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**Kathleen Graupman**

*Superintendent of Schools*

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Re: The Teacher Union Reform Network's impact on the relationship between the Greece Central School District and the Greece Teachers Association

As the new superintendent of the Greece Central School District, and someone who has worked in the district for nearly 15 years in various roles, I bring interesting perspective. Simply put, our work with the Teacher Union Reform Network has been transformative for our system. We have moved from being a district with individual interests focused often times on meeting the needs of adults to one focused on collaboration in the best interest of kids. We have shifted from a toxic culture of finger pointing and blame to one focused on solutions and joint ownership. I am incredibly grateful for the work that was done before I became superintendent and look forward to building on this work as we move forward.

Our work with the Teacher Union Reform Network has built a clear understanding of Professional Unionism. In a town where unions are scrutinized, the Greece Teachers Association (GTA) has led the way with creating and promoting a positive image. The root of much of this lies in the creation of the 'Social Justice' committee by our GTA. This committee that has been responsible for lowering the cost of school supplies for our students, collaborating with our local fire departments to donate hundreds of coats to our students, working with financial agencies to create 529 accounts, and collecting and distributing instruments to students. Our town has suffered through the downsizing of Kodak that led to the loss of many jobs. This has had a significant impact on our local economy and added to an already needy community. Over half of our families now qualify for free and reduced lunch. The Greece Teachers Association and the Social Justice Committee have truly changed how our staff and community view the union and the Greece Central School District.

Additionally, our internal culture and climate have improved greatly. The Teacher Union Reform Network helped us see things in a more collaborative, united manner. We now think about educational issues and our work in a 50-50 way, meaning that we make sure that we have 50% teacher and 50% administrator participation and input. This simple shift of thinking about things as 50-50 has truly changed mindset. We have created teacher-led committees using this 50-50 principle to help solve key issues in our district. For example, we used a teacher led committee to help design a standards-based report card and to address issues related to the implementation of RtI. The beauty of this is that everyone has 'stake' in the game. 'We' collectively can enjoy the success of this work, and also 'We' collectively own failure or challenges. This shift has given us a stronger sense of efficacy as a district.

Our GTA leadership starting with our President, Jason Cooney should be credited with this overall success. Jason and our previous superintendent, Barbara Deane-Williams initiated this work with TURN at a time when trust was lacking.

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**Student Learning is The Goal**

They set the foundation that we are building on today. I am proud to share that we now have created the structures for all to have a 'voice' and to impact the success of our students. This would not have happened without the Teacher Union Reform Network.

**Student Learning Is The Goal**