

DIRECTIONS

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LODI TO ELIMINATE 15% OF TEACHING STAFF

What if you worked in a district with 130 teachers and budget problems forced a layoff of 20 of them? That describes the situation in Lodi. The proposed layoff was a response to a projected budget deficit of up to \$1.6 million. "I fear that we are basically dismantling the public education system of this state," Interim School Superintendent Chuck Pursell said. The cost to children and staff in terms of class size, program reduction, and low morale is just starting to be calculated and the method of layoff is in dispute. For the full story go to <http://www.channel3000.com/education/30192223/detail.html>.

DISTRICTS MISUSE POWER

There are a few games school districts are playing in the CAUS area that require some attention from members who may be affected.

1. Using a nonrenewal instead of a layoff procedure. Some districts are getting bad legal advice to do this because they believe they can deny recall rights to the members they have terminated and possibly impact their ability to collect unemployment. Besides being a likely violation of the contract, this can put an underserved blot on an employee's record. School Districts should not be trying to confuse the two: Layoffs are due to cuts in district budgets, and caused by declining enrollment, funding shortfalls, low levy rates etc., while non-renewals are sought by districts for alleged problems in performance. The union is fighting this trend in several districts.

2. Trying to deprive employees of First Amendment rights. We now live in a hyper-political state where everything tends to become political. Some superintendents have tried to deal with this by telling everyone who works for the

district that all things political, including member conversations, are off limits. That's not how the right of free speech works in America. What you do at home, or on your lunch break, before and after school hours, how you respond to parents, what materials you pack in your school bag, and a host of other things are your decision, not the district's. Most members know enough not to campaign or engage in political activities while at work or use school resources, but members still retain the basic rights of citizenship. Contact your local President or UniServ Director if you believe your rights are being violated.

3. Mishandling the Handbook. Some districts have made the Handbook a moving target. Guarantees of input lack follow-through; or the district handpicks members for input instead of including the union. A thoroughly pro-educator school board would just take the Master Contract and wrap it into the Handbook. Some are attempting to do this, but even then, a few key protections, such as just cause and seniority, may slide out as adoption nears. One of the key predictors of a good handbook is how active a local has been in finding and electing good school board members.

BETTER ALTERNATIVES TO MERIT PAY AND WHAT TEACHERS REALLY CARE ABOUT

A recently released report by Barnett Berry and Jonathan Eckert, details how current programs being pushed by federal and state lawmakers to institute merit pay for teachers do little to improve student achievement or help to attract and retain good teachers in high-needs areas. The report, *Creating Teacher Incentives for School Excellence and Equity*, lays out a strong case for how current merit pay programs are overly simplistic and provides recommendations that should be considered by policymakers if their true goal is to improve teacher effectiveness and student

outcomes, especially in high-needs areas. A companion report takes these recommendations and puts them into model legislation.

News media frequently report on so-called success stories of how merit pay has helped to attract and retain good teachers and increased student achievement. A simple GoogleNews search yields countless articles from across the nation lauding merit pay programs. This report disagrees with those stories. Here are the key takeaways from Berry and Eckert's policy brief:

- So-called merit pay programs that provide extra money to teachers whose students perform well on standardized tests aren't that effective and don't do much to attract and retain good teachers in high- needs areas.
- Deciding teachers' pay based on their students standardized test scores is a simplistic and flawed approach that can actually undermine the goal of improving education.
- Working conditions are more important than financial incentives in attracting and retaining quality teachers.

Both reports are on the Great Lakes Center website: <http://www.greatlakescenter.org>.

FUN FACTS ABOUT THE RECALL

The number of people who signed to Recall Walker would fill Lambeau Field 14 times! Petitions weighed 3,000 pounds (equivalent to about two Wisconsin dairy cows.)

In Ohio, organizers got 32% of voters to sign to repeal SB5 in 3 months. Recall Walker got 46% of voters to sign in 2 months.

By the Numbers:

4,372,347 eligible WI voters in 2010;
2,167,079 voted in Walker/Barrett race;
1,000,000 signed Walker recall;
Teachers? 68,000;
Public employees? 283,000;
Union members? 380,000.

A million+ Recall Walker signatures say:
This is what Democracy Looks Like!

NON-RENEWAL SEASON BEGINS

Are you or anyone else you know being targeted for layoff or nonrenewal? Wisconsin Statute 118.22 provides the procedural guidelines for non-renewing a full-time teacher's contract. Notify your UniServ Director (Glenn Schmidt or John Wedge) **AS SOON AS POSSIBLE** about your school district's intent to non-renew **or layoff teachers**.

The school district must provide a written preliminary notice of consideration on non-renewal by **February 29 2012**. This preliminary notice must be voted upon by the full board (look for distribution of preliminary non-renewal meetings). A teacher receiving this notice has five (5) CALENDAR days to request a private conference with the school board on the consideration of his/her non-renewal. If the teacher is to be non-renewed, the board must vote to non-renew the teacher and give the teacher written final notice no later than **March 15, 2012**. *Note: A collective bargaining agreement may modify these guidelines. With the change in the bargaining law there are many more questions about this process. If you have any questions about it please call or e-mail.*

WEAC RA

CAUS-North locals need to elect their delegates to attend the one-day WEAC RA at the Kalahari in Wisconsin Dells to be held on Saturday, April 21st. In light of the shortened schedule the WEAC Leadership Team and Budget and Finance members will be available at our pre-RA meeting to answer delegate questions before the Assembly begins. The CAUS pre-WEAC RA meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, April 17th at 7:00 p.m. at the CAUS office.

In addition, if delegates need a room for Friday or Saturday evening at the WEAC RA, CAUS-North has a block of rooms at the Holiday Inn, Wis. Dells. Reservations can be made through the CAUS office, however, the cost of the room (\$120.95 + tax) is the delegates/local responsibility. The cut off date for room reservations is March 16th.

If you are interested contact your local President.