

June 15, 2012

To the Southern Boone County R-1 Board of Education:

I will decline the offer of a contract for next year because I can no longer tolerate the lack of professionalism and waste of taxpayer money that characterize the district's current management. Of course, the last straw for me was being offered a raise that was half that offered to most administrators. When I asked Charlotte Miller, superintendent, why my raise was less than others', she said that the board didn't understand the assistant superintendent's job. That's ridiculous as this position has existed at Southern Boone for over a decade, held by others before me. It exists in all other schools our size and many smaller ones. Charlotte also said that the board thought that my salary was too high but didn't explain why I am penalized now after serving the district for 4 years. Of course, it's actually a two-year penalty since my pay increase last year also was smaller than that given to selected other administrators. Charlotte couldn't explain why the board doesn't object to very large increases in her own salary or that of her favored administrators.

First, my salary is not small; many families would appreciate such an income. However, the assistant superintendent salary here is not out of line with similar schools or with the knowledge and experience needed for the position. The assistant superintendent at a school almost identical to ours in size (Wright City) earns \$5,000 more than Southern Boone pays. Schools where the asst. superintendent earns less are all smaller schools, and their superintendents are paid much less than our superintendent. In addition, some schools give an extra stipend to staff members who have earned a doctorate; Southern Boone penalizes me for that accomplishment. While an asst. superintendent position is not a high-profile job with the general public, most superintendents and districts recognize the value of work encompassing a wide variety of areas.

Because Charlotte's explanations were so weak, I believe that this decision is personal and based on my speaking up against abuses of other staff members and against the waste of taxpayer dollars over the past two years. I've also refused to submit fraudulent claims for state funds based on enrollment and attendance. Despite the lip service given to collaboration and the administrative "team," it seems that opinions that conflict with Charlotte's and that of her favorite colleague (Bob Simpson) are punished. It also appears that some board members may put their personal friendships with Charlotte and Bob ahead of their responsibilities to the district. However, because there might be board members who care about education and respect the taxpayers' support of the community's schools, I'll provide details of some of the waste and abuses.

Nepotism/wasteful staffing

For instance, I have objected to the creation of unnecessary staff positions. Last year, Charlotte and Bob created a position for Charlotte's niece, costing taxpayers \$45,000 in salary and benefits, along with additional costs for specialized training. Bob used the term "behaviorist" to trump up the credentials of a young woman with only a

temporary certificate and no teaching experience. As Charlotte told a staff member, "After all, you can't expect her [the niece] to live on an aide's salary forever!" Ignoring legitimate needs elsewhere, this position was placed at the Middle School, staffing it with non-core staff at a far higher level than any of the other schools. To hide the new position, Charlotte presented a document (2011-12 Staff Changes, attached) showing that her niece was replacing a teacher at the Elementary School. However, the position became the 4th special education teacher at the Middle School, which previously had 3 sped. teachers. Bob claimed that student needs justified additional staff, but the same students were served by fewer teachers at other district schools. A staff report which I prepared this spring to try to look at the situation objectively is attached (two pages: Staffing by Building and Reading Specialists). Fortunately, this situation is resolved for next year; the niece is relocating, so the Middle School will do without a "behaviorist."

Facilitating Charlotte's nepotism may be Bob's specialty as the same thing occurred 4 years ago, with the creation of an at-risk position for the Middle School. The position was then given to a young woman associated with Charlotte's family although she lacked a teaching degree. Such a position could have been filled by any certificated teacher in the state, a pool of thousands of qualified applicants. Instead, the taxpayers of the Southern Boone District generously paid tuition reimbursement for Charlotte's associate (Bob's choice) to get a master's degree and certificate. The normal (and rare) circumstance in which the district provides tuition reimbursement is when there are no qualified applicants for a position and a teacher is persuaded to take on the assignment.

That same year (2008), Charlotte's stepdaughter was hired as at-risk teacher for another building. This was more credible since the position existed previously, and that young woman was actually a teacher. However, Charlotte told a district employee that her stepdaughter was hired because there were no other applicants; that was not true.

