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Communication Log 2015-16

Initiated By										
	Date	Responded By	Date	Topic	Phone	Letter	Email	Meeting	Other	
Kim Mumm	6/22/15	Sarah Riss	6/23/15	Early Learning Study Team Report			x			
Kim Mumm	6/24/15	N/A		Decimation			x			
Kim Mumm	6/28/15	N/A		preschool scholarships			x			
Bob Arrandale	6/29/15	Diane Moore	7/8/15	Moss Field Parking Lot			x			
Kim Mumm	7/1/15	John Simpson	7/2/15	Data results compared to Kirkwood			x			
Kim Mumm	7/3/15	Cathy Vespereny (call)	7/7/15	Clarifications	x		x			
Kim Mumm	7/9/15	David Addison	7/9/15	Detail audit of Ambrose Family Center			x			
Kim Mumm	7/10/15	David Addison	7/10/15	Instructional funding easily remedied			x			
Kim Mumm	7/16/15	Sarah Riss	7/17/15	Preschool & Adventure Club Budgets			x			
Dave Buck	7/16/15	Sarah Riss	7/17/15	Moving Forward w/help of Strategic Planning Committee			x			
Dave Buck	7/28/15	Sarah Riss	7/29/15	Online Survey Feedback			x			
Dave Buck	7/30/15	Sarah Riss	7/30/15	Thoughts to keep the Vision for the Collaborative alive			x			
Laurie Ekey	8/3/15	Amy Clendennen	8/4/15	BOE Meeting Agenda 8/10			x			
Laurie Ekey	8/4/15	Sarah Riss	8/4/15	BOE Meeting Agenda 8/10-further clarification	x		x			
Peg Pedersen	8/9/15	David Addison	8/10/15	WG BOE Survey			x			
Kim Mumm	8/10/15	David Addison	8/10/15	June 22 comments			x			
Dave Buck	8/13/15	N/A		Statement on the Ethics Commission Agreement			x			
Dave Buck	8/13/15	John Simpson	8/13/15	What happened to the Collaborative Committee			x			
Kim Mumm	8/14/15	Steve Loher	8/14/15	Brainstorming for new strategies			x			
Kim Mumm	8/17/15	John Simpson	8/17/15	2015 MAP Score Congratulations			x			
Michael Richards	8/16/15	Sarah Riss	8/17/15	Props S & W			x			
Michael Richards	8/24/15	Sarah Riss	8/27/15	Accountability			x			
Dave Buck	8/27/15	N/A		Post Election Results Summary			x			
Kim Mumm	8/27/15	N/A		YMCA/Epworth, Space Crowding			x			
Kim Mumm	9/6/15	Sarah Riss	9/8/15	A Research Report			x			
Kim Mumm	9/14/15	Sarah Riss	9/14/15	Correspondence Log			x			
Kim Mumm	9/14/15	N/A	9/14/15	Masters Degrees/Longevity			x			
Denice Cusumano	9/14/15	Amy Clendennen	9/15/15	Gifted Learners			x			
Dave Buck	9/15/15	N/A		Superintendent Search Community Engagement Meeting			x			
Michael Shipley	9/15/15	N/A		Warson Woods Board of Aldermen Meeting			x			
David Addison	9/16/15	Jean Dugan	9/17/15	Date of Meeting with the Board			x			
Kim Mumm	9/14/15	David Addison	9/17/15	New Message			x			
Susan Mello	9/18/15	Sarah Riss	10/8/15	Plan for race base hiring			x			
Dave Buck	9/18/15	N/A		Steger			x			
Kim Mumm	9/18/15	Diane Moore	9/18/15	A sincere thank you and three questions			x			
Kim Mumm	9/20/15	Emerson Smith	9/21/15	Average teacher salary, longevity and % advanced degree comparisons			x			
Kim Mumm	9/21/15	NA		One correction in the table on tab 1, botom of page			x			
Kim Mumm	9/22/15	NA		8-24-15 meeting minutes and 9-18-15 data request			x			
Kevin Lee	9/29/15	David Addison	9/29/15	Bond Issue/Superintendent Search			x			

Lori Medlin

From: Sarah Riss
Sent: Monday, September 14, 2015 9:05 PM
To: Lori Medlin
Subject: FW: correspondence log

For the correspondence log.
Thanks

Sarah

Sarah Booth Riss, Ed. D.
Superintendent of Schools
Webster Groves School District
314-962-1233

From: Sarah Riss
Sent: Monday, September 14, 2015 9:05 PM
To: 'kmummm@charter.net'
Cc: 'Addison, David'; Amy Clendennen
Subject: correspondence log

Dear Kim,

After consulting with our attorney I learned I cannot redact information from your email, including your email address, prior to posting it in the correspondence log. Once your email has been placed in the correspondence log it becomes a public record. Missouri's "Sunshine" law prohibits us from altering or redacting public records unless they fall within one of the exceptions set forth in the statute. Examples of records and information that may be closed (i.e., kept from the public) include student records and certain confidential personnel information. A citizen's email address does not fall within any of the law's exceptions.

Also, earlier this summer you indicated that the Early Learning Study Team report was not posted on the website. It is posted on the facilities committee webpage. It has been there for quite some time. We will be working with our staff this semester to try to improve the ease with which community members may be able to located reports such as this one.

Thank you and please feel free to contact me if you would like additional information.

Regards,

Sarah

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

Lori Medlin

From: Linda Holliday
Sent: Wednesday, September 16, 2015 2:53 AM
To: Lori Medlin
Subject: Fwd: Masters degrees/longevity
Attachments: WG, Kwood, Lindbergh teacher masters degree and longevity.xlsx; ATT00001.htm

For Communications Log

Linda Hayes Holliday
Education Consultant
(314) 918-4002

Sent from my iPad

Begin forwarded message:

From: <kmummm@charter.net>
Date: September 14, 2015 at 10:49:49 PM CDT
To: "'emersonsmith10@gmail.com'" <emersonsmith10@gmail.com>
Cc: "'holliday.linda@wgmail.org'" <holliday.linda@wgmail.org>, "'addison.david@wgmail.org'" <addison.david@wgmail.org>
Subject: Masters degrees/longevity

Dear Emerson,

When you asked how we compare to teachers who have master's degrees w/ other districts, I knew I had a file comparing us to the state average, Kirkwood and Lindbergh by year from DESE.

Here it is. Our teachers have a lower percent of master's degrees, per this data, than the other two do. Any district information can be queried via the DESE web site; I had just recorded these two several months ago and updated the 2015 data tonight.

Please also note the longevity data.

I hope this helps.

kim

Year	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
% teachers w/ master degree or higher, WG	69.5	73.7	76.7	74.7	70.7	74.7	74.6	78.5	75.6	74.4	75.9
% teachers w/ master's degree or higher, state	49.6	50	50.6	51.3	53.5	56	57.7	58.8	59.1	58.9	58.9
difference	19.9	23.7	26.1	23.4	23.2	18.7	16.9	19.7	16.5	15.5	17
% higher masters degrees in WG than state	40	47.4	51.8	45.6	43.4	33.4	29.3	33.5	27.9	26.3	28.9
% teachers w/ master degree or higher, WG	69.5	73.7	76.7	74.7	70.7	74.7	74.6	78.5	75.6	74.4	75.9
% teachers w/ master degree or higher, Kirkwood	73	78.2	82.9	83	84.8	83.9	86.4	87.1	88.1	85.3	82.6
% teachers w/ master degree or higher, Lindbergh	74.4	78.5	75.3	74.3	77.5	79.6	83.8	81.8	79.7	80.1	79.7
Average years of experience, WG	13.8	13.9	14.7	14.5	14.5	14.7	14.7	14.4	14.6	14.4	14.9
Average years of experience, Kirkwood	13.7	13.7	13.6	13.6	13.8	14.3	14.9	14.7	14.8	14.6	14.3
Average years of experience, Lindbergh	12.9	12.8	11.8	11.9	12.3	13.1	13.7	13.4	13.4	13.5	13.2

Lori Medlin

From: Sarah Riss
Sent: Tuesday, September 15, 2015 5:04 PM
To: Lori Medlin
Subject: FW: Gifted Learners
Attachments: Shortchanging the Gifted.docx; 10 Things Administrators Should Know - GiftedChildren.doc; Maximizing Gifted Students.docx

For the communication log.

Sarah

Sarah Booth Riss, Ed. D.
 Superintendent of Schools
 Webster Groves School District
 314-962-1233

From: Amy Clendennen
Sent: Tuesday, September 15, 2015 4:50 PM
To: Sarah Riss; David Addison
Subject: FW: Gifted Learners

I don't know if she sent this to the whole board or just me. In any case I wanted you to see my response. I did copy John S.

Amy

From: Amy Clendennen
Sent: Tuesday, September 15, 2015 4:48 PM
To: decoos@hotmail.com
Cc: John Simpson
Subject: FW: Gifted Learners

Hi Denise,

Thank you for the information. I want to share a couple of resources regarding the District's Gifted and Talented program that may be of interest to you. The program website, <http://wggifted.blogspot.com/>, often provides information and resources for parents of gifted students, including events both within and outside the District. There is also a Google group ("Parent Organization for Gifted Student Support," or "POGSS") for parents to share questions, challenges, and celebrations regarding their kids. They also share research and other information among the group members. Abby Barker (abbybarker@prodigy.net) is the organizer and she can add you to the group, if you're interested. Within this group, each school should have a parent liaison. This year's parent liaisons are: David Williams (Avery), Laura Rose (Clark), Abby Barker (Hixson), and Alexis Elward (WGHS). We are still in search of parent liaisons from the other schools. If your child attends one of the schools listed above, the parent liaison would be a good source of information about the POGSS group, and gifted issues in general.

