

Schuler not
'anti-education'

About two years ago, I was one of four members of the Stevens Point Area Public School Board to meet with community leaders and school officials in the Marshall School District where our current superintendent, Dr. David Schuler, was then employed. One of the people we met with was the head of the local business organization. This woman said she held opinions about taxation and school needs that were in direct conflict with those of Schuler. She had worked diligently, but unsuccessfully, to defeat the referendum that Schuler had worked to pass the previous year. Yet, she described him as a person who advocated fairly and strongly for what he believed was best for the community. She said he was a person we could trust. If I were to tell her today that a small, but vocal segment of the Stevens Point community was attempting to label Schuler as "anti-referendum" and "anti-education," I think she would have as hard a time believing it as I do.

The coverage of the recently proposed budget cuts for the district, including the opinions voiced in Open Letters, often leaves out important information that explains the need to consider budget cuts. To those analyzing this proposal, please be aware that you should be familiar with (among many other items): two-thirds funding/QEO/revenue caps, No Child Left Behind (ESEA) requirements and reimbursement, state mediation/arbitration law, SAGE, unfunded and under-funded state and federal mandates, charter schools/ Choice program/virtual schools, TIF districts, existing employee contracts, statutes governing layoff notices and time frames for referendum questions.

The School Board is definitely accountable to the public for how it spends our money. But if you want to work toward ending the constant contemplation of budget cuts, turn your efforts to our leaders in Madison and Washington, D.C. It's time for the education of our state's children to garner as much attention as determining who gets to carry a gun or get married, and which federal environmental regulation should be eliminated or how big the next tax break should be.

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