

From: [Michael Pothast](#)
To: [Lisa Diesslin](#)
Subject: written testimony for 3/6 meeting
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Hello,

I normally don't write these types of testimonies, as it isn't my style, but for a variety of reasons I am compelled to share my thoughts.

Personally, and in full transparency, I would benefit greatly from TRA pension reform. I started teaching in 1995/96 when I was 21 and turned 22 a few weeks into my first year. With either of the proposed options, the "light" at the end of the tunnel is very achievable and near. Without those, to get full benefits, I would have to teach until I am 66. That would mean 45 years of teaching. I enjoy my job. I am able to roll with much of what has changed in the past 27 years and continue to enjoy the challenge that is teaching. However, the idea of bringing the energy and passion that this job requires for another 17 years is hard to imagine. I don't know how anyone, realistically, can say that they would have the energy and needed passion to teach for 45 years and until the age of 66. And, I REALLY don't want to do a disservice to my students and the profession I have given over half of my life to by being that "old, burnt out" teacher. But, I feel like the system of teaching until age 66 is setting up so many teachers to be just that.

In the bigger picture, I worry about where the profession of teaching might be heading. You can easily find facts on the troubling trends on enrollment in education programs at colleges dropping, schools having a hard time finding teachers, and teachers leaving the profession. All ideas to KEEP teachers in the career and to also pursue it need to be an option. I went into teaching with eyes wide open, knowing that I wouldn't make as much as my brothers in the business world. I knew that and I accepted that. With that, though, it has been a challenge to put as much towards retirement, etc... when having a family and life's expenses. Of course some would say to "put more" into other retirement funds, but that isn't as easy it seems when on a teacher's pay scale. I, like many teachers, will rely heavily on my pension, so leaving at 62 and taking a penalty is an issue. Many younger teachers are seeing this and hearing us "old timers" talk about teaching until 66 or being penalized for leaving at the age of 62 and it is affecting them. That isn't hyperbole. Part of my current role is to work with young, new teachers and this is a topic they are asking about and it is a possible factor for them leaving the profession. I don't know how to answer all the concerns younger teachers have or try to make it seem "right" when they are shocked at the age 66 for a retirement age or having 14% of my pension penalized for leaving at 62. It is a tough sell.

I feel like many people outside of education see this as a bunch of

teachers being greedy or just wanting to "get out early". That is an insulting and frustrating comment I have heard some make. This is teachers seeing that we simply can't bring the needed energy and passion to our students when age 66 or, in my case, 45 years in. It just isn't truly reasonable. We also see people leaving the profession for better options, and we worry about what our schools will look like in the future.

Mike Pothast

Hermantown Community Schools | Tech Integration Specialist 5-12|Mobile CSP Instructor

4335 Ugstad Hawk Circle Drive| Hermantown, MN 55811

P218.729.8874 | F218.729.0180

mpothast@isd700.org | www.hermantown.k12.mn.us

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