

## **Subject: Follow-Up on April 23rd Feedback Meeting**

Dear Trustees,

I attended the teacher feedback meeting on Wednesday, April 23rd, with the hope of engaging in a collaborative conversation—a space where questions could be asked, ideas shared, and concerns meaningfully addressed. Instead, I left the meeting feeling confused, unvalued, and disappointed.

What I had anticipated was a dialogue. What occurred felt more like a presentation. I had many points prepared and left with even more questions after hearing Mr. Reid's presentation. Yet, I found very few genuine opportunities to voice them. While trustees expressed how valuable the meeting was, it felt like many important topics were either untouched or glossed over. For example, Mr. Eberwein mentioned the issue of sugar paper jamming machines—certainly not the central takeaway we hoped for.

I'm writing this letter with the clear expectation of a follow-up and, more importantly, direct answers. At the meeting, it seemed that many of our actual questions were sidestepped in favor of responses with less impact. While there may be times when that approach is appropriate, this was not one of them.

### **1. Leadership Salaries vs. Budget Constraints**

The district repeatedly emphasized that many cost increases—like inflation and transportation—are out of its control. However, the spending on district leadership salaries is absolutely within its control. The proposed and approved annual increases come from decisions made internally.

It is concerning that, despite being the smallest of the three CRD districts, our superintendent receives the highest salary. This raises questions about priorities, especially in light of ongoing financial shortfalls and job cuts impacting front-line educators. Additionally, it appears that performance-based raises of 6.75% (or more) were implemented across all three CRD districts.

- Where did this percentage come from? Why was this increase applied uniformly across all districts?
- How do these leadership salary increases align with the financial realities being shared?

If we are looking for areas to reduce spending, this seems like a logical place to examine more critically.

### **2. Strategic Plan vs. Role Reductions**

I've taken the time to review our district's four-part strategic plan. As an elementary inclusion support teacher, my role directly supports every facet:

- **Literacy:** I provide direct support to learners and collaborate with teachers to enhance literacy instruction.
- **Mental Health & Wellness:** I support students and offer classroom strategies to promote wellness.

- **Indigenous Learners:** My support extends beyond academics into community and family engagement.
- **Global Citizenship:** I help learners feel connected, included, and engaged within their classroom communities.

If the district is committed to this plan, why have roles like mine—roles that directly support these goals—been systematically reduced, particularly in the past year? At the same time, leadership salaries continue to rise.

- What rationale supports these cuts?
- How are these decisions aligned with the goals outlined in the strategic plan?

### 3. Budget Allocation for Salary Increases

I would also like to understand more clearly:

- From which part of the budget are district leadership salary increases drawn?
- How are these increases justified while educators in student-facing roles are being cut back?

### 4. Health & Wellness Officer Role

Lastly, I have questions regarding the newly created position focused on staff health and wellness. I understand this is a relatively new initiative, but some transparency would be appreciated:

- What are the success metrics for this role?
- Was the role created in part to reduce costs associated with staff absences or health benefits?
- Has the district seen any financial return on investment so far? If not, what is the expected timeline for those outcomes?
- I ask because I wonder if this new position was financially worth it? Please share any available data.

In closing, I want to emphasize that I care deeply about my work and this district. My position is not one many others choose, but I am passionate about it and the students it supports. For the past four years, I've been directly impacted by budget decisions. Teachers are open to making sacrifices—we always have been. But losing our jobs shouldn't be one of them. We want to be included in the conversation about how to save both money and the positions that matter most to students.

I appreciate your attention and look forward to clear, honest answers.

Sincerely,  
Sara Van Helvoirt