



Robbinsdale Federation of Teachers

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March 28, 1991

March 22
March 29
April 5
12

Senator Ember Reichgott
301 Capitol
St. Paul, MN. 55155

Dear Ember:

I appreciate your invitation to work with you and your committee to revise SF 630. Since I will be out of town March 30 through April 6 and unable to attend your April 2 meeting, I thought I would provide for you a follow-up to my letter of March 19.

First, I think you should use the term "**Charter School**" in SF 630 rather than Outcome Based School. The concept you are developing in the bill, though different in important aspects, is similar to that described by American Federation of Teachers president, Al Shanker, in his talks across the country. Using Outcome Based could cause confusion, especially since in Minnesota nearly all schools are gradually moving toward Outcome Based instruction.

Your concept is that of a small group of entrepreneurial teachers who want to experiment running a school freed from many of the restrictions and much of the bureaucracy which has become common place in many school systems across the country. In the education industry, this is known as a Charter School.

Secondly, I think the sponsoring agent should be restricted to K-12 schools, intermediate schools, joint powers boards, and possibly cooperative districts.



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The third issue I raise is that of bargaining units. It is my position, and I am confident, the position of most teachers in District 281 who I represent, that teachers who organize a Charter School should be allowed to retain their membership, seniority, salary increment rights, accrual of credit for early retirement programs, etc. in their home school district.

Starting new bargaining units can cause many problems. To name a few:

- * Before the school opens will there be a collective bargaining election to determine which teacher organization will represent the group?
- * If an ^{el}impasse occurs, what pressure can a small unit of teachers bring to bear on the sponsoring board ?
- * Is the School Board willing to add to a list of groups with which it must bargain, another bargaining representative?
- * Is the State Board of Education willing and equipped to bargain separately with each bargaining unit it creates?

These are all serious issues and there are many more.

I am very opposed to permitting a Charter School to employ non-licensed teachers. It might be appropriate to bring in non-licensed experts to work in conjunction with a licensed teacher on a two week unit, but utilizing non-licensed teachers beyond a short span of time would be most inappropriate.

I also think the composition of the State Advisory Committee needs some work. Caucasians could, at most, obtain only two seats on this ten person committee, as currently described in SF 630. The percent of Caucasians in the state must be someplace between 90% and 95%; it seems inappropriate to limit this group to two or less people on an advisory committee. I realize that this is an attempt at affirmative action, but I think it is ill advised to the extent it is developed in SF 630.

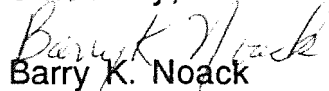
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These are my main objections. Allowing enterprising teachers in a school district to initiate and manage a Charter School using their own district as a sponsor, collecting state aid, and working as a member of that district's teachers' bargaining unit is an acceptable model to me.

Should SF 630 be restricted to the concept I have just described, I am certain our local teachers Federation, as well as the Minnesota Federation of Teachers, would work to foster these schools helping to make them successful. Certainly, this more limited concept of a Charter School needs a chance to succeed before introducing outside sponsors such as the University of Minnesota, State Universities, Community Colleges, Technical Colleges, or the State Board of Education and creating new bargaining units.

I extend my best to you and your committee in redrafting SF 630 into a form which is acceptable to all, or at least, most parties involved.

Sincerely,



Barry K. Noack
Executive Secretary

cc: Sandra Peterson
Rose Hermodson
Roger Iverson
Stu Stockhaus
Rep. Becky Kelso
Rep. Lyn Carlson
Rep. Ann Rest