

Oct. 3, 2018

Dear Board of Education Member,

As I reflect on the latest situation facing Geneva 304 teachers, I am very disheartened at the board's inability to understand their teachers' needs. As someone who has been in the teaching profession for over 30 years, and currently at Williamsburg, I am very proud to have worked with such quality teachers, including the ones in my building. I am constantly impressed with the professionalism, generosity and work ethic of our staff. I see teachers going to games, plays, and other Geneva events all on their own time, as well as staying late or coming in on weekends. They do it because they care. I know I also buy stamps out of my own pocket for beginning of the year letters to students and have been told the district won't pay for it, yet it's important to the students so I do it. Additionally, the staff as a whole keeps bettering themselves by getting advanced degrees and participating in professional development events or presenting at conferences, like the Illinois Reading Council (IRC) this week, even when the district doesn't pay for it. We are driven to be the best as it shows in our ratings. But will this continue as teachers are not valued?

Geneva teachers care about their students...every single one of them. We try to make a personal connection. I also know we are valued in the community as we make these connections. Our parents know we care and I think you underestimate the reaction of the community to the disparity of our wage compensation compared to the Tier 4 schools in our area. When I call my students' parents to discuss their children academically and behaviorally, they are always thankful and appreciative of the time I have spent after school hours calling them about their child's strengths and struggles. Together we are trying to make their child successful. We are working as a team.

I believe this is supposed to be the goal of the Board of Education as well, to work together with teachers and administrators to maintain success for all students. How can that happen when teachers are so devalued? How can the community continue to brag about their schools as a selling point when buying or selling a home if the schools cannot attract the highest quality teachers because their salaries are so low? I am concerned about the future of Geneva schools and their ability to keep the amazing teachers we have now when the Board is unwilling to invest in their future, especially if the Board does not reconsider their position on this contract.

Overall, I am sorry to say that I have lost respect for our Board members and their inability to understand and be independent thinkers, or problem solve as a group; to understand and articulate that this new salary schedule is wrong and unsustainable for teachers and their families. I hope you have also given the time and respect to actually read the letters from your teachers' hearts, as many have taken the time to share their concerns. Please reconsider your position and do what is right.

Sincerely,

Dawn Lutz

