

February 2026

Subject: Vote of No Confidence in Springfield Public School District Leadership

Dear Springfield School Board Members and Members of the Springfield Community,

We write to you as educators, families, and community members who care deeply about Springfield Public Schools and the people who make our schools places of learning, connection, and stability. At this time, we are formally expressing a vote of no confidence in Springfield Public School District leadership, specifically Mr. Todd Hamilton, Mr. David Collins, Mr. Brett Yancey, and Mr. Dustin Reese.

This decision is not made lightly, nor is it rooted in anger. It is rooted in a profound loss of trust, trust that has been eroded through unclear communication, lack of transparency, and decision-making processes that have caused real harm to our school communities.

### **A Breakdown in Transparency and Communication**

District leadership has stated publicly that the budget challenges facing Springfield Public Schools, and the possibility of mid-year cuts to licensed staff, were known well in advance. At the January 12, 2026 Board meeting, district leadership stated that the budget shortfall and potential mid-year staffing reductions had been anticipated for months. If this is true, then the question our community continues to ask is simple and reasonable: why was this information not communicated clearly, accessibly, and consistently to the board, staff, students, and families? And why did the district continue to hire additional staff during this period, while operating under a 0% COLA assumption, if the budget was already known to be insufficient to sustain those positions?

Instead, information about the budget was shared in fragmented, technical, and often inaccessible ways. Budget information was often presented through technical financial terminology without plain-language summaries and in executive-session discussions, without clear explanations of how decisions would affect classrooms, staffing, or students. Critical details were delivered late, without clear explanations of consequences or options, such as the number of staff or amount of financial impact of new hires. Families and students learned about potential layoffs through news coverage and last minute board meetings, rather than through transparent, proactive communication from district leadership. Multiple local news outlets reported student and family testimony expressing surprise and confusion about the decision.

Accessible language matters. We expect students to learn complex systems, evaluate consequences, and engage critically with information. Our district leadership should hold itself to the same standard when explaining decisions that directly impact classrooms, learning conditions, and community stability.

## **Presenting the Board with Artificially-Limited Options**

The manner in which this self-inflicted budget crisis was presented to the Board of Education also raises serious concerns. Board members appeared to be asked to respond to a narrow set of options, framed as inevitable, rather than being presented with a full range of clearly explained alternatives, such as temporary cost-sharing measures, phased approaches, or furlough days. This limited framing undermines meaningful governance and erodes public confidence in the decision-making process.

Public engagement, while technically offered, was constrained in ways that prevented genuine dialogue. Concerns were offered during public comment before the district's presentation, preventing community members from questioning, clarifying, or responding to the information shared. Community members were given limited time to speak, after decisions had already been framed as urgent and unavoidable. This is not what meaningful collaboration looks like in a public institution entrusted with our children's education.

## **Numbers Without Values**

Springfield Public Schools states that student success is our most important outcome and that the district is committed to "Every Student, Every Day." We share these values. However, recent district administration actions do not reflect them.

Budget numbers were presented as fixed realities rather than as choices shaped by values. Cutting educators mid-year, disrupting relationships, increasing class sizes, and destabilizing learning environments, was treated as the primary solution, rather than the last resort.

We are particularly concerned by the lack of clear explanation around district reserves. Community members have asked reasonable questions: What are reserves for if not to prevent immediate harm to classrooms? Why were other cost-saving or temporary measures not clearly presented and discussed before resorting to layoffs? These questions remain unanswered.

## **A Climate That Discourages Honest Feedback**

Equally troubling is the growing perception that speaking openly, to the board or to district leadership, carries professional or social risk. Healthy school systems depend on trust, open communication, and the ability of educators and community members to raise concerns without fear. When people feel silenced or dismissed, problems deepen rather than resolve.

## **Our Demand**

For these reasons, we no longer have confidence in the district administration's leadership ability to manage the district in a transparent, collaborative, and values-aligned manner. This vote of no confidence is directed at district administration, specifically Mr. Todd Hamilton, Mr. David

Collins, Mr. Brett Yancey, and Mr. Dustin Reese, and its leadership processes, not at educators, students, or individual schools.

We call for the following actions:

1. Future staff reductions and/or reinstatement of RIFed educators must be reconsidered.
2. Budget information must be presented in clear, accessible language, with explicit explanations of impacts on students, staff, and schools.
3. Board members and the public must be given meaningful opportunities to review, discuss, and understand multiple alternatives.
4. Any future vote must occur only after transparent communication and genuine community engagement.
5. An evaluation by SPS Board of Education and S.E.A. of district leadership's capacity to rebuild trust, communicate honestly, and lead collaboratively must take place.

Our schools are not spreadsheets. They are communities. Decisions that affect them must be made with care, clarity, and integrity.

We believe Springfield deserves leadership that communicates openly, plans responsibly, and centers students and educators, not just in mission statements, but in practice. Until these commitments are demonstrated through clear action, our confidence in district leadership cannot be restored, and we cannot move forward as though this process met the needs of our community.

Respectfully,

*Concerned Educators of Springfield*

94% of Certified Staff who participated agreed with this letter; that is 379 Certified Staff in agreement.