Finally, if you have questions or suggestions regarding the gifted curriculum, you probably want to talk to either Kristy Daniels-Jackson, the District's Gifted Coordinator, or Dr. John Simpson, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum. I'm sure either of them would be happy to talk with you about what our District does to support and challenge gifted students. I'm also copying John Simpson on this email, so that he has a copy of the articles you shared.

Thanks again for the information.

Amy

From: Denice Cusumano [decoos@hotmail.com]
Sent: Monday, September 14, 2015 11:48 PM
Subject: Gifted Learners

Hello,

I wanted to forward these articles because I don't know if you're aware of the issues facing these students in our district. What helps them, can help all students - with minimal costs to start. Is there currently any kind of Gifted Advisory Committee or initiatives underway to improve the educational program for these students? What strategies and ideas are being used in other districts that we can implement here? Is it time to raise the bar for all students?

Thank you,
Denice Cusumano

Shortchanging the Gifted

Through differentiation of content, pacing and grouping, schools can address the pressing needs of highly able students by SUSAN WINEBRENNER

Academic programs for gifted students aren't what they used to be or what they could be with appropriate support and resources.

As I travel around the country on speaking engagements, I observe the significant and often disheartening changes in programming for gifted students in the '90s. Pullout programs have virtually disappeared in many states. Any program for gifted kids that is associated with the word "special" is rejected as elitist, a word that appears to have the power in and of itself to bring an end to a program serving the gifted.

In addition, programs for gifted students are sacrificed as nonessential in the name of budget crunches, at the same time as the appropriated funds for students with other exceptional educational needs are greatly expanded.

The most significant explanation for the disappearance of gifted programs is America's democratic devotion to the concept of egalitarianism. This term is unfortunately interpreted to mean that everyone should get exactly the same educational experiences, instead of everyone having an equal opportunity to actualize their learning potential. Before making crucial decisions regarding the place of gifted education in 21st century schools, educators' vocabulary, beliefs and expectations should be reviewed.

Defining Vocabulary

The term "gifted" has rightfully been expanded to include students with exceptional abilities beyond academics into the areas of the fine arts, leadership and bodily-kinesthetic skills. There already are ample opportunities for students with gifted ability in nonacademic areas to express their talent in special programs and competitive events. Students whose gifts are in the academic areas have just as much need to experience learning opportunities that truly challenge their exceptional abilities. We need to be less concerned with the label of gifted and more willing to advocate that all children regularly experience challenging learning environments.

Our nation's schools also have encountered persistent calls for equity and excellence. If we define equity as equal opportunity for all students to learn at their challenge level and excellence as opportunities for all students to reach their own learning potential, maintaining appropriate programming for gifted kids is justifiable.

If we define gifted as an expression of ability that exceeds the expectations for age-appropriate learners and define learning as forward progress from one's entry point into a learning curve, it becomes obvious that those students who already know what is about to be taught will not be learning as much as those

students who are novices in that same content. Unfortunately, those who already have learned the grade-level standards often are perceived to be "done," as though they were cooked to perfection.

Gifted students need different educational opportunities so that they can actually learn in classes that are geared for age-appropriate learners. Therefore, nothing *special* is expected, even though something *different* may be needed.

The final vocabulary issue surrounds the concepts of enrichment, acceleration and extensions of the regular curriculum. For many years, activities for gifted students were labeled enrichment. The accompanying assumption was that only these learners could benefit from an enriched curriculum or program. Of course, we now realize all students deserve an enriched curriculum. However, only exceptionally capable students consistently need *extensions* of the regular curriculum or acceleration into a higher level of content.

· Walking the Talk

Your school or district has made promises to parents, as stated in mission statements that include phrases such as:

- **"All students will be challenged in the curriculum they encounter."**
Any parent has the right to ask this question of all their children's teachers: "What evidence do you have that my child is working at her challenge level in your class?" All teachers have an obligation to answer that question--and that means that teachers must know how to provide learning experiences that stretch students' existing capacities. To offer a "one size fits all" curriculum is inadequate. Oregon, for example, has expressed this concept uniquely, asserting in statewide legislation that all students are learning at the appropriate "rate and level." Notice, the word "gifted" is not mentioned.
- **"All our students will be expected to actualize their learning potential."**
Actualizing one's learning potential is not as easy as it sounds. It cannot be done until the teacher knows how to challenge all students to move into uncharted waters. Gifted students often don't come close to their learning potential, especially when they are "given" high grades for work they know took little to no effort.
- **"All students will enjoy high self-esteem as an integral part of their schooling experience."**
Self-esteem actually is enhanced when success is attained at a task that had been perceived as difficult or challenging. Development of high self-esteem requires that students be allowed to challenge themselves in an environment in which their mistakes and struggles, as well as their successes, are encouraged and appreciated.

When students receive kudos for products they know required little or no effort, their self-confidence is undermined, and they learn to find the easiest way out, postponing their exposure to challenge in many creative ways. Many really fear that if they try something challenging and are not instantly perfect at it, others might conclude that they are not really very smart after all.

Re-enfranchising the Gifted

There are at least three assumptions upon which administrators can begin a plan to re-enfranchise gifted students.

The first is that most classroom teachers and school administrators have very little training in meeting the learning needs of gifted students in heterogeneous classes. The second is that most teachers are currently drowning in a flood of expectations for accountability regarding progress for students who are working significantly below expectations. Third, present grouping practices may not provide appropriate learning experiences for gifted students. Let me elaborate.

Effective staff development can dramatically improve teachers' ability to work with their gifted students. Even better, any strategy a teacher implements for the benefit of gifted students helps other students as well. For example, for many years we have allowed gifted kids to represent what they learn in a project format. Naturally, they have considered their learning strengths when making those choices. But *all* students can demonstrate better learning outcomes in their strength areas, and many enjoy project work. In fact, everything that was pioneered in gifted pull-out programs in the last 25 years now is considered state-of-the-art teaching in all classrooms.

Most teachers enter the field with absolutely no course work in how to recognize and teach gifted students. This reflects the general lack of awareness of and concern for the academic needs of gifted children by most teacher training programs, as well as a lack of attention from policymakers and politicians. Whereas both new and experienced teachers are highly likely to have had at least one college-level course in teaching special-education students, few of those teachers are even remotely knowledgeable about the exceptional capabilities and learning behaviors of gifted youth.

Therefore, most teachers are unaware that gifted students actually learn differently from age peers in three important ways, according to Barbara Clark, author of *Growing Up Gifted*. First, they learn new material in much less time; second, they tend to remember forever what they already have learned; and third, they perceive ideas and concepts at more abstract and complex levels than other students their age.

Since so few teachers are aware of these realities, their behaviors toward gifted students are likely to reflect stereotypical beliefs. The first of these beliefs is that gifted kids are highly productive students who should always get high grades. They will, as some put it, "make it on their own" without much assistance from teachers. This belief is related to the myth that students who are not productive in school cannot be gifted.

If there is one overriding frustration among gifted children, their parents and empathetic teachers, it is the issue of whether the student will do his or her work. This frustration arises from what I call "the confusion of pronoun syndrome." I rarely have met gifted students who won't do "their" work. What they usually resist doing is the teacher's work.

Gifted children actually would be thrilled to use school time to do their work, which I define as learning something they don't already know. This concept is somewhat shocking to most educators, who never

have considered the notion of "Whose work is this, anyway?" Content and pacing differentiation are vital to ensure that gifted students can get to "their work" on a regular basis.

To accomplish this, teachers might offer students a chance to demonstrate previous mastery at the beginning of a unit of study, perhaps as part of a strategy I've designed called "Most Difficult First." The teacher designates a small part of an activity she thinks is the most difficult and invites students who can accomplish it with neatness and accuracy to demonstrate their ability and then move on to more challenging extensions.

The second belief is that gifted students' work always should be neat, beautiful and excellent in all forms. Many teachers find it difficult to juxtapose the notions of highly intelligent with highly messy and completely disorganized. Professionals in gifted education slowly have come to realize that such profiles may actually describe the existence of learners who are "twice exceptional." These are gifted youths with a learning disability, attention deficit disorder or some other learning challenge. These students often are described as "absent-minded professors," students who can verbalize magnificently, but who refuse to write anything down. And even if such a student is not twice exceptional, the presence of messy work is often a sign of frustration over being expected to do tasks that hold no challenge for the learner.

The third belief is that gifted kids always should want to "go for the gold"--that is, be excited about going above and beyond the expectations for age-appropriate learners. Many teachers offer work for extra credit and are perplexed and frustrated when some gifted kids don't take advantage of the opportunity. Parents often encourage this practice by asking teachers to give their kids more to do at home in the evenings, weekends or over the summer months. No rational person, at any age, willingly does more than others are doing simply because more is better. Teachers need training on how to provide truly differentiated learning options.

Preparing Teachers

Gifted students need compacting and differentiation. Compacting is the practice of condensing the regular curriculum for advanced learners to allow them, at the beginning of any unit of work, to demonstrate previous mastery or their ability to learn the required material at a faster pace than age peers.

In order for compacting to work, teachers need to learn how to develop and use appropriate differentiation activities that stretch gifted kids' minds into more abstract and complex types of thinking. When students need acceleration of content in addition to or in place of extension, a different type of intervention is indicated. A student might then experience content or grade-level acceleration by working with older students for some of his learning time.

