

Communication Log 2014-15									
Initiated By	Date	Responded By	Date	Topic	Phone	Letter	Email	Meeting	Other
Pat Zach	7/1/14	Emerson Smith	7/1/14	Full-Day Kindergarten Tuition			x		
Barb Buck	7/1/14	N/A		Full-Day Kindergarten Tuition			x		
Dave Buck	7/1/14	Sarah Riss	7/1/14	June Update			x		
Chris Wilhelm	10/13/14	Emerson Smith, Sarah Riss		property issues (ongoing conversation from July 2014)			x		
Dave Buck	10/24/14	Sarah Riss	10/24/14	Creative Thinking Seminars			x		
Jonathan Browne	11/7/14	N/A		Property Assemblage		x			
Pat Zach	11/12/14	Amy Clendennen	11/12-11/13	Proposals at BOE meetings			x		
Chrissie Stewart	11/13/14	Steve Loher	11/13-11/14	BOE Meeting question			x		
Chrissie Stewart	11/14/14	Sarah Riss	11/17/14	Bond Questions			x		
Dave Buck	11/15/14	Sarah Riss	11/17/14	Retreat Feedback			x		
Jean Dugan	11/16/14	Diane Moore	11/16/14	Moss Field timetable			x		
Dave Buck	11/20/14	Sarah Riss	11/20/14	Do High School Rankings Really Matter?			x		
Dave Buck	12/3/14	Sarah Riss	12/3/14	Creative Kids Chaos Day			x		
Sara Howard	12/4/14	Sarah Riss, Emerson Smith	12/4/14	HS ECHO survey distribution			x		
Anothony Stricker	12/6/14	Sarah Riss	12/8/14	Tax Levy/Bond Issue			x		
Bob Sherwood	12/8/14	David Addison	12/12/14	Tax Increase			x		
		Amy Clendennen	12/12/14	Tax Increase			x		
		Emerson Smith	12/12/14	Tax Increase			x		
		Emerson Smith	12/14/14	Tax Increase			x		
Tracy Smith Clyburn/CS parents	12/17/14	Sarah Riss	12/17/14	Letter from CS parents about grandfathering CS students			x		
Dave Buck	1/16/15	Sarah Riss	12/20/15	40 Acres Master Plan Status			x		
Dave Buck	1/27/15	Sarah Riss	1/27/15	Four Key Words to Improve WGSD			x		
Dave Buck	2/24/15	Sarah Riss	2/24/15	Propositions S & W	x		x		

Jane Baumgartner

**From:** Sarah Riss  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 24, 2015 6:32 PM  
**To:** Dave Buck; Emerson Smith; Amy Clendennen; David Addison; oliver.joel@wgmai.org; Jean Dugan; Steve Loher; Michael Shipley; John Simpson; Diane Moore; Cathy Vespereny; Linda Holliday; Jane Baumgartner  
**Cc:** Kristin Denbow; Stacie Smith; Jon Clark; Nancy Zitzmann; Bill Schiller; Tony Arnold; Pam Retzlaff; Lisa Hilpert  
**Subject:** RE: Steger 6th Grade Center's Last Stand

Just had a great phone conversation with Dave buck. I feel I was able to effectively answer all his questions. Jane, please put in the communication log for the BOE.  
Thanks!

*Sarah*  
Dr. Sarah Booth Riss  
Superintendent of Schools  
Webster Groves School District  
314-961-1233

**From:** Dave Buck [mailto:dave@buckstl.com]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 24, 2015 2:36 PM  
**To:** Emerson Smith; Amy Clendennen; David Addison; oliver.joel@wgmai.org; Jean Dugan; Steve Loher; Michael Shipley; Sarah Riss; John Simpson; Diane Moore; Cathy Vespereny; Linda Holliday  
**Cc:** Kristin Denbow; Stacie Smith; Jon Clark; Nancy Zitzmann; Bill Schiller; Tony Arnold; Pam Retzlaff; Lisa Hilpert  
**Subject:** Steger 6th Grade Center's Last Stand

School Board & District Administration,

As I have already shared with a few of you, given I have sophomore twins at the high school and a grandson in kindergarten at Bristol, if Barb and I are going to err toward the side of success in any area of our lives, it's going to be in education. Plus, we trust you. So Propositions S&W will get our votes.

But I am not casting my vote without first sharing a strong opinion with you, for whatever it is worth.

I have learned in my career that there is always more than one right answer to any problem or opportunity in life. So here is my second right answer called "Steger 6th Grade Center's Last Stand."

If the increasing enrollment trend and overcrowding are the major problems driving your solution, I get it. You are not the only district trying to proactively deal with this issue. But I wonder if a second right answer was seriously considered by the Building and Finance Committees and you that included keeping the Steger 6th Grade Center open, given that parents and students have long felt that there was something unique, special and important at work at Steger.

Beyond my own thoughts, I believe in market research so I was curious what a few current and past Steger students, a few current faculty, and current and past Steger parents thought. I also briefly touched base with another school district which does not have anything like Steger.



I do not know the exact history of Steger, but I think it has operated as the 6th Grade Center for around 20 years or more. To my understanding, I do not know of any other school district which has anything like Steger. Here's a few key points of support offered as Steger's Last Stand:

- 1. 5th grade graduates from the district's five elementary schools, *who have never met each other*, get to come to a new school where they can get to know each other and come together as one class and social group, without any disruption and distraction from both upper and lower grades.
- 2. This unique bonding opportunity and development of a class is so important as these kids will be with their classmates for **the next 7 years!!!!** As such, I have long believed that Steger's approach, whether by design or by accident, was brilliant and perfect for child development and class formation at that age.
- 3. Additionally and importantly, Steger introduces its kids to its superb team teaching approach for the first time that is later carried on at Hixson.

In short, I think the district has something truly unique and special on their hands in Steger and, while I understand the need for expanded physical facilities, I do not like the idea of the district losing the excellence and positive learning and bonding experience of the Steger 6th Grade Center.

I hear and know the arguments that the 6th grade kids at the renovated Hixson will have their own wing, etc. But talk to kids who have experienced Steger, Hixson and now the high School and you will get a different picture and feedback. To them, despite a new wing at Hixson, the kids say that the grades will mix anyway and the sole focus on forming a 6th grade class will be lost.

Finally, without seeing any hard enrollment numbers and projections through 2018 or beyond, it raises questions as to is the district potentially overbuilding for a short-term overcrowding problem that will soon lessen, necessitating the question of is there a second right answer that maybe doesn't cost the district and residents \$28 million?

But I'm considering this email as the Steger 6th Grade Center's Last Stand. Thanks for listening.

Dave Buck  
952-0910