

MDUSD encourages public participation in district business by way of public comments.

One method of leaving a public comment is to email BoardComments@mdusd.org. Emails received are automatically distributed to each board member. Emails will be entered into the public record on this document when received on 04/28/2021. Monitor public comment emails below.

Public Record:

<marnibeck@yahoo.com>

To whom it may concern,

Ahead of the meeting this evening, I would like to share an email from my husband about the disheartening news about three displacements at our Elementary school, Strandwood. Not only will our amazing kinder teacher be displaced, but school sizes will be raised to an unbelievable number. This is an extremely short sighted response and these young children need great teachers and smaller classes when returning to full time school. In many conversations with other kinder parents, inside and outside our school, we have had a MUCH better experience due to our teacher, Ms Jillian Cary. She has been caring and supportive and the kids are doing so much better because of her.

These types of decisions, especially since I believed the board had voted AGAINST layoffs, are infuriating. I strongly request that you rethink this decision. These are the types of decisions that are making parents question their decision to stay part of MDUSD.

Best,

Marni Voelkel Beck

Begin forwarded message:

From: Benjamin Beck <bnjmnbeck@aol.com>

Date: April 26, 2021 at 6:08:20 PM GMT-6

To: scripterc@mdusd.org

Cc: boardcomments@mdusd.org

Subject: Recent news: Strandwood Elementary / Ms Jillian Cary

To whom it may concern,

I am writing on behalf of our daughter and the numerous parents we have spoken to about Ms Cary and about the way the district is being run.

Our experience with Ms. Cary

I'll start with the absolutely sickening news that Ms Cary has been displaced. Being a parent, having your first child start school is a frightening experience— knowing that your child's first exposure to school is solely in the hands of one person. Combining that with these crazy Covid times made all parent even more nervous.

From the first exposure we had to Ms. Cary, she has truly blown us away with her caring, patience and love for the children under her care. We have many friends that have dealt with teachers in this district that just weren't cut out for teaching the youngest of our children.

Ms. Cary has done an outstanding job ensuring that we, as parents, know what is happening at every step. During these crazy times, her communication, openness and care has shown through.

I want to provide a simple example that I have seen play out multiple times this year. On one of the few Zoom calls I have been able to listen in on this year, very early in the school year, I saw Ms. Cary handle a flurry of questions and comments, from 5 year olds no less, with an extraordinary level of grace and joy. These children had no idea what to do on those early calls, when to talk, when to listen, and, yes, how to use that tricky mute button. Ms. Cary made each one feel heard and acknowledged each and every one of their comments with pure joy and understanding. I was left in awe at her handling of such a tough situation. And to do that with such care and such attention to each individual student—all while helping them learn how to navigate their odd new learning environment— was something I will never forget.

I have asked myself many times how many people could have handled that situation the way Ms. Cary did. And I would ask you to do the same. The answer: not many human beings have the capacity for that level of patience and understanding. And that is exactly what kids in these trying times need. I very humbly and respectfully ask you and the board to reconsider your decision.

Whatever happens, I will always be grateful that our daughter was introduced to kindergarten and her first experience of school with such a wonderful, loving person like Ms. Cary. She will be forever better for her time with Ms. Cary.

MDUSD

That you would let a teacher like Ms. Cary, who truly loves what she does and brings what she does to those children, makes me truly question whether this district is operating in the best interests of the children it is supposed to care for.

As a parent during these times, I find myself talking, and thinking, more than ever about what is best for our children. My wife and I have spoken with dozens of parents in the area about how their schools and districts are handling these tough times. And yes, they are tough times for all (yourselves included).

What I have found I truly disheartening. MDUSD has a negative connotation in the area. Letting teachers go at this time is a step in exactly the wrong direction and will only serve to degrade your reputation further.

Combining that with the idea of higher student-teacher ratios, and I believe that now I have to truly consider whether keeping our children (we also have a 4 yr old) in MDUSD is the right decision.

Closing

While I am sure this was not a decision made lightly, I have to say that making this decision in the midst of a pandemic is both heartless and short-sighted. I don't have a clue if you still have the ability to change course. But I will say that if you don't, you be losing an exceptional asset for the children you are supposed to care for. And we, as parents, will look to make some serious changes at the top of this district. I will see to that.

