

Public Comment Business Meeting- November 15, 2021

COLLEEN HUNTER <ckhunter13@aol.com>

Mon 11/8/2021 6:00 PM

To: public comment <public.comment@springfield.k12.or.us>;

This message is from a non-SPS email address. Please use caution and only click links and attachments if you are sure they are safe.

Members of the Board and Superintendent Hamilton,

As requested before, I would like to ask that live public comment continue at board meetings and that virtual availability for public comment also be available, as well. This should be done not only to comply with SB 2650 but also to allow for community members to be able to participate in the process to speak and also to be able to listen to others' statements, opinions, questions and/or concerns. This would allow for full transparency as email public comment is very difficult to locate on the website even by those of us who know where to attempt to find it. The information regarding how community members would go about making these live public comments could simply be shared on the district website so as to help people in the process of wanting to share their thoughts, feelings, opinions, etc.

I would also like to ask that district leadership consider the current realities facing our teachers and take notice of the actions of some districts in our state that have modified and/or cancelled expectations which were workable in the time before covid-19. Mandated professional development trainings, professional learning community work and teacher evaluations have been cancelled or postponed during this time. I see a similarity in the Oregon Department of Education requesting a waiver from the United States Department of Education for administering federally mandated standardized tests during the pandemic. Teachers are being asked to do so much more and so differently than ever before, under enormous constraints and I would like to think that they are valued enough, as well as their students. In consideration of their current workloads, please show them the understanding and respect that they deserve.

Respectfully,

Colleen Hunter
Retired SPS teacher and member of:
CAPE (Community Alliance for Public Education) and
SAfER (Springfield Alliance for Equity and Respect)

Public Comment

Laura Farrelly <farrellylt@gmail.com>

Wed 11/10/2021 6:23 PM

To: public comment <public.comment@springfield.k12.or.us>;

This message is from a non-SPS email address. Please use caution and only click links and attachments if you are sure they are safe.

November 9, 2021

Dear Members of the Springfield School Board,

My name is Laura Farrelly, and I am an English Language Arts teacher at SHS. I am writing this letter to help clarify the reasons teachers are feeling burdened this year as well as to request your help. If you are not actively working in a classroom with students, the severity of this issue may not be readily apparent.

Many of the challenges that teachers currently are grappling with stem from inequities which have become normalized in our nation's public schools. Due to the pandemic, these problems (large class sizes, ever-increasing workload, unsafe working conditions) have worsened and can no longer be ignored.

Teaching during a pandemic is extremely difficult. Wearing a mask for eight hours a day, while facilitating and directing safe and interactive classes for 30+ students is exhausting. It is not possible to give the students the one-on-one attention that they need and deserve while policing cell phone use, misuse of school-issued devices, and improper mask-wearing on top of the other misbehaviors present in a student body grown unaccustomed to in-person schooling. Additionally, when many of our students are in quarantine or returning from quarantine, teachers are giving up their preps and lunches in order to help their students catch up on missing work.

The ongoing staffing shortages are exacerbating teachers' already untenable workload. One teacher in my building loses fifteen minutes of her lunch everyday because she has to accompany her students to and from the lunch line. Ordinarily, an EA would cover this duty. Besides this, she had to give up her prep because she had to act as one-on-one aid to a student receiving special services.

The staffing shortages are also a safety concern. Since we do not have enough campus monitors, teachers now have to discipline students that are not even in their classes. Students have taken to wandering the halls without masks and disrupting classes. A colleague shared with me that a group of students ran past his classroom and threw rocks into it while class was in session. Luckily, he and the students were not injured. I frequently have to leave my own class to help maintain order and safety out in the hallways, but because we don't have the human power to staff lunch detentions, after-school detentions, facilitate other disciplinary measures, or the time to establish meaningful relationships with students, our efforts are in vain.

Clearly, we are in crisis. We need your help and support in order to help our students be successful. In order to teach, we need time to plan effective, engaging lessons. We need time to collaborate with our colleagues. We need

time to grade formative and summative assessments while giving detailed, meaningful feedback in a timely manner. Finally, we need the administration to develop systems, so we and our students feel safe on campus.

Thank you in advance for your attention to these matters.

