



## I Don't Want to Help Clear Anymore Teachers' Supply Lists

August 19, 2022 by Educator Barnes

It's no secret that most teachers spend money from their paychecks to purchase classroom supplies. The IRS has responded by raising the deduction teachers can file on their taxes from \$250 to \$300. Although this is a development to be proud of, at some point, we have to ask hard questions. Why does this tax benefit have to exist? What can be done to help teachers?

My husband is a database administrator. He is not expected to buy a laptop to work or buy items to make the job easier for other people in his department. For teachers, instead of addressing this issue, a bandaid is given to cover it up. A tax break is given, or supplies shift to parents. One year, we were asked to bring in a pack of paper for the copy machine. Supplying copy paper is neither the teacher's nor the parent's job.

It is time for school districts to cover school supplies that teachers need to teach. Most teachers will buy what they need, but some will not. It is unfair that some students are not in the best learning environment with the necessary tools because the teacher has decided not to purchase supplies. Teachers should not have to spend their paychecks on their job, but students are impacted when there is a supply gap.

The other reason school districts should get involved is so there is a conversation about what is being purchased. Some classrooms get an A for decor but a D or even an F for teaching and learning. Items added to the classroom can look nice and be coordinated, but they should not interfere with learning, and it is even better if they enhance learning.

For example, a teacher might believe they need a fidget kit for each student. In theory, it is known that fidgets can help students. However, if the teacher doesn't have training on best practices for them in the classroom, it is a classroom behavior issue waiting to erupt.

We need to move beyond quick fixes and invest in permanent solutions as a society. I want a day to come when I do not see clear the list trending on social media because teachers have to beg online for supplies. Although I do purchase items to support educators, I don't want to do it because it sidesteps why the public is asked to clear the lists in the first place.