

Dear Senator Roberson,

Please ensure that SOTs are given accurate, timely revenue projections and regular, complete financials for our schools. We must have this information to do our jobs. Two years into the reorganization, we still haven't received it.

During this last round of budget planning, CCSD gave us revenue projections and demanded a decision in less than a week. In October of last year, we literally had a district academic manager calling us in the middle of our site budget meeting to change the revenue projection for that year and to remind us that the decision was due that night.

No school should have to decide which programs to cut on three days or three minutes notice. These are decisions that parents and the community should be given months notice to work through.

CCSD has repeatedly failed to provide accurate revenue projections to schools in a timely manner as part of the reorganization process. There is no greater problem with the SOTs than the lack of timely, accurate, transparent school financial information. We cannot make meaningful decisions in the climate CCSD has created.

Moreover, last year, district personnel sent our principal revenue projections for our school site that varied by over \$1 million over the course of a single week. We went from thinking we had enough money to build a new school building to having to cut three English teachers and a Science teacher.

Would you tolerate an agency head coming to you and demanding a budget decision with less than a week's notice? Would you tolerate revenue projections that swing as wildly as CCSD's have?

To fix this, the legislature should require that all budgetary projections be given no later than the November prior to the following school year, and that budgets be due no earlier than three months after revenue projections are given. Revenue projections must be certain and time must be given to parents and teachers to digest the implications.

Moreover, the legislature should establish trusteeship as a penalty for failing to meet the timelines required for schools to make decisions. If the district's revenue projections to SOTs deviate by more than 15% of the school's final revenue allocations for any reason other than student enrollment, or if the district provides less than two months for schools to make financial decisions, the district should go into mandatory financial trusteeship.

CFOs whose projections fail as miserably as CCSD's have failed get fired in the real world. The district's casual, and frankly incompetent, approach to how schools budget our children's education is appalling. At this point, I would recommend that CCSD be put in an immediate financial trusteeship with competent financial professionals who can give schools revenue projections we can count on.

At the very least, the threat of future trusteeship should change the district's behavior.

The lack of financial transparency is the second most serious problem I see in SOTs. I have served on my SOT for two years now, and I have yet to see an actual financial statement for our school presented in any meeting. I've served on boards for charter schools and nonprofits. In my previous life as an attorney, I've advised corporate boards transitioning through bankruptcies.

I've never been asked to serve in this kind of role and be denied access to financials.

My principal has repeatedly denied us access to real financials for our school. I would never tolerate a corporate board denying me as a board member access to expenditures and revenues. Yet my principal, from day one, flatly denied me access to school financials, and continues to deny this access. She can do this to me because she's my boss. She can do this to parents because she's their children's principal and has the power to suspend and expel their children.

After fixing district revenue projection failure, the second most important reform you can pass as a legislative body is to mandate the form, content and frequency of financials that principals must give to their SOTs.

I recommend that the legislature require principals to present complete financial statements to the SOTs at least once each quarter, with the financials in the same format and content as the principal himself or herself has, or preferably, in a form prescribed by competent financial professionals.

SOTs need to see expenditures, revenues, and budgets just like a non-profit board or a corporate board sees them. We need to see them regularly, and we need to be able to access them whenever we need them, down to the individual expenditures, if necessary.

Moreover, if a principal fails to provide detailed, quarterly financials in the prescribed form, the principal should be removed and replaced with a school financial trustee.

The legislature should establish an independent body to monitor these requirements and ensure that school organizational teams be given the kind of accurate, timely, transparent information necessary for our schools to succeed.

As we entered the era of the school reorganization, I had great hopes. They have been thoroughly dashed. Nightmares I never imagined now dominate our reality.

Please work to ensure that SOTs have the kind of financial information we need to do our jobs and empower parents and educators to make meaningful decisions regarding their children's education. This experiment is failing, and will continue to fail, unless we turn this ship around now.

I trust you will share this letter with the other members of your committee.

Best Regards,

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SOT Educator Representative

Science Department Chair