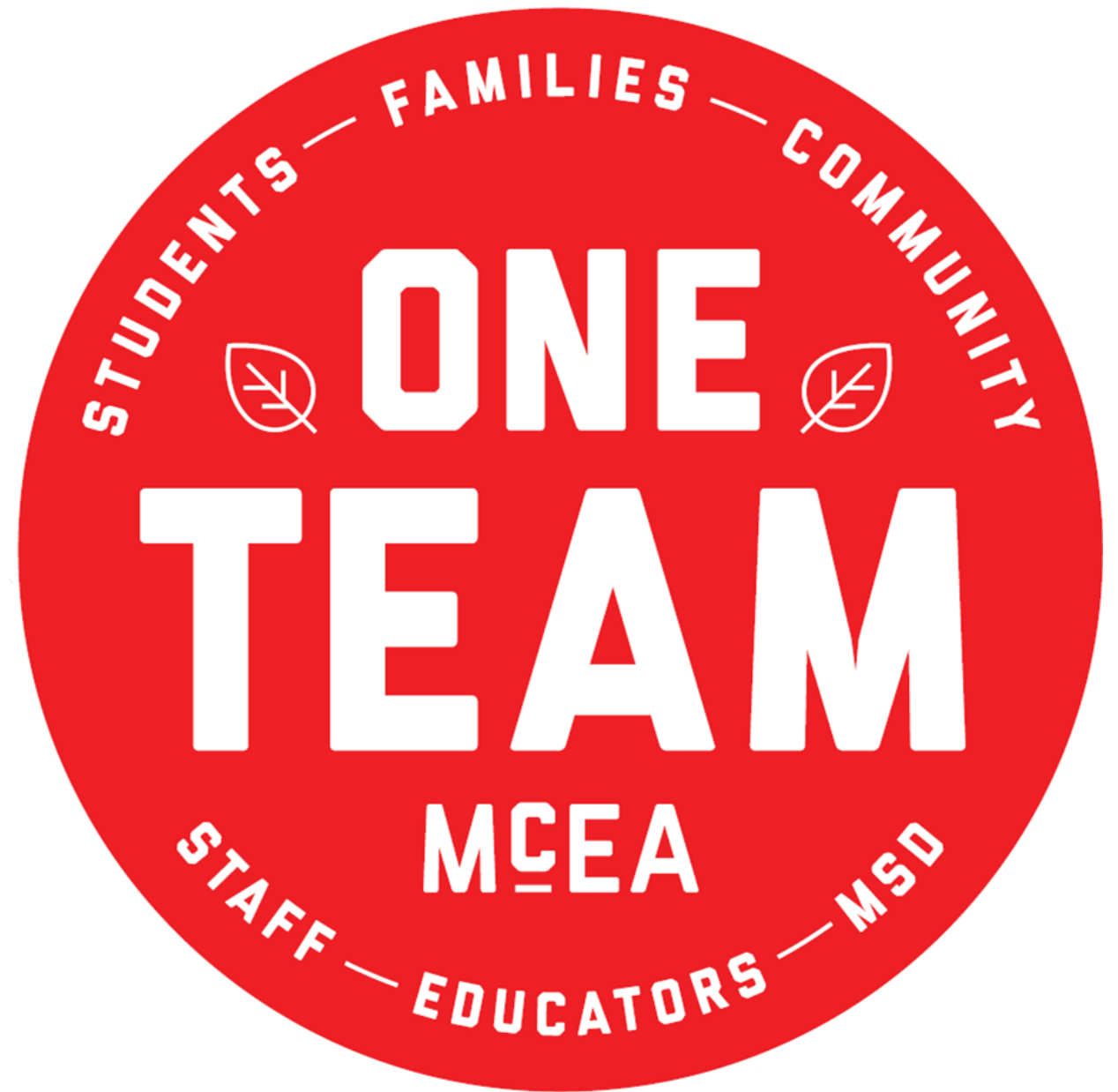


Our Mission:
Working **together**
for the emotional
and academic
success of
students and
their families.



