

Anita McGray
Columbia Falls
LD 34

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Dear State of Maine Legislature,

I am writing to formally advocate for an increase in the base pay for teachers, particularly for those in special education. As a dedicated special education teacher, my role extends far beyond the classroom. I oversee the education and well-being of some of our most vulnerable students, many of whom present significant behavioral challenges that frequently result in physical altercations. Managing these behaviors requires not only patience and skill but also an immense amount of emotional and physical energy, as well as additional trainings.

In addition to direct instruction, I am responsible for overseeing and supporting three educational technicians, ensuring that they have the guidance and resources necessary to effectively assist our students. While collaboration is essential, breaks throughout the day are scarce, leaving little time to reset and prepare for the next challenge. The demand of my workload far exceeds the compensation provided, making it difficult to sustain the level of dedication and commitment required in this field.

Beyond classroom instruction and behavioral management, my responsibilities include writing Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), drafting Written Notices, and preparing other legally binding documents to ensure compliance with state and federal regulations. These documents require precision and extensive knowledge of each student's unique needs. Additionally, I regularly collaborate with other professionals, including speech and occupational therapists, behavior specialists, and administrators, to ensure that our students receive the most appropriate and effective education possible.

Despite the extensive responsibilities, the financial compensation does not align with the time, effort, and expertise required to fulfill these duties effectively. Let alone the rising costs of living. Special education teachers play a critical role in shaping the futures of students who require individualized instruction and support, yet the current pay structure does not reflect the level of dedication and sacrifice required for this role.

If we truly value education and the professionals who make it possible, we must ensure that their compensation is adequate with the demands of the position.

Increasing the base pay for teachers, particularly those in special education, would not only acknowledge the challenges we face daily but also help retain passionate educators who are committed to making a difference.

I urge you to consider the immense responsibilities of special education teachers and take action to provide fair and competitive compensation. Our students deserve the best, and that starts with ensuring that their educators are valued and supported.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I welcome the opportunity to discuss this matter further and look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

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