
From: Edwards, Crystal
Sent: Thursday, April 17, 2025 10:48 AM
To: Public Comments
Subject: Agenda item 2.03

Board Members,

I am writing today regarding the consent item 2.03. This item is very important and personal to me, as well as my current position as an employee. I am deeply frustrated and concerned how this change was brought about primarily in timeliness, stakeholder involvement, understanding of roles/responsibilities, and overall transparency.

I have worked for the school district for almost 20 years in many roles starting as a substitute, high school teacher, Dean, and most recently before my current position- an Assistant Principal. Last summer, I took a new position directly aligned to the Strategic Plan as an Internship Coordinator (3-year position). This position is new and didn't exist prior to my knowledge. I work daily with students, counselors, teachers, and business/industry partners to help create, promote, align, and match students and their future career interests with local employers for credit bearing semester long internships. I create courses for student schedules on IC, add courses to schedules for minimum load/credit, and I also monitor, track and coordinate with WCSD teachers for course requirements, grades, and enrollment. Not to mention various other tasks, presentations, meetings, curriculum development, and direct support to all stakeholders.

I was only informed ONE WEEK prior to the previous board meeting when this was first put on the agenda of this "contract conversion" and my position impacted. Needless to say, I was shocked and confused. From the time I decided to become an educator, I also knew that having a family and TIME with my family was my priority. I knew that summers and breaks would be crucial time for us to have together. As a teacher I knew I would have some time off with my family, and even as an Administrator, I understood my role would require more time, but it is an 11-month contract-which would still afford me time on non-contract days (during off periods) with my family, and I could be creative in how to schedule that time, along with my afforded vacation days, etc.

But now, with this conversion, I am NO LONGER able to have that time/flexibility, as this new contract, that I didn't have any voice or choice in, is a 12-month contract. And it begins July 1st, 2025! I already have time off with my family planned, scheduled, and confirmed. However, I now must adjust my time as noncontract days no longer being an option, and just the use of vacation days. Which in turn, impacts any future time off that I have ALWAYS had and valued. If I had planned to ever adjust to a 12-month contract, I would have made that choice with my family's needs and time in mind. But I didn't get that choice. I don't want to be on a 12-month contract. My children are still young, and I want the TIME with them. The contract changes do not reflect my needs nor wants.

Also, this conversion also seems to be very abrupt and rushed-as I know recently that Athletic Directors are switching to this contract as well. However, they had months of time/notice to review the changes, ask questions, collaborate with each other, and ultimately decide collectively on an agreement. Why did that process happen for them and not the same afforded to us? I happen to be married to an AD, and this

is very confusing for both of us. When we talked about it for his position, it was something we discussed, and thought would work because I was still on an 11-month and could be home/have time with our kids. But now, BOTH of us are moving to a 12-month and that just will be devastating to our family and dynamic. I am already scrambling to figure out how and where my kids will go during summer/break times when most summer programs are likely already full. Plus, the unexpected cost of camps/programs for those times. It's unrealistic to force a change to employees with such little time, buy-in, collaboration, or understanding. Another concerning aspect of the new contracts for both AD's and my role as well is the contract does not seem to require having ANY Educational experience. We are supposed to be educational leaders in our roles but now with the new contract that seems to be not an important aspect of these roles.

When watching the previous meeting, I was happy to see that the item was pulled for further discussion and investigation. It was encouraging to hear the board question and stall the process. And from my understanding, you asked for the HR team to learn more about the impacted employees, their roles, and gain more information. However, I was VERY DISAPPOINTED when I received an email early last week that simply was just a document with common Q&A they had received and a statement inviting us to request a meeting, if wanted. THAT WAS IT. No personal check in, no survey, no collaboration in the process! I did request a meeting, and I shared my frustrations and concerns- primarily being by pushing this through so quickly and without much discussion/preparedness (that I was aware of) for impacted employees creates a loss of trust, respect, job fulfillment, and ultimately, value. As a leader myself, change is something we learn and study about in depth and often-this type of change isn't one that should be dealt out this way.

Finally, as an experienced educator and leader, this stings in a way that has really made me question my devotion and loyalty to this district. I can accept change and have had to do it quite a bit in recent years, especially regarding my career. But when something like this happens TO YOU and not in collaboration with-you feel robbed and devalued. My role currently isn't something I would have considered if I knew it would be a 12-month position, but now I feel disheartened. I love my position and role and don't want to leave. Also, I don't want to leave my director in a position where he would have to rehire. However, I am now seeming to be in a position of a choice between my job and my TIME with family and that isn't right.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this matter.


***Crystal Edwards – Internship Coordinator,
Career Technical Education & Signature Programs***

WCSD – Office of Teaching, Learning & Leadership

www.washoeschools.net



From: Jenifer Rose
Sent: Friday, April 18, 2025 12:35 PM
To: Public Comments; BoardMembers
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Request for Continued Zoning Alignment for Huffaker Community

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Dear Esteemed Members of the Board of Trustees,

I am writing to express my deep concern regarding the proposed rezoning changes and to respectfully urge you to maintain the historical school zoning for the Huffaker neighborhood.

At the recent Zoning Advisory Committee meeting, I listened closely to the passionate voices of families from Smithridge and Damonte. Their arguments for maintaining long-standing school alignment were compelling and ultimately honored. I commend the committee for recognizing the importance of community ties and student continuity in their decision.

However, I was disheartened to witness the lack of similar acknowledgment for Huffaker families, who have been historically zoned for Swope Middle School and Reno High School for over four decades. If four years of connection can warrant consideration for one community, surely forty years of established legacy, family tradition, and support should merit the same.

Our community is not simply advocating for preference—we are asking for equitable treatment. The rationale used to maintain existing alignment for one school should be applied consistently across the district. Anything less undermines the trust and support of families who have invested their time, energy, and resources into our school system.

Additionally, many Huffaker families proposed a reasonable compromise: a split feeder system using Huffaker Lane as a boundary, which reflects a previous zoning configuration. This solution was dismissed without due discussion, even as a similar split feeder option was approved for Vaughn. Again, this raises the question—why are certain communities heard and accommodated, while others are disregarded?

Furthermore, I urge the Board to reconsider the narrative surrounding capacity concerns at Swope. The data clearly indicates that any potential overcrowding is short-term and will decline significantly in subsequent years. Choosing to rezone Huffaker students away from Swope based solely on a brief spike in enrollment fails to account for long-term implications. In fact, excluding these students may contribute to declining numbers and resource losses in the near future. Meanwhile, Reno High School has ample capacity to welcome these students, ensuring both academic stability and social continuity.

As a grandparent at Swope and as a parent deeply engaged in our school community, I see firsthand the value our Huffaker families bring. My local Reno business is proudly partnering with Swope


through the Partner in Education program—just one of many ways our families are invested in these schools.

I respectfully ask that you preserve our neighborhood's zoning to Reno High School and Swope Middle School. Our children deserve the same respect, legacy consideration, and emotional continuity afforded to other communities. To dismiss these points for one group while honoring them for another is not only inequitable—it's deeply discouraging.

Thank you for your time, your service, and your thoughtful consideration of our request.

Best regards,
Jenifer Rose
CEO - Community Office Solutions

From: Jordan Schoonover
Sent: Friday, April 18, 2025 2:58 PM
To: BoardMembers; Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Protect Huffaker's Zoning Legacy to Swope and Reno High

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Dear Board of Trustees,

I'm writing as a concerned member of these communities to urge you to keep the Huffaker neighborhood zoned for Swope Middle School and Reno High School. This isn't just a request based on preference—this is a call for fairness, safety, and consistency in how zoning decisions are made across our district.

For decades, Huffaker has been aligned with these schools. Families have built their lives, friendships, and educational expectations around this zoning. Many of us chose to purchase homes in this area specifically because of this alignment, and we've supported these schools through volunteerism, athletics, partnerships, and active parent involvement for decades.

The current proposal to rezone Huffaker students—while other communities are being allowed to maintain their ties after only a few years—feels inequitable and inconsistent. If legacy, emotional ties, and student continuity are valid reasons to protect one community's zoning, they must be considered valid for all.

Here are a few points I respectfully ask the board to weigh heavily in your decision:

1. Our neighborhood has decades of history and involvement at Swope and Reno High. These are not new ties—they are generational.
2. Our children's sports, extracurriculars, and social networks are already aligned with Reno High. A change would disrupt established teams and friendships.
3. Driving on the freeway to reach another high school poses unnecessary safety risks when a local, accessible, and under-capacity school—Reno High—is already available.
4. Families made intentional decisions to buy homes based on the current zoning. Changing that undermines trust in the district.

Our proposed alternative—a split feeder using Huffaker Lane—was not given fair consideration, even though a similar option was granted to another community just minutes later in the same meeting.

The data shows any projected overcrowding at Swope is temporary. Enrollment is expected to decline significantly in the coming years. Removing Huffaker now could result in under-enrollment and staffing issues in the future. We need to think long term when making zoning decisions

I urge you not to base this major decision solely on short-term projections in a spreadsheet. Please consider the long-standing support, student safety, and community investment that Huffaker families continue to bring to these schools.

We are asking for fairness.

