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**Environmental high school can't make it w/\$180 million?
Parents request mediation with trustees of steel chief's fortune**

LAND O' LAKES, WI, February 5, 2009 – A coalition of concerned parents, Conserve Community, have retained the services of a professional mediator to bring the Trustees of **Conserve School** and the administration to the table, to discuss the decision to restructure the school. Officials of Conserve School, a four-year college preparatory boarding school in Land O' Lakes, Wisconsin, with a focus on environmental studies, announced Friday January 29, 2009, that they will begin a one year transition to a semester school, citing the economic downturn as the cause for the change. (www.conserveschool.org) Conserve Community, currently with a growing membership registration of 178 parents, students, alumni and community members, is asking for accountability by the board of trustees for the fiduciary responsibilities of the non-profit organization to manage the trust in the best interest of its beneficiaries, the school.

Conserve School is owned and run by the Conserve School Corporation (a Wisconsin Non-profit Corp.) funded by a trust established by the late James R. Lowenstine. The Conserve School Trust (an Illinois domiciled trust) is composed of about 60% stock in Chicago based **Central Steel & Wire** (currently worth about \$138 million) and about \$40 million in other investments, according to trustees. When the trust was established it stipulated that if the Conserve School became financially non-viable, according to the Trustees, then the stock of Central Steel and Wire should be sold and the proceeds distributed to Culver Military Academy which James Lowenstine attended.

According to the Boarding School Review:

Conserve is in the top eleven schools nationally with highest endowments per student.

Conserve is also in the Top 20 of 244 boarding schools in the nation in seven categories.

The school uniquely serves 143 academically advanced, culturally, economically diverse students.

34% of students are of color

25% are international

71% are on financial aid, funded by the Conserve School Trust. www.boardingschoolreview.com

According to trustees, the devaluation of Central Steel & Wire (www.centralsteel.com) is the reason this young successful boarding school is about to be dismantled, at a time when environment education and awareness is a national priority.

Parents believe that the proposed new semester program structure is in violation of the trust. In 2005 at the dismissal of a case filed by Culver Education Foundation against Conserve School, Managing Trustee Ron Kazmar said, "It was Mr. Lowenstine's desire to set up a college preparatory boarding school for gifted students much like Culver." (www.thepilotnews.com/content/view/4031/)

The Officers of the **Conserve School Corporation** are also the Trustees of the **Conserve School Trust** and the Board of Directors for **Central Steel and Wire**. The Trust controls 59.02% of the voting stock of Central Steel and Wire.

Seven years ago Conserve School was formed with a supporting endowment of over a quarter billion dollars. While trustees and administration say the school is no longer economically feasible in its current form, many schools are operating on a tenth of Conserve's endowment. The parents seeking mediation are asking for accountability and return to the original format of the school.

Conserve School Trustees have not yet responded to the request for mediation.

Nearly 75% of those employed by Conserve School have been put on notice that their employment will not extend beyond June. Some lay-offs are said to start in March, according to school administration.

www.conservecommunity.com # www.bringbackconserve.com # <http://web.me.com/mushluck/SOS>