

March 16, 2011

Education Committee Members,

Thank you for this opportunity to speak to you today. My name is Roxann Dean. I work as a custodian for the Cheboygan Area School District. I have proudly held this position for the last 18 years. I also hold the position as President, in the United Steelworker Union, Local #9998. Our local represents the support staff at our district. I am a registered voter and have exercised this privilege for almost 40 years. I oppose HB-4306, and I will share with you the reasons why.

REASONS TO OPPOSE HB-4306

- Residents of Cheboygan know and respect us as important members of the school family. They entrust their children to us, knowing they will be safe and cared for while in our schools, facilities and buses.
- More than 90% of transportation, custodial and food service employees are local tax paying residents of the district where we serve. We take great pride in the safety, appearance of the facilities where we work.
- Many years ago the Cheboygan School District did privatize the food service department with terrible results. The so called savings the school was suppose to realize, was not to be. The cost of repair and replacement for the kitchen equipment cost more than the savings that was promised. The workers supplied by the outside privatizing company did not have a vested interest in our school, students or community and performed poorly.

- We invest both our personal time and money as taxpayers toward supporting the successes of our school programs. As an example, our Local has purchased backpacks and filled them with school supplies for needy children, we purchased two portable defibrillators (AED) units for our schools and provided staff training for it's use, we also have provided Christmas gifts and food for our neediest students for the past several years.
- Money spent on privatizing is money sent directly out of the community, as most privatizing companies are located outside the district. We spend our money locally, thus boosting local businesses who are also struggling to survive.
- On the local level, how will having more workers join the unemployment lines in our community do anything to improve either our schools or the economy of our community? On a larger scale, how will having us unemployed do anything to help Michigan and the national economy?
- Our custodians , clean the school buildings, drive bus, do maintenance, do all the painting, lawn service and the snow plowing. A privatizing company would charge the school separately for each of these services.
- Our food service is self-supporting, and has been for years. Food service wages, food, equipment and repair are all taken out of the food service budget, not the school's general fund balance.

- By passing this bill, it will reduce the number of employees who contribute to the Michigan Public School Retirement System, thus putting more of a burden on already strapped school districts to make up the difference.
- If this bill passes, all of the employees in the MPSERS who have less than 10 years with the school (vested) will need to be reimbursed all the money they have invested. What size burden will this put on the retirement system with these funds being drained from the account?
- HB-4306 would be devastating to our support employees, to our schools and to our communities. In Cheboygan, our Superintendent, School Board, Administrators and faculty also oppose this bill. When we have budget issues to resolve, we as individual groups all come together to brainstorm and come up with the decisions to solve the problems. Don't take away our right to govern our affairs that best suit our school, students and communities.

Thank You,
Roxann Dean

Roxann Dean

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