

POLAND SCHOOLS STRATEGIC PLAN

Observations, March 13, 2017, Enrollment Committee Meeting
Larry Warren

1. The concept of open enrollment has come up in discussion several times. It is obviously an issue that needs to be addressed by this committee. Here are my thoughts.
 - A. Conceptually, I am opposed to open enrollment. I believe that it is a system that takes from the poor to give to the rich. Its design is to take students from one district and give them to another, along with the state dollars that follow them (the students).
 - B. That being said, if the decision is made to include the open enrollment concept in the strategic plan, I believe that the wording needs to give the board of education maximum flexibility in (1) Deciding whether or not to implement it and (2) Determining the guidelines, obviously within state law, that need to go into place to facilitate such implementation.
 - C. Concomitant with that is that those making the decision have a thorough and true understanding of all of the ramifications of such a move.
 - D. Some are perceiving open enrollment as a silver bullet that will solve a myriad of financial problems. It's not necessarily that way. The decision needs to be entered into only after a great deal of thought, research and deliberation.
 - E. Creating open enrollment has great potential for altering the culture of a school district. The decision to move ahead with it makes it imperative to get a grip on how that culture can be altered and what strategies need to be in place to assist the school in dealing with any of those changes.
2. At several meetings of this committee we have broached the subject of promoting curricular and extra-curricular offerings to keep students in the district. This is, I believe, one of the most important things we can do as a school district to keep our students.

It is, essentially, internal marketing. This is an initiative that can also be addressed by the communications committee. We need to make our citizens proud of and willing to support the Poland Schools. They need to be reminded constantly of the good things that happen in our district.

3. I still don't believe that we have reliable data regarding why Poland students choose to be educated outside the district. The answer to this and related questions would go a long way in helping us determine a strategy. If we are to acquire this data, someone within the district needs to be tasked with obtaining reliable data. We also need to get a fix on the number of resident students in the Poland School District who attend parochial schools and why they attend them.