

Prepared Notes for Board Meeting
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Today, I offer a number of committee updates and a thought or two on the issues of the day.

First, you might remember a few weeks back I asked Dr. Tucker to look at the district's prohibition on using cell phones and other Wireless Communications Devices. Dr. Tucker convened a virtual task force to look at what some technologically enlightened districts are doing and that task force held its second, and second to last, meeting last week. The task force has reached consensus on a number of concepts. First, we agree it makes no sense to ask students to power down when they enter our buildings. Second, we agree that while all technology and all equipment has the potential to be abused, we should not ignore the potential for the vast educational benefits that technology can offer. Third, we agree that there is no reason to reinvent the wheel as several policies from both in and out of Ohio already exist that will do what we need. Fourth, we agree that it would be difficult to start making inclusive lists of every possible behavior that would be acceptable under the policy or not acceptable under the policy. There will be a certain amount of discretion on the part of building level administrators.

The policy that most closely matches the consensus came from Seminole County Florida Public Schools. It is relatively simplistic in that it attempts to integrate the student's online experience with regular schoolwork. For example, the expectation for online interaction is the same as the expectation for face to face interaction. If bullying is unacceptable in school, it is equally unacceptable online. If cheating on a test by copying someone's paper is unacceptable behavior, cheating on a test by texting the answers is equally unacceptable and so forth. Mr. George Joseph is in charge of crafting a policy for the committee to approve, said policy to be brought to the board for a first reading in December. This will allow a solid month for constituent input prior to final adoption at the organizational meeting in January.

My second update is for Race to the Top. At this month's meeting, our representative from ODE, Mr. Greg Sampson stopped by to give us a pep talk and promised better communication throughout the state to find out what other districts are doing with this initiative. We then broke into application areas to conduct the real work of the meeting. I am in Application Area D and this month's meeting focused on the teacher evaluation system pilot project which will be taking place at Evening Street and McCord, not to be confused with another Race to the Top related pilot, OPAPP, which is the subject of tonight's resolution.

First, I am supportive of our participation in the teacher evaluation pilot for two reasons. I think that Worthington should have the opportunity to provide input into the final system

endorsed by the state and second, I think the state will have a better shot at coming up with something that can stand the test of time and not be subject to political whims if smart, committed teachers are involved in the process at an early stage.

HB153 mandates that multiple evaluation factors be used, but at least 50% of the overall evaluation must represent student academic growth. The question of how to measure said growth is difficult even when standardized testing exists, but it becomes far more challenging for those subject areas, such as elementary school art, where no such metric is currently available. Like art itself, is it a case of “I’ll know great art teachers when I see them” or can there be an objective measurement. Who better to ask than art teachers, and that’s some of what we’ll be doing in our pilot.

In addition to student academic growth, the pilot will also attempt to measure things like professional communications and classroom management. Again, this leads to some thought provoking questions. For example, if student achievement is through the roof but parents feel left out of the process, will that reflect poorly on the teacher and should it reflect poorly on the teacher. I don’t know the answers but through the pilot, our district will hopefully have the input we deserve.

Finally, while I applaud the expeditious nature of the Wireless Communication Device committee in only having 3 meetings, I am less happy about the frequency of “3 and out” performances of the offenses of our high school football teams this year. Still, it is once again time for our annual football bet on the game between Thomas Worthington and Worthington Kilbourne. In the true tradition of funding education (and in Columbus, apparently, sports arenas) through gambling, I will be wagering a \$25 donation to the Worthington Education Foundation that the TWHS Cardinals will emerge victorious in this year’s rivalry game, while Jennifer Best holds the opposite view, so at the risk of incurring the wrath of David Bressman, Charlie Wilson and Josh Cook, I respectfully close these remarks with a hearty “Go Cards”.