



April 27, 2009

Tom Madden, Chair-Minneapolis Board of Education
School Board Directors
807 Broadway St. NE
Minneapolis, MN 55413

Dear Chair Madden and Directors:

Thank you for your hard work and diligence in proposing changes to Minneapolis School District operations to better reflect current enrollment and funding realities. We recognize that important changes need to be made. We also recognize that these changes will not be easy to bring about. We affirm your leadership and we stand ready to assist in any way we can. Our children need to be our number one shared priority.

This work began last year with the adoption of a laudable strategic plan and continues with the Changing School Options effort now underway.

As is true of any change process of this magnitude, obstacles and pitfalls are bound to arise. We are concerned about recent incidents that threaten to devolve this effort from one of problem solving and opportunity building to one fraught with resentment and polarization.

We hope you can agree that the excellence we find in many of our schools is attributable to factors we would want for each and every school. Namely, parental and community involvement, vital and energetic teachers and administrators, and a richness of diversity. It is important that our community fully appreciates that this process seeks to uphold and affirm that success and be absent of any notions of jealousy, rivalry or threats to dismantle these very things.

At no time and in no manner have we detected anything but full support by active and thoughtful members of our school communities to widely shared district-wide goals of full access to an excellent education for all kids, aggressive efforts to eliminate achievement gaps, and a full embrace of diversity and desegregation.



The seemingly abrupt administrative leave forced on Principal Tim Cadotte after an exchange with an elected district leader is alarming. By any available measure, Tim Cadotte is among the most successful principals in the school district. He must be reinstated to his position as soon as possible.

We would also hope that you take the opportunity undertake whatever internal process you have available to you that would confirm propriety of actions on the part of elected officials, especially in their interaction with district employees and public professionals.

Absent strong, swift and certain steps on your part, it is difficult to imagine how valid decisions can be made in such an environment of distrust.

Likewise, we will assist our constituents in moving swiftly to convene meaningful conversations with their peers so that misunderstandings and mistrust within the community can be alleviated.

Please accept this communication in the spirit in which it is conveyed, one of appreciation and respect for your leadership and your full authority over the difficult decisions you face. We affirm our partnership with you in serving our mutual constituents.

Very truly yours,

D. Scott Ribble, 60

Paul J. Juss 63A

Debra Ann Ray, 62

Margaret Anderson Killiker, 60A

Ken Kelash 63

Paul Honsten, 60B

Jeff Hyslop 61B