

From: Sarah Wiles

Sent: Tuesday, May 06, 2014 6:47 PM

To: [Email addresses redacted]

Subject: I'm embarrassed to confess: I am a teacher.

Every year there is a debate on teacher compensation. This is only exacerbated during election years. However, nothing happens. As a sixth year teacher, I have only seen a pay increase once (and then again after plunging myself into debt by earning my Masters in Education). I have attended rallies, joined NCAE, petitioned, and worn red (or blue and white, or whatever color of the rainbow I was required to wear to "show my support"). Nothing ever changes, except my wardrobe. So, that brings me to this one request: leave me alone.

I am so tired of being lied to about how important I am and how valuable I am. I am also sick and tired of politicians making my profession the center of attention and paying it lip-service by visiting a school, kneeling next to a child, shaking my hand and thanking me, telling the nightly news that I deserve a raise, and then proceeding to speak through the budget that I am not worth it. If you aren't going to do anything, and you know nothing will change, just leave me alone. I would rather be ignored than disrespected.

And on the topic of disrespect, our salary is disrespectful. I tutor my own students for free four days a week after school until I have to go to my next job. I tutor outside of school for pay about fifteen hours a week, and that includes weekends. I also babysit. And I manage pools and teach pool operator classes. And, I currently have an application for summer school being reviewed. I get home at eight pm, spend a half an hour with my husband, answer parent emails, fall asleep, and am back at work at seven am the next morning. I have come very accustomed to being disrespected. My students know that no one cares about education because they frequently ask me why I ever made the decision to become a teacher. Honestly, I am running out of answers. Do not misunderstand or misconstrue what I am saying as apathy for my students (I love them more than most adults), but I can no longer defend that North Carolina cares about education because they are not willing to pay for it. It's a lie and everyone knows it.

I know that you all will continue talking about how important teachers are and weaving those wonderful words that tax payers love to hear from the people who are "leading" them that make them believe that it isn't all about the bottom line and that you care about their kids and the public education system. But, I am calling your bluff. If you continue to do nothing even though you can do something, you should be ashamed. I am embarrassed for you. I am embarrassed by you. And, save for my students, I am embarrassed by being a teacher in North Carolina, the doormat of society.

Sarah Wiles, M.A.Ed.