

May 23, 2014

Good Evening,

**I am exhausted.** So are many of my colleagues. I am tired of students cussing me out, flipping me off, storming out of class because they don't want to follow directions.

I am frustrated by the constant defiance and disrespect and foul language that goes unchecked, **because there is no suspension policy to remove these students from class----** thus penalizing the learning of the rest of the Pacific community. Allowing this behavior to continue because there is no suspension doesn't help the offenders either. This policy against suspension ties our administrators' hands and leaves us, professional teachers, with no recourse or way to correct this behavior. Every student has the right to a public education, but these 15-20 students, male and female across all ethnic groups who daily disrupt every class they are in, are preventing the majority of our students access to the quality learning that we at Pacific pride ourselves on, and that they deserve.

Students are very upset that they can't learn because their classes are constantly being disrupted. These disruptive students are, in fact, stealing learning from the rest of the group.

I often feel I work in a hostile environment. I come to work prepared to teach, and am abused by 10-14 year olds. Our dedicated staff at Pacific deserves better.—a safe and civilized environment in which to teach those who want to learn. Two examples:

1. Living voices professional actor preparing for presentation of life of a freed slave. 70 students filing into the library in close quarters. Teachers assisting kids to move on down the rows in a timely manner. This student refused. Loudly. He said wanted this particular seat(on the aisle blocking all) I told him that he could see and hear

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from any seat and needed to move on down the row. He continued to refuse becoming belligerent, so much so that the actor came over because he believed I was being threatened. I called security. This student daily disrupts every class he is in.

2. My Library TA was in the shelving area not working. After asking him 3 times, quietly, what was wrong and getting no reply, he stood up, threw his folder down and cursed (F word) at me, then stormed out. This was not a one-time incident.

We know these students by name, strength and NEED. Clearly, we are not addressing their behavioral needs.

And, they know full well they can't be suspended, and will readily tell that to our faces.

As a professional and caring teacher, I know and agree that suspending students alone doesn't change their behavior and deprives them of education. However, we cannot stop out-of-school suspensions without a **significant investment** (SPONTANEOUS APPLAUSE) in keeping them in school with trained professionals working with them in ---a separate area where their many needs can be addressed WITHOUT negatively impacting standard classrooms.

### **Enacting a Policy without tools is a recipe for failure.**

As it stands, we can't do anything to address this disruptive behavior, which is only escalating.

**Why** should these students be able to get away with this behavior?

**What good** does it do them or us when there are no consequences?

Why should we, the professional teachers-- and administrators-- be subjected to this abuse to the detriment of our teaching and our students' learning?

I can't think of another profession where this non-compliant, disruptive, disrespectful behavior would be tolerated day after day.

As certificated teachers in the Highline School District we deserve better.

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Thank you.

Re: TFA. Will district funds be redirected to untrained, uncertificated, inexperienced individuals? I imagine TFA are paid less than certificated, trained professional teachers. Where will the remaining funds go? Those funds, if diverted to TFA, would be better spent for more paras in our classrooms of 30 plus students, often mixed with SPED and ELL and more behavioral support in our buildings----

We are charged with knowing our students by name, strength and need. The need is clear. More behavioral help, more paras for large classrooms, more supervision during transitions, lunch etc.

THANK YOU.