We are asking to be heard.

And above all, ***we are asking you to honor the legacy and future of our children.***


Thank you for your time and consideration.

Best Regards,

Jordan Schoonover

Operations Systems Analyst
DHL Supply Chain

From: Erica Freese
Sent: Monday, April 21, 2025 2:01 PM
To: Smith, Elizabeth A; Public Comments
Cc: Mark Freese; Crystal Edwards
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Huffaker Zoning for 2026-2027: 4/22/25 Agenda Item 3.05

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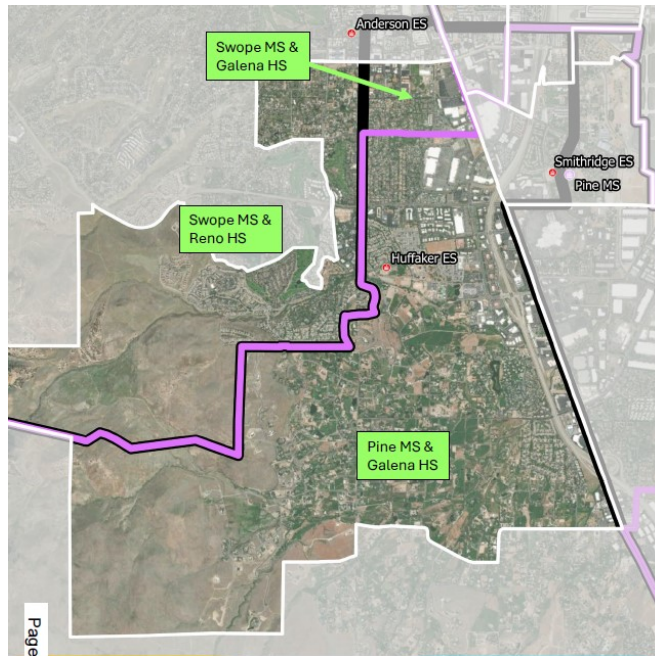
Dear President Smith and Trustees,

My name is Erica Freese and I am the proud parent of two Huffaker Elementary School students.

Tomorrow's Board of Trustees Meeting will discuss and potentially voting on the rezoning of elementary schools that currently feed into Pine Middle School, including Huffaker. I have attended and participated in numerous meetings over the past several years as the District has moved forward with the closing/restructuring of Pine Middle School. As a Huffaker parent, I have been anxiously awaiting the ZAC's recommendation for our school zone. I currently have a child entering 6th grade during the 2025-2026 school year and have made accommodations so that she doesn't have to transfer schools during her middle school years. I was hoping that the ZAC would approve a split feeder option for our zone, as the travel distance varies greatly depending on where you are located. While my child will be attending Swope next year, I was hopeful we would be zoned for Swope/Reno going forward, allowing for bus transportation to those schools.

While I understand that split feeders are not in congruence with the zoning guidance from Administrative Regulation 7107, the option the ZAC voted to recommend includes a split feeder (with regards to Smithridge and Dodson in the coming years). Additionally, there are other split feeder schools in the district, demonstrating that this would not be unique.

I would appreciate it if the Board would consider an option that splits Huffaker either at McCarran (north of going to Swope/Reno and south of going to Herz/Galena) or going back to the old zoning that split along Lakeside (2019/2020).



I appreciate your service to our community and its schools. Thank your for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Erica Freese

From: Kitchin, David R
Sent: Monday, April 21, 2025 3:12 PM
To: Public Comments
Subject: For 4/22 Board Meeting re: item 3.05

President Smith, Superintendent Ernst, and Members of The Board,

First, I would like to thank Chairman Rogers and the Zoning Advisory Committee for their thoughtful work and for their heart in honoring the Smithridge community, considering transportation safety, and also investing in the inner city of Reno.

I would also like to thank the many parents, staff, and most importantly students who showed up last week to advocate for their schools. If you need an injection of joy, go back and watch the dozens of students sharing how much they love their school communities.

I am also here this afternoon to express frustration, but not frustration with you or the work of the committee. I am frustrated with the public discourse on this process. As we engage in conversation about communities that have been historically underserved, I ask all of us to be intentional in avoiding narratives that portray these communities as somehow inferior.

Our community does face unique challenges, but they are not fragile. In fact, I have found them to be strong, resilient, and full of innovators and small business owners.

Our community does experience generational gang dynamics, but this does not define us. This is a community that is kind, and generous, and full of love.

Our community does struggle with chronic absenteeism, but not because we do not value education. This is a community that is committed to multigenerational family, that often asks young adults to be involved with childcare and elderly care, and that honors a young adult's desire to work and help support the family. This is a community that is asking us to adapt in how we implement secondary education rather than just expecting them to conform to the expectations of decades past.

Our schools are not unsafe and underperforming. Sometimes we must look at growth metrics, subpopulation data, and the data implications of being newcomer centers to truly see and celebrate the incredible accomplishments of our students.

And so, I am frustrated with how local media, op-eds, and petitions have treated our community as less than. We all must demand better of our public discourse.

I would like to finish by asking you to continue to intentionally invest in the schools in the inner city of Reno. You are already doing this so well through capital projects investments, but more is required.

This may look like additional human resources for Vaughn MS to support the complex work of integrating rival gang neighborhoods. This may look like class size reduction allocations for bilingual programs, as are afforded other schools in our district with similar programs. Even though our schools are getting

smaller in the short term, this may look like making music teacher and secretary allocations whole so that we can continue support specific programming at our schools.

Thank you for your ongoing support,

David Kitchin
Principal
Earl Wooster High School

From: Kerry Rohrmeier
Sent: Monday, April 21, 2025 3:47 PM
To: Public Comments
Cc: Smith, Elizabeth A
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Item 3.05 Huffaker School Zoning

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Dear Boardmembers,

I am a resident of [REDACTED] Reno, NV 89509 [inside the McCarran Loop]. My address is zoned for Huffaker Elementary School but I am concerned for the proposed rezoning for students to have to attend Herz Middle school and Reno High School when there are closer options with Swope Middle School and Reno High School. For the students living in my neighborhood this shift will lead to added transportation time and added carbon emissions.

Sincerely,
Kerry Rohrmeier

From: Davis, Trish
Sent: Monday, April 21, 2025 3:50 PM
To: Public Comments
Subject: Critical Needs positions 2025-26 school year

To whom it may concern,

I am a retired teacher in a critical needs position. I served the district from 1987-2017 as an elementary teacher. I am writing to express my deep disappointment and concerns about the changes to the Critical Needs program for the upcoming school year.

The decision to not only cut salaries by \$15,000 but also reclassify us as guest teachers- with no access to health insurance, sick leave or PERS retirement benefits is disheartening but an extreme financial burden. Guest teachers are not expected to work the number of hours as a teacher under contract, as well as lesson plan, parent teacher conferences, or pay for the number of items to set up a classroom out of pocket. These changes drastically alter the terms under which many of us returned to support our schools.

These changes devalue the number of years served; as well as the experience retired teachers can bring to their school. I understand that budgetary challenges exist, but I'm urging the Board to reconsider the proposal and grant Critical Needs teachers, who show up every day to make a difference in our children's lives, the compensation including current salaries, sick leave, benefits and PERS contribution they deserve.

Respectfully,
Patricia Davis
1st grade teacher

From: Silvia Lopez-Buggs (silopez)
Sent: Monday, April 21, 2025 4:02 PM
To: Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] School Zoning – Huffaker Elementary – Swope Middle School – Reno High School

Importance: High

Washoe School District members,

Please refer to the email below regarding zoning and our concerns as a family.

Thank you,
Buggs family.
Silvia & Keith Buggs

Reno NV 89519

From: Silvia Lopez-Buggs (silopez)
Sent: Monday, April 21, 2025 3:57 PM
To: boardmembers@washoeschools.net
Cc: Silvia Lopez-Buggs (silopez); Buggs, Keith
Subject: School Zoning – Huffaker Elementary – Swope Middle School – Reno High School
Importance: High

Dear Washoe School District Board Members,

We hope this email finds you well. We are writing today to advocate for our school zone to keep Huffaker Elementary, restore Swope and keep Reno High School for our children and the ones to come. This is more than a logistical issue considering the zone should be marked at Huffaker Lake where it used to be but also there is a sense of community that we are losing. Our neighbors, our friends, our family, our kids have been students at those great schools; we are proud of that and we want that legacy to continue. It is our sense of belonging that is drastically broken by this initiative that we feel is not fair. The teachers and staff of those schools know who we are, they are professional and great examples for our kids to mirror and learn from. We already went through the change to Pine Middle School for a year for our daughter, which was such a bad experience for which we had to pursue a variance at the time to Swope. Please, we kindly ask you to listen with an open heart what we are here to say and evaluate this petition to:

- have our neighborhood zone aligned with Huffaker Elementary, Swope Middle School and Reno High School back to where it was; and
- Have the historical boundary put back into place at Huffaker Lane.

