

My name is Deborah Olson and I work as an educational assistant with Centennial School District. I have been there for seven years.

I started in September of 2008 which was just before a two year pay freeze due to budget cuts. Because I did not receive a raise the next two years, year four had me making the same rate of pay as a brand new hire would then make!

We will not even begin to start in on the rising cost of medical and dental insurance premiums. Suffice it to say I now have been forced to take my children off my plan in order to still have any paycheck left at all.

You see that is something I do not think many people are aware of. The way the district structures the pay for their employees, if you are an individual who relies on the medical insurance we are entitled to as a school district employee, you can expect to lose about half of your pay, on average, per month! That is not even for the top dollar insurance; that is for the low cost Kaiser option!

That means that although I make 15.30 an hour and work 30 hours a week (that is not considered full time), my take home pay is just over 800.00 a month! It is really ridiculous too because I made close to that when I first started seven years ago!

Nevertheless, it is near to impossible to live on this pay structure without having to borrow all summer because we do not have the ability to get unemployment during the times when the schools are closed. I cannot afford to be off all summer yet that is where I work.

Sadly, lately I have even been searching for an entirely new job/career so that I can have only one job all year long! I do not like the idea of leaving the career I have loved for seven years, yet I also do not want to keep making less though I am working the same! YES, NOT ONLY should the school district personnel be eligible for UI during summer months, they also should be deemed full time at 30 hours a week!