Sincerely,

Laura Farrelly

Public Comment Business Meeting - November 15, 2021

Jonathan Gault SEAPREZ

Fri 11/12/2021 11:28 PM

To: public comment <public.comment@springfield.k12.or.us>;

Good evening once more,

I did want to highlight an incorrect email address for public comment, posted on the "Contact the School Board" website, which does not include the requisite period in-between the words "public" and "comment" :

<https://www.springfield.k12.or.us/Page/8124>.

Public Involvement

Public involvement is important to the Springfield School Board. The board invites members of the public to attend the public meetings of the board to gain a better understanding of school district business and the role of the school board. The public is also invited to address the board during identified public comment portions of their business meetings. Individuals interested in addressing the board during the public comment portion of their meeting should arrive a few minutes prior to the scheduled meetings to fill out the request to speak paperwork. Individuals may also submit written public comment to be included in the meeting minutes of the board business meeting by submitting an email to publiccomment@springfield.k12.or.us.

Notice of Public Meetings

To find out when meetings are scheduled:

- Visit the [Agendas & Materials](#) section of the SPS website

To contact the school board outside of public comment please feel free to use the form below and a member of the board, or district staff will assist you in a timely manner.

I did find the correct email address for public comment, as well as the instructions for proper subject line labeling on the board packet.

Since the message I sent for public comment was rejected by the server, I am forwarding it below.

Thank you,

JG

Jonathan M. Gault (he, him, his)
President, Springfield Education Association
seaprez@comcast.net (541) 343.1151

"Alone we can do so little; TOGETHER we can do so much." - Helen Keller

From: Jonathan Gault <seaprez@comcast.net>

Date: Friday, November 12, 2021 at 10:57 PM

To: Naomi Raven <naomi.raven@springfield.k12.or.us>, Emilio Hernandez <emilio.hernandez@springfield.k12.or.us>, <todd.mann@springfield.k12.or.us>, Jonathan Light <Jonathan.Light@springfield.k12.or.us>, <kelly.mason@springfield.k12.or.us>, <publiccomment@springfield.k12.or.us>

Subject: Public Comment: Springfield Education Association Survey Results

Good evening Springfield School Board,

Springfield Education Association recently sent a survey out to certified staff in order to gain an understanding of the experience of our educators so far this year, with an awareness of the increased demands and challenges related to the pandemic and the impacts of ongoing staffing shortages. SEA wanted to make sure you all were included in the sharing of this information, which has also already been shared back with certified staff, as well as with district leadership.

Some highlights from the results follow:

- **445 responses** (as of 9:45pm, Nov. 12th)
- **76%** feel their work-related stress level is causing them to feel overwhelmed
- **Almost 40%** report stress so severe that it is **impacting physical and emotional health**
- **89%** say that workload is more extreme this year than in any previous year
- **95%** say that their stress level is more extreme this year than in any previous year
- **98%** are working hours beyond the contract day; many are working more than 20 hours extra per week
- **212 educators** are “**seriously considering**” **exiting the profession** in one way or another (leave of absence, early retirement, or resignation). Our schools could not function if this many people left. **299 more reported that they are “possibly” considering these actions.**
- The greatest contributions to stress and workload have been attributed to **heightened student needs, and added work requirements, and lack of time to plan/prepare**

Thank you for taking the time to read through and consider this important information,

JG

Jonathan M. Gault (he, him, his)
President, Springfield Education Association
scaprez@comcast.net (541) 343.1151

“Alone we can do so little; TOGETHER we can do so much.” – Helen Keller

Letter to the School Board

Kyle Johnson

Sun 11/14/2021 6:00 PM

To: public comment <public.comment@springfield.k12.or.us>;

 1 attachment

Letter to School Board - Kyle Johnson - Google Docs.pdf;

Please see attached letter.

Kyle Johnson
English Language Arts Teacher
Springfield High School
541-744-4700

Please consider this email as confidential...

November 12, 2021

Dear Members of the Springfield School District School Board,

My name is Kyle Johnson, and I am an English Language Arts teacher at Springfield High School. This is my sixteenth year working as an educator in Oregon, and my sixth with Springfield School District. I love working with my colleagues and students at SHS; it is the best job I have ever had. Today, I am writing to add clarity around why teachers are feeling so burdened this year, and to ask for your help.

