaluation committee had another thrill packed ride into the intricacies of the Ohio Teacher Evaluation System. The committee focused on

the creation process for Student Learning Objectives, what the granularity was for the SLO's (Teacher, Department, Building, etc..). The committee discussed the pros and cons of using the same SLO assessment in the fall as we do in the spring and other nuts and bolts type topics related to the pragmatic aspects of implementation. Trent sent a note regarding the decision to eliminate the shared attribution measure and other changes are likely once we can see what is allowed with the state software.

The policy committee met on Wednesday and Mr. Joseph has or will describe what was discussed, so I'll let that go for now.

On Thursday, I joined a team of Worthington Kilbourne teachers, counselors and administrators to conduct interviews for the 2013-2014 Student Board Member position. The committee selected Ms. Kaitlyn Napoli, an incoming senior who wants to demystify the functions of the Board of Education for students at Worthington Kilbourne High School who are constantly hearing that the Board did this or the Board did that, some of which would probably come as a complete surprise to the Board. Kaitlyn has a student resume a mile long and I look forward to her joining our meetings in August. In the meantime, if you want to see one of Kaitlyn's talents, check out her article demystifying sequestration in the March issue of the WKHS Ravine. If she can demystify sequestration, demystifying our Board should be a piece of cake.