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TO: House Education Committee
FROM: Christine Beardsley, Superintendent
RE: House Bill 4625: Teacher and Administrator Compensation
DATE: May 22, 2013

I oppose the bill because we have already developed a compensation model that is fully based on merit concepts we developed working with our teachers that we believe fits our needs better.

Give me, and other leaders like me, the chance to lead and be the educational professionals that we desire to be!

I have been down this road before. In 2007, well before legislation mandated, Oscoda Schools negotiated the Merit Pay Model. We had very positive and measurable results. Then, the law mandated merit pay and the whole spirit, environment, and view about merit pay withered. They have disbanded the model.

1. HB 4625 wipes out and prohibits our compensation model that we have not even been able to put into practice yet.
2. We spent considerable time and effort designing a plan that is cutting edge and does what I think this bill is intended to do: use professional criteria to determine compensation, not simply years on the job.
3. Working WITH our employees we devised a compensation plan that will work for OUR DISTRICT.

Our merit compensation plan includes the requirement for an "effective or highly effective" evaluation rating to advance levels.

Our evaluation rubrics include:

- a. Our teachers use the Danielson Model. This year the rubric represents 80% and the student data is 20%. We will increase it to the 50% ALREADY in the school code by the due date of 2015.
 - b. Our Health Based Professionals like Occupational, Physical and Speech Therapists, as well as Psychologists and Social Workers, etc, have components of Danielson relating to the educational setting 50%, as well as components reflecting best-practices in their occupational specialty, 50%.
4. Our merit compensation plan does recognize advanced degrees because they ARE an indicator of an increased knowledge in specialized areas that help children learn.
 - a. In fact, 36% of our employees are REQUIRED by state guidelines or federal law to hold an MA + 15 just to enter the profession.
 5. Our merit compensation plan does have entry level wage with five levels of advancement based on accomplishments.

6. I would ask you: Do you know more about how to be an effective legislator in your second year than your first?? Every legislator that I have posed this question to has not hesitated to affirm that they were better year two than year 1, AND better year 4 than year 2!
7. Our plan may not work other districts as effectively. There are nuances for each district, locally, that cannot be addressed with a one-size fits all model.
8. Research on these types of compensation model shows that there must be an existing evaluation system in place and fully implemented prior to linking compensation to performance.
9. Did you know that over 200 districts, including Ann Arbor, Wayne and Eaton County schools, districts that are large, small, urban, suburban and rural have already implemented a rubric based evaluation protocol according to just one vendor, ZIMCO? That statistic does not include districts that are using other vendors, or their own in-house tracking system. This is without the state EEC telling us how to do this, because we are NOT accepting the status-quo, we are pioneering change!
10. Many districts have risen to the challenge and are working to implement meaningful evaluation protocols ----give us a chance to do it with fidelity! More will follow as they see our success.

Again, I oppose the bill because we have already developed a compensation model that is fully based on merit concepts we developed working with our teachers that we believe fits our needs better. Give us a chance to prove that it works.

Educators ARE willing to raise the bar – we are doing it all over the state. We are forward thinking and bringing in best-practices. We are working collaboratively with our employees to reach meaningful change within our organizations.

We are changing what we view as our role and increasing both accountability and focus on excellence.