

What's The Buzz?

BETTER ENVIRONMENTS TO ELEVATE EDUCATORS



Celebrating Women's History Month!

As March unfolds, we find ourselves immersed in the vibrant celebration of Women's History Month. It's a time to honor the incredible contributions, sacrifices, and triumphs of women throughout history, as well as to acknowledge the tireless work still ahead in the pursuit of gender equality.

This month, we reflect on the courage and resilience of women who shattered barriers, challenged norms, and paved the way for generations to come. From the fearless suffragettes who fought for the right to vote to the fearless leaders advocating for justice and equity today, women have been at the forefront of progress in every aspect of society.

In the spirit of celebration and empowerment, the BEEE Foundation is proud to highlight the stories of remarkable women who have made indelible marks on history. Throughout this month, we will be highlighting and amplifying the voices of women from all walks of life that have had an impact on education. Our goal is to create an impactful dialogue around the topics of gender equality and social justice.

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Op-ed Spotlight



ABOUT MISS REDACTED:

Miss Redacted is a digital creator across many social media platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, Youtube, Twitter, and Twitch. Her content centers around education and its struggles while keeping a light hearted and comical atmosphere throughout.

Why I Left Teaching In South Florida...

Opinion by Miss Redacted

Published: 8:00 AM EDT, Wednesday February 7, 2024

BEEE - I started my teaching career in South Florida, and I absolutely loved it. I was rookie teacher of the year, I had the highest data my school had ever seen, and I loved my students. But I left. For the rest of the year, my students sat alone in a classroom with no teacher, learning nothing. This is normal in South Florida but this is unacceptable.

So why did I leave? Cost of living. My rent went from \$1,100 to \$1,700 a month, this happened to most teachers in South Florida when housing costs skyrocketed during COVID. My district knew this, and they failed to give teachers a raise. Districts made a choice to pay their teachers less than a livable wage, when teachers started leaving the classroom to avoid homelessness, leadership did nothing. Our children go without an education because leadership is too cheap and incompetent to effectively manage their employee retention.

Many districts also fail to reward teachers for their experience. We know that teachers become more effective the longer they stay in the classroom, yet most districts do not give teachers significant raises based on their experience, whether it's your first year or your 24th year, your base salary will be less than \$55,000. How can we expect people to stay in this district when they will never be able to support themselves on their salary?

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So what did I do? I moved to a new district, in a new state, that actually values its teachers enough to pay them a livable wage. My new district is paying me \$59,000 a year and the average cost of a one bedroom apartment is \$1,500. My districts starting salary is \$49,500 and the average cost of a one bedroom apartment in the area is \$2,400. Any policy maker that says they care about education is a liar. If these leaders truly valued your child's education they would put their money where their mouth is and pay the teachers. For the safety of myself and my students I cannot share the name of my new district but the data does not lie; the children here are scoring higher on their exams, especially reading and math. The children of South Florida deserve competent, experienced educators who are being paid a living wage.

I live in the community, this is terrifying to me, what can I do? A lot!

1. Offer to volunteer at your child's school! You will be able to see these issues first hand and give your child the support they deserve!
2. COMPLAIN TO THE SCHOOL BOARD! The school board has no reason to listen to teachers, but if enough parents complain about the lack of teacher pay and show up to meetings to use their voice, we will start to see progress. You may not feel it, but you have SO much power.
3. If you have the means, donate to teachers' classrooms! We love pencils, sticky notes, paper, crayons, and all that other fun stuff, but the best gift is CASH. My favorite teacher gift I've ever gotten was a \$500 venmo deposit with the memo "for whatever you need!" So what did I spend this on? A ton of amazing activities from teachers pay teachers for the AP US History students, and those activities are helping them score higher and learn more.

You may be asking "what if they don't spend the money on classroom stuff?" Neither does the school system! As of April 30, the national average percentage of spending all three rounds of ESSER funds was 52%. For instance, Iowa had spent 70%, and Arkansas had spent 69%, while Wisconsin had spent 34% and the District of Columbia had spent only 22%. California ranks eighth among the states, and slightly above the national average, with 58% of ESSER funds being spent [source].

Op-ed Spotlight

A personal and horrifying example of ineffective school budgeting, when my district “gave” me \$300 to buy items to make my classroom COVID safe, I decided to spend the entire \$300 on an air purifier, that air purifier took over 6 months to arrive (and only came with one filter) and once it did finally arrive, I found the exact same one on amazon for \$120. Where did that \$280 go? Are districts the worst shoppers of all time? Did it go to a friend of the board? Was it funneled into some bonus plan for someone who wears a suit? Who knows! I assure you the average teacher will spend your money more continuously than your government does.

