



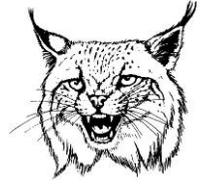
Bowling Green R-I School District

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"Home of the Bobcats"



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Good Morning,

I hope this letter finds you enjoying the early spring weather which has been gracing us with its presence. I'm writing to address the editorial in this week's paper. I have been taught not to worry about things you can't control. I always try to follow this advice. However, when attacks are levied against me and the organization I represent, I would not be doing my job if I did not share the truth with you.

In truth, we are a proud school district. School districts receive a score yearly which is called our APR (annual performance report). Our district APR has increased from earning 75% of our points in 2013 to 90.4% in 2014 to 95% in 2015. Similarly, our high school APR has increased from 70.7% in 2013 to 91.1% in 2014 to 95.4% in 2015. Frankford has worked its way out of focus school status. All of these improvements in student performance were accomplished through the hard work of our staff, students and parents. These huge gains were also made while keeping our fund balance steady.

Unfortunately, none of these terrific accomplishments were worth of news in our local paper. In full disclosure, we have also struggled in areas, primarily in the middle school, where our APR has been a rollercoaster, going from 72.1% in 2013 to 90.0% in 2014 to 77.1% in 2015.

As a district, we own and take responsibility for our successes and our struggles. This is the kind of information which is discussed at administrator meetings and school board meetings. Contrary to what others may say in the paper and on social media, this is the information I, other administrators and the school board use when making recommendations and decisions regarding long range planning, personnel and administrative restructuring, among other things.

The newspaper states that "the Bowling Green R-1 School District is again under the swirl of controversies rooted in unequal pay, confusing contracts, low morale and unethical hiring practices." I guess I work at a different school and live in a different community than the paper is writing about. There is no controversy, unequal pay or confusing contracts. Morale is good, not great, but certainly not low. All hiring is done ethically and following the same standard; is this what's best for students? If the answer isn't yes, we don't do it, no matter whose feelings that may hurt.

I could continue on and on. I could discuss the elimination of unfair annuities for 13 members of our staff, the addition of Mental Management, the improvements in food service, transportation, curriculum and grounds maintenance. I could discuss the improvements in fringe benefits for our staff, the additions to the salary schedule and improvements to facilities, all of which benefit our students. I would love to brag on this district and its students to anyone that wants to come and listen. However, I don't want this to turn into a 15 page letter. If you'd like to discuss any of these improvements or many others, please don't hesitate to come by.

In response to the sunshine law request referenced in the paper, The Bowling Green Times requested over 187,000 pages of documentation. One hundred eighty seven thousand pages, at 10 cents a page, including the time it will take to compile the information, comes out to nearly \$20,000. This is not something we are hiding behind. Here's a sample of what was requested: every email I have ever sent to any board member, every contract for every employee since 2012, every email that contains the word harassment, Ethan Colbert, restructure. This is just a small sample of what was requested. Obviously, locating, running and sorting 187,000 pages of information takes a lot of time and resources. This is time and resources that we are unable to devote to our students.

The paper states "the era of no questions being asked by journalists is over." The paper fails to point out that every question that has been asked has been answered. For example, I conducted an interview with the newspaper the morning the sunshine law requests were filed. Every question I was able to answer I did. Including supplying every salary asked for. Then, at the conclusion of the interview I was handed all of the sunshine law requests. The sunshine law ensures transparent government. Everyone agrees with that. However, using it as a guise for a fishing expedition to create problems where there are none, is cowardly and harassing.

In conclusion, our district scores have improved considerably. A long range plan has been put in place. Staffs are evaluated fairly and consistently. Financial balances are holding steady while student enrollment is slowly decreasing. What's best for students drives the decision making in the district. These are the facts and what is going on at the Bowling Green R-1 School District. We are not hiding behind anything and cannot be more transparent than what we are. As a district, we miss having a newspaper that highlights the accomplishments of our students. As an employer in the community, we are concerned that instead of bringing us together as a community, our local paper is trying to tear us apart.

If you have any questions or would ever like to see anything, please do not hesitate to contact me. I can assure you we are much easier to get to than Fort Knox.

Sincerely,

J.W. Brandt