If you have any questions or desire a dialogue about this situation, I would be more than happy to talk to anyone that cares. And more than anything, I simply want the people that care for our children to be shown the same care that we ask of them. If we cannot do that in these trying times, then I believe we are failing as a society, as people... and certainly as a school district.

Sincerely,

Benjamin Beck, disheartened parent

<rforbes765@insite.4cd.edu>

Good Morning,

My name is Racquel Forbes, and I am a college mentor at Shore Acres Elementary School. I am also a student at Diablo Valley College that is a part of the class Education - 120. I have written an advocacy letter for higher teacher pay and attached it to this email.

Thank you,

Racquel Forbes

<ashley.m.harvey@gmail.com>

Hello,

I am writing in regards to class sizes and involuntary teacher transfers.

This past year has been a challenging one for our communities. Families and schools alike had to adapt as we found ourselves in the midst of a historic pandemic. We now look hopefully to next year. A year our students can rejoin their classmates, teachers, and staff and a return to "normalcy." Though, we must not "return to normal" without accounting for the toll that this year has taken. Students are going to need dedicated teachers and appropriate class sizes to address learning gaps and other outcomes from this past year. It is because of this that I and many parents are adamantly against increasing class sizes and involuntary transfers of teachers.

I understand there are budgetary constrictions the district must take into consideration and work within. I empathize with the hard decisions that have to be made. However, these decisions are going to directly impact our students after a year that has already impacted them so greatly. Our teachers have gone above and beyond their call of duty. Adapting classrooms and coursework and providing support to their students and parents alike. Our students are going to need this same level of commitment next year. I implore the district to rethink any plans to decrease teaching staff and increase class sizes.

Thank you,

Ashley Harvey

Strandwood Elementary Parent

<monica.black1217@gmail.com>

Please provide all progress made towards an August 2021 full reopening as an agenda item at each and every board meeting going forward, Having reports buried in the superintendent's address does not provide enough transparency to parents. We still have a very long way to go before trust is established between parents and the board and MDUSD.

Additionally, any excess funds in the budget should be put towards students, as they have been the victims of lack of education this year. Hiring new teachers so we can have smaller class sizes, hiring more counselors and school psychologists to help deal with the trauma caused by over a year of distance learning, providing site based enrichment programs should be what any excess budget funding goes towards. While usually I am all for salary increases for teachers, this is not the year for it. Students and their well being should be the only thing MDUSD is spending extra money on in 2021-2022.

Thank you,

Monica Black

<laurakescobar@gmail.com>

It seems that for the Fall 2021 school year, we have a trust and a

financial issue on our hands. On March 26, Dr Clark and MDEA President, Anita Johnson, issued a joint statement that there are intentions to resume the Fall 2021 school year in person. This was done seemingly in an effort to quell the public's anxiety and mistrust in both the school district and the teacher's union.

Now, not more than a month after that statement, our students are still only receiving 5 hours a week in-person, and MDEA has instructed their membership to demand raises. This is completely tone deaf.

Just a few meetings ago, many in our district celebrated the fact that the trustees did not pass a motion to issue pink slips, in an effort to retain as many qualified educators as possible as we navigate the coming school year. This was done despite the district having spent down state required reserves during the pandemic and facing possible threats of receivership. There is also a hope and wish that perhaps the covid relief funds will be enough to float our district long enough to not only retain the teachers but also to give them all raises. We don't even have that money yet and it's already being demanded to be spent. Tonight, the board will also vote to increase the daily rate for subs. This is also an important need for our students. Per the "Ask the CBO" videos, 94 cents of every dollar spent in this district is paid to personnel, which is 10% more compared to neighboring districts. We pay our teachers competitively and we should feel good about that. I should also mention that those districts are beginning to offer more like full time instruction. I have to point

out that schools exist to educate our children, not to employ teachers. While teacher satisfaction should absolutely be a factor, it must not be a priority over students. The students must come first. So long as our students are not in class for full time days, there is no room for negotiating the remaining 6% of funding.