Since Bob is willing to carry Charlotte's relatives and associates, Charlotte returns the favor. At an administrative meeting last spring, Charlotte and Bob proposed an assistant middle school principal position. I noted that we were 100 students below where state staffing guidelines call such a position necessary. Faced with this fact, Charlotte ended the discussion, but the idea lived on. Last summer, Charlotte "re-assigned" a half-time administrator to a full-time administrative position, with a very large pay increase. The "re-assigned" responsibilities continued to include transportation director and added alternative school director and something called "K-8 administrative support." During the recent economic downturn, most Missouri schools eliminated non-essential administrative positions such as directors for alternative schools, but Southern Boone has added one! This is especially odd since two years ago, Charlotte claimed to have eliminated an administrative position (Rick Briedwell's) although half of Rick's position was restored immediately in the form of transportation director. Now, the entire administrative position has been restored, in a much less efficient or useful form.

As to this year's so-called "K-8 administrative support", absolutely none was provided to the Primary School, and fewer than 10 hours (total, for the year) were spent at the Elementary School. Therefore, the support was solely for Bob Simpson, creating

an assistant position but hiding it under a different title. As an additional expense, in order to provide someone to actually teach the alternative school class, Charlotte created a new level on the classified salary schedule for an "instructional professional." The purpose of that appears to be to pretend that no new teaching position was created by this maneuver. As the year progressed, it became obvious that the woman hired for this position had sole responsibility for the class, but she wasn't paid a teacher's salary (other issues of fairness will be described later). Previously, the alternative school required 2 staff members when there were 2 distinct sessions; currently, there's only 1 session, apparently requiring an administrator as well as a teacher.

The "K-8 administrative support" is an outrageous waste of money. No other district in Missouri would fund an assistant principal position (whatever silly name is used) for a school of 350 rural students with a low poverty rate (according to standard definitions). Nor would another district pay a middle school principal as much as a high school principal (another example of favoritism) since the latter is a far more complex job. It appears that the purpose of the new position was to fill in for Bob while he followed Charlotte to meetings unrelated to a principal's responsibilities. In other words, the taxpayers paid for Charlotte's and Bob's efforts to groom Bob for his aspiration to be Southern Boone's next superintendent. The cost of that grooming is nearly \$32,000, calculated at half of the "K-8 administrative support" position's base salary, plus benefits. Charlotte and Bob may claim that he is "interning" by shadowing her, but he supposedly did that internship the prior year. No other aspiring administrator would require multiple years of internship, much less charge the taxpayers \$32,000 to enable it.

To further understand how wasteful this full-time, 12-month position is—even beyond the unnecessary "administrative support"—remember that the alternative school, serving about 20 students a year, does not operate during the summer. As to transportation, only one bus takes a few students with special needs to summer school. The mechanic prepares the buses for inspection while state-required transportation reports are prepared primarily by the assistant superintendent's secretary. And surely even Bob can handle a summer school of 45 (often fewer) students without help.

At a board work session last summer, board members Bridget Canaday and Joe Miller spoke in favor of a middle school assistant principal position. Lately, there have been rumors that a different teacher is being considered as a possible assistant principal for the Middle School. Normally, such rumors wouldn't warrant a mention, but since the "K-8 administrative support" position was created deceptively last year and not advertised, it seems that anything's possible. It isn't clear how the "K-8 administrative support" position was presented to the board, but the majority must have gone along with this expensive notion. The question is, how much support does Bob Simpson need?

Staffing inequities

Staffing inequities that result from favoritism hurt the district's students. The Middle School is staffed at a far higher rate than other schools. For example, when the "behaviorist" was given to the Middle School, the High School, with 4 grade levels and

as many special needs students (needing to complete diploma requirements) had only 3 special education teachers. The Middle School also has 2 other non-core staff members who served only 25 and 41 students, respectively, during the past semester. This contrasts with the High School's critical need for staff, a situation which has been allowed to exist for years but is more obvious with the new schedule. Some high school teachers teach 180-200 students per semester, as mentioned in program evaluations. There, the debate is about which students must be displaced from courses they've chosen and how to displace as few students as possible with available staff. An additional 1.5 teachers will help next year but will not address all student needs.

The staffing inequity is worsened because Bob is unable to think of or unwilling to consider adjustments to the Middle School schedule. The Middle School pulls 6 teachers from the High School for afternoon classes. After noon, the High School has 26 teachers for 450 students while the Middle School has 29 teachers for 350. Excluding special education teachers who may have small case loads anyway, the numbers become 23 teachers for the High School and 25 teachers for the Middle School. Although the numerical averages don't seem bad, anyone with an ounce of sense recognizes that high school students can't be perfectly distributed among classes. Some classes may be advanced subjects with small enrollments while others will have around 30 students.

