

Good afternoon,

My name is Naya Cruz, and I have been a secretary for the Red Clay Consolidated School District since 2016.

A typical day might start with:

- a jammed copier
- phones are ringing
- there's an upset parent that wants to speak with admin
- the heat isn't working in a room
- a new student's lunch tag is not ready, and
- *"How much is left on a budget for this field trip?"*
- *"Did you order lunch?"* . . .

We answer these types of questions before we've even sat down.

Today I advocate for a respectful and professional salary increase for the colleagues that I serve. School secretaries are the face of our students' learning environments.

Most often than not, we're the first point of contact for families and students. We are the welcoming voices that help ease anxious parents and students from early learners to transitional programs. From the moment of registration, we become guardians of student data.

We're experts of multiple student information systems and responsible for maintaining student records, including custodies and PFAs, at our fingertips. We also do attendance tracking. Some of us are the McKinney-Vento liaison for our buildings, which also makes us confidantes with our ability to maintain discretion in confidence.

School secretaries ensure that our students and staff have the supplies necessary to be successful from pencils and paper to technology. We also know how to fix anything broken or jammed in the buildings, which we all know like the back of our hands. We also go down to security—we keep our buildings secure and follow security measures set by our districts.

And yet, too many of my colleagues are two paychecks away from homelessness as we struggle to keep up with the rising costs of just living. Our salary is not competitive, nor does it reflect the value that we as secretaries bring not only to the schools but to our communities.

An increase will ensure that we can retain these essential school personnel professionals who keep our schools running. Thank you.