Intent of Testimonials

The intent of these testimonials is to validate the need for collaboration, shedding light on the necessary additions of Article 18 language drafted by McEA.

These experiences (testimonials) are shared to work towards a safe school space for everyone.



Thank you to the families,
educators, and community for
the overwhelming support of
testimonials!

(Not all will be shared here today)





Listen to the following.

Seek to **understand**.

Testimonial 1: Emilee Strong, Parent of Four Children in MSD





Testimonial 2: A School Community Volunteer

I am writing to give my perspective on the classrooms in McMinnville. I have been volunteering in the district for a few years now. I was involved with another district before that.

The teachers and staff do their best to create a safe, fun, and secure learning environment for the students in their class. I have known teachers that spend several hours and a lot of their own money to create this type of classroom.

This is why it is shocking to me how little is done to protect the students, teachers and classroom from harm.

Testimonial 2 Continued: A School Community Volunteer

I have seen a classroom after a “room clear” that traumatized a class.

The student in crisis was allowed to destroy the classroom, flipping over tables, and throwing chairs while counselors stood back. They were not “allowed” to protect the classroom or investment the teacher worked so hard to create.

It is tragic that students as young as kindergarten are taught to take themselves to another class so the teacher can deal with their friend in need when no one else comes to help. These little people worry about their classmate and teacher in these situations--so after the room clear event, the rest of the day is spent giving them back a sense of security.



Testimonial 2 Continued: A School Community Volunteer

So much instruction time is lost because there are not enough resources to help the child in need or the rest of the class.

It breaks my heart that a district that prides itself in excellence turns a blind eye to these situations. The lack of strong, consistent and straightforward guidelines for helping those in need has resulted in a potentially dangerous work environment for both students and staff.



Testimonial 2 Continued: A School Community Volunteer

Even a baby needs a parent to be strong and make decisions for them when they are too tired to know what they want. Babies are typically not allowed to tear up their houses when they are upset.

Students in crisis are the same way. They need someone to be strong and guide them with care through the crisis without allowing them to destroy the class.

It is time that this issue is addressed openly so everyone can have a safe place to learn and work.



Testimonial 3: A Fourth Grade Teacher

There were more than a few incidents in my classroom this year where a student disrupted the learning environment so much so that teaching and learning are simply not able to occur.

During these incidents, the behaviors of the student in crisis included yelling, slamming their desk, tipping their desk, and throwing materials.

In these situations I am not able to continue teaching and learning is completely halted.



Testimonial 3 Continued: A Fourth Grade Teacher

I, as the teacher, have to respond to the student in crisis, while leaving the other 25+ students to process the situation on their own.

Again, this not only affects my ability to teach, but certainly the students' ability to learn.

Additionally, students in my class have expressed fear or uncertainty about navigating a learning environment that is unpredictable and often interrupted.



Testimonial 3 Continued: A Fourth Grade Teacher

It is alarming to me how normalized these behaviors have become to students who are self-regulated.

Yet, these kinds of disruptions still certainly provoke anxiety.

In one case, two students returned to my classroom from P.E., both so upset that one threw their desk over, broke materials, and both began yelling loudly and crying. I had to send the rest of my students out to recess, where I was supposed to be on duty, while I attempted to deescalate the students in crisis.



Testimonial 3 Continued: A Fourth Grade Teacher

Again, these kinds of disruptions are not cohesive to a calm, productive, and safe learning environment.

I cannot do my job to the best of my ability when this kind of disruption occurs nearly daily. It pains me as the teacher to know that students in my classroom **may not feel safe, or be able to learn to the best of their ability.**



**Testimonial 4:
Kathleen Mika, 5th
Grade Teacher**



Testimonial 5: **A Kindergarten Teacher** (edited for length)

I have had my fair share of room clears, been assaulted by numerous students, watched other coworkers be assaulted by students, experienced a school lockdown because of a student in crisis who trained staff could not control or help, been called every name in the book, seen multiple staff members with workers' comp injuries, taken trainings on trauma-informed teaching and how to "MANDT" students when necessary.

