

October 1, 2018

Dear Board of Education,

Not only am I a proud Geneva teacher, but I am also a proud Geneva graduate. My teachers in this district impacted me so much that I wanted to be one of them. When I went to college, I realized what a great education I had because of my teachers. I have wanted to be a teacher since the third grade, but never thought I would be lucky enough to work in district 304. In 2015, I not only graduated with my teaching degree, but I was also given the opportunity to work at my alma mater. I could not believe that at twenty-three years old, I was starting what I thought would be my forever career.

Going into education, I knew I was never going to make billions. The money is not the reason why any teacher goes into this career. However, I also didn't think I would not be able to support myself or consider starting a family. I am in a serious relationship and we are discussing marriage, a house, and a family. We have been putting our future on hold due to my current salary. Think about that. Think about being twenty-seven and not making enough money to move out of your parents' basement. That is my reality every day. This is the time of my life that I should be ecstatic about the idea of getting engaged and starting a marriage, and all I can think about is how there is no way we could afford it. Rent in Geneva is around \$1,500 on the low end. I don't even make that in one paycheck. Between student loans, a car payment, and everyday expenses I am lucky to make it to my next paycheck.

I would love to further my education by getting a masters degree in Instructional Technology. This degree would allow me to better teach my students twenty-first century skills. With the lane advancement limitations that are currently in place, I will have to start paying for my degree before I start getting paid for it. I do not know of any other career that does not reward you right away for furthering your education, let alone having to wait four years. This is deterring me from starting a masters and making it very difficult for me to find a way to ever make it work.

I went into teaching because I wanted to make a difference in students' lives like my teachers did for me. It's a noble profession that deserves to be respected. As a teacher in district 304, I feel insulted, belittled, and unappreciated. Think of your children, some are teachers and some want to become teachers. How would you feel if their districts were treating them this way and they called you to tell you what was being proposed? Would you still support it?

At the end of the day, I love what I do and where I do it. I thought I would live out my career in Geneva schools. Unfortunately, that no longer seems possible. I, like all the younger teachers, will be forced to leave in order to live. The "tradition of excellence" will go by the wayside. There would be a revolving door of teachers and those customs and beliefs would never be able to be transferred from generation to generation. No teacher would stay long enough to keep those traditions alive.

It would be heartbreaking to leave my students, coworkers, and a school I love in order to make sure I could provide for my future family. However, it seems like I may need to start looking for a district that rewards and supports my goals.

I am tired of living paycheck to paycheck, and I need to get out of my parents' basement. Please remember, we are hardworking people who just want to make enough money to live a middle class life. We are people who work everyday with and for **YOUR** children and grandchildren. We love this community and want to continue the "tradition of excellence" for which families moved here. I am a proud Geneva teacher but the current situation makes working here unsustainable.

Sincerely,

GMSS Family and Consumer Science Teacher

*Bri Mack*

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