

From: [Steven Bliven](#)
To: [Lisa Diesslin](#)
Subject: Date for submission says the 31 for 27 meeting? Testimony 2nd email
Date: Sunday, March 26, 2023 7:41:25 AM

Dear LCPR Committee,

My name is Steve Bliven and I am an elementary teacher in Stillwater Area Schools. Thank you for taking on this daunting task of trying to rectify some terrible decisions made from the past. I'm sure you have heard countless stories from Tier II educators from all over Minnesota; it has been disheartening to read testimonies from my peers on how they have felt shafted after giving their hearts and souls to this profession which I love. I am praying that the bills that have been written and are being discussed will be looked at with common sense and compassion. As of now, the Governor's target given for pensions is grossly underfunded; myself and my peers are at a breaking point when we see recommendations that are way below the national average. As a servant leader yourselves, I implore you to fight the fight and honor my peers with an equitable pension that is at or above the national average.

The education profession was the top profession my classmates from East Grand Forks chose; most of them now retired and enjoying volunteering in the schools, enjoying time with grandchildren, and feeling a sense of relaxation after a professional career in serving others. This is not the case anymore as social media has informed and warned the pool of young college bound students to stay away from educational careers, especially when seeing the terrible pensions in Minnesota - almost the bottom of the nation. The Tier II teachers have come to realize that we will have to teach 10 more years than our classmates because we received our teaching positions after the 1989 deadline for Rule of 90. I can't imagine teaching until 66 and missing precious time with my grandchildren now already becoming teenagers. This is so wrong on many levels.

I do love my profession and my students are a part of my soul. I dream about them and pray for their success and happiness in life. As many of my peers can relate, the Covid years were a 24 hour a day job that added onto an already stressful profession. My students and parents were and still are amazed to see when I made the videos during Covid; they love to check the day and the time. They were shocked that I did a recording at 4:00 AM the day after Christmas and another one at 12:05 AM New Years Day! Many of my emails to students and parents were answered late at night for it was the only time I had to breathe.

I implore you to take this seriously. We are near a point of begging for something that never should even be an issue. This is embarrassing that we are to this level in the state of Minnesota. For our mental and physical health, this has to be addressed. Please for the thousands who are barely hanging on, give us validation that you actually care about our

well-being. Thank You again for taking on this awesome role to do what is right for this wonderful profession,

Steve Bliven

Minnesota Teacher of the Year Finalist