



WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE
ANNETTE POLLY WILLIAMS

STATE REPRESENTATIVE
10TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

February 5, 2010

State Superintendent Tony Evers
Department of Public Instruction
125 S. Webster Street
PO Box 7841
Madison, WI 53707-7841


Dear Superintendent Evers:

I am contacting you regarding your Notice of Decision dated February 4, 2010 issued to the Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS) which would potentially eliminate the \$175 million in federal funds received for services to low-income children through the Title 1 program. In your press statement, you indicated that you had a legal responsibility to the children of Milwaukee and that you were using the only tool allowed under state law to ensure these federal funds are used effectively to improve MPS. Not only I am deeply perplexed by the timing of this notice, but I'm equally concerned over the use of your authority to withhold federal dollars to "speed up change" in MPS. I find your efforts to be disingenuous.

It is my understanding that MPS is in compliance with the Department of Public Instruction's (DPI) corrective action plan, except for one issue that had an agreeable solution. I have also been informed that MPS has not received any indication or warning from DPI informing the district that they were out of compliance or spending funds ineffectively. Although you may see this as a motivating factor to increase a sense of urgency for change in MPS leaders, it is viewed by those who have spoken with me as efforts from your department to work against MPS. If DPI would indeed withhold the \$175 million in federal funds received for low-income students, it would cripple MPS' ability to meet its existing needs and will greatly impede any present or future plans for improvement.

In my opinion, this action is another veiled, incessant backdoor attempt by you, the governor and mayor to take over the governance of MPS. The Notice of Decision seems to simply point out the known authority of the DPI. However, from its timing and obvious length, it appears this notice tries to discredit the Milwaukee school board and administration, and attempts to exert an elusive authority over the district. The current school board has been making key strides in reforming the district and is working to improve the quality of education for children in Milwaukee, including the recent hire of the next superintendent. Furthermore, the Wisconsin State Legislature has spoken to this issue by adjourning the special session called by the governor without voting on the MPS governance issue. The parents and people of Milwaukee have overwhelmingly said no to an MPS takeover. It is my hope that the proponents of the takeover would give up on their failed attempts to destroy the Milwaukee Public Schools.

Sincerely,


Annette Polly Williams
Wisconsin State Representative
10th Assembly District