

Washington Local Schools has a game plan to meet the challenge of being the academic powerhouse that your Sept. 12 editorial "[Whitmer's bobble](#)" proposes.

The Ohio Department of Education rated our district excellent in three of the past four years. This year, we received our highest performance index score in district history. We met 23 of the state's 26 indicators —our highest ever — while achieving value-added distinction. The federal government defines subgroups that are difficult to educate and we exceeded that standard with 41 of our 46 subgroups including all at Whitmer. Whitmer met graduation and attendance standards and 11 of 12 state indicators.

Last year, the Fordham Institute pointed to Washington Local as a shining star and deserved recognition for educating kids in poverty. Since 2003, the share of our students deemed economically disadvantaged has tripled (17 percent to 53 percent), while our performance index score has increased by more than 10 percent.

Your editorial mentions that 47 of 96 students on Whitmer's varsity football team played in our junior league. You imply that a large number of players are transfers, and that is not the case. Those numbers are extremely misleading; 86 of 96 players attended junior high in Washington Local.

Our district is extremely transient, mainly due to the poverty of our families. About 3,000 students have transferred to us in the past three years (five students EVERY DAY). The Ohio High School Athletic Association is looking at seven transfers — less than one quarter of one percent of all transfers into our district. Although the football team consists of 10 percent transfer students, the Whitmer student body consists of 22 percent transfer students.

Your editorial mentions the possibility of athletic recruiting five times. OHSAA has not mentioned recruiting to me during its entire investigation. Association officials have checked a multitude of student files for grades, have looked at the rosters of our 22 teams, and every coach's file for credentials and certifications. They have visited the homes of students and spoken to them and their neighbors. If recruiting occurred, we will deal with it severely.

Your editorial asks "what recommended the transfers to Whitmer other than the school's football program?" While Whitmer was the first public school in 26 years to win the All Sports trophy, I strongly believe that thousands of families are choosing Washington Local because of our amazingly supportive community and incredible offerings. Whitmer has 200 course offerings, including college preparatory and advanced placement, 15 career training programs, 50 clubs and activities and an unwavering commitment to the arts and music. Whitmer was voted the best high school in Toledo and offers free tuition at the University of Toledo, Eastern Michigan University, and Owens Community College to eligible graduates. We have strong counseling, nursing, and special education programs conducted in well-maintained and modern facilities.

Washington Local avoided massive layoffs and program cuts that have occurred at districts across Ohio because of our community support and sound fiscal management. Parents have educational choices and are choosing our district. Our 6,700 kids, 800 staff members, and 22,000 voters deserve the best. We will continue to work diligently to give our

kids an outstanding educational experience and the individual attention and infinite opportunities they deserve.

Our core values drive us. We love the kids and families we serve. I hope the OHSAA investigation is thorough, complete, and concluded soon, so the students who are waiting for eligibility determinations can participate, and we can focus again on being a lamp unto our kids' feet and a light upon their path.