Let's also not forget that the taxpayer dollars that are being requested to support no layoffs/raises are paid for by people who have lost their jobs and parents who have had to leave their jobs to be home with children. I'll remind you that those parents are disproportionately women and low wage workers, many of color.

In many of my discussions with the community while advocating to reopen for in-person instruction, most of the teachers I spoke to noted failing infrastructure at our schools including HVAC and plumbing. When we have a burned out workforce and poor facilities, no amount of wage increases will address the employee dissatisfaction. We need to focus on improving class sizes and facility updates.

If the district wants to repair relationships with the public that they exist to serve, we need the trustees to put the money where their mouth is. Every private school in the county has waitlists a mile long. I promise you that those students are dually enrolled at this moment and parents are idly watching these moves carefully. Not just for fall but the financial decisions that will impact their children for years to come. Kids come first.

Dutifully,

Laura Steele

<lina.plotnikoff@gmail.com>

To whom it may concern

We have recently moved to Pleasant Hill and were excited to have our children join Strandwood Elementary as it has great credentials, community, and teachers. However, we were very disappointed to receive information that MDUSD will be reducing the number of teachers and increasing class sizes.

30-35 students per class would negatively affect kids' learning and social/emotional experience as they would not be receiving enough attention from teachers, in addition to losing great teachers who are making a great impact on our kids this current year.

It is already hard for children to absorb all the new material and keep themselves organized, focused, and disciplined, but it will be extremely difficult to stay on top of schoolwork and receive education with such crowded classrooms and minimal attention from teachers because they will be stretched thin with trying to teach such big groups.

We are asking to really put a lot of thought into this and retain the teachers to keep classrooms at no more than 25 students per class so our kids can benefit from the education they're being provided and actually learn and want to go to school.

Thank you,

Lina and Vlad Plotnikoff

Strandwood Elementary parents

Shuangling Gu <sgu105@insite.4cd.edu>

Hello, dear board members.

Thank you so much for provides me this great opportunity to have my voice to be heard. The attachment is my advocate letter, thanks.

Best regards,

Shuangling.

Attachments area

<lauraferguson7@icloud.com>

Hello,

I am the mother of a Kindergartener and First Grader at Strandwood Elementary.

When the board voted NO to layoffs for the upcoming school year I felt relief, hope, and trust in the district. I felt that the groundwork was being established for a stable and safe return. There was a sigh of relief for our essential hardworking teachers that they would all return to teach another year in the classroom at their school and be there as we as a community move forward past the pandemic.

However, this was short lived and was a false sense of relief hope and trust as now the decision has been made to involuntarily transfer some of our essential teachers out of their classrooms and out of our school. That groundwork that was being set up for a stable and safe return is no longer. You are removing dedicated and essential teachers and in turn having classrooms sit empty.

These teachers have weathered the storm with the district and community during pandemic and distance learning times. These teachers are a big reason why many families who could choose to leave the district did not choose to do so. They are vital to the home schools that they have served for years. They lead our children and families in creating a sense of class pride and school pride. These are teachers who have grown up in the district, attended the schools and decided to return after obtaining degrees to share the passion for education with our students in this community. The district in turn threatens pink slips annually and now involuntarily transfers teachers when layoffs were voted against for the upcoming year.

I have been given many excuses when advocating against layoffs and now involuntary transfers such as “well we just don’t know what enrollment numbers will be...budget concerns ... 1000+ families have left the district...etc”. In last night’s meeting Dr Clark said that we just don’t know how many kids will return but there will be a place at the homeschool for each of them. How can you say this while simultaneously closing down classrooms and having our home teachers not return against their will? Displacing our teachers, closing classrooms, and maximizing class sizes is both unsafe and does not achieve the goal of a safe full return to campus. Keep each of our classrooms staffed with the current teachers, and let us safely welcome back our children to school.

I grew up in a school where teacher retention was a focus and a success, 30 years later I am in touch with some of those educators and my nieces and nephews have some as teachers. This is what community is. This is what teacher appreciation is. This is what MDUSD should strive for. If there are openings at other schools that need to be filled, you post and hire into those. You ask if anyone currently employed within the district would like to be transferred. You do not take a staff member in an already established community school and against their desire move them around like pawns in a game of chess. They are more than that to us, they are essential and belong to our school community. They have made the commitment to the school they serve, now it is time for the district to make the same commitment back to them by not threatening involuntary displacement.

