

February 19, 2021

To truly understand HB 1367 “Dis-annexation”, we must go back to 1979 when South Bend Community School Corporation (SBCSC) was preparing to implement a reorganization plan. At that time, both Greene Township and Liberty Township students attended North Liberty School, a K-12 institution that was a part of SBCSC. As reorganization plans started to form, Greene and Liberty Township residents requested to separate from SBCSC and join the Polk Lincoln Johnson Township Schools which were later renamed John Glenn School Corporation. SBCSC agreed to release Liberty Township and North Liberty School, allowing it to merge with Polk Lincoln Johnson Township Schools, but Greene Township was required to stay with SBCSC. This history is very important, noting that Greene Township residents have wanted to join the John Glenn Schools for over 40 years.

The state-wide change with the open enrollment law has led to almost 40% of Greene Township students choosing to attend John Glenn School Corporation (JGSC). A much smaller percentage still attends SBCSC. The remaining Greene Township students attend a conglomeration of other area traditional public, public charter, and private schools (according to 2010 census data and IDOE Student Transfer Report). The large number of Greene Township students selecting schools other than SBCSC has caused the resurgence within the Greene Township Community to again actively pursue an official change of school district.

HB 1367 continues to surface because under the current Indiana Code, there is no ability for the residents of Greene Township to exercise “collective school choice” without SBCSC officially releasing the township from its district. HB 1367 seeks to provide a pilot program whereby the residents of Greene Township could initiate a dis-annexation process without the official permission of SBCSC. HB1367 would require the development of an extensive annexation proposal, approval of the proposal by the State Board of Education, and a signed petition by a majority of the Green Township registered voters.

John Glenn has always faithfully educated all of our students. This includes our resident enrollees, transfer students from the surrounding area, as well as the students of Greene Township. Because of the long history connected to North Liberty School, many students and families of Greene Township have a deeply rooted connection to John Glenn Schools.

We as a district are committed to all of our students. We embrace our historical origins while remaining committed to educational excellence. This history includes our unique connection to Greene Township, whose students represent about 8% of our student body. As such, we continue to pursue a collegial effort between Greene Township and SBCSC to develop an agreed upon dis-annexation plan outside of HB 1367. We are ready to serve as a teammate with stakeholders including the General Assembly in the proposed pilot program.

Yours in Education,

Christopher Winchell Ed.S.