

OPINION

Don't bash school employees as irresponsible

Troy Grubb, Port Orchard Published 11:16 a.m. PT April 2, 2019

I would like to respond to Lucinda Tharp's recent letter, "[Fiscal responsibility missing in South Kitsap schools \(/story/opinion/readers/2019/03/20/fiscal-responsibility-missing-sk-schools/3230832002/\)](https://www.kitsapsun.com/story/opinion/readers/2019/03/20/fiscal-responsibility-missing-sk-schools/3230832002/)." (Kitsap Sun, March 21)

I would like to correct her understanding when she writes, "Most employees were given 20 percent raises as well as increases in benefits this year."

I keep hearing this and I can tell you that the classified group represented by SEIU 925 has never received a 20% increase — ever.

And I would like to know what additional benefits the letter refers to. Other groups and other districts may have received them, which has only made us fall behind. Here is a comparison to our neighbor, Central Kitsap. Our last contract was for 3 years, and we received in year one a 5% increase plus a state COLA, and added 1 step with a few jobs titles equalized to be competitive. Our hard-working counterparts in CK received in the same year a 6.3% increase, plus the state COLA and already had more steps than we do. In year two we received the state COLA of 1.9%, and that was it. CK received what I believe to be a 19% increase, which may have included the state COLA. Year three is coming up.

Even if we received for our little group a livable raise like CK received, we would still be below a comparable district in the county.

If you want to bash people for being fiscal irresponsible, please do not do it on the backs of the South Kitsap School District Chapter of SEIU 925.

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