One of the amazing educators that you have chosen to displace through involuntary transfer is Ms. Jillian Cary. My family was lucky enough to be paired with Ms. Cary as my son’s Kindergarten teacher. From the first virtual meeting, I knew that she was one of the good ones and counted my blessings with her. She sent the students a video of the school classroom during her introduction so they could feel a sense of connection to their first year in elementary school. Her patience, positivity, excitement, and excellent communication are just a few of the qualities that make her easily one of the district’s best teachers. She has been our light during this dark and uncertain time and has gone above and beyond to make this unique school year as wonderful as any other year. She put in so much additional time and work coordinating special class celebrations, class pride t-shirts, social emotional zoom groups, and my list goes on and on. She has created a safe environment for my son who has a severe speech disorder. Through Ms. Cary’s constant encouragement my son now raises his hand and speaks, he has found a comfort and trust in knowing Ms. Cary will be patient with him and his friends will be kind as he works out what he is trying to say in the caring class community. I know without a doubt that he would not have this same progress with other teachers and even had two speech therapists at the beginning of the year that could not accomplish this finesse approach with my son. Ms. Cary is an amazing educator who takes the time to ensure each and every student is successful and heard. My 5 year old son (along with all of his siblings since this is zoom and we have all formed the irreplaceable bond) will be looking for Ms. Cary to be on campus at Strandwood come the new school year, and we hope that you reconsider your decision on involuntary transfers.

Your current decision to displace Ms. Cary and others will in turn close their classrooms and maximize class sizes of the other classrooms. It is irresponsible of the district to plan for prepandemic class sizes. We need smaller safer class sizes for this upcoming school year. Just because you can legally have class sizes in the 30+ range does not mean that you should. Our teachers and our kids deserve better than that. Keep our class sizes stable, keep our teachers

in each of their current rooms at their current school, give us the groundwork needed for a successful year coming out of this pandemic. This is not the year to shuffle staffing around. This is the year that it is vital to hold steady with a strong experienced teacher in an established school community to welcome our kids and families back to in person learning as we begin to return to a normalcy that we have not had in a very long time.

There will be academic gaps, there will be social gaps, there will be emotional gaps, and there will be trauma that our children are working through and the best point person to help us all heal and get back to normal school routine will be a dedicated, caring, and essential teacher such as Ms. Cary. Not just any staff member can take on this role, we need the same stable staff that our children already know and feel comfortable and safe with.

Please set up our school for success, our teachers for success, our children for success, our community for success. Keep our teachers in their positions at their home schools, no involuntary transfers.

Thank you,

Laura Ferguson

<liakbrown@gmail.com>

I would like to express my disappointment in hearing the news of 4 Strandwood teachers being involuntarily pink slipped. Ms. Cary is my sons teacher and she has been nothing but the best for my son who is challenging. She has helped us get additional support for him and he has made huge strides.

I also do not agree with having class sizes at 31 and combined classes for k-2. After all these kids have lost this year, they need and deserve more. Most will need more one-on-one support or small groups in order to get on track. This sets us back yet again.

I do hope you will reconsider these layoffs and take cuts elsewhere!

Best regards,

Lia Brown¹

<hannacakes@aol.com>

I am writing to ask that class sizes please not be increased for the 21-22 school year. Please consider using some of the COVID relief money the district has received to keep the amazing teachers who have pushed through so many challenges this year, and keep their class sizes down. The learning gaps have undoubtedly widened during distance learning while some students have lots of help at home and some have none. Sending all of these kids back to classrooms of 35 students will make it almost impossible to meet them all where they are at.

Please reconsider these involuntary transfers of teachers who have made all the difference for my kids this year. We need to prioritize not only the physical health of our kids but their mental health as well by making sure they are able to be seen and heard in their classrooms next year. We need our teachers and we need to keep class sizes small!

Thank you,

Hannah Slade

gravendaal@gmail.com>

Just want to make sure this gets seen by the board. I don't see it listed on the public document yet.

