

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 speaking tonight to continue to push for workload reduction for our licensed staff.

Listening Session Thank You!

I wanted to begin with a big thank you to Rich and Robin for joining our listening session this month involving SPED educators from around Bethel. Our educators value the face to face and opportunity to speak directly to school board members and hope that these sessions continue to allow for an avenue of communication into the future.

In addition to the information shared on Friday from Sabrina, I would like to stress two areas of focus. Additional Licensed staff & additional classified Staff, both are needed. We are in need of additional resource room teachers & SLPs. Our caseloads are high in both of those areas. Further, additional EAs. EAs can perform scheduling and reduce paperwork demands found within SPED. Right now licensed staff members are performing these tasks instead of focusing all of their attention on the students. There is a better way.

Enhanced Monetary Incentives for Classified Staff ~ Thank You!

I also wanted to say another thank you for the decision to provide monetary incentives to attract EAs to Bethel. I hope that people will apply to our open positions and I think that this makes us competitive with other employers in the area.

We are in desperate need not only for SPED EAs, but gen ed is witnessing a never seen before lack of support to the classroom. When we pair the lack of EA support with increased behavioral demands since the return to the buildings, classroom teachers are left feeling like they are on an island. There are no good solutions at this time until we are able to increase our numbers. This has a negative impact on our staff and ultimately the children of Bethel.

Workload Relief ~ Licensed Staff

I wanted to return to the comment I made regarding a pause on PD within Bethel last time I spoke. To clarify, when I say PD I actually mean everything outside of the classroom. Our focus should be on the classroom only and anything (meetings / committees / PD), anything that can be cancelled or delayed, right now is the time. Some items are important, but we are in crisis mode and anything that isn't focused on our children, in our classrooms, needs to be cut.

There are things we can do:

One area that could help is Collaboration time. Collaboration time is found at the elementary level. If it could be changed from principal directed to teacher directed time it could give elementary staff additional planning time. Right now too much work is either being completed outside of the contract day or...it simply isn't happening at all.

Further:

Structural changes need to be considered at this point as well. While conversations at the state level need and should be happening soon locally there is room for structural changes. Every building is above requirements on instructional minutes. While school boards are usually adamant on not lowering contact time, right now we are running a school district at a capacity

that isn't sustainable by staff. We need to give staff time to complete their work. I recommend that we start looking into reducing contact with students to the minimum requirements by the state.

Resignations:

-Experienced teachers are looking for ways out (early retirement and PERS), young teachers are starting to question if this is the right profession for them. In the end, it takes only 60 days for us to lose a teacher to a neighboring district. Right now, educators are preparing their resumes on the weekends. If we don't want to see losses to the number of educators in Bethel we need to take immediate steps to lower their workload.

Thank you for your leadership, have a great rest of your evening.