

MTI Voters
2005 School Board Election Questionnaire
by
Lawrence J. Winkler
Candidate for Seat 7

1. Did you support the June 2003 Referendum?
2. RE: Spring 2005 referenda
 - a. RE: Will you support 2005 Maintenance referendum?
Tentatively, yes. The list of critical items, given to the Long Range Planning Committee in the December 20 meeting, does seem to suggest a referendum is needed – I do not want to balance these needed items against the District’s core educational responsibilities.
 - b. RE: Will you support 2005 Operating Budget referendum?
The issue of an operations referendum has been mentioned as possible but it has not been proposed. There is no such referendum on the table at this time. As a member of the School Board in April, if elected, I will be voting on the MMSD budget allocations; if a referendum becomes necessary to support MMSD, I will support it.
 - c. RE: Will you support 2005 Leopold School construction referendum?
The Long Range Planning Committee, made up of Board members and representatives of the public, were charged, in part, with reviewing solutions to overcrowding in the Leopold area. However, only now is the Committee receiving information on alternatives to building a grade 3-5 facility on the current Leopold site (or alternatives in case a referendum is defeated). A solution to the overcrowding problem being experienced at Leopold is critical. I will support

such a referendum if it is the best reasonable alternative to resolving the problem.

3. Identify specific MMSD programs and/or policies which you believe should be modified, reprioritized, or eliminated and explain why?

The School Board must actually have and enforce priorities before we can begin to consider reprioritization. I will introduce formal decision analysis processes to MMSD (with guidance from UW experts) and ensure that all critical stakeholders have formal input into setting these priorities: the Board, the Administration, the teachers, the parents, critical others.

The main budget decision, typically made in the June timeframe, must include all budget items, instead of making prior binding budget decisions. Prior binding decisions, then, require that budget cuts be absorbed by school programs, such as cuts to SE programs (again!) that were made last year.

We need to look carefully at curriculum. Issues of tax burden are less about the money than the perception that we are not getting the quality for the money. There is significant distrust in the community that the Administration and School Board are making correct decisions.

4. What should the District do to reduce violence/assure that proper discipline is maintained in our schools?
Acknowledgement that violence occurs is critical, and the Board must be made aware of these incidents so that detailed policy can be made and solutions funded. Until my candidacy, violence and disciplinary issues that made the papers, and some incidents raised during PTO meetings, I was aware of. My daughter, currently at West, was aware of only a few such problems.

1. Disciplinary problems in the classroom: Students who are continual disciplinary problems in class

should be permanently removed from that class. This did not happen in one of my daughter's classes; the teacher did not get support from the administration to remove the problem student.

2, SE staff have been the targets of mentally challenged and mentally ill students, and without appropriate level of staffing, there is potential for violence against other students and teachers in total-inclusion settings. The appropriateness of total inclusion of violence-prone students in the classroom needs to be substantively addressed.

3. Sexual assault of students against other students in an MMSD elementary school has occurred. The lack of appropriate action by the administration allowed other similar assaults to occur to several other students. The Board needs to be made aware of these issues and exercise their oversight authority.

4. Violence and disciplinary problems are sometimes due to drug and alcohol. Triaging kids into treatment by third parties and involvement of parents can be successful.

5. Student-on-student violence raises a question: Do we tolerate certain student-on-student violence and condemn others? This is a question raised by my daughter, who is Hispanic, and her friends, also of varied ethnic groups (Tibetan, Hmong, Thai, Black, White, Jewish). Their belief is that black-on-black violence is tolerated, but others cause disciplinary actions.

5. Explain any concerns/proposed solutions you have about the District's minority achievement efforts.

We should really be talking about low income, not minority – a sad reality that there is such a high correlation. However, my deep concern is that the burden has been placed solely on schools to solve what is a social and parenting problem, and that

schools, even fully-funded, cannot succeed in closing this gap -- the deprived environment that kids come into the system with will likely remain as deprived throughout their 12 years in school -- though blame will be layed on the schools for the failure.

NCLB is primarily a close-the-gap program for 20% of kids, but international comparisons (TIMSS, PISA) are showing an increasing gap developing between our 80% and the rest of the developed world. Our curriculum needs to be changed to catch up to the rest of the developed world.

Achieving the latter goal will widen the gap between low income and rest.

Solution (this is quite presumptuous!):

1. NCLB contains grant money for parental programs. Parents in economically deprived environments must be given the skills to create a nuturing and intellectually rich environment despite their economic circumstances.
2. Intensive programs must be developed to help the lower 20% catch up. Success here requires more than pull-out, but full immersion: charter school, or school-within-school, such as Nuestro Mundo.
6. Explain your commitment to four-year-old and all day kindergarten programs.
Committed, but only if it can be shown to be an intensive program as I outlined in question 5. The programs I have seen described for 4K seem to fall short in this regard. The Administration, in its budget analysis for 4K, projected the costs/revenues out 3 years, but the estimates did not include estimates of costs savings due to improved skills of incoming 1st graders. Improved skills should impact need for remedial reading programs such as Reading Recovery,

- an expensive program; ideally, 4K should eliminate the need for Reading Recovery in all but a handful of cases.**
7. Would you support the Early Learning Initiative, if it violated the MTI/MMSD Contract ban on contracting out.
Yes. A dollar spent needs to solve at least two(2) problems. One, the dollar needs to support the intensive curriculum for low income kids to catch up. Two, the dollar needs to go into the pockets of the economically deprived parents as they are developed into “teachers” to the kids in the program.
8. Should planning time for elementary teachers be increased? If yes, how could this be accomplished?
Yes, if needed. Though increase may be less necessary if high-needs kids are in dedicated intensive programs.
9. Given that the Wisconsin Association of School Boards rarely supports the interests of the MMSD, do you support the District withdrawing from the WASB?
No opinion.
10. From what sources do you believe that public schools should be funded?
Balance of property, sales, income, value-added, etc.
a. Do you support increasing student fees?
Yes but minimal.
11. Do you support class sizes for the primary grades of 15 or less?
Yes, given current curriculum. Studies show all kids, low income and higher, benefit significantly from this smaller class size.
12. Do you support:
a. The use of public funds (vouchers) to enable parents to pay tuition with taxpayers’ money for religious and private schools?
No.
b. The expansion of Charter schools with the MMSD?
Yes, for appropriate reasons: curriculum improvement, immersion programs as mentioned above.
13. List MMSD staff from who you do or would seek advice.

