

# MCALLEN AFT NEWS

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## COURT CASE

The state district court in Travis County has rejected McAllen ISD's appeal regarding its obligation to pay teachers the full salary amounts required under the Texas Education Code for the 2009 – 2010 school year. It affirmed the Commissioner of Education's decision that the district violated state law when it refused to pay teachers their salary steps that year and ordered the district to pay back pay. McAllen AFT, the teachers' union pursuing the long running dispute, also tried to get the steps paid for the following year, 2010 – 2011, and the

Commissioner ordered back pay for the second year as well. However, the court found that the teachers were not owed back pay for the second year because they had not filed a separate, second complaint when the district decided to violate the law again in 2010 – 2011.

Says Ruth Skow, President of the 1200 member of the McAllen American Federation of Teachers, "The district continues to game the system by spending taxpayer dollars defending what they know isn't right through expensive court appeals. Although we can only speak for our members, we believe the board needs pay every district employee that is owed money and not pursue ways to avoid doing that. The district owes for two years. Continuing to game the system by using a technicality that the teachers should have filed the same complaint the second year the district violated the law is not a victory for the district.

## RECLAIM

### Will You Reclaim the Promise?

Our public schools represent our nation's commitment to helping all children dream their dreams and achieve them. A high-quality public education for all children is an economic necessity, an anchor of democracy, a moral imperative and a fundamental civil right, without which none of our other rights can be fully realized.

I will reclaim the promise of public education—not as it is today or as it was in the past, but as we imagine it for our children—to fulfill our collective obligation to help all children succeed.

I will reclaim the promise to fight for neighborhood public schools that are safe, welcoming places for teaching and learning.

I will reclaim the high quality public education for all children that nurtures a joy of teaching and learning.

Pledge at: [go.aft.org/promise](http://go.aft.org/promise)

In this issue:

<b>COURT CASE</b>	1
<b>RECLAIM THE PROMISE</b>	1
<b>FOR PROFIT CHARTER SCHOOLS</b>	2
<b>AFFORDABLE COLLEGE</b>	2
<b>COACHING STIPENDS</b>	2

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## COURT CASE CONTINUED

It is a slap in the face of every hard working employee who has been waiting for justice since the TEA Commissioner's original decision three years ago. The district needs to accept responsibility for their behavior and correct this injustice. Their attempt to wheel and deal their way out of the Commissioner's decision is a disservice to the taxpayers and a disservice to their employees.

Martha Owen, our attorney, is reviewing appeal options as to the second year. **We are determined to fight for justice until it is delivered," vowed Skow.**

## FOR-PROFIT CHARTER SCHOOLS

For-profit charter schools that operate in the dark without basic public transparency and without strong public control too often put their bottom line ahead of the public interest and high-quality public education. In partnership with In the Public Interest, AFT has launched the Web site *Cashing in on Kids* for the facts about for-profit education in America.

While we are working to reclaim the promise of public education, these for-profit charters are cashing in on kids.

The site profiles five for-profit charter school operators: K12 Inc., Imagine Schools, White Hat Management, Academica, and Charter Schools USA. It identifies several issues that need to be addressed in charter school policy, including public control, equity, transparency, and accountability, and it analyzes the impact of profit-taking and privatization in charter schools, where student results are mixed and mismanagement is widespread.

AFT and In the Public Interest built this site to ensure that parents, educators, and policy-makers are better informed about the impact of profit, money, and private interests in education, particularly charter schools. Check out *Cashing in on Kids* and help spread the word by sharing with your social networks

**See more at: <http://texasaftblog.com/hotline/?p=3605#sthash.3DWiYaIn.dpuf>**

Locally charter schools have made a big difference in public school enrollments. Rio Hondo is releasing 23 employees because of children moving from the school district to charter schools. There are five (5) other public school districts facing loss of enrollment due to drops due to charter schools—e.g. IDEA.

## AFFORDABLE COLLEGE

Texas A & M University-Commerce (East Texas) and South Texas College have unveiled a new, innovative online bachelor's of applied science in organizational leadership degree, developed in partnership with the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. Students with no prior college credits should be able to complete the degree requirements in about three years for a total cost of \$13,000 to \$15,000. Students with 90 hours of college credit should be able to complete the degree in a year for \$4,500 to \$6,000. (**Texas Education News, February 17, 2014**)

## OTHER NEWS

High school head football coaches who receive stipends in Texas ISDs receive an average of \$6,400 in extra-duty stipend pay, preliminary Texas Association of School Boards/Texas Association of School Administrators survey data for this school year reflects. Of the stipend-paying districts for head coaches, about 60 percent also pay an average of 22 extra days, which are typically paid at the employee's daily rate (or at a standard rate) determined by the district. Stipends for head football coaches can vary significantly according to the size of the school—with Class 1A head coaches receiving \$3,500, while Class 5A head coaches are paid more than \$12,500 in addition to salary. (**Texas Education News**)