

Good morning. My name is Anna Perng. I am a parent at McCall Elementary School. I also serve as President of McCall Home and School Association, a volunteer-run nonprofit which advocates, educates, and raises funds for our school community.

McCall Elementary School is the top public elementary school in our District. We have 712 students enrolled. Approximately 78% are low-income students and 19% of the students are English language learners.

Everyone is working hard at McCall. Our student population has more than doubled in the past six years. With the increase in students, our school has had to hire more personnel. Even so, when we are lucky, we have just 2-3 custodians to help clean our school. In the lower grades, we have large classrooms with 32 kids. We don't have additional spaces to create more classrooms when we are given additional teachers for the overages.

Our teachers are working so hard, and on top of that, working additional part time jobs just to make ends meet. You will never hear our faculty, staff, or families complain. We work as a team to help all of our children excel.

When my other officers and I took office in July, we asked faculty and staff about their needs. We received numerous requests, which ranged from a stipend to purchase materials for the coming year, to funds for professional development, technology, worms for composting, and even a request to repave the schoolyard.

Since we received these requests, we have met with our principal to strategize how we will meet these needs. We have participated in Title I meetings where the principal receives feedback from families about academic and other needs for our school. Parents complain about the broken bathrooms, which will cost \$120K and more to repair. When it rains, the school yard floods and two staff members must spend an hour to siphon 1,000 gallons of water from our yard, simply so our students and families can walk through the yard. Every week, it seems, there is another funding need. They are all valid.

One of the variables that makes school budgeting a challenge is that we aren't always at the table when the District decides which programs and software to approve or disapprove. For example, it is very difficult for administrators and faculty when the District takes software and programs off approved vendors lists, without notice. Over the summer, our teachers discovered that their logins for Study Island no longer worked. It turned out that the software had been removed from the approved vendors list. Similarly, another critically needed program -- EducationWorks -- may rest on families to fund: our wonderful Coach Nick doesn't only provide structured recess for kids from kindergarten up to 5th grade, he also works on restorative justice with youth who have been suspended and he has had positive results.

I am sure there are many valid reasons for District level changes and decisions, but I think it's important to allow schools to individualize and request what they need to succeed. If the teachers at one school are having success with one software, they should be allowed to choose that software for the following year while the District addresses their concerns with the software company about FERPA. If the school community feels that EducationWorks is working for them, they should be able to keep it in their school budget for the following year.

As the new Board of Education and City Council reflect on District management and policies, I'd like to make a suggestion: please listen to your principal, faculty, staff, and include families when developing budgets at the school building level. When we encourage communication, collaboration, and transparency, there can be some stability, which will allow every student to succeed!