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House Committee on Commerce, Labor and Economic Development
March 6, 2013
Sub for House Bill 2027

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee - thank you for the opportunity to comment on Sub for HB 2027.

In the months prior to negotiations beginning, WNEA surveys the faculty to determine which issues they feel need to be bargained. Upon the exchange of notice documents, we meet with the district to go over – in detail – the items to be negotiated, discussing what items are already covered in the agreement, and making sure everyone understands the issue (i.e. why this item is being negotiated.) As a general rule, both sides drop items to be negotiated at this point for reasons that can vary from deciding it is not important, to another item to be negotiated should take care of the issue.

Winfield has a separate committee that looks at supplemental salaries and makes recommendations. This committee is made up of district personnel, BOE members, and teachers and reports to the general bargaining team (district and WNEA.) In these issues, the two sides have traditionally worked together to make sure that money was being used wisely. On other areas of compensation, our district as a whole has not supported 'merit' pay. This is due in part to the fact that independent research (provided to us by the district) has demonstrated that 'merit' pay does not increase teachers' abilities or student achievement. In recent years, the teachers in Winfield have specifically asked for NO pay-raise due to the tight finances in our district. During this time, teachers did ask that those staff members who had received a new university degree be moved up on the pay scale with the district agreeing.

In areas outside of finance, our district has a stellar reputation for working in conjunction with our school board. We have recently added a Board/Teacher Panel to the list of committees that help govern our district. The Board/Teacher Panel meets monthly and gives both the board and teachers an opportunity to address issues. Examples of issues are: concerns about implementing Common Core, the scheduling of Parent-Teacher conferences, problems with substitute teachers, calendar options, rule 10 coaches, evaluations, summer professional development opportunities, and equality of professional development. With the use of this committee, WNEA and the Winfield BOE successfully handled an issue regarding planning time. The issue at hand had to do with one building's schedule not fitting into the system agreed upon in the negotiated agreement. In this case we waved the planning-time portion of the negotiated agreement for the teachers of that particular building and worked with the district to ensure that both parties were happy. This has been cited as an example of how well teachers and board members work together at board meetings and in the community as a whole.

Our district also created a committee of board members, teachers, and community members to look at the length and number of teaching periods. This committee spent four months meeting after school and in the evenings to determine the most efficient use of teacher time during the day and the length of class periods. Part of what was discussed at the bargaining table was how much time administration could use of the teachers' planning period and the district offered, and teachers accepted, administrative use of 90 minutes weekly if needed.

WNEA/Winfield BOE recently agreed on evaluation instruments. A few years ago there was a problem with technology working efficiently in the district. An agreement was reached to not evaluate teachers on their use of technology if it was not working. Once systems were upgraded the evaluation of the use of technology was reinstated. In addition, the district and teachers agreed just this last year to begin reviewing KEEP as a suitable replacement for our current evaluation instrument.

USD465 – Winfield has also agreed to allow teachers to work from home on 'record and report' days. This has allowed teachers to enter their grades from home by a pre-determined time. Voluntary

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in-service has been successfully offered during those days so that teachers could report to the schools and work on being trained on new techniques, technology usage, etc. We have also added several in-service days into the calendar. Teachers have appreciated the flexibility and recognition of the need for professional development. The time involved in being a successful teacher involves more than the time with students.

All told, the collective bargaining process works in Winfield. Sub for HB 2027 would upset the respectful working relationship teachers, administrators, and members of the school board have spent years building. This relationship has proved to be a success in strengthening student achievement. Because I have seen first-hand how well the bargaining process works for the children of Winfield, I oppose the adoption of Sub for HB 2027.