

My name is Kris Crawford. I am the Administrative Coordinator at Maple Ridge Secondary School – a position I have held for 20 years. I speak tonight on behalf of my fellow clerical colleagues at both the elementary and secondary level.

The proposed operating budget for the next school year recommends a cut to CUPE support staff of \$370,000, the equivalent of 23 full time jobs including 12.5 full time general clerk positions. Those 12.5 positions equate to an elimination of 43% of the general clerks at elementary and secondary schools. To suggest that this is a reasonable reduction is shocking. 43%

In my office at MRSS alone, I will loose 48 hours per week from my team. Who is going to do that work? We've made efficiencies, lots of them over the years and we continue to do so but 48 hours? That's just one school. To suggest that we do less with less is ludicrous.

Those clerical members impacted would permanently loose their jobs. We are the lowest paid employees in the District and the proposed cuts affect the most people in a single employee group. We have become cannon fodder.

Clerical staff are referred to as support staff. We are called that for a reason. The definition of Support Staff is: Quote "the people who work for an organization to keep it running and to support the people who are involved in the organization's main business". unquote

We support our students, parents, teachers, business partners, District Staff and the Ministry of Education. We are the GO TO people who make things happen, who keep our students safe and who keep this business running. We are

the worker bees and without us our schools will be crippled and will not run effectively nor efficiently. Services that students, families and educators rely upon may not be available if the proposed level of funding cut is approved.

Consider the comment on page 23 of the report and I quote: *"The existing staffing levels were established over a decade ago. During this time, significant technological changes have directly impacted the workload of clerical staff eliminating tasks once performed by them."* Unquote. This comment is offensive. It is indicative of the lack of knowledge by the authors of this document of what transpires on a daily basis in every school in our district. While technology has indeed changed, the impact has been to increase the workload of clerical staff, not decrease it. The thirst for knowledge and desire for information has substantially increased our workload. Implementation of new computer systems like BCeSIS, BasLite, and the new Parent Portal to name but a few have had dramatic effects. None of them positive from a workload point of view.

When Principals were presented with the budget at the Superintendent's meeting last week, they were stunned.

We have a significant surplus in our management structure in School District No. 42. Consider this one example: the Human Resources department used to have 4 excluded staff members, there are now 6.5. Our staffing and enrollment hasn't increased by 61%. This increase is disproportionate to our growth and our needs. We suggest that you roll it back to 4 excluded staff.

We understand cuts are required. We've made recommendations this year and in previous years. What we want to see is **equitable cost savings from all employee**

groups from the Senior team, beginning with the Acting Assistant Superintendents at the Board office.

Non-union, excluded staff members should have an equitable share in the cost reductions. Equitable. If our enrollment and our funding have dropped so substantially, why do we need to maintain staffing levels in the highest paid jobs in the District. Lead by example. Accept your share of staffing reductions.

We implore you to reconsider the budget item to reduce our general clerk positions: to disregard it in its entirety. These positions are vital to running our schools. With the recommendations that we will present shortly, we could save all 12.5 general clerk AND all of the Career Planning positions that are in jeopardy. Furthermore, the recommendations we will make to cost savings through the reduction of our excluded staff does not have any impact whatsoever on students. None. None at all.

To purposely, knowingly set out to debilitate our schools is irresponsible, and reckless.

We are the glue that holds our schools together. You need us. Students need us.

Thank you.

