

STAKEHOLDER LETTER OF SUPPORT

May 10, 2016

Dear JCPS,

We support our teachers and staff. Freezing their pay would be unconscionable, when:

- The state auditor's office recommended that JCPS conduct a salary review, starting with the positions that make more than \$100,000 a year. This should not have been interpreted to include teachers and staff.
- The resulting salary study/proposal contains many questionable assumptions and unaddressed concerns, and is being rushed through after an unspecified delay with little to no transparency. The proposal going before the board does nothing to specifically address the auditor's initial concern. Furthermore, the "Community Advisory Team" makeup for "Project Equity" was lacking adequate teacher, parent, and community representation.
- Recruiting and retention of teachers in our district, especially in our priority schools, is already difficult. A salary freeze would exacerbate a dire situation, and doesn't take into account the reasons they are paid a premium.
- Cost of turnover and training does not appear to have been factored in to the analysis. Having less experienced teachers and staff and frequent turnover impacts student learning and school climate. Relationships matter.
- Our teachers and staff are continuously faced with budget cuts, coupled with increased expectations. They are often paying for materials and supplies out of their own pockets.
- Our teachers, staff and students are demoralized and beaten down by the over-emphasis placed on high-stakes, standardized test scores. These tests drain school and district budgets and resources. Furthermore, quality curriculum and assessment are sacrificed for increasing numbers of tests and test prep activities.
- Many school administrators are currently not provided the necessary supports and resources to address behavior issues properly. Our schools need more manageable class sizes, whole-school buy-in and implementation of restorative practices, sufficient and dedicated personnel, more intervention alternatives and wrap-around services, and more, before the proposed changes to the Code of Conduct can be successful.
- Many of our teachers and staff are being required to endure an overwhelming increase in the number of responsibilities in the classroom, while accountabilities are also increasing. This is an impossible expectation.
- There is a district-wide culture of intimidation that prevents decision-makers from hearing the best ideas and solutions from those on the ground.
- Stakeholder input and involvement are continuously and systematically shut out. As a result, the best decisions are not being made the first time. Our students suffer.

Instead of a blanket salary freeze for all educators making over an "arbitrary" \$14 per hour, focus on salaries of central office employees making over \$100,000 per year, as the audit originally suggested. Start by providing the school-level supports that are so badly needed to meet the needs of students, so that effective learning can take place. Start by fully funding and supporting research-based programs, not just PR, and treating priority schools like a priority. Address the above items before you further penalize and devalue the ones who faithfully and unselfishly serve our students day in and day out.

Signed,

Name _____

Signature _____

Board Member (if known) _____

Zip Code _____ Phone Number _____

Parent/Guardian Teacher Student Community Member Other _____

