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# Cincinnati Public Schools to put top teachers at weak schools

Move violates contract, says one reassigned instructor

BY JESSICA BROWN • JLBROWN@ENQUIRER.COM • JUNE 14, 2010

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The Cincinnati Public School district is revamping a volunteer career training program for its teachers to ensure the best teachers are working in the lowest-performing schools.

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The move is not unprecedented for the administration to weigh in on teacher assignments in this district of nearly 35,000 students. However, this is the first time the district has taken this broad or direct a stance on where its top teachers should teach.

The goal is to save the district money and improve academically struggling schools.

The move will only involve eight teachers next year, but could ultimately impact up to 426 of the district's 2,500 teachers as they move through the training program.

"It's a change in philosophy," said

Superintendent Mary Ronan. "How else am I going to get the highest performing teachers in the lowest performing schools?"

Teachers currently have a say in where they teach.

The changes in the program come in the context of tough budget talks. The district is trying to cut \$17 million from a proposed 2010-2011 budget in order to keep spending flat. The administration has discussed cuts in transportation, crossing guards and summer school.

Revamping the career training program is expected to save the district \$1 million next year.

"I think it violates our contract that we're currently under," said Becky Armbruster, a union member and one of the teachers who will be reassigned. "That doesn't show too much faith in the administration upholding a bargaining agreement that they negotiated, so I disagree with it."

Negotiations between the district and the Cincinnati Federation of Teachers stalled last month after the groups failed to reach agreement on teacher employment and school scheduling rules. Employees remain under the same contract. Negotiations resume this month and both sides hope to have an agreement by June 30, the end of the district's financial year.

Armbruster, who taught first grade at Roberts Paideia Academy before her teacher training, thinks that it's unfair to limit the school choices of the district's top teachers.

"I'm not saying I wouldn't want to work at a (lower-performing) school, but I feel I would want to have

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