Many teachers worry there simply is not enough time available to them to accommodate gifted students' needs for compacting and differentiating the curriculum. My experience in teaching teachers how to accommodate gifted students in mixed-ability classrooms confirms that once these educators learn how to challenge their gifted students in ways that do not create unmanageable burdens, they are more than willing to make the necessary accommodations. For instance, during training sessions I

demonstrate how much planning teachers can accomplish in 20 minutes or less when working with their peers. This technique could be used in their schools--if they just offer to bring chocolate to the planning sessions.

A matter of intense concern is classroom management. In order to try something different with their students, teachers need to know that the technique will flow smoothly in the classroom and will be relatively easy to manage. Considerable professional development time should be spent demonstrating methods that help students understand exactly what they are supposed to do on a given day in class. Teachers need specific instruction on ways to maintain necessary records and documentation. Ways to help students improve their own organizational skills and take more responsibility for managing their independent work time should be included in the training.

Teachers appreciate methods that allow them to spend time regularly with students who are working on differentiated tasks so those students don't feel abandoned by the teacher and so they know help will be available for them when they need it. I recommend that working conditions be carefully described and discussed with the students, so they understand the consequence for failing to follow these procedures is to return to the teacher-directed group for the balance of the chapter or unit. All students should have opportunities to re-qualify in each new unit of work.

Finally, gifted education specialists and administrators need to plan ways in which teachers can continue to support each other as they work to implement compacting and differentiation opportunities in their classrooms. (By the time teachers leave a professional development workshop, they should have concrete plans about which strategies they will use and how they will manage those options.) The research on staff development concludes that lasting change is more likely to happen when teachers have peer support during the entire implementation process.

I strongly encourage the formation of school-based study groups, led by teachers already comfortable with the new approach, and open to all interested teachers in the building. Meeting together at regular intervals during the school year, teachers select methods to try in their classrooms help each other with implementation, and have group discussions on the pros and cons of each method.

Without such a support system at a school, teachers who attempt to use methods they have learned in a workshop are likely to abandon that method as soon as they encounter any barriers to success. With the study group members available to each other, the likelihood of being able to work out glitches as they occur is very good and the likelihood of lasting, effective change improves substantially.

A Heavy Burden

The second assumption that will help administrators address the needs of gifted students begins with a deep awareness of the heavy responsibilities their teachers have regarding progress for students who are working significantly below expectations. As many states insist that these students take the same tests as students who are average or high achievers, the cry has gone out, "Get those test scores up for the lowest achievers." Most educational decisions, therefore, focus on that goal.

If low-achieving students don't do so well in homogeneous classes, we place them in heterogeneous classes. If mixed ability classes are better for struggling students, it is reasoned, they also must be better for gifted kids--so they too are placed primarily in heterogeneous classes.

To compound the problem, we often use the academically advanced students to help their less capable peers raise their achievement levels. These practices have been the source of intense frustration for gifted kids and their parents. With the advent of alternative schooling methods, such as home schooling and charter schools, many of our most capable students have left public education. If we don't do something to keep them with us, the top 5 percent of the students will no longer come from the 95th to 99th percentiles.

Totally heterogeneous grouping practices do not automatically provide for the needs of gifted students. Many gifted kids do not thrive if they are purposefully separated from each other so that one or two can be placed in each class as role models or leaders. When gifted kids are grouped together for part of each school day they are much more likely to demonstrate their capabilities because they have others like themselves who can validate they are OK just the way they are. Furthermore, new leaders emerge from the other 95 percent of the group when the top 5 percent are placed somewhere else.

Fulfilling Promises

The programs we should seek for gifted learners are those that deliver the promise made by most schools: to provide consistent daily opportunities for challenging learning experiences for *all* students. This goal automatically requires differentiation of content, pacing and grouping practices for the most capable students.

These opportunities are always available for students who struggle to learn, so the precedent is in place. Since gifted learners are just as atypical from average as are kids with learning problems, the differentiation they need is highly defensible.

Susan Winebrenner, an educational consultant, can be contacted at 160 Riviera Drive, Brooklyn, MI 49230. E-mail: ecsfirst@aol.com.



Ten Things All Administrators Should Know About Gifted Children

As the school year approaches, we are reminded of how instrumental school administrators are in creating a leadership strategy that ensures all children will learn. AASA and the National Association of Gifted Children have created a partnership to bring AASA members the very latest resources and information on gifted and talented issues, with a special emphasis on high-ability learners and poverty. Below are things we feel school administrators should know about the gifted students you serve.

Gifted Students

- Are not all alike. They vary in respect to general ability, domain-specific aptitude, interests and predispositions, and motivation and personality. Thus one program or service is insufficient to respond to their diverse needs.
- Benefit from interaction with peers. Intellectual peerage contributes to important growth patterns in all subject areas (Kulik & Kulik, 1992). For example, cooperative learning, carried out in heterogeneous classroom settings, produces no growth (Rogers, 2001).
- Need various forms of acceleration throughout their school years, ranging from content acceleration to Advanced Placement or dual enrollment to mentorships (Shiever & Maker, 2003; Renzulli & Reis, 2003; Clasen & Clasen, 2003).
- Are capable of producing high level products in specific areas of learning at the level of a competent adult (NAGC, 1990). For example, fourth graders can draft a policy for pollution that would rival an adult community committee.
- Need to be challenged and stimulated by an advanced and enriched curriculum that is above their current level of functioning in each area of learning (VanTassel-Baska, 2003).
- Need to be instructed by personnel trained in the education of gifted students to ensure that they are sufficiently challenged, exposed to appropriate level work, and motivated to excel (Croft, 2003).
- At the elementary level require differentiated staffing and flexible scheduling to accommodate their needs; at the secondary level, they require special classes (Feldhusen, 2003).
- Have counseling needs that require psychosocial, academic and career preparation on an annual basis (Colangelo, 2003; Greene, 2003; Jackson & Snow, 2004; Silverman, 1993). At the secondary level, assigning one counselor to the gifted may be the best staffing model to employ.
- Have affective characteristics that render them vulnerable in school settings such as perfectionism, sensitivity and intensity (Lovecky, 1992; Robinson, 2002).
- In general, have healthy social relationships and adjust well to new situations (Robinson, 2002). Concerns for social development more than cognitive growth are rarely warranted.

Written by Joyce VanTassel-Baska, Center for Gifted Education, the College of William and Mary. Reprinted with permission from the National Association for Gifted Children, Washington, D.C., 202-795-4268, www.nagc.org.



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Maximizing Gifted Students' Potential In the 21st Century

By Dina Brulles, Ph.D., and Susan Winebrenner, M.S.

The current situation

In recent years, national and state level attention to students with the highest potential has been diverted to those struggling to achieve at minimum proficiency levels. Meanwhile, school districts wrestle with ensuring that high ability students demonstrate annual yearly progress. Documenting that progress occurs for gifted students presents a challenge to school administrators.

The trials involved in funding gifted education continue to increase. Decreased school budgets during the current decade have forced many school administrators to consolidate or eliminate specialized services for their most capable students by reallocating funds previously directed toward gifted education.



Dina Brulles

Educational alternatives are at an all-time high. Alternative schools taking advantage of the plight public schools face are targeting exceptionally bright students. Ebbing the flow of "bright flight" from our schools necessitates re-evaluating our priorities. Methods described in this article re-direct schools' attention to the learning needs of *all* students, including those with high potential, in cost-effective ways that ultimately benefit everyone.

What do gifted students need?



Gifted students have been defined as those who possess exceptional abilities in any area of learning that significantly exceeds age-level expectations (Winebrenner, 2001). Taking into account that grade-level standards inform instruction, we realize that many gifted students will not make academic progress during any given year unless interventions occur. One important idea often misinterpreted is that **teachers are not necessarily responsible for teaching the standards; they are only responsible for demonstrating that students have mastered the designated grade-level standards** (Winebrenner & Brulles, 2008).

Assuring that systems are in place that allow gifted students to make academic progress requires administrative planning and intervention. When school-based learning is described as making yearly academic progress, the students most likely to be “left behind” are those with exceptionally high ability, our gifted learners. Educators and parents generally assume that students who earn good grades and score highly on standardized achievement tests are learning; however, many gifted students have mastered the majority of grade level standards prior to receiving instruction (Brulles, et al., 2010).

When teaching advanced learners, teachers can use formative assessments to document previously learned standards. Students demonstrating mastery of grade level standards then need more challenging curriculum and instruction that allows them to advance academically. Providing this challenge calls for accelerated curriculum and opportunities to study grade level concepts at deeper and more complex levels than their age peers.

The background presented here demonstrates the need for a paradigm shift for educators. To help teachers instruct all students at their challenge levels, we must first implement grouping strategies. Teachers are more likely to use formative assessment data to form flexible learning groups in their classrooms when they have a group of students who require differentiated instruction in order to experience academic growth. The Schoolwide Cluster Grouping Model (SCGM) facilitates this process.

The Schoolwide Cluster Grouping Model

The Schoolwide Cluster Grouping Model is an inclusion model wherein students with exceptional learning needs are integrated into mixed-ability classrooms. In this model, classroom teachers are trained to provide appropriate differentiated learning opportunities for those needing additional challenges. Similar inclusion models have been used for decades to provide services to students who have been identified as having exceptional educational needs and for English language learners. The same philosophy is equally beneficial for gifted students.

The Schoolwide Cluster Grouping Model represents a method for providing full-time academic services to gifted students with no financial impact to the district. In the SCGM, *all* students are grouped based on their ability and achievement levels. Classroom compositions are carefully structured with two main goals: to ensure a balance of abilities in all classes in the grade level, and to reduce the learning range found in any given classroom (Winebrenner & Brulles, 2008).

