

Director Kopp,

A few years ago, I was at the SPFE COPE screening when you spoke about your own teaching experience. I remember the SPFE membership meeting when you cried while you spoke to your struggles to do it all as a teacher.

Imagine all of the struggles of teaching you experienced, and now with students at home and on an iPad. Teachers are working around the clock to connect to our students and engage them.

I am personally working every weekend on Saturday and Sunday to manage the workload of Distance Learning.

I am very concerned by the Curriculum Plan presented by Craig Anderson at the Committee of the Board Meeting last week. I could not sleep after watching that meeting.

I timed myself on a Sunday Afternoon and it took me 5 and a half hours to prepare 2nd grade science SeeSaw posts for one week. This is 5 and and half hours not including the texts and e-mails with colleagues earlier in the week to come up with the ideas. This does not include the trip to Petco to get mealworms. This does not include the times when I go for a walk and spend my time thinking about how to make a virtual pet mealworm engaging to 7year-olds. None of that. I sat down on a Sunday afternoon with my ideas sketched out in a notebook. 5 hours and 30 minutes later, I had it posted for my students. My husband and kids went on a fun hike and came home before I finished. 2nd grade science is not the only thing I have to prepare each week. That was 1 subject for 1 week.

In the Hybrid plan, I will be working with students Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday. When my students are in a room with me, they get my full attention. Imagine the exhaustion I will feel after being with students and maintaining social distance and sanitizing our space.

Imagine Craig Anderson's proposal that I would be delivering the same content to all of my students each day of the week. I would dismiss the students who were in class with me and sit down to 100 Seesaw posts to approve from the students who were working from home that day.

And, how does the district's hybrid plan work? If I introduce the pet mealworms on Monday and Tuesday and focus on writing about them on Wednesday and Thursday, do only the kids on Monday and Tuesday get to see them in school? If I do the same things for students each day, one group of students will miss out on the experience of the science demonstration in person.

Some learning is better in person. Some learning is ok online. It works when I read a story aloud for 2nd graders and ask them to respond to it for Distance Learning. If I followed Craig Anderson's Directions, all of my students get the same learning on the same day. Would the students in the classroom with me have to put their headphones on and watch the video of me reading the story?

We need a hybrid plan that lets us do the best teaching mode for the setting we are in.

Also, I need support for hybrid. I need online learning materials prepared for me so there are things for the students to do while I am teaching hybrid. I need support responding to the 100 posts a day that happen on SeeSaw.

I cannot do what Craig Anderson said and continue doing what I am doing now and add on in person instruction.

As a former teacher I think you will understand. I am working as many hours now as I did my first-year of teaching, but I have 18 years of experience to support me. I know my standards inside out and backwards. I have stacks of books and about 5 bins of science supplies in my basement that I know how to use to engage kids.

Jessica, I have an e-mail in my inbox. It is a nomination for the Presidential Science Award, and I am too overwhelmed to open it.

At the board meeting, please ask how much time it will take Kindergarten, 1st grade, and 2nd grade teachers to prepare 1 week of lessons for 1 subject. My example is 5.5 hours.

Ask how many subjects Kindergarten, 1st grade, and 2nd grade teachers need to prepare each week.

Ask how much time teachers are expected to be engaging with students, and how much time is left in the day after students are dismissed.

Ask Craig Anderson if he has ever approved 100 Seesaw posts of student work and how long that took.

Then, please ask what supports the district will have in place for the teacher workload in hybrid.

Ask for specifics. Ask for examples.

There are other ways to do hybrid.

District 196 has district made practice work for students for the days they are not in person.

Other ideas could be giving teachers the freedom to flip flop the work so the at home work is the same for both groups and the in person lessons are the same for both groups.

Or another idea could be to have group one 2 days ahead of the other group. So work is always introduced in person and students have time at home to reinforce and practice.

I am sorry this is so long. This is very personal. Parents tell me that their children love the science work I create for them. It is a privilege that I can bring joyful learning into the homes of my students during a pandemic. I cannot do the workload I am doing now. I will not be able to continue what I do now and work in hybrid.

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