

MEMORANDUM

TO: WCSSD Board of School Directors
FROM: Arthur Stewart
RE: Process and Scheduling for MFP review
DATE: August 7, 2011

Dear folks:

I write to update you about Donna's and my efforts to schedule meetings for a meaningful MFP review process. We continue to discuss the "to do" items with the administration and solicitor; however, the two obstacles I previously communicated remain. Key administrators, including Jim Grosch, Norbert Kennerknecht, Mike Kiehl, Amanda Hetrick, and Amy Stewart remain unavailable until the school-opening tasks are complete.

This prevents these individuals from attending to the agenda items I shared with you ten days ago. After I wrote to you, none of you identified additional agenda items for inclusion. Thus, the list remains:

- 1) Identify current student residences. Uses will include: cohort/enrollment; transportation; attendance area study.
- 2) Update Dejong components of renovation and construction costs.
- 3) Update Dejong operational cost factors:
 - staffing
 - utilities
 - transportation
 - other
- 4) 5 year budget projection must be modified to take into account:
 - 11/12 budget
 - long range impact of Governor Corbett measures
 - QZAB yes, QZAB no

As you can see from Bob's Superintendent's report, Bob continues the process of gathering information on an ad hoc basis, with the help of principals. If members of the Board desire it, Bob's process will make it possible to vote on a new MFP, presumably in time to exploit the fall QZAB traunch, and while Bob is still here to carry on his guidance of the process. From that perspective Bob lends important continuity; his tenure, of course, precedes the Dejong community effort that resulted in the current MFP.

From the Board perspective, however, I continue to think it premature to put the MFP on the agenda. A foremost worry is the lack of ownership by those who will be called upon to implement. The key administrators, who, in the coming year, will be held accountable for the new MFP data, are not available to us until September, at the earliest. Similarly, in a matter of weeks, we transition to a new superintendent. As the Board receives new data, and as we build toward a new consensus, we would be wise, I think, to enroll our new superintendent as a key player. An associated worry is lack of time to vet data. No matter who provides us data the Board will have a need to challenge, digest and ask questions.

The second obstacle preventing the Board from acting is the new legal landscape of Act 1. I have been in regular contact with the solicitor about the referendum questions I posed to him in early July. He remains unable to complete that research due to the more pressing school-opening tasks engendered by the budget changes. However, he has orally communicated to me the confirmation of what was suspected: a referendum vote can only occur in the May elections (as opposed to the fall).

While I have heard various Board members express both favor and disfavor for referendum action, the solicitor's preliminary view is that, going forward, all major construction will require electoral approval because borrowing will put our District over the index. If that preliminary opinion holds, then whatever MFP changes we fashion at the Board level, will be put to public vote. This is a mixed blessing. On the good side, we will have until May, 2012, and this gives us breathing room for the administrators and new superintendent to gather and work with the new data. On the bad side we will be limited to a referendum process not yet determined by the solicitor, and which will probably not be flexible enough to allow for multiple construction options. The solicitor will continue to research the questions of how referendum questions can be phrased, whether multiple options can be posed, etc. But whatever MFP work we undertake, as a Board, will have to be done within the referendum confines. Again, I don't know how to responsibly add these matters to our agenda until we have that legal opinion in hand.

All of this said, the status remains as I stated ten days ago: I don't foresee any special meetings in August nor will I be including these matters on our September, 2011 agenda. Given the knowledge that a referendum is not possible in November, 2011, we have a window of several months within which to conduct an MFP review. I propose to schedule that process in conjunction with the new superintendent and at a time when the key administrators can take ownership of the data.

I recognize that this plan fails to exploit the millions of dollars of savings available in the QZAB program. If you are desirous of bringing a revised MFP plan forward, and which exploits the QZAB funds, I appreciate that Bob's process and report make that feasible. At the call of any three of you I will schedule a special meeting for that purpose. Alternatively, you may move to modify the agendas of either our August or September, 2011 meetings.

Sincerely,
Arthur