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Public Comments for Nov 22 SDMA School Board meeting

4 messages

Abraham Smith <abrahamdavidsmith@gmail.com>

Mon, Nov 22, 2021 at 1:29 PM

To: janet_quinn@msd.k12.wi.us

Our kindergartner had no school on Friday, because there aren't enough bus drivers. She has no school Monday and Tuesday, because there aren't enough teachers.

SDMA is facing severe ongoing staffing shortages.

I have seen this happen before at large and small companies across the research, tech, and defense industries. When an organization cannot retain or hire employees, or cover time-off, or maintain reliable operations through times of stress, then this is a clear sign that employees are underpaid, undersupported, and disrespected.

This failure of operations is not a consequence of our current crisis. It is due to a long-term cascading failure of leadership at multiple levels.

The members of the State Legislature have consistently and intentionally forced local school districts into impossible situations, through levy limits that prevent local citizens from adequately supporting their own schools, and by stripping public employees of collective negotiation of good contracts that would make teaching and school administration into an attractive career.

Over time, the state legislature has undermined the school board.

The SDMA School Board has ignored administrators' professional recommendations, and has prevented administrators from taking a public educational/outreach role in the overall well-being of the community.

Over time, the school board has undermined the administration.

The administration has developed a widely-known reputation for stifling concerns raised by teachers and staff, many of whom are convinced they will be fired immediately if they speak honestly outside the "chain of command".

Over time, the administration has undermined the teachers.

In the end, everything comes down to the teachers and staff and bus-drivers, who are hardworking, frustrated, exhausted, and underpaid.

Start from the bottom, and empower each layer.

Empower the teachers. Give them a representative seat on the school board. Make it clear that no teacher will ever be punished for speaking honestly or publicly about their experience.

Empower the administration, and let principals organize public-health educational campaigns in their community.

Empower school boards, by telling the legislature that citizens deserve the freedom and flexibility of local control of their own tax levies.

Yours,
Abraham Smith
Town of Menomonie