When cluster grouping, gifted-identified students are purposefully placed into mixed ability classrooms. Ideally, a group of four to nine gifted students is clustered with a teacher who has had—or will receive—training in understanding and responding to their exceptional learning needs. When there are ten or more gifted students in a grade level, a second gifted cluster class may be designated. Grouping gifted students together helps teachers challenge them more easily. High-achieving students (who are not identified as gifted) are placed into the other classes at the grade level so that all classes include students of high ability and high achievement.

Implementing the gifted cluster grouping model

Classroom placements for the upcoming school year occur at end of each school year following spring gifted testing. When making placements, teachers from the sending and receiving grades work with the building principal, teachers who have had gifted education training, and special education teachers. Prior to placing students into classrooms, teachers assign all students in the grade to one of the categories that follows. Each grade level team then assigns all students to classrooms.

Grouping categories:

- Group 1—Gifted: All gifted-identified students, including those who are not fluent in English, not productive in school, and twice-exceptional gifted students.
- Group 2—High Average: Highly competent and productive students who achieve well in school.
- Group 3—Average: Students achieving in the average range of grade-level standards.
- Group 4—Low Average: Average students who are able to achieve at grade level with some support.
- Group 5—Far Below Average: Students who struggle in several subject areas and score below proficiency levels on academic measures.

The cluster group of gifted students (Group 1) is placed in a classroom with the designated gifted cluster teacher for that grade level. High-achieving students (Group 2) are then evenly placed into the classes that do not have the gifted students. Students from Groups 3 and 4 are then placed into each class, and students in Group 5 are placed into all classes the except the gifted cluster class. With this placement method, no teacher has the full spectrum of abilities. Narrowing the range of achievement levels in every class allows teachers to focus their efforts more productively (Winebrenner & Brulles, 2008).

Rationale supporting the SCGM

Some may question whether cluster grouping represents a form of tracking. In the Schoolwide Cluster Grouping Model, all classes have high ability or high achieving students. Within each grade level, groups are configured so that heterogeneous classes are the norm and equitably balanced.

Gifted students benefit from learning together (Brulles, et al. 2010; Kulik, 2003; Rogers, 2002); research documenting these benefits supports cluster grouping (Brulles, 2005; Brulles et al., 2010; Gentry, 1999, 2006; Rogers, 2002). Students identified as having high ability better understand and accept their learning differences when there are others in the class who share similar traits (Delisle & Galbraith, 2002). Learning together on a daily basis can encourage these students to pursue in-depth study of their interests.

Why cluster grouping models work

Gifted students typically learn new content more quickly than their chronological peers. Cluster grouping provides them with opportunities to engage in intellectually stimulating endeavors with others who are equally capable of learning at advanced levels, increasing possibilities for measurable academic progress (Gentry, M. 1999, 2010; Brulles, et al., 2010).

When a teacher has a cluster of gifted students, planning for appropriate provisions becomes more realistic. The pacing of instruction and the depth of content that gifted students need is made possible through compacting curriculum and providing extended learning opportunities to the group. For this to occur, the **gifted cluster teacher must have on-going training** in how to teach exceptionally capable students in the cluster model (Winebrenner & Devlin, 2001; Winebrenner & Brulles, 2008).

High achieving students also benefit in this model, as they have new opportunities to become academic leaders. Without gifted students in their classes, high achieving students are no longer overshadowed by the presence of highly verbal, highly competitive classmates. Parents of high average students appreciate the prospects their children have for demonstrating leadership skills and shining academically, perhaps for the first time in their school experience.

Surprising to some, gifted students do not make the best academic leaders because of their ability to learn more quickly and with less effort than others. Teachers recognize that many gifted students are abstract learners who make intuitive leaps in their thinking processes. They make connections between ideas and concepts that others do not make. They do not always follow the same linear-sequential steps as others when solving problems or reaching conclusions. Therefore, they are frequently incapable of guiding others who learn in a more traditional manner, and are often impatient with classmates that learn more slowly than they.

Equitable services for all students

Effective gifted cluster teachers learn to recognize and nurture behaviors typically demonstrated by gifted students. Gifted cluster teachers need training to create differentiated learning environments in which:

- All students have opportunities to work at their challenge levels.
- Differences in learning needs are respected.
- Flexible grouping based on readiness, interests, and learning styles occurs.
- Students can demonstrate and receive credit for previous mastery of standards.
- Opportunities for faster pacing of new material are offered when needed.
- Students' areas of interests are incorporated into their independent studies.
- Research investigations are facilitated.
- Technology is incorporated into differentiated learning opportunities.

When teachers differentiate effectively, there is general improvement in overall achievement for the entire class (Saunders, 2005; Tomlinson, 1999; Winebrenner & Devlin, 2001). This suggests that when teachers learn how to provide what gifted students need and provide similar opportunities to the entire class, expectations and the levels of learning are raised for all students (Gentry & Kiely, 2001).

Teachers recognize that differentiation strategies effective with gifted students are also effective with other students. Likewise, the benefits of Response to Intervention (RTI) practices can also meet the differentiated learning needs of gifted students. RTI methods used for struggling students incorporate a similar philosophy as methods in the SCGM. Teachers assess the students' entry level with the designated standard, choose a method of teaching that will move the student forward, apply the method, and then assess the degree to which the method worked. A similar rationale drives instruction for all students in the Schoolwide Cluster Grouping Model.

The SCGM can be structured to accommodate all school settings. It can either stand alone or complement other gifted education services in the school. This model may be used at all grade levels and in all subject areas, but the structure will vary. The numbers of gifted identified students and sections at each grade level influences the number of gifted cluster classes in the grade level.

Educational impacts of the SCGM

Cluster grouping addresses the academic and affective needs of gifted students and facilitates effective instruction for teachers working with all students. When incorporated well, cluster grouping can provide full-time, cost-effective services for gifted students in a manner that addresses their learning needs on a daily basis. Unlike other prevalent models used for serving gifted students, The Schoolwide Cluster Grouping Model enfranchises previously under-represented populations including, English Language

Learners, culturally diverse students, twice-exceptional students, non-productive gifted students, and gifted students in the primary grades.

Some administrators choose to rotate teachers into the gifted cluster teacher role on a two- to three-year schedule so that all teachers have similar experiences and training. Teachers find that once they have become proficient using the methods and strategies effective in the SCGM, they continue using those methods with all their students regardless of whether they are the designated gifted cluster teacher in any given year.

Supporting Gifted Cluster Teachers

Schools transitioning to cluster grouping models may face some initial obstacles. Parents accustomed to their gifted children receiving pull-out services may feel they are losing services when the pull-out programs are eliminated. Additionally, there may be pressure from parents to have their high-achieving children (who are not identified as gifted) placed in a gifted cluster classroom. Gifted students moving into the district or those identifying as gifted during the school year may present additional concerns. Suggestions on handling these situations include:

- Providing training for all staff in compacting and differentiation so parents can expect those opportunities in all classes.
- Emphasizing that gifted students in this model can expect differentiation, acceleration, or enrichment to occur in all content areas, all day, every day.
- Helping others understand that gifted students need to spend time learning with intellectual peers in order to progress academically.
- Rotating the cluster teacher assignment every two to three years among teachers who have had appropriate training so parents see that all teachers are capable of teaching gifted students.
- Developing a method for screening students when they enroll during the school year and providing comprehensive gifted testing every spring prior to making placements for the upcoming school year.
- Ensuring that gifted cluster teachers consistently compact and differentiate the curriculum. Administrators must expect gifted cluster teachers to maintain the integrity of the program and provide the support needed to be successful.

Conclusion

Cluster grouping small groups of gifted students into otherwise heterogeneous classes represents one manageable way to provide gifted education in our schools during these challenging economic times.

Implementing the Schoolwide Cluster Grouping Model can be relatively easy to manage. However, success in the model requires administrative support and a commitment to training teachers. Schools that have successfully implemented the model have been able to retain families of gifted students in their schools. Administrators have documented that families who had left the school seeking more challenging educational settings for their gifted students return when the school proactively plans ways to maximize the potential of their gifted children.

Resources

For additional information on the Schoolwide Cluster Grouping Model, contact:

Susan Winebrenner - www.susanwinebrenner.com

Dina Brulles - www.giftededucationconsultants.com

The cluster grouping handbook: How to challenge gifted students and improve achievement for all www.freespirit.com.

Credit line:

Contents of this article are based on *The Cluster Grouping Handbook: How to Challenge Gifted Students and Improve Achievement for All* by Susan Winebrenner, M.S., and Dina Brulles, Ph.D., © 2008.

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Saunders, R. (2005). A comparison study of the academic effect of ability grouping versus heterogeneous grouping in mathematics instruction. Doctoral Dissertation, Arizona State University.

Tomlinson, C. A. (1999). The differentiated classroom: Responding to the needs of all learners. Alexandria, VA: The Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Winebrenner, S., & Devlin, B. (2001). Cluster grouping of gifted students: How to provide full-time services on a part-time budget. Eric Digest E538. www.ericec.org

Lori Medlin

4

From: Sarah Riss
Sent: Tuesday, September 15, 2015 9:51 PM
To: Lori Medlin
Subject: Fwd: Tonight's Superintendent Search Community Engagement Meeting

For the correspondence log
Sarah

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: Dave Buck <dave@buckstl.com>
Date: September 15, 2015 at 9:45:58 PM CDT
To: "loher.steve@wgmail.org" <loher.steve@wgmail.org>, "addison.david@wgmail.org" <addison.david@wgmail.org>, Amy Clendennen <Clendennen.amy@wgmail.org>, "riss.sarah@wgmail.org" <riss.sarah@wgmail.org>
Subject: Tonight's Superintendent Search Community Engagement Meeting

Hi Steve,

Long time no see or talk! 😊 I just wanted to give you some quick feedback that, in my humble and imperfect opinion, tonight was the single best WGSD community engagement or forum I have been to in my 16 years in Webster Groves. Here's why:

1. Judy and particularly meeting moderator, Chris, from McPherson & Jacobson were awesome.
2. The attendance was small, only 10 total including Steve. Everyone had a voice and could be heard, as often as they liked. Eight people spoke up regularly.
3. Chris ran through his four standard questions and elicited great feedback. But then he opened it up for other questions and comments from us and that is where the real fun, interaction, learning and dialogue happened.

