

December 5, 2019

Kindergarten at Chapman is in a state of extreme crisis.

Our three classrooms are desperately overcrowded, under-resourced and not a safe or healthy place for the five-year-olds in our trust. This is the third year, in the past four years, where the kindergarten team is unable to create a climate that we would want for our own children.

The 2019-2020 school year at Chapman began with three sections of kindergarten classes, with 27 to 28 students in each section. We have minimal and inconsistent E.A. support.

Kindergarten students, in particular, need structure, routine, and an environment that allows for the cultivation of authentic relationships with teachers and other adults in the building. Our classes are not only large, but they include a number of students with significant behavioral issues. On a daily basis our students witness and endure kicking, hitting, scratching, spitting, screaming, and elopement. In just the first 10 days of November there were 17 referrals in kindergarten.

With classes so large and with the constant behavioral issues, our Kindergarten teachers are simply unable to provide the attention that is required to help students be successful as they build academic foundations in many areas of the curriculum.

- Successful reading instruction includes small group meetings which are impossible without consistent E.A. support. In addition the wide disparities at Chapman between students of privilege and disadvantaged students makes it a challenge to do whole group instruction that meets everyone's needs.
- Successful writing instruction includes one-to-one conferencing with children to provide feedback and assistance. Students should be receiving this far more frequently than they are.
- Successful math instruction requires frequent questioning and problem solving in small groups and one-to-one situations.
- The Caring Schools curriculum builds community and a sense of belonging. It is designed for smaller classes than ours. We have found that many lessons simply don't work with large classes.

We believe that Kindergarten has a long term impact on student learning and attitude toward school. Our inability to meet students' behavior and academic needs does not bode well for the future of Chapman.

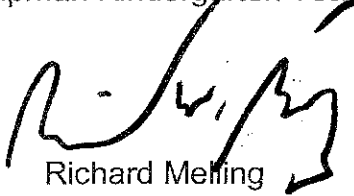
Due to class size and staffing at the beginning of the year, we have been unable to provide a climate where every student feels safe and can focus on learning. For this reason our classes are in a state of constant chaos. Immediate action is necessary.

We call upon the district to appropriately staff Chapman Kindergarten to address the demographics of our school; we have a significant number of students who are coming from shelters, poverty, and backgrounds of trauma. We are asking that the district immediately fund one more teacher to relieve class sizes, and to provide funding for a full time E.A.'s in each classroom. While this will not bring us the class size that evidence-based practice indicates is best for students (14-17 students), it will make significant progress towards creating kindergarten classroom environments where every student feels safe and successful.

Due to the desperate nature of our Kindergarten situation, we need your response by December 16th.

Sincerely,

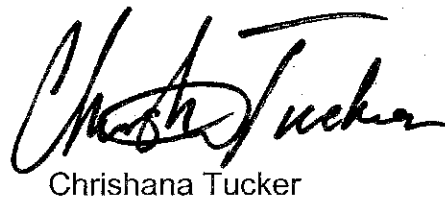
Chapman Kindergarten Teachers



Richard Mellinger



Casey Rodhe



Chrishana Tucker

and
Chapman Teachers and Staff

