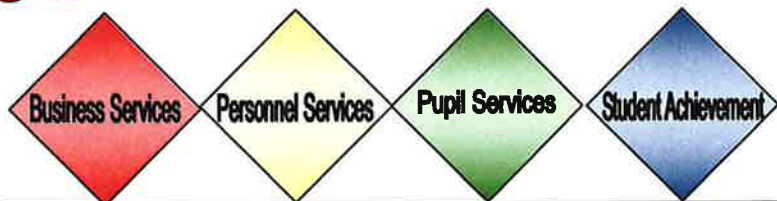


# School District of New London



## MONTHLY UPDATE

By: Bill Fitzpatrick  
District Administrator  
Date: March, 2011

### Uncertainty Abounds

These are tumultuous times for public education in Wisconsin. Frustration and anxiety related to the pending Budget Repair Bill continue to escalate. In addition, deep cuts in state funding and revenue limits for our schools were disclosed in the Biennial Budget proposal presented by Governor Walker.

There is much that we do not know and may not know for some time. We can make some assumptions based on the proposals pending in the legislature and projections of enrollment. However, with no knowledge of state funding for next year, no knowledge of exemptions to revenue caps, no knowledge of who will be retiring, the district **must** use the worst case scenario to protect itself.

At our meeting on February 14, the Board took action to issue contracts to identified staff for the next school year as is customary and in accordance with state statute. By the end of that week we became aware that the pending legislation (Budget Repair Bill) raised questions about whether the lay-off provision in the collective bargaining agreement and the associated timelines regarding lay-off notice will continue to exist.

In an effort to remain united and not unnecessarily pit specific individuals or departments against one another, NLEA, Administration and Board decided to issue a universal layoff notice to all certified staff. It is important to know that this was a measure taken to protect the District's right to lay off for economic reasons and has no implications related to job performance. At a Special Board meeting on February 24, the Board of Education took action to provide a notice to all certified staff by midnight on February 28 in order to retain their rights.

The following day, attorneys for the district and teacher union agreed upon language that will be added to individual contracts which will accomplish the goal of protecting the lay-off rights of the district and each individual educator until such time as full knowledge of the facts related to the financial impact of pending legislation are known.

At a Special Meeting of the Board on Monday, February 28, the Board rescinded its decision to issue layoff notices to all teaching staff and adopted the Memorandum of Understanding adding lay-off language to individual contracts (see sample on next page) which will be issued to those teachers approved at the meeting of February 14. They will be delivered on or before the statutory deadline of March 15. This action will provide for the greatest flexibility to respond with potential lay offs as the facts become more apparent in the next few months. The reality

of the situation is that regardless of the outcomes coming out of Madison, there will be 2,500 students in our schools next year, and we will continue to need a passionate and dedicated staff to serve them.

### 2011-2013 Biennial State Budget

Governor Walker gave his 2011-2013 Biennial Budget address last week but revealed very little in the way of detail related to K-12 education. Since that time we have been meeting with colleagues and our professional organizations to gather the specifics and to project the impact on our local school district. The initial indications are that our revenue limit for next year will be reduced by roughly \$2,000,000.

Although there remains a certain amount of inaccuracy due to the many unknowns at this time, we are committed to transparency of information as it becomes known. We will be providing regular updates in an effort to share the facts about school funding and our evolving budget status as the facts come to light. This is without question a time when our best collaboration is needed both internally and externally.

As a community, New London and the surrounding area have a tremendous history of support for our schools and there is visible positive inertia. Our reorganization efforts and the community collaborative partnerships to provide 4-K have added to that positive inertia. With the establishment of career academies at the high school over the next three years, I believe we will position ourselves to emerge as a world-class district of choice. In the process we must make sure that the district is financially stable and sustainable. What is clear is that we cannot make promises that we cannot keep. It means fundamentally doing things differently. These things can only be accomplished in a culture of trust between all parties. Now is the time to build trust.

### Staff Committed to Children

It would be unrealistic to think that the proposed changes currently under consideration at the state level would not affect the emotions of our employees. These are natural emotions for anyone when livelihood and job security are in jeopardy. However, the vast majority of our staff has remained focus on the education of the students in our classrooms. I am impressed, but not surprised, by the professionalism and concern they continue to have for our children and their learning. They remain passionate about their work. For that we should all be very grateful. I have attached a letter I sent to all staff on Monday, February 28, expressing these thoughts.

