



RECOVERY SCHOOL DISTRICT CUTS 100+ JOBS

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RecoverySchoolDistrict

For those of you who are not familiar with The Recovery School District the organization [describes itself as](#), “Launched in 2003, the Recovery School District is guided by one question: What will it take to get every student on track to graduate from college or attain a professional career? In response to that question, the RSD transforms schools that for years have not put enough students on the path to career and college by identifying top school leaders and teachers to operate the schools, by giving them the freedom to educate children as they know best, and by giving parents the power to choose the schools that are best for their children....Most New Orleans public schools are now charter public schools for this reason. Charter school educators are empowered to teach; parents are empowered to choose their school; principals set their own budgets so that more money gets to the classroom; community members form boards that oversee schools; and the district’s central office, which is not close to the parents, the teachers, or the children, monitors schools but does not tell parents and teachers how to educate their children. Sadly, this innovative program is set to take some serious job cuts. The school is getting ready to cut back on just about 200 teachers in order to set things to right. This is partially because of budget issues, and partially because the school system is turning over some of the public schools that it runs to the charter system in order to help them thrive as individual units. The school will be laying off 117 workers because of the transition, and they will be cutting back on another 82 workers because they did not have satisfactory performance reports for the prior schools year. Either of these two cuts, by itself, is enough to qualify as a mass layoff action in its own right. 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, “Monthly 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.” In this case the notification requirement is satisfied by the time between now and the start of the next school year. There is a touch of controversy here. The school is using performance as an indicator of who needs to be cut. While this may be common in many other areas of employment in public schools the unions for teachers, and a strong system of tenure have traditionally protected educators, regardless of their actual level of performance. This new system, which is only in its second year, has some teachers upset about how it is decided who gets the axe.

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