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Burke for Wisconsin
PO Box 2479
Madison, WI 53701

September 19, 2014

Dear Ms. Burke,

On behalf of the Neenah Joint School District I would like to express my disappointment regarding your use of our District as an example of your perceived negative impact of Act 10 on education as reported by John McCormack in the Weekly Standard and at least one additional news publication in the Green Bay Press-Gazette.

In your position as a Madison school board member, I'm sure you've seen that Act 10 has created a variety of challenges for school districts across Wisconsin, but I'm sure you've also seen plenty of positives as well. It is unfair and misleading to claim that Act 10 is the primary reason why one specific candidate chose to accept a position in Minnesota over an opening in the Neenah Joint School District. There are many reasons why candidates choose to work in other districts and certainly some effects of Act 10 may factor into those decisions. However, to make a blanket statement that Act 10 is the reason why teachers are leaving school districts in Wisconsin (in this case the Neenah Joint School District), especially by citing only one candidate's decision to go elsewhere, is an unfortunate exaggeration at best.

We are extremely proud of our schools in Neenah and incredibly proud of the staff we have assembled both prior to and since the passage of Act 10. We have never settled with an inferior candidate to fill a position and will never do that to our students or families.

Since you have not reached out to me to learn more about our District, I will provide to you some data points that you might find revealing about why we continue to be a high performing District in Wisconsin. Since Act 10,

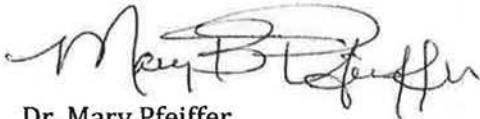
- we have faced, and met, the difficult challenges necessary to support student learning while retaining our excellent staff.
- we have significantly reduced an unsustainable \$184 million unfunded liability regarding our Other Post Employment Benefits (OPEB). Meanwhile, we still provide all of our most veteran employees a \$100,000 retirement benefit. New employees are also provided OPEB benefits and that is something most districts have eliminated. As you are aware, this is in addition to the state retirement benefit.
- we have reduced class sizes and increased the number of our certified staff.
- we have had no certified staff (teacher) layoffs since Act 10.

- our school board has supported pools of dollars for 2% salary increases (above the CPI) and 2% one-time stipend awards every year for all employee groups for a total of 4%.
- over the past two years, 57 certified staff members have received a \$5,000 or more increase in their salary.
- more than 33% of certified staff received a 3% or higher salary increase in 2013-14, with 6% of them receiving a 6% increase or higher.
- our insurance costs are the lowest in our area.
- we have no long-term debt.
- our mill rate remains the lowest in our area at \$8.53 and a decrease for the third consecutive year.

I respectfully ask that you stop using Neenah as an example of the negative ramifications of Act 10. This request has nothing to do with my personal feelings or political stance. It is about a dedicated staff that is proud to work in Neenah. I would be pleased to speak with you further about this issue.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,



Dr. Mary Pfeiffer
Superintendent of Schools
Neenah Joint School District

Copy: Neenah Joint School District Board of Education Members