



Tukwila Education Association

TEA Proudly Represents All Certificated Staff & Education Support Professionals

May 25, 2023

To: Director Carlee Hoover
Director Edna Morris
Superintendent Flip Herndon

Director Jan Bolerjack
Director Dave Larson

The Tukwila School District has historically been a district where employees are proud to serve. We have seen ourselves as a community who work collaboratively to better serve our students. Under the leadership of Dr. Allison Deno, this collaborative spirit has been denied repeatedly. The primary concern of our membership, as always, is the impact on students resulting from the dysfunction of our current leadership.

For only the second time in the history of our association, we have felt compelled to hold a vote of no confidence; specifically in the leadership of Teaching and Learning of the Tukwila School District. We understand the importance of such a vote. This action was taken after numerous unsuccessful attempts by individual members, building staff, and TEA leadership to open dialogue, communicate concerns to the district, and collaborate on effective solutions.

The following summarizes the results of a vote which was conducted using anonymous ballots. Each member that participated signed a separate document indicating that they voted. These documents are available as evidence of the transparency of the process.

261 out of 285 certificated and classified members took part in the voting process.

78% of our membership voted “No Confidence” in the leadership of Dr. Deno

4% voted “Confidence”

18% abstentions

The strength of the results speak for themselves. The membership came to this decision after looking at the following about Dr. Deno:

- Understands the needs of the programs she oversees
- Supports our work with MLL students
- Spirit of collaboration and using community input for decision making
- Management style is appropriate for our staff
- Values align with those of Tukwila school District

Our primary reasons for submitting this vote of no confidence are detailed below and highlight the impacts on our classrooms and students. Also, there is an addendum including the voice of our membership in the form of surveys and direct quotes.

An effective district requires a stable leadership base with individuals who understand their roles and invite stakeholder voices in before decisions are made. The administrators in charge of Teaching and Learning should have a good understanding of research-based pedagogy that is effective with our students. They should trust that the dedicated staff who serve our community are professionals. They should understand that true collaboration does not result in rigid directives and micromanaging. **The shutting out of educators' voices has resulted in changes in priorities, vision, and messaging to teachers, staff, and by extension, students without any attempt to listen to those who have been serving this community for more than a year..**

Collaboration is an essential element of effective organizations in which there are multiple stakeholders. An effective superintendent recognizes the need for collaboration and seeks out appropriate input on key decisions that will impact buildings, classrooms and students. Teachers and staff have critical experience and information related to their work and the needs of our diverse students. It is our view that the critical experience and voice of our members has been largely ignored, dismissed, or deflected over the past three years. **Successful programs which ultimately lead to gains in student achievement are built on input and buy in from all key stakeholders.**

The overwhelming majority of TEA members do not have confidence in the current leadership of Teaching and Learning. We need to move forward as a district and serve our students; the frustrations, lack of leadership and disrespect for our community detailed in this letter have been a hindrance and distraction from our work as educators and district employees. We are requesting that Dr. Allison Deno resign her position or that the School Board declines to renew her contract for the 2023-2024 school year.

Debbie Aldous
TEA President

Terra Dupont
TEA Vice President - ESP

Emma Wohl
TEA Secretary

Melissa McLean
Treasurer

Addendum - Members' concerns:

- **“Dr. Deno does not listen to the voices in the room. She does not solicit opinions of ALL MLL staff, just the ones who echo what she herself says.** She does not invite conversation. She has not asked us about our program in a way that invites conversation. Changes to MLL programming are not based on OUR students' or teachers' needs or input. **What is most concerning is the lack of attention to literacy demands of our MLLs.”**
- **“Dr Deno has made decisions about our Pre-K program without seeking input from the staff or families within the program.** These significant changes she is proposing are in conflict with our current program requirements. She has made changes to our schedules for the upcoming school year which leaves no planning time for our teachers. **The schedule change reflects her lack of knowledge surrounding the importance of intentional planning, parent-teacher-child relationships and shows an unwillingness to partner when presented with the consequences and negative impact on students, families, and staff in regards to these changes.** Our early learning program has many requirements that must be adhered to, to maintain funding, and is whole child and family driven.”
- **“I have been to an MLL meeting that Dr. Deno facilitated. Through her vision, our program will drastically change and valuable services provided by skilled MLL staff to our MLL students will drastically decrease or end entirely.** There has been no training, clear communication, or valuable input allowed for staff this year. Concerns have been dismissed or unanswered. **If this plan, or lack of plan, comes to fruition, our students will not have their academic or civil rights addressed.”**
- **“Dr. Deno has continuously made decisions that negatively affect our students without allowing the professionals who work with our population to have any input. We need leaders who lead with integrity, compassion, and a willingness to learn about the community we serve, not ones who lead with bullying, intimidation, and consistently show no desire to learn about the community we serve.”**