

Mr. Superintendent and Board members I appreciate the opportunity to visit with you. In my 50 years of being involved in education activities, I have been guided by several basic principles:

1. The Board of Education represent the "public will" and has the legal and moral responsibility for making final decisions.
2. School employees contribute their best work when accepted as professionals and treated fairly.
3. Schools operate best when decisions answer the question "what is in the interest of students and not in the private needs of the adults?"

With these three principles as my guide I suggest the following for your consideration:

1. The Board of Education should express its support and commitment to shared governance.
2. The teachers should accept the decisions of the Board, move on and be assured that a review of the schedule will be conducted at the end of the school year and all parties will be given the opportunity to make recommendations.
3. Difference between the parties, if at all possible, should be settled without going to arbitration. Arbitration always produces a win-loss situation and does not lessen the emotions attached to the situation.
4. Negotiations over the Written Agreement should be conducted periodically as the needs of the District adjust to changing conditions.

I am in no position to tell any one what should be done. This, however, I do know, that I was blessed to have a love affair with the Salt Lake City School District. It was my good fortune to have talented Board members like John Crawford and effective teacher leaders like Bud Limb. Their work brought strong public support to the District.

It is my hope that such a relationship can be established today so that the students of the Salt Lake City schools can receive the best education that the human mind can conceive. Because of my experience and the values that I hold I believe that shared governance is essential to achieving that goal. Thank you.

Poet's Corner

THE LONG ROAD TO PROFESSIONALISM¹

“Lord, heavenly father, let the angels watch over thy servants, that no evil may overcome them. Protect them from the peril of fast rivers, thieves, and wild beasts.”²

Eight hundred years ago, or more,
According to our ancient lore,
To Santiago pilgrims went
In search of truth and message sent.
They prayed protection from the beast
Who wished on human flesh to feast.
To save their souls, their final dream
And meet their God in joy and gleam.

So now our teachers, pilgrims too,
Are told to march in rows by two:
“Professionalize in every way
More to attract the young and gay.”
While teachers pray relief from law,
The State above creates with awe
The rules and books by which to teach
And merit pay for some to reach.

O Lord, save them from all the rules
Protect them from the many fools
Who wish profession to create
From little stories they relate
And legislate for all to see
The proper way to teach and be.
The only way to be the best
They say: “Conform to rule and test.”

Reform is to enhance their work!
But down the legislative fork
Remove the shackles and the chains
To make for all some reasoned gains.
As pilgrims died along the way
Teachers have lost both soul and say.
Unless we change our current thought
Reform shall lose whate'er it sought.

*M. DONALD THOMAS
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¹ Dedicated to those who wish to make teaching a profession by controlling what teachers say, believe, and do.

² Blessing bestowed on medieval pilgrims who traveled to Santiago de Compostella, Spain.