

Good evening Superintendent Sproles, Chair Farr, and members of the Bethel School Board. My name is Curt Nordling and I am the vice president of the Eugene Education Association and I am here tonight to speak about how exhausted and overworked our staff are.

Sometime this week, I ask that you pick up the phone and call any of our educators and simply ask, "Hey, how are you doing?" In every building, in every classroom, office, and any place where education happens in our schools...people are exhausted. Anxious, stressed, unhealthy...many describe it as...they're done. Its October.

While many people outside of our schools are looking to a return to normal...within our schools we are experiencing THE hardest year in education. Structural problems within our Online Academy, teacher shortages at all levels, and non-existent support staff...this year isn't the same as last year...its harder.

Most educators are pushing to produce for students in Bethel the same way as they always have. Running online virtual classrooms or supports for students and in-building content and curriculum. Class sizes that rival or surpass pre-covid levels. Working in classrooms where the impact of COVID is constant, and in some of our elementary settings, where the only person that could be vaccinated...is you.

The real solution to the problems we are having is hiring more people. You need to hire more...immediately. BOA teachers, classroom teachers, resource room teachers, SLPs, counselors and especially many more classified staff. (You should pay them more too since we aren't competitive with other employers). In some areas you can, and you should hire...but there is a shortage of teachers and classified staff, which we all saw coming.

So what can we do now? We need to lower the pressure on staff.

**First:** We need to stop all PD, immediately. No PD through January. You can. Of course you can, 4J just announced it.

**Second:** Push back against teacher goals. We don't need the hoop of SEL or SLG goals. We didn't last year we certainly don't need them this year. In fact, while many of our educators in Bethel were in meetings this week learning about student growth goals, they were receiving texts from colleagues in Eugene that they are being suspended in their district.

**Finally:** Evaluations and observations. Stop. These tools, while important, use up valuable time for both the administration and the teaching staff...that honestly we just don't have right now.

It is October. Educators are at the end of their ropes. The plea is urgent. We need more staff on all fronts, we need deep structural changes to BOA, but most importantly we need time simply to do our jobs. Educators need relief immediately. With what we are seeing at this early stage of the year, this will clearly be the most challenging year for many in the educational field, if nothing is changed, it will likely be that many won't make it to June.

I want to thank you for your service, thank you for your leadership, anything that can be done to lower the pressure on our staff please..we need your help immediately.