Yet every year, the same instances occur. I have seen my classroom being destroyed weekly, and in some cases, multiple times in one day.

Testimonial 5 Continued: A Kindergarten Teacher

I have had a parent come in and physically remove their child from my room because no other trained staff could help the student in need. We are talking about literal hours of my students' education being taken away because of these instances.

You see, room clears do not only last for the time students are physically out of the classroom, but there is an aftermath of emotions with the rest of the class when we return to our classroom.

These students have seen things happen in my classroom, and other classrooms, that I never would have imagined at the young age of five. A five-year-old child should not fear what will happen when they come to school. Or worry about their classmates' and teachers' safety.

Testimonial 5 Continued: A Kindergarten Teacher

The problem isn't the student in crisis. The problem is a lack of communication, a breakdown in our district's so called "transparency" between admin and teachers, a lack of involvement/collaboration in behavior plans between admin/counselors/ TOSAs and teachers, and a lack of consistent protocol. "Every student is different," yes. But where is the consistency? Every child needs consistency.

Teachers are the ones on the literal front lines. Every year, teachers hope that we have grown from our struggles from the previous year, and that this year will be different. This year when we call the office for help with a dysregulated student, someone will actually answer the phone. This year we will be sent help rather than asked "Well, which student do you need help with?" or "There is no one available."

Every year, teachers have hope that when students need to leave the classroom for their own safety, teachers are not asked "Was the room clear necessary?" or "What could **you** have done better?"

Testimonial 5 Continued: A Kindergarten Teacher

Parents ask:

“My child said that tables were flipped over, posters ripped off of walls, lamps were shattered and broken by a student today. Is this something that happens often in your classroom?”

“My child told me that you stepped in front of them when a chair was thrown their way. Are you ok?”

“Why are these things happening in my child’s classroom and I am not hearing about it?”

“How is this in the best interest of any child in that classroom?”

The list goes on and on. You see, kindergarten students do not come into our classrooms with an IEP, 504, or behavior plan. And because of our broken process, that poor student in need of one of these plans often does not see any of them put into place until they enter first grade.

Testimonial 5 Continued: A Kindergarten Teacher

Those who really suffer are the students.

My heart goes out to the student who is experiencing triggers and dysregulation. And my heart also goes out to the students in the classroom who are watching.

The behavior they are seeing becomes normalized. This is not ok. I have had students sobbing because they don't want to leave me in the classroom when it's time for their ELD class. They are afraid of what will happen to me when they are gone. They are afraid of what will happen to their friends when they are gone. They experience a type of trauma as well. They see the destruction, the injuries I have received, the pain in the dysregulated student's face, and friends who have physical injuries from a dysregulated student. My students have second-hand trauma because of this!

We need better systems.

Testimonial 6: A Third Grade Teacher

I'd like to pose a few questions to the MSD bargaining team this evening.

- In what other profession are you expected to withstand being verbally accosted and physically assaulted including, but not limited to, being hit, kicked, and bitten without recourse?
- In what other profession are you expected to stand by and watch your work space be ravaged: bookshelves pushed over, desks flipped, chairs thrown, and supplies destroyed, without recourse?
- Finally, in what profession are you expected to welcome back the person responsible for this damage or disruption, without so much as an apology?

I can't think of any, and yet these are the conditions that teachers in our district have been forced to endure even as incidents escalate year over year

Testimonial 6 Continued: A Third Grade Teacher

I'd like to pose one more question:

How can we possibly expect students who have just been witness – or worse, subject -- to these kinds of experiences be expected to resume learning without interruption or impact?

Quite plainly, they cannot.