Sent from my iPhone

On Apr 20, 2021, at 4:32 PM, Heather Gravendaal <gravendaal@gmail.com> wrote:

Dear MDUSD Board,

I'm writing to show my support to keep class sizes small as we plan for the next school year.

Teachers have done amazing work and spent long hours this year adjusting curriculum to fit the needs of distance learning and then shifting to hybrid. We know they'll have to make plans to address learning loss next year. They shouldn't have to face an increase in class size too. A lot has been asked of teachers this year. It's too much. Teachers deserve better.

Students have not learned as much as they would during a normal in person year. There will be a large range of needs among students and having larger class sizes will take away from teaching to the individual student needs. Returning to full time in person school after a pandemic is new territory. Making big adjustments during this sensitive time will have an impact that will be felt for years. Students deserve better.

Increasing class sizes is not in the best interest of our most important stakeholders. Students and teachers need more support and this is not the answer.

I do not support lay offs or involuntary transfers. The goal should be to retain teachers who have done so much this year and to increase student learning opportunities. We should be discussing how to get MORE support and resources to these groups.

Thank you,

Heather, parent of 3 MDUSD students

<katerushton2000@hotmail.com>

Good afternoon,

It has recently come to my attention that the district plans to redistribute teachers in the coming school year to accommodate shifting numbers and larger class sizes. I am writing to express my sincere dismay at this plan. First, I cannot understand for the life of me why class sizes would be INCREASING in the face of social distancing mandates and potential learning losses from this turbulent school year. This is just illogical.

In addition, our children will need the stability of familiar faces now, more than ever, as they return to in-person instruction. My son is a kindergartener at Strandwood elementary school. He has never met his teacher, Ms. Cary, face-to-face. He looks forward to this with immense

anticipation and it is a driving force in making him more comfortable on his still-foreign campus. Sadly, she will not be there for him to meet next year because she has been transferred. This is a tremendous loss for our community and for our children. I beg you to please reconsider.

As a teacher and a parent, I wish to express my tremendous disappointment in how this district is managed. There have been considerable stimulus funds allocated to the district, which should be put toward staffing and resources to help our kids make up for this inconsistent year. Instead, we are increasing class sizes and displacing teachers. Anyone who has ever stepped foot in a classroom should know how important consistency and individualized attention are for student success.

I truly hope that students' best interests and pure logic will win out in the end, and that you will find a way to provide the stability of familiar faces and intimate class sizes for our students. I sincerely hope that my son and I will be able to meet Ms. Cary face-to-face on the Strandwood campus in the fall.

Sincerely,

Katherine Rushton-Zundel

ashleygus9@gmail.com>

Hello, Mount Diablo School Board,

We have lived in Pleasant Hill for 10 years and have daughters in 4th, 2nd, and Kindergarten. Our Strandwood teachers are wonderful and deliver high quality education to their students.

My children love Miss Brenda and Ms. Cary. They are warm, wise, organized, and creative. They truly love their work. I cannot imagine finishing out the year in their shoes when they have no plan to look forward to. Rest assured, neither of them have complained, but when asked directly if they will stay on next year they have to answer honestly and say they are being moved and they do not know where. They both have incredibly positive attitudes and say that they are looking forward to completing the year with their students. I am astonished at their maturity and love. I'm sure the other teachers at Strandwood that face the same future are equally well-grounded.

My husband and I have a lot of confidence in the public education system. However, I feel that class sizes any higher than 25 have extremely low likelihood to succeed in providing quality attention to each student. Teachers are already strapped for time and resources. Increasing class sizes makes no sense to help them in this end.

I would like to hear the rationale on involuntarily moving teachers without giving them any plan, closing down classrooms that are there for student education, and increasing class sizes giving students less attention. This is a horrible way to treat our educators, as well as students, the future of our country. It seems to me we will end up needing to hire more tutors to take children out of classes to help them where they are falling through the cracks. This could be avoided if class sizes are smaller and teachers could do their job more effectively.

I am deeply concerned. I do not want to pull my kids out of school. But if this environment continues to become less amenable for students academic and emotional growth, then I fear we will have no choice. And I do not want to leave teachers in that position.

They deserve better than this. Please help us keep our wonderful teachers for future students at Strandwood.

