

November 7, 2024

Dear School Board Members,

As I stood on the street in front of the elementary school on Halloween morning, my fingers numb, having given out the last of the dozen or so disposable hand warmers I had brought to teachers with winter gear not quite good enough for the conditions, I was left with one particular question on my mind: where were our elected school board members and why weren't they here showing solidarity with our teachers?

I voted for each one of you in past elections. And I, like many Nomeites, voted for you to support high quality teacher recruitment and retention through increasing teacher pay and benefits to attract and retain top talent in Nome Public Schools. You didn't get elected to remain silent and sit on the sidelines warm while teachers are out in the cold figuratively and literally!

In my experience, leadership boils down to problem solving. The day people stop bringing you their problems is the day you have stopped leading them. They have either lost confidence that you can help or concluded you do not care. Either case is a failure of leadership. At next Tuesday's school board meeting teachers are going to be bringing you their problems looking for your leadership and direction.

There really is no avoidance of this issue. I would encourage you to not patronize our teachers by saying or implying you support them but then immediately follow it up with a AND, IF, OR, or BUT. The only thing they need to hear is your voice of support making it clear that you expect school district leadership to quickly resolve this contract dispute in favor of Nome teachers.

As a member of the public, I would encourage you each to choose your words wisely, as they may very well play a pivotal role in determining where things head from here. Please show our teachers the support and respect they have earned and deserve.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Adam R. Lust". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being the most prominent.

Adam R. Lust

ADAM R. LUST  
NOME, ALASKA