

*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>*

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2.25.2023 notes

As always, these notes are confidential. If you have any item you are interested in more conversation about, please let me know. I will set up a time with you. You are also always welcome to add comments to these notes if you have additional resources that would benefit the board. Rachel

### **Board/Development - Training**

**As a reminder to all members, you should submit your comments directly to Box. Please do so. I will be discontinuing any responses to emails as of this week for anything that is not basic scheduling/logistics, or does not require urgent response prior to the next week's notes. We do this for the sake of transparency to our community.**

- Board Training. Thank you to members for responding to the request for scheduling training.

Thursday 4/20 seems to be the date all members are available without any conflict. I would anticipate this is a two-hour training, 6-8 pm at the WVEC office on Benton St. in West Lafayette. The quote for training is \$1000 and that cost can be paid entirely from the state STEM grant as it relates to professional development. Please confirm this to me by Tuesday of this week 2/28 so that the training can be confirmed with <Redacted Text>. Thank you.

- Notes received from Secretary Austin from the ISBA Legislative Day. She will give a verbal report at the 3/6 meeting. I am posting her commentary here now so all members are reminded to ask any questions and/or review the informational documents mentioned:

*On February 21, 2023 I attended ISBA's Statehouse Day in Indianapolis. Prior to the meeting I invited Spencer Deery, our new state senator, and Chris Campbell, our state representative, to join me for lunch. Both replied that they would attend, but unfortunately Mr. Deery was ill, so I didn't get to see him. When he emailed me to let me know, I invited him for coffee before the next Third House event, but I haven't heard back. That event will take place on March 10.*

*Chris and I had an excellent discussion spanning several issues. She is a friend of public education and it never takes much convincing for her to vote in our best interests. I also said hello to and spoke briefly with Sheila Klinker and Ron Alting.*

*The main program consisted of two panel discussions. The first panel was the Caucus Leaders' Panel which included:*

*Representative Karickhoff, Speaker Pro Tempore  
Senator Eric Bassler, Assistant Majority Caucus Chair  
Senator Shelli Yoder, Assistant Minority Floor Leader  
Representative Phil GiaQuinta, House Democrat Leader*

*Some interesting bills they touched on included the fact that mental health is prioritized this session by the senate, being the focus of SB 1. HB 1281 adds requirements for teaching financial literacy in high school. SB4 relates to Public Health. They spoke about the partisan school board race bill(s) at length, and mentioned a new bill I hadn't previously heard of regarding data privacy. I have a booklet that summarizes where all these bills, and the rest of the education related bills, are in the process right now if anyone would like to take a look. HB1001 would give \$200 M to school choice, which is a nice way of saying charter schools. During that part of the discussion, Rep. Kerickhoff said, "We are adequately funding public schools," which almost made me fall out of my chair.*

*The other most interesting part of that discussion was that schools in the Evansville area have piloted a Youth First initiative that provides social workers to school corporations, which is having a positive impact in those communities.*

*The other panel discussion was the Education Committee Chairs/Leaders Panel which included:*

*Representative Bob Behning  
Representative Vernon Smith  
Senator Jeff Raatz  
Senator Fady Qaddoura*

*Mr. Qaddoura is so impressive, I could listen to him all day. He spoke eloquently about why partisan school boards are a terrible idea, and he talked about the 21st Century Scholars bill that would automatically enroll eligible students.*

*This panel also spoke about many of the bills that the first panel discussed. The main difference was that this session spoke more about Career and Technical Education.*

*I really appreciate the opportunity to attend this event and learn from our state senators and representatives. Obviously, the lunch and conversation with the legislators was the most important part, but the panel discussions were very informative and useful.*

- Commentary received from member <Redacted Text> regarding her ISBA new member training. I am not including these in the board meeting notes as written because they are individual member commentary, not report. The notes and conversation are carried over below from email for the sake of transparency.

## Member Mumford Commentary received 2.7

### ISBA New Board Member Training

January 21, 2023

Indianapolis

Presentation by Steve Horton, ISBA Director of Board Services

The screenshot shows a presentation slide titled "Understanding and respect for roles". The slide is divided into two main columns: "SCHOOL BOARD" and "SUPERINTENDENT".

