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unique security issues that you believe need to be addressed," he wrote.

Bill Turque

By [Bill Turque](#) | September 21, 2009; 4:48 PM ET | Category: [Bill Turque](#) ,

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What a joke. How can anyone think that this is going to be a fair and transparent process with the best interests of the school community and children in mind? I doubt that many LSRT's were convened (for those schools that even have one). And 95% of the criteria are purely subjective! Face it, a Principal will be able to fire anyone they want to as long as they can justify doing without that Instructional position.

And if the Council won't even stand up for the autonomy and funding of the ELECTED Board of Education, why would any teacher think that the Council will stand up for them.

Posted by: [scinerd1](#) | September 21, 2009 5:38 PM

The pitiful part of all of this is that the citizens are so desperate for reform that they will take any lie that this Mayor and Chancellor feeds them and eat it as the truth.

The citizens have a very powerful tool at their disposal. It is called their vote. They elected a School Board, members dedicated to specific constituencies in this city and a chair elected citywide. However, they have allowed the Mayor to render their representative impotent.

It is time now for the Council to undo some of the harm done when they hamstringed the D.C. School Board by giving a mayoral appointee full control over their budget. By doing such, they have given the Mayor a financial noose to wrap around the Board's neck forcing them to do his bidding as opposed to that of the constituents that elected them.

Tomorrow, the council can vote to give the School Board full autonomy over their own budget so that they can hire whom they need, when they need them to do a job that they were elected to do without executive interference.

Posted by: [concernedaboutdc](#) | September 21, 2009 5:49 PM

This whole thing makes me sick.

Posted by: [efavorite](#) | September 21, 2009 10:57 PM

Fenty and Rhee not telling us the full story?! Yeah, you got that right. They continue to do what they want and just lie to us. Our schools are in danger with both of them in charge. DC deserves so much better.

Posted by: [DCWatcher3](#) | September 22, 2009 12:22 AM

What a mess! Fenty has become a dictator and what he says goes.

Posted by: [Ward4DC](#) | September 22, 2009 12:53 AM

The RIF process described in this article reads like a game show with the principals serving as the host. We just need a name for it.

Rhee obviously thinks her principals make better targets than her and Central Office staffers.

The RIF notices should come from Human Resources. Why bring so many disheartening emotions to the school buildings?

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Posted by: shank2sb | September 22, 2009 1:35 AM

Rank and file educators will gather outside of the DCPS central office on Thursday, September 24, starting at 4:00 p.m. to protest teacher layoffs. We request that other laid off and terminated government employees, parents, students, city workers, residents, community activists, local leaders and the media join us in taking a stand for our teachers, students, and schools. We are baffled that Chancellor Rhee hired over nine hundred new teachers this summer, and that only one month into the school year announced that — due to a budget shortfall — she will make imminent teacher layoffs prior to the start of the fiscal year. Please join the rank and file this Thursday as we protest Rhee: The Teacher Terminator.

Posted by: wtf1 | September 22, 2009 5:53 AM

shank2sb asks, "Why bring so many disheartening emotions to the school buildings?"

To spread the bad feelings around. Remember, the chancellor thinks stress is good:

"If they're [teachers and principals] feeling pressure--good! I feel pressure every day because I have the education of 49,000 kids in my hands" WSJ 12/22/07
<http://www.opinionjournal.com/editorial/feature.html?id=110011029>

Posted by: efavorite | September 22, 2009 7:49 AM

Being a principal right now under this administration is really a bad position to be in right now. Since it's in writing what the principals are being forced to do, after it's all over, they still have to provide the leadership in their buildings. What teacher is going to trust that leader now knowing that they have to justify who stays and who leaves? They are being used in the worst way. To add insult to injury, the principals then have to deliver the termination letters to the teachers. The more I read the more it becomes clear why principals were let go. This kind of dirty work and it's "publicity" would not have gone over well with many of them. Talk about the ultimate misuse of people. For years how many principals have complained about the lack of support from central? This central administration just threw them under the bus and rolled back on them several times. She'll leave them hanging with answers of "the principals decided."

Posted by: candycane1 | September 22, 2009 8:19 AM

Right, Candycane -- the Council cut the budget and the principals fired the teachers, while Rhee is just doing what's in the best interests of the kids.

How long can Rhee supporters fall for this?

Posted by: efavorite | September 22, 2009 9:41 AM

It doesn't stop here Efavorite. Look for Sunday's WP Magazine. She's being highlighted again and on MSNBC she again did her usual bashing. In two years not one positive thing about "her" school system on a public stage.

Posted by: candycane1 | September 22, 2009 10:37 AM

What is the big deal with principals having to fire people? Bosses do that all over the country every day. If Rhee made the decisions you all would bash her. I guess you all want a computer to decide, you know, based on numbers, like length of service.

The WTU has done a huge disservice to its members. Parker almost agreed to that Red or Green deal until it was toredod but the rest of the leadership for personal purposes.