We greatly appreciate this opportunity,

Best Regards,
Silvia & Keith Buggs

From: Cisneros, Cristal
Sent: Monday, April 21, 2025 6:32 PM
To: Public Comments
Subject: Public Comment for Board Meeting Item 2.03

Good Evening Board,

First and foremost, thank you to all who help make WCSD better. Your time and work do not go unnoticed. Secondly, I'd like to comment on Agenda item 2.03, reclassifying some positions from administrative to ProTech within our district. Though there are some positions which I agree could be moved to a ProTech pay scale, there are a few that, if changed, would add to the achievement gap for our students.

The Mentoring and Induction Coordinator and the PGS Coordinator are incredibly essential to the academic and social growth of our students. Mentoring and Induction is critical to the growth of our students because it focuses on the growth of our teachers. Despite its best efforts, pre-service teaching programs do not address all the 'need to know' for new teachers. This task is then left to our induction process and the teacher mentors who help our new educators. Without our induction program, countless new teachers would not have the support they need to strengthen their abilities.

As teachers grow and progress, their professional growth is essential for the continued growth of our students. Some teachers do well and excel, however some teachers need more support. Regardless of the teacher's path, our PGS dept is equipped to collaborate with the teacher or school with the support they need. Without the guidance and experience of being in the classroom, this position would have a difficult time providing authentic help and ideas to both teachers who are effective in their position and to teachers who are still developing their skills.

Please do not reclassify these positions. Our students and teachers need these positions to be educators who have experienced the benefits and challenges of working within schools.

Thank you for your time, and again, for your service,
Cristal Wilson



Cristal Wilson- EL Facilitator for A. Smith and Bennett
English Language Development Department
WCSD – Office of Teaching, Learning & Leadership

From: Millar, Joni
Sent: Monday, April 21, 2025 6:53 PM
To: Public Comments
Subject: Brianna Wiltse Mentoring and Induction Coordinator


The kids need and deserve a licensed teacher in the role of Mentoring and Introduction Coordinator that is focused on instructional leadership, teacher development, and school support. In this role they need to work alongside schools, licensed mentors, and administrators to retain and work with all our teachers.

Sincerely,

Joni Millar

Certified teacher at Bohach Elementary

From: Jessica Bantham Thomsen
Sent: Monday, April 21, 2025 7:01 PM
To: Public Comments
Cc: Smith, Elizabeth A
Subject: [EXTERNAL] 04/22/2025 Meeting: Comments re: Huffaker Elementary School Rezoning

 External Email: This email originated outside of WCSD. Please exercise caution. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Chair Smith and Members of the Washoe County School District Board of Trustees:

My name is Jessica Thomsen. As the mother of a 5th grader and 3rd grader at Huffaker Elementary School, I write in regard to the Zoning Advisory Committee's (ZAC) recommendation (Option #4A) for rezoning Pine Middle School feeder schools beginning in the 2026-2027 school year.

I greatly appreciate ZAC's time and dedication to the matter this past semester. While I am not expressly against its recommendation to send Huffaker Elementary School students to Herz Middle School and Galena High School, I would support an alternative option in which:

- students previously zoned for and/or closer to Swope Middle School and Reno High School (roughly north of Windy Hill/Davis Lane) would continue with that zoning; and
- students closer to Herz Middle School and Galena High School who were previously zoned for Pine Middle School and Galena High School (roughly south of Davis Lane to the Holcomb Ranch area) would be zoned for Herz and Galena.
- [Please note that this is *not* the split feeder scenario (Option #5) that the district presented to ZAC at the meeting on April 17, 2025. That option drew a line in which all students north of McCarran went to Swope and all students south of McCarran went to Herz. I am *not* in support of Option #5].

I believe that the alternative alignment outlined above makes sense both geographically and historically. It also appeals to us on a personal level, as we purchased our home in 2016 in part because it was zoned for Huffaker/Swope/Reno, and our oldest daughter will be attending the Swope magnet program as a 6th grader next year.

That being said, I also want to stress that my biggest priorities at this point are certainty and stability, as outlined below:

- We are now just over a year out from the closing of Pine, and I believe that affected families deserve a timely resolution to this matter. I do *not* wish to see the Board of Trustees remand this issue to the ZAC, where it has been under discussion/consideration for the past four months. If the board is able to address the issue this month and vote for a split feeder as described, that is fantastic. If the board is not able to do that, I would accept the option in which all of Huffaker is zoned for Herz/Galena as a favorable second choice.
- Huffaker is going through its second rezoning in the space of just six years. The previous rezoning — which attempted to "clean up" our split feeder elementary school and backfill Pine upon the opening of Herz — served only to further fragment our neighborhoods. The upheaval and

uncertainty resulted in the scattering of friends and classmates, with folks sending their children to charter schools, private schools, school of choice options, etc. If there is any chance that making Huffaker a split feeder will result in another rezoning in a few years, I do *not* support it. If the board commits to the Swope/Reno and Herz/Galena option, I would like to make sure that is our students' path for the foreseeable future.

Finally, I would like to thank Chair Smith, who is our trustee in District D and who has attended a number of Huffaker PTA meetings and community events over the past few years. I know that she has heard a lot from Huffaker families during this process, and I appreciate her willingness to take our calls and emails and to advocate for our students at the board level.

To reiterate, I would support a Huffaker split feeder option if it:


- **roughly aligns with historical and natural geographical boundaries (e.g. north/south of Windy Hill);**
- **can be accomplished by the board in an expeditious manner;**
- **will remain the zoning for Huffaker students for the foreseeable future.**

If these three things are *not* possible, I support the Herz/Galena alignment as recommended by ZAC.

Thank you for your time, attention to this matter, and dedication to the education of our students.

Sincerely,
Jessica Thomsen

From: Darrell Crowther
Sent: Monday, April 21, 2025 9:51 PM
To: Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Urgent Concerns Regarding Agenda Item 2.03

 External Email: This email originated outside of WCSD. Please exercise caution. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Members of the Washoe County School Board,

I am writing to you as a concerned teacher within the Washoe County School District regarding Agenda Item 2.03, which is scheduled for a vote on Tuesday, April 22nd.

While this may seem like administrative minutiae, I believe this proposed change has significant implications for the comprehensive support and development opportunities available to both teachers and administrators, and ultimately, for the quality of education our students receive.

I have directly benefited from the work of the Mentoring & Induction Coordinator and the Professional Growth Systems Project Coordinator. Their roles extend beyond supporting teachers; I know they also provide crucial training for experienced teachers to become effective mentors and, importantly, they equip administrators with the skills needed to support and guide our professional growth. Furthermore, they play a vital role in bridging the gap between teachers and administrators by sharing invaluable insights into administrator perspectives, fostering a greater understanding and collaboration within our school community. It makes logical sense that these positions, and others being considered for reclassification, have historically been held by individuals with extensive educational experience and licensure — **especially since they also mentor administrators.**

My primary concern stems from the potential for reduced expertise and support for all educational leaders within our district. Lowering the licensure and experience requirements for these vital roles could significantly diminish the quality of training and support available not only to teachers like myself but also to the administrators who lead our schools. We all rely on the specialized knowledge and skills of these coordinators for our professional development and growth.

Another significant worry is the potential for a weakened connection between the central office and our individual schools. Removing the requirement for school-based experience in central office positions risks creating a greater disconnect between the district's administration and the daily realities faced by both teachers and administrators in our classrooms. Strong communication, mutual understanding, and shared experiences are essential for effective collaboration and a thriving educational environment.

Finally, I am concerned that reclassifying these positions could lead to less educator input and understanding at the central office level. Reducing the number of central office positions held by those with direct classroom and administrative experience could mean that the voices and perspectives of educators at all levels are less represented and understood in crucial decision-making

processes. The loss of that shared perspective would be detrimental to creating policies and initiatives that truly serve the needs of our students and staff.

As a teacher dedicated to my students and my profession here in WCSD, I urge you to carefully consider the potential negative consequences of this reclassification. The comprehensive support provided by these academic administrators – to both teachers and administrators – is invaluable to our professional growth and directly contributes to our collective ability to effectively educate our students. Diminishing the qualifications and potentially the effectiveness of these roles would be a disservice to the entire educational community within the Washoe County School District.

I sincerely hope you will take my concerns, and those of other educators who benefit from this vital support network, into consideration before making a decision on Agenda Item 2.03.

Thank you for your time and commitment to the education of our students and the professional growth of our educators.

Sincerely,

Darrell Crowther
Depoali Middle School
Choir/Piano Teacher

To: Washoe County School District Board of Trustees

Re: Critical Needs Teaching Contract

Dear Members of the Board,

I am writing to express my concern regarding the revocation of the Critical Needs contract for retired teachers who have returned to serve in high-need positions. This decision is not only short-sighted but detrimental to our students, school communities, and the district's mission to provide a stable and effective learning environment for all.

There are several key issues I would like to raise:

1. **Persistent Teacher Shortage:** Despite efforts, the shortage in the teaching workforce remains unresolved. Removing incentives for experienced retirees to continue serving in critical roles only exacerbates this crisis.
2. **Equity Among Guest Teachers:** The removal of Critical Needs contracts has led to an unfair system where guest teachers are compensated inadequately and inconsistently, creating division and dissatisfaction among staff.
3. **Counterproductive Labor Practices:** By limiting PERS pensions to 75% and incentivizing early separation (albeit in the past) for those approaching 30 years of service, the district inadvertently encourages early retirement and discourages longevity in the profession. This practice has not alleviated the teacher shortage, but rather contributed to it, ultimately harming our students and community.

