

Money Well Spent? posted – 20 April 2019

Is this money well spent?

“This year \$3,000 was offered to new and returning teachers who teach high school level math courses and \$1500 to new and returning teachers who teach middle school math courses.”

Hampton City Schools
April 4, 2019

I pretty sure, the math teachers in middle and high school would emphatically attest to this being money well spent. But is it? Why them?

This is not money to be spent on teachers in positions that are hard to fill. After all, Hampton City Schools reported to be 100% staffed last year (2017-2018) at the start of school. No bonuses were reported in the Annual School Report – Finance for teachers. Personnel Services received nearly \$40,000 in bonuses. So why this year are the bonuses necessary?

The dollars are not being steered to high poverty schools. The funds will not be heading to highly skilled teachers for retention...unless they just happen to be a math teacher in middle or high school. You just have to be a math teacher in middle or high school.

Using last years numbers from the personnel report, Hampton reported 138 middle and high school math teachers. Hopefully, this number did not fluctuate by more than 3 or 4 throughout the year. Meaning, a whole lot of teachers did not quit at the same time. According to the personnel reports, 18 middle and high school math teachers left Hampton City Schools last years. That is about 13%. In 2017-2018, 24 Language Arts teachers left Hampton's employment. Only 118 were reported on staff. That means we lost 20% of our Language Arts teachers.

Sitting through many parent/teacher meetings throughout the years with children's teachers, most teachers stressed that success in math rests heavily on reading and English skills. Have to catch them while they are young.

Below are the percentages of teacher by grade that left Hampton City Schools last year.

1 st Grade – 17%
2 nd Grade – 15%
3 rd Grade – 24%
4 th Grade – 15%
5 th Grade – 23%

What is the reason for the turnover? How does turnover harm our children? If programs are put in place to increase learning and new teachers have to be taught the Hampton method, we have heard from staff that it is not a smooth transition and not necessarily successful.

What about our special education teachers who teach math at the middle and high school level, are they shafted out of this bonus deal? I have asked 1 Franklin Street but have yet to receive a response.

Below is what is on the plate of one teacher in middle school. If that ain't math, and at the middle school level, I don't know what is.

English - Grade 6/Specific Learning Disabilities
English - Grade 7/Specific Learning Disabilities
Mathematics - Grade 6/Specific Learning Disabilities
Mathematics - Grade 7/Specific Learning Disabilities
Life Science/Specific Learning Disabilities
Science - Grade 6/Specific Learning Disabilities
U.S. History to 1865/Specific Learning Disabilities
U.S. History: 1865 to Present/Specific Learning Disabilities

I suspect the response from 1 Franklin Street to be a resounding – NO; they don't get squat to stay. This may be why 13% of the special education teacher left last year. Clearly, from the list above they are worthy. The teacher represented above is required to have the same skills and more than the regular education teacher instructing 6th and 7th grade math. Yeah, they are worthy.

So back to the original question, are the bonuses money well spent?