

From: Tuck, Angela <ATuck@greenvillenews.com>
To: Danny Varat DannyVarat@scstatehouse.gov
Date: 5/10/2018 3:33:42 PM
Subject: RE: Submission

It will go online and in print on Monday.

From: Danny Varat [<mailto:DannyVarat@scstatehouse.gov>]
Sent: Thursday, May 10, 2018 3:33 PM
To: Tuck, Angela
Subject: Re: Submission

Thanks very much

Sent using OWA for iPhone

From: Tuck, Angela <ATuck@greenvillenews.com>
Sent: Thursday, May 10, 2018 2:57:09 PM
To: Danny Varat
Subject: RE: Submission

Thanks, I have received. I will get this in.

From: Danny Varat [<mailto:DannyVarat@scstatehouse.gov>]
Sent: Wednesday, May 9, 2018 8:24 PM
To: Tuck, Angela <ATuck@greenvillenews.com>
Subject: Re: Submission

Dear Ms. Tuck, please see the submission below. Is it possible to place this on Sunday? Thanks

Danny

Teachers Leave Their Classrooms, because We Don't Let Them Teach

"Imagine seeing a 200-pound student chase down one of your teachers and punch her in the face and break her glasses and continue to punch her."

"'Standardized Test Scores.' Those three words head the list of reasons teachers like me give up their dream.... Crushing paperwork, time-crunches, absurd curricula and unrealistic expectations only accelerate the resulting exodus of high-quality teachers."

"Teaching morals and good character has been de-emphasized."

These are the words of South Carolina teachers. No wonder many cannot wait to leave.

Recent statistics illustrate the exodus from South Carolina public school classrooms. Twenty-two percent of new teachers hired in 2016 left after one year. Thirty-eight percent of teachers left their jobs

within their first five years in the most recent count. South Carolina colleges graduate about one-third less teachers than they did just a few years ago.

Many politicians focus on teacher salaries as a solution, and I agree that many teachers certainly should earn more. Parents also tell me that some should leave the classroom altogether.

Teachers I talk to would like a higher salary. But they equally, if not more so, are concerned about the mind-numbing regulation and red tape, the physically-sickening gauntlet of assessments, and the real prospect of violence, that renders their jobs nearly impossible.

Higher salaries, the fiscally devastating TERI program, and other financial incentives have failed before to solve the problem and will again. South Carolina needs radical structural reform.

I absolutely and unequivocally believe in school choice and tax credits to support it. I authored the Exceptional Needs scholarship program, and I want to see it expanded for every child in South Carolina. School choice and successful public schools are not at odds or mutually exclusive. They actually are complementary, and I never will stop working for universal school choice.

We may disagree on school choice, but our decades old system for K-12 education simply no longer works, if it ever did. We must fundamentally change our approach to public K-12 education.

The dozens of funding formulas, reams of regulation, bizarre and destructive systems of assessment (of both students and teachers), all mandated by Columbia and Washington, have turned our public schools into Orwellian stages where individuals of talent and passion either lose their heart or succumb to the paradox of the classroom as assembly line--and then leave.

I advocate expelling Columbia and Washington from the classroom. I also advocate eliminating the Education Oversight Committee and its ruinous testing and reporting regime. The mindless coloring of bubbles wastes precious time and money, but the crushing tension and anxiety that begins weeks before the onslaught destroys the joy of learning for everyone, adults and children alike. No teacher or principal that I know assigns any value to the EOC. It must go away.

Teachers and principals need to control their classrooms. I believe that many teachers leave the profession, especially from the challenging schools, because they have no ability to enforce rules and discipline.

I also advocate local control in security preparedness. One of the last bills I sponsored as a state senator codifies the freedom of local districts to arm people besides active duty police to keep kids safe. Examples might include school personnel, retired police, or active Guardsmen, but it would be a local decision. Georgia passed a law in 2014 to allow these local decisions and the Laurens County, Georgia school board recently decided to use this freedom. We can and must do that here.

Worthless paperwork, testing mania, and chaotic classrooms leave teachers no space, time, or energy to teach. Teachers too often are focused on the struggling students to try and raise their test scores or on the unruly ones to try and keep order in the classroom. They spend very little time actually teaching, especially to those who want to learn.

I'm happy to hold a discussion about teacher salaries, but for the really good teachers, no amount of money will keep them on a road to ruin--with a bubble test at the end.

From: Tuck, Angela <ATuck@greenvillenews.com>
Sent: Monday, May 7, 2018 12:51 PM
To: Danny Varat
Subject: RE: Submission

Yes, that is perfectly fine. Thanks Danny.

From: Danny Varat [<mailto:DannyVarat@scstatehouse.gov>]
Sent: Monday, May 7, 2018 12:51 PM
To: Tuck, Angela <ATuck@greenvillenews.com>
Subject: Submission

Dear Ms. Tuck, LG Bryant is working on a piece on teachers. May he have 700 words for this submission? Thanks

Danny