

- Which administrators will be functioning in which positions and in which building?
- What will administrative salaries be with WGS as compared to pre-WGS?
- How many teachers will need to be sacrificed to get the efficiency that makes WGS economically beneficial?
- What if the right number of teachers don't take early retirement or if they aren't teachers in positions where other faculty are available? Will some contracts be terminated? How many teachers equal five percent efficiency? If so, how will it be decided which teachers will be let go? Will it be by seniority? Senior teachers aren't always the best teachers. Who will make the decision and how will you ensure that the decision is fair (because BCIG administration will want to keep their teachers, and OA will want to keep their teachers). We can hope that attrition will take care of this matter neatly, but we are naïve to think that everything will work itself out. It's great to hope for the best-case scenario, but we should also have a concrete plan for when the worst-case scenario happens.
- If "excess" teachers aren't terminated, how much extra expense will be incurred by keeping more teachers than needed?
- If teachers will remain under current contracts, will they be paid mileage if they must drive to another building daily? If so, how much extra expense will be incurred?
- If mileage isn't paid, will teachers who serve as coaches or directors for speech, band, vocal, etc. be as accessible to students? If I were a speech coach or vocal director, I certainly wouldn't want to drive to Ida Grove each evening or early in the morning for lessons or practice without being paid extra. These activities aren't like sports where practice is automatically right before or after school with all participants meeting at the same time; practices must often be scheduled at odd hours to accommodate student schedules.
- If you plan to survey teachers about their strengths and preferences for teaching assignments, what happens when multiple people want the same classes and both are qualified? What's the plan for making sure a fair decision is made?
- How will rooms be assigned to teachers?
- What will the schedule for the school day be? Will the day be shortened due to busing, or will students have to arrive at school early to catch the shuttle? What is the plan to ensure that students' time is not being wasted and that students' days don't become so long that they aren't as productive, successful, and well-behaved at school?
- Will high school students be allowed to drive to Ida Grove, or will they be required to ride the shuttle?
- Will Driver's Ed. be offered in the summer at both schools or will OA parents have to get their kids to Ida Grove for class and driving times?
- Will the school's liability insurance costs be affected by having more students riding buses each day? Does our insurance cover IG students riding our buses?
- Will restrictions be placed on athletic practice times to ensure that students' days don't grow to be excessively long due to busing?
- What equipment will need to be purchased and at what cost?

- What equipment will need to be moved and at what cost?
- How do computer capabilities compare between the two schools?
- Will computers in the different buildings be networked?
- What is the plan for blending the GPAs of students? Which classes will be included in the GPA and which won't?
- How will scholarship eligibility and distribution be handled?
- When the grade configuration is reviewed each year, what will be the criteria for determining whether a new configuration is needed? How do we know that our elementary school won't soon be included in this arrangement?
- How soon will consolidation be considered? What will be the criteria for determining if/when that happens?
- Exactly what classes will be offered? I understand the difficulty of determining our offerings at this point, but several drafts should be possible.
- Will our college offerings be completely dependent upon full-time staff? If we are to be more efficient in a WGS arrangement, shouldn't funds be available to hire part-time college instructors for key courses? Both Iowa Central and Western Iowa Tech work with high schools to help them find qualified instructors for dual credit courses, so shouldn't we be able to put together a list of dual credit classes that we are committed to offering students of OA-BCIG?
- What is the plan for making sure that student input is actually used for decision-making? It isn't good enough to just say that it will be "used whenever possible" because it's too easy to say that it isn't possible. Who gets to say when it isn't possible, and what criteria will determine when it isn't possible?
  - Since our students' wishes were disregarded in making the decision about the colors and mascot, I assume that the two boards decided that this is an instance when it isn't possible to use their input. However, very little reasoning for this decision was given. We were told that it was done this way to avoid problems at the beginning of WGS because students wouldn't be able to come to an agreement about this. As I've expressed to some of you, I believe that by giving up the idea of a neutral mascot so quickly, we have abandoned the critical-thinking and creative-problem-solving skills we say we are trying to teach our children in school. You may have convinced yourselves that because BCIG has more students, they will never choose a neutral mascot over Falcons so this solution is the only way to avoid hard feelings from the start. However, the solution is very simple: take both Trojans and Falcons off the table and have students propose neutral mascots. As administrators and school board members, you have the power to eliminate the current mascots as choices, leaving the students of the two schools the tremendous opportunity to come together as one school to have a voice in their new identity.
  - Once again, I urge you to truly consider why people are so upset about this issue. Don't disregard the public's concerns about this as superficial. What is bothering people is that in making this decision, the boards have ignored what students want, what our community wants, what common practice is, and what research recommends in favor of what the BCIG board wanted. You ask us to trust you and your decisions. You ask us to trust that both

boards want what is best for students and are working toward the same goals. However, certainly you can understand that it becomes very hard to trust when decision-making is done the way it was done on this issue. At the October 22<sup>nd</sup> meeting, our board decided to support the students' proposal. In addition, information about the low cost of East Sac's transition into new colors and mascot were presented by our superintendent, which led everyone to believe that our board truly did believe in a neutral mascot. At the very next public meeting--after a private meeting and the announcement of new meeting procedures that came as a surprise to all of us—the board and administration's position had completely flip-flopped. From the outside, it looks like we were bullied into this decision. If that is not the case, then justify this decision to us more fully than with the argument that this is our way of compromising and that BCIG has compromised by allowing OA to come first in the name. Surely in your heart, you know that these two things are not equal compromises! Our wrestling team has used the name OA-BCIG for several years, and it is never the "BCIG" that gets left off, even though it is the second school in the name. The BCIG board knows that the sequence of names won't impact their visibility at all; their name is in little danger of being ignored.

- The point of this is that beginning a partnership of this magnitude on an ultimatum such as the one issued by the BCIG board is frightening to most of us. It speaks loudly about the position the communities of Odebolt and Arthur will find themselves in once WGS begins, and it shows how little respect will be paid to our students. That's why everyone is so upset about this issue.
- Will the new procedure of letting the board president and vice president make the decisions in private continue in all matters? You can argue that the issues still get discussed at public meetings and that the board can still choose to either support or amend what was decided in private, but unfortunately, most people are followers rather than leaders. The herd mentality dominates, and most people will just go along because it's easier, faster, and allows them to avoid controversy—not necessarily because the decision is a good one.
- When do you plan to sign the WGS contract, and again, what is our rush? This contract doesn't need to be signed until February of 2009, so can't we work out some of the particulars and see how negotiations on other issues go before we completely commit ourselves? This would also allow us to make sure that the starting date for WGS is appropriate. At this point, it seems like there are volumes of plans to be made and details to be worked out to be ready to start WGS in August of 2009.