

Clark County Teachers Find Moonlighting Necessary

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More than two of five Clark County schoolteachers called it necessary to work a second job during the regular academic year to make ends meet, according to a union and district survey.

Clark County school Superintendent Walt Ruffes said he wasn't surprised by the survey findings reported Tuesday by the Las Vegas Sun, particularly after a moonlighting teacher sold his wife a pair of pants last weekend at a woman's boutique.

"She greeted me and said she was one of my teachers," Ruffes said Monday of the encounter at a Coldwater Creek clothing store. "She told me she was working weekends to make ends meet."

The need for second jobs was underscored in the survey of more than 8,000 district educators sponsored by the Clark County Education Association and the school district.

Some 42.2 percent said they agreed or strongly agreed that it was necessary to work a second job during the school year.

Asked about class sizes, almost two of three said they felt class sizes were too big to meet the educational needs of all students.

The annual survey was intended to measure teacher satisfaction with principals. Officials said the question of whether teachers considered second jobs a necessity had not been asked in past years and was added to gauge employees' financial stability.

Results were distributed late last week to teachers and administrators in the nation's fifth-largest school district.

Salaries for new teachers crossed the \$30,000 threshold for the first time in the current school year, with rookie teachers earning \$33,000. About half of the district's 16,000 teachers have fewer than five years' experience.

Nevada ranked 26th in the nation in 2005 with an average teacher salary of \$43,500. A Clark County teacher with eight years' tenure and 32 academic credits toward a master's degree earns \$43,554.

School Board member Susan Brager-Wellman said she has met teachers working second jobs at an Outback Steakhouse restaurant and a Bed, Bath & Beyond store.

"Every time I see them it breaks my heart," Brager-Wellman said.

Overall, 71 percent of the survey respondents said they agreed or strongly agreed that their school was a good place to work and learn. Sixty-six percent agreed or strongly agreed that teacher performance evaluations were fair.

Ruffes called those percentages well below his goal of 100 percent.

The survey also found many teachers reporting they spend more than 10 hours of personal time each week on school-related work.

----- Information from: Las Vegas Sun, <http://www.lasvegassun.com>

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