



HR0831

LRB103 40937 ECR 73966 r

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HOUSE RESOLUTION

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WHEREAS, The members of the Illinois House of Representatives wish to congratulate MaryBeth and Jim Westin on the occasion of their respective retirements after a combined six decades of teaching in the Rockford Region; and

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WHEREAS, MaryBeth Westin earned a Bachelor of Science in Special Education from Illinois State University in 1991; she obtained a Master of Arts in Education from St. Xavier University in 1994; she later earned a Library Information Specialist endorsement from Northern Illinois University in 2011; and

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WHEREAS, MaryBeth Westin has always striven to participate and advocate for students; she has made a tremendous impact on the lives of her pupils while embracing the challenges and responsibilities of educating special education students with unwavering commitment, patience, and empathy, ensuring that each student received the personalized support and accommodations necessary to thrive academically, socially, and emotionally; her work ethic is reflective of her guiding principle that every student possesses the ability to learn, even if learning cannot traditionally manifest itself; and

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WHEREAS, MaryBeth Westin has worked tirelessly to break

1 down barriers and overcome obstacles that special education
2 students often face, advocating for their rights, access to
3 resources, and opportunities for full participation in our
4 academic system; and

5 WHEREAS, Marybeth Westin has served as a member of
6 multiple union bargaining teams, including during the height
7 of the COVID-19 pandemic when she leveraged her expertise,
8 insight, and experience in negotiating the contracts of over
9 1,500 teachers in the State's third-largest district, proving
10 her relentless dedication to ensuring that the terms and
11 conditions of employment were fair, equitable, and reflective
12 of the needs and priorities of educators, students, and the
13 broader school community; and

14 WHEREAS, In her years as a librarian, MaryBeth Westin has
15 initiated book clubs to help students foster a love for
16 reading, critical thinking, and intellectual curiosity,
17 including a parent-student book club that provided
18 opportunities for students and parents to engage in meaningful
19 discussions, share diverse perspectives, and connect and bond
20 over education; and

21 WHEREAS, MaryBeth Westin has exemplified a deep commitment
22 to the holistic development of her students, going above and
23 beyond to support their involvement in extracurricular

1 activities; she has served as a steadfast champion and mentor
2 for students, encouraging them to explore their passions,
3 interests, and talents beyond the confines of the traditional
4 classroom setting; and

5 WHEREAS, Jim Westin received a Bachelor of Science in
6 Education from Illinois State University in 1995; he later
7 obtained a Master of Education from Northern Illinois
8 University in 2001; and

9 WHEREAS, Jim Westin began his career as a special
10 education teacher at Abraham Lincoln Middle School, where he
11 worked for 20 years, serving and educating children at the
12 same school he attended as a student; and

13 WHEREAS, For the last years of his career, Jim Westin has
14 demonstrated an exceptional commitment to serving
15 nontraditional students during his tenure at the Winnebago
16 County Juvenile Detention Center, displaying unwavering
17 dedication in his educational endeavors and embracing head-on
18 the unique challenges and opportunities of teaching in a
19 juvenile detention center; further, he has recognized the
20 importance of education as a pathway to rehabilitation,
21 empowerment, and hope for incarcerated youth; and

22 WHEREAS, Jim Westin has gone above and beyond to create a

1 supportive and open learning environment within the confines
2 of the detention center, providing personalized attention,
3 mentorship, and encouragement to students who often previously
4 faced significant academic, social, and emotional barriers;
5 and

6 WHEREAS, Jim Westin has demonstrated remarkable
7 creativity, adaptability, and resourcefulness in developing
8 and implementing educational programs tailored to meet the
9 diverse needs and backgrounds of incarcerated youth; he has
10 also exhibited extraordinary empathy, patience, and
11 understanding in working with students grappling with trauma,
12 adversity, and systemic challenges, recognizing the inherent
13 dignity and potential of every individual under his care; and

14 WHEREAS, At the end of the 2023-2024 school year, MaryBeth
15 and Jim Westin will conclude their respective careers as
16 educators of Rockford's youth after more than 60 combined
17 years of service to the community they have both called home
18 all their lives; and

19 WHEREAS, MaryBeth and Jim Westin's tireless efforts,
20 passion for teaching, and commitment to excellence have set a
21 standard of professionalism and excellence that will continue
22 to inspire future educators for years to come, and the impact
23 of their work extends far beyond the walls of the classroom,

1 shaping the minds and futures of generations of students and
2 contributing to the fabric of our community in ways that are
3 beyond measure; therefore, be it

4 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE
5 HUNDRED THIRD GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that
6 we congratulate MaryBeth and Jim Westin on their respective
7 retirements after more than 60 combined years of teaching in
8 the Rockford Region, thank them for their commitment to
9 education, and wish them all the best in their future
10 endeavors; and be it further

11 RESOLVED, That suitable copies of this resolution be
12 presented to MaryBeth and Jim Westin as a symbol of our esteem
13 and respect.