Thank you,

Ashley Gustafson

leercyr@gmail.com>

Dear School Board Members,

Last Spring, after about 17 months of bargaining, an agreement was reached, but it was set off by the School Board over concerns about funding, as the Pandemic took hold. The District laid off a bunch of people, which later turned out to be a windfall of about \$15 Million to the District since the State is keeping the school funding at the same level as last year, regardless of attendance. Add to that some \$104 Million in aid monies coming in this year and next year. Also, Governor Newsom is calling for an almost 4% increase to school funding next year and the Federal Government is looking sympathetic on school funding.

One might think that our School Board would be saying, "You know, now that the funding picture is clear, we need to go back and do the Right Thing. We need to go back and honor the agreement that was bargained last Spring!" They might also say, "Yes, and we need to earmark funding now, to allow for a raise for our employees as we negotiate the new up coming contract!"

They say that “Where there is a will, there is a way”. With something like \$119 Million Dollars, there must be a way to give some recognition to the Teachers and Staff. Please include Teachers and Staff in your budget considerations.

Thank You,

Lee Cyr

<Sortedgray@outlook.com>

Please keep Ms. Cary with Strandwood! She's wonderful with teaching kindergarten and couldn't have been more instrumental in my sons education.

Most sincerely,

Casey McInerney

<walter.eckalbar@gmail.com>

Hello Dr. Clark and MDUSD Board Members,

I attended yesterday's information session held by Dr. Clark and Trustee Khaund. While I do hope homeschooling or distance learning academy is a good option for those still uncomfortable with returning to full-time in-person school, and I understand many families need to hear that information, I do believe details on how we will arrive at full-time in person learning were lacking from this meeting. I also see on the current agenda a “Fall 2021” item, but no real detail or presentation, only what looks to be an outline of topics to be discussed in what would appear to be an informal and casual manner.

Also, I took particular note of one thing from Dr. Clark's presentation yesterday. In that presentation he outlined that the CURRENT 3 foot guidance by CDC and State allows for a full return of students in the Fall. Yes, that's right, those are the CURRENT guidelines. Which means we could and should be opening for full time in-person learning NOW. Additionally, what is “new and different” conditions relative to now versus fall, if the assumption is that 3 foot

distancing, in-door mask wearing, and other precautions will remain in place? This is the missing piece logic that leads many parents to be skeptical of promises of full time in the fall. If you can do it then, why can't you do it now?

Additionally, this admission by Dr. Clark that 3' guidance allows for full time in-person school, is also an admission that in-person school is NOT being provided to the greatest extent possible now. This continues to be a violation of California State Law and our State Constitutional guaranteed rights to a free and appropriate education. For those board member curious why they face recall, this is the reason why. You have let negotiations with MDEA supersede your fundamental duty to provide the appropriate, in-person education to our children.

Moving forward out of this pandemic, you are also leading our district to financial ruin. Many of us have already seen the scripted comments by MDEA to ask for raises. Not only can our district which is both headed toward receivership due to our worsening budget situation, but this comes as an utter slap in the face to parents that have been shouldering much of the burden of distance learning this past year. Parents have had to take time off or quit jobs entirely. Our incomes have gone down as a result of excessively long Distance Learning, while they ask for raises. COVID relief funds have largely been used to continue to pay salaries for teachers our district can not ultimately sustain. Instead of making this situation worse, these COVID funds should be used ON STUDENTS. Improve and update your curriculum. If you are going to carry more teachers than our budget actually allows, at least reduce class sizes so that our students see some benefit. Update facilities. Do something, anything that directly improves MDUSD from the student's perspective.

Fundamentally MDUSD exists to serve students and you are stewards of the public at large's best interest in regards to our local public education system. MDUSD does not exist to provide jobs to teachers. Jobs for teachers is a side benefit, not the primary goal. It is time to refocus on your primary goal. Get our children in school, full time, ASAP. Dr Clark admitted that could be done under CURRENT 3' guidance. So, ASAP means NOW.

Thank you,

Walter

Racquel Forbes

<rforbes765@insite.4cd.edu>

Dear School Board Members,

My name is Racquel Forbes and I am a college mentor at Shore Acres Elementary School. I would like to first begin by commending the board for approving volunteers from the Diablo Valley College Education 120 class to gain early fieldwork experience while working in an elementary school classroom. As my three year experience at DVC comes to a close this semester, Shore Acres has continued to help motivate me to further my education in order to have my own classroom one day. This experience has solidified my passion for being an elementary school teacher.

