

## TEACHERS SABOTAGE MEETING, BUT CANNOT SAVE JOBS



A Clark County School Board meeting turned into a slanging match, following a vote that will cut teachers jobs. Incensed and angry teacher brought the meeting to an abrupt halt, demanding answers. The Board adopted a proposed \$2.062 billion budget for 2012-13. However, what riled the teachers was the districts attempt to plug their \$60 million deficit hole, by eliminating 1,015 teachers' jobs. "Save our kids, save our school," the crowds kept on shouting, even as the Board tried to restore a semblance of orderliness amongst the chaotic sloganeering. The meeting was momentarily halted and the board threatened that if the disorder and interference continued, they would start arresting the intruders. Ruben Murillo, president of the Clark County Education Association, the teachers union, said that he was apprehensive of trusting the district and did not believe that the officials were being honest. There are hundreds of jobs open within the district, he had said before the meeting. Young said, "I am disappointed with the teachers union. I don't appreciate people coming and trying to infer that we are here to try and sabotage and hurt people. That's insulting. It's demeaning." The board says that the union's adamant attitude regarding pay raises, was the reason why they had to lay-off the teachers. District officials had asked the unions to agree to pay concessions, owing to the deficiency in the budget. Unions representing school police, administrators and support staff accepted the district's proposals, but the teachers union continued their opposition and the case was sent to the arbitrator, who ruled in their favor. District officials says, that owing to the increased pay raises, 90 percent of the general fund, is used for salaries and benefits, leaving them with no alternative but to go-ahead with the layoffs. A district spokeswoman said that the average district teacher's salary is \$58,000, not including benefits. Moreover, the district is projected to earn \$27.6 million less in revenue this year and for the third consecutive year, tap its emergency reserves, to meet the extra \$20 million expenditure in teacher salary hikes. This leaves just \$40 million for other expenses. Just before the vote, that was passed unanimously, Board President Linda Young had said, "We did not want one teacher, one support staff, one administrator, not one to lose their job." Murillo said, "What the district needs to do it get behind us and support us in finding alternative sources of revenue. Instead the district wants to go after teacher contracts, teacher rights, and bash teachers." The board felt that they were being wrongly maligned. Trustee Chris Harvey said, "Every single person in this room has tried to think, how can we find a solution." Fellow Trustee Deanna Wright also echoed similar sentiments saying that, "We tried to save jobs. We got shut down." Trustee Carolyn Edwards called it a "sad day for the district." District officials said, that the layoffs would result in class sizes increasing by two or three students.