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From East Cleveland Education Association

For Immediate Release:

East Cleveland Education Association blindsided by layoffs; urges CEO to use federal money to meet students' needs as intended

EAST CLEVELAND, Ohio - The East Cleveland Education Association (ECEA) is extremely disappointed in CEO Henry Pettiegrew's unilateral decision to lay off ten teachers at the close of the 2020-2021 school year. The decision was made without consultation with the Association and without regard for the needs of East Cleveland's students.

"The layoffs were a shock to the entire teaching staff in East Cleveland who have gone so far above and beyond over the past year to meet the challenges of educating students amid a global pandemic. Their expertise and dedication will be needed now more than ever to help address the learning gaps our students were left with because of the disrupted learning opportunities, but the CEO has once again demonstrated his disregard for the wellbeing of our students and community," said Irene Spraggins, ECEA spokesperson.

The unnecessary layoffs will drive up class sizes and reduce access to resources for East Cleveland students at a time when millions of dollars in federal aid are flowing into the district to prevent those issues. East Cleveland schools are receiving \$18,982,399 in American Rescue Plan (ARP) funding through September, 2024. The ARP money, which was approved by Congress earlier this year, is specifically intended to prevent layoffs, among other allowable uses. [School districts are required, by law, to consult with educators and their unions](#) about how the ARP money should be spent, but the CEO has continued to refuse to work collaboratively with East Cleveland teachers or even discuss what he plans to do with the funds.

Pettiegrew's indifference to the regulations surrounding the critical ARP funding come as no surprise to ECEA members. This school year ECEA has filed more grievances than in the past due to the violation of their Collective Bargaining Agreement, which he has violated numerous times. ECEA members have continued to work in good faith, without a contract, since August of 2020. The terms of the previous Collective Bargaining Agreement remain in effect while federally-mediated negotiations for a new contract with the district continue.

The ECEA is an affiliate of the Ohio Education Association and the National Education Association. The ECEA represents approximately 170 full time and part time educators in the East Cleveland City School District.

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