

Dear ,

My name is Joe Behmer, and I am writing this email in regards to Governor Renyolds agenda that was laid out in her Condition of the State address earlier this week, specifically regarding her plans involving our AEA's. Normally I am not one to complain or voice my opinions. However, after hearing and educating myself on Governor Renyold's plans I felt that now was the time to reach out and voice my concerns over her plan.

I am the father of three, and along with my wife, an educator. I have served as a teacher for nine years, and have worked as a school administrator for nearly 12 years. In that time, I have come to rely on not only the Special Education services AEA's offer, but so many other services to support not only myself, school employees, but the students and families we serve. Some of those services include:

- Trainings:
  - Literacy, Math, Science
  - Professional Training
- Curriculum Support- Literacy, Math, Science, and English Language Learning
- Positive Behavior Interventions & Supports- A system to promote positive behavior and culture school wide
- Coaching- Assistance to support teachers and support staff with additional ideas and strategies surrounding academics, relevant topics, and behavior.
- Digital Learning- Taking creative steps in using technology and implementing strategies or systems into the classroom to make for a more engaging environment.

The examples I briefly described are only a few of which I have used to help me continue to grow professionally. With the ever changing times, it is imperative that professional educators have resources available to help support the students and families we serve. Grant Wood AEA in addition to the other AEAs in our state have been a valuable asset. Based on Governor Reyold's plan we are in danger of losing these resources.

As I mentioned earlier, I am the father of three. One of our sons was diagnosed with a speech deficit when he was two. Thanks to the support of Early Access, a program that Grant Wood AEA offers, my wife and I were able to receive in-home support from speech therapists to assist in supporting our son. In addition to the in-home services, Grant Wood AEA was able to provide testing that went into creating an Individual Education Plan (IEP) that would offer continued support/s for our son as he enters school. Thanks to the support Grant Wood AEA has provided, our son has shown improvement. Had this service not been provided, I feel that our son would be entering school already laps behind his peers. Our story is not unique. Losing these resources would have a negative impact on future students who may have difficulties on their school transition. These kids would struggle to develop a love for learning that is crucial for success later in life. While our situation was stressful, it does not hold a candle to the challenges and stress other kids and their families face. I have personally worked with AEA staff who have gone above and beyond to support families in providing support that meets the needs of their students, while creating an equitable learning environment.

I feel that the plans Governor Reynolds is proposing for our AEAs is a mistake. This plan would be harmful to the students, families, and staff of our great state. As an educator and parent, we rely on these supports to improve our own professional practices. As a parent of a child with a special need, the early ACCESS program to identify needs and offer support for our son. The idea of depleting the resources that our AEAs provide is disappointing, especially today where our kids, families, and professional educators are looking for additional support. I encourage anyone who is in favor of Governor Reynolds' plan to educate themselves and see the big picture. They will see the value in supporting our AEA's mission to provide support and resources for our families and professional educators. Please support the AEA's of our state by funding these priceless organizations and their services in order to support educators and families.

Sincerely,  
Joe Behmer