



## Embracing Act 10

*One administrator's call for school leaders to use Act 10 to improve their school districts*

There have been many discussions amongst public education leaders regarding Governor Scott Walker and his education policies. From following these debates, I believe it is evident that many school leaders are not supporting the governor because some public schools do not support the elimination of collective bargaining.

I understand why employees would be against Act 10. I don't understand why an employer would. I provide the following rationale why administrators and school board members should support Act 10:

- The law does not require that we tear apart the basic tenets of our contracts. Having the ability to take things away does not mean that we must or should. If a district has truly developed a mutually agreed upon contract, the same language can be moved over to a teacher handbook. Given that option, is there really a reason for a school board or administrator to be against Act 10?
- Without collective bargaining, we treated the staff in the Stanley-Boyd School District much better than many districts that extended old contracts. We provided step movement and an additional \$3,000 in premium pay. With a 10 percent contribu-

tion and a new vendor, we maintained health insurance coverage and kept our retirement options. We have not found a contradiction between Act 10 and a moral commitment to our staff.

- The law does not say we can't solicit staff ideas. The wisdom of our teachers is the most valuable resource we have to continue making progress in student achievement. Act 10 is not about shutting employees out of the process; we need their professional input and intend to make full use of it.
- For 26 years, I have participated in countless discussions at the local, CESA, and state level regarding our inability to remove substandard teachers. I see nothing negative in eliminating "just cause" and ending the grievance process at the board level. If you think teachers deserve another chance, give them one. If they need help, help them. But Act 10 gives us the ability to make necessary personnel changes for the good of students.
- We have great teachers at Stanley-Boyd who do awesome things for our kids. We want to pay them well and provide them with good benefits. We also recognize that we have a duty to provide for our parents and taxpayers, which



### Gov. Walker at Convention

**Governor Scott Walker** has been invited to address school leaders at the 91st State Education Convention. He is invited to speak on Thursday, Jan. 19 during the General Assembly in the Frontier Airlines Center. □

Visit [wasb.org/convention](http://wasb.org/convention) for more information.

requires us to be efficient and prudent at the same time. Act 10 allows us the freedom to do this.

I admit I feel more accountable now as a result of Act 10. No longer can I blame budget woes on the union as I now have the power to make decisions to balance my budget. I can't blame the contract for retaining under-performing employees. Who can we now blame other than ourselves when our programs don't lead to higher student achievement?

We have been given a great deal more power by this governor; I hope we all accept the responsibility. ■

*Jones is district administrator at Stanley-Boyd Area Schools.*

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— Jim Jones