

Good afternoon, Members of the Workforce Committee.

My name is Cydnie Meyer, and I'm a classified employee in the Corvallis School District. My employment background includes 31 years working as a Fiscal Clerk at the high school level, and an Administrative/Operations Assistant at the middle school and district office levels. This is rewarding work and I love my career providing fiscal, operations and administrative support to serve the children, parents, staff and community of my school district.

I work 8 hours a day, five days a week. I have no paid vacation days. My calendar work days have mostly been 210 days of work per year. This includes unpaid days off: winter break (10 days), spring break (5 days) and summer break (35 days). As far as the school district is concerned, this makes me "full-time". And I am fortunate in my position that I was able to gain an additional 10 days to complete my yearly tasks – now working the five days during spring break and another five days during the summer. This has left me still working only 80% of a typical work year.

Through the years I have explored employment opportunities that coincide with unpaid days from my CSD employment. Even though I'm a dependable employee with a high level of skills that are easily transferable to other private sector employers, I've been unable to secure employment during these forced days off due to the few and sporadic weeks of my availability. This has caused me to watch my spending carefully, and many things that may seem typical to others such as a newer car when needed or a yearly vacation are out of the question. Again, I love my career as do my fellow classified staff members but unfortunately, that love doesn't pay the bills and there is sacrifice to be made in order to continue to serve the children of my school district.

Most of our classified employees have at least a two-year college education background, and the last figure I received was that 70% of Corvallis School District classified have at least a four year degree.

It's difficult to witness our school classified employees who due to the low pay and shortened work year live at the poverty level. They feel the stigma of relying on public assistance including accessing free/reduced meals for their children. Their ability to locate summer time employment has for the most part, resulted in the same results as I have experienced – limited or no opportunities due to the short window of availability. Working in the schools in positions they love but at the poverty level is unbearable to a large number of our classified staff.

Each year we lose relatively new and also long-time employees who experience additional cuts in hours as school funding fails to provide for state mandates and predictable increased costs of living. As these classified employees leave to obtain employment elsewhere, departing are some really talented individuals, taking with them a considerable amount of training. That valuable experience and those training dollars that have been invested in them are lost. It's a financial drain on our district to continually hire and train new employees. The education of children is in great part an endeavor bolstered by the personal connections between students and their supportive educational staff. This high level of classified turn-over causes disconnect and a slow-down in student academic progress as our classified employees are replaced and students are served by new and under trained school staff.

Each year we experience a classified turn-over of 15-20 percent. A conservative estimate of the dollars lost when classified leave and new employees must be hired and trained is \$900 each time 75 classified staff were replaced over the past 18 month period. This is a minimum of the equivalent of 9 work days/hours spent in orientation and basic level training. That's an average yearly low estimate of \$45,000 per year for our school district, and this does not include the cost of the staff hours involved in the hiring process, the cost of fingerprinting and background checks or the staff hours spent conducting the trainings for our new groups of classified employees.

I'm happy to answer any questions for you.

Thank you.