Art Rainwater, Roger Price, Jane Belmore, Ken Syke, staff at the schools, etc. Anyone who has or may have appropriate information I am seeking and help me understand issues.

14. Is your candidacy being promoted by any organization?
Unfortunately not.
If yes, please name the organization.
15. Have you ever been employed as a teacher? If yes, please describe why you decided to leave the teaching profession.
Not within secondary schools. TA at UW; instructor at MATC.
16. Do you support the inclusion model for including Title I, EEN and ESL students in the regular education classroom?
Why/why not?
No strong opinions. For my daughter who was in the Leopold ESL program, I would have been quite upset if she were not included in the regular classroom.
17. The Board of Education has moved from the development of policy to becoming involved in implementation of policy; i.e., matters usually reserved to administration. Some examples are when it:
- a. Decided to hear parents' complaints about teacher's tests and grading.
 - b. Decided to modify the administration's decision about how a State Statute should be implemented.

Do you believe that the Board should delegate to administration the implementation of policy which the Board has created and the implementation of State Statutes.

I believe current Board is wholly ineffective in exercising the authority which a Board must exercise, and which is granted to it by statute. It must, of course, delegate day-to-day operations, but, as in any delegation model, the Board must set clear expectations, set the parameters to the delegation, monitor the results, and maintain full authority and control.

There is no delegation model to which I would agree that would include unreviewable discretion to a delegatee by the Board. This is not a matter of trusting or not trusting a delegatee – it's a matter of policy.

Do you believe that the Board should delegate to administration the implementation of State Statutes?
See above.

Would you support the Board exploring a means to make their meetings more efficient?
Yes.

18. Do/did/will your children attend private or parochial schools during their K-12 years? If no, and if you have children, what schools have/will they attend(ed)?
Daughter attended Montessori Children's House for two years before starting 1st grade at Leopold. Attended Cherokee, and now at West.
19. Will you introduce and vote for a motion which would direct the WASB to request the introduction and promote the passage of legislation to eliminate the revenue controls on public schools?
Yes, as currently written. But, though significantly flawed, and surprising even to me, I like the idea of more direct democracy, and of requiring the School Board to justify its decisions.
20. Will you introduce and vote for a motion which would direct the WASB to oppose any legislation which would authorize a tax freeze and/or a taxpayers bill of rights (TABOR)?
Yes, in its current and any likely forms.
21. Will you introduce and vote for a motion to direct the WASB to request the introduction and promote the passage of legislation to eliminate the Qualified Economic Offer which restricts free and open collective bargaining for teachers and would enable teacher wages to be established through negotiations between the parties?
Yes.

22. Will you introduce and vote for a motion to direct the WASB to request the introduction and promote the passage of legislation to prohibit the privatization of public schools via the use of tuition tax credits (vouchers) to pay tuition with taxpayers' money to private or religious schools?

Yes.

23. Will you introduce and vote for a motion to direct the WASB to request the introduction and promote the passage of legislation which will maintain or expand the benefit level of the Wisconsin Family and Medical Leave Act?

Maintain, yes. Expand? In what way?

24. Will you introduce and vote for a motion to direct the WASB to request the introduction and promote the passage of legislation which will increase the retirement formula multiplier from 1.6% to 2% for teachers and general employees, i.e., equal that of protective employees?

No opinion. What are the issues?

25. Will you introduce and vote for a motion to direct the WASB to request the introduction and promote the passage of legislation which will prohibit public employee residency requirements?

No opinion. What residency requirements are you referring to? What are the issues?

26. Will you introduce and vote for a motion to direct the WASB to request the introduction and promote the passage of legislation which will eliminate and forbid restrictions of free and open collective bargaining for the selection of insurance for public employees (under Wis. Stat. 111.70), including the naming of the insurance carrier?

No opinion. I don't know the issues.

27. Will you introduce and vote for a motion to direct the WASB to request the introduction and promote the passage of legislation which will guarantee free and open collective bargaining regarding the establishment of the school calendar/school year, including the right to beginning the school year, via negotiations between MTI and the District?

No.

28. Will you introduce and vote for a motion to direct the WASB to request the introduction and promote the passage of legislation to forbid the work of employees organized under

Wis. Stat. 111.70 (collective bargaining statute) to be subcontracted?

Yes, but subject to issues raised in 5 supra.

29. Will you introduce and vote for legislation which will mandate full State funding of any State mandated program?

Cute idea, but politically useless. Check the NCLB website where Bush is quoted as saying that NCLB is not mandatory – it's voluntary – but if a state wants Federal funds, it has to abide by NCLB.

30. Will you introduce and vote for legislation which will provide adequate State funding of public education?

Yes.

31. Are you, or any of your campaign committee members, active in or supportive of the "Get Real" or "ACE" organization?

I've had no contact with "Get Real". Speak regularly with Don Severson of ACE, and am appreciative of his perspective and knowledge he brings to the table, though likely we disagree on conclusions.

32. Name of Campaign Committee/Address/Phone #/Treasurer. List the members of your campaign committee.

Winkler for School Board

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