

Some Back-to-School Items Needed this Year

Teachers Need Help with School Supplies

By BEVERLY CORBELL

Printer paper, pencils, glue sticks, facial tissues, hand sanitizers and snacks are just a few of the essential items that classroom teachers must pay for out-of-pocket each year.

Teachers make only 76 percent of the average salary of similarly educated professionals in the private sector, but must also pay for school supplies. According to the Learning Policy Institute, buying classroom supplies is a hidden cost for teachers.

On average, teacher's annual investment in school supplies represent about 13 percent of their first month's salary, and teachers in schools with more students from low-income households spent about 20 percent more of their own money on supplies.

According to the National Education Association, despite low pay and high inflation, most educators still pay hundreds of dollars out of pocket every year for classroom essentials. Teachers spend an average of between \$500 and \$750 of their own money ev-



A teachers helping elementary school students with classwork

ery year on supplies their students need, and prices for school supplies increased almost 24 percent in the last two years.

But that's on the low end. The NEA site states that teacher Damian Tucker, who teaches special education in Tacoma, spends be-

tween \$1,500 and \$2,000 on his students every year.

"School supplies, snacks and paper products for my class — it adds up real fast," he said.

And that's not all, states the NEA. "Out-of-pocket classroom expenses are greatest during

the back-to-school period, but continue to add up throughout the year," the NEA stated. "Educators report buying clothing, winter gear, eyeglasses, food and toiletries for students, on top of classroom supplies and teaching materials."

That burden on teachers is the reason many agencies, nonprofits and businesses sponsor school supply drives to reduce back-to-school expenses for teachers.

There's hope for teachers in the form of many school supply drives in Portland, including KGW-TV, which hopes to collect school supplies for 15,000 students, which would put a big dent in supplies needed for over 19,000 elementary students in Portland Public Schools.

The KGW school supply website at kgwschool.com offers several ways to help buy school supplies. People can buy online and have the supplies sent to a specific school district, supplies can be donated at dozens of businesses listed on the KGW site, and folks can also contribute money on the KGW site.

The nonprofit Friends of the Children, at <https://friendspdx.org/news/school-supply-drive>, accepts gift certificates to Fred Meyer, Bi-Mart and Amazon, or cash donations, and provides help in setting up a school supply drive by calling Amy Prince at 971-340-1447 or email at aprince@friendspdx.org.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6



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