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I appreciate everyone's efforts into properly assessing the current situation of mandates on schools. As a school board member for Ellsworth School District, I can say that our schools are being choked by mandates. I have been trying to bring about proper lunch times for kids, and haven't been able to extend the 20 minutes window because we can't accomplish the number of government mandates in day if we add even two minutes to our lunch window. That means kids only sit down to actually eat for 10 minutes. It's utterly unhealthy. To top it off, so many of these mandates are antiquated and no longer serve the students well.

Please consider capping a total number of hours per school year for Elementary, Middle and High school. Therefore, new mandates can not be added without staying within a certain parameter of time that eats up the school year. So if some new mandate comes in, it has to be weighed against not only other mandates, but can't be simple added to the pile without maybe taking something else off.

Please remember that teachers are highly educated, and most are very experienced. They also work under the guidance of a curriculum coordinator. In essence, we do not need government mandates, because we as Districts already hire people with more expertise in the field of education, than some of the people being for the mandates.

In years such as 2020 and 2021 with the added pressures of Covid, mandates are a massive hinder in the process that should be focused on getting kids through the more basic and pressing measures of education. We can not move forward being fooled into believing this pandemic is the only one that is going hit us. We need to plan education that includes suddenly switching to remote learning for a variety of reasons. And we need to have the time and resources to help kids adjust to the social and emotional baggage that comes with these moves, instead of being over burdened by mandates.

Thank you so much for this hard work!