

From: **Marilyn and Jaime Acosta Andrade** <acostafamilyschool@gmail.com>

Date: Tue, Apr 25, 2023 at 10:15 AM

Subject: Urging board to ask for school to backfill 1st grade

To: <cywak@hbschools.org>

Hello school board and members of our High Bridge community,

I was present at yesterday's board meeting, and like the rest of the public have become aware that Mrs. Richardson, a first-grade teacher, position will not be backfilled. Having one teacher for the 1st grade means that our children, who are presently in kindergarten, and possibly more students moving in before the new school year, will be in one classroom and one teacher. There is one teacher as a homeroom teacher, and regardless of whether they go to their separate classes for educational or emotional support, one teacher is ultimately responsible for them.

Regardless of what the average occupancy for classrooms may be nationally or even in New Jersey, is that what we're striving to be an average classroom size? What is the reason that we cannot backfill the position? Had Mrs Richardson not requested to retire there would have not been any changes. Please know that myself and other moms have spoken and we want to loudly encourage the board to move on filling that first grade position. I hope to see a post with an opening position for first grade teacher.

We need to make sure that our schools can continue to provide our children with the best they can. Also, to overwhelm one teacher because of the increase in students will take a toll on the staff, including that teacher.

I also want to bring attention to the fact that a lot of kids are on the younger end of their grade, like my son. Transitioning into first grade, which is an extremely important formative year, into a larger student size class will be a disadvantage for him and for any child that needs extra support. That is where our teachers are really great at. That was what Mrs. Richardson and Mrs. Morris is great at being supportive advocating for our children communicating with parents in regards to anything that we can help our children with.

Did you know that it was my son's kindergarten teacher, Mrs. Kerr, that saw that he needed his vision checked. He has severe astigmatism, which can go undiagnosed, therefore becoming worse if not caught early. It is easy to mask it because one eye becomes stronger and compensates for the weaker eye. Do you think this is some thing that a teacher would be able to point out if now the teacher has about 23 students? It would be less of a possibility, and not because the teacher is not capable, but because the teacher has a lot on her plate.

A large group of parents and myself urge you to add a post to fill the first grade position as soon as possible.

Thank you,

Marilyn Andrade

Mother of three HB students