

Dear Superintendent Garcia and Members of the District Board,

I regret I cannot attend tonight's hearing, as I'm volunteering with the Hunt Middle School Booster Club—investing my own time to strengthen our schools. As a parent of students at Geiger Montessori and Hunt, I'm deeply committed to our district's success. Yet I am profoundly disappointed by this year's budget cuts—imposed without meaningful input—and alarmed by opaque budget reporting and poor communication that exploit volunteer goodwill and erode public trust.

Eliminating Educational Support Professionals at Geiger Montessori and slashing librarian hours at both schools directly undermines Tacoma's "Whole Child" philosophy. Montessori's self-directed, hands-on approach has transformed my daughter into a voracious reader and given my son a safe space to cultivate empathy and independence—qualities our modern economy demands. These gains depend on ESP and librarian support; removing them overloads teachers, shatters a nurturing environment, and risks accreditation.

Worse still, cutting critical instructional roles while recruiting athletic coaches highlights a troubling misalignment of priorities. Recurring multi-million-dollar shortfalls, coupled with opaque budgeting, point to fiscal mismanagement and a lack of transparency.

Over the past twelve months, the Board has repeatedly made unilateral decisions without regard for family needs. Most glaring was the shift to a pre-8:00 a.m. middle school start—designed to save roughly \$1 million without any transparent justification. Many middle schoolers still require significant parental support. Expecting children that age to begin their day earlier offers no educational benefit and only places added strain on parents and a 2:00 p.m. pickup is simply unrealistic for working families. This pattern of opaque, top-down choices blatantly ignores the real needs of both students and their families.

I urge the Board to:

1. Reinstate ESPs and librarians to preserve equitable, student-centered learning.
2. Publish clear, detailed budget reports to restore community trust.
3. Engage parents, teachers, and ESPs in all future staffing and scheduling decisions.

Only through transparent collaboration can we uphold Tacoma Public Schools' commitment to our children's education and well-being.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Tasick

Geiger Montessori and Hunt Middle School Parent