

## **By Employees** *For Employees*

Clare Public Schools are like all public schools. They are employee-run organizations.

Once it is recognized that Clare Public Schools is an employee-run organization, it is easy to understand why they act the way they do. Imagine what would happen in the private sector to a business if the employees are put in charge. Put the employees in charge of a government entity, a public school, and the results are more pronounced.

Employees in the public schools have little interest in reducing their revenues and therefore more taxes are needed all the time, and they have even less interest in reducing operating costs or labor costs—their own salaries—and therefore more taxes are needed all the time.

Maximizing size of the organization is placed at a premium and they favor any policy that increases employment while they oppose any measure that would eliminate jobs. When tax revenues are reduced, employee-run organization are more likely to run a deficit than balance the budget.

Employee-run organizations have little incentive to account for their behavior. They feel little need to please the people they supposedly serve. This system eliminates any serious consideration to requests of the taxpayer. When you think of it, a taxpayer is in a genuine sense, a customer. In employee-run organizations, the customer is not always right. In fact, the contrary seems most often the case—the customer doesn't count.

If you went into a store and the salesperson took your money, but ignored your request, and then consulted others about how to spend your money, you would be outraged. Yet this is exactly what happens at public schools. Just talk to the principal, the superintendent or Board of Education and you will see this for yourself. They are happy with your taxes but really want you to otherwise leave them alone.

Additionally, you would not think it right if a store employee argued that you did not deserve an item, or that it should be shipped to someone more worthy. In fact, you would be fighting mad. Yet again, this is what happens in our public schools. You would expect that the

proprietor of the business would fire that employee immediately if they wanted to stay in business.

But, to fire a public school employee is all but impossible. Public schools are virtual monopolies. Most communities do not have enough private schools for everyone to escape the public school monopoly. Choice is not an option. Your only set of choices are that you can go to your public school, go to a different public school with the same exact problems or home school your child. Home schooling is not a viable choice in our two income family economy. Even if you find a way to escape an employee-run education, they still take your money—so keep paying your taxes.

Elected Boards of Education cannot and have not curtailed the problems associated with employee-run public schools. First, these well intentioned community leaders meet but once a month and have nothing to do with the day to day operations of the school. The day to day operations are in the hands of an employee—the superintendent and principals. Secondly, the Board of Education members often join the employees as comrades in education. Since the public (the customers) generally want education, the Board of Education thinks that they are doing their job by supporting their employees who are the educators. Thus, a meaningful education at a reasonable cost is hopelessly lost to the folly of employee-run public schools.

The only way to fundamentally change employee-run public schools is to give control back to the customers (the taxpayers). When the customer controls the schools, there will be incentives to provide quality education at a reasonable cost. Customers in the private sector drive businesses to provide the best possible product at the lowest possible price. The same can be true for education. Those who argue that education is not a product and somehow different, believe that the public would destroy education in the quest to reduce the costs. This wrongfully assumes that the public does not care about education. The public has an entrenched desire to have our youth get the best education possible. It is important to our society to do this. On the other hand, employee-run organizations claim to want the same thing as long as their co-employees are well taken care of and they can do it the way they want to do it without any interference from the public.

Without completely privatizing education and creating competition, the public needs a meaningful way to monitor expenditures, curriculum and results. Expenditures need to be fully disclosed online. Curriculum should give the customers' choice—students should be given the choice between college preparation or trade preparation. Results should be monitored and bad teachers should be fired. We should not be teaching to a test. We should be providing the tools for students to learn. We should be teaching our students to think. Employee-run public schools want to primarily fulfill the desires of the employees. Education is a secondary consideration in an employee-run public school.