As a retiree myself, I understand the financial challenges that the district faces each year. However, I urge the Board to consider a balanced approach. One possible solution could be to revise the Critical Needs designation to include a reduced salary structure, while maintaining essential benefits, particularly health insurance.

This would allow the district to retain highly qualified and dedicated retirees in classrooms where they are needed most. These educators provide continuity for students, offer a wealth of professional experience, and contribute to the strength of school communities striving toward shared goals.

I hope you will take these points into serious consideration and work toward solutions that support both fiscal responsibility and the critical need for experienced educators in our schools.

Respectfully submitted,

Nurit W. Stites

From: Edgerton, Meri
Sent: Tuesday, April 22, 2025 6:34 AM
To: Public Comments
Subject: Public Comment for meeting of April 22nd

Dear Trustees:

I am currently working in a critical needs position with a class of children with Autism. When I accepted my first position in a Strategies (Autism) class, I had a master's degree in special education. Despite this, I was told that I would need to obtain a specific Autism credential. No one was able to tell me exactly which classes I needed to take, and I believe I ended up taking four three credit graduate classes.

Now, I am working with a long-term sub in the classroom next door. She has no experience in implementing an IEP, let alone writing one. I do all the testing, IEP writing, scanning of documents, data collection and whatever else needs a licensed teacher. I have worked for the last two years with no prep period and no lunch. I come an hour early and never leave before contract time.

I do not know how the district can possibly fill all the vacancies in special education next year without calling on critical needs. Not to mention the fact that new teachers really need some kind of mentoring. And yet, we are told that we will work with no benefits, no contract, no leave. Please consider these things when contemplating the restructuring of the critical needs hiring process.

Sincerely, Meri Edgerton

Meri Edgerton
Strategies
Traner Middle School
medgerton@washoeschools.net

From: Aikin, Kathy
Sent: Tuesday, April 22, 2025 7:41 AM
To: Public Comments
Subject: Critical Needs for SY2025-26

I am writing in response to the email we received last week providing “clarity on the process for staffing retirees into critical labor shortage teaching positions for next school year”. I am also writing in support of all future retirees who want to continue supporting WCSD students.

My first reaction was to laugh when I read the document outlining the critical labor shortage position compensation for next year. I laughed because the compensation being offered is such an insult to experienced teachers who are willing to fill these positions that I thought it must be a joke. When I reread the document to make sure I understood it, I was utterly disgusted by the school district’s very clear message that retirees’ experience and willingness/desire to return is worth next to nothing. I have never, in 30 years, felt truly valued by the district, but this embarrassing compensation package was the nail in the coffin. After the shock of the district’s message wore off, I realized how grateful I was that I had already decided not to return to one of these positions next year.

Retirees like me, and those who will follow us, are filling positions that, by definition, are critical to the operations of the district and that the district is unable to hire other staff for. We are the most qualified and experienced educators in the district, and without us, students, staff, and schools would flounder. If I were going to return next year knowing that I would be expected to plan lessons, grade papers, and attend IEPs and other meetings, among all the other tasks teachers are required to attend to, I would rather be paid a lower salary than I’m receiving this year and be provided benefits than to return for glorified sub pay, no days off, and no benefits. Considering that these positions are already virtually impossible to fill, it will be interesting to see how many hardworking, highly-qualified retired educators are willing to fill them for a pittance.

Thank you for your time. For the sake of students, I hope you reconsider next year’s compensation package for retirees in critical needs positions.

From: Warren, Ann
Sent: Tuesday, April 22, 2025 7:50 AM
To: Public Comments
Subject: critical needs

Board of Trustees,

I am a seasoned teacher who has given her best years to WCSD. I raised 5 children who successfully attended area school. I often put my duties as a teacher and TOSA before attending my active children's activities. WCSD has been good to me and I believe I have reciprocated with hard work and commitment to our students and teachers.

I was thrilled to become a critical needs teacher next year. I would be compensated as a knowledgeable, experienced, hard-working teacher who consistently achieves student growth within the program I work. I will not be coming back to WCSD on critical needs due to the proposed changes. As a dedicated teacher who is well versed in research and good practice, I am sad to hear the guidelines for compensation and sick days will change. I am a young 62 years. I love to interact with students while joining with teachers to improve practice. I also contract illnesses more than when I was 20. I would not be compensated for sick days...even though we all know most of us work at home and well beyond contract hours...even when we are sick!

I would so enjoy working in WCSD as a critical needs hire, however, the changes is a slap in my face. I have worked with such diligence and fervor and I would be compensated to return at lower wages with no benefits. Sorry.....not sorry.

Ann

Ann Warren, MS, NBCT
EL Facilitator
Proctor Hug HS
Reno, NV 89431

From: Akers, Mary Beth
Sent: Tuesday, April 22, 2025 8:12 AM
To: Public Comments
Subject: Critical Needs Positions

Good afternoon,

My name is Mary Beth Akers and I am currently a critical needs teacher at Desert Skies Middle School. I am writing to express my concern and disappointment concerning the new policy for critical need teachers.

What a shock it was to receive the notice that critical needs will now be no more than glorified substitutes. I, as well as all other critical needs teachers, work above and beyond our duties to run a smooth classroom all the while making sure students are our top priority. I take my job very seriously and fulfill my duties to the very best of my ability. My job is important to me and to my students.

I am very concerned about next year with this new policy. I am concerned that without critical needs teachers, many schools will not be able to fill their open positions. Our school does not get substitutes very often and the teachers sub for one another. What will happen when you take away the critical needs teachers? You will have a variety of subs, if any at all, in classrooms. Student learning will be disrupted by the introduction of a new sub, if one is even available. Teachers will be spread thin subbing during their guaranteed prep period. Relationship building with the students will be nonexistent!!!

I most likely will not be returning next year if there is an open position if this policy goes into effect!!! I love my job!!!!!! I love my students!!!! I hope someone will consider what this new policy will do to them!!!

Sincerely and respectfully,
Mary Beth Akers

From: Pruyn, Melissa
Sent: Tuesday, April 22, 2025 8:44 AM
To: Public Comments
Subject: Critical needs

Dear WCSD Board,

I am retiring this year. If the changes to critical needs are approved, I will not consider doing this position in the future and will find other opportunities. I think you'll find most retirees feel the same way. With over 250 jobs on the job board, I think you should reconsider this decision.


Thank you,
Melissa Pruyn

From: DeLucchi, Bernadette
Sent: Tuesday, April 22, 2025 10:16 AM
To: Public Comments
Subject: Critical Needs Teachers-Public Comment

Public Comment - Keep Critical Needs the Same!

When my mother, for whom I was caring, passed away in 2023, I found myself longing for my former life as a WCSD teacher, which began in 1987. So, I began substitute teaching. I was offered several full-time teaching jobs, but didn't think I was yet ready for the commitment and time investment that a full-time job would require. Finally, in December 2023, I was ready! I accepted a critical needs position at Desert Skies Middle School as an 8th grade Special Education Math teacher. Desert Skies became my priority in life. I soon found myself exhausted from working long hours in the classroom as well as at home planning lessons, attending meetings and school events, testing students, grading papers, lesson planning, creating progress reports/report cards, and writing IEPs. Quite a different life from a substitute teacher. I am now working as an 8th grade Special Education ELA teacher at Mendive Middle School. I've always seen myself as a public servant. I enjoy working as a professional, again, and am thankful for being compensated as such with benefits and pay commensurate with my years of service to the WCSD, much of which I spend on my classroom and students. It is an honor to serve the district, and I am considering serving for 1-2 more years. However, the change from Critical Needs teacher to "guest teacher" is a demotion. Guest teaching and Critical Needs are two entirely different things. WCSD expects us to provide them with the commitment and time investment that a full-time job would require, while stripping us of benefits like health insurance and sick days. With the passage of this new policy, the district is communicating that older folks are not valued. This is ageism. Tried and true professionals, like me, are filling a critical needs position while there continue to be a great number of vacancies across the school district. Will retired teachers continue to step up and give their golden years to a district who has just devalued us? Please, keep the Critical Needs teaching Positions untouched.

From: Kelly Roper
Sent: Tuesday, April 22, 2025 11:00 AM
To: Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Fwd: Re-zoning due to Pine

 External Email: This email originated outside of WCSD. Please exercise caution. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

I meant to include public comment and forgot. Please include in public comment for today's meeting.

Kelly

From: Kelly Roper
Date: April 22, 2025 at 7:38:38 AM PDT
To: Elizabeth A Smith <Elizabeth.Smith@washoeschools.net>, BoardMembers@washoeschools.net
Subject: Re-zoning due to Pine

Dear School Board Members,

I am sending you the comments I made at the Zoning Advisory Committee (ZAC) meeting Thursday night. I do stand by thoughts on split feeding schools; however, since I have also read and listened to commentary from parents who are still asking for Huffaker to split between Herz/Galena and Swope/Reno, I added a thought on what would perhaps be a better dividing line than McCarran later in my comments.