4. As the lone board member, Steve was just like one of us and tremendously added to everyone's understanding and perspective.

5. With only 10 people in attendance, everyone had plenty of time to ask their questions and speak their piece, which you do not get at the larger community forums, even when you break-out into smaller groups, as time always runs short. I actually think Chris liked and got into our extended exchange.

6. In short, the 10+2=12 of us went over 1 1/2 hours and became a miniature learning community. I personally left knowing that everyone of my significant number of questions was addressed and answered. I have never felt that before coming out of a district or board meeting, even committee meetings.

Maybe a lesson learned is that, sometimes, simpler is better and less is more.

7. Finally, if you are looking for or needing parents to interview any of the superintendent candidates when they visit St. Louis, count me in.

Thanks.

Dave Buck

952-0910

Lori Medlin

5

From: Sarah Riss
Sent: Tuesday, September 15, 2015 10:07 PM
To: Lori Medlin
Subject: Fwd: Warson Woods Board of Alderman Meeting 9.15.15

For the communication log
Sarah

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: Michael Shipley <wgsdshipley@gmail.com>
Date: September 15, 2015 at 10:05:46 PM CDT
To: "Addison, David" <DAddison@rgare.com>
Cc: Sarah Riss <Riss.Sarah@wgmail.org>, Amy Clendennen <Clendennen.amy@wgmail.org>
Subject: Warson Woods Board of Alderman Meeting 9.15.15

Hello David,

I just wanted to let you know that I spoke as a community citizen tonight at the Warson Woods Board of Alderman monthly meeting that commenced at 7 PM. I highlighted the many great things happening in the WGSD, as well as, the upcoming new Superintendent search meeting taking place on September 26 at 9:30 AM in the Webster Groves High School PV Commons.

Sincerely,

Michael

6

Lori Medlin

From: Addison, David <DAddison@rgare.com>
Sent: Thursday, September 17, 2015 11:00 AM
To: Sarah Riss; Lori Medlin
Cc: Amy Clendennen
Subject: Fwd: date of meeting with board

Jean's note Needs to go into the correspondence log.

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: Jean Dugan <jhdugan@gmail.com>
Date: September 17, 2015 at 10:56:14 AM CDT
To: "Addison, David" <DAddison@rgare.com>
Cc: "SteveLoher@GMail.com" <SteveLoher@gmail.com>, "emersonsmith10@gmail.com" <emersonsmith10@gmail.com>, "wgsdshipley@gmail.com" <wgsdshipley@gmail.com>, "oliver.joel@wgmail.org" <oliver.joel@wgmail.org>, "Clendennen.amy@wgmail.org" <Clendennen.amy@wgmail.org>
Subject: Re: date of meeting with board

McPherson's original proposal had the closing date for candidate applications as mid-October. Id like to see a new timeline.

Jean

On Wed, Sep 16, 2015 at 11:05 PM, Addison, David <DAddison@rgare.com> wrote:

Dear Colleagues:

I talked to Judy and Chris on Tuesday about moving the date of the meeting forward. They indicated that they needed that amount of time to collate responses from the various stakeholder meetings and to provide us with a report. Therefore we will keep the meeting as planned. They did note that other work was occurring. In particular they have started work on the brochure. They also confirmed that all the responses will be provided so we can include them in the public record.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Regards

7

Lori Medlin

From: Sarah Riss
Sent: Friday, September 18, 2015 2:41 PM
To: Lori Medlin
Subject: FW: New Message

For the communication log.

Sarah

Sarah Booth Riss, Ed. D.
Superintendent of Schools
Webster Groves School District
314-962-1233

----- Original message -----

From: "Addison, David" <DAddison@rgare.com>
Date: 09/17/2015 8:43 PM (GMT-06:00)
To: kmummm@charter.net
Cc: Diane Moore <Moore.Diane@wgmail.org>
Subject: Re: New Message

Dear Kim:

I believe that this has been posted in the past as well. We are working to get this and other public documents to be more easily accessible.

David

Sent from my iPhone

> On Sep 17, 2015, at 8:39 PM, "kmummm@charter.net" <kmummm@charter.net> wrote:

>

> Dear David,

>

> I was looking at the WGSD web site tonight and stumbled upon the "2015-16 Budget Notebook"

>

> http://www.webster.k12.mo.us/files/_FWEWw/_cc3dad66a1d1f43b3745a49013852ec4/2015-16_BudgetNotebook.pdf

>

> One finds it by going to departments/business office then clicking on "preliminary budget overview, 2015-16".

>

> I swear I have never seen this document before and I have probably looked at the business department page dozens of times as I was writing my recent research report, b/c I wanted to always assure accuracy. I also hadn't ever seen the nice video that is embedded on the business page, introducing members of the business office team.

>

> At any rate, while the data that is graphed within the Budget Notebook only goes up to 2013-14, there are many of this year's budget documents, also included. I am certain this was never posted previously. Recall, it took me many weeks to query how much preschool tuition revenue has been each year. This report has each year's figured listed. Even included, are this year's staffing and budgets by building.

>

> This document has some of the critical data the Kirkwood Budget book has. As you know, I consider that document spectacular. It

even has a section on the importance of careful reveal of encumbrances.

>

> I don't know if you are responsible for asking Diane and Joann to produce a document like this, or whether my report might have helped, or the arrival of a new superintendent soon, none, or all of the above, but I think this is a wonderful addition to information posted for the public. I will tell Joann and Diane this, as well.

>

> Take care,

>

> Kim

>

>

>

>

8

Lori Medlin

From: Sarah Riss
Sent: Thursday, October 08, 2015 7:54 AM
To: Lori Medlin
Subject: FW: plan for race based hiring

For the communication log.

Sarah

Sarah Booth Riss, Ed. D.
Superintendent of Schools
Webster Groves School District
314-962-1233

From: Sarah Riss
Sent: Thursday, October 08, 2015 7:53 AM
To: 'Susan Mello'; John M. Thomas; David Addison
Subject: RE: plan for race based hiring

Dear Ms. Mello,

The tax rate information was emailed to you by me on 9-16-15 at 4:15 p.m. This included the agenda for the board meeting and the tax rate posting. The posting was also included in The Times, on our website, on Facebook, and posted on the exterior doors of all instructional facilities.

I also responded to your ADA complaint regarding the accessibility of the tax rate hearing notification on 9-15-15. No further response will be forthcoming.

Regarding the new Avery patio on the front lawn. This change has improved the accessibility of the lawn area by expanding the sidewalks and creating a smoother service for outdoor events. The action did not impact the entrance to the front of the school.

Sarah

Sarah Booth Riss, Ed. D.
Superintendent of Schools
Webster Groves School District
314-962-1233

From: Susan Mello [<mailto:susanmello@gmail.com>]
Sent: Tuesday, October 06, 2015 6:12 PM
To: Sarah Riss; John M. Thomas; David Addison
Subject: Re: plan for race based hiring

I submitted a complaint, where is the report and investigation, as required. Why was I not sent the tax figures and why are the ADA issues still not addressed? Did anyone check the walkability of the Avery brick patio for evenness?

On Fri, Sep 18, 2015 at 7:49 AM, Susan Mello <susanmello@gmail.com> wrote:

In connection with the report in WKT, I am very concerned and ask about the background of Linda Holliday and how much we paid her on her contention should hire by race .

The cases also hold that it is not legitimate to try to match the students, and in fact it is unethical and its own form of very kind of racism, that all members of the Black subgroup are alike. Staff and teachers should be hired on their merit not color. It also does a disservice to the administrators and staff suggest they cannot be role models, and that someone of color (not matter their background would be a role model). What would be best to model and start the movement for is that race should not matter, what should matter is achievement. That should be the lesson of schools. Even more so, from even people I know that teach and work in predominantly minority schools, it is insulting to them to suggest if their skills and training are immaterial and what matters is their race I do not believe this is the law, correct or allowable and instead as we have seen the one superintendent with the most success (who is innovative and if we want to take a step forward should try to hire her or at least see who she might recommend and get her involved in the superintendent replacement search is Superintendent Anderson of Jennings who involves the community treats the community as if all in this together and looks to hire persons on skills,

It is my understanding such is known to be prohibited as even at the National Assn of College educators website on student recruitment where as it notes at <http://www.nacweb.org/committee/whitepapers/ethicsguide/thirdparty3.htm>
<<http://www.nacweb.org/committee/whitepapers/ethicsguide/thirdparty3.htm>>

Users Guide to the Principles for Professional Conduct

"Third-party recruiters will follow EEO standards in recruiting activities in a manner that include the following:*

1. *Referring qualified students to employers without regard to the student's race, color, national origin, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation, or disability;*
2. *Reviewing selection criteria for adverse impact and screening students based upon job-related criteria only, not based upon the student's race, color, national origin, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation, or disability;*
3. *Refusing, in the case of resume referral entities, to permit employers to screen and select resumes based upon the student's race, color, national origin, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation, or disability;*
4. *Avoiding use of inquiries that are considered unacceptable by EEO standards during the recruiting process;*
5. *Affirming an awareness of, and sensitivity to, cultural differences and the diversity of the work force;*
6. *Investigating complaints forwarded by the career services office

or the employer client regarding EEO noncompliance and seeking resolution of such complaints.*

....

