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Mission Statement

The School District of Fort Atkinson is committed to delivering the quality opportunities and services each student needs to achieve his or her academic and personal potential

Board of Education
March 2, 2017

RE: WISCONSIN PUBLIC SCHOOL START DATE

Senator Scott Fitzgerald
Senator Stephen Nass
Senator Janis Ringhand

Representative Cody Horlacher
Representative Joel Kleefisch
Representative Don Vruwink

Dear Senator Fitzgerald, Senator Nass, Senator Ringhand, Representative Horlacher, Representative Kleefisch, and Representative Vruwink:

On February 23, 2017, the Board of Education of the School District of Fort Atkinson unanimously voted in favor of the following resolution regarding the calendar for Wisconsin public schools and asks that you support this legislation to allow for start dates before September 1:

WHEREAS the State of Wisconsin by state law provides that public school districts in the State of Wisconsin cannot start school before September 1 pursuant to Wis. Stat. §118.045;

WHEREAS the school board may commence a school term prior to September 1 if it submits a written request to the Department of Public Instruction asking for an earlier start date listing the extraordinary reasons for the earlier start date request;

WHEREAS local control over the start date would allow for additional days of instruction for students prior to state and local assessments, and preparation for the ACT and Advanced Placement exams;

WHEREAS local control over the start date will allow the School District of Fort Atkinson to better meet the needs of its students to have additional breaks throughout the school year to align with best practices for student learning, to decrease the rate of illnesses/absences and to increase time spent with family over the holidays;

WHEREAS local control over the start date will allow the School District of Fort Atkinson to align the school calendar with post-secondary institutions to better meet the needs of our students;

WHEREAS local control over the start date will allow the School District of Fort Atkinson staff to participate in additional professional development coursework throughout the course of the school year which is better aligned with best practices for adult learning;

WHEREAS local control over the start date will allow the School District of Fort Atkinson to better align its school calendar with the co-curricular schedule for students that begins in early August;

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WHEREAS the impact on tourism has changed given the fact that states which traditionally comprise significant tourist influx to Wisconsin have public school start dates in early to mid-August;

WHEREAS charter and voucher school districts have the flexibility to start prior to September 1 and still receive public funding from the State of Wisconsin;

WHEREAS the State Superintendent is recommending in his 2017-19 Biennial Budget to allow the Milwaukee Public School District to be provided an exception to this provision in the state law to allow the district to maximize learning opportunities; therefore, this opportunity should be granted for all school districts in the State of Wisconsin;

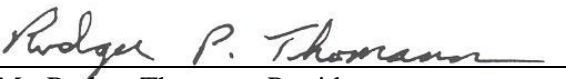
WHEREAS the School District of Fort Atkinson Board of Education strongly believes that setting the school calendar is a matter of educational policy with sensitivity to local conditions and characteristics of the community, and should remain the decision of locally elected school officials;

BE IT RESOLVED that the School District of Fort Atkinson is officially requesting to establish local control in determining the school calendar; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the School District of Fort Atkinson will be better able to educate its students because of this flexibility as greater outcomes are anticipated academically as well as preventing absenteeism.


We urge you to support change to allow Wisconsin public schools to start before September 1. Please give our school districts every opportunity we need to educate our students. Students are the future of this state and country and they should always be our first priority. Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,


Mr. Rodger Thomann, President


Mrs. Victoria Hachtel, Vice-President


Mrs. Kim Patrick, Treasurer


Ms. Sue Hall, Clerk


Mr. Mark Chaney, Member

c: Fort Atkinson Chamber of Commerce
Wisconsin Association of School Boards