

COLUMBUS MUNICIPAL SCHOOLS TO LAYOFF 59



The Columbus Municipal School District is getting ready to layoff 59 teachers at the end of the school year. They are simply not renewing the contracts of the educators, all of whom have been with the school district less than two years, and these will not be the only jobs lost. Several workers who are retiring this year will not be replaced when they leave the school. Columbus Interim Superintendent Martha Liddell told the following about the cuts to a reporter for [Packet Media](#): "The cuts will not take our student-teacher ratios above the state minimum requirements of 27:1 at the elementary level or 150:1 at the secondary level. We anticipate that we will hire back 20 or so of these teachers because our enrollment is growing and we must cover critical areas. We've already talked to our teachers that have more than 20 years in the system and asked them what their intent is. A number of them have chosen to retire, and we'll also lose some teachers who are moving out of the district... Our budget is 76% personnel. We've also cut athletics, administration, support services and some special programs....We're also reducing the coaching staff," she said. "We have eight coaches now at the high school, and we're looking at cutting it to six. We also had some hefty supplements, and we're reducing those. For now, no sports have been eliminated." The school is blaming the layoffs on a number of factors, including a decrease in funding from the state, a smaller tax base for the city to collect revues from and a dwindling fund balance. For nine years of the last 10 the school has been forced to declare a shortfall. So really, this is more of a long-term trend for the city's schools, then a direct result of the 2008 global economic decline, which affected many millions of workers around the world. Cuts will be made from all of the schools in the district, though the bulk will come from the high school. This move does leave many people questioning the fate of the new middle school currently under construction by the district. The situation here is still as not as bad as the one in the city of Philadelphia. In January of this year the [school district](#) made sure that, "1,400 employees that got the boot. While these layoffs were not to the teaching staff, instead they came to the blue-collar workers who deal in facilities and transportation maintenance services, this is still a serious loss of jobs for the city. This was not the first mass layoff for the city of Philadelphia in the last 12 months. In September the city's school district had to cut jobs by about 850. Then over the summer roughly 1,000 teachers were cut from the budget as well. So on the whole the schools have shed more than 3,000 jobs since the end of the last school year. At the current moment however the officials for the school district are hoping that the settlement of a dispute with the workers union can mitigate some of the layoffs. If the members of the Local 32BJ, Service Employees International Union, are willing to make some concession than they will be able to keep some of the jobs."

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