



For Immediate Release
March 3, 2011

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Holmen Settles with Teachers on One Year Contract

Cheryl Hancock statement/view

Much of the rhetoric taking place in Madison regarding the budget Repair Bill, and more recently Biennial Budget, is focused on the need to eliminate collective bargaining with public sector unions in order to give school boards and municipalities the flexibility to make difficult decisions in order to balance our budgets. I believe the bill goes too far and the settlement between the Holmen School Board and the Holmen Education Association proves it is not necessary.

What happened in Holmen shows that bringing two groups together can result in a respectful, open and honest conversation where good things can be accomplished and all parties are valued and a part of the answer. I have negotiated with the teachers in our district for many years and have always been impressed with their willingness to find solutions to the issues we are confronted with, keeping the needs of our students first.

Contrary to what many believe, our staff have already been contributing 20% toward their health insurance premiums for many years and now have stepped up again to make significant concessions beyond what is being called for in the current budget repair bill. This willingness to work together will provide time for our district and staff to continue to collaborate and find solutions for the remaining deficits we face. I hope it will also give our staff a sense of security and respect that they deserve.

As a candidate for the 94th Assembly District I know that the same can be said for teachers, other school district staff and public employees across the Coulee Region. While they are willing to play a part in finding solutions, they should not be expected to fill the gap on their own. These are difficult financial times in our state and I believe that thoughtful and meaningful negotiation is the only way that we will find true solutions to the challenges we face. It worked in Holmen and it can work in Wisconsin too.

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