Now the teachers have no seniortiy rights when it comes to firing AND THEY

HAVENT GOTTEN ANY RAISES. Say what you want about Rhee. She knew what she was doing. She is getting what she wants. And the teachers have NOTHING.

Total FAIL by the WTU. If you took the Red or Green plan last year. Teachers would have another \$10k in the bank before being fired.

Total incompetence all around. Parker, grow a pair and shut your dumb noisy masses up. TAKE THE MONEY. If it is still there.

This will be a new case taught to students in labor classes all over the country of what not to do: don't listen to the idiots you represent, you might actually know what is best for them.

Posted by: makplan20002 | September 22, 2009 11:07 AM

Eternal optimist that I am, I'm expecting the Sunday article on Rhee to be somewhat negative.

Posted by: efavorite | September 22, 2009 12:17 PM

It's hard to imagine any principal regardless of his/her politics, who would want to turn over staff in the middle of a school year. It disrupts students, teachers and is a lot of work for principals with no obvious return.

Maybe I'm missing something. If anyone can think of any reasons why principals would think this is a beneficial move, please let me know.

Posted by: efavorite | September 22, 2009 12:23 PM

There isn't a principal who is OK with turning over a staff at this time of the year. This has a serious impact on principals. Depending on the number of staff members lost, there is a lot to do. Teacher and student schedules were already done. Classes need to be re-arranged. Duty schedules need changing and perhaps some class selections are gone. It's like they worked all summer for nothing. This is not pleasant for any principal. If a principal is initiating an action of having a teacher fired, that is solely on the basis of documented ineffective performance. That would not be happening in Sept/Oct. If this is "truly" a RIF that is an agency initiated action. However as I previously stated, with the manner that this is being carried out and with the publicity given to it regarding what principals must now do, they are under the bus.

Posted by: candycane1 | September 22, 2009 2:08 PM

Candycane - do you think principals were told this would happen in the summer?

Posted by: efavorite | September 22, 2009 2:33 PM

efavorite: answering your question - of course not. Remember your data to me - "they need to feel the pressure". And don't forget the 10:00 am deadline this past Saturday when they (principals) were required to submit their work sheets.

Had they known any of this was going to be upon them, it would have given them too much time to ask valid questions about staffing their buildings before and after this mess.

I believe they were happy campers who were glad to have "take charge" jobs. Now they have been hit upside their heads with the first snowballs of the school year - just a little earlier than usual.

Posted by: shank2sb | September 22, 2009 5:37 PM

Efavorite: I think that shank2sb makes a valid point. There may have been rumors about it. If you remember, I posted that a RIF was coming but it involved facilities and sure enough the warehouse was shut down. Rumors may have been floating, but given the timeline that they had to work with, I doubt that they knew much about how, who or when. I know one thing. They are frustrated as hell. It's

no picnic to have to reorganize in days what you've been planning for months to open schools.

Posted by: candycane1 | September 22, 2009 8:00 PM

As an erstwhile DCPS teacher, who resigned as of last month to begin teaching in a neighboring County, I must say that no low-down-dirty move by this Chancellor and Mayor surprises me any longer. After all, the leopard does not lose its spots.

The Chancellor has been revealing her true colors under cover from the inception of her tenure. Few knew about it, and, when told, even fewer believed any negative report. At this juncture, she no longer is inclined to hide her agenda, which has little to do with educating our youth. That simply is the platitude she uses as a cover.

This is not a struggle between the Chancellor and teachers, as so many of her supporters choose to delude themselves into believing. Rather, this is all-out war between a Chancellor with egotistical and narcissistic public relations ambitions and our precious youth, whose fragile future she controls. Right now, she is winning hands down, and that, indeed, is a tragedy of proportions yet to be revealed.

Sad, sad, sad.

Posted by: vscribe | September 22, 2009 8:25 PM

It is absolutely beneath contempt that Ms Rhee and Mayor Fenty think they can run slip shod over teachers. They would not stand for this type of treatment if they were in our place. You can not balance a budget on the backs of teachers. How do they expect to achieve high test scores with over crowded classes.

Posted by: Rhojon56 | September 22, 2009 8:27 PM

Shank2sb and candycane – appreciate your analyses – the only thing that doesn't sound completely plausible is that the principals have been happy campers. I'd guess many have been unhappy for quite some time and are looking for a way to get out, or to adapt without losing their souls. I know that some others have responded by identifying with the aggressor – becoming mini-Rhees in their schools.

Vscribe – good decision to get out, eh? Hope to hear more from you from your knowledgeable but above-the-fray position.

Posted by: efavorite | September 22, 2009 9:11 PM

rhojon56 asks, "How do they expect to achieve high test scores with over crowded classes."

Possibilities:

- Cheating
- Believing makes it so
- suppressing the scores and using incredibly successful (so-far) verbal skills to keep supporters of "reform" from noticing or caring.

