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SWEETWATER COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 2

Teachers fear reassignment for bringing up issues

Employee association leader discovered concerns at campuses

RHETT WILKINSON reporter4@rocketminer.com Jan 26, 2018



GREEN RIVER — “They say that they will get moved if they say anything.”

That is what Green River Education Association co-president Sandra Bowling said in a Nov. 1 meeting between GREA leadership, members of the Sweetwater County School District No. 2 Board of Trustees and the district administrators. She was referencing teachers voicing concerns about speaking with administrators about issues in the district, according to documentation obtained by the Rocket-Miner.

“I am just telling you that I have tried to bring it to Super 8,” Bowling said. “We’ve talked about that there needs to be communication on what some schools are going through.”

Super 8 is the committee with board, administrator, GREA and district staff personnel to talk about issues that can morph into a board meeting agenda item, with “unresolved items” brought up at the regularly held board-GREA “negotiations period.” The superintendent, assistant superintendent and human resources director are Donna Little-Kaumo, Jamie Christensen and Jason Fuss, respectively.

“I’ve listened to people at Lincoln, at Truman, at Jackson and I’ve listened to it at the high school,” Bowling said. “It is at all of the buildings that we hear these things.”

Bowling then spoke to teachers tracking time that administrators have observed the teachers in their classrooms. Discussion in the meeting often had to do with “walkthroughs” that lasted even 45-plus minutes last semester; Bowling and GREA co-president Lisa Robison said fellow teachers wanted consistency for the length of the walkthroughs.

Bowling then said “we should be getting the feedback” resulting from the walkthroughs.

“They should be getting the feedback,” Little-Kaumo said. “We will certainly take that back to the principals, because if you are not giving feedback, you need to do that. But trying to make it consistent in a way that you are thinking about it, Sandy, would really be tough. Because it depends on what the teacher needs.”

“I know a principal was working with a teacher and he said that ‘the next time I come into your room, I want to make sure that you have structures in place, with your tummy to the table and parking the pencil’ and some of the things that we have heard from the consultants,” Little-Kaumo then said. “So she may go in there for 10 minutes just to see if at the beginning of the lesson, ‘does he start out that way or does she start out that way?’”

“But to try and say that we can have a consistent amount of time for people to bop into rooms – look, principals should differentiate for their teachers just like we do for the kids and teachers are the principals’ classroom, so they are going to get different kinds of support in all different kinds of ways, with all different kinds of minutes,” Little-Kaumo said. “There is no way to make that kind of minutes consistent.”

Robison then advocated for the importance of “letting people know that that is the way that is going to be.”

“Because I don’t remember hearing on how long anything was going to be,” she said.

“It was the first day of PD,” Board Chairwoman Brenda Roosa claimed, meaning “professional development.”

