

public comment

Misty Crowley <mcrowley@killinglyschools.org>

Mon 4/26/2021 4:56 PM

To: Public Comment <publiccomment@killinglyschools.org>

Cc: Lydia Rivera-Abrams <lriviera@killinglyschools.org>; Chris Viens <cviens@killinglyschools.org>; Gregory Biggs <gbiggs@killinglyschools.org>; Normand Ferron <nferron@killinglyschools.org>; Janice Joly <jjoly@killinglyschools.org>; Doug Farrow <dfarrow@killinglyschools.org>; Hoween Flexer <hflexer@killinglyschools.org>; Jason Muscara <jmuscara@killinglyschools.org>; Kyle Napierata <knapierata@killinglyschools.org>

Our transportation issues this week are just a symptom of MUCH bigger problems.

Why do we continue to have bussing issues and can't keep a Transportation Director for more than a year or two?

Why have we lost a Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, Director of Pupil Services, and Principal all in less than a year? Has the Board made this an agenda item and had a public discussion as to what is it about our district culture that has driven away so many?

Why is it that we continue to loose teachers to neighboring districts? (Rhetorical question—we all know they can make 1000s more in any neighboring town)

Board members should let what is best for **STUDENTS** guide their decisions—not what's good for the bottom line (that's for the Town Council and ultimately the taxpayers to decide). An example of this...It was SO disheartening during the deliberations for decision packages to hear that we'll just continue to offer the BARE MINIMUM for foreign language graduation requirements and essentially not worry about our higher achieving students or what they may need for prerequisites for college. Let's just continue to set the bar and our expectations low, even though this position has been asked for year after year and we know classes are over enrolled.

I am concerned for the future of my/our children when we continue with the status quo mentality of "what was good for me, is good for students now" attitude. Stronger schools attract families and increase the tax base.

Misty Crowley
6th Grade Science Teacher
2019 KPS Teacher of the Year
KIS Science Instructional Coordinator
mcrowley@killinglyschools.org

School Closure unacceptable

Lacey Luneau <laceyluneau@gmail.com>

Mon 4/26/2021 7:49 PM

To: Chris Viens <cviens@killinglyschools.org>; Gregory Biggs <gbiggs@killinglyschools.org>; Normand Ferron <nferron@killinglyschools.org>; Janice Joly <jjoly@killinglyschools.org>; Doug Farrow <dfarrow@killinglyschools.org>; Hoween Flexer <hflexer@killinglyschools.org>; Jason Muscara <jmuscara@killinglyschools.org>; Lydia Rivera-Abrams <lrivera@killinglyschools.org>; Public Comment <publiccomment@killinglyschools.org>

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Board Members,

I am writing to express my extreme dissatisfaction and disappointment with the current Killingly school closures.

I have lived in the town of Killingly now for 10 years. My oldest child of 4 is 8 years old. When we moved here, everyone repeatedly warned us how "bad" the schools are in Killingly. We decided to ignore the rhetoric and settled here anyway. We have thus far been blessed to proclaim how our children are flourishing and the teachers are caring, dedicated professionals.

Until now.

The current school closures due to bussing is absolutely unacceptable. In a year already filled with absences and remote days, our kids NEED TO BE IN SCHOOL. Let's be perfectly honest here... remote learning is not a substitute. My kindergartener cannot remote learn. We need to stop pretending that what is happening right now is a substitute. It is an excuse to pretend that what is happening is okay, and it is not.

The Board is responsible for this. The Superintendent is responsible for this. The Board hired, and continues to allow the current Superintendent, to be employed.

My tax dollars, that I pay a significantly large amount for, pay for kids to be IN SCHOOL and for the busses to transport them.

This situation needs to be remedied now.

Last year, the biggest issue facing Killingly was the name of a mascot, and many of the current board members ran on a campaign focused on a mascot. How ridiculous that is now as our kids aren't even in the schools.

I am embarrassed for Killingly Public Schools. Please. Take action for our students. They deserve SO much better than this.

Respectfully,

Dear Killingly Board of Education,

My name is Adam Mielniczuk. I have two sons in the Killingly school system in second and third grade. I would like to start, by thanking every single teacher and building level administrator, who I believe have done everything in their power to provide the best education possible, given the circumstances that they have to work with, that are out of their control. From the bottom of my heart, thank you for what you do.

The reason I am writing today is to express my concerns about the circumstances teachers and building administrators are facing. I believe I speak for many Killingly parents who I have talked to recently when I say that there are great concerns about the interests of the current Board of Education, and the impact these interests are having on the day to day life of our children's education in Killingly. It is my understanding that a majority of the current BOE ran with the sole objective of influencing the final decision of the mascot at Killingly High School. We need a BOE that has the best interests of our students, our schools, our staff, and building level administrators in mind in our current climate. They all need your support.

Our new Superintendent was given a \$20,000 raise, although we cut \$800,000 that would have gone towards students. What is the community of Killingly getting for that extra \$20,000? I would assume that this \$20,000 would go towards making sure that school stays open for students as smoothly as possible, that we would have someone working for us that makes sure students are provided everything they need to succeed. You know, the basics such as adequate busing to ensure students can get to school, especially since the issue was brought up at the beginning of the school year, but was dismissed due to cost. What about the cost for families for having to keep their

children home due to this incompetence? Haven't parents made their schedules flexible enough already? Another example I can think of for that extra \$20,000 would be someone who leads and can help solve an issue about busing, even though it may cause an inconvenience to address it when on vacation. Killingly Public Schools have made the Norwich Bulletin twice this year for embarrassing reasons; 1) The sexually explicit email sent out around Valentines Day and 2) Not having the competency to solve a bus issue that was brought up at the beginning of the school year. Has there been any accountability for either of these issues?

