

April 5, 2010

Board of Finance
Avon Town Hall
60 West Main Street
Avon, CT 06001

RE: STATEMENT FOR PUBLIC COMMENT:
Cutting Avon Schools' Media Tech Staff Cuts
Technology Education for Our Community's Kids

My name is Lori P. Sigan and I work as a certified media tech assistant, or CMTA, in Pine Grove Elementary School. I am submitting this statement tonight because I am concerned about the future of Avon's schools. The students we serve deserve nothing less than a quality public education.

The Board of Education is considering proposals that would cut CMTAs in each Avon's schools. **This would be akin to cutting technology education,** especially at the elementary level when children are just beginning to learn skills that will carry them through their high school and college years.

On the first day of Kindergarten each year, I ask the children if they have a computer at home. All the hands go up, but when I ask how many of them use the computer, the majority of hands go back down.

More and more children coming into school don't know the letters of the alphabet, yet are expected to find the ctrl-alt-delete keys to log on, type a user name and a password -- on a keyboard with letters not in ABC order -- before they even get into a program, and all within 30 minutes.

With a teacher and a CMTA in the computer lab, not only have Kindergarten students mastered the aforementioned without tears and frustration, but also are double-clicking, typing their names, illustrating ideas, learning how to read and practice math skills.

Second graders are learning how to type and how to use Excel and Powerpoint (I encourage members of the Board to come to the computer lab during Open House in May to see for themselves.)

A CMTA teaches students how to "search" on the Internet and how to determine if the information on a website is valid. A CMTA creates alternatives "on the fly" when a website in a lesson a teacher prepared is no longer available. CMTAs assist district technicians with software installations and hardware issues, cutting down on work orders.

We work one-on-one with students struggling to complete a project. We assist the administration and other faculty members with our creativity and are the first line of defense when the Internet goes down or a question needs to be answered.

CMTAs wear many hats, but the kids call us their "computer teacher." At our salary grade, the school board is getting a real "bang for its buck" and should reconsider cutting these positions. **That's why Avon's support staff are standing up for the board's proposed budget increase of 6.91%.**

Lori Sigan

Certified Media Tech Assistant, Pine Grove Elementary School
Member, CSEA/SEIU Local 2001

cc: Members, Avon Board of Education
Members, Executive Council, CSEA/SEIU Local 2001

LPS:dmo