

February 24, 2011

Dr. James Williams  
Buffalo Public Schools  
712 City Hall  
Buffalo, NY 14202

Dear Dr. Williams,

I am writing to you today to urge you to ensure that the City of Buffalo School District is included in a repeal of the "last in/first out" statute as it pertains to teachers in our urban schools.

It is my understanding that Assemblyman Sam Hoyt has sent a letter to you regarding this issue. I fully support Assemblyman Hoyt and also want to ensure that there must be a comprehensive process of evaluating the effectiveness and competency of teachers when determining which teachers, if the need arises, should be let go. Basing such decisions exclusively on seniority is not in the best interest of children and children are the "special interest" who I care most about.

This antiquated policy whereby layoffs are based on seniority rather than merit is detrimental to the continued achievement gains and gap closing efforts underway in our local schools. School administrators and other district officials must be afforded discretion in making staffing decisions and classroom performance should be a key factor in determining who stays and who goes. It is also important that these decisions be made following engagement of local union leaders.

These are exceedingly difficult economic times that will require tough decisions to be made including staffing reductions. These actions will certainly have an adverse impact on our children and anything we can do to mitigate that impact is essential.

Retaining our most qualified and best performing teachers is imperative. Our districts have teachers with extensive training in specialty areas. Last in/first out requirements prohibit us from considering these important qualifications in making layoff decisions.

Along with Assemblyman Hoyt, I want to also assure you that as discussions continue with regard to amending this law, I will make every possible effort to guarantee that the bill that is introduced includes the City of Buffalo and the other "Big Five" cities of New York State.

This reform is important to Upstate New York and our children. I will continue to work with Assembly Hoyt and the rest of the Western New York Delegation on this important issue directly effecting the City of Buffalo.

Our children deserve the finest educators and some of the most innovative and effective teachers are not necessarily the most seasoned. We welcome the opportunity to work with you on this matter and thank you for your continued commitment to the needs of New York State's large city school districts.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. In addition, I am willing to work with you on any other issue that you believe can help to improve the educational experience for the children of the City of Buffalo. If you need to reach me, feel free to call my office at 716-854-8705.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark Grisanti". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Mark" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Grisanti".

Senator Mark Grisanti  
60<sup>th</sup> State Senate District