

CARE TEAM PETITION

**(Collaborative Advocacy for Resources and Engagement)
TO THE ROBBINSDALE SCHOOL DISTRICT 281 SCHOOL BOARD**

To the Robbinsdale School District 281 School Board,

We, the undersigned, are residents and taxpayers of Robbinsdale School District IDS No. 281 who are deeply committed to our school system. District 281 holds a unique and cherished place in our lives. We have witnessed firsthand the profound impact this district has had on our students, families, and the larger 281 community. It is with great sadness as well as anger that we see the challenges the district now faces due to the lack of oversight by the school board.

We are presenting this Petition to the school board because of our continued concerns around accountability, transparency as well as the decision making process specifically related to the looming budget vote that will be made next month.

We have previously communicated with the Board in different ways, including correspondence, regarding some of the general concerns that we have. However, those concerns have not been adequately addressed, sometimes even ignored.

Therefore, we feel compelled to present this Petition in order to call to the board's attention our concerns. They include the following:

- Proposed deep reductions by administration to critical student support personnel including teachers, EA's, counselors, and other onsite personnel that should not be done. This is a vital time period for our children and students in the school district and any material reductions in onsite personnel, particularly teachers and staff, would have an extremely detrimental impact on the learning experience;

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- Disruptive program relocations for some of the most vulnerable students served within the district resulting in student growth regression and families feeling disregarded, confused and angry;
- Careless changes and reductions to health services without providing comprehensive plans to families as well as other staff;
- The strong impression decisions being made outside of public meetings resulting in a violation of open meeting laws;

We are mindful, of course, of financial concerns. However, we feel those can be addressed in alternative ways other than cutting the sinew of the school district. Therefore, we respectfully request the following immediate actions take place in order to safeguard the future of our school system:

1. Hiring freeze with the exception of positions required for day to day support of students such as summer school staff, substitutes, etc.;
2. Rescind the employment offer made to the Assistant Superintendent leaving the position vacant until it can be determined and justified, with measurable outcomes, to the public that this position is warranted;
3. Pending contract negotiations for cabinet and principal bargaining units (contracts expiring June 30, 2025) to consider immediate proposed pay freezes for the next 12-18 months;
4. Immediate evaluation of all district leases with emphasis on subletting spaces ex. Warehouse and Crystal Learning Center Lease;

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5. Superintendent Staloch forgo the scheduled salary increase for the next year and the school board not allocate any funds for the bonus clause in the superintendent's contract;
6. Require board approval for any use of third party consultants;
7. Produce clear academic metrics along with clear explanations of how cuts to building staff will support meeting said metrics;
8. Halt use of legal counsel at board meetings, which appears to be used to limit discussion and silence dissenting voices. The board has an obligation to the public to engage in detailed discourse regarding the budget, standard of service and program changes.
9. The board should research and implement any available policies to address ways expenses can be reduced, especially as re-examining purchasing decisions, increasing purchasing power through collectives and other arrangements.

An additional suggestion would be to take a close look at the administrative level of personnel district wide. It would appear that a significant savings could be made by consolidation of positions and other mechanisms that would reduce expenses at that level without impacting onsite personnel. Other district's that we know of have faced this problem and addressed them by administrative realignment and ISD 281 should do so, too. This imploration applies to cabinet members, directors, principals and other administrative personnel.

We recognize the list of actions above will not solve all of the district's financial challenges but we do expect that these concerns, as well as others, be taken into account in a responsible and respectful way.

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The role of a school board should extend beyond symbolic approvals - it must be an engaged body that fosters transparency AND accountability. Governance should be conducted in a way that ensures district leadership serves students, educators, and families effectively. The question remains: is our school board truly fulfilling its mandate or is oversight becoming a mere formality?

We look forward to cooperating and coordinating with you as these issues are addressed and attempts to resolve these concerns are undertaken.

Respectfully,

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