



A Union of Education, Technical Support, Charter School and Education Support Professionals

## PRESS RELEASE

**Note:** Excellent photo and aerial photo opportunities.

### **Thousands of protestors converge on downtown Fort Lauderdale**

**FORT LAUDERDALE, FLA., May 24** – Thousands of community members including parents, teachers, students and other tax payers will protest the termination of 1,400 Broward teachers as well as other school and community budget cuts at 5 p.m., today, Tuesday, May 24 across from the Broward County Courthouse in downtown Fort Lauderdale. Based on 25 charter buses being reserved by schools for the event and many more pledges from community groups and members to attend, protestors expect well over 2,000 protestors at the event, which will be one of the largest protests seen in downtown Fort Lauderdale in years.

BTU President Pat Santeramo said district officials are ignoring the teachers' \$70 million in common sense budget cutting alternatives to terminating our children's teachers. He said support for the terminated teachers has been overwhelming. The protestors will be drawing attention to school and community budget cuts.

"The public needs to know that our School Board members have other budget cutting besides sending our children's teachers to the unemployment lines," Santeramo said. "The fact that Miami-Dade schools will not be laying off any teachers this year despite facing the same budget challenges as in Broward where 1,400 teachers have lost their jobs so far has really made parents and taxpayers angry."

Unlike in the past, this year district and union officials formed a joint collaborative finance committee that had both union and district representatives on it with the sole purpose of identifying and verifying the viability of employee budget cutting recommendations. The joint finance committee identified \$70 million in budget cuts that could be implemented and none involved eliminating the positions of Broward children's teachers. He said the items also equal far more savings than Superintendent Notter's outdated management tactic of mandating furloughs.

"We viewed the formation of the joint district and union finance committee as a positive step forward, but we never imagined the end result would be that Superintendent Jim Notter would ignore the vast majority of the budget cuts studied by the committee members. Instead, he has needlessly once again put the jobs of our children's teachers on the budget chopping block and to date only a few School Board members have publicly challenged his drastic actions," Santeramo said.

### **EVENT SNAPSHOT**

**What:** Fight for Our Future Protest

**Who:** Parents, teachers, students and other community members

**When:** 5:00 p.m., Tuesday, May 24, 2011

**Where:** 600 Southeast Third Avenue in downtown Fort Lauderdale

**Note:** Excellent photo and aerial photo opportunities.