

87 DETROIT TEACHERS TO BE CUT



The Emergency Manager for the city of Detroit, Roy Roberts, has made a recent announcement to lay off of 87 Detroit Public School teachers. He said that the decision is based on the total student headcount for the district, which was completed on October 5th as the reason for the decision. According to DPS officials for the city the estimated student headcount is 64,424 students, through this number will be adjusted when the number of absent students on the headcount day is known. While the exact number of teachers to be laid off will change based on the final headcount there will still be some layoffs unless the number of students in the district raises to meet or exceed 67,000 students by the end of the day. This means that a total of 2,576 students would have to have been absent on the day of the headcount. So, it is not completely impossible that the headcount could rise significantly. Keith Johnson, president of the Detroit Federation of Teachers, was quick to point out that this reduction of the number of teachers in the classroom could create instability in the classroom at a juncture when teachers are looking to increase classroom performance. While many studies have shown that the ration of students to teacher can have a profound impact of the quality of education that students receive there has been no solid consensus on what the ideal student to teacher ratio is exactly. The members of the DPS Board are willing to acknowledge the fact that the timing of the layoffs could be disruptive to the students MEAP testing. The MEAP test is an exam administered all over the State of Michigan at a variety of grade levels. The test is used to give school districts and the state an idea of how well students are learning the information from the content standards prescribed by state educators. The results of this test have been used as part of the No Child Left Behind Act, instated by former President George W. Bush. The testing process began the same week as the student headcount, with the actual tests being administered October 11th thru the 19th. This year the test will also be used to determine which schools in the district will be made a part of new statewide district, Education Achievement System (EAS) that is designed to help "low performing schools," to work more efficiently. Roy Roberts, the man who made the initial announcement about the layoffs will oversee the statewide district. Of course not every member of the board supports the idea of letting go teachers. Lamar Lemmons, another board member. "I would assume that the financing would have allowed us to hire more teachers, not less," Lemmons told a reporter at the Michigan Citizen. "Laying off these teachers is ill-timed and will have an adverse affect on testing students, further putting their schools in danger of being put into the EAS. That is a grave concern." If the layoffs take place the teachers will have 30 days notice, as per their union contract.