

## SACRAMENTO FACES ISSUES OVER TEACHER'S LAYOFFS



Bad news for the students and administrators of the Sacramento City Unified School District as the district and the teachers union are in the middle of a law suit about the rehiring of teachers and seniority rights in the recent layoffs and if things do not go well there is a chance that the poorest performing schools in the district may lose staff. The Sacramento City Teachers Association's has filed the suit months after the school board made a decision not to layoff teachers at six of the worst schools in the district. The decision not to layoff those teachers was made based on a little used provision in the Sacramento City Education Code. If the suit is decided in favor of the teachers union than the school district will have to layoff and rehire based simply on the notion of seniority, leaving the teachers with the most years in the school, while removing teachers with fewer years, no matter how well or how poorly their schools perform. The president of the Sacramento City Teachers Association told the following about the suit to a reporter for [the Sacramento Bee](#), "We just want to see everyone treated equally instead of some getting special treatment. Basically, we are saying the way in which they skipped teachers was incorrect." In the filing for the case the lawyers for the Sacramento City Unified School District the position was taken that the suit should be dismissed because the case was, "utterly lacking in key details such as naming any teacher or counselor who was laid off and refused reemployment in violation of the Education Code." While on the whole the law in the state of California does say that in the case of budget based layoffs that teachers should be laid off in order of their seniority. In this state however these are two exceptions to the rule. School districts may ignore the seniority rules in two different cases. They may skip to maintain or achieve equal protection under the law and the other case is when the teachers to be laid off are in hard to fill areas. Hard to fill areas generally include science, math, bilingual education and special education teachers. This second exception is being used as the reason behind the lack of layoffs at these six schools. Back in March the school board voted not to layoff teachers at these six schools, which were labeled as a priority by Superintendent Jonathan Raymond. The district is arguing that these teachers receive special training in order to work there and that this qualifies them for the exception. The union does not seem to see it that way at all. This case could actually be fairly important to the state of California as more and more districts are moving away from strictly seniority based layoffs and instead being more selective in which jobs they eliminate. This changes is not only being made in the layoff process, but to the rehiring process as well. The suit is currently being held in the Sacramento Superior Court.