
From: Veronica Copple
Sent: Tuesday, August 1, 2023 8:48 AM
To: Public Comments
Cc: Enfield, Susan; Church, Jeffrey; Westlake, Colleen M; Rodriguez, Joseph M; Smith, Elizabeth A; Woodley, Alex; Mayberry, Adam; Nicolet, Diane M
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Spending and Budget

Hello Dr. Enfield and Board Members,

My name is Veronica Copple and I am a teacher librarian at Cold Springs Middle School. I'd like to introduce myself to you and give you some background about myself and give you some numbers to consider as you continue to spend money on programs and create positions which remain unfilled.

I have lived in Reno for most of my life. I'll be 39 in August. I attended Lemmon Valley Elementary and Alice Maxwell, Sparks Middle School and Sparks High School. I graduated in 2002, and got my first job with WCSD at Robert Mitchell Elementary School in 2008.

In 2008, I was a 1:1 CLS Aide. I worked with a boy who had Down's. Some of my job requirements included toilet training and safety. I made \$11:50 an hour. Today, in 2023, a 1:1 Special Education Aide makes \$11:56/hr. As I am sure you are aware, that is a .06¢ increase over a 15 year period.

Through the years since then, I steadily moved through different Classified positions until I was finally able to finish college and become a fully certified teacher. Due to the low pay district wide, and higher education costing what it does, it took me longer to finish my degree since I had to work an extra job over the summer months.

But I digress. I began teaching in the summer of 2015 as a summer school teacher at North Valleys High School. Shockingly, but not really, none of the teachers on staff wanted to teach summer school there due to the low pay offered. As an individual with student loans due who had just come off of a 16 week non-paid internship I couldn't pass the opportunity up.

I was then hired to teach at Vaughn Middle School that fall. My classroom was a basement boiler room, and I was told I was going to need to use a program for intervention. It was called Edmentum. The students hated it, it was confusing to learn myself, and the data was not thorough. We switched to Scholastic Action. That program was much more effective, so we got rid of Edmentum. The rest of the students used Step Up to Writing, and Read 180. I continued to teach in the boiler room of Vaughn Middle School making \$32,000 for the remainder of the year.

In the spring, I was told that because I did not have my TESOL certification that I would be overaged. I applied for transfer to Mendive Middle School. I worked at Mendive for three years. During that time, a contract negotiation was made in which steps were removed from the pay schedule, and some steps were added. Unfortunately for me, that meant that a new teacher with zero experience was making the same amount per year that I was. There was no compensation or adjustment for teachers who were already teaching. Around that same time, we went into a pay freeze, so I also had to contend with a year of no increase whatsoever. There, the intervention program was dyslexia related, and since it is no longer used, I don't remember what it was called.

It got to the point that I could no longer afford the commute from my home in Stead, all the way to Mendive. I transferred to Cold Springs Middle School and taught ELA. Over the past five years at CSMS we've used Read 180, Springboard, System 44, Phonics First, and i-Ready. All the while being told by you all that there isn't any money to

increase teacher salaries. Additionally, Reno began to grow at a rate of 20% higher than expected. Cost of living began to increase.

In 2021, the Board approved a renewal of the contract with Microsoft. There were so many zeros in that expenditure I lost track. The justification was that it did not have security issues like the FREE, easier to use Google Classroom and G Suite products. However, all programs are susceptible to hacking and issues, and Microsoft suffered a major security breach. 90% of schools nationwide use Google Classroom and there are plenty of resources to support the G Suite and Classroom applications it makes teaching much easier.

Home prices continued to rise, and then inflation began to increase. From 2016-2023 interest rates have risen from 3% to over 7.

This upcoming school year will be my 15th year as an employee with WCSD. I am beginning a new position as a librarian. Per district policy, I am required to take seven more graduate level courses to receive my endorsement to work in the library. This will cost me approximately \$5000. My Master's Degree is not sufficient enough to run a middle school library.

Over the last three weeks I have been informed of several colleagues leaving the district for higher paying positions elsewhere.

One left to go work at UNR.

One left to go work with the County Medical Examiner.

One is moving back to her hometown of Los Banos, California (where the cost of living is the same as Reno) to double her salary. As a third year teacher she will make \$81,000 per year.

One left to stay home with her children because as a teacher, she could no longer afford childcare.

Further, the last few weeks have also seen decisions by neighboring school districts to increase teacher pay. Carson City just voted to increase teacher pay by 21%. 21%! Already, a teacher with my same experience makes \$7,000 more per year than I do. That is before the 21% increase.

I have literally dedicated over half of my life to this school district, and the returns I am seeing in return from the Board are dismal. Please stop wondering why teachers are running away from Washoe County and start paying us a living, competitive wage.

Thank you for your time,
Veronica Copple MA TESOL

From: Maggie Babb
Sent: Sunday, August 6, 2023 7:15 PM
To: Westlake, Colleen M; Nicolet, Diane M; Rodriguez, Joseph M; Woodley, Alex; Mayberry, Adam; Smith, Elizabeth A; Church, Jeffrey; Enfield, Susan; Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Public Comment-Discretionary Funding

Dear Trustees and Superintendent Dr. Enfield,

My name is Maggie Babb, and I am a 2nd grade teacher in the Washoe County School District. I am writing today to echo concerns brought to your attention at the July 25 board meeting. At this meeting the presidents of the WEA and WSPA addressed this board to ask that you postpone all discretionary spending until after all units have completed bargaining their contracts. Contracts should be negotiated first and then the remaining funds can be used for various programs and training.

I am writing to you at the start of my 9th year with the district. I moved to Nevada and began working with the Washoe County School District in 2015. In the time that I have worked here I have seen the district invest money in many programs. Examples include, LLI program kits for K-3 teachers, Microsoft office/teams software, ELlevation curriculum to aide with the implementation of the Benchmark Advance curriculum, School City Assessment program for district wide common assessments, Virgin Pulse Wellness programs, Learning A-Z, MAP, I-Ready and plus many more that are no longer in use. From my observation this district is always pursuing the next new and exciting program or software and has for years neglected to invest in its workforce. As we have spent money on all these programs and curriculums our educator payouts are some of the lowest in the state.

I am by no means saying that these programs are without merit. Many of these programs have been of great use in the classroom.

We are at a critical moment in time in the School District. The 2023 legislature has passed an historic budget for funding in education. Which gives the immense opportunity to invest in the staff, the educators, and most importantly, the **students**. We know even the best program or software we have funded will fail if there are not dedicated individuals there to implement. With the current funding our district is seeing, I urge you to invest in the people who make the schools run. Prioritize the contracts of your staff members so that we can recruit and retain quality educators to do the best for our students. Also consider that we now need to remain competitive with school districts in the surrounding area who have seen upwards of 20% raises for their staff and teachers including Carson City School District and Nye County. do not invest any new funding in programs or training until our contract negotiations have been completed. It is time to put **people** over programs in the district.

Thank you for all the work you do.

Respectfully,

Maggie Babb