

Opinions & Comments To Trustees and Superintendent

Letters

| Topic | Suggestion | Comments |
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| Specialists | Cut | <p>Take a look at the special education facilitator positions. All the facilitators are certified special education teachers and should be utilized in special education classrooms. Instead, many of the high need classrooms are staffed with long-term subs. They are not trained and cannot handle the classes they are given. The facilitators could be thinned out considerably, with some left at the large high schools. The rest should be returned to classrooms. Substitute teachers could be used 2-3 days a week to schedule IEP meetings. Facilitators have no authority and primarily work on developing IEPs and scheduling IEPs.</p> <p>Take a look at the compliance monitors in Compliance & Monitoring. They are all certified special education teachers and should be utilized in classrooms as well.</p> <p>There are special education centralized positions that are duplicated at the region level.</p> <p>Take a look at the social worker positions in Wrap-around Services. The district managed quite well without social worker positions for many, many years. Ask what they do.</p> <p>The change to region management has been a disaster from a parental point of view. The point was to get schools closer to parents. All it has done is create kingdoms, each doing different things. It's impossible to get problems solved easily and it has to be a more expensive model.</p> |
| Specialists | Keep | <p>As a National Board certified teacher librarian for CCSD, and the president of the CCSD Librarian Association, I am saddened at the prospect of losing 105 certified library positions throughout the district. Perhaps you are not familiar with the recent studies indicating that certified school library media specialists and school libraries are vital to high achieving schools. Studies in Indiana, Illinois, and Ohio have all reached the same conclusion: powerful libraries and librarians do, indeed, make powerful learners. The time to eliminate certified instructional professionals is not when our class sizes are increasing and classroom teachers need all the specialized help they can get at their school location.</p> <p>I have attached information detailing how important school libraries are to our students and their achievement and describing how the certified school library media specialist is a partner with classroom teachers in ensuring no children are left behind.</p> |
| Class Size Reduction | Cut | <p>Last week, during a budget meeting at Lorna J. Kesterson Elementary School, Principal Wooldridge informed us that the Clark County School District is facing a 3.5 million dollar district-wide budget cut. This cut, we learned, would have a direct impact of approx. \$127,000 to Kesterson Elementary, for each of the next two year.</p> <p>Dr. Rulffes, we realize the shortfall is per a mandate from the governor and , as such, cannot be avoided, but as concerned parents and PTA board members, we can not only hope for a solution to this budget crisis, but assess any ways the school can make up the cut.</p> <p>Two suggestions come to mind, since approx. 86% of the school's budget is comprised of salaries and benefits:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Increase class size by 203 pupils. This, in itself, is a bitter pill to swallow. However, school-wide under this scenario, it would be possible to cut, by attrition, on, or maybe two teacher positions. 2) Again, by attrition, eliminate one office position. We do realize the additional duties this would place on remaining staff. <p>Dr. Rulffes, again, we do realize the additional burden these proposals would place on everyone. However, thinking long and hard, the realization is that any other cuts would have a far greater impact on students. As you're well aware, the school is already stretched in terms of supplies and teaching aids. The PTA, however, is committed to redouble it's efforts to generate additional revenue as well as supplies contributions for the school.</p> <p>We will also aggressively ask parents to volunteer, doing what we can, to take some of the pressure off teachers and other staff members.</p> |

