

# DEXTER COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

## PRESS RELEASE

### For Immediate Release

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### Annexation Ad Hoc Committee Meets for First Time

*December 8, 2014* – **The Dexter Community Schools Board of Education appointed an Ad Hoc Board Committee to research annexation of Whitmore Lake Public Schools. At this time, the committee has no official position regarding the possibility of annexing Whitmore Lake Public Schools.** However, given current educational trends in the state, the DCS Board feels that it is their responsibility to research the idea to determine if it may be beneficial to our district and students. Meanwhile, the Whitmore Lake Public Schools Board of Education also appointed an Ad Hoc Committee to research the possibility and also has no official position regarding the possibility of being annexed by Dexter Community Schools. The Whitmore Lake Public Schools Board of Education also feels it is their responsibility to research the idea to determine if it may be beneficial to their district and students.

On December 8, 2014, a joint committee meeting was held between the Whitmore Lake Public Schools (WLPS) Board of Education Ad Hoc Committee on Annexation and the Dexter Community Schools (DCS) Board of Education Ad Hoc Committee to begin researching the possibility of DCS annexing Whitmore Lake Public Schools. At that meeting, both committees discussed the background leading up to this point. In particular, in early 2014, DCS was contacted by local and state entities about the possibility of annexing WLPS. At that time, WLPS initially decided to pursue annexation with Ann Arbor Public Schools. Ann Arbor defeated the proposal in November 2014. **The debt issue is a different scenario regarding an Ann Arbor annexation of WLPS than a Dexter annexation of WLPS. In particular, if DCS annexed WLPS, state law does not require a mutual assumption of debt. In other words, DCS and WLPS residents would not see a change in their property taxes, unlike the scenario in Ann Arbor.**

After the November election, DCS was again contacted by local entities regarding the possible annexation of WLPS. Both Boards appointed Ad Hoc Committees to research the possibility of annexation and other long-term options. The role of DCS's Ad Hoc Committee is to research information regarding the implications of annexation, identify known and unknown variables, identify the pros and cons of annexation, and explore other long-term options which may be beneficial to our district and students. It is anticipated that this work will take several months. Once more facts are known, DCS's Ad Hoc Committee will share their findings with the Dexter Board of Education and with the community at large. There will be ample opportunities for the community to ask questions and provide input before any decision is made. At this time, the DCS Board of Education has no official position regarding the possibility of annexing Whitmore Lake Public Schools. However, given current educational trends in the state, the DCS Board feels that it is their responsibility to research the idea to determine if it may be beneficial to our district and students.

### Currently Known Facts About Annexation

- There would be no assumption of Whitmore Lake Public Schools' debt by taxpayers in Dexter Community School District as DCS is not a "hold harmless" district, as was the case with Ann Arbor Public Schools.
- Over the past several years, the legislature has incentivized districts for consolidating services and/or operations.
- The legislature is considering incentivizing annexations and consolidations of school districts and may take the issue up during the December legislative session.
- All current school attendance boundaries would continue to operate unchanged. For example, anyone currently living with the DCS district boundaries would continue attending in their current schools while everyone currently living in the WLPS district boundaries would continue attending in their current schools.
- An annexation would, essentially, be a legal merger of all administrative functions between the two districts.

According to DCS Board President, Mr. Michael Wendorf, "Our District and Board are always open to exploring ideas and options that might benefit our kids, our community, and our employees...this first meeting did exactly that...we plan to continue to explore the possibility and implications of annexing Whitmore Lake Public Schools and to engage all of our stakeholders during this process."

According to WLPS Superintendent, Tom DeKeyser, "Our District and Board are certainly willing to listen to any proposal that could benefit our students, community and staff. Thanks to administration reorganization, concessions by our teaching staff and other adjustments, we approach all proposals with a sense of fiscal stability. Any partnerships we engage in will be because we want to--because it is the best option for our district--not because we have to."