By the way, in contrast to an unnecessary assistant position for the Middle School, the High School's student population of about 450 is high enough that an assistant principal is considered essential by state guidelines. High school enrollment will increase next year, but no additional administrative or secretarial support has been considered.

Favoritism

It should also be noted that before the expensive new position of "K-8 administrative support and alternative school director" was created, Bob received \$1200 in extra duty pay to be the alternative school director. Because Charlotte and Bob developed their staffing scheme secretly last summer, no other administrator was offered a chance to take on the responsibility of alternative school director in the same format (i.e., for extra-duty pay). Instead, that full-time, 12-month administrative position (with administrative pay) was created for the purpose of releasing Bob from blocks of time as Middle School principal, for which he was paid nearly \$79,000.

Furthermore, no other principal has an extra duty contract, no matter how many assignments they have. For example, the Primary School principal supervises both the Parents As Teachers program and the preschool program—either one of which serves far more students than the alternative school. That principal receives nothing for the additional responsibilities.

Another interesting fact about administrative pay is that Charlotte's salary is only part of her compensation. In addition, she has an extra-duty contract that lists no specific work to be performed but is simply an extra \$5600 for next year (and district-paid

retirement on that). Regardless of “challenging economic times” (Charlotte’s favorite phrase), there was enough money for Charlotte to attend an out-of-state conference this spring. Meanwhile, parents of students have to fork over an activity fee for sports participation, an activity fee for summer school, and a fee for a driver education class.

Between the 2008-09 and 2012-13 school years, Charlotte’s salary has increased by almost 11% to over \$122,000 while Bob’s has increased by 12% to over \$82,000. Over the same period of time, increases for other administrators averaged 7.3%. The discrepancy cannot be attributed to quality of work as the rest of us have used district funds wisely and accomplished concrete improvements in our areas of responsibilities. The big raises of as much as \$5,000 appear to result from personal friendships and mutual “back-scratching.” Bob is among the highest paid middle school principals in the region, apparently because of his service to Charlotte and “partying” with some board members.

Of course, the less-favored administrators are not the only employees short-changed by selfish management decisions. Many staff members lost money through salary cuts, fewer contract days, more expensive insurance with additional costs, and inequitable treatment on the salary schedule. As an example of the latter, a coach was given credit for related experience outside of K-12 schools, but a counselor was not. One teacher’s extra-duty days will be compensated according to a formula different from any other extra-duty contract; that seems legally questionable, much less fair. To save money, the district eliminated a career ladder for teachers and reduced compensation for summer school teachers. Information presented to the Salary Committee showed that Southern Boone’s teachers ranked 21st out of 29 area schools in salary. While everyone understands the need to make cuts during a bad economy, sacrifices should be shared. There shouldn’t have been windfalls for Charlotte and Bob, whose pay is at the top of the top third of schools in the region—the opposite of where our teachers rank.

However, no one sacrificed as much as the custodial staff. After a year of juggling the custodial/maintenance tasks formerly managed by Rick Briedwell (who also supervised transportation before his position was eliminated), Charlotte decided to outsource these tasks. The boasted savings of \$45,000 from using a company called PCI were achieved by eliminating custodians’ health insurance and pensions and cutting wages. Turnover has been so high (above 95%) that principals have asked that custodians wear a PCI shirt so they’ll recognize whoever is in the building as a custodian.

Although drastic cuts to custodians seemed to produce enough money to fund some of Charlotte’s and Bob’s perks, even that turns out not to be the case. Charlotte announced at the May board meeting that there were additional costs for custodial and maintenance services that weren’t in PCI’s original contract. Now it seems that outsourcing custodial services actually costs more than having in-district staff with decent benefits. Sadly, most of the employees who suffer from mean-spirited and dumb decisions can’t speak up; they need their jobs and can’t afford to “make waves,” even when blamed for others’ mistakes. Do decisions like these warrant the superintendent’s raises of nearly \$5,000 a year?

Before you dismiss this as a rant from an angry employee (which I certainly am), be advised that every statement is true and can be verified by others. It's difficult to go along with the pretense of teamwork while Charlotte and Bob waste taxpayers' money and concoct behind-the-scenes schemes for their own benefit. Another example of such waste is Bob's overstaffing his summer school, which Charlotte approves every year. There are about 45 students at the start, but only about 25 by the end of the session.