**SCHOOL BOARD**  
Governance  
(Means)  
Mission & Vision  
Goals  
Policy  
Budget  
What? Why? How  
Much?  
"Bridge" between  
community and  
superintendent  
AUTHORIZE  
MONITOR

**SUPERINTENDENT**  
Management  
(Methods)  
Strategies  
Action Plans  
Regulations  
Procedures  
How? Who? When?  
Where?  
"Bridge" between staff  
and committee  
RECOMMEND  
IMPLEMENT

In the center, a double-headed arrow labeled "TRUST & RESPECT" connects the two columns. Below this arrow is a box labeled "COMMUNITY TRUST".

The slide is displayed in a browser window with a date of January 21, 2023, and a presentation title "Presentation by Steve Horton, ISBA Director of Board Services". The browser interface shows a zoom level of 175% and a page number of 1 / 1. The system tray at the bottom indicates the date is Feb 25 and the time is 8:08.

## Takeaways:

- The school board should act as the bridge between the community and superintendent
- It is important to share both good and bad information
- Every member of the school board should receive the same information ● Rumors about school situations spread rapidly and so it is important to provide accurate information quickly
- School board should actively monitor school finances, practices, and procedures

## What WLCSC school board is doing well:

- Good relationship between school board members and superintendent
- Policies are online, accessible to everyone, and current
- Executive sessions are only held when the topic meets one of the requirements

## What WLCSC school board could improve:

- Robust and public-school board meeting discussions of each important topic
- School board member questions over email before the public meeting should usually be re-asked and answered in public
  - Agenda items should be tabled until the next meeting if a school board member does not have enough information or if the community has not been allowed to share comments

### *R. Witt response 2.11*

*I am in receipt of this submitted information but am not clear if this is a report of training that you received from ISBA or a commentary of your personal assessment of school board performance. It reads to me as the latter. This could be interpreted by a reader as though the ISBA has somehow contributed to and/or agrees with your assessment and that is outside of their scope of their mission and operation. Could you please clarify your communication?*

### *R. Witt follow up 2.19*

*Just a follow up. I do not see receiving a response from you on this question and want to include your report if possible. Please let me know if my question is not clear or you would like additional information.*

### *D. Mumford response 2.21*

*I submitted the notes that I took during the ISBA training. The training covered the topics in my report and they described best practices. I noted which ones our school district is already following and where we would need to improve to meet the ISBA standard.*

### *R. Witt response 2.21*

*I would encourage you to consider that your assessment of our district's performance is a matter of opinion, as it would be if any single member (myself included) gave it. This assessment was not given by ISBA, and as I read the document you provided, that was not clear to me. As a board, our collective assessment of our district's performance on any issue has merit and is reportable. An assessment by a professional third party hired by the board to complete assessments would also have merit and is reportable (i.e. climate audit, etc.) Our individual assessments have merit for the purpose of informing the board's collective assessment and*

*decision making. I am happy to include your comments in the weekly chair notes for the benefit of the board. Please let me know if you would like me to do that. Thank you, Rachel*

#### *D. Mumford Response 2.23*

*I suggest my report be included in the next school board packet (the usual way of doing it) rather than in the weekly notes. My report is just a summary of my notes from the ISBA training. If you are looking for training materials that do not include an individual school board member's perspective, the ISBA could provide that directly.*

### **Meetings of the Board**

- Reminder, next regular meeting is Monday 3/6 6:30 PM. It was moved to the first Monday because of spring break.

### **Community/Patron Feedback**

- x1 patron <Redacted Text> with a complaint specific to member <Redacted Text> published commentary. Response sent to patron, cc to full board.
- <Redacted Text>, through multiple board members and administrators, regarding member <Redacted Text> published commentary. Note of appreciation sent to staff for the vital role they all play in our schools for our students. Forward cc to full board.