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| | | Thank you for listening and let's all fight the good fight for our kids. |
| Revenue Resources | Ideas | <p>My name is _____ I'm a single parent struggling everyday like so many of us today who is very concerned I don't want to be famous or do interviews im just trying to find a way to help about the problems that are affecting our Schools, Teachers, and Staff, Transportation, Athletics, and most of all our Students. I have come up with a Slogan and ideal for ALL of us to get involved to donate money OUR goal \$130,000,000.00 that is needed for the Clark County School District whether its in person or thru the mail here is what im suggesting</p> <p>Slogan = W.S.O.S. WE SAVED OUR SCHOOLS Yes We Can Yes We Will Yes We Did</p> <p>Please help our School District raise the money need to help for our Teachers and Staff Salaries, Uniforms, Supplies, Lunches, Transportation, Athletics, Before and After School Programs, etc. All we have to do is send directly to the School District \$100 to Save Our Budget from every Household or Business or Individual that is able and can afford to help in reaching our goal we can put off Shopping, Going out, the new Game, that Concert, our Hair and Nails done just so WE can all say WE as Parents and concerned Citizens helped our School District not the Government, President, Elected officials but WE SAVE OUR SCHOOLS Citizens of Nevada made it happen. Thank you for your time.</p> |
| Magnet | Keep | <p>My daughter is a 10th grade student in the IB Magnet program at Valley High School. I am concerned with budget cuts which discontinue the transportation of magnet students throughout the valley.</p> <p>The IB program at Valley is nothing short of outstanding, on of which the district should take great pride in. The courses that she is taking, the instructors who are extremely talented educators, the administrative staff headed by their principal, Mr. Montoya is an educational dream come true. As I'm sure you know, the kids in the IB program thrive on learning, and setting their own personal goals of educational excellence. All of this is threatened to come to an end without transportation support.</p> <p>I would venture to say that at least 50% if not more of the students who participate in the various magnet programs throughout the district rely on the current transportation system. The fact that transportation was provided as part of the magnet program was and important selling point for us to send our daughter to Valley. We live 20.8 miles round trip from Valley and we couldn't provide transportation for her on a daily basis due to our work schedules and I'm sure that other parents have similar reasons. If transportation is discontinued itwould greatly impact the magnet programs.</p> <p>I would suggest changing the current mileage for transportation to zoned schools. My son currently is transported to his zoned middle school because we live more than 3 miles away. If the requirement for zoned school transportation is increased to 4 or 5 miles this could possibly give you the funds to continue transporting to the magnet programs. I am well aware that this suggestion could require me to get my son 5 miles to school, than my daughter almost 11 miles daily. More children might have to walk or bike to school which would greatly increase the amount of exercise that they receive daily, especially since PE classes have been continually cut on an annual basis.</p> <p>I understand that the CCSD budget must be cut, that there just not enough money to go around, but I implore you to continue transportation to the magnet programs. These programs are much too important to the students who attend them and the parents, teachers and administrators who make their attendance and education possible. Please continue the transportation program to the magnet schools.</p> |
| Specialists | Cut | I would like to submit my thoughts and opinions regarding budget cuts. I have worked as a licensed employee in the elementary school setting in Las Vegas for the past 17 years. I am sure you have received much input regarding what positions or areas should be cut. My opinions are due to my experience with the CCSD over |

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| | | <p>the past 17 years.</p> <p>The areas that I believe should most definitely be looked at are the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Literacy Specialists: My experience with literacy specialists over past years is that they seem to have excesss time on their hands in which they run errands, socialize while on district time and have become administration's sounding board and/or administrative assistants. Very little time is spent in the classrooms and moral amongst many teachers is poor due to the manner in which literacy specialists are used. The last I knew, classroom teachers are trained to teach reading and writing and the position has become a position of luxury as opposed to necessity. 2. ELL Positions: These positions seem to be a luxury position as with the literacy specialists. I do realize we have many hispanic students in the CCSD. I believe students who are low in the English language will catch on. The parents of these children have made a choice to be in our tow/school district. We have more than gone out of our way with numerous resources and funding to accommodate these individuals. I think it may be time to realisticaclly look at this area at this time due to budget cuts. 3. ECS Positions: Instead of teaching lessons to students, many ECS positions are deemed administrative assistants. Student's learning/knowledge of computer education is directly related to the computer expertise of each individual teacher as teachers are the ones teaching computer skills to their own students. There appears to be a broad range of teacher computer knowledge on a scale from 1-100. 4. Special Education positions: Our special education facilitator is divided between 2 schools. She has commented that she really is not needed at her other school. She appears to have time to socialize with stff throughout the 3 days she is assigned to our school. <p>I am remiss regarding signing this letter as I do not want repercussions with my administration. It has gotten to the point where I do not know who I can trust any longer and I would not want to jeopardize my much loved position.</p> <p>All I ask is that you take a look at the above positions and see for yourself where money can be cut by placing these individuals at two or more sites or possibly eliminating Literacy and Ell positions altogether.</p> <p>I thank you for your time.</p> |
| GATE | Keep | <p>I am writing to you with a plea to save GATE, the only CCSD program that is available to the gifted children in Clark County. I write this not only on behalf of my children, but children throughout the Clark County School District. People often forget that gifted education is considered special education, because gifted children have spencial needs, too. And this group of children frequently get overlooked and/or dismissed when budget-cutting discussions are held. They are often the first to be disregarded and the first to be cut when decisions need to be made. However, just like a child with autism deserves speical programs to make the most of his education, so, too, does a gifted child.</p> <p>I have been informed by my daughter's principal at Ober Elementary that based on a teacher survey, GATE is most likely the first program to be cut, should the schools be given autonomous control over such budget cuts. I urge the Board of Trustees to consider the impact this will have on the children who are, ostnesibly, our future leaders. Eliminating GATE is certainly not the way to encourage educational growth and involvement!</p> <p>School districts across the country struggle daily, attempting to improve their reputations and the educational well-being of their students. They work incessantly on getting every child to meet "average" standards that have been arbitrarily decided, based on what the "average" child should know at any given age. However, has anyone stopped to consider that the nature of "average" means that some will always be lower and some will always be higher? In attempting to eliminate the "lower," I have seen a disturbing byproduct. In focusing exclusively on ensuring that everyone is meeting average standards, we are ensuring that no one can be exceptional.</p> |

