

WLCSC Community Forum 12/09/2019, notes from Sarah Wassgren

These notes are taken by the Jr/Sr HS Parent Council representative. They are not official minutes.

WL Jr/Sr HS

Construction update

- Aquatic center is open, and the swim team is practicing there! The first home swim meet will be held Thursday, Dec 12. We have a separate diving well and swimming lanes. Another improvement is deskside seating for 180-190 athletes, important for hosting larger meets.
- Over the weekend (12/7) they worked to get the aquatic center ready, much floor finishing to be completed before the final furnishings can be moved in.
- Jeff HS is 4-6wks from getting into their new pool.
- The ribbon cutting (11/25) was well attended.
- Dining court is open for student lunch seating. Meals in the court will be served after break.
- Waiting for steel to be delivered for other construction.

Parent Council

- Teacher Grants were issued. We had 8 requests and funded all of them (at least partially).
- Student Etiquette Dinner at Purdue in February.
 - o It has been a few years since we hosted this dinner event due to scheduling issues. Seniors and Juniors will have first priority to sign up.
 - o It will be held at Purdue's Marriot Hall and led by Anthony Cawdron, Westwood Event Manager (AKA "Purdue's Butler").

WLIS

Lots of great school events!

- Strings, band, and choir concerts
- Game Night
- Kids' Night was last Friday
- DARE graduation is this week

WLIS Cares

- Families in need being sponsored at the holidays
- Good WLIS community response to the program

Parent Council

- Have issued their teacher grants
- "Gaga pit rules" sign is being made
- Raising money for playground improvements. They have \$5K holdover funds from last year, are raising another \$5K this year for this item.
- Parent Coffee meet & greet is planned for January 14th.

WLES

- Holiday Tree for families in need (15-20 families). Kids can take an ornament home which lists a need to be filled. The 200 ornaments were gone instantly! Gifts are coming in this week.
- 3rd Grade is going to McCord's Candies to see their annual candy cane production. They will take 2 classes at a time. This is a new trip this year, and the kids are very excited!

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- Mrs Dewitt is creating a multicultural celebration week, in February.

Parent Council

- Have moved some of their annual events around this year.
- Hosted their first Movie Night which was very well received
 - o 150 students pre-registered, plus more "at the door"
 - o Parents appreciated that WLIS siblings were welcomed!
 - o Newly constructed cafeteria space worked very nicely for them
- \$15K playground equipment will be installed when the ground is not frozen
 - o 3 balance beams
 - o 2 saucer swings
- Purchased coat racks for the cafeteria from TSC surplus auction, lowered to "little kid height"

City of WL

- Installing new sidewalks (never had them there before!) on Ravinia from Hillcrest to Riley. This will be a great improvement for the neighborhood, plus for students who walk to/from the high school.
- Ice rink is open!
- Had their ground-breaking at Morton. The interior has been gutted and construction is on schedule.
- Wellness Center under construction should be open by January 2021-

Purdue

- Lots of construction under way and planned at Discovery Park. They will be tearing down the Patty Jischke Early Care & Education Center building (jointly run with KinderCare) and relocating the facility. There are several possible locations, one of which is the former State Farm building on Kent Ave. A site near Slater Center is also being investigated.
- Winter break staff shut down: 12/20/19 – 1/2/20

WLCSC School Board

- Operating budget was passed
- The board & WLEA (WL Education Association) successfully negotiated a new collective bargaining agreement
- Held public hearings to issue bonds for the upcoming Bob Kelly Performing Arts construction at the high school
 - o Bids are coming in around \$7.2M, higher than the anticipated \$5M
 - o Partially due to the area construction boom, steel tariffs driving up material costs
- Participated in the Red for Ed at our school locations
- Supporting the litigation against the state concerning the former Happy Hollow School building

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Superintendent, Rocky Killion

Newsweek magazine has released their high school STEM rankings of the best 500 STEM high schools in the nation:

- Of over 19,000 US high schools, WestSide ranks #20 for STEM education overall, #13 for STEM in public schools. RDP!

Upcoming construction plans

- Spring 2020 will begin construction on the high school's Bob Kelly Performing Arts Center
- Summer 2021 will open the HS science wing and the Bob Kelly Performing Arts Center

Happy Hollow lawsuit

- The way the vaguely written law reads, if WLCSC does anything other than K-12 education in the building a charter school can come at any time to buy the site for \$1.
 - o Currently the building is being rented to WL City Hall through the end of 2020, which is generating income for the school district
 - o Creating future plans of renovating the building for an Early Education Center: have a pre-school program, have the capability to add kindergarten if WLES needs more space in future years, possibly even a Children's Museum.
 - o Before WLCSC invests millions in renovations, we want assurances that it cannot be taken from us – before / during / after renovations
- Costs of the lawsuit
 - o The main lawsuit will cost ~\$25K in legal fees. Two other school districts have said that they will help us cover that cost
 - o The new Taxpayer Petition was drawn up pro-bono (by attorney Doug Masson, former WLCSC school board member), no legal fees are associated with the petition
- Taxpayer petition in support of the lawsuit
 - o Judge Persin asked several times during the hearing about taxpayer support. The purpose of the petition is to demonstrate local taxpayer support for this lawsuit.
 - o It is a low (no) cost way to support our position, where fast turn around needed
 - o If desired, taxpayers may still file a class action lawsuit against the state later. Comparison of the petition versus a class action: faster, cheaper, signers are not called to testify
 - o Goal is to get 1,000 signers by the end of Friday 12/13. The petition will be submitted on Monday 12/16.
 - Can be signed at the admin building or any of the schools
 - Parent Council volunteers are going to the student pick-up lines this week to gather signatures, also trying to cover this week's home high school sporting events.