



Groveport Madison Local Schools History of the Win-Win Agreement

On May 15, 1986, eleven Franklin County school districts (Canal Winchester, Dublin, Franklin County Board of Education, Gahanna-Jefferson, Groveport Madison, Hamilton Local, Hilliard, New Albany-Plain Local, Reynoldsburg, South-Western, Westerville and Worthington) announced the provisions of a negotiated agreement designed to address the issue of school district territory transfers within the Columbus Metropolitan Area.

Through 1955, the city of Columbus and Columbus City Schools covered 55 square miles and shared the same boundaries. That year, the law changed, and school district territory transfers no longer automatically followed land annexation agreements. Instead, school districts had to apply to the State Board of Education for property transfers. During the ensuing years, the city of Columbus grew to 187 square miles, while Columbus City Schools grew to 110 square miles.

Suburban school districts became increasingly concerned as Columbus City Schools continued to incorporate valuable, undeveloped land into its school district. Many suburban school district officials suggested that Columbus City Schools was targeting industrial and commercial properties with a valuable tax base, and voiced concerns about the fiscal stability of their suburban school districts due to continued property and tax base losses to Columbus City Schools. Strong opposition to Columbus City Schools' continued growth arose from suburban school districts that wanted to protect their investment in facilities and who wanted to serve families who wished to keep their children in the school district with which they historically identified.

In 1980, a moratorium on school district land transfers was imposed by the state legislature, and two additional bills extended it until November 30, 1986.

Irving Goldaber, a nationally acclaimed "Win-Win" negotiator assisted the local school district superintendents in resolving the long-standing uncertainty about the educational, financial, and territorial future of the districts.

Results of the Initial 1986 Land Transfer Agreement (Win-Win)

- Student-centered, shared educational programs and services were cooperatively developed and provided through the establishment of the Franklin County Education Program and School Services Council. (A Council that no longer exists.)
- School boundaries remained as they were at the time of the agreement, for at least six years, subject to renewal.
- With few exceptions, unincorporated township land would be automatically transferred to Columbus City Schools, if and when it was ever annexed into the City of Columbus. (Non-contiguous areas thus became part of Columbus City Schools for the first time.)
- Financial growth in the commercial and industrial property in the common area would be shared, with each suburban district's payment to Columbus City Schools limited to \$200,000, subject to additional negotiations. The suburban districts' share was funded for the first three years by the State of Ohio.

The state legislature incorporated this agreement into Senate Bill 298, which passed and was signed by the governor. At the time of the agreement, district representatives felt the agreement was advantageous to the districts because:

- Columbus City Schools had access to future county development in terms of both revenue and students.
- Columbus City Schools would have had to seek land transfers through the State Board of Education.
- The suburban schools retained their original boundaries.
- Annexed properties in suburban districts were protected from automatic transfer to Columbus City Schools.
- All students would benefit from shared educational programming.

In short, the 1986 "Win-Win Agreement" agreement gave Columbus City Schools a share of ongoing future revenue land transfers. Additionally, it put an end to the adversarial relationship that had existed for several years between the suburban school districts and Columbus City Schools. It also established predictability for school district boundaries.

The Extended Joint Agreement of 1992 and 1998

In 1992, Reynoldsburg City Schools withdrew from the Win-Win Agreement, indicating that only a very small portion of their district was located in the City of Columbus. Participating school districts voted to approve the successor agreement to the 1986 Land Transfer Agreement in an effort to achieve continued educational, financial, and territorial stability and predictability, and cooperative inter-district planning relative to facilities, services, and programs.

This extended agreement clarified provisions for shared education programs and payment requirements to Columbus City Schools. The result was that:

- A graduated payment schedule was agreed upon.
- Stipulations for terminating participation were amended.
- The automatic transfer of properties annexed after the initial Win-Win signing in 1986, to the City of Columbus to Columbus City Schools was maintained.
- Six-year extension periods were established for the purposes of termination or amending the agreement.

The agreement was approved without substantial changes to the terms in 2004 and 2010. It is up for renewal in 2016.