



June 24, 2020

Superintendent Carla Santorno  
Tacoma Public School Board of Directors Lisa Keating, Enrique Leon, Scott Heinze, Andrea Cobb, and Elizabeth Bonbright  
Central Administration Building  
601 S. 8<sup>th</sup> St.  
Tacoma, WA 98405

Dear Superintendent Santorno and Tacoma Public School Board of Directors:

We are concerned about Tacoma Public Schools' proposed layoffs of and hours reductions for paraeducators working in the district. After speaking with paraeducators at TPS, we are concerned that this decision will have significant consequences for our most vulnerable students. We also have questions about the decision-making process that led to this serious action. We have not heard of any similar proposals from other school districts despite them facing similar challenges.

Paraeducators provide support to our most vulnerable students, including students who need special education services, students who need additional support to meet grade level expectations, and students who face substantial barriers to equal access to education. Many of these students will have increased need for behavioral, emotional, and academic support as a result of the school closures and the pandemic.

We are also concerned about the impact to students receiving equitable services relative to the amount saved in the budget. How much money does the district expect to save in wages and benefits through the layoffs and work reductions for paraeducators, and how will that money be allocated going forward? How do you plan to ensure that students with Individual Education Plans and other students supported by paraeducators receive the services they need and are entitled to? Lastly, does the district plan to rehire paraeducators when students return to school buildings full time?

Thank you for your consideration of these questions. We know that this has been a difficult time for the education community and that districts are facing a significant amount of uncertainty. We

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look forward to working with you to ensure the best education possible for Tacoma's students going forward.

Sincerely,



Speaker Laurie Jinkins  
Representative, 27<sup>th</sup> Legislative District



Jeannie Darneille  
Senator, 27<sup>th</sup> Legislative District



Jake Fey  
Representative, 27<sup>th</sup> Legislative District



Steve O'Ban  
Senator, 28<sup>th</sup> Legislative District



Christine Kilduff  
Representative, 28<sup>th</sup> Legislative District



Mari Leavitt  
Representative, 28<sup>th</sup> Legislative District



Steve Kirby  
Representative, 29<sup>th</sup> Legislative District



Melanie Morgan  
Representative, 29<sup>th</sup> Legislative District