To warn conscientious people who might be on the board, I've outlined obvious inequities and waste. However, that's certainly not the only problem with the Charlotte/Bob management (it can't be called leadership). There are more instances than I can describe of bad educational decisions. For example, administrators are sometimes forced to go along with whatever bandwagon Bob and Charlotte endorse, such as a new teacher evaluation program. Other administrators, much less the teachers themselves (who have the biggest stake in the method used), had no choice in changing the teacher evaluation system. The objective truth is that while the state will eventually require changes to teacher evaluation, there will be options to choose from. The professional approach would be to consider various possibilities in conjunction with the faculty.

Bob and Charlotte will soon be talking about purchasing a new science program for the Middle School and will try to force the Primary and Elementary School to go along. While Sangari science is reportedly an excellent program, its purchase seems to be more about Bob needing a new bandwagon so he can pretend to be an innovator. Recently, the district recently spent significant funds on new science textbooks and teachers have formalized science curriculum—all to be wasted. The problem with "bandwagons" is that while bragging about new programs may impress gullible board members, too many new programs are not implemented well, wasting teachers' time and effort and the district's money.

Perhaps in the future some board members will ask questions and demand evidence instead of blindly accepting whatever they're told; they owe that to the district's patrons. Certainly, conscientious board members should be careful how applications for the superintendent's position are received and reviewed next year when Charlotte retires, to make sure that Bob's friends on the board don't pre-select "dud" applications to make him look good by comparison. It's interesting that, in April, the board deviated from its long-standing practice of moving the vice president into the president's position for the subsequent year. Instead, Bob's friend, Bridget Canaday, was re-elected by the board as president. One wonders if there is a voting bloc within the board devoted to Bob's advancement to superintendent.

For me, being cheated on a salary increase is just the last straw. I cannot work for people who have no integrity. Nevertheless, I'm sad to leave many wonderful teachers and several outstanding administrators here in the Southern Boone District. I'm honored to have worked with them. Like them, I've made specific contributions beyond my routine duties, including re-writing the salary schedule, coordinating the GTECH Corporation's \$15,000 gift to the high school, and writing a school improvement grant that brought in an additional \$15,000. Last fall, when I knew I'd have more time to

devote to curriculum, I audited a university course (on my own time and at my own expense) in order to update my knowledge. I hate to leave the work I've started with professional learning communities, curriculum, program evaluations, using data legitimately, and cohesive professional development.

With my departure, you may hear some blather about loyalty to the Southern Boone District. In my opinion, serving the district with skill and integrity, as I have, represents loyalty far better than providing the superintendent and some board members with Jello shots and a keg stand. There might also be some blather about my late departure, but it was May 18 when Charlotte informed me that my raise would again be much less than that given to her and her pals. If Charlotte had done a performance review with me this winter, I'd have told her then that I wouldn't tolerate another year of unprofessional schemes and favoritism. Nevertheless, I feel bad for the people on whom my work will be dumped, who already have to function within the climate of fear, ignorance, and lack of communication.

Southern Boone's patrons wholeheartedly support the district in every way. These patrons, some of whom no doubt must budget carefully in order to pay taxes, deserve better than "good old boy" administrators who feather their own nests. Even more important than issues of treatment of employees, the fact remains that wasted resources could be better spent as they're supposed to be—on the legitimate needs of the district's students.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Carolyn Deffenbaugh". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Carolyn Deffenbaugh, Ed.D.

