

Board Testimony, 10/3/12—Jack Whelan

My name is Jack Whelan. I was one of the plaintiffs in the suit brought against the district regarding this Creative Approach MOU.

In principle, I am a supporter of the Creative Approach Schools; in principle, I am for more freedom and autonomy for local learning communities. But the framework for providing that has to be very carefully planned and thought through. This MOU does not provide such a framework. I urge you to vote NO on the amended MOU, and I urge you instead to develop solid framework for Creative Approach Schools in the context of the upcoming CBA negotiations.

I'm not going to bore you with what you already know: That there are no adequate safeguards for families.

And there isn't time to go into how Creative Approach Schools are going to destabilize the neighborhood schools framework established by the new student assignment plan. I see a mess in the making there.

And I'm not going to get into why this amended MOU, if passed tonight, isn't going back to the teachers for a revote.

But here's my real concern: Unnecessary haste.

It's clear that this MOU has way too many problems and is very vulnerable to abuse.

It's clear that the current framework provided by this MOU has a huge potential for unforeseen and unintended consequences.

It's clear that a more thoughtful, conservative approach should be adopted before going forward with a policy that can have such far-reaching consequences.

It's clear that this sense of urgency is overblown and largely manufactured.

And yet this vote tonight, like the vote earlier this year, despite the known problems, is being rushed through again. Why? What's the rush? Why not get this right?

I've heard there are "good reasons" why this MOU needs to be passed now despite its flaws. But you know, there are always "good reasons" to do the wrong thing. A savvy leader knows when the reasons are sound or when the reasons are nothing more than putting lipstick on the proverbial pig.

I've been reassured that some of these problems will be fixed later. I accept your good intentions, but excuse my skepticism. The history of this school district for the last decade

and more is paved with unfulfilled good intentions and littered with broken promises. If there are “good reasons” for not fixing it now, there will be “good reasons” for not fixing it later.