

October 16, 2005

Members of the Warren County School
District Board of Education

"The mission of the Warren County School District is to prepare all students to be responsible and productive citizens by providing them with the skills and education necessary to achieve academic and personal excellence." Having attended numerous board meetings over the years, I have heard this board express this desire, and the desire that these graduates return to Warren County with their skills and talents and make their homes and commitments to society right here. I suggest to you that I am just such an example.

Having lived here all of my life, attending and graduating from schools in this district, I began teaching here immediately after college, serving the district as regular education teacher, special education teacher, teacher of the gifted, and middle school counselor since 1974. In February of 2005, you showed your faith in me by appointing me as a "teacher on assignment" at Tidioute Elementary Middle School where I served as principal until the school closed at the end of June. Recently selected as the successful candidate for Principal of Sugar Grove Elementary School, I have been assigned there as an intern while awaiting my principal K-12 certification to arrive from the Pennsylvania Department of Education. This is shared with you in order for you to understand how I am being affected by a unique situation with our Act 93. After 31 years of service and commitment to the students of this district, there is no vehicle in our Act 93 for recognizing or giving credit for years of service within the district. What this amounts to in my case is a cut in salary of \$5,000 if I accept the position of Principal of Sugar Grove Elementary School.

In July of 2005, the Pennsylvania School Boards Association newsletter carried the average annual salaries for Elementary Principals across the state. Five years ago, we weren't even close. That gap is even wider today. In my research, not one school district that is contiguous to us has a beginning administrator salary lower than any of its teacher salaries. We do.

Let me do some math for you. As a teacher/counselor at the Master's level earning \$59,000 per year, working 186 days for 8 hours a day, those earnings amount to \$39.65 per hour. Administrators work a minimum of 35 more days a year, work a longer day, have expanded duties, greater responsibilities, and occasional evening duties. An administrator offered \$54,000 per year, working 220 days for 10 hours a day, using the same formula as above results in earnings of \$25 per hour. Let's see: \$39 to remain a teacher or counselor and go back to Beaty-Warren Middle School and work for 186 days a year, or \$25 an hour to work a longer year, a longer day, have expanded duties, the responsibility for the overall operations of the building, and the safety of all students, work with the community, and evaluate employees that are earning a higher salary than I am.

What business or company in America would expect its leader or CEO to take on expanded duties, or manage and evaluate its employees for less money than those employees are earning? My performance as a teacher and counselor has been valued more than as an administrator.

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It's no wonder so many of our effective administrators have gone to seek employment elsewhere. Administrators have been hired from outside the district and placed higher in the salary matrix in order to attract them into Warren County. We have offered external candidates full credit for experience. Our Act 93 does not address this inequity. The situation presented to you tonight should make that clear.

Thirty one years in this school district.

Thirty one years of exemplary evaluations.

Thirty one years of taking a leadership role, doing what was asked of me, volunteering in the staff development initiative.

Thirty one years of commitment to the students of this district.

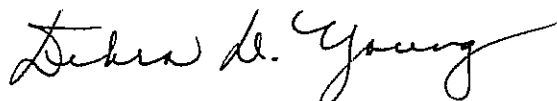
Thirty one years of professional development and studies, and two certificates later, advancement to the principalship is valued at \$5,000 less.

Longevity and loyalty is valued at \$5,000 less.

I have proven that I am effective as an administrator. I can do the job and do it well. Now I'm being forced to make a decision; one that may ultimately lead me away from this district.

The request before this board tonight is to do what is ethically right. You have stated that you want to promote from within. Let's do it with dignity. In light of this presentation and the evidence presented, I'm asking this board to approve a salary of \$64,490.00. I anxiously await your response.

Thank you for your time and your consideration,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Debra D. Young". The signature is fluid and elegant, with the first name "Debra" being the most prominent part.

Debra D. Young
Sugar Grove Elementary Principal