

April 21, 2020

Dear Board of Ed Members,

As you all know, Kristin DeManche's position of School Social Worker is in the budget to be eliminated beginning the 2020-2021 school year. As Kristin has been a BRS school community member for the last 19 years, faculty and staff are in complete shock that this is something that the board would support.

Administration was trying to be responsive to the needs of the school psychologists in the building when they eliminated the social worker position. However, the counseling staff wishes they had been included in a problem solving process so that this may have avoided eliminating the social worker position. School social workers are the link between home, school, and community in providing both direct and indirect services to students, families and school faculty/staff to promote and support students' academic and social/emotional/behavioral success.

You may have heard the Superintendent blame special education evaluations for the burn out of School Psychologists. However, for Kayla, testing is why she became a School Psychologist, and not a different type of mental health provider. What is causing burnout for Kayla is that the increase in testing has caused missed counseling sessions because of the increase in counseling. A solution that works for everyone, and addresses the increased workload of our School Psychologists is to have a social worker provide the additional counseling services. That social worker is Kristin DeManche.

Therefore, we wanted to present to you some scenarios that would help to support and maintain Kristin's position here at Beecher Road School, while addressing the increasing social emotional demands. Kristin can easily adapt to a different schedule, which could include the following:

- 1) Kristin is open to working full time;
- 2) Kristin is open to an increase in hours above part time, but less than full time;
- 3) If there is an increase in hours, Kristin is open to extending her caseload from grades 3-6 to K-6.
- 4) Kristin can do any combination of hours, meeting her half time position, to be available for an increased counseling caseload. This may look like coming in every day during lunch waves to accommodate more lunch groups and counseling support.

Now, more than ever, with the "new normal" that we are facing, counseling support will be so important for students when they arrive back at school. That counseling support coming from someone students are familiar with, is equally as important. It has been shared that students and families will feel most comfortable with services being provided by the Social Worker they've always known. While no time is a good time to eliminate the position of Social Worker, it seems with the repercussions of COVID-19, the impact of this elimination would be even greater.

We appreciate you taking the time to listen this evening. We hope that you reconsider your decision.

Sincerely,

Kayla Widmeyer  
Intermediate Grades School Psychologist

Kristin DeManche  
Intermediate Grades School Social Worker