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| | <p>It is a common misconception that “smart kids” will be fine in a regular class; that they’re smart enough to do the work easily and that they will stay at the head of their class. But this is not the case. More often, without proper challenges, encouragement and peer interaction, gifted children will stagnate. Without challenges, they will become bored and cease to pay attention. Without encouragement, they will learn bad habits that will take years to break. Without peer interaction, they could fall into that age-old peer pressure trap of covering up their knowledge in order to fit in with others.</p> <p>My daughter, _____, is in 3rd grade and tested into the Highly Gifted program last year, which automatically placed her in GATE. Her teacher at that time, _____, told me she was “one in a million.” _____ is talented in math and excels beyond belief in reading. I have no doubt that she could easily handle the work that would come with skipping a grade to keep her educationally challenged. However, _____ is also very much an eight year old young girl, emotionally. I would not consider myself a responsible and caring parent if I ignored the emotional impact in favor of the educational impact; not when her needs are currently being met with GATE and the High Gifted program, needs that would go unanswered should this program be cut.</p> <p>My husband and I are a rare breed in Las Vegas, as natives and products of the CCSD. My husband, _____, was born here and attended Doris Hancock ES, Hyde Park MS and Bonanza HS. I attended CH Decker ES, Kenny Guinn Jr. High School and Clark HS, both of us graduating with high honors. We both believe in public school education and very strongly believe that you get out of your education what you put into it. There have been times when I’ve discussed _____’s educational needs (and the future needs of her brother, who starts kindergarten next year) and so many times the response is, “She needs to be in private school to get a good education.”</p> <p>I don’t want to believe that, but in the face of economic hardships, what is one of the first programs to be looked at for elimination? What program is valued, apparently so little, that it appears expendable in the education of our youth? Do we really value the gifted children in Clark County so little? What will happen if gifted children are forced to leave public schooling for better opportunities? What will happen to gifted children who cannot afford private school, to get the education they deserve?</p> <p>Please don’t force the principals to make such a detrimental decision. I know there are programs that are untouchable at the school level; programs that the district deems important enough to keep, no matter what, whether it’s because of federal mandates or district priorities. I urge you to mandate that GATE and the Highly Gifted program are untouchable. Surely there are other answers to our growing economic crisis than cheating a large group of children out of a worthwhile education?</p> <p>Thank you for your attention to this matter. I plan on attending the Town Hall budget meeting at Western HS on November 18. Prior to that, I would be happy to discuss this further with you, if you think I could be of assistance in saving this program. I can be reached at _____ or on my cell phone at _____. I am also available via email at _____.</p> |
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