Intent

The recruitment of students from colleges will be carried out in a manner mirroring the standards of justice in the American employment system.

At the core of an effective affirmative action program is recruitment, i.e., attracting the interest of targeted populations. Thus third-party recruiters in NACE member organizations seeking to meet their affirmative action goals view campus recruiting as a means of inviting minority and females to apply, interview, and ultimately accept an offer of employment. ...

A third-party recruiter is retained by an client organization that is seeking to recruit college women and members of minority groups for a management training program as part of its diversity enhancement effort.

Resolution

The issue here is not whether or not to court the interest of these candidates, rather it has to do with **how** this effort is carried out. Career services professionals are obliged to provide equal service and opportunity for all students. But for them to single out students based on race, ethnicity, or gender is unthinkable. ..

NACE is a founding member of International Network of Graduate Recruitment and Development As <<http://www.naceweb.org/about/ingrada.htm>>

2 I would submit that especially where this is a public school district that it is especially important the guidelines as in the May 2007 opinion in *Parents Involved v Seattle Schools* be reviewed for guidance on what is now lawful. As held there to make assignments on the basis of race was unlawful.

As noted there in the majority opinion

"Accepting racial balancing as a compelling state interest would justify the imposition of racial proportionality throughout American society, contrary to our repeated recognition that "[a]t the heart of the Constitution's guarantee of equal protection lies the simple command that the Government must treat citizens as individuals, not as simply components of a racial, religious, sexual or national class." **Miller* v. *Johnson**, 515 U. S. 900, 911<<http://caselaw.lp.findlaw.com/cgi-bin/getcase.pl?friend=public&navby=case&court=US&vol=515&invol=900&pageno=911>>(1995) (quoting

Metro Broadcasting, 497 U. S., at 602<<http://caselaw.lp.findlaw.com/cgi-bin/getcase.pl?friend=public&navby=case&court=US&vol=497&page=602>>(O'Connor,

J., dissenting); internal quotation marks omitted).
 14<<http://caselaw.lp.findlaw.com/scripts/getcase.pl?court=US&vol=000&invol=05-908&friend=public#FNopinon1.14>>Allowing racial balancing as a compelling end in itself would "effectively assur[e] that race will always be relevant in American life, and that the 'ultimate goal' of 'eliminating entirely from governmental decisionmaking such irrelevant factors as a human being's race' will never be achieved." *Croson, supra*, at 495 (plurality opinion of O'Connor*, J*.) (quoting *Wygant* v. *Jackson Bd. of Ed.*, 476 U. S. 267, 320<<http://caselaw.lp.findlaw.com/cgi-bin/getcase.pl?friend=public&navby=case&court=US&vol=476&invol=267&pageno=320>>(1986) (*Stevens, J.,* dissenting), in turn quoting *Fullilove*, 448 U. S., at 547<<http://caselaw.lp.findlaw.com/cgi-bin/getcase.pl?friend=public&navby=case&court=US&vol=448&page=547>>(*Stevens, J*., dissenting); brackets and citation omitted). An interest "linked to nothing other than proportional representation of various races ... would support indefinite use of racial classifications, employed first to obtain the appropriate mixture of racial views and then to ensure that the [program] continues to reflect that mixture." *Metro Broadcasting*, *supra*, at 614 (O'Connor, J., dissenting).

.... is contrary to our rulings that remedying past societal discrimination does not justify race-conscious government action. See, *e.g.* *,* *Shaw* v. *Hunt*, 517 U. S. 899, 909-910<<http://caselaw.lp.findlaw.com/cgi-bin/getcase.pl?friend=public&navby=case&court=US&vol=517&invol=899&pageno=909>>(1996) ("[A]n effort to alleviate the effects of societal discrimination is not a compelling interest"); *Croson*, *supra*, at 498-499; *Wygant*, 476 U. S., at 276<<http://caselaw.lp.findlaw.com/cgi-bin/getcase.pl?friend=public&navby=case&court=US&vol=476&page=276>>(plurality opinion) ("Societal discrimination, without more, is too amorphous a basis for imposing a racially classified remedy"); *id.* at 288 (O'Connor, J., concurring in part and concurring in judgment) ("[A] governmental agency's interest in remedying 'societal' discrimination, that is, discrimination not traceable to its own actions, cannot be deemed sufficiently compelling to pass constitutional muster").

The principle that racial balancing is not permitted is one of substance, not semantics. Racial balancing is not transformed from "patently unconstitutional" to a compelling state interest simply by relabeling it "racial diversity." While the school districts use various verbal formulations to describe the interest they seek to promote--racial diversity, avoidance of racial isolation, racial integration--they offer no definition of the interest that suggests it differs from racial balance. See, *e.g.* App. in No. 05-908, at 257a ("Q. What's your understanding of when a school suffers from racial isolation? A. I don't have a definition for that"); *id.* at 228a-229a ("I don't think we've ever sat down and said, 'Define racially concentrated school exactly on point in quantitative

terms.' I don't think we've ever had that conversation"); Tr. in *McFarland I*, at 1-90 (Dec. 8, 2003) ("Q. How does the Jefferson County School Board define diversity ... ?" "A. Well, we want to have the schools that make up the percentage of students of the population").

...

It is further my understanding the court also drew a line between remedies needs to address state action and racial imbalance caused by other factors.

Thus, unless there is some judgment or admission of race discrimination in hiring by the district that would be state action (on which where it has been unlawful at least since 1964 it has been unlawful (such the individuals involved would seem to have breached their duties and should be held accountable) it is my understanding the court held that there cannot be such affirmative action.

It stated:

The distinction between segregation by state action and racial imbalance caused by other factors has been central to our jurisprudence in this area for generations. See, *e.g.*, *Milliken*, 433 U. S., at 280 (<<http://caselaw.lp.findlaw.com/cgi-bin/getcase.pl?friend=public&navby=case&court=US&vol=433&page=280>>, n. 14; *Freeman*, 503 U. S., at 495 (<<http://caselaw.lp.findlaw.com/cgi-bin/getcase.pl?friend=public&navby=case&court=US&vol=503&page=495>>-496 ("Where resegregation is a product not of state action but of private choices, it does not have constitutional implications")...

and found that as here where all races are allowed to attend thus be no allowed justification for race-conscious remedies.

While I have not looked at this issues lately where it was clearly held not legal, even appellate cases have confirmed even a judge cannot issue race role model hiring As in Robinson v Shelby 6th cir 2009 n striking down a similar student plan even a judge could not order a race based hiring plan citing: Oliver v. Kalamazoo Bd. of Educ

., 706 F.2d 757 (6th Cir. 1983), we explained that "students. . . do not have a constitutional right to attend a school with a teaching staff of any particular racial composition. Rather, with respect to the teaching staff, all that the students are entitled to is the 'sustained good faith effort to recruit minority faculty members so as to remedy the effects of any past discriminatory practices.'"

Id

. at 762

(quoting Fort Bend Indep. Sch. Dist.

v. City of Stafford
, 651 F.2d 1133, 1140 (5th Cir.
1981)).

Is Webster Groves admitting
it still has engaged in discrimination where it is not just going to have a plan to recruit but to hire staff based
on race,

--

Susan H Mello
(314) 721 7521
fax (314) 863-7779 fax

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9

Lori Medlin

From: Sarah Riss
Sent: Friday, September 18, 2015 12:45 PM
To: Lori Medlin
Subject: Fwd: Steger

For the board com. Log.
Thanks
Sarah

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: Dave Buck <dave@buckstl.com>

Date: September 18, 2015 at 12:42:05 PM CDT

To: "riss.sarah@wgmail.org" <riss.sarah@wgmail.org>, "simpson.john@wgmail.org" <simpson.john@wgmail.org>, "loher.steve@wgmail.org" <loher.steve@wgmail.org>, "addison.david@wgmail.org" <addison.david@wgmail.org>, Amy Clendennen <Clendennen.amy@wgmail.org>

Subject: Steger

A quick FYI that's worth sharing. During Tuesday evening's Superintendent Search community forum, the moderator, Chris, shared that he had earlier spent the day interviewing some teachers, staff, etc., and students. He did not say what specific grade levels the students were or how many.

Steve, please correct and forgive me if I got this wrong, but I remember Chris saying that he asked the students a question something along the lines of, "What have you liked best about the district in your time here so far?" And evidently their #1 answer was the Steger 6th Grade Center.

Personally, in my humble and imperfect opinion, I have never seen anything like Steger in any other school district I have ever seen. The kids liked the idea of kids who do not know each other coming together from the 5 elementary schools to gel and to bond as a class, who will be together for the next 7 years, and to do it without any distractions from lower or upper grade students.

I share this because Chris is a former superintendent of a Kansas school district and, in response to a question about his top job above all else, he said he kept a sign on his desk that said something like, "If it's not good for kids, we don't do it."

If Chris' student learning is any indication, if S&W could be shaped all over again, who's point-of-view on Steger would count the most: adults or students?

Food for thought.

Dave

Lori Medlin

From: Sarah Riss
Sent: Friday, September 18, 2015 5:16 PM
To: Lori Medlin
Subject: FW: A sincere thank you and three questions

For the communication log.

