

Joe said last night he'd heard something about the MFT local in Osseo proposing a charter school in negotiations this year, and the Board turning it down. That turns out not to be quite right, but the story is kind of interesting. My source for what follows is Mike Damyanovich, who talked with Larry Seavert, the exec dir of the Osseo FT.

The OFT was aware some people have been pressing for a curriculum that drops sex education and stresses 'family values'. Concerned that these folk might try the charter-school option and that the Board might say 'yes' as a neat way to get them out of its hair, the OFT proposed to management that the contract provide that if the board were willing to grant a charter the OFT (itself!) would have first option to receive it. (It would be interesting to know if similar proposals were put on the table in other MFT districts: One way for the Federation to 'deal with' the charter law would be for it to 'buy up' all the schools itself.)

Management's response was that since it wouldn't be granting any charters this was not a 'bargainable issue'. This checks: Mike himself had had some interest in organizing a charter school and had talked with the Sup't, Marl Ramsey, who told him: "No way".

Today however Mike was saying the charter issue might still be around. Osseo has had a committee looking at some kind of alternative school. This committee considered a 'magnet' school but decided against it and then proposed to disband. The Sup't said "Don't do that". He wants it to keep going.

Mike thinks proposals for a charter school may still appear (clearly the district can't prevent proposals) and believes the prospect of this is causing the district to want to keep thinking itself about new schools it might generate internally. Mike's reading is simply that the district won't move unless it sees/fears that somebody else will move instead.

This has some pretty clear and important implications for the school-improvement strategy. (It also relates of course to the objection we always hear from opponents of charter schools: "We could do this now!" . . . to which the response is: "You could, but you don't!").

I urged Mike to suggest to Seavert that the OFT go ahead anyway with the idea of the union setting up a charter school and propose -- say, a professional-practice school -- to the internal committee to show the Board what teachers could do if given a chance. Mike may do that. If he does it'll then be interesting to see how Seavert and the OFT respond.

1-10-92

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Larry Seawert
exec dir of T

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at attn vs/magnet

Bill Spadey

Spence Rogers
PhD NY

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- he "dropped the

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High-Succ. Consort

Geo Snyder
ant snpt