I am a teacher, what can I do to get the resources I need?

- **Find organizations like BEE**, new teacher center, education fund. These organizations can help provide you with relevant professional development, provide tangible resources for your classroom, and help fight for systemic change in the education systems.
- **Strechhhhhh your money!** You do not have to have a cute classroom to be a great teacher. Use student work to decorate the walls, skip the classroom rug and just use small pieces of duct tape as sit spots, take advantage of free resources on sites like teachers pay teachers, and create classroom procedures that conserve resources. For example, instead of using valuable ink and printer paper to print packets for each student, create activities where students can use their composition book or work on notebook paper. We should not have to do these things, but hey here we are! A piece of wisdom I wish someone told me was to ASK your admin! They get a limited amount of funding so closed mouths don't get fed! Go to your admin, ask for the resources you need and explain why you need them. Specifically, I went to my (former) principal and told him I needed notecards to help the kids review for the EOC, despite the fact that I had already spent all my supply money, he got the notecards! The old me would've just shut up and paid for it myself but we need to be in the habit of holding our leaders accountable and making them aware of what we need to be successful.

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- **NETWORKING!** Go to networking events in your city, make connections on LinkedIn, join virtual events, and any other place you think you may find people with access to money. My acquaintances from other industries have been extremely helpful in teaching. Specifically, one Real Estate broker I know donated \$500 to my classroom for supplies this year. This was a total win win because he wrote off that charitable donation on his taxes and has used this to market himself as an involved member of the community. Many businesses are looking to do the same! Another corporate America friend of mine was cleaning out their office to move to a new location and they dropped off dozens of unused binders to my school. Again, we should not have to beg and plead for resources, but unfortunately that is not the world we live in.

Check out our website for more interviews like Miss Redacted's at www.beeefoundation.org/news

Op-ed Spotlight



ABOUT PATRICK:

Patrick earned B.A. in Biochemistry at Harvard University and M.A. in Instructional Technology and Media at Columbia University. He served as a 2017 Teach for America Corp Member in Miami-Dade and now works as a Customer Success Manager at Nearpod.

Getting the Most Bang for Your Buck

Opinion by Patrick Jean-Baptiste

Published: 12 PM EDT, Wednesday February 21, 2024

BEEE - As of February 2024, 25 U.S. states require high school students to complete a course in financial literacy. More states are following suit. One of the staunchest champions behind this push is Next Gen Personal Finance, a not-for-profit organization, whose mission is that by 2030, all high school students will have taken at least one semester of a personal finance course before graduating. Of the many graduation requirements that students should meet, a course on financial literacy certainly belongs near the top. The goal is to graduate financially literate students.

While graduating financially literate students is essential, equally important is graduating students who are effective communicators. Unlike the term personal finance, which is fairly clear cut, the term communication is rather vague. It will mean something different to different people. When I think of the word communication, I think of writing and speaking. For some people, body language may come to mind. But regardless of how one thinks about communication, it shows up in our everyday lives, and unlike personal finance, one can practice being a more effective communicator at any time and in any instance. Society judges us on many things, but two of the most obvious are what we say and how we say it.

Op-ed Spotlight

So if we want to prepare our students to be successful, we should be teaching them not only to share what they know, but also how to share what they know.

For many high school students, a requirement to take a financial literacy course to graduate is as similar as a requirement to take an algebra course to graduate. And like financial literacy, algebra is not a topic which one can demonstrate proficiency in a flash. Communication education, therefore, needs to go beyond being a graduation requirement; it should be a part of everyday teaching and it should be an essential part of any school curriculum—at every grade level.

One foundational component of communication that is taught widely and deeply in schools is vocabulary. Vocabulary is as foundational to communication as clarity. I still have a copy of Sadlier-Oxford's Vocabulary Workshop from my ninth grade English class. I can still remember filling out 3x5 index cards for weekly quizzes: in the front were the word and its part-of-speech; in the back were the pronunciation and the definition, as well as a sentence to place the word in context. This activity helped expand my vocabulary, prepared me for the SAT, and played a large role in how I communicate today. Research has shown time and time again that there is a strong correlation between achieving professional success and having a solid vocabulary. We can extrapolate that to include having great communication skills. But defining vocabulary words, writing their parts of speech, and using them in a sentence won't make a student the most effective communicator. For that, you need deliberate and consistent practice.

