

January 21, 2015

Dr. Enfield, School Board members and community, my name is Lisa Lecoq and I am a 1st-grade teacher at North Hill Elementary. When I started teaching over 10 years ago I knew what I was in for. Sometimes there were long days during the school year preparing lesson plans, grading papers, and communicating with parents. I have always loved the challenge of teaching and seeing the results of my determined effort, and it is because of this passion that I am up here speaking to you all today. I want to talk to you today about serving the needs of our students. Our students need teachers that can exemplify that learning is fun and contagious. Our students need teachers that are creative and innovative. Our students need teachers that are enthusiastic and full of energy. Right now our students have teachers who are exhausted, overwhelmed, overworked, and feeling inadequate and very discouraged because they feel no matter how hard they try they will never live up to the district expectations.

I understand that there needs to be some means of holding teachers accountable. That is a given. But we have to report not to 1 department but to 6: literacy, writing, math, science, Ell and professional growth and evaluation. Each one of these departments has expectations, additional work time, and deadlines to meet. Teachers cannot meet all of these expectations and still have lives outside of work. Teachers are being set up to fail instead of succeed. Highline School District has so many great teachers, but the expectations from district departments have become too much and it is not manageable anymore.

I recently read an article from *The Seattle Times*. I usually do not spend time free reading during the school year, but the title of the article caught my attention. It was "How to Retain a Teacher." In the article Nathan Gibbs-Bowling wrote, "more than a decade's worth of research has shown that the most important in-school factor for a student's academic achievement is his or her teacher." Highline School District already has so many incredible and talented teachers. They know how to develop supportive relationships with the students. They know them by name, by strength and by need. They plan lessons that differentiate and accommodate all learner types.

I come to work on average an hour to an hour and half early each morning and on average leave an hour to an hour and half later. I rarely take advantage of the allotted break and lunch allowances so that I can plan, grade and communicate with parents. So in an average week I work 60 hours and still do not have everything completed. I haven't even mentioned all the meetings I am required to go to, the time it takes to collect and download artifacts for the professional growth and evaluation system, learn new curriculum, go to Professional development after school, etc.

Here is what I would like to see happen: Stop adding new programs, new curriculum, and new expectations for at least three years. Let us become experts with what we have now. Stop micro-managing our time. 99% of the teachers here

at Highline School District go above and beyond the call of duty. Don't penalize the 99% great teachers for the 1% of teachers that aren't teaching well. Teachers need to hear that they are doing a great job.

I would like to close with this last thought: People who are able to balance both their professional and personal lives are generally speaking very happy people. When people upset that balance the other side suffers. If you put too much time into your personal life you probably are not doing a very good job at work. On the same note, if you put too much time into your professional life, then your personal life is failing. Highline School District has way too many teachers off balance. They are spending entirely too much time at work and it is affecting their health, their relationships with their spouses and children and their personal happiness. Please stop adding more responsibilities and mandates. We can't even keep up with the ones we have now.

Thank you for your time.