I was very glad to see that the Zoning Advisory Committee (ZAC) listened to all of the parents from Huffaker in February when we explained why Herz and Galena were a better fit for Huffaker than Vaughn and Wooster. I know there are parents wanting to keep Swope and Reno and perhaps creating a split feeder out of Huffaker again. I do NOT think that is a good option. To start with, half of the homes that used to be zoned for Swope and Reno and possibly thought they would get that zoning back, would not because option 5 uses the new dividing line of McCarran vs. Lakeside Drive. But most importantly, I have a better perspective of what it is like to watch my children go from kindergarten to graduation. Five years ago, I fought relentlessly for the ZAC to send Huffaker to Herz & Galena even though I knew that I was going to be asking for a variance for my second child to go to Swope and continue on to Reno with her sister. I was fighting for what I thought was best for the children that go to Huffaker. When my children were at Huffaker and it was a split feeder, I was constantly aware of whether or not the good friends that they were making would to continue on to middle and high school with them. I watched people move homes as middle school approached because they were not going to the same schools as their children's friends. After Huffaker was re-zoned to Pine and the class of 2026 became freshman at

Reno, I drove a carpool from Cross Country practice with two boys that went to Pine. I heard how they felt like complete outsiders barely knowing anyone. I chose to variance my daughter to Swope and I had the luxury of being able to drive her. Many of the kids that went to Pine did not have a choice because their parents needed the bus. While Huffaker's zone is large and inconvenient to zone to middle and high school, I think that is why there is school of choice. I think the Board needs to do right by the kids that go to Huffaker and keep them aligned from elementary through high school. For the parents that are closer to Swope and Reno and are able to, they can apply for school of choice and parents can choose for their kids to make new friends versus kids who may live on the "wrong side" of McCarran and are forced to go to a school that is different from all of the friends they have made because their parents rely on the bus. This would be why I do not support making Huffaker a split feeder.

I have read and listened to many public comments concerning making Huffaker a split feeder. If you do decide to make Huffaker a split feeder again, the only diving line that makes sense for everyone asking for their traditional zoning back and geographic proximity to schools would be to make the dividing line the base of Windy Hill. All homes north of Windy Hill for Swope/Reno and all homes up and around Windy Hill Herz/Galena. (See attached).

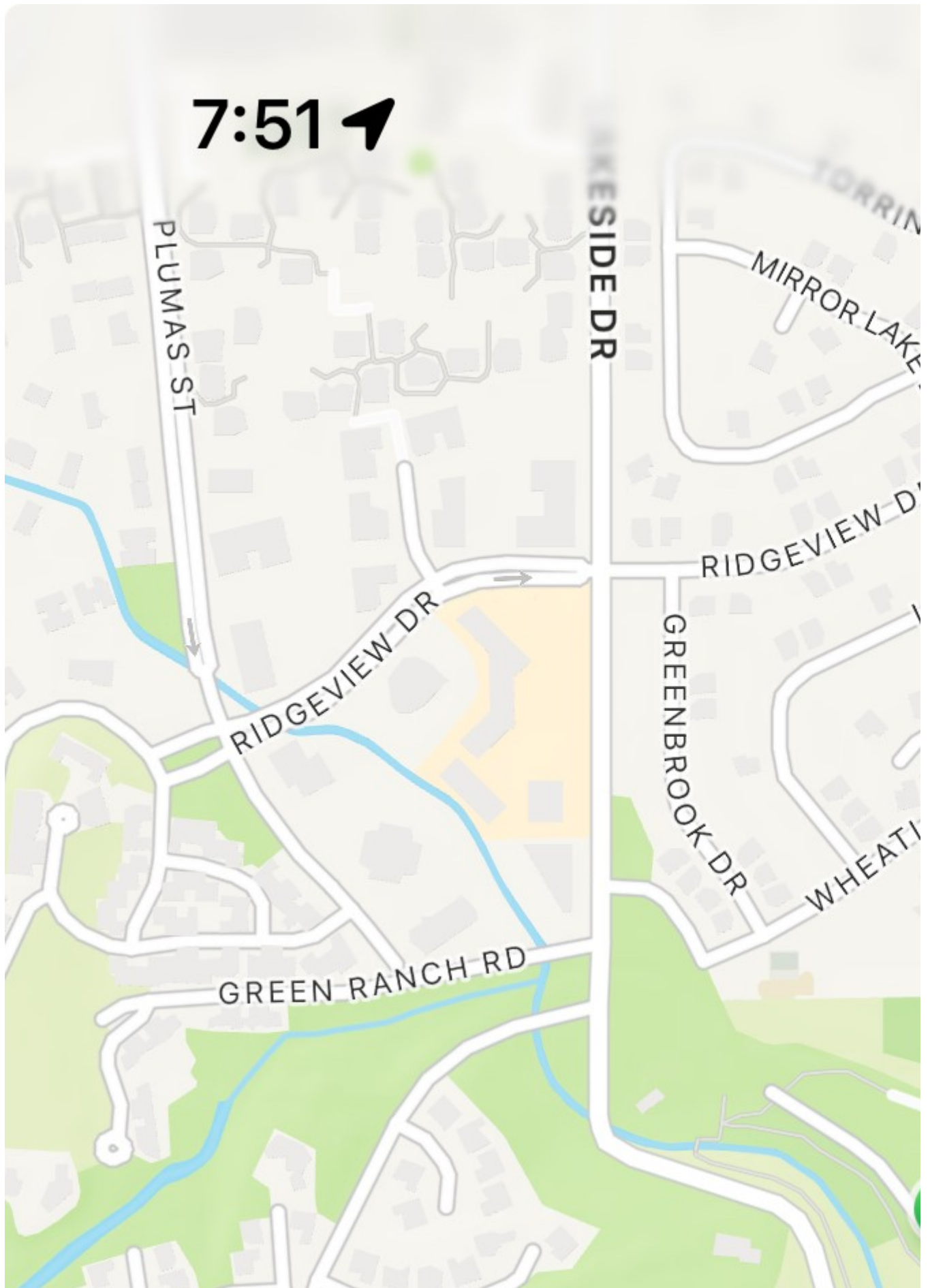
I also do not support option 4A. The children at Smithridge should not make new friends at Vaughn that they will be forced to give up being sent to Damonte where everybody else has already established friend groups from Depoali. I think it is much more detrimental socially to split feed schools after middle school than after elementary school. If Smithridge is needed to keep the signature Academy at Damonte thriving, then Smithridge needs to go to Depaoli. One of your own ZAC members suggested perhaps Smithridge at Vaughn could create a problem with rival gangs like what happened when the new Hug HS. opened anyway making Depaoli and Damonte a better choice. I understand that sending Smithridge to Depaoli and Damonte may create a situation where Vaughn looks underutilized, but Smithridge families should not be put in an undesirable situation because of that.

While I left Thursday's meeting early, I listened online. Smithridge and Damonte families were so focused on keeping Smithridge zoned for Damonte, that they didn't have the foresight to realize that if option 4A was chosen, they would now be the only elementary school leaving Vaughn for Damonte. People who made public comment spoke out against Smithridge kids going to Wooster because of safety issues walking to Wooster among other issues. Someone who worked for the district even acknowledged they could be walking through rival gang neighborhoods to Wooster. Why then would the ZAC and board knowingly zone rival gangs to Vaughn MS.

The ZAC approved option 4A by a thin 5-4 margin. I do not think that is representative of a good solidly supported recommendation coming to you.

Thank you
Kelly Roper

7:51 ↗



From: Hyatt, Barbara
Sent: Tuesday, April 22, 2025 11:45 AM
To: Public Comments
Subject: Certified teachers as "guest teachers"

I see that you are going to stop hiring qualified and hardworking teachers on critical needs and use them as long term subs with no protections or security. This is unacceptable and seems counterproductive. I'm not sure whether, as people who spend next to no time in our schools, you are aware how few and far between substitute teachers are. I'm in a middle school, and I have to cover two to four times a week for teachers who are out because no subs pick up their jobs. I'm supposed to be getting paid for that, but what is being entered in Employee Online is far short of the times I've actually covered. In any case, if I have no protection and no guarantee that I won't be replaced midyear if a cheaper, less experienced, and less reliable teacher can be found, I'm not interested. You are sacrificing the well-being of our students with this poor decision. I understand that you are trying to save money, but cutting the "fat" at the classroom level is a mistake. You approve and spend millions on terrible textbook programs and software. In addition, there are far too many administrators who do very little; those jobs could be consolidated and eliminated without negatively affecting those very people we *purport* to serve.

I hope that when you hear and read the comments from people who have dedicated themselves to our children and worked hard to provide strong, quality education, you will reconsider this decision.



Barbara Hyatt
6th Grade ELA and Social Studies Teacher

WCSD – Cold Springs Middle School
www.washoeschools.net



From: Valcarce, Cheryl
Sent: Tuesday, April 22, 2025 11:48 AM
To: Public Comments
Subject: FW: Critical Needs Changes

Good afternoon,

I am an ELL teacher at Pine Middle School. I would like to state my disappointment that WCSD is discontinuing the critical needs placement program. As a teacher in a critical needs position, I have witnessed the need for experienced, well-educated teachers in these challenging classrooms. The positions we are filling are essential to the growth of our students. The positions need to be filled with knowledgeable teachers. I have seen the failure of classes not thriving due to guest teachers in these classrooms that are not equipped to handle the high needs of these students. I have also seen this year, that the schools do not have enough guest teachers to handle the positions. Therefore, teachers are having to substitute classes and lose their prep time.

