July 25, 2023

5757 Wilshire Boulevard, 7th Floor
Los Angeles, CA 90036

Dear President Drescher:

The American Federation of School Administrators, AFSA, proudly stands with the courageous members of SAG-AFTRA as you fight for your existence in the face of stunning corporate challenges to your creativity and your very personhood. Your efforts to illuminate the glories and dangers inherent in our culture, and to enrich our lives with knowledge, humor and ideas, are indispensable to the sustenance of a just and empathic society. As school leaders across the nation, we could not be more inspired by your lifelong mission to educate the public through performances that portray the triumphs and tragedies of human experience.

We are educators together! Our audiences are the children we educate from pre-kindergarten through high school. It is our sacred responsibility to ensure that our students are not subjected to mind control and indoctrination by corporations with agendas of greed or are rewarded or discarded for their worth as calculated by artificial intelligence. As different as your role of actors may seem to ours of school principals, other school leaders and educators, we share the responsibility of opening minds and hearts to all subject areas, possibilities and points of view and encouraging a love of knowledge and creativity.
Thus, we at AFSA see your current struggle as relevant to future struggles of our profession and many others. In your fight for a fair contract, you are asking, among other things, for higher compensation overall in the face of record inflation, residuals for series and films that air on streaming services and for which you are scarcely compensated now, and the introduction of safeguards around the use of AI to protect your images, voices and performances from uncompensated simulation by AI. While AI has much potential for good, it also has the potential to displace tens of millions of actors, who now average modest middle class salaries and work from paycheck to paycheck, while the privileged few corporate studio heads reward themselves with combined salaries and stock options worth up to $40 million a year.

The parallels between your mission as performers and ours as educators are notable. No doubt AI will dramatically expand intellectual capacity in our professions. But unless handled with care and an eye towards fairness, tens of thousands of jobs could be automated and members of both our professions could be replaced in vast numbers.

Artists and educators shape our culture and, in this inestimable role, let us all stand together now and forever.

In solidarity,

Leonard P. Pugliese, Ed.D.
AFSA National President