

November 3rd, 2020

To whom it may concern,

We workers of the [Redacted] Elementary [Redacted] program are sending you this notice out of concern for the safety and well-being of the children, their families, ourselves, and our coworkers. Since the start of the [Redacted] program, [Redacted] workers have experienced many troubling issues and we still have many grievances that have not been addressed, some of which is in violation of state law and safety guidelines set by the recent Emergency Temporary Standard.

We all were hired as Lunch/Recess Aides for [Redacted] County Public Schools. We were all told in our hiring interview with Principal [Redacted] that we would receive breaks, including lunch breaks, but we've never had one. We were all told we wouldn't have to work Wednesdays when the schools are closed, but we have been working every Wednesday since the semester started. There was no orientation or training for the technicalities of this job outside of the orientation HR gave all new employees of [Redacted].

On September 6th, we received a group text to our personal phones from the [Redacted] program director [Redacted] indicating we would be working a job that differed from what we were initially hired for. On September 7th, the day before school was to begin, [Redacted] provided more information on a tentative schedule as well as indicating that she would meet with each of us individually before the end of the first week. It wasn't until September 15th that [Redacted] actually did this and came on-site to briefly visit *and meet* the afternoon [Redacted] workers. Her lack of presence at our job has been noticed and commented on by all coworkers.

[Redacted] gave our personal phone numbers directly out to the parents to call us when they arrived to pick up their kids. We were never notified this was going to happen until after she had already given it out. It resulted in the parents texting us questions regarding the program we were

not qualified to answer. It wasn't until September 21st that [Redacted] acquired an iPad for workers to communicate with parents rather than having us use our personal phones.

On our first shift, we were concerned about the cafeteria-packed lunches provided to the kids in the morning at [Redacted], which they bring with them on the bus to [Redacted]. They were cold and there were no utensils or plates for them to use. We have only recently acquired paper plates and utensils for them, so that we can microwave their cafeteria lunches one-by-one using the high schooler's microwave. We still lack consistent access to a refrigerator or ice for the kids' use. Cold food is one of many health concerns we have about the conditions of the [Redacted] program.

We are also concerned about the [Redacted] cleanliness while it is being hosted inside the [Redacted] High School cafeteria. We initially had sanitizing wipes, absorbent paper towels, and cleaning supplies which all ran out after the first week. The rag we used for cleaning was not being replaced and we were expected to use one rag for all surfaces the children contact— from desks to doorknobs to spills. Workers have been bringing in our own cleaning supplies since it was communicated to us by [Redacted] that the sanitizing wipes and some other supplies were extras that are not normally used or provided by the program. It wasn't until September 23rd that we know the rags started to be changed out. In addition to using a single rag, we are asked to use a sanitizing spray but we never received proper instruction on how to use it. On October 28th, a janitor at [Redacted] explained to the [Redacted] workers that we had been improperly sanitizing— up until then, we had not been informed that the spray we are being given by the school to use has to set for five minutes in order to kill bacteria and germs. We believe we should have been properly trained on cleaning procedures by somebody knowledgeable, especially during a pandemic, but no training like that has happened.

There have been several cases of COVID both at the [Redacted] site and the [Redacted] site. None of the [Redacted] workers have been notified by any representative of [Redacted] (including [Redacted]) of these cases, and we have had to find out by word of mouth from parents in the school system. Under the new ETS policy, it is required that all workers of any building where a COVID case has been confirmed are to be notified. Why haven't we received notification?

We also believe the floor of the [Redacted] cafeteria isn't being completely sanitized or fully swept and we have communicated this to [Redacted] repeatedly. We asked for mats for the kids to sit on instead of the dirty ground and we didn't receive those until October 6th. We also had no first aid kit, which we asked for in September and didn't receive until October 6th as well. On that day, the children were also given a few more games, but up until then there had been a full month where there was very little to do with them.

All of the workers in the [Redacted] have been spending our own money and time off of the clock to buy games, recess equipment, and crafting materials for the program. We had been asking for a TV to show movies on rainy days, and we were told by [Redacted] that there was nothing she could do to get us one. On October 28th, the afternoon Lunch/Recess aides were discussing hauling in our own television from home again, because we knew it would rain the next day. A librarian at [Redacted] overheard the [Redacted] workers planning this and she told us she had a TV and DVD player that she was looking to get rid of, and she brought it down for us to use. In this way we acquired a television, through no effort of [Redacted].

Due to the persistent issues and delayed resolutions we have had several talks with [Redacted]. This has led to some conflict between [Redacted] and the [Redacted] workers. There have been multiple instances of [Redacted] demanding that coworkers discuss these work issues off the clock over the phone with her, rather than making the time to discuss them in person at work. [Redacted] has not come on-site to talk to the afternoon aides since the one occasion on September 15th. Meanwhile, there have been times when she has scheduled us to work alone and we have been unable to even go to the bathroom because there was nobody else to watch the kids.

The online description for our job describes our wage for Lunch/Recess aides as "\$12.46 - \$21.96 per hour, depending on experience." We are all getting paid on the lowest end of the spectrum, even though we all have experience in childcare and/or education. We are working through this pandemic in the public school so that we can make sure the children in our community are safe. We Lunch/Recess aides are being asked by parents and [Redacted] to help the students with their homework, reading, and their virtual learning. If we are responsible for these children's education during a pandemic, we should make more than \$12.46/hour. We should all be given a fairer wage and a fairer contract, because this is a different job than "Lunch/Recess Aide" and we are pulling more than our own weights to try to keep this program fun, safe, and rewarding for its children.

We know this is a difficult time for everyone as we work through this pandemic. We send you this notice not to be petty, but in the hopes that we can ensure everyone's safety by following the necessary state safety guidelines as well as properly accommodating the [Redacted] workers providing an essential service to our community.

We ask that [Redacted] meet the following:

- Provide the breaks and lunch breaks promised to us when first hired on
- Increase our wages to reflect the workload and competency of the workers
- Close the [Redacted] program on Wednesdays and have the [Redacted] program follow school closures
- Follow the ETS standards - including proper notification of COVID cases in our workplace
- Permit the [Redacted] workers to have more oversight over the budgeting, planning, and administration of the [Redacted] program

Thank you for your time and consideration,

- The[Redacted] Workers

Sarah R[Redacted], [Redacted], [Redacted], [Redacted]