### **General Business**

- Meeting location follow up. I received feedback to my notes from <Redacted Text> regarding the location of our meetings. Hearing no other comment, we're going to go ahead with first determining if central office location would be possible and an improvement for live streaming, if not, we will look at possible alternate spaces in Happy Hollow. As a reminder, the meetings are also audio recorded and posted to the website as back-up to the sound issues on the livestream.
- Met with Policy Committee members on 2/23. Reviewed various policies related to our recent board discussions. Drafts have been sent to legal counsel for review and I expect first reading will be included in the March meeting.
- Board chair notes for the first six weeks (1.2.23 - 2.11.23) of 2023 are redacted and posted on the website on 2.20.23.
- Member <Redacted Text> has submitted several questions. Some of those Superintendent <Redacted Text> has responded to in his weekly notes. Some I have responded to.

### **Member Wang:**

1. WVEC boarding training: is this training for all board members or just for current new board members? Did all existing board members receive the same training when they were new board members? Did the school pay tuition for this training? Is this training voluntary or mandatory?

2. Can I have more info regarding my committee assignment of item "Negotiations/IBB"? Do I need to read related documents? Who should I contact or work with? Any meeting time or other obligations?
3. Can we arrange a meeting with the school attorney as a part of new board member training?
4. What is the best way/procedure to add an item/motion on board meeting agenda?

*R. Witt response*

Question 1. This WVEC training is for all members as described in my notes. It is normal for our board to have training, particularly when we have new members. In my time on the board, I have participated in similar training probably 5ish times. We had something similar when <Redacted Text> joined the board, using an ISBA resource. Because <Redacted Text> both recently had ISBA training I thought it would be good to diversify the delivery of that training. <Redacted Text> only had virtual training from the ISBA as there were still active COVID protocols in place. I think it is clear enough that we as a board could use some work on our understanding of the role of a school board as well as our interpersonal communication. <Redacted Text> led our priority setting retreat last fall and did a very nice job. As I said in my notes, it is also local so eliminates travel time and expense. I will respond with this detail to the whole board, but we believe the cost for this training will be about \$1000 and will be paid for by a grant.

Question 2. This is the negotiations team. It is short term, but intensive in the Fall. <Redacted Text> will let you know when it's starting up and help provide you training. <Redacted Text> on this last year and before it started, we conducted a training with <Redacted Text> would be up to speed and able to participate fully as a new member. I think that training worked well for <Redacted Text> was appreciative at the time, and I never heard otherwise.

Question 3. It is not out of the question to request a meeting with legal counsel, but we will pay for that time and travel in addition to retainer fees so as to be good stewards of our resources, I would like to be able to have a clear agenda, list of questions, etc. Do you have something in particular you would like to know? or training you are interested in that you did not receive from ISBA? (Usually we use them for legal related training because they do an excellent job and it is the lowest cost option.)

Question 4. This was in my chair notes from January 2. Copied below. So, if there is something you're interested in seeing on the agenda, I'd recommend you comment on the board chair notes as we discussed in our meeting last week so all members can see it and ask questions. "As a general point of clarification/education to all members, we do already have in place a mechanism for a member to force an agenda item to a meeting. A member can make a motion that an agenda item be added during a regular meeting when the board chair specifically asks at the start of every meeting if there are any changes to the agenda. The board member would motion, that would require a second, then it would go to vote. If the majority of the board votes to modify the agenda, the item would be added.

That said, it is IDEAL in the interest of collaboration if that conversation is had prior to the meeting so that a) the meeting is efficient and respects members time and b) so that staff and all members have the ability to review facts, ask for additional information, and are prepared to vote. This is the reason why, in interest of transparency, I invite members to contribute their thoughts in advance of the meeting..."

L. Wang

Question 1: Thanks for arranging the training session. I think I should be available then.

Question 2: Thanks for detailed info which is very helpful.

Question 3: I do not have any specific questions for school attorney now. I think a general training/information session with Q&A should be good enough. If it is too costly, I can skip it.

Question 4: I am wondering, do we need a whole board majority vote to add an item on agenda, or one motion plus one second are enough to add an item on agenda for info, discussion or vote?

*R. Witt*

Please refer to policy 0166 Agenda