

## FCW Newsletter

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**From:** Sue Quinn [susan.quinn@comcast.net]  
**Sent:** Thursday, January 14, 2010 9:41 AM  
**To:** susan.quinn@comcast.net  
**Subject:** Bus Driver's contract, Anti-Nepotism, Recess and Elections

Dear Friends,

I wanted to update you on a few things happening at the School Board level, and encourage you to participate in your local government.

### **Bus Driver's New Union Contract Approved**

Last night, the school board approved (5:2 Millar, Quinn dissenting) a contract for the newly formed Bus Driver's Union. This contract gave **11.4% in raises over the 4 year contract**, at a time when **revenue is predicted to be less than 7.6%** over that same time period. The majority of the board approved this contract in the face of financial projections that showed the **district deficit spending every year for the next 5 years**, eventually depleting reserves. It is precisely because the board keeps approving contracts that we cannot afford, that the district continues to spend more money than it has. There are only two possible outcomes to this: **increased taxes or teacher layoffs that would increase class sizes, probably both.**

### **Anti-Nepotism Policy**

Last May, I proposed the district strengthen their anti-nepotism policy, which currently prohibits school board members from employing their spouses or family in the district in permanent positions. The board at that time sent the policy to committee, where it died. I brought this issue back again at last night's board meeting, since a school board member's spouse had been employed by the district in a temporary position in December, without the board's approval. I argued that State and Federal Law, as well as common sense, dictates that the board should adopt an Anti-Nepotism policy, to preserve the reputation of the district as a place where the best and brightest are hired based on merit, not on their relationship to a board member. **Dr. Chapman** attempted to cut off discussion of the Anti-Nepotism policy, and **Dr. Ekeberg** made personal attacks against me. In the end, the **board voted (5:2) to kill the Anti-Nepotism policy.**

### **Recess Policy across the District**

Virginia Lake parents have been protesting, since the beginning of school, their new recess policy, which **reduced recess time from 40 min to 20 min each day.** Last night I argued that just as all schools are required to use the same textbooks and academic programs, the district should have a standard recess policy. **I proposed a minimum 30 min recess each day, with flexibility given to schools** as to how to implement that policy. Currently, three schools (Jane Addams, Virginia Lake and Willow Bend) have less than 30 minutes, with the rest of District 15 schools having 30-40 minutes. In previous years, before out-of-level math was mandated across the district, some schools had this program and some did not, resulting in unjust disparities in academic opportunity across the district. We have moved away from that, towards a more uniform academic environment, and I argued that access to similar levels of physical activity during the day, which is vital to academic success, should likewise be equitable across the district. **The majority of the board once again disagreed.** At the last minute, voting was postponed until June.

### **School Board Elections – April 2011**

**I look at a school board that votes *against* strengthening the curriculum, votes *for* teacher's and bus driver's contracts that we cannot afford, votes *against* equitable recess policies and anti-nepotism policies, and I see a board that is more interested in protecting the employment of adults in District 15 than are interested in doing what's best for children.**

**It is very discouraging.**

Dr. Chapman and Dr. Ekeberg will be up for re-election in April 2011, as will I. At this time, I have not decided whether I will run for re-election.

But of this I am certain: **If Dr. Chapman and Dr. Ekeberg are re-elected, the kind of status quo that**

**puts the interests of adults ahead of the interests of children, will continue.** Ultimately, this will result in higher taxes or larger class sizes, or both, but it will also result in dozens of smaller decisions that impact the education of our children every day. With the strong support of the unions, the only way that Dr. Chapman and Dr. Ekeberg will not be re-elected is if strong candidates step up to replace them, and people are willing to go to the polls in sufficient numbers to remove them from office.

**In the months ahead, please consider whether you are willing to step up and run for the school board.** Without good candidates, this broken system will not be repaired.

Feel free to forward this email. I would be happy to add anyone to the list that requests it.

Regards,  
Sue

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