

Dear Dr. Trigg, Administrative Staff and Highland Park School Board,

I am a concerned community member, parent and finally a Highland Park teacher. Since the Golden Penny election, I have had many come to me asking my opinion on the state of the district. They wanted to be informed, so that they could vote responsibly. I struggled with my response because even though a pay raise is deserved, the fact that it has been withheld for over 6 years after receiving the largest endowment in the school's history indicates the district has deeper issues.

When I first started, teachers were respected and valued. We were an integral part of the decision making process when it came to programs and curriculum. In addition, administrators and members of the school board were accessible and on campuses. The administration worked with teams and schools instead of against. Today, teachers have raised concerns that have fallen on deaf ears. Instead of teachers being heard, respected, and trusted as the experts, we are part of a sheet on a clipboard to be checked on like our children.

Increasingly, programs and curriculum are purchased that are not supportive of our curriculum, standards or the two populations that need the most support: special education and TAG. Despite recent research against, Lucy Calkins has now become "the" curriculum for reading and writing instead of an available resource. Finally and most disturbing, the newest program creates flexible groups by ability grouping students based on scores. Unfortunately, this time in the flexible groups takes away valuable time in which students would otherwise get the help needed from their teachers or differentiation groups.

Again, grave concerns have been brought up by teachers across the district who are overwhelmed, overworked, and disenchanted by a district that used to treat teachers as the most valuable resource, but now treats them as a group to be managed by the whim of those who want to instill common core ideals and mediocre programs. It is not too late to make some crucial changes and start focusing on what is important – the students and the teachers that are in front of them each day. These are your important assets – listen to them and create an environment in which they are listened to and heard.

Sincerely,

Anonymous teacher

"Leaders face a unique challenge in that no single solution exists for addressing adult well-being...a first step should always be to ask educators what they actually need. – a quote from Dr. Beth Holland.