I am speaking to advocate for higher teacher pay. Besides a child's parents or guardian, their teachers are the next adults in their lives who they spend the most time with, are influenced the most by and will evidently be the most impacted by. A teacher has such a great deal of influence on the next generation yet according to a report published by CNBC in December 2020, "teachers make about 20% less than other professionals with similar education and experience". Teachers do not go into this profession for the pay and because of this, they bring an immense amount of passion and willingness to go above and beyond for their students. Before the pandemic began, they would arrive early to school to be prepared for the day, they would stay late to grade papers, clean up their classroom, work on lesson plans and reply to emails. They come in during the summer to set up their classroom and they spend their own money on school supplies just to ensure they give their students the best experience for their new school year. According to NBC News, "teachers spend an inordinate amount of their own money on their

classrooms. Most estimates put the average annual teacher expenditure at around \$500, with 10%

spending more than \$1,000. California teachers are said to average \$674. But clearly, many are spending thousands". During the pandemic, teachers were expected to figure out how to navigate

an entire new world of teaching online. This included a new teaching platform, adjusting assignments and lesson plans all while helping their students and families adjust to the new online world as well. Teachers were able to preserve through this unfortunate time and still maintain their passion for their profession. As schools begin to reopen or plan to reopen in some way or another, it is time to reevaluate the issue of low teacher pay so their salaries can start reflecting their passion and willingness to go above and beyond for our next generation. If possible, a response by April 28th would be greatly appreciated.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Racquel Forbes

sgu105@insite.4cd.edu>

MDUSD Board of Education

1936 Carlotta Dr., Concord, CA 94519

Dear MDUSD School Board Members,

I am a college mentor at Shore Acres Elementary School. I'd first like to commend the board for approving the volunteers from the DVC EDUC 120 class to gain valuable early fieldwork experience working in an elementary school classroom. This experience has solidified my pathway as a future educator to pursue a career as a public elementary school teacher.

I'm speaking to promote the development of bilingual education in our school district. Language is a bridge for common communication between countries. With the frequent economic trade between China and the United States, English has an unshakable position in the Chinese education system. Conversely, the United States lacks an interest in learning Chinese. From my perspective most of the school districts only focus on Spanish language education. Although the Spanish language is important, I want to advocate to combine a Chinese language program with English language education to encourage mutual understanding between various cultures to promote better economic and trade exchanges. Bilingual education should start at an early age because the more the student's age grows, the more challenges they would face. Therefore, in the 21st century, bilingual education must be promoted from elementary school. I believe we can start by implementing a Chinese language program in a particular elementary school in our school district. After the number of students who are willing to learn more than one language increases, the bilingual education would add more programs of different schools in the same school district and hire bilingual teachers and teaching assistants to promote the implementation of this policy.

I strongly encourage you to support Chinese education for our country's future. I'm happy to answer any questions you may have. Thank you for your time, service, and consideration.

Sincerely,

Shuangling Gu

<jacksondj@mdusd.org>

to MDUSD

Good morning, afternoon, evening or night,

brian.erik.chase@gmail.com>

Hello,

I wanted to confirm this will be incorporated into the public comments and available for viewing; should you feel it's appropriate to do so.

Thanks,

Brian

> On Apr 23, 2021, at 12:03 PM, Brian Chase <brian.erik.chase@gmail.com> wrote:

Dear MDUSD Board,

Thank you for your extraordinary efforts this past year; the openness of communication and decision making has certainly been appreciated.

I'm emailing regarding the next school year; to express my support to keep class sizes small. I believe that increasing class sizes would not be in the best interest of our students and teachers.

I suggest the goal to be focused on retaining teachers who have done so much this year and to increase student learning opportunities. We could discuss how to get MORE support and resources to these groups. Avoiding involuntary transfers or layoffs is desirable

Teachers have done amazing work and spent long hours this year adjusting curriculum to fit the needs of distance learning and then shifting to hybrid. They will have to make plans to address learning loss next year and they shouldn't have to face an increase in class size too. A lot has been asked of teachers this year as will also be the case in the upcoming year. Teachers deserve the best teaching environment we can provide.

