



Lapeer Community Schools

ADMINISTRATION & SERVICES CENTER

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## MEMORANDUM

RE: House Bill 4059  
FROM: Matthew T. Wandrie, Superintendent  
DATE: May 14, 2012

In review of this proposed legislation, I find potential problem areas worthy of consideration. I agree with the fundamental premise of PA 336 prohibiting strikes, and the intention of the proposed amendment that union endeavors should neither interfere with nor disrupt the daily functioning of school district business. Additionally, both union groups and administration in a large majority of Michigan school districts desire a collaborative relationship characterized by quality and student-centered collective bargaining, proactive grievance resolution and honest contract administration. As a former director of human resources, high school principal and current superintendent, I can speak to the complex relationship between labor and management with which district personnel must navigate.

The proposed legislation would prevent district administrative personnel and union representatives from meeting during the regular work day to conduct "district" issues involving union business. However, the opportunity to meet during regular work hours is a benefit for both parties. Union representatives participate in a number of district-level functions including but not limited to: building staffing decisions, interviewing prospective district employees, grievance resolution, teacher evaluation, employee discipline and contract administration. The ability to collaborate on these important issues during the work day for timely settlement is critically important to efficient district management. The limitations of what union representatives can and cannot do during paid time are clearly articulated in collectively bargained contracts and in many cases, school board policy. If particular districts desire an alteration to the negotiated arrangement, they reserve the right to bargain as has always been the case under Michigan law. An effective mechanism already exists to adjust the relationship and the terms that characterize the limitations of union groups. The proposed legislation would severely limit local districts from maintaining and improving established relationships with their union groups that have for years proven effective.

We must maintain the ability to proactively problem solve during the course of the work day and week to the mutual benefit of the district, our students and employees. I implore you to support the current method districts utilize to reconstitute necessary change in the labor-management relationship; collective bargaining. Hundreds of Michigan districts have proven for decades that a quality relationship can be cultivated provided the basic tenants of mutual trust and collaboration are present. The proposed legislation would create an unnecessary logistical burden on local districts to identify time outside the normal 40-hour work week to conduct district business with union officials.

In consideration of the aforementioned variables, I contend this bill is overly burdensome to district administrative personnel, subversive to the idea of local control as it seeks to undermine the collective bargaining process, and should therefore not be supported.

Lapeer Community Schools is a dynamic community organization embracing our students with a quality learning environment, developing independent and confident learners for the future.