

BRANDON SCHOOL DISTRICT VOTES TO LAYOFF

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In the past those people who chose to dedicate their working lives to the goal of public education have expected that they will enjoy a certain amount of protection when it comes to their employment status. The long has held, in the years past, that those people who work in public schools as teacher will be fairly exempt from the general ups and downs of the world of the job market. For a very long time that was true for teachers, as well as many other types of civil servants, who enjoyed job protection thanks to both strong unions and the types of services that they provide. After all, many people are willing to forgo a swimming pool, or a new DVD. Few people are willing to let their child go without a proper education. In the current economy however things have gotten bad for educators across the nation. As the state and county governments that fund these programs collect less in the way of tax revenue from it citizens and local businesses, while inflation at the same time, there is simply less money to go around. This means that schools, even if they are getting the same percentage of their budgets allocated to their programs have less in the way of real dollars to work with. Caught in the vice grip of this double bind many schools are left with little choice but to cut back on their staffing. This time the bad news is coming to the workers at the Brandon School District public schools where the workers are going to be taking a double whammy. The school district has decided both to cut back on the number of teachers they have in the schools, and to privatize its janitorial services. The move, which is designed to help the school shore up a \$1.4 million hole in its budget, will impact 28 teachers, who will not be brought back for the coming school year. In addition the custodial staff will take near total layoffs, though the exact numbers on how many workers in this department will be cut has not been released at this time. The move, which pass with a vote of five in favor and two against, was unpopular both with teachers and the parents of the children who attended. Despite the fact that the vote came after a closed meeting which lasted until 11pm many educators and members of the potentially impacted staff stayed to hear the final verdict. Interestingly enough the cut of the janitorial staff comes just two years after the union for these workers made major concessions, more than \$500,000, in order to save the jobs of its workers. The school system clearly had a detailed plan in place, because they were able to release specific numbers, the same day as the cut, as to how much money they expect to save when they replace their own workers with an outside company. According to school board officials the school district hopes to see a savings of about \$250,000 each school year, though this savings are only an estimate at this time.

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