

February 10, 2020

Dear Little Rock Parents,

Little Rock educators have received a number of questions regarding rumors related to this week's school closures. We understand and share your concern for your student and every LRSD students' education.

Out of respect for the medical privacy of our educators and in compliance with relevant privacy laws, we cannot discuss the medical status of individual educators. As you well know, flu season has hit our community particularly hard with many students, faculty, and staff missing time to appropriately mitigate the spread of contagious illnesses that would further disrupt your students' education.

What we can tell you is that there is a confirmed sickness in LRSD, and the state's neglect to treat it is causing catastrophic consequences of endemic proportions. It is a disease that infects the needs of our children and young adults with the political interests of the Walton family and their hand-picked decision makers in the state capitol. Parents, like you, are tired of this illness debilitating the community's voice in how our students are educated. Our community is sick of their neighborhood schools closing and the termination of educators who have taught generations of Little Rock students. We're sick and tired of the total lack of authentic community input in our schools. We are sick of more than five years of state control that by the state's own measures has left our students worse off than before the state takeover. The state's treatment plan for these ailments would silence the voices of educators, ban this community from having a say in who leads our schools, and prohibit any treatment of disordered district contracts that rob resources from our students.

Despite the severity of this diagnosis, we also know that with intensive care, full recovery is possible. The infirmities of LRSD can only be cured by full local control that respects the voices of educators and allows local decision making through authentic engagement to determine who leads our schools, how our students are educated, and how we hold stakeholders accountable. Full local control also means a thorough disinfection that rids our schools of the contagions that enable chronic Walton influence to interfere with our students' learning.

As the school year progresses, please know that our educators share your utmost concern for the health, wellbeing, and academic success of your and our students. We greatly appreciate the support this community has shown as our educators continue to combat the contagious afflictions that return each year and hit educators and students especially hard. Please know, we will continue to do everything we can to mitigate the harm these sicknesses can inflict upon our most valuable resource—your children.

Sincerely



Teresa Knapp Gordon  
President, Little Rock Education Association