



Parents, Stop Complaining about Community Classroom Supplies

By Educator Barnes – August 26, 2019

Teacher requests for school supplies have evolved. When I was a K-12 student, teachers would create a supply list of needed materials. The school shared this list before school began, and parents purchased the supplies. Parents purchased the supplies for their children's use only. Today, this is no longer the case.

Many schools have now moved to community classroom supplies. I have experienced this as a parent with my sons. Since they began kindergarten a few years ago, this has been the case. The school supply list includes typical supplies such as paper, pencils, folders, markers, etc., but parents are asked not to label them. Instead, the teacher collects all the supplies and divides them up for the class to share. This doesn't apply to all items. For example, headphones were on my sons' school supply list this year, and parents were asked to label them for personal use.

The move to community classroom supplies has angered some parents. They don't want the items they purchased to be shared by other students. Furthermore, some parents believe the school should purchase the supplies. As both an educator and parent, I understand both sides, but we have to think about why schools went this direction with school supplies in the first place.

When students had their own supplies, some students would run out. In that case, teachers would ask for parents to send more supplies, but...

- What if parents don't?
- What if the supplies needed are writing utensils?
- How will the students complete their work?

Then, teachers have to obtain supplies. Maybe the teacher is lucky and they have \$50 to spend from their school. That money is supposed to be for teachers to add to what they would like to do, not cover supply parents are supposed to send in with their children. Teachers are underpaid. The least we could do is not expect them to buy supplies, hence the move to community supplies.

Community supplies allow teachers to store supplies and stretch them throughout the year. They can divide the supplies for use by semester or by quarter. This way, teachers don't have to ask for extra supplies and all students have supplies to use. That point also makes some parents mad because some parents believe they should not have to support other children. Maybe those parents should reflect and have some compassion. I believe most parents that can do will do for their children and don't want a handout.

Yes, be upset if the teacher is not teaching your child. Yes, be upset if the teacher has poor classroom management and your children cannot learn, but please don't be upset because teachers and schools are putting systems into place, so students are prepared throughout the school year.