



Tukwila Education Association

TEA Proudly Represents All Certificated Staff & Education Support Professionals

May 25, 2023

To: Director Carlee Hoover Director Jan Bolerjack
 Director Edna Morris Director Dave Larson
 Superintendent Flip Herndon

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. Millicent Borishade, 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 286 certificated and classified members took part in the voting process.

85% of our membership voted “No Confidence” in the leadership of Dr. Borishade

4% voted “Confidence”

11% abstentions

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

- Lack of support for our work with MLL students
- Mandates around iReady testing use
- The lack of collaboration and community input for decision making
- Management style that works 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. Millicent Borishade 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. Borishade makes assumptions that there has been no successful educational effort on the part of staff **without any data or communication to back up these claims.**"
- "Dr. Borishade showed up to FHS to scold the English and math departments in front of the whole staff about their perceived lack of iReady completion. **It was one of the most demeaning and insulting meetings I can remember. I felt ashamed and devalued.** She chose a random student who had a very low iReady score, and **displayed his private information for all to see, as she spoke about his deficiencies.**"
- "**The Common Core training was insulting - it sounded like she believed we had never heard of CCSS, when we had in fact been using them for a decade, and our dept had done intense work on them with a coach for several years running.** It is clear to me that she either believes people to be incompetent, or she just doesn't care enough to speak with us about what we've been doing, and instead prefers to just dictate a course of action."
- "She has ridiculed staff in my building for how their classroom library was set up of all things. **Instead of feeling like we can share our students' progress, we are treated as less than professional.**"
- "**I don't recall her ever asking for our input or sharing her philosophy of learning.** There has been no relationship building or letting staff know she supports us."
- "Dr. Borishade has stepped in as Sped. Director while Jennifer Jones is gone. **Emails have gone unanswered and requests to attend important decision making meetings and IEP meetings were ignored.**"
- "I have seen firsthand how Dr. Borishade does not understand the legal processes of special education. **She has undermined decisions made by IEP teams even when she has not been in attendance at meetings.** She has refused to support staff when we are already severely understaffed by refusing to hire more people or pay for overages when staff have taken on extra evaluations or treatment time beyond what their caseload cap requires."