For those who do not work in a school building every day, it may be difficult to imagine what it is like to teach during a school year like this one. Many challenges that teachers -- and students -- face have worsened due to the pandemic, and yet, in so many ways, teachers are being asked to proceed as if it is 2019. Since the beginning of the pandemic, many students have lost any meaningful connection to school, and to ignore these challenges and pretend that everything is "back to normal" is harmful for both students and staff. Many of these obstacles are not minor at all, because they directly relate to teachers being able to do their jobs and students being able to learn. Challenges such as large class sizes, teachers having more responsibilities with less time to do them in, and an unsafe school environment have intensified, and while these obstacles certainly directly affect teachers, they also negatively affect every student who walks into our building.

Teaching during a pandemic is arduous. Teachers are wearing a mask for their entire work day, while delivering instruction to large classes. We all know that one-on-one relationships and supporting of students is essential, and yet, it is impossible to provide that for all of our students while trying to successfully manage inappropriate technology use, incorrect wearing of masks, and other unsafe behaviors. By this point in the school year, many students have had to quarantine for multiple weeks at a time, and in order to help those students get caught up when they return, teachers are frequently sacrificing their prep time and lunch.

You are undoubtedly aware of the staffing shortages our district is currently facing. These shortages make it logistically impossible to provide legally required services to some of our students. In our special education department, we have less than half of the necessary EAs to support our students. Classes that used to have two educators in them now often do not. Some of our students on IEPs are legally entitled to one-to-one support, and these shortages make that impossible. Without these legally required services, many students are struggling. Teachers are overextended to attempt to make up for these shortages. For example, special education teachers have found themselves covering lunch supervision; some students have IEPs and behavior plans necessitating staff escorts from location to location, and that burden has also fallen on special education teachers, despite being incompatible with their assigned teaching duties.

Additionally concerning to me is that these staffing shortages are leading to unsafe environments for staff and students alike, since we do not have enough campus monitors. Teachers have been asked repeatedly to help supervise hallways during passing periods, but those ten minutes are often crucial for building connections with students, assisting students getting caught up from absences, or even a simple restroom break. Additionally, supervision concerns are not limited merely to passing periods -- the lack of hallway supervision during instruction time is a growing and scary concern. A colleague in my hallway had a student run by his classroom and throw rocks into it during one of his classes. During my prep period, I have often encountered groups of students in hallways having loud, disruptive, and profane discussions with their masks removed. There has been clear evidence of items being thrown over stairwells. Many of my colleagues, myself included, have had to stop in the middle of teaching to address behavior concerns happening in the hallways. Furthermore, we do not currently have the staffing necessary for lunch detentions or other disciplinary measures, let alone the necessary time to build meaningful relationships with students, so these efforts often feel frustratingly futile.

Not addressing these issues will only worsen them. Teachers need time to plan meaningful lessons with their colleagues. We need time to grade assessments and give feedback to our students. We need staffing so that students on IEPs receive the services that they are legally entitled to. We need supervision and discipline plans that do not require teachers to stop teaching in the middle of a lesson to address behavior concerns with students they may not even know. Perhaps most importantly, we need help creating a school environment where all staff and students can feel safe.

Thank you for your time, and thank you in advance for your assistance.

Sincerely,
Kyle Johnson

Public Comment Business Meeting – November 15, 2021

Pauline Pham

Sun 11/14/2021 6:38 PM

To: public comment <public.comment@springfield.k12.or.us>;

November 14, 2021

Dear Members of the Springfield School Board,

My name is Pauline Pham, and I'm a special education teacher at SHS. This is my fourth year in the district, and my 14th year teaching. I write to you in order to shed light on the crisis taking place at our schools and to implore you to take effective measures to relieve some of the burdens teachers are carrying.

The most significant factor impacting student success is the staffing shortages we are experiencing. We need more educational assistants to provide required accommodations and specially designed instruction to our students with disabilities. Many of our classrooms went from having two adults to one, and the impact of that loss has been severe. Some students have told me they no longer attend certain classes, because they're not getting the support they need and are likely to fail anyway. Other students who attend say there's no one to ask for support from because their teachers are too busy helping the numerous other students that need help. Some students who are used to one to one support are having to adapt to a constant change in staffing. When I asked a group of students how the year was going, one student asked, "Why did they make us come back full time if they aren't ready to help us?" The academic and behavioral supports provided by our educational assistants are not only ethical obligations; these are also legal obligations that our students are entitled to in order to be successful.