Posted by: efavorite | September 22, 2009 9:16 PM

Principals have enough problems with the new evaluation procedure (which dictates 3 observations per year per teacher). It was hard enough for them to do 1 or 2. The morale of principals in DCPS has got to be plummeting.

Posted by: p-man | September 22, 2009 9:20 PM

Before long, D.C. will be another New Orleans (sans Katrina) - a system of charter schools. The public schools that remain, if any remain, will be application schools for the few - not the many.

I think it's clear that there are some teachers who should not be in a classroom anywhere. And it's clear that a democratic process necessitates that everyone has a chance to voice his or her opinion, have it heard by peers, and then a consensus is reached and things move on. Just because the WTU - rightly or wrongly - did not agree on a contract doesn't mean that it's okay for DCPS to backdoor teachers.

To date I don't think it's been conclusively proven that the new hires are far superior - or even much better - than all of the veterans. Newsflash: sometimes older folk still know more than young 'uns. Thank goodness! Otherwise, how would the young ones learn...

Posted by: verumputo | September 22, 2009 9:31 PM

efavorite: the "happy campers" are the new ones, and there are quite a few, who had no idea about the Rhee Factor" until this mission was given to them.

Second year principals are either the reformed "mini-Rhees" or the ones that are just going along to get along - they have bills now.

Whatever their category, a dark cloud of fear now hovers over their educational paradigm. This cloud produces a constant overcast of worry and "pressure" that will surround them throughout the school year. And it is just September!

Thanks for your comments.

Posted by: shank2sb | September 23, 2009 12:02 AM

Verumputo - True, New Orleans' school system sucks, but at least N.O. has Katrina to blame. Seems to me, Rhee and her flunkies are DCPS's Katrina. The most important aspect of the school system is the children and from Central Office to the school buildings, the students are not the priority. This RIF is a way to rid DCPS of the seasoned educators that know darn well what Rhee and Fenty are doing is absolutely wrong. DCPS will most likely keep the 900 new teachers hired over the summer because most of them are still babies themselves and will march to the sound of Rhee's music.

Nobody on the 9th floor of 825 gives a rat's a** about the central or school based employees. As long as they continue to make their high salaries, everybody else is fair game. As the Dep. Chancellor stated after all Central based employees became "at-will" a couple of years ago, "I feel like firing somebody today" is the motto for the 9th floor decision makers. Unfortunate for the staff, students and the school system as a whole.

Posted by: speakoutloud | September 23, 2009 10:54 AM

"Starting today, principals began trekking to a sixth floor conference room in the human resources department at 825 North Capitol to discuss their choices with senior administrators."

It is so telling that DCPS would force principals to leave their schools on a school day to get this done. All about the kids, though, right.

Why not make those central office administrators get off their backsides and at least hold these meetings in the schools?!

Posted by: emrj | September 23, 2009 5:30 PM

efavorite: To further answer your question, Principals were sent the memo on September 18th regarding the RIF. Another point. Due to the many new principals, they don't know their staffs to evaluate anything. Look for lawsuits to fly!

Posted by: candycane1 | September 23, 2009 8:45 PM

Emrj: "Why not make those central office administrators get off their backsides and at least hold these meetings in the schools?!"

Because then they'd lose their home court advantage.

candycane: "Look for lawsuits to fly!"

Wonderful - more money for lawyers.

Posted by: [efavorite](#) | September 23, 2009 11:44 PM

This entire workforce reduction in the District Government, as I hear it, has been nothing more than a witch hunt based on personal vendettas vs. a contemplative process to make non-performance related reductions in staffing. I thought that suspicious until the Mayor ticked the Council Chair Gray off by blaming the Council for the cuts and he publicly stated that it was the Mayor that was using the national economic crisis as an excuse to fire employees without due process.

What is worse, I understand that there is now an environment in the District government where those people that the Mayor wishes to keep are jumping ship to find employment elsewhere. Jobs where they are allowed to actually do what they are hired to do. Instead of doing a comprehensive review of all D.C. government positions and making one common sense cut, this government has had to operate under the shadow of reductions week by week, month by month, thereby creating an environment wherein nothing gets done. Staff are continually scrambling to cover the work of released workers and things are falling between the cracks.

The people of the District really do deserve a government that is managed better from the Executive Suite. Not only is the Mayor hiring inexperienced executives to run District agencies, he is also making unwise cuts in staff causing even the best employees to throw their hands up and discontinue their own service to the District.

It is truly a bad situation.

Posted by: [concernedaboutdc](#) | September 24, 2009 10:28 AM

Please correct me if I'm mistaken, but isn't the Chancellor the person who flew into D.C. a couple of years ago claiming to have worked unprecedented miracles in the slums of Baltimore, miracles that are impossible to achieve in just two years, and then could not or would not deliver the evidence to back up her claims? I'm just a poor country boy from the Midwest, so please someone out there fill me in...

Posted by: [mrichardson2](#) | September 24, 2009 6:21 PM

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