

MANCHESTER SCHOOLS TO CUT JOBS



More layoffs are coming to workers in the field of education. This time it is the cuts are coming from the Manchester Board of School Committee. The meeting, which took place on Saturday, was only a preliminary meeting, and the decisions are slated to actually occur next Friday, but since a fair number of jobs are on the chopping block this is a serious matter. At the current moment there are two different plans being considered. One of them called for the elimination of about 104 members of the staff, including teachers, and the other plan calls for an elimination of up to 194 full time workers. Either of these options means the unattractive proposition of layoffs in the middle of the school year, when getting rid of positions could mean the juggling of students in classrooms in order make things fit. Since cutting classroom teachers is the last thing that many people want, the committee is looking for some other ways to close the \$9.7 million gap in the current budget. A number of options are being explored that they hope with either lower the amount of layoff needed, or cut out the need for them completely. Some of the cost saving measures being examined include: - Cutting the cost of transporting students to and from school by cutting down the bus routes and having more students walk to school. This suggestion is of primary importance, as the school district saw a 11.3 percent increase in the cost of student transportation this fiscal year. - Cutting back on the costs of some employee benefits, either by renegotiating the costs to put more onto the workers, or by renegotiating the contracts with the workers union. - Removing Registered Nurses from the schools and instead replacing them with Licensed Practical Nurses. The fiscal impact of these suggestions is set to be discussed at the meeting on Friday, so until then workers for the school will have no solid word on who and how many jobs will be cut. They are, of course, not the only school to consider, and make, staffing cuts this year. For those of you who missed our [earlier coverage](#) here is an excerpt from our earlier coverage: "It looks like even more bad news is coming to the Philadelphia school system, and that is really the last thing that they needed, as the school system has taken several hits in the recent past. The current problem is that the city's school district is in even more debt that they through that they were. A botched budget means that 2,700 service employee members have been given their layoff notices, in order to trim down \$61 million from its budget by the beginning of June. Union President George Richezza told the following to a reporter for [My Fox Philly](#) about the situation, "We are the pulse of the school district. Nothing moves within a school district on the educational side unless we do our jobs – our bus attendants, our drivers pick up children...Every child that goes to school in a public school has a clean, safe, healthy environment that get there, and make sure when they do get there, that the educational process does not stall." It is estimated that about 500 workers will not get their scheduled raises this year; they are also being forced to take on furlough days and pay a greater share of their own health care. In addition any worker who has a salary that is greater than \$75,000 will be forced to take a pay cut."

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