Another concern that I have is the fact that we have additional money available for the superintendent, but are unwilling to pay competitive salaries or even negotiate them for our staff that work day to day with our kids. Why work in Killingly when you can just go a few towns over and make more money and feel valued? I believe the lack of a competitive wage combined with a superintendent and BOE that is not supporting its staff is having a negative effect on the morale of our staff as evidenced by losing a Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, Director of Pupil Services, and Principal in less than a year.

As a resident of Killingly, I am greatly concerned about the lack of leadership in some of the most important positions within education for Killingly. What is pushing all of these great professionals out? I don't think we need to look much farther than our current BOE and Superintendent to answer that question. They need your support and have not received it. It needs to be addressed and remedied that the people put in charge to make the best decisions for our children are not doing what is best for them. Instead, they are looking to save money at all costs, even if that cost is the great experiences our children deserve.

Fw: Public Comment - Board of Ed

Public Comment

Wed 4/28/2021 2:00 PM

- Janice Joly;
- Normand Ferron;
- Hoween Flexer;
- Jason Muscara;
- Kyle Napierata;
- Chris Viens;
- Gregory Biggs;
- Chris Viens

Cc:

- Doug Farrow

From: Jennifer Horner <fuhrmannje@gmail.com>

Sent: Wednesday, April 28, 2021 10:40 AM

To: Public Comment <publiccomment@killinglyschools.org>; Lydia Rivera-Abrams <lriviera@killinglyschools.org>; Chris Viens <cviens@killinglyschools.org>; Gregory Biggs <gbiggs@killinglyschools.org>; Janice Joly <jjoly@killinglyschools.org>; Doug Farrow <dfarrow@killinglyschools.org>; Hoween Flexer <hflexer@killinglyschools.org>; Jason Muscara <jmuscara@killinglyschools.org>; Kyle Napierata <knapierata@killinglyschools.org>

Subject: Public Comment - Board of Ed

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Good morning,

My name is Jennifer Horner. I grew up in this town. I went to almost every school in this town (KCS, KMS, KJHS, KIS, KHS). There are now three children in my household being raised and attending school in this town. As a taxpayer, parent, and now part-time educator since distance learning, I am reaching out to you for help.

To those of you that have worked so hard to try to make a difference and do what is best for our children, our students, I want to thank you. You may not hear it often enough but understand it is not because you do not have support. I feel more than confident in saying that I speak not only for myself, but for many of us. We see you. We believe in you. We truly thank you so very much. Unfortunately, there are not enough of you. We want to help you. I want to help you.

To those of you that choose not to put our children, our students, the future of this town first, I now turn my attention to you. Your actions speak louder than your words. It is now time for you to step up and do the work that you are charged to do. The mascot fight is over but that doesn't mean your work is done. If you're tired of hearing that's the only reason you ran, then prove it.

In order for our schools to succeed, they need adequate busing. Truancy was an issue pre-pandemic. When you shut down transportation, you exasperate that issue. Further, closing down the schools because of transportation issues that have existed since the beginning of

the academic year is not acceptable. You took the easy way out. You knew about this issue. It was not something that occurred overnight. You did not resolve it. You waited until it came to a head and then forced our students out of in person learning that they so desperately need. You might say that it's because of issues with retaining a Transportation Director. Let's look at that.

Killingly has an inability to attract and retain talent. In the last year alone, we have lost four key positions including Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, Director of Pupil Services, and a Principal. Why are we unable to retain a Transportation Director or retain educators for any type of prolonged period of time? You know the answer. I'm not telling you anything new. What I am telling you, is that we know why too. Our heads are not in the sand. We are very aware of what is going on. There are two main issues:

1. Lack of support from our Board of Education. You are to be the allies of our schools and the families they serve. You've lost sight of the expectations of your role.
2. The salaries we provide to our educators and building administrators are not even remotely competitive. As you know, if you go one or two towns away, the salaries increase by not hundreds, but thousands. While there is great love for our students and this community, there is also the need to take care of one's own family and put food on the table.

Let's talk about distance learning. We know how hard it is to teach this way. We know how hard it is to learn this way. We know the choices and struggles families have had to deal with trying to make this work. We know our students have developed anxiety and social issues from distance learning. So why is it the first sign of an issue, you run right to distance education as if it's the only tool in your arsenal? Never mind that several towns never fully closed as we did, never went to hybrid, stayed fully open. Let's put that aside and talk about our kids and our educators. We know that there are lots of problems with the attendance system marking some students as absent that actually attended. We know there are numerous students that never logged into a computer or attended a virtual meeting. We know that there is a great disparity among our students between those that met virtually and those that did not. We know that our special needs students were not attended to in the same way. We know that educators are fighting to bridge these gaps. Yet, there's a transportation issue and we go to virtual learning. There's another way. There's always another way.

Spend your money more prudently. Adjust your focus. Fight for our students. Fight for our educators. Fight for our schools. Fight for this town. You can make a difference and I implore you to do so. There's still time. Let's make the news because we're doing something right.

Sincerely,
Jennifer Horner
5 Lafantasie Rd

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Jennifer C. Horner