

I am here tonight to talk to everyone about the students and the dedication that my wife and I have for them. After all isn't that the reason we have schools, is to teach the next generation to be adults and be great citizens.

This is a direction that I see the administration and Corbett turning away from. Their only focus this year is passing a bond and getting students to get outstanding scores on those AP tests. This sounds like the district is only interested in making themselves look better and they are ignoring what would be best for the students.

It seems like the administration is not only turning away from the students, but they are turning away from the staff who truly care for these students as well. This administration team has shown our family that they are willing to make decisions based on personal issues and they are not looking at what is truly best for the school.

They have pushed me out of a job and then turned around and want Erika out as well. The only explanation we have been given is budget cuts. This does not make sense because when Culinary Arts was brought into the school it was supposed to be the program that saved the district a bunch of money. The district eliminated three full time kitchen jobs and replaced it with a teacher.

They also made another art class and added another option for the kids. This option was a great way to earn an art credit for those who are not particularly gifted in music and drawing. Also it gave the students some great skills that can be applied to their lives.

When they made this decision it started out by telling us that we couldn't work together anymore. They started by making us believe that I was the only one leaving the kitchen. They pulled Erika and myself into separate meetings and told that they were splitting the kitchen team up.

It seemed that the administration got wind of Erika and I being separated and they used this excuse to pull the trigger on their plan. Next they pulled Erika into her meeting and said they felt so bad for her and in order to protect her and let her carry on being a teacher and be able to take care of her students, they were moving me out of the kitchen and I was being replaced with someone that Erika has mentioned to them, she would not be able to work along side for years.

At first Erika felt like she didn't even want to be at the school anymore. However, after a weekend to think about it, Erika figured that she would give it a try. Letting someone take over the kitchen duties and her being able to concentrate on the teaching end of the job, may make things easier.

Things were not easier in any form. First thing Monday morning she was lambasted with the administration giving what they thought were helpful ideas for the program. However since neither the principal nor any of the administrators ever spent more than 10 minutes in the kitchen, it didn't seem that they should be offering any sort of suggestions or criticisms.

Also because that whole first week none of the administrators seemed to ask her how it was going. They only continued to pull the new assistant out to the cafeteria and talk with them

without Erika knowing what was going on. At one point he was out of the kitchen and she tried to go find him to get ready to set up lunch.

Erika could see that she was not going to be a part of the restructured kitchen and any improvements made immediately would have the credit given to the new assistant and have nothing to do with her. She decided that it would be best to step out for a few weeks and let the new kitchen staff settle in.

The stress from Erika's job came from the administration, along with one particular staff member. One secretary always knows everyone's business and just from a small portion of her job from running the computer at lunch, she began to micromanage the Culinary Arts Program.

She never wanted to take credit for what goes wrong in the kitchen, she is just there to pull everyone in a meeting once a week and give us a list of what she wanted the kitchen and the culinary class to be like. Amazingly enough the administration always covers down to her and it seems like most of the time, she runs the school.

It was apparent that this one staff member has wanted the Paces gone since September. Within the first two weeks of this school year. She called a meeting with everyone who ran the lunch program and the superintendent. She wanted the kids to be running the program the same as they had at the end of the previous year.

Easier said than done, as we were still training our new students and had new kids dropping into our program daily. Along with her requests we asked that she allow Erika to run

her classroom and Erika wanted to know if this staff member was allowed to go in to any other high school class and tell them how to teach their kids? With this she said that it was time for us to go and that they could get a couple of monkeys to do our job and then yelled, cussed and left the meeting. Nothing was done to reprimand such behavior.

That gave this staff member full control to continue to bully the kitchen staff and our students from that day forward. Now the bullying persists and this staff member has got her way, the Paces are removed.

But how will the district cover this, the budget shortfall. We had to laugh when the superintendent said that the kitchen was 60 thousand over budget. What is the budget? Erika used to get a budget at the beginning of each year. From that she could break it down by the number of weeks in the school year and stick to it. She has not received a budget in the past three or four years.

In fact each and every time something came up we were told to order it or if we need it get it. At the end of last year during her evaluation Erika was told that the school has money and that she should not be afraid to advocate for her program and ask for things that she would need to progress her program forward.

Ok, so let's take the budget shortfall into consideration? When did we notice we were in the hole? The kitchen has cooked for 100 people for every meeting that wants to invite the community to hear about the bond. Along with the t-shirts and door prizes that the district was giving away. Back to school night, where the kitchen is told to prepare food for 600 people.

The high school staff received a full dinner prepared by the students for each conference night.

Not to mention the amount of food that the staff eats on a daily basis. Many years ago, it started that the staff would get a free lunch in lieu of watching over the kids during their lunchtime. Over time it has grown where the entire staff comes in for a free lunch (often taking way more than their fair share of food) and they do nothing for it.

We estimate that between 30 and 40 people eat lunch on a daily basis. If we conservatively take \$4 a piece, the price of an adult lunch, times the number of people, times 148 school days. We are looking at a waste of 17 - 24 thousand dollars a year on staff lunch and easily probably another 10 thousand in the staff breakfast and coffee bar.

When we had made the request to move me into the kitchen, we started doing the laundry and bringing back the old trays that we could wash. Along with these changes and changing our food distributor, this instantly cut 40 thousand dollars out of the budget.

In the 17 years that Erika has had her job, no one has stepped into the kitchen and knows what goes on in the kitchen and what steps it takes to run a kitchen. This is not just about cooking good food. It requires organization and knowledge of all of the USDA guidelines.

Food has to be served and records must be maintained on a daily basis in order for us to be reimbursed by the state. Also each recipe that is used in the kitchen must be USDA approved. Over the last 3 years Erika has been running recipes through the government system and created recipes that the kids liked

and met guidelines. Under the new manager, the recipes have been thrown into the storeroom and he is making new food. Great, everyone likes it, but it is not approved.

Our reimbursement from the state is usually 10-12 thousand dollars a month. The food has stepped up since Erika left, but the requirements are not constantly being met. We run under the requirements of "Offer vs. Serve" This means that for every breakfast and lunch the kids are suppose to have three choices for their main dish.

Then they need to have at least 3 fruits and 3 vegetables on their salad bars, one of each which is fresh and not canned. We have noticed that breakfast has only contained one choice and cereal every day.

The food that is going out does not sit between the minimum and maximum amount of grains and proteins that are required for each child. The National School Lunch Program audits the district every three or four years. This was year 3, which means next year they will be here.

They will spend a week watching our production and going through all the record books. If we are non compliant, they will stop reimbursement and go back previous years and ask for that money to be returned as well.

The kitchen that sits here in the middle of this school is not just about preparing great food, while using students as slave labor in order to serve the students on campus. It is about an entire program that has to run like clockwork. This takes great organization, the knowledge of guidelines and the compassion of working both with and for the students.

We worked the last summer to build a classroom and be able to bring more students into the class. Previous years the culinary class has run for 5 periods a day with the maximum of 10 kids per class. Culinary was such a popular class that we were flexible and made it possible to run 7 periods a day and we had up to 18 kids per class. With this increase in students, some people were still turned away because there was not enough room.

Erika has given the district many options to save money and continue the program. One in which would take her out of the actual kitchen and allow 30 students per class. However, like we said at the beginning all of our words seem to fall on deaf ears because this is not a budget issue it is an issue with wanting the Paces out of the district.

Like we were told at the beginning of the year, they can get a couple of monkeys to do our job. I wish the district luck finding a team who will constantly work 50+ hours a week for 40 hours of pay, volunteer for community events, dress up in a cardinal suit, chaperone dances and graduation and all in all love these students the way we did.