

Good Evening School Board Members, Parents, Students, Staff, Community Members:

DEA is thankful for the ongoing support from teachers, parents, and students. The issue of involuntary transfers is not an easy one. To borrow a phrase, we believe that simply moving teachers around is NOT going to solve problems”.

DEA has never disputed the right of the district to invoke an involuntary transfer.

However, we question the validity of the process and its outcome on student achievement. At no point during this process has DEA leadership, building leadership, department heads, or the teachers themselves been directly involved in any meaningful part of the decision making process. The involuntary transfer of teachers is not part of No Child Left Behind or the School Improvement Grant nor has DEA had conversations about involuntary transfers since the fall.

The High School Reform plan has been used by the administration as a reason for the involuntary transfers. However, the High School Reform Plan as approved by the School Board addresses staff assignments. The Plan states on page 6 and I quote **“Develop with union leadership the assignment of staff based on building needs beginning in June 2011”**. Let me repeat “Develop with union leadership the assignment of staff based on building needs beginning in June 2011”.

The School Improvement Grant which was written by the district goes one step further in stating that “simply moving staff around will not solve the problems” We agree.....

We welcome the conversation about reform and have been an active participant in that conversation by our attendance and voice during meetings about the High School Reform Plan and the School Improvement Grant. However, to make drastic changes without any credible rationale or collaborative conversations behind it is disappointing and unnerving to the staff. Even as of this late date, the district has never revealed its selection process or criteria to either the public or DEA leadership. The district has never stated any data driven, measurable objectives for the transferred staff. We would hope that school board members would never support a decision that was not data driven or had measurable outcomes.

Education is about people and relationships. If we can't come together as an organization and work towards a common objective what can we expect from our students.

Our staff has been told time and time again to build relationships with students. We have complied with that directive with purpose and drive. And, yes, at times individuals make decisions to leave the District. We are always sad to see any of our staff leave. However, THIS situation is completely different, the district is driving this change by forcibly moving teachers from the very school where **we** have built relationships with our students, where **we** have built programs for our students that work, where **we** have attended meetings for hours to improve the education of our students. We don't believe that simply moving teachers around is going to solve the problems.....

The DEA has been open and straightforward in raising concerns regarding the involuntary transfer process. The students have shown an unprecedented outcry over their own future in Decatur Public Schools.

When this process is long past, it will be those teachers and students alone in the classroom.

Have you as a school board done the absolute most you can to make that classroom successful? All we ask is that the district come forward in an earnest manner to work collaboratively with DEA leadership, building administrators, department heads, teachers and students.

The District's Reform Plan **approved** by the Board of Education includes staff reassignment conversations to begin in June 2011, do not violate your own vote. Delay the involuntary transfer until a plan that is truly collaborative can come forward to the Board of Education for approval. Simply moving staff around will NOT solve the problems.

Thank you