Students have not learned as much as they would during a normal year. There will be a range of needs among students and having larger class sizes will take away from the ability to focus on individual student needs. Returning to full time in person school after a pandemic is new territory. Making big adjustments during this sensitive time will have a negative impact. Students deserve the best learning environment we can provide.

Thank you for considering my feedback in your upcoming planning sessions.

Brian, parent of 3 MDUSD students

<yen4teaching@gmail.com>

Can we get a timeline for negotiations with the different bargaining units?

What are the goals? How will you achieve them?

Dr. Clark stated that he wanted to establish a more unified district with better relationships with the employee groups.

This is your first step. Make a resolution to get this done. Before the current contract is up on June 30? Yup... This is how it is done in other districts.

Make the commitment to get this done and show employees the respect they deserve.

Value the #1 asset in your district, your employees. Your actions speak louder than words. Saying you want a destination district? Well, take the steps to make it happen.

Prioritize the budget to show you value your employees. Budget for an increase in salaries.

<hannacakes@aol.com>

Based on the proposed increased class size for fall, Strandwood is losing 3 incredible teachers to involuntary transfer.

Ms Brenda Barnhart has been the best possible teacher my son could have had during this ridiculously challenging year. She is kind, compassionate and genuinely interested in the well being of the whole child and every child she interacts with. She has gone above and beyond this year to allow students to address their feelings, emotions and struggles during a year like no other. She has truly nurtured the students she works with and has created so many opportunities for them not only to learn and succeed academically, but also to learn how to become a good person, which is important now more than ever.

Please reconsider the involuntary transfer of her from Strandwood Elementary as this would be a tremendous loss for this school and this community, as her students come out aware of what it means to be good citizens! Please do whatever we can to avoid these involuntary transfers which disrupt and harm the entire school community. We need Ms Brenda Barnhart at Strandwood and to transfer her would be an awful loss for our school. Thank you for your consideration!

Hannah Slade, parent of 3 Strandwood students

<anonymity requested>

Dear Community, Board Members, and Student Board Member,

We are at a tipping point. We are making plans for a new way to organize schools, and at the same time making the same old mistakes.

We have to listen to the community and keep our students' needs at the forefront. We can prioritize the money to make sure that we have smaller class sizes for full-time in-person school, a full-time virtual academy for any student who wants to attend, while maintaining the current Alternative Education schools as currently structured and run. Furthermore, we can make sure we have standards aligned culturally appropriate curricular materials.

Smaller class sizes would ensure students' learning losses and delayed social/emotional development would be remediated. I hear many parents saying a size of 25 students to 1 teacher would be preferable, and at all grade levels. Teachers should also be allowed to choose if they want to be in-person or not.

The virtual academy should be for any student/family who needs to continue a distance learning model. During presentations this week, it was said that the virtual academy is for students who have a specific reason to attend distance learning and are not able to attend in-person. Well, one reason allowed should be, "because I learn better in distance learning." MDUSD needs to make sure this virtual academy can be competitive with online charter schools and keep students in our district, as opposed to students leaving for a subpar education at a charter.

For Alternative Education, such as Independent Study or Home Study, these schools already have a process for applying. It is not an automatic enrollment just because a student/family is interested in attending. Horizons School is a huge commitment, a voluntary educational placement by a family, and is not a good fit for everyone. Unless students have already been homeschooled or attended other Independent Study schools, they will not know what they are

about to embark on until they begin. That is why there is an application process and a review of whether students are a good fit.

Lastly, if we do not update our materials and supports, we will lose families. We need our outdated and white-washed textbooks in K-12 social studies, middle school English, and high school English classes, we are upholding racism and belittling cultural experiences by underrepresented communities. If we do not update our elementary math, we are denying our youngest a foundation in math and an opportunity to begin to think critically. We need more counselors, librarians, and music-art-PE teachers to support student learning.

The more variety and diversity in educational options and curricular materials will provide families more choices within the MDUSD schools and learning opportunities. Please use funds wisely to support students.
