

The notes below were written by the chair of the WLCSC Board of Trustees, Rachel Witt, and sent to the members of the WLCSC board of trustees, the Superintendent of schools, date as noted. They were written as documents to aid collaboration and contain both informative and deliberative items. They are informal communication, written with the sole purpose of information to board members to facilitate individual members' ability to execute the task each were elected to do. They were not written for any form of publication.

Writing of these weekly notes and distribution to the board is voluntary and can be stopped at any time. A school board may decline to distribute information that is deliberative. Deliberative is defined, in part, as expressions of opinion or thoughts that are of a speculative nature, and that are communicated for the purpose of decision making. Nearly all language in these notes exactly fit the description of deliberative.

The Board Chair, in consultation with corporation and board leadership, is releasing these documents, only minimally redacted, as part of our ongoing work for transparency. Names/pronouns are redacted to ensure a first-person voice. Other redacted language could include: Legally protected information, i.e. personnel or student names or reference, deliberative information where release of the information could potentially cause harm to a person or group of persons, or inhibit the ability of the board to conduct the business of the board.

Redacted Text is noted by <Redacted Text>

3.11.2023 notes

As always, these notes are confidential. **As a reminder to all members, you should submit your questions, comments and additional information that could be helpful to the other board members directly to Box.** Please note, because of Spring Break, and reduced activity, unless there is some new urgent issue, I will not be writing notes next Saturday. Rachel

Board/Development - Training

- Excellent links to various Indiana Education Related Matters was sent out by ISBA yesterday (3/10). Subject of the email is “February School Board Resource Digest”. Please be on the lookout for it as a resource.
- There have been significant questions and comments about the appropriate roles and relationship between Superintendent and Board. As you are aware, this is one of the topics for our April training. I will try to offer materials here leading up to that training for your review and consideration. Here is an article that I found to be informative, current and concise. While its origin is Alaska, the content is very relevant. <https://aasb.org/clear-board-and-superintendent-roles/>

Meetings of the Board

- Regular meeting was held 3/6 at 6:30 PM
- Next Regular Meeting is scheduled for Monday 4/10 at 6:30 PM
- *Board Training (Executive Session) is scheduled for April 20 from 6-8 pm.*

Community/Patron Feedback

- x1 media regarding a former member, response sent.
- x1 patron <Redacted Text> regarding event organization and process for retiring teacher, response sent.
- x1 specials teacher (name withheld and some of the identifying words removed to avoid identifying this teacher for HR concern, but unlike the letter received last week from a different specials teacher, this letter was written such that nearly all of the content could be shared without identifying the teacher. *This will all be redacted*)

<Redacted Text>

Response sent to this teacher, Dr. Greiner and the Building Principal, but identity withheld. This is a personnel morale concern at this point and under the care of Superintendent Greiner.

General Business

- 3/6 Meeting docs are redacted where required and posted on website.
- As a general reminder, if you are scheduled to attend a meeting in a board member capacity and are not able to attend the meeting, or are not able to arrive on time, and stay until the end of the meeting, then please feel free to contact me or any officer to attend in your place.
- I am only partially complete on the redaction of board chair notes from previous weeks. I will complete this week and send to <Redacted Text> for posting all at once to make good use of her time. I have considered the timing of releasing going forward and will have a one-week delay on release so that members have an opportunity to offer questions or comments before the posting. For example, the 3/4 notes will be available to post now that the 3/11 notes are out to you. **As a reminder, these notes are a place for questions and answers to be posted. They are not IN ANY WAY a means for electronic decision making. They are entirely focused on making sure that information that any board member would like to inform their decision be provided to them and to all members at the same time so that all members have access to identical information.** This is to ensure transparency to our community, and limit the likelihood of costly public records requests for member emails. The only exceptions to this process are time sensitive/urgent inquiries, general logistical communications, and patron responses. Other email communications will not be responded to.
- As you are all aware, the principals of our schools have requested that in person student recognitions at our Regular Meetings, commonly known as our “way to go” awards, be suspended due to “concerns with lengthy and tense meetings”. <Redacted Text> communication with us continued with “We feel pausing this action is respectful of the time, sensitivities and efforts of our students and families. We would suggest that we reevaluate this decision in the fall of the next school year.”

Response was sent to the principals and Superintendent <Redacted Text>, with a copy sent to the full board. For the sake of transparency, below is the response to this request <Redacted Text>

Dear principals,

Yesterday Dr. Greiner shared with the board your concern with inviting students for student recognition, to our board meetings given their current contentious nature. Of all the difficult things that have been said by and about the board and individual members over the past two years, this was by far the most difficult to receive. To be clear, I agree with your perspective and concern. But it is difficult to hear confirmation that as a board, we are not conducting ourselves in a way that represents our schools well and serves as a good example to our students. As the board chair, I should be, and am, deeply concerned with this.

With all the difficulties facing our students and public education, we need every single adult in our buildings united behind our students and that includes, and should begin with, our school board. That doesn't mean that we must agree on all matters; healthy disagreement is to be expected at times and can be beneficial, but how we conduct ourselves and work together to do the business of the board sets the tone for our schools. We are currently falling short. I must work from the premise that all members have good intentions, but perhaps do not yet have the experience and training to be most successful in the role of a board member. Even current members, myself included, have room to learn and improve. When we stop striving for that improvement, we are certainly failing.

We started a new, board member self-evaluation process last fall and I anticipate continuing that and other board performance processes. The board mentorship and training methods previously successful with members have largely been rejected, so we are trying a different method by changing how I process information to the board, and also have scheduled a board training executive session for April 20th. I cannot control the actions of members. Each is an adult, elected by our community, motivated by their own perspective and values. But, I will continue to pursue a path to cohesive and productive function for our board and so, for our schools.

Above all else, I appreciate your willingness to stand up for the needs of our students and community.

Gratefully, Rachel