Please consider putting the critical needs program back in place for next year. We need this program to achieve the growth and overall education of our students.

Thank you.

Respectfully,

Cheryl Valcarce-ghilieri

ELL Teacher

Pine Middle School

From: Rensch, Cherry
Sent: Tuesday, April 22, 2025 12:03 PM
To: Public Comments
Subject: Concerns Regarding Reclassification of Critical Needs Teachers

Dear WCSD Board of Trustees,

I am writing to express my deep concern about the decision to reclassify Critical Needs Teachers as Guest Teachers, removing our benefits and contractual protections.

I have served students in this district for over 30 years—as an elementary classroom teacher for 3 years, an elementary PE teacher and reading specialist for 6 years, an ESL teacher for 21 years, and most recently, a Special Education teacher for the past 2 years. My professional experience reflects a lifelong commitment to supporting diverse learners and stepping in where the district has the greatest need. I’ve taken on challenging roles not because they are easy, but because I care deeply about our students and their success.

To now be classified as a “Guest Teacher”—a term typically reserved for day-to-day substitutes—feels like a profound disservice to the work I and others in similar roles are doing. We are filling positions that are essential to the district’s ability to function. We are not temporary support—we are experienced educators doing vital work in areas where the district has struggled to hire permanent staff. At \$400 per day, this change offers compensation that does not match the responsibilities or expectations placed on us.

This reclassification strips us of our benefits, removes us from any bargaining unit, and places us in at-will positions with no contractual protection—at \$400 per day, this change offers compensation that does not match the responsibilities or expectations placed on us.

I want to be clear: this change is making me seriously reconsider whether I will return to fill one of these critical labor shortage positions.

I urge the Trustees to reconsider and send this plan back to the drawing board. There is still time. You are aware of the ongoing staffing crisis in education, and removing experienced educators from these roles will only make that crisis worse.

Sincerely,
Cherry Rensch
Critical Needs Teacher

From: Dupont, Raquel E
Sent: Tuesday, April 22, 2025 12:05 PM
To: Public Comments
Subject: Support for Maintaining the Mentoring & Induction Coordinator Classification

Dear Board of Trustees,

I am writing to express my strong support for maintaining the Mentoring & Induction Coordinator position—and other similar academic administrator roles—within the Washoe School Principals' Association (WSPA).

These positions require licensed educators with deep instructional knowledge and leadership experience. Reclassifying them under the Washoe Professional Technical Association (WPTA) diminishes the professional standards and qualifications necessary to lead and support teachers effectively.

As a school leader, I see firsthand the critical role the Mentoring & Induction Coordinator plays in developing, retaining, and empowering teachers. This position bridges the gap between central office initiatives and classroom instruction, ensuring that early-career teachers receive the coaching and support they need to succeed.

To reclassify this role as non-licensed minimizes the expertise required and sends the wrong message about how we value those who lead our instructional improvement efforts. Now more than ever, we need to strengthen—not weaken—the connection between educational leadership and school support.

I urge the board to reconsider this proposal and preserve the integrity of these positions by keeping them within WSPA. Doing so ensures that licensure, experience, and educational leadership remain at the core of the work that directly impacts student success.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration.

Sincerely,
Raquel DuPont



Raquel DuPont, M.Ed.
Teacher

WCSD – Office or Department
Office: 775-626-0062
www.washoeschools.net





From: Jacky, Donna
Sent: Tuesday, April 22, 2025 12:52 PM
To: Public Comments
Cc: Spriggs, Earl; Evans, Calen
Subject: "guest teacher"

Washoe County School District Board of Trustees:

I have been a special education teacher since 1987, moving to Nevada in 1990. I am highly qualified in special education - mild, moderate, and severe disabilities (including my autism endorsement) as well as in math and K-8 general education - all subjects. WCSD has sent me to multiple out of state trainings to support students with autism - the TEAACH training, the PECS training, and the Social Thinking training. I also served two years as a Program Consultant/Facilitator/Autism Consultant. I would also like to note that over the years while serving in self-contained programs for students with severe and challenging behaviors, I have been injured as follows: concussion, fractured nose, neck injury that has left a permanent condition and required 18 months of medical treatment through worker's comp which had to refer me to two outside spinal specialists. I only missed two days of work following my most significant injury. I have been rated as highly effective by every administrator on every evaluation I have ever received. I was a member of the WEA every year of my career until I retired.

I am now serving my third year in a critical needs position at Reed High School after serving two years at Wooster High School. I currently teach 6 periods every day of special education Algebra 1. Because our numbers were so high, I gave up my prep period to open an additional section at semester to better serve my students in a small group setting. I also manage a full caseload. I am routinely at work 9 and 10 hours developing specialized curriculum and fulfilling my duties as a classroom teacher - and I ALWAYS write IEPs and complete special education progress reports at home on my own time - usually on weekends.

I was incredibly dismayed and truthfully deeply insulted to receive the email from Doug Owen telling me that I was not worth a contract or being treated as a professional next year. The email left many questions unanswered as well. Perhaps Mr. Owen can hold informational meetings for retirees to ask essential questions that will help us determine whether or not we are willing to return to help the district fill the numerous unfilled positions with our move to "guest teacher" status.

Some of the questions I have are:

- Will we still be contributing to PERS - or we will be contributing to Social Security?
- What is happening to our current, earned sick days? Why can't they be carried over to next year?
- Since we have no contractual protections, will we be made to work on our prep period without compensation?
- Will we still be covered by workman's comp if injured on the job?
- Will we be paid for nonstudent days to set up classrooms and participate in Professional Development?

Thank you for your consideration,

Donna Jacky, M.A.

Edward Cornelius Reed High School

Resource Math Teacher

Special Education Department

From: Williams, Tavia
Sent: Tuesday, April 22, 2025 1:51 PM
To: Public Comments
Subject: Concern Regarding Critical Needs Changes for Next Year

Dear WCSD Board,

I am writing to express my deep disappointment regarding the recent changes to the Critical Needs program for the upcoming school year.

The decision to not only cut our salaries by \$17,000 but to also reclassify us as guest teachers—and deny access to other negotiated benefits—is both disheartening and financially devastating. These changes drastically alter the original terms under which many of us returned to support our schools, and they place an immense strain on loyal employees.

For those of us who have dedicated years of service to WCSD, 31 years for me, this feels like a devaluation of our experience and commitment. I understand that budgetary challenges may exist, but I urge the Board to reconsider the long-term impact of these decisions—on teacher retention, on morale, and most importantly, on the students and their families who rely on experienced educators.

I sincerely hope the Board will take our concerns into account and explore alternative solutions that do not come at the expense of those who have returned to help in a time of need.

Respectfully,
Tavia Williams

Mrs. Tavia Williams
3rd grade teacher
Huffaker Elementary



From: Dennis, Jane
Sent: Tuesday, April 22, 2025 2:10 PM
To: Public Comments
Subject: Critical Needs Policy

Greetings,

My name is Jane Dennis, and I am a critical needs teacher at Desert Skies Middle School. I am writing to express my disappointment and frustration concerning the potential new policy for critical needs teachers next school year.

It is with a heavy heart that after reading the notice from the district saying that critical needs teachers will be treated like a substitute teacher, I have decided not to return. While I understand that there are budget concerns, this decision directly affects the students negatively and their learning.

I love teaching and feel strongly that the students deserve the best, which is why I came out of retirement to fill a critical needs position for the past 3 years. The students deserve consistency, and this policy will not be for any student. Our students deserve better. You cannot balance a budget to the detriment of our students. In addition, this will impact certified contracted teachers. Here at Desert Skies Middle Schools, we already cover for each other because of substitute shortages. Who is going to be responsible for the planning of lessons and the materials for a quality education?

If this policy goes into effect, I will not be returning. I cannot be a party to such an injustice to the students and teachers. Hopefully, one day, you won't need the critical needs positions because you will have enough teachers to fill those positions. Until that day, this policy is not the way to fix the issue.

Thank you,

Jane M. Dennis

From: Roskelley, Dawn
Sent: Tuesday, April 22, 2025 2:20 PM
To: Public Comments
Subject: Critical Needs Positions for 2025-26

Dear Superintendent Ernst and esteemed Board Members,

My name is Dawn Roskelley. I have spent the last 35 years pouring my heart and knowledge into the music education of our Washoe County students. Of this, 32 years were passionately spent as an integral part of Rita Cannan Elementary School and its surrounding community. Beyond a bachelor's degree in music education, I hold a master's degree in integrated arts education. Additionally, I have been a National Boards Certified Teacher for 6 years and, as a veteran teacher, continue to pursue and invest in internationally vetted professional training to expand my pedagogical skillset. In short, I have spent the better part of my life dedicating myself to the pedagogy and practice of giving WCSD students the best quality music and integrated arts education I can possibly muster.