Sarah

Sarah Booth Riss, Ed. D.
 Superintendent of Schools
 Webster Groves School District
 314-962-1233

From: kmummm@charter.net [mailto:kmummm@charter.net]

Sent: Friday, September 18, 2015 5:13 PM

To: Diane Moore; 'kmummm@charter.net'

Cc: 'brett.moorehouse@rankinjordan.org'; David Addison; Amy Clendennen; Emerson Smith; Jean Dugan; Joel Oliver; Michael Shipley; Steve Loher; Sarah Riss; Joann Kite

Subject: RE: A sincere thank you and three questions

Dear Diane,

I most certainly do think this version now posted is extremely useful and valuable. It is a wealth of information.

The current year budget (drafts, then final versions) which I did see posted all spring/summer on the BOE and business pages was, in itself, helpful. I referred to it often after the election. It is how I learned "preschool tuition" was contained within the line item # 11, entitled "other local". I was also able to see, on the expense side of that electronic budget, line item # 84 was a "clean" "preschool expense".

I'm sure you recall, I asked several questions in April and May to try to ascertain the actual preschool tuition, then the full preschool revenue figures, so the preschool revenues could be aligned with the preschool expense line item, to learn if the preschool runs a surplus, deficit or "breaks even".

This currently posted Budget Book contains much more detail than the electronic budget document did. You even have included a full posting of all the individual items listed within the "other local" revenue line item #11, one of them being preschool tuition.

I love the fact that anyone else who might also wonder about some of the things I did will now only have to refer to this comprehensive document for answers. Again, thank you.

What was so wonderful about this year's published tax notice is, it contained the projected figures in a WKWT ad, not just the notice to please see the projected figures, posted within one of the school's buildings.

Thank you for clarifying how/from whom I might hear more about discussing the contents of my report.

Thanks for your reply and have a good weekend, as well, all.

Kim

From: "Diane Moore"

To: "kmummm@charter.net"

Cc: "brett.moorehouse@rankinjordan.org", "David Addison", "Amy Clendennen", "Emerson Smith", "Jean Dugan", "Joel Oliver", "Michael Shipley", "Steve Loher", "Sarah Riss", "Joann Kite"

Sent: Fri, 18 Sep 2015 20:19:14 +0000

Subject: RE: A sincere thank you and three questions

Kim,

I am glad you feel the electronic budget notebook is a useful and valuable tool. The Business Office moved to an electronic budget notebook in the spring of 2007-2008 to provide budget updates for the 2008-2009 school year. This notebook has been available on the district's website every spring in the format you see today. In fact the electronic budget notebook currently available on the Business Office website AND the Board of Education website was posted in April, 2015. I'm not sure why you haven't seen it before now but it has been linked to the same two websites for seven years. The Business Office video is not new. This video was provided to the Board of Education during the school district Infrastructure Report in June, 2014. After it was presented in this board meeting we put it on the Business Office website for informational purposes. The video has been available for viewing for over a year. The district is in the process of reviewing all of the business office websites and links. In the coming weeks/months we will be updating many areas.

The district has used a similar format for the property tax rate hearing notice as in the past.

As to your questions – JoAnn nor I do not have the time at this point to research any differences between the 2013-2014 audit and the electronic budget notebook. While we try to make sure past years are correct and updated to final budget numbers, it is possible we do not catch this all of the time in past documents posted. We work very hard to make sure the CURRENT budget documents (which shows previous years) is up to date and contains final budget information for each of the funds. Without spending time comparing the audit numbers to the operating budget, I can quickly explain the \$31,961,276 in the 13-14 audit represents all local revenues coded to the GENERAL Fund while the \$37,541,810 in the 13-14 budget notebook represents local current property taxes the district received which would then be coded to different funds according to DESE guidelines. Please submit a sunshine request if you feel you need more detail and clarification immediately.

I cannot speculate when the Board or the Finance Advisory Committee might respond to your report. While you made several recommendations and I am sure individuals from the Board and the Finance Advisory Committee read your report, it will be up to each of these entities to decide if and in what form they choose to respond. JoAnn and I will be meeting with the Chair of the Finance Advisory Committee in the coming weeks to discuss future agendas. I would be happy to provide you more information once I know anything for future agenda items from this committee.

I hope you have a good weekend,
Diane

From: kmummm@charter.net [mailto:kmummm@charter.net]

Sent: Friday, September 18, 2015 12:58 PM

To: Joann Kite; Diane Moore

Cc: 'brett.moorehouse@rankinjordan.org'; David Addison; Amy Clendennen; Emerson Smith; Jean Dugan; Joel Oliver; Michael Shipley; Steve Loher

Subject: A sincere thank you and three questions

Dear Diane and Joann,

(NOTE to Lori- if this is posted in the BOE communication log, please check w/ Brett to ask if he'd like his e-mail address revealed. Thank you)

I would like to thank you for posting the new video on the WGSD business web site, which introduces many of your department functions and staff. I think it is a great addition to the page and a great resource for citizens who are interested.

Thank you, also, for the new "budget book" which seems to have been recently posted. I just stumbled upon them both last evening. I had checked in on your business at least daily throughout the 8 weeks during which was writing the research report I provided you September 6, but had not looked since then. I looked so often then, because I was watching for the 2014 audit posting or any updates I didn't want to disregard or misrepresent.

The budget book is filled with excellent information. Thank you for its table of contents, the detailed revenue and expense data, for the graphs, which detail select individual fund data through 2013/14, for the per school staffing and budget document, as well as for your opening section, which provides very good explanations of the budget components. Sincerely, thank you. This is a HUGE benefit for tax payers. ☺

Finally, thank you for posting such an informative and clear tax rate hearing advertisement in yesterday's WKWT. It was very easy to simply compare our ad to Kirkwood's ad, to look at various components of it in order to understand both sets of data well. Thank you. I believe I do understand it and think you served the community magnificently by posting the information. I plan to attend the Kirkwood tax hearing on Monday to be certain I learn as much as I can from that forum.

I left you both voice messages that I have just a couple of question, please.

1. Per the budget book, our total local revenues were \$36,194,025 in 2012/13 and \$37,541,810 in 2013/14.

What was it this figure for this past year, please (2014-15)?

2. Per page 37 of the 2014 audit, the total local figure listed for the general (incidental) fund is \$31,961,276, but the total for ALL the local funds is \$ 52,366,300

Please could you clarify for me which of those totals relate to the totals listed in question 1 (from the budget book, 2013-14), or if neither relate, then how they do relate to the totals in question #1?

3. When do you anticipate (and by what method) I will hear from you and/or the financial advisory committee and/or the board of education to discuss the content of the Comparative Research Report I sent on September 6, 2015?

Thank you very much. You don't have to return my call, unless you'd like to do so. This is what I wanted to tell you and ask.

Take care,

Kim

Lori Medlin

From: Sarah Riss
Sent: Monday, September 21, 2015 11:57 PM
To: Lori Medlin
Subject: Fwd: Average teacher salary, longevity and % advanced degree comparisons

For the communication log
Sarah

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: Emerson Smith <emersonsmith10@gmail.com>
Date: September 21, 2015 at 9:47:02 PM CDT
To: Sarah Riss <Riss.Sarah@wgmail.org>
Subject: Fwd: Average teacher salary, longevity and % advanced degree comparisons

Sarah,

Please add to the communication log.

Thanks,
Emerson

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Emerson Smith** <emersonsmith10@gmail.com>
Date: Mon, Sep 21, 2015 at 9:44 PM
Subject: Re: Average teacher salary, longevity and % advanced degree comparisons
To: kmummm@charter.net

Thanks again Kim. I appreciate you sharing. This will give me something to review on a trip i'a taking.

Emerson

On Sun, Sep 20, 2015 at 11:04 PM, <kmummm@charter.net> wrote:
Dear Emerson,

You got me wondering how we compare to more than just Kirkwood and Lindbergh with our teacher longevity, % with advanced degrees, as well as average salaries. I decided to dig up the DESE numbers this weekend.

It is possible this may be a good resource for you and other BOE members, if you've not seen this year's detail yet in this format. Feel free to pass it along to the others. I'll copy David, here, b/c I'd copied him on the K and L info.

Have a great week, both of you.

Take care,

Kim

The EXCEL file (attached) has 2 tabs.

tab 1- St. Louis area districts

tab 2- Missouri districts

The summary points:

1. Comparisons to St. Louis area school districts:

WEBSTER GROVES- 15th highest of 26 St Louis area accredited school districts for of % teachers w/ advanced degrees in the St. Louis area (top 58%)

WEBSTER GROVES- 2nd highest of 26 St. Louis area districts for teachers with # years of experience (top 8%)

WEBSTER GROVES - 3rd highest average teacher salary of 26 St Louis area accredited school districts (top 1%)

2. Comparisons to Missouri school districts:

WEBSTER GROVES- 22nd highest in state of the 2015 % teachers w/ advanced degrees, per DESE data (top 4% of all 520 districts)

WEBSTER GROVES- 16th highest in the state in years of experience of teachers, per 2015 DESE data (top 3% of all 520 districts in the state)

WEBSTER GROVES- 3rd highest average teacher salary in the state, per 2015 DESE data (top 0.6% highest of 520 districts in the state)

Emerson Smith

--
Emerson Smith

Lori Medlin

From: Sarah Riss
Sent: Tuesday, September 22, 2015 8:39 AM
To: Lori Medlin
Subject: FW: one correction in the table on tab 1, bottom of page

For the board communication log.

Sarah

Sarah Booth Riss, Ed. D.
 Superintendent of Schools
 Webster Groves School District
 314-962-1233

From: kmummm@charter.net [mailto:kmummm@charter.net]
Sent: Monday, September 21, 2015 3:25 PM
To: Linda Holliday
Subject: one correction in the table on tab 1, bottom of page

Dear Linda,

I just noticed I made an error on this table on tab 1 of the EXCEL sheet. Obviously, as can be noted on the yearly total average salary tables, WGSD surpassed \$64000 in 2013, not 2012, as I had recorded.