Southern Boone County Schools
2011-2012

Staff Changes

Staff Leaving/Movement	Position	Replacement	BOE Approval
Brandi Fatherley	Elementary Principal	Amy James	3/24/2011
Diane Foster	Fifth Grade Teacher	Kelci Weier	4/18/2011
Wendi Scheer	Fourth Grade Teacher	Janelle Cade	4/18/2011
Stephanie Stokes	Fifth Grade Teacher	Emily Wirts	4/18/2011
Mindy McBride	Special Service Teacher	Ingrit Tutu	4/18/2011
Jana Stockstill	6th Grade Math	Amanda Frost	4/18/2011
Karen Barrett	K-2 Primary Art	Jessica Starbuck	4/18/2011
Joe Brown	8th Grade Science	Chris Gares	4/18/2011
Fellows	1st Grade	Christina Ebenroth	4/18/2011
George Zimny	High School Spanish	Travis Thornhill	5/16/2011
Carolyn Pridemore	Parents as Teachers	Kim Lewis 1.00	5/16/2011
Beth Yates	8th Grade Communication Arts	Justin Griffith	5/16/2011
Peggy Thompson	Kindergarten Teacher	Ashley Angle (transferred)	5/16/2011
Tara Atchison Green	Special Service Teacher	Dianne Zimmerman *	4/18/2011
Sandy Nichols	Title 1 Reading	Carolyn Pridemore (transferred)	5/16/2011
Special Education Para's	Special Service Teacher	Tara Atchison Green	6/20/2011
Stacey Campbell	Special Service Teacher	Suzanne Lackman	6/20/2011
Heather Miles-Mange	Alternative School	Heather Miles-Mange	6/20/2011
New Position	First Grade	Brandy Latchford	5/16/2011
Angle Ashley	First Grade	Jessica Reeder	5/16/2011
New Position	HS ISS/At-Risk/Health	Shannon Jeffrey	6/20/2011
New Position	Elementary Physical Education P/T	Elizabeth Harlow .50	6/20/2011
New Position	Elementary Art P/T	Meagan Cooper .50	6/20/2011
New Position	Elementary Music P/T	Kaitlin Foley .50	6/20/2011
Donna Klemme	Counselor's Secretary	Marilyn White	6/20/2011
Alan Campbell	Custodian	Lionel Lanseigne	6/20/2011
Debbie Campbell	Custodian	Mindy Campbell	6/20/2011
	Parents as Teachers - .25	Jessica Reeder	6/20/2011
Jane Travlos	Elementary Secretary	Diana Smith	7/18/2011
	ESL Instructor	Jeanne Welch-Kurdle	8/22/2011
		Revised August 19, 2011	

← Diane is Charlotte's niece. Tara Green taught at the Elementary School.

Staffing by Building 2011-12

School	Student enrollment	Core staff	Couns.	Reading specialists	Special ed. teachers	# of students with IEPs (excl. speech)	Ratio of students to special ed. teachers	Aides and paras	Other educators: support staff w/certif..	Ed. support staff total	Ratio of students to education support staff
Primary	332	17	1.0	2.39	1.0 [#]	18 [#]	1/18	2.0 [#]	n/a	6.39	1/52
Element.	323	15.11	1.0	1.0	3.0	32	1/11	2.5	n/a	7.50	1/43
Middle	350	18.09	1.0	1.0	4.0	37	1/9	2.0	1.0 Directions	9.0	1/39
High	462	25.12	1.9*	0.125**	3.0	35	1/12	2.0	.80 ISS/at-risk***	7.7	1/60
Altern. School		.57 + ?				1.0					

Number excludes the 1.0 special education teacher and 1.0 aide dedicated to 1 high-needs student.

* 1 HS counselor teaches 1 section of dual credit psychology.

** 1 HS comm. arts teacher teaches 1 section of reading each semester.

*** The HS ISS teacher teaches 2 sections of health.

Core staff PS: 6 kindergarten, 6 1st grade, 5 2nd grade

Core staff ES: 5 each in 3rd, 4th, & 5th gr., plus .11 Ashley Anderson

Core staff MS: 5 each in 6th, 7th, & 8th for reading, writing, math, science, and social studies, plus 3.09 part-time (.39 for Egloff, Nabors, Marijamaa, Mohlman, and Anderson; .56 Shaffer; .51 Lacy; .12 Adams-elective)

Core staff HS: 4 comm arts, 4 math, 3 science, 3 social studies, 1.39 foreign language, 2 business, 1 agriculture, 1 art, 2.20 health/physical education (incl. Jeffrey), plus 3.43 part-time (.62 for Egloff, Nabors, Marijamaa, & Mohlman; .51 Anderson; .44 Shaffer, .10 Culley)

Reading specialists

School	Number of students in specialized reading class	FTE of certificated teachers	Ratio of students enrolled in reading to reading specialist(s)	
PS	74 (doesn't include wait list)	2.39	1/31	
ES	63 in January 2012	1.0	1/63	
MS	24 students 2 nd semester (avg. class size 4)	1.0	1/24	
HS	7 students each during 1 st and 2 nd semester	0.125	1/56	