It is with profound disappointment that I must express my concern regarding the recent reclassification of critical needs positions to that of guest teachers. My deepest joy lies in the daily interaction and instruction of my students, and I look back on the countless young lives I have positively influenced through meaningful musical experiences with immense pride. However, at this juncture in my life, the financial well-being of my family and myself must be a priority, particularly while I am still healthy and at the peak of my professional abilities. The offer presented by the district last week not only makes my return to one of these unfilled (critical needs) positions unlikely, but also strongly suggests that many of my equally dedicated colleagues will be compelled to seek opportunities elsewhere.

This shift to guest teacher status for critical needs positions creates a huge deterrent for us to continue in this capacity. Beyond the significant reduction in pay, the added burden of insurance costs will substantially diminish our actual take-home earnings. Moreover, the lack of recognition for the advanced degrees and specialized certifications that many of my colleagues and I have diligently pursued throughout our careers feels deeply disrespectful. The elimination of leave time and the transformation of these roles into at-will, day-to-day employment effectively erodes any motivation to build robust programs and cultivate classrooms with long-term vision and goals.


My love for teaching, a sentiment shared by my critical needs colleagues, is undeniable. Yet, the practical reality of this policy change is that it will inevitably deter highly qualified educators from remaining in or seeking these critical positions, leaving vital teaching roles unfilled.

Thank you for your invaluable time, dedicated service, and thoughtful attention to this critical matter.



Generate Audio Overview

From: Jeff Schoenbachler
Sent: Tuesday, April 22, 2025 2:20 PM
To: Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Huffaker Re-Zoning

 External Email: This email originated outside of WCSD. Please exercise caution. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Hello all,

Thank you for your time and the thoughtful consideration you've given to this incredibly complex and important matter.

I'd like to share a concern that I, along with many others, hope you will take into serious account:

Splitting elementary schools into multiple middle schools can have a deeply negative impact on students' emotional well-being—especially during such a pivotal time in their development. When children leave the only school environment they've known, breaking long-standing friendships and familiar support systems, it can lead to increased anxiety, a sense of isolation, and a diminished feeling of belonging. This kind of disruption removes the stability that many students depend on as they face the already difficult transition into adolescence.

Research shows that these types of social disconnections can contribute to loneliness, decreased self-esteem, and even academic struggles—not due to a lack of capability, but because students no longer feel safe, supported, or connected. During a time when consistency and peer relationships are crucial, split feeder patterns can seriously undermine students' confidence, emotional health, and overall success.

Huffaker, in particular, has been subject to numerous changes over the years. To now designate it as one of the only split-feeder elementary schools in the district further adds to the instability these students have already faced.

Let's give our kids the consistency they need—and the stability they deserve—to truly thrive in this district.

Thank you for your time,

Jeff Schoenbachler
(Father of three Huffaker Students)

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From: Nevin, Mary
Sent: Tuesday, April 22, 2025 2:26 PM
To: Public Comments
Cc: Nevin, Mary
Subject: Critical Needs Changes

I retired from Washoe County School District with 30 years of service. I taught students with mild to severe disabilities for 29 of the 30 years. I have a Master of Arts with an emphasis in Multiple and Severe Disabilities. The last four years I have taught at Marvin Picollo School, a school that serves students with multiple and severe disabilities. My start dates each year have varied from the end of August to January because all attempts to fill the positions were unsuccessful. We have two other teachers at Marvin Picollo School who are also Critical Needs Teachers.

It is unfortunate that Washoe County School District is not acknowledging Critical Needs Teachers are an asset to our students and schools. We have experience, dedication and an excellent work ethic that cannot be matched. Had we not retired our salary would be the same, it is not elevated by WCSD, and the fact that we can collect earned retirement should not impact WCSD decisions.

I am positive that shaving a few dollars from the budget at the expense of students would not be supported by administrators, teachers, parents, and students.

From: Dunn, Shari
Sent: Tuesday, April 22, 2025 3:00 PM
To: Public Comments
Subject: Critical Needs

Hello,

I am currently a critical needs teacher for the Strategies program grades 2-5 at Huffaker (kids with autism in a self-contained classroom). I am planning to return for another year if possible. It is so important for this very vulnerable population to have consistency in their routines and environments. I'm planning to bring that to them next year. We have made leaps and bounds academically and social/emotionally this year.

However, if critical needs positions become guest teacher positions, I won't be coming back to fill the position.

My questions/concerns around the proposal are:

1. No days off for illness? Mental health days? This is a very difficult job, and mental health days are necessary.
2. If a day off is needed, will pay be deducted for the full amount of \$400.00 per day? Who will pay for the substitute? Who will arrange for the substitute? Who will write the lesson plans for the substitute?
3. This job takes a lot of training and extra time. How will the training hours and extra time be compensated for?
4. IEP's and 3-year reevaluations take time, knowledge, and expertise. Who will write the special education documents and how will the guest teacher be compensated for the extra time?
5. I understand the district is opening up 24 new Strategies programs around the district. These positions are very difficult to fill, take extra training and classes, and a special kind of person with a lot of patience and stamina.

I hope that you reconsider these critically important, desperately needed, and hard to fill jobs, and reverse the decision so that I can return to these kiddos who have benefitted from my teaching years and experience.

Thank you,

Shari Dunn
Special Education Teacher
Huffaker Elementary School

From: Herman, Todd
Sent: Tuesday, April 22, 2025 3:07 PM
To: Public Comments
Subject: Critical Needs questions

Dear members of the Washoe County School Board,

As a critical needs teacher with 32 years of experience in the Washoe County School district, I do understand that certain cost-cutting measures are needed for the next school year. After reading the memo sent out by Doug Owens that was sent out on April 17, 2025, I would like to ask some clarifying questions about the Critical Needs position specifically relating to Special Education for 2025 - 2026.

- Is the department leader or principal expected to provide lesson plans, make the copies, and get the materials ready for the lessons that day/period?
- As a guest teacher in a special education classroom, that individual cannot have a student caseload to manage. Are you asking the other teachers in that building to have a larger caseload?
- They cannot write Individual Education Plans or facilitate meetings – There is no expectation that guest teachers to stay at school beyond the contract day. IEP's often go 30 – 45 minutes beyond the contract day.
- Who will test students for the initial evaluation or three-year re-evaluations.
- When it comes to discipline, who is going to collect data and work with stakeholders for the manifestation meetings?
- Who is going to input data quarterly for progress reports and update Infinite Campus?
- Is there a contract we will sign, or simply a day-to-day commitment?
- Is it worth saving a small amount of money knowing parents will take to the district to due process over a lack of service or getting inconsistent services for their child?

Thank you,

Todd Herman
Robert McQueen High School
Resource teacher

From: Grinsell, Tricia
Sent: Tuesday, April 22, 2025 3:27 PM
To: Public Comments
Subject: Critical Needs Changes

To Whom It May Concern:

I came out of retirement from general education this year to take a Critical Needs resource position at an elementary school. I'm dual certified in special education and there was a huge need. There is no other resource teacher on staff where I took a position and it was largely left on me to take classes to quickly get up to speed with writing IEPs, holding IEP meetings, and to figure out all of the "things" that go into being a resource teacher. (Mind you, receiving more credits does a Critical Needs teacher no good, so really it was without compensation that I took 40 hours worth of classes.)

By September 27 of this school year, my caseload had risen to full capacity or over. In January, my numbers had officially risen to the point another position should have been triggered, but no help has ever arrived. I have EASILY worked, on average, 30 hours a week over my contract hours to complete the IEPs, revisions, notices and to do the scheduling with parents so that I could actually administer the service minutes to those students on my crazy caseload.

I have a question...who is going to work as a glorified substitute, (guest teacher) AND teach all of the students, as well as, write IEPs, schedule the meetings, hold the meetings, send the notices, follow-up on the paperwork, etc. to keep the district in compliance? You already take advantage of your employees by demanding workloads that cannot possibly be completed within contract hours. Now you have delivered a blow to your most experienced and needed resource to fill positions you historically have not been able to fill.

I thought I was a lunatic for taking on what I took on this year for the salary I was receiving, but there is no way I would take on everything previously mentioned for \$400 a day especially with no benefits. This is a complete kick in the gut and I'm disappointed with the District for demeaning the experience and expertise that Critical Needs teachers bring to the table.

Sadly, in the end, it will be the staff that remains and the students that will suffer. If you don't value the expertise, you'll either get what you pay for and/or further strain your staff of teachers by having many unfilled positions. Your current staffs will have to manage unfilled positions on top of what they already manage, creating more teacher burn-out and turnover.

I certainly hope the board re-thinks their actions concerning critical needs positions.

Sincerely,
Tricia Grinsell
Sped. Resource Teacher,

From: Amy Horvath
Sent: Tuesday, April 22, 2025 5:32 PM
To: Public Comments
Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL] Public comment when watching online

⚠ External Email.

Hello WCSD Board,

Since there isn't a way to submit public comment online while watching the Board Meeting live, I will submit public comment via email.

My name is Amy Horvath. I have two students attending Huffaker Elementary School. I am a mom, community member, small business owner, and educator. I am also incredibly active on the Huffaker's PTA.

