



**Presentation to CMS Board of Education
Carol Sawyer, September 11, 2012**

I would like to thank Dr. Morrison for acknowledging morale problem in CMS and our need as a community to value teachers.

I would also like to thank the teachers who have spoken publicly about the need to value staff in word and in deed.

We can all agree that our community's children will be best served by having the best possible teachers in each and every classroom. And, I think we could all agree that some teachers currently employed by CMS are not up to the task.

The question is how do we support good teachers and remove unsuccessful ones.

The recent report by Michelle Rhee's New Teacher Project suggests that we should focus our efforts on retaining the top teachers. They define them as the 20% of teachers who have the highest value-added or growth scores. They call these teachers irreplaceables. They suggest that the way to keep these teachers is to pay them significantly higher salaries, work extra hard to acknowledge their contributions, and offer them leadership positions. Unfortunately, the report doesn't call for a base increase in teacher salaries, rather it calls for freezing or lowering other teachers salaries and reducing the total number of teachers by increasing class sizes to pay the top 20% more.

The study contrasts the performance of their top performers with those at the bottom, paying scant attention to the vast majority of teachers who students successfully make a year's growth in a year's time. I suggest that rather than focus on teachers with the highest value-added score, we work to support and retain ALL good teachers.

We can better support teachers if we don't use test scores to arbitrarily label 20% as "irreplaceable". Does that mean that the remaining teachers are replaceable? Ranking teachers does not foster teamwork and collaboration. Let's improve working conditions for all teachers and I think we'll find that good teachers will want to stay.

Our teacher morale problem is influenced by both national and local factors. While we can't control the anti-teacher language and attitude voice at the national level, we can refuse to adopt divisive language and actions here in CMS.