We also need more campus monitors to provide and maintain a safe and healthy place of learning. There have been an increased number of physical and verbal conflicts among students, particularly in the hallways that don't have enough supervision. Just last week, students came to my class talking about "oh, just another fight" that took place, as if violence has become the norm at our school. We also need more transition specialists. Our freshman, who haven't had a normal year of school since the 6th grade, are struggling immensely to transition to the demands of high school. Some of them can barely sit through an entire class period without experiencing an anxiety attack. We need more custodians. The physical space of our school is a reflection of our school climate, and right now it's not uncommon to see trash and old food littering our hallways. Imagine what that scene communicates to our kids about the importance of their education.

Without these vital members of our school, teachers have taken it upon themselves to fill these roles. Some teachers have dedicated time before and after school, lunch hours, and even their precious prep time to provide more academic and emotional support for kids. We're often in the hallways monitoring student behavior, trying to prevent fights and begging kids to return to class. We're providing therapeutic support (for which most of us aren't professionally trained) in and out of classes for there has been lasting trauma from this pandemic. We're bringing in our own supplies and cleaning our own classrooms to keep the school from looking like a total dumpster. It's no secret that teachers have always worked beyond their paid duty hours. Except this time, the stakes are higher and

the needs are greater. It's not an exaggeration to say that teachers are working at least 60 hours a week and are still unable to accomplish what we need to do for kids. And students not getting what they need are not attending, not engaging, and not succeeding.

I implore you to help us fill these gaps in our schools. I don't believe we have a staff shortage problem. I believe we have a staff recruitment problem. What are we saying as a community if Taco Bell's starting hourly rate is \$17.25 and our starting hourly rate for an educational assistant is \$15.25 with no guarantee of a full time position and full benefits? Surely we care more about our children than we do a chalupa craving box. Our students deserve more than teachers and administrators who are stretched too thin; they deserve a fully staffed school that is functional, supportive, and safe. Another way to do this is to give teachers more time to address the lingering effects of unfinished learning from the past year. We've only just begun to really assess where students are and what they need. Now we need more time to find creative ways to solve some really complex problems. Also, please reduce the additional responsibilities that only serve to detract from the most pressing issues at hand: the wellbeing of our kids. Lastly, I believe it's important for teachers to hear directly from you that it's okay to prioritize caring and connecting with students and to adapt our curriculum to meet students where they are at, whether that means abridging materials for kids who are quarantined for 3-4 weeks or starting from scratch for the kid who missed an entire year of instruction. We cannot pretend this is a normal school year and ignore how the pandemic continues to affect so many parts of our lives.

Before signing off, I'd like to clarify that the hierarchy of people I interact with directly have done their absolute best to be supportive and solve problems. But the reality is that they can't produce new employees or give us time that isn't theirs to give. I work with some of the most brilliant and compassionate people who want the absolute best for our students, but we will not be able to effectively serve our kids without additional support and more time.

Sincerely,

Pauline Pham

Special Education/English 9&10/Ethnic Studies

Please consider this email as confidential...

Public Comment Business Meeting-November 15, 2021

Halle Wing <hallejwing@gmail.com>

Mon 11/15/2021 11:59 AM

To: public comment <public.comment@springfield.k12.or.us>;

This message is from a non-SPS email address. Please use caution and only click links and attachments if you are sure they are safe.

Greetings! I love our community and seeing good teachers being put on unpaid leave is so heartbreaking. I personally know some of these teachers and to see them get thrown out like they're dirt simply because they won't get a new vaccine that they have strong convictions against getting. These teachers who were once being praised during the pandemic are now getting put on unpaid leave because they won't get a vaccine. Our country is known for being a free country and a mandate is going against freedom. I am confused about why we need a vaccine mandate because I thought the vaccine was only to protect the person who gets the vaccine. So far no one has been able to prove or even have good evidence on if the vaccine is supposed to stop the spread. Instead, they are telling us that the vaccine is our hero whether we like it or not and that there is NO guarantee that it actually stops the spread. Please listen to your community and take into consideration the lives being changed due to this mandate.

Thank you.

Halle Wing

8th grade student