



Oates, Samantha <soates@bhpsnj.org>

Fwd: Salary Guide Placement

1 message

Kot, Julie <jkot@bhpsnj.org>

Wed, Jun 14, 2023 at 1:45 PM

To: Samantha Oates <soates@bhpsnj.org>

Correspondence

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Helmstetter, Marcy** <mhelmstetter@bhpsnj.org>

Date: Wed, Jun 14, 2023, 12:17 PM

Subject: Salary Guide Placement

To: Dr. Melissa Varley <mvarley@bhpsnj.org>, Julie Kot <jkot@bhpsnj.org>, Angela Penna <apenna@bhpsnj.org>, Joy Young <jyoung@bhpsnj.org>, Gale Bradford <gbradford@bhpsnj.org>, Robert Cianciulli <rcianciulli@bhpsnj.org>, Thomas Foregger <tforegger@bhpsnj.org>, Dipti Khanna <dkhanna@bhpsnj.org>, Pamela Stanley <pstanley@bhpsnj.org>, Jordan Hyman <jhyman@bhpsnj.org>

Cc: Nicholas O'Sullivan <nosullivan@bhpsnj.org>, Cheryl Gillick <cgillick@bhpsnj.org>, Mary Dendinger <mdendinger@bhpsnj.org>

Dr. Varley, Julie Kott and Members of the Berkeley Height Board of Education:

We hope that this letter finds each of you well, and we thank you for your time and effort working on behalf of the students and staff in the Berkeley Heights educational community. We are writing to you because of a serious concern that we have. As public-school employees, we are well aware of the shortage of teachers and other school employees across the state and country. We also believe that all districts should be doing their best to attract and retain the best for our students. However, we have concerns about whether the District's recent hiring practice of teachers, and other school employees is approached fairly and equitably. Additionally, we have similar concerns relative to the implementation of district policy 3411 - "Placement On The Salary Guide." The BHEA would like the opportunity to work with you to resolve these issues.

Recently, the District began hiring people beyond their years of experience, thus surpassing those who have worked in the district for many years. Though this approach may allow the District to fill much-needed positions, it creates a level of unnecessary discord and disillusionment among those who have spent their careers serving Berkeley Heights students' needs. Furthermore, the BHEA is noticing that it is eroding the morale of dedicated career employees and current newly hired staff alike. This is a real problem.

Our career school employees' experience and education provide evidence of their value. Their value, as it relates to their experience, cannot be understated nor should it be undervalued, which is exactly what occurs when the district engages in this type of hiring practice. This hiring practice enables staff with fewer years of service to our district to achieve higher earnings than those who have dedicated themselves long term to our district. Moreover, our current staff have worked tirelessly throughout the pandemic and countless crisis situations to provide care and support to Berkeley Heights students as well as their families. This is an issue that must be addressed.

We find the inconsistency in the recent hiring practices both troublesome and disheartening. To be clear, we are not looking to take any salary or benefit away from our peers. The staff in our district have been very supportive of each other, both professionally and personally, as we navigated the COVID pandemic and all the constantly changing regulations and mandates. We are proud to share that we work together to make the transition from other districts a positive experience for our newest colleagues. Our goal simply is to open discussion and work toward the mutual goal of doing what is best for our district by treating all our teaching

staff and other school employees with the respect and appreciation they deserve and to reach a fair and reasonable resolution to this disparity.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

BHEA Executive Committee

Marcy Helmstetter
BHEA President

Nicholas O'Sullivan
BHEA Vice President

Cheryl Gillick
BHEA Treasurer

Mary Catherine Dendinger
BHEA Secretary