Looking at the options in front of you, I am in support of Option 4A.

From what I have heard at the last ZAC Meeting, as a parent and educator, it sounds like the students of Smithridge have been rezoned multiple times like the students of Huffaker. Option 4A removes the worries of rival gang violence, an hour walk to high school for Smithridge students, and most importantly, it maintains the relationships and community students and families have already created for Smithridge students and Huffaker families. Stability is key.

After the last meeting, the criticism Huffaker families received was that we were not united on where we wanted our students to attend. However, we ARE united, for a variety of reasons, in not wanting our students to attend Vaughn for middle school. I know some Huffaker families would prefer to go to Swope/Reno. However, based on attendance numbers, I do not see this as an option, as it would put stress on Swope, which staff has also identified. I believe, as a rule, it is important to keep Huffaker families and communities together. It is important to keep ALL elementary students and communities together through middle school and high school. It is unacceptable to allow for split schools and split boundaries anywhere in the district. For Huffaker families who would like to attend Swope, the GT program and School of Choice could allow for potential admittance to Swope without putting all students in a

Our family moved to the Reno area from Truckee and part of the reason we selected the neighborhood we're in is because of the schools. When we purchased our home, we were under the impression that our children would attend Huffaker, followed by Swope, and then either Reno High or Galena. We had heard rumors that Huffaker could potentially be re-zoned, but this would likely mean Hertz and then Galena. We purchased our home in a specific neighborhood for the associated schools. We paid more for our home because of the schools. The same is true for many families in the Huffaker community.

The Huffaker neighborhood and community also aligns more so with the Hertz/Galena community in terms of the power grid and weather.


While the drive time and mileage is a bit further to attend Hertz/Galena, it is an easier drive coming from the neighborhoods around Huffaker.

I believe the students from Huffaker should attend Hertz and then Galena. Many of the Huffaker families are applying for the School of Choice Program for Herz and Galena already. Why not lighten the load on the School of Choice Program and provide a zoned route for Huffaker families? It's my opinion that if Huffaker is zoned to Vaughn/Wooster, many families will either apply for School of Choice, or opt to leave the district and look at charter or private options instead, as many families are currently doing.


On a side note, I am not sure why Vaughn is being rebuilt as such a large school. It is not an area of large development or proposed new development. It feels a bit like field of dreams - if you build it they will come. Except, there isn't a plan for them to come. I feel, unfortunately, a mistake was made in rebuilding Vaughn as a larger capacity school. This error is now trying to be righted by filling the school in any way possible; including not following the guidance from admin regulation 717. As students here tonight have reminded us all, please remember students are at play here, their class electives, their programs, their futures. Obviously, this is not just about zoning lines.

Again, I ask the Zoning Committee to consider Option 4A only for approval and presentation to the Board.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Amy L. Horvath 
pronouns:: she/her/hers
sent from my iPhone

From: Chelsea M
Sent: Tuesday, April 22, 2025 5:50 PM
To: Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Zoning for Huffaker Students

 External Email: This email originated outside of WCSD. Please exercise caution. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Good evening,

I have three students in Washoe county school district. A 1st grader, a 4th grader, and a 6th grader. My 6th grader is a school of choice child at Marce Herz. My other children are at Huffaker Elementary. I want all of my children to be on the same track. Zoning the Huffaker students to Herz/Galena provides my family stability as well as continuity of education. It also allows us to continue with a community we have already become a part of.

I wanted to take a moment to discuss the potential busing times for Huffaker students. I currently live .3 miles from Huffaker Elementary School. I drive my 6th grader to Herz in the morning. To get there on time we leave our house at 6:30 a.m. While this is early, the busing times would be comparable, and a 40-minute bus ride is not a concern for me.

To reiterate my position, for my family the Herz/Galena track is the preferred option. My 6th grader is already a school of choice child at Marce Herz. As a parent I have been very happy with the education and support my son has received at Herz. Additionally with Marce Herz's recent STEM designation from Governor Lombardo, I feel that Marce Herz is the best option to prepare my children for the future. Especially in a community where mining, gaming, and technology businesses are the leading industries and employers.

I do not endorse a split feeder option for Huffaker elementary school. This would separate students from their peers, which is not ideal.

Thank you,
Chelsea Moore
Huffaker Elementary PTA Secretary

From: Brian Moll
Sent: Monday, April 21, 2025 9:16 PM
To: Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Agenda Item 3.05 – Support for Options 1 and 4 / Opposition to Split Feeder Proposals

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Dear Members of the Board of Trustees,

My name is Brian Moll, and I'm a parent at Huffaker Elementary and I also serve as a leader within Washoe County School District. I'm writing to you from two lenses and with deep gratitude for the work you're doing and a strong ask that we get this zoning decision right for our students and families.

Like many Huffaker families, I always thought our kids would feed into Swope and Reno. It felt natural, it fit our community, our relationships, and our history. But as this process unfolded, it became clear that Swope doesn't have the capacity to support Huffaker long-term. That was disappointing, but understandable.

What wasn't expected, or understood, was the sudden introduction of Vaughn and Wooster as options. That came out of nowhere for many of us and reopened old wounds from the last time Huffaker was rezoned.

That's why I'm urging you to adopt Option 1, or, alternatively, Option 4. Both options rezone Huffaker to Herz and Galena, and both reflect realistic planning, program alignment, and most importantly—community input. Option 1 is the staff-recommended choice, and for good reason: it's aligned with Administrative Regulation 7107, it supports a clear and consistent feeder pattern, and it honors existing peer groups, including those in our special education programs like Strategies.

Option 4, while not as clean as Option 1, demonstrates that the community's voice—particularly from Huffaker and Smithridge—is being heard. It's not perfect, but it's grounded in feedback and shows a genuine attempt to balance priorities.

What does not work is Option 4B. It creates a split feeder for Smithridge, which goes directly against the goals outlined in AR 7107 (specifically sections 1, 2, and 5 regarding equitable access, peer continuity, and clear feeder patterns). Similarly, Option 5 would split Huffaker—forcing some students, including those in the Strategies program, onto a different path than their peers. Currently, Swope and Reno do not offer a Strategies program, which means Huffaker students in that program would be forced to attend a different school than their general education peers. That's not equitable or inclusive.

Lastly, transporting Huffaker students past three elementary schools that are closer to Vaughn just doesn't make sense. It doesn't align with Administrative Regulation 7107. It doesn't align with what's best for our kids. And it doesn't reflect the type of stability and trust our families need from this district. We shouldn't compromise our guiding principals and promise to families and the community just to fill seats. If the goal is to address under-enrollment, there are other creative, community-centered solutions we can explore.


This decision is about more than maps—it's about trust, relationships, and doing right by kids. Let's honor the community's voice. Let's protect peer continuity. And let's make a choice that reflects our best thinking and our shared values.

Please support Option 1 or Option 4—and reject split feeder proposals like Options 4B and 5.

Thank you for your time and for the care you're bringing to this process.

Sincerely,
Brian Moll

From: Mary Owens
Sent: Monday, April 21, 2025 4:03 PM
To: Public Comments; Mary Owens
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Critical Needs

 External Email: This email originated outside of WCSD. Please exercise caution. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Board of Trustees,

I appreciate your time in reading my comments.

I am extremely disappointed after receiving the changes to how future critical labor shortage positions will be filled.

I retired in 2024 after teaching over 30 years in Nevada schools. I earned my Master's Degree and became a Nationally Board Certified Teacher. These revisions are extremely disrespectful, considering the experience I and other retirees bring to our work.

We are simply not "guest teachers"! I for one, would never consider working for WCSD if these adjustments are implemented. When working in a school, critical needs teachers are expected to fulfill the same obligations as any teacher on a regular contract, and should be compensated accordingly!


Whatever the reasons for these changes, it seems counterintuitive to the need of filling vital positions that support students and families in our community.

These new policies simply must be reconsidered if you hope to have highly qualified and experienced retired teachers consider coming back to educate for WCSD.

Sincerely,

Mary Owens
M. Ed., EL & GATE Endorsed, NBCT
Current Critical Needs EL Teacher, Hug High School

From: Laura Tremaine
Sent: Monday, April 21, 2025 1:10 PM
To: Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Board meeting

 External Email: This email originated outside of WCSD. Please exercise caution. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Members of the School Board,

I am writing to express serious concerns about the recent possible move to reclassify certain positions that currently require an administrative license and degree to non-licensed technical roles.

Administrative positions require specific experience and educational preparation for a reason—they directly support teachers and school leaders and play a critical role in shaping decisions that impact our schools, educators, and students. Diluting these requirements compromises the integrity and effectiveness of that support.

This shift risks deepening the disconnect between the central office and school sites at a time when we should be prioritizing stronger instructional alignment and strategies to retain high-quality staff.

Furthermore, it sets a troubling precedent that job title or work year alone—rather than demonstrated expertise or educational qualifications—can define our professional identity and bargaining protections.

I urge the Board to reconsider this direction and to engage in deeper, more collaborative dialogue with educators and school-based staff. Our policies should reflect the complexity, dedication, and professionalism of those who serve our students every day.

Thank you for your time and all that you do to make Washoe County Great