



October 10, 2013

Dear Senate Education Committee members,

I am writing to again raise my concerns about Senate Bill 76, regarding charter school authorization. As you continue to consider this bill, I hope you will take into account the concerns of local communities across the state.

Placing a charter school within a school district is a decision that local communities should have the opportunity to thoughtfully consider. Local communities know their schools and their students best, and that's why they elect a local board to represent them. Those boards are charged with making decisions about the best ways to serve students in their own community. I hope you'll see how important it is to keep that responsibility within local communities and the boards they've elected.

We are also concerned about the financial implications of the bill. We already pay a penalty of more than \$700,000 out of our state aid to support charter schools in Milwaukee. We don't know what impact additional independent charters across the state would have on funding for our public schools. This year, our district received the largest cut to state aid allowed under the law, about \$8 million. Because of how independent charters are funded, this bill would allow an even larger cut under state law in future years.

We hope you will agree that locally elected school boards should retain the authority to make decisions in the districts they represent. If you have any questions, please contact Rachel Strauch-Nelson on my staff at 663-1903 or rmstrauchnel@madison.k12.wi.us.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Cheatham
Superintendent
Madison Metropolitan School District