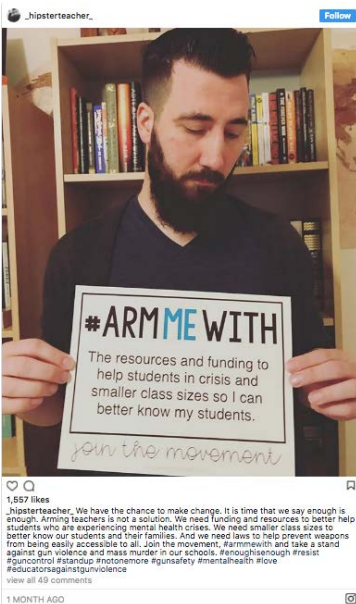
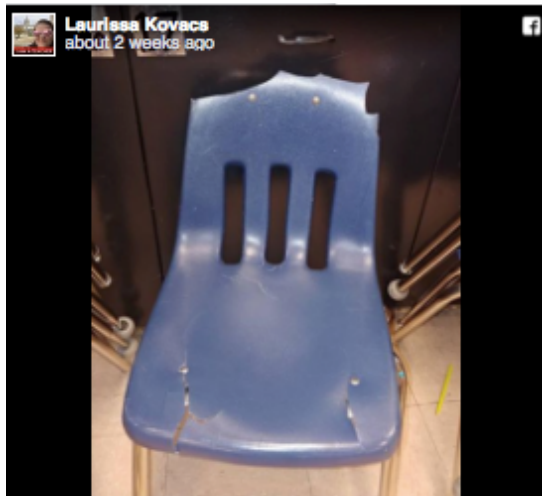


Handout: #armmewith



Handout: Oklahoma art teacher Laurissa Kovacs' tweet



Ok here's my story and why I'm walking out. This is my fourth year teaching in Oklahoma and after taxes and insurance I take home \$2,311 a month, \$27,732 a year. I could make about 20 grand more by moving to Texas or Arkansas, and many teachers are doing just that. Oklahoma is losing qualified teachers every day. These kids deserve the opportunity of a great education but we cannot give them that if all our teachers are emergency certified or completely over worked.

I teach six classes each day. As of today this is how many students I have in art class:

2nd Hour- 30 students
3rd Hour- 27 students
4th Hour- 32 students
5th Hour- 19 students
6th Hour- 23 students
7th Hour- 30 students

This is way too many students for one class. Especially art class. I've had to cut back on the fun, ambitious, and exciting projects literally because there isn't enough room on the table for 32 kids. I literally do not have enough chairs for 32 students. This photo is something every one of my students is familiar with. This chair, or cheek-pincher, is what my students have to sit on. Most of the chairs in my room look like this. Once they get to this point it's only a matter of time before the bottom goes completely out. Today a student actually carried his chair with him to sharpen his pencil because he got in early enough to get a good chair. I've gotten a few new students and had to throw a bottom-less chair away so tomorrow I'm having to bring in a couple of folding chairs I have here at home. That's why I'm walking out.

These kids deserve so much better than this.

They deserve teachers who are qualified to teach.

They deserve classes that are small enough that the teachers can actually spend some time with each student.

They deserve CHAIRS.

They deserve a quality education just as much as kids in surrounding states.

This is about so much more than a raise. It's about the future of Oklahoma. That's why I'm walking out.

And this bill that just passed is no where near enough to make an actual difference. I'm still ready to walk out and stand my ground.

Edit: Wow thank you all for the shares and messages of encouragement! Hundreds of people have asked if they can donate anything so I created an amazon wish list.

<https://www.amazon.com/gp/registry/wishlist/2698WSN52ULQN>

36K 18 85K

Handout: Teachers Strike in West Virginia, Oklahoma, Kentucky and Arizona

Public investment in K-12 schools — crucial for communities to thrive and the U.S. economy to offer broad opportunity — has declined dramatically in a number of states over the last decade. Worse, some of the deepest-cutting states have also cut income tax rates, weakening their main revenue source for supporting schools.

<https://www.cbpp.org/research/state-budget-and-tax/a-punishing-decade-for-school-funding>

The West Virginia teachers strike ... may have ignited a national labor movement, as teachers in Kentucky, Arizona and Oklahoma are making their frustration over pay and benefits known and sharing demands with their state legislators. “Last week, Kentucky teachers came out in force to protest proposed cuts to their retirement benefits. And in Arizona and Oklahoma, two of the worst-paying states for teachers in the country, educators are demanding salary hikes. All three appear to be taking cues from West Virginia.”

<https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/west-virginia-teachers-strike-other-states-low-pay-could-also-n855606>

Dignity and respect are the root cause of every serious labor struggle. This was certainly the case in West Virginia’s unprecedented nine-day statewide education strike. When the workers won ..., singing and dancing erupted among the thousands who packed the state capitol. The strike produced a string of significant victories Perhaps most significantly, it restored the dignity of 34,000 workers, rebuilding the pride of West Virginia’s working class and reinforcing one hell of a union that will carry the struggle forward. <https://www.thenation.com/article/the-west-virginia-teachers-strike-shows-that-winning-big-requires-creating-a-crisis/>

Oklahoma teachers reached their breaking point after enduring no pay raises since 2008. State lawmakers tried to avert a strike by passing measures in the past week to raise teacher salaries by \$6,100 annually and support staff salaries by \$1,250 annually, as well as increase education funding by \$50 million. But the increases were only a fraction of what the teachers wanted, so the strike moved forward. <https://www.courthousenews.com/striking-oklahoma-teachers-share-their-demands/>

On Wednesday, the Oklahoma legislature passed a historic tax increase – the state’s first in 28 years – to give teachers their first salary boost in more than a decade. The \$450 million tax hike required a three-quarters majority, a barrier that has typically been insurmountable in deeply conservative Oklahoma. “That’s something we never thought we’d see,” says Shawn Hime, executive director of the Oklahoma School Board Association.

<http://www.governing.com/week-in-finance/gov-teachers-winning-historic-tax-hikes.html>

Teachers in ... [Kentucky] are furious about a surprise bill lawmakers passed last week that cuts pension benefits for new and retiring teachers. Hundreds of teachers walked out of class Friday in response, and about 5,000 rallied in the capital of Frankfurt Monday.

<https://www.vox.com/2018/4/2/17188700/teacher-strikes-oklahoma-kentucky>

Will Arizona teachers strike? That question has swirled for weeks as educators rally for higher wages and more school funding. Leaders of the grassroots Arizona Educators United unveiled a list of demands last week, and they’d wait to see how Gov. Doug Ducey and the legislature respond as budget negotiations advance. “Arizona Educators United is prepared to do whatever it takes to reach our demands, However, we will do everything in our power to avoid a strike. As educators, we’re willing to put kids first, even when the state won’t.” <https://www.azcentral.com/story/news/local/arizona-education/2018/04/05/what-take-arizona-teachers-strike-walk-out-redford/491377002/>