More than ever, there are countless platforms to share one's thoughts, ideas, and plans. It takes a good communicator to connect with an audience, even a virtual one. In school, when there were opportunities to do class presentations, what was obvious was that I was in a room full of anxiety-stricken teenagers—me included. None of those teenagers were instructed and trained on how to communicate. What was most important was the content, not the delivery. As a former high school math teacher, I didn't prioritize students presenting in front of their peers. But even with competing priorities, it's incumbent upon educators and the education system to create a culture of effective communication.

Op-ed Spotlight

Presenting should not be limited to humanities classes or to the debate club. Every student should have the training and the opportunity to improve his or her communication skills, whether it be during public speaking events or during everyday classroom conversations.

At the end of high school, during the graduation ceremony, teachers, students, parents, and community members usually hear from the valedictorian. In some cases, the valedictorian connects with the audience and leaves it in awe with an inspiring and moving speech. While a great number of students in the audience didn't qualify to be the valedictorian or to be in the top 10%, they should all have the skill and confidence to deliver an inspiring and moving speech of their own. On that day, their knowledge and understanding about dollars and cents should not be their greatest asset. Instead, their abilities to connect deeply and listen intently, to process intelligently and write clearly, and most importantly, their ability to speak convincingly, should be the returns on their—and our—most worthwhile investment.

**Check out our website for more interviews like Patrick's at
www.beeefoundation.org/news**

NETWORK MIAMI EVENT

HERE'S A RECAP!



Resume Building Workshop

On Saturday, February 1st, 2024, we partnered with Teach for America and the Center for Black Innovation to help provide educators with some insight and advice to strengthen their resume building skills.

During this event Kalyn Lee, Nichole Dino, and Alexandria Martin applied their knowledge and presented the participants with strategies on how to channel their strengths and weaknesses and how to best represent them to a prospective employer.



Playlist of the Month

As an educator, staying motivated for the new year can be challenging with various stresses constantly on your mind. To kickstart your day, simply put on your earphones and tune in to this invigorating playlist designed to uplift and inspire amazing teachers like yourself.

These motivational songs are curated to keep you motivated and energized as you dedicate yourself to creating a caring and secure learning environment for your students.

1. **Happier than Ever** - **Billie Eilish**
2. **Wait a Minute!** - **Willow**
3. **POV** - **Ariana Grande**
4. **Deja Vu** - **Olivia Rodrigo**
5. **I Got You** - **Ciara**
6. **Hard Times** - **Paramore**
7. **Looking At Me** - **Sabrina Carpenter**
8. **Oh My God** - **Adele**
9. **Underdog** - **Alicia Keys**
10. **Liar** - **Camila Cabello**
11. **Lose You To Love Me** - **Selena Gomez**
12. **Back To December** - **Taylor Swift**
13. **Unwritten** - **Natasha Bendingfield**
14. **Fantasy** - **Mariah Carey**
15. **Dark Horse** - **Katy Perry**
16. **Remember That Night?** - **Sara Kays**
17. **Someone To Call My Lover** - **Janet Jackson**
18. **Wannabe** - **Spice Girls**
19. **Love on the Brain** - **Rihanna**
20. **Water** - **Tyla**

**Kickback, Relax,
and Unwind**



March Events



Monthly Observances

March - Women's History Month

Daily Observances

March 2 - Read Across America

March 14 - Pi Day

March 17 - St. Patrick's Day

March 19 - First Day of Spring



Help Create Impact by donating to Better Environments to Elevate Educators

YOUR MONEY AT WORK



Your donation will help us organize and conduct professional development programs. These programs will focus on topics that provide teachers with the knowledge and skills to improve their teaching practices and student outcomes.



Your donation will facilitate networking opportunities for educators to connect with their peers and share best practices, create a community of educators who are passionate about improving education, we can foster collaboration and teamwork among teachers.



Your donation will help us provide educational resources such as books, online courses, and instructional materials to assist educators in their professional journey, ensuring that every teacher has the necessary tools to succeed.

WHY CHOOSE US?

BEEE is led by teachers creating content for teachers that helps retain qualified educators it also benefits students.



DIAMOND BEEE \$100,000+

- Thank you letter
- Donor Impact Letter
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- Event Invitations



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