School District of New London  
New London, Wisconsin 54961



**PROFESSIONAL EDUCATOR CONTRACT 2011-12**

Professional Educator Name:     **«Name\_\_First\_Name» «Name\_\_Last\_Name»**

This agreement, made and entered into this **15<sup>th</sup> day of March, 2011**, by and between the Board of Education of the School District of New London, Wisconsin, for and on behalf of said District, party of the first part, and **«Name\_\_First\_Name» «Name\_\_Last\_Name»**, a legally qualified Professional Educator, party of the second part.

WITNESSETH: The party of the second part hereby agrees to perform professional services as may be assigned for which appropriate certification is held, beginning on the first day of school in the School District of New London, New London, Wisconsin, for a period of **187 days/«Total\_Contract\_FTE» FTE** during the **2011-12 school year** at a salary of not less than **«Total\_Pay\_Amount»** payable in 26 equal installments, the first payment being due the Last Friday of August.

It is mutually agreed and understood that the party of the second part will abide by all directions and regulations now in force or hereinafter to be made by the Board of Education. The Board of Education agrees to make available to each Professional Educator a copy of said rules and regulations.

It is further mutually agreed and understood by the party of the first part, and the party of the second part that this contract is subject to all statutory provisions of the State of Wisconsin.

This contract is specifically made subject to, and will be amended and modified to comply with, the terms and provisions of any applicable collective bargaining agreement between parties, entered into subsequent to the tender of this Contract, including as follows:

The Board reserves the right to lay off the teacher during the term of this Contract based upon the needs of the District, pursuant to the Layoff Provision of the current Collective Bargaining Agreement between the parties. The teacher shall be given notice of such layoff not less than thirty (30) calendar days prior to the effective date of such layoff. It is understood that as a layoff, the non-renewal procedures of Section 118.22, Wis. Stats., do not apply.

This Contract is not valid unless returned on or before April 15, 2011.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Keith Steckbauer, Board of Education President

\_\_\_\_\_  
Virginia Schlais, Board of Education Clerk

\_\_\_\_\_  
«Name\_\_First\_Name» «Name\_\_Last\_Name»,  
Professional Educator

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date Signed



## SCHOOL DISTRICT OF NEW LONDON

DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION OFFICE  
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February 28, 2011

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**Jo Collar**  
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**Kristin Grable**  
Sugar Bush Elementary and  
Readfield Elem. Principal  
kgrable@newlondon.k12.wi.us

Dear Staff Members:

Needless to say, the past several days have been unsettling and have produced an enormous amount of uncertainty for many of us. Circumstances are changing and what the future holds is unclear.

Like many of you, I am struggling to understand what these changes will mean for all of us who have made working in the field of education our life's mission. However, even as I am reeling from the massive nature of these changes and the unknown implications, I am thankful for the calm and dedication that I have heard in my conversations with many of you. I am impressed, but not surprised, by your professionalism and the concern you have for our students and each other.

Over the past few days we have been pouring over the information available regarding the changes taking place in order to determine what will likely be the impact to our school district in the years ahead. One thing is clear – nothing is entirely clear!

Changes that Governor Walker proposed will mean personal sacrifice from all of us financially as well in our feelings of security. While the Governor's Budget Repair Bill includes sweeping changes to collective bargaining, I am also concerned with the changes that he will propose next Tuesday in his 2011-2013 biennial budget recommendations to the legislature. Early reports indicate significant reductions in state aid to school districts, meaning considerably less revenue to support education for our students.

No matter what happens in the near future, we can be confident that we will continue to treat each other with dignity and respect. The School District of New London has enjoyed positive working relationships among all the people that make this school district work for our students. I know we will continue that tradition in the weeks, months, and years ahead.

On behalf of the school board and the administrative team, I want to thank you for all that you do for our students and your friends and colleagues. I will be taking a deep breath and stepping back to assess the facts before the rumors, and I hope that all of you will do the same. We have survived difficult times before and we will again because of each other and our commitment to our students.

Sincerely,

Bill Fitzpatrick  
District Administrator