

MEMPHIS CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT GIVES JOB CUT DOUBLE WHAMMY



Jobs in education used to be the place to go if what you were aiming for was stability in your professional life and a guarantee that once you got past the first couple of years you would have a job for the rest of your life. After all public school teachers get tenure after between two and five years depending on the district, their union and the negotiation skills of both sides. That protection, combined with the fact that public education is one of the things that we in this country consider to be an essential public service and for a very long time jobs in public education have been some of the most stable around. In the current economy however that math has changed a bit. As government at all levels is getting less in the way of tax revenue and giving less to each of the departments that they need to allocate funds to, all kinds of civil servants have been getting the ax in the last couple of months and in some cases years. That means that what was once one of the most stable fields out there is now taking serious hits to its staffing numbers and leaving thousands of professionals that are only really trained to do one thing all looking for new work at the same time. This time the job cuts are coming to the workers of the Memphis City School District. They are going to be taking the loss of 70 workers according to the notification that the schools filed with the state department of labor and workforce development in Tennessee. The WARN notices, which let workers know when they will be turned out of a job, were issued because of this cuts status as a mass layoff action. For those of you who are not familiar with the idea of a mass layoff action here is a look at how the federal government [defines](#) the term, "...mass layoff numbers are from establishments which have at least 50 initial claims for unemployment insurance (UI) filed against them during a 5-week period. Extended mass layoff numbers (issued quarterly) are from a subset of such establishments—where private sector nonfarm employers indicate that 50 or more workers were separated from their jobs for at least 31 days." These cuts will impact workers in clerical and administrative positions. They are, sadly, not the only jobs to be cut in the current economic downturn. The city schools are also getting ready to get rid of about 150 teachers as well. These teachers have been targeted to be cut because of their poor performance at their jobs. While in many other industries that sounds perfectly normal it is a bit unusual in public education. This city is one of the few that are now working out the details of performance based layoffs instead of the more traditional seniority system. Schools across the nation are hoping that this approach will help to keep the best teachers and not just the teachers who have been with the school the longest.

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