These experiences are traumatic. The same churning that I feel in my stomach after an incident, I can only imagine is further amplified in theirs; the same cortisol that floods my system, rendering muscles tense and attention span compromised, must surely course through theirs.

I have dedicated my entire career to teaching, hold two degrees in the subject, and consider myself an early-childhood education expert. Please take me at my word when I say meaningful learning cannot resume after a classroom blow-out, and the interruption sustains far beyond the 5-10 minutes of the actual incident.

Testimonial 6 Continued: A Third Grade Teacher

The seriousness of this situation cannot be overstated, and yet the concerns of teachers have been continuously trivialized, and worse, dismissed.

This same team [MSD] has pointed to the existing PBIS behavior system and claimed that the issue is being adequately addressed. Let me state quite plainly: it is not, and the consequences of this, both to teachers and to students, are dire.

In the short-term, we lose significant instruction time, operate in fear on a daily basis, and feel disempowered--unable to maintain a safe environment for all students. In the long-term, we risk the continued degradation of our classrooms, the premature attrition of seasoned staff when we need them most, and worst of all, the immeasurable toll to students as they are exposed to these toxic displays for years as they move through school.

Testimonial 6 Continued: A Third Grade Teacher

I urge this team to:

- amend the contract to include stronger language to protect teachers and students,
- commit to exploring new methods of long-term intervention and accountability, and
- commit to hiring the additional staff – counselors, behavior specialists, and other mental health professionals – so desperately needed in our school system.

I thank you for your consideration and your time.

Testimonial 7: A Fifth Grade Teacher, A Parent, A Community Member

I am Michelle Formway. I am a fifth grade teacher, but I am also more than that. I am a lifelong resident of McMinnville, a former McMinnville School District graduate, a former McMinnville Police Department detective, and a parent of three young boys who are students in MSD. I have worked for the McMinnville School District for a combined total of 17 years. I love my community, and I am completely invested in the people that live and work here.

Throughout my time as an educator and police officer I have seen a myriad of unfathomable situations and events, and right now, at this moment I feel like we are at a tipping point in education. We are either going to go tumbling off the precipice into more chaos, or we are going to come together in a collaborative manner to ensure the most excellent educational environment for all of our students.





Testimonial 7 Continued: A Fifth Grade Teacher, A Parent, A Community Member

I understand the PBIS model. It works sometimes but in many other instances it just is not enough. Maybe it used to be enough, but it just isn't any more. As we all know, human circumstances and behaviors do not often stagnate, but change and morph over time. Student behavior is just one example of this.

As a personal example I would like to reflect on some situations from my own classroom from the last few years. I have had students physically injured at the hands of other students multiple times. I have watched students assault staff members with fists and feet and teeth and spit more than I can count. I myself was slammed across the back with a textbook by a fifth grader that was very close in size to me.



Testimonial 7 Continued:

A Fifth Grade Teacher, A Parent, A Community Member

I have watched school and personal property of staff being destroyed and vandalized by students in crisis. I have had to clear my classroom of all other students due to one child's behavior, and I have watched other classrooms of children have to do the same on multiple occasions.

I have received concerned emails from parents who have heard from their own children about the behaviors they are witnessing while in our schools, and I have had students come to me and express fear at being in the classroom. Fear...at being in their own classroom...a place where I pride myself at being able to create a welcoming, safe, and inclusive environment for all.

And as for learning...well, we all know that a mind feeling fear or trauma is not learning.



Testimonial 7 Continued: A Fifth Grade Teacher, A Parent, A Community Member

Time and time again, the PBIS team would come together and attempt to help all parties involved by putting plans into place, but often the efforts did not work.

Because the system we have now, that may have worked before, does not work any more.

This is not an “us” versus “them,” admin versus teachers, union versus district, time. This HAS TO be the time of WE...the time of ONE TEAM. Our students deserve it, our families deserve it, our community deserves it, and our staff deserves it.

I know WE can do better.



Only with **shared leadership**
can we make **big change** for
our **students**, families,
professional educators and
community!

