

Members of the board,

First, I thank you for allowing me the opportunity to discuss the matter at hand with you, face to face. In fact, I've sincerely awaited speaking with the board for nearly four years about matters related to my professional experience at this district. As I know my time is limited, I will start by addressing the reasons elicited by the Administration to support the non renewal of my teaching contract.

The Administration begins their reasons with saying I am, "...not responsive to supervision and is not coachable. Mark is consistently oppositional with management (see below)." The administration then provides a few examples to support their assessment. The first instance describes an email communication between Mr Board and I, and expressed to all District personnel, about the long range plan issued by the district. The Administration's claim, as stated, is that I was, "taking issue with Mr Board for not commenting on an issue... (I) wanted addressed." This email exchange was a series of questions about the long range plan. I congratulated the District in its efforts to increase pay for substitutes and hourly employees, as well as their attempts to move the District in a forward direction. However, the Administration has interpreted these questions and compliments as "oppositional, divisive, and at times, unethical behavior that is not appropriate for the workplace." I ask all of you here at this meeting, if providing compliments about the District's decisions to improve pay for those who've worked hard to earn that is "divisive" what compliments can an employee provide its District? If asking questions about the best ways to establish trust - an element the District has itself admitted is the number one priority they need to address - is "unethical behavior" what questions can an employee ask? If providing links to statistical information relating trust and communication to Administration, in hopes of establishing solid foundations for both of those District identified areas of need is "divisive" what suggestions can an employee provide? These two substantial issues the District has identified as areas of need (1. Lack of Trust & 4. Lack of Communication per the District's Long Range Plan) are issues that employees in this District agree need attention and correction. In fact, these are issues that you who are here at this private conference have agreed upon as items to be addressed. But when the Administration receives genuine inquiries about the processes to attain success with these issues from an employee, and categorizes those inquiries as, "oppositional, divisive, and at time unethical behavior that is not appropriate in the workplace" perhaps the category of "communication" particular among employees of the District, should be re-evaluated with an objective lens, and not considered negative rhetoric to be used against an employee.

Second, the Administration referenced a hearing that occurred on April 9, 2021, claiming that I "admitted that (I) surreptitiously audio recorded meetings that (I) had with my supervisor..." Please note, that the word "surreptitiously" or in layman's terms, *sneakily*, was once again, the Administration's interpretation of the event. They have attached a negative connotation to my intent without first knowing my intent. Two points can be made to address this statement, as well as its categorization as, "oppositional, divisive and, at times, unethical..." First, recording the meeting, per state law in Wisconsin is completely legal as Wisconsin is a one-party consent state. The Impartial Hearing Officer at that meeting, as well as the District's attorney both

completed such training. If not, perhaps some in-service training is needed at the start of each year to help District employees better understand FERPA and IDEA laws.

Finally, the District used an email exchange between Jon Bosworth and I about a parking spot. It states, "I believe your gold vehicle is in the visitor section. It should be in an unmarked (undesigned) spot in one of the parking lots. I've referenced this on Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday of this week in my daily news posts. If I am mistaken about your vehicle identity, please accept my apologies for the confusion. Please move your vehicle." My response was as follows; "A bit out of sorts this morning and didn't have that reminder in my head when I parked... I'll be sure to get my vehicle moved at my earliest (in)convenience." It's certainly possible that this email could be perceived as "snarky." Again, however, I was never asked of my intent with the email but the Administration has interpreted the word *(in)convenience* as "oppositional, divisive and at times, unethical." I would also like to remind all in attendance that the email was sent during a pandemic that has stretched everyone's mental and emotional well being. Once again, my intent was not to exert a "snippy" remark but that moving my vehicle from a particular spot in the parking lot was certainly not at the top of my mind as I would have been in class with students. Education of those students, who were also enduring the mental and emotional stress of the pandemic was at the top of my mind. Something that I'm sure you all heard Monday evening is quite literally **always** at the top of my mind.

In closing, I'd like to summarize the cause for us gathering tonight. Quite simply, there is a misunderstanding with communication. The Administration interprets my questions and statements as "oppositional, divisive and, at times, unethical." Conversely, and as you witnessed Monday evening, **no one** else does. The Administration responds with punitive measures rather than compromising and collegial ones. When measures like these are implemented, fear grows and communication is stifled. Allow me, if you would, to remind you of the adjectives the Administration have used to describe me: "oppositional, divisive, unethical..." Compare that to the adjectives the teachers, parents and students, those who have a relationship with me in a continual and personal manner, have used: "passionate, dedicated, kind, thoughtful, helpful, intelligent, appreciative, caring, supportive, genuine, loved, respected, respectful, encouraging, leader, valued, irreplaceable..." Surely the disconnect between the Administration and the stakeholders of this community is on display and that disconnect has manifested itself tonight with a decision to non renew my contract with this District. I sincerely ask the full membership of the school board this evening, to remove this non renewal of my contract. Allow this District to continue "building futures one child at a time." A decision to non renew my contract will negate that mission statement indefinitely. Your decision tonight will echo with stakeholders for the direction for our district. Let this be a decision to start the process of repair and promise for the futures of the students, parents and staff. Please overturn your decision for non renewal.

Thank you for your time and resolute consideration.