

Sayers, Margery

From: Bernadette C. Bechta <Bernadette_Bechta@hcpss.org>
Sent: Sunday, June 14, 2015 4:42 PM
To: CouncilMail
Subject: I oppose the appointment of Susan Garber to the Planning Board

Dear County Council Members:

Thank you for your consistent support of teachers. I was dismayed to read the editorial by Susan Garber and learn of her appointment to the Planning Board. I urge you to reconsider this appointment. Teachers are an educated group of county employees who regularly update and improve their certifications. Susan Garber's reference to the average salary of \$70,000 for 192 days of work is insulting.

How many days do teachers spend writing letters of recommendations for seniors? Last year, I spent four long Saturdays writing 25 letters. How many evenings do teachers sacrifice time with their families to grade papers, prepare lessons, call or email parents? There is absolutely no time in the school day to perform these tasks. All of my time during the day is spent engaging those 138 students on my roster. I believe also that 68% of teachers require a second job to sustain their living standard with tutoring, summer jobs, evening jobs, etc. Our utility bills keep rising and adjustments are made to the County budget, but without our steps or COLA where does that money come from?

The most disturbing element of this editorial by Susan Garber states that teachers do not affect the outcome in the classroom. I feel bad for her that she hasn't experienced this as a teacher, parent or classroom educator. I experience successful engagement every day that makes a difference. It is clear to me that these negative comments reflect a bias or perhaps a bad personal experience.

I urge you to select someone for this position who speaks with positivity, encouragement, and respect about our students and our teachers. We, indeed, are a team. Teacher morale is at an all time low and Susan Garber's comments deepen the divide. Teaching is a joyous job, filled with inspiring moments and great rewards. Our request for steps reflects the salary scales given to employees when hired. They look at where they will be in five, ten, or fifteen years and plan for it. COLAs simply help us keep up with inflation; just like the policemen, firefighters, county employees, state employees.

I oppose the appointment of Susan Garber to the Planning Board. Thank you for your time.

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