

DONOR DOES WHAT LEGISLATURE SHOULD DO - DONATES \$600K TO SAVE TULSA TEACHER JOBS



The superintendent of Tulsa Public Schools, Keith Ballard, confirmed that a generous donation of \$600,000, by an anonymous donor, would prevent 15 teacher jobs from being eliminated. The 15 teachers had been, earlier laid-off owing to a decrease in federal funding. He said that adequate funding has been identified from budget savings and coupled with the benevolent donations, will be adequate to save around 32 teacher positions that were recently done away with because of the end of federal Jobs Bill funding. "As we think about next year, there are still too many unknowns out there for us to say what we will do with the budget," Ballard said. "I have gone to outside sources, and we have had an anonymous donor step up and pledge to us 15 teacher allocations, which costs a little over \$600,000." However he cautioned, "That's one time. You can't do that indefinitely." In another charitable gesture the Eliot Elementary School raised \$42,000 to save the job of a science teacher. Ballard said, "While I appreciate the work of the community very much and this is a great gesture, it's a shame that the Oklahoma Legislature, when they have the wherewithal to do it, did not support the public schools." Kim Jackson from Channel 8 sheds light on how schools hope to hold on to their teachers. The budgetary cuts meant that Webster High School would lose five teaching positions. But now that some money has come in, they may not have to lay off the teachers. Students at the school felt that this was the last band class they would attend and hereafter there would not be any more as the band master was retiring and the school did not intend hiring another. Five other teachers, in English, Social Studies and Math, were also facing a similar situation. "The first hope is to get my band program back which I fully intend to do. We can't, it's difficult to run a school without a band program," said Principal Jim Rector. The Principal hopes the unidentified donation will allow him to continue with his band program, as well as retain all his teachers. Other schools echoed similar sentiments; none want to lose their teachers. "We are looking closely at every opening, at every allocation and we are going to very carefully begin to assign those teachers allocations back out to the schools," said Dr. Keith Ballard. Even though the donation is substantial, the unmanned donor will have no say in which positions are to be filled with the money. An allocation committee has been appointed to take such decisions. Dr. Ballard said, "No one who gives us any money would have any control whatsoever and we make that clear up front. Not one allocation will be controlled by the donor." The funding that is available is enough to reinstate just about 30-positions. 45 posts could still remain unfilled as the money is not enough to go around. The students in the Webster's band are praying that their band director does not fall in the latter group and that he will be one of those who will be hired. "If I get that one back, I will be happy for the band people and I will be happy for the school community but I will not be satisfied," said Rector. Dr. Ballard said discussions are underway and it will take a week to announce the names of the lucky ones.

<https://blog.granted.com/>