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Ted Kolderie  
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Dear Sirs;

Thank you to the invitation to the meeting on "chartered schools" . I intend to try to get there. First I have to find on short notice some one to watch my store. That has been very difficult to do. Hence the letter in case I can't make it.

I see this "chartered Schools thing" as the first bright light in the last 20 years for education. I don't know if you saw it but I wrote an article which I sent to a few people up there on my experiences as a small town board member and parent over the last 20 years. I will be glad to send you a copy if you wish.

Chartered Schools if properly set up by a good enabling law could make Minnesota a true leader not just in effective education but also in getting it at a reasonable cost. Based on what has been happening the last 20 years every politician that wants to get elected merely comes out for "more money for education". Then all that seems to happen is the money gets "gobbled up" in higher salaries and shorter days and less work by our teachers. Such a situation would be ok except that for MOST teaching fields there is a huge number of well qualified people out looking for work. Even though employment opportunities are "bleak" the colleges have many students in education. I suppose they hope for one of the openings that naturally do occur each year. Kathy Nelson's plight is typical. In private industry for example engineers (to whom teachers like to compare themselves) change jobs in the metro area and are paid based on the "market place". Salaries increase (or decrease) based on the need for qualified job seekers. As it works out though there continue to be jobs for engineers it just depends on how much they want to make. In the case of a teacher such as Kathy Nelson I believe her salary at Fridley was \$53,000 per year. If she was such a valuable "commodity" in the market place why didn't some of the growing districts in the metro area "snap her up". It is my contention that they like those of us in Truman realize that in her field there are lots of well qualified people out there at \$25,000/ year. We then can hire TWO teachers, reduce class size AND put \$3,000.00 in the bank. Based on all the "contract language" in public school contracts it has become impossible to manage in a financially prudent manner the most important and expensive (around 60% of the budget) resource we have. In private industry salary and "language" demands have to be "tempered" to the market place or the company will go out of business. No such situation exists in education. There are NO forces holding down demands and they have become excessive. School boards them selves because of elections being held at odd times are getting teachers and spouses of teachers that actually teach in the district on them. Presently my own school board has the husbands of two teachers (we had 3 but one declined to run for re-election). I would not question this under an accountability situation such as chartered schools but with public education there simply is no "arms length" relation ship. Personally I would PREFER to see reforms and to make the public system work but based on what is happening and HAS happened in the past 20 years feel this is impossible.

Good luck in this endeavor I hope to see you Wednesday

yours

Richard Lauring - member Truman school board