

[East Lansing School Board Treasurer Kath Edsall's statement of May 11, 2020, on the review of Superintendent Dori Leyko]

As chair of the Personnel Committee, I communicated with our HR director Rick Long, Superintendent Leiko, the Board's attorney, Lisa Schwem and the other personnel committee members about our responsibility in regards to evaluating the superintendent. Given the guidance I have received and shared via emails with the other committee members, we agree that it is unnecessary and unwarranted to evaluate Dori this year. This decision is supported by the Governor's Executive Order as summarized in an email I requested from Lisa Schwem:

"Executive Order 2020-65, IV, 8 (p 13) suspends the statutory requirement to evaluate district administrators during this school year. The EO, in relevant part, states:

"Strict compliance with rules and procedures under section 1249, 1249a, 1249b, and 1250(1) of the School Code, MCL 380.1249, 380.1249a, 380.1249b, and 380.1250(1), under section 38.93 of the Teachers' Tenure Act, MCL 38.93, and under section 104 of the School Aid Act, MCL 388.1704, is temporarily suspended to the extent necessary to waive any requirement for assessments or other performance evaluations of teachers not on an individual development plan on March 13, 2020 and district administrators during the 2019-2020 school year." (emphasis added)

Relatedly, this same provision of EO 20-65 also temporarily suspends strict compliance with Section 1250(1) (performance-based compensation), which states:

"Except as otherwise provided in this section, a school district, public school academy, or intermediate school district shall implement and maintain a method of compensation for its teachers and school administrators that includes job performance and job accomplishments as a significant factor in determining compensation and additional compensation. The assessment of job performance shall incorporate a rigorous, transparent, and fair evaluation system that evaluates a teacher's or school administrator's performance at least in part based upon data on student growth as measured by assessments and other objective criteria." (emphasis added)."

While the EO fully supports the decision to forego an evaluation, I wanted to share some personal thoughts. Just as I feel it is not possible to do a fair and accurate evaluation of our students at this time, I do not believe it is possible to do a fair and accurate evaluation of the superintendent. Her past evaluations do not place her in any category (IDP) requiring evaluation. I also believe that on the day before school closed, she would have received, at minimal, an effective rating based on her progress on goals established last fall, but these were yearlong goals. Once school closed, our district priorities changed dramatically. Personally, I feel Dori has more than risen to the demands of a pandemic, but specific goals were not established upon which she could be evaluated with any integrity during these last few months. I believe the governor's EO eliminates the need for an evaluation specifically because of this conundrum.

