

Dear Colleagues:

The Walnut Valley Unified School District Board of Trustees has decided to arrange for ongoing meetings between the Superintendent's Office, WVEA, and CSEA, to work collaboratively on better understanding and ultimately addressing the issues surrounding District of Choice (DOC). We have also agreed to send a joint communique following each of our discussions/meetings to assist in keeping our staff informed.

In our September and October discussions/meetings, the following three items were addressed:

- Building a cohesive understanding of the history and current status of DOC
- What are the possible next steps?
- What can or should we be doing as a collective staff or individual at this point?

History of DOC:

- DOC was introduced to WVUSD by former Superintendent Dr. Hockwalt who truly believed that all kids had a right to a world-class education.
- Over the past 20 years, DOC has been set to expire multiple times and has always been extended.
- Last year the Legislative Analyst's Office conducted a study on DOC and made a recommendation to legislatures to extend DOC (up to 8 years) because they found it to be good for students across the state. (<http://www.lao.ca.gov/Publications/Report/3331>)
- SB 1432 moved quickly through the approval of the Senate and its subcommittees and began moving through the Assembly and its subcommittees, passing unanimously out of the Assembly Education Committee, which deals with policy issues. However, Assemblywoman Gonzalez held the DOC Senate Bill 1432, which did not allow the bill to be discussed and voted on by the Appropriations Committee.

Current Status of DOC:

- DOC is set to expire at the end of this school year (June 30, 2017).
- Assemblywoman Gonzalez has publically committed to working collaboratively through bi-partisanship efforts to create a DOC extension bill that could be approved.
- Some surrounding non-DOC school districts have expressed a desire to allow current DOC students to remain in our school district regardless of the status of current and future DOC legislation.
- WVUSD and other DOC Districts have a lobbyist/consultant to advocate for a DOC extension.
- School districts are funded on the previous year's enrollment, thus any loss of students caused by DOC would not impact the budget until 2 years following the reduction.
- If DOC is not extended, WVUSD will assist parents in alternative ways to keep their students in WVUSD, such as working with surrounding districts, interdistrict transfers, Allen Bill, etc. Furthermore, while highly unlikely (because of the reason and alternative methods stated above), should all current DOC students be required to return to their districts of residence, WVUSD stands to lose approximately 3,500 students enrolled through DOC, which would result in a reduction of our budget (thus leading to possible reductions such as teachers, classified staff and administrators, programs, etc.).
- WVUSD will open the DOC enrollment in November and December, 2016, as normal.

What are the possibilities?

- Urgency Bill - would be introduced in December 2016, becomes effective as soon as the Governor signs the bill, requires 2/3 approval from the legislators, and needs the approval of the Appropriations Committee.
- Governor's Document - would be introduced in the Governor's Budget in January 2017, does not need the approval of the Appropriations Committee, and would be returned to the Governor following the May Revise for his signature by June 20, 2017.

What can or should we be doing?

- We have been advised that at this point, it's best for us to "wait and see" what happens with the upcoming election (so we'll know who our legislators will be).
- Because the voices of our staff and parents were so strong regarding DOC (and with the assistance of other DOC voices across the state), legislators have agreed to work together and try to resolve this issue. Therefore, at this time, it's best that we, again, "wait and see" what happens in the next month or so.
- If needed and deemed advantageous, we will let you know if and when (and to whom) we/you should begin communicating with legislators through email, social media, in person, etc.
- We will also be communicating with our DOC parents to keep them updated and informed.

Thanks for your continued support and efforts!



Robert P. Taylor
Superintendent



Lisa Peterson
President, WVEA



Margarita Gutierrez
President, CSEA