I corrected my version and pasted it below, here. The alignment will be off, but we surpassed \$60K in 2010, 62K in 2012, 64K in 2013, 66K in 2014 and 68K in 2015.

I also found other years w/ tiny increases in year to year total av salary increases of other districts that I'd not highlighted in red. I'm sure you will see them, nevertheless.

Would it be possible for you to please forward this correction e-mail to the BOE members for me? If not, just let me know, and I send it. Sorry for the trouble, all.

Kim

Year each district surpassed the average total
 teacher salary, listed at right

1. Clayton

	\$60,000	\$62,000	\$64,000	\$66,000	\$68,000
	<2006	<2006	2008	2009	2010

2. Kirkwood	2009	2009	2010	2011	2012
3. Webster Groves	2010	2012	2013	2014	2015
4. Parkway	2012	2013	2014	not yet	not yet
5. Ladue	2009	2011	2015	not yet	not yet
6. Brentwood	2008	2008	not yet	not yet	not yet
7. Pattonville	2010	2012	not yet	not yet	not yet
8. Special School District	2010	2015	not yet	not yet	not yet
9. Affton	2015	not yet	not yet	not yet	not yet
10. Francis Howell	2015	not yet	not yet	not yet	not yet
11. Jennings	2015	not yet	not yet	not yet	not yet
12. Rockwood	2015	not yet	not yet	not yet	not yet
13. Ritenour	2015	not yet	not yet	not yet	not yet
14. Fox	not yet	not yet	not yet	not yet	not yet
15. Lindbergh	not yet	not yet	not yet	not yet	not yet
16. Hancock Place	not yet	not yet	not yet	not yet	not yet
17. Valley Park	not yet	not yet	not yet	not yet	not yet
18. Hazelwood	not yet	not yet	not yet	not yet	not yet
19. Ferguson-Florissant	not yet	not yet	not yet	not yet	not yet
20. U. City	not yet	not yet	not yet	not yet	not yet
21. Mehlville	not yet	not yet	not yet	not yet	not yet
22. Wentzville	not yet	not yet	not yet	not yet	not yet
23. Maplewood-Richmond Hts	not yet	not yet	not yet	not yet	not yet
24. Ft Zumwalt	not yet	not yet	not yet	not yet	not yet
25. St Charles R- VI	not yet	not yet	not yet	not yet	not yet
26. Bayless	not yet	not yet	not yet	not yet	not yet
Riverview Gardens	not yet	not yet	not yet	not yet	not yet
Normandy Collaborative	not yet	not yet	not yet	not yet	not yet

Lori Medlin

From: Sarah Riss
Sent: Tuesday, September 22, 2015 2:59 PM
To: Lori Medlin
Subject: FW: 8-24-15 meeting minutes and 9-18-15 data request

For the correspondence log.

Sarah

Sarah Booth Riss, Ed. D.
Superintendent of Schools
Webster Groves School District
314-962-1233

From: kmummm@charter.net [mailto:kmummm@charter.net]
Sent: Tuesday, September 22, 2015 2:56 PM
To: Lori Medlin
Cc: Sarah Riss; David Addison
Subject: RE: 8-24-15 meeting minutes and 9-18-15 data request

Dear Lori,

I see the meeting minutes are now posted. My comment is fairly summarized.

I look forward to receiving the enrollment data.

Thanks,

Kim

From: kmummm@charter.net
To: "medlin.lori@wgmail.org"
Cc: "riss.sarah@wgmail.org", "addison.david@wgmail.org"
Sent: Tue, 22 Sep 2015 11:03:31 -0500
Subject: 8-24-15 meeting minutes and 9-18-15 data request

Dear Lori,

I will copy David on this e-mail, too, because this involves the BOE meeting minutes on the BOE web site.

1. The 8-24-15 BOE meeting minutes are still not posted.

As you know, these minutes were initially posted in advance of the 9-14-15 BOE meeting. I was able to read your summary of the public comments made at the 8-24-15 meeting by another citizen and by me. I felt you represented my comments fairly accurately in the meeting minutes you posted.

Presumably, because the meeting minutes were not yet approved by the BOE on 9-14-15 and were still preliminary, the minutes were removed from the web site in advance of the 9-14-15 meeting.

Today, however, is 9-22-15.

This is my 3rd request for them to be posted. Here is the link to the BOE meeting minutes page. I don't see them. Am I looking in the incorrect location for them?

http://www.webster.k12.mo.us/pages/WGSD/Departments/BOARD_OF_ED/Elements/BOE_Documents/Minutes/Meeting_Minutes_20156-2016

2. Please see my data request, sent 9-18-15. I have heard no reply yet regarding it.

Thanks.

Kim

From: kmummm@charter.net
To: "medlin.lori@wgmail.org"
Cc:
Sent: Fri, 18 Sep 2015 11:41:26 -0500
Subject: data request

Dear Lori,

I would like to please request the enrollment reports for the years 2000/2001- 2013-14.

This would include the total enrollment for the district, the total enrollment per school, the enrollment by grade within each school, how many sections/grade per school, the average classroom size/grade, the average classroom size per year per school and the projected same numbers for the following year for all of these data.

This is all contained in Sarah's October, 2014 enrollment report. Therefore, her report could serve as a model, please, for what data I would like to have.

I realize the format of the report will differ from year year. The report Sarah or, before year, Brent, presented to the BOE is what I am requesting, please.

Thank you so much.

Feel free to call if you have any questions.

By the way, as of last evening (I have not looked today) the board of education meeting minutes from 8-24-15 are not posted. They were approved at the 9-14-15 BOE meeting and I had seen you posted your "draft" of them previously, but it was removed.

I made a public comment in the 8-24/15 meeting; that is why I am watching for the meeting minutes.

Thanks for all your help.

Kim

Lori Medlin

From: Sarah Riss
Sent: Tuesday, September 29, 2015 11:23 AM
To: Lori Medlin
Subject: FW: Bond Issue/Superintendent Search

For the communication log.
 Sarah

Sarah

Sarah Booth Riss, Ed. D.
 Superintendent of Schools
 Webster Groves School District
 314-962-1233

From: Addison, David [<mailto:DAddison@rgare.com>]
Sent: Tuesday, September 29, 2015 9:24 AM
To: Kevin Lee; David Addison
Cc: Michael Shipley; Sara McGinnis Lee; Sarah Riss
Subject: RE: Bond Issue/Superintendent Search

Dear Kevin:

Thank you for your letter and for your support.

The ongoing funding of our schools, including the space needs are high in the minds of the board. We are working with the administration to determine when and how we will reengage the community. We have been working to improve community engagement to ensure that we understand the perspective of all of our citizens. The ability to engage and garner the support of those citizens who did not feel able to support the propositions is a key element of that approach.

My personal feeling is that there were a number of reasons why the proposals did not pass, but I don't think that Dr. Riss's pending retirement was one of them. She did not make her decision public until after the vote, but more importantly I never heard that raised as a reason to vote against the proposals. Irrespective of whether or not it was a factor, however, as a board we recognize that the hiring of Dr. Riss's successor is probably the most important decision we will make as a board. Among the many tasks that will fall to that individual, building on Dr. Riss' record of community engagement will be very important.

With best regards

David

From: Kevin Lee [<mailto:kevinjlee95@gmail.com>]
Sent: Tuesday, September 29, 2015 7:50 AM
To: addison.david@wgmail.org
Cc: wgsdshipley@gmail.com; Sara McGinnis Lee
Subject: Bond Issue/Superintendent Search

David,

Thank you for your service on the Board of Education.

My wife, Sara, and I live in the district. We have two sons: an 8th grader at Hixson and a 5th grader at Avery. We also happen to live on a block with over 35 school age children. The future of Webster Groves is right before our eyes.

We are proponents of the proposed bonds for improvements to the school district. We both voted yes last year. It is critical that we continue to invest in our public schools to: form children as students and future citizens; insure WGSD is a top choice for families; and keep Webster Groves a wonderful place to live. Failure to invest could result in the University City phenomena - wonderful neighborhoods, nice tax base, mediocre school district that once was great.

Last year, we had a shot at passing the bond issue and unfortunately it failed. I do not believe that the failure was merely an issue of disseminating the information on a larger scale. I believe a certain portion of the failure is due to uncertainty regarding future district leadership.

Dr. Riss has been a great leader but everyone knew she was retiring. I believe we are now in a holding pattern until the new superintendent is in place. People want to know who will be at the helm directing the efforts of the district in the future i.e. at the end of the day who is responsible for the expenditure of those funds.

Once the new superintendent is in place, I would suggest the following:

- Enter the community to speak about the need. District leadership should be speaking at the Rotary, Kiwanis, and every church in the district. District leadership should disperse and enter every coffee shop weekly to discuss the bond issue with the citizens. To continue to hold meetings at the district office or at the schools where the same 200 like minded individuals is not effective. We need a community engagement strategy where we engage the people who are not voting yes.
- Train all school leaders/building administrators on effective communication strategies for their respective schools. Education is a customer centered business. Every employee from the secretary to the principal is part of getting the bond issue passed. Will every parent always be happy - impossible but they should receive great customer service.

Obviously, I do not feel these last two happened. I know you know business development etc.

Again, I believe the key is the superintendent.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Most of all thank you for your service.

Sincerely,

Kevin J. Lee

429 Greeley Ave

Webster Groves, MO 63119

314.239.2617 cell