

There is no doubt that these are uncertain times. Collectively as a united staff, we want the parents to understand that we are a part of a history making event that will define how education is viewed and funded in the future. Because you have children that attend a RUSD school, this directly affects you and their future. We understand that we will need to pay more toward our pension and that we will need to contribute more toward our healthcare. **These concessions are what Governor Walker needs to balance the state budget.** More importantly, we are fighting for our right to collectively bargain our working conditions. This right determines what language is in our contracts. This language determines what we will be able to do in our classrooms. For example, collective bargaining determines: class size, how much time we get to prepare quality lessons, the use of our wonderful educational assistants, building size, how students are assigned to classes, how many (if any) specialists we will have, all Special Education student programming, how teachers are assigned to positions across the district, work schedules for all Unified staff, classroom assignments, teacher supplies and materials that are provided, how the calendar is set, how substitute teachers are chosen and trained, the conditions of the building that the students are in, and finally but very importantly, the code of conduct the students and staff will be held accountable to. Other bargaining issues are at risk as well. **Governor Walker does not need to take these rights to balance his budget. These rights don't cost anything. This is the right to discuss issues with our employers.** All of the collective bargaining rights are items that are discussed between RUSD and the union to maximize student learning and achievement. Without these discussions, OUR children are at risk. These areas of bargaining were developed initially because it was shown that they were essential parts of a school's community that would ensure student learning. If these "discussion rights" are taken away, what is to ensure that over time the "almighty dollar" will take over common sense and ruin sound educational practices. We are fighting to stop it from taking over our children's rights for a "free and public education". We are NOT fighting for pay raises; we are fighting to keep the good things happening in schools all over the district going strong. We are fighting for the right to discuss and compromise. We are fighting for the right to advocate for all children. We are fighting for OUR children's futures in a world where the United States ranks far below other countries in the importance of education. We need to move FORWARD, not backward. Regardless of your political affiliation, this bill in its current form isn't good for anyone. You can support Governor Walker without supporting this bill. We are only asking for your support in these difficult times. We are asking that you talk to us, understand our fight, and help us keep the lines of communication open. We are proud to be part of such an alliance at Gifford.

Respectfully,
56 members of Gifford Elementary School Staff

This ad was paid for by the staff that signed it.