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Ald. Bob Donovan
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Alderman Donovan Will Look at Seceding 8th Aldermanic District From MPS

Cites 14.6% Levy Hike, Continued Frustration With "Broken" School System

Alderman Bob Donovan said today that he will begin investigating the possibility of seceding his aldermanic district from Milwaukee Public Schools' rule to join with a different, neighboring school district.

"Enough is enough. I have to act in the best interests of my residents and a 14.6% property tax increase for a failing train wreck of a school district is not in their best interests," the alderman said.

The announcement comes after last night's Milwaukee Board of School Directors meeting where members voted for the 14.6% tax levy increase to fund the MPS budget for 2009. The increase came after members voted to protect their travel budget and to maintain their \$150 per year car allowance. And, just weeks ago members discussed and raised the possibility of studying the dissolution of MPS.

Alderman Donovan's 8th District is located on the city's near south side and is considered the city's most densely populated, with thousands of school age children who attend MPS schools. "We're talking about our future – our children – and I just wouldn't be doing my job if I didn't look into a way to relieve my district of this situation and go to a better option," he said.

With the U.S. facing its biggest economic crisis since the Great Depression, MPS "should be looking to do more with less," he said. "But instead of doing that the board pours gasoline on the taxpayers with a maximum tax levy increase. It's simply preposterous," he said.

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Donovan to Look at Secession From MPS/ADD ONE

Although it's unclear how secession from MPS might be achieved, the alderman said it "can't hurt given the do-nothing stance" of Mayor Barrett and Governor Jim Doyle. "While the Mayor and the Governor continue to study the failure of MPS, the taxpayers of Milwaukee are paying for those same failures," he said.

"There's been more than enough hand-wringing and finger-pointing on MPS problems for years, but the taxpayers are always left holding the bag," he said.

Alderman Donovan said he knows MPS has good students, engaged parents and a "vast majority of good teachers who are doing their jobs." But, he said the school system's mismanagement and deterioration has reached a "tipping point," leaving him no choice but to seek an alternative option.

"I don't even know if (secession) is possible, but if I didn't even explore the possibility of aligning with another school system that could provide a better education at a reduced cost, then I wouldn't be doing my job," he said.

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