

RTA News from Rep Assembly, January 26, 2010

1. The Assembly collected money for the Haiti Relief Fund.

2. **President's report:**

The February Rep Assembly is moved from Tuesday to Thursday, February 25.

The RTA is working to improve the List Serve to get members information effeciently and effectively.

Reps from each building need to make sure members get all information from meetings and faxes.

Voluntary Transfer Date has been pushed back to February 26 and that may change, so check on RochesterTeachers.com for any changes.

Fabian Servent is added to the Grievance Committee.

Autonomous Schools -- The reps and schools have received the regulations and application. It is for a one year period only. Adam Urbanski feels that it is written the way the union wanted. Any departure from the RTA contract has to be negotiated with RTA reps and then voted by secret ballot with 80% of all the teachers in the building voting (any absentee is considered a "no" vote).

If voted in, there will be a yearly vote to continue because of possible changes in administration and/or staff.

It is recommended to pursue only if you have a high level of trust between administrators and teachers.

The Autonomous Contract Schools proposal passed after a lengthy debate.

Any rep or group of teachers wanting an RTA officer to come speak at their school should call and schedule it.

Mayoral Control -- Adam Urbanski said that it is about money. The mayor wants to give less to the school district than he has been obligated to give in the past as a result of "maintenance of effort" as an intergovernmental body. If the district becomes a department of the city, it can take back the \$11 million in the first year they tried to keep from giving a couple of years ago.

The mayor and his advisors want to "break the union" by seeking new legislation that is being drafted and introduced the first week in February by Gant, Morelle, and Duffy.

They feel they have the support of the governor who is not perceived as a strong leader.

The NYSUT lawyers have said that the mayor can declare the Rochester Teacher contract "null and void" because the agreement was with the school board which will no longer be in existence if the law is passed. Everything that has been gained in collective bargaining may be lost if this is the case. Mayoral control has taken place

in other cities such as New York. Urbanski said that it has not proven any better with or without mayoral control because there are so many other variables. William Cala wrote an excellent editorial against the negative aspects of mayoral control for the City newspaper that can be found on their website. When asked about their contract, Urbanski said that the president of the union (who is now president of AFT) worked with the mayor of New York and then supported the mayor in the transition, but that this mayor in Rochester has spoken out against unions.

One business leader has said that the RTA contract is a “terrorist document” and that Adam Urbanski is “Public Enemy #1”.

Urbanski said that he is working with NYSUT and will try to stop the legislature in the Senate. He said that he can only do it with support from parents and the faith community because teachers cannot be the only ones trying to stop this. We are seen as a special interest group.

Adam Urbanski’s message to teachers is that mayoral control can cost you economically and professionally and that he cannot single-handedly stop this. Leadership from all groups need to work together. Teachers need to come out to rallies and contact their legislators saying that they oppose mayoral control.

Respectfully submitted,
Mary Zimmer