



Dear Members of the Board,

The following is our response to the "Custodian Focus Group Summary" as requested by some of the Board members.

The ESPA sent a written survey to all 57 custodians. The survey consisted of the same six questions used by ARAMARK when they conducted their focus groups this past July.

Out of the 57 surveys the association received 21 responses. The following is a summary of their responses, which differs from the over all summary made by ARAMARK.

- The first question was ***"What is the overall work environment like here?"***
  - The overall responses to this question were, Good depending on the building and who the supervisors are. Some other responses used words such as stressful and tense.
- Second question ***"What is the best thing about working here?"***
  - The opportunity to work with wonderful administrators, teachers, children and other support staff, as well as the good benefits offer by the school district.
- Third question ***"What is the worst thing about working here?"***
  - The Lack of communication between staff and upper management. The intimidation that upper management projects toward staff. Poor management and leadership skills in the Custodial and Maintenance departments. Equipment is not serviced properly. Deficient supplies and equipment.
- Fourth question ***"Do you feel you are treated with respect?"***
  - For the most part all employees feel respected by district employees, some also feel they receive respect from ARAMARK management, but many employees predominately do not feel they are respected by ARAMARK management.
- Fifth question ***"Do you feel like you can communicate openly with your manager?"***
  - Some employees do feel they can communicate freely with their head custodian, but not with the upper management of ARAMARK.
- The last question was ***"If you were boss for the day, what is the one thing you would change?"***
  - Work on building morale and respect of employees, Have an honest and open communication with all staff. Make sure supplies and equipment are accessible to all workers. Corroborate all equipment is in top working order. Last but not least, see that all substitute staff are trained properly so that they can work efficiently in each building.

As the Association read through the “Custodian Focus Group Summary” that was presented by ARAMARK, we noted contradictions to their statements. The contradictions are as follows.

**I. Under Positive Aspects of the Employee Experience**

- a. Sub title ***Impact on Kids***, ARAMARK wrote; **These employees understand that using the right chemicals and cleaning processes to create a clean and safe environment for children helps support the learning process**, which all the custodians do agree with. The problem is they can’t get the supplies they need to create that environment.
- b. Under sub title ***Compensation***, it was written; **Interestingly enough, very few participants mentioned that they wished they could be paid more.** Where in fact it was mentioned at one of the focus meetings and they were told that it was a union/district issue and then no longer discussed.

**II. Under Opportunities for Improvement**

- a. Sub title ***Staffing and Training***, ARAMARK says; **a more structured approach to start up training for new employees and custodians transferring from one building to another was mentioned as a step to take to improve job knowledge. Others did not see a need for additional support and training, “ I don’t need support or a boss”** In our survey the custodians say there isn’t any proper training for subs, subs are training subs and they feel ARAMARK should be doing all training.

**III. As for the ARAMARK Action Plan**

- a. When is it going to begin?

In closing, it is obvious that communication, supplies and equipment are a necessity. One custodian wrote in their survey *“nobody should have to ask for these things several times before they receive them: they are a necessity. It took a movement from the School Board and an extension on an old contract to make it happen, so I won’t put a feather in a subcontracting hat when it took something like that to get a move.”*

At this time the Association would like to say that we feel it would be beneficial to remove ARAMARK as management and have the district take over this role as presented to the School Board in June of 2006. As well as boosting the morale of district employees, it would save the district a substantial amount of money.