

Written by Kathy

Tuesday, 14 February 2012 10:48 - Last Updated Wednesday, 15 February 2012 06:53

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CLEVELAND, Ohio-Cleveland Mayor Frank Jackson (pictured) said through a spokesperson yesterday that Black state legislators representing Cleveland and Cleveland City Council members that have said he crafted his controversial Cleveland schools educational plan unleashed last week that calls for a teacher merit pay system and more charter schools without their knowledge are being disingenuous, at best.

"He would never release something like this without speaking to the appropriate people," said Andrea Taylor, Jackson's press secretary. "They were aware of the proposal before it was made public."

And Taylor said that nothing in the plan suggest that teacher tenure will be touched or that seniority would be eliminated, a posture that Cleveland Teachers Union officials and community activists angry over the proposal say simply is not true.

"The mayor just wants to add merit pay as an option," said Taylor.

Cleveland Ward 8 Councilman Jeff Johnson, who opposes the plan, said last week that the mayor crafted it without input from the community or Cleveland teachers, and that it is geared to dismantle seniority through potential state legislation pushed by Republican Gov. John Kasich that is only applicable to the predominantly Black Cleveland Municipal School District, which Jackson controls via state law.

State Rep. John Barnes Jr. (D-12), a Cleveland Democrat, said last week that he had not seen any details of the plan.

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Reached by telephone today Barnes said there was nothing more to say for now, and that until the plan becomes a bill, if it in fact becomes one at a later date, it is nothing but a proposal on a local level issue.

Asked if the mayor believes that teachers over 40 should be replaced with younger teachers in potential violation of the age discrimination clause of The Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, Taylor said "absolutely not."

She referred The Kathy Wray Coleman Online News Blog.Com and Cleveland Urban News.Com to the city law department when asked if Jackson's educational proposal in anyway infringes upon the 1st Amendment's prohibitive use of public funds for religious and private education through proposed voucher-type charter schools with state monies set aside for Cleveland's public schools.

A group of about 10 community activists, led by Cleveland schools parent Donna Brown that included Art McKoy, Ada Averyhart, Ernest Smith, and Marva Patterson, protested against the mayor's educational plan Fri. afternoon outside of the Cleveland Board of Education building on E. 6th St in Cleveland.

They chanted "no levy, no levy," and "stop mayoral control."

Cleveland Teachers Union President David Quoke, who leads the majority White teachers union, could not be reached for comment, though he has reportedly told ranking union officials that Jackson's plan is a pro Senate Bill 5 gesture designed to undermine the negotiated collective bargaining agreement between The Cleveland Teachers Union and The Cleveland Board of Education.

A bill passed early last year by the Republican controlled Ohio State Legislature and cradled by Kasich that would essentially do away with public sector collective bargaining in Ohio, SB 5 was repealed in Nov. by Ohio voters, who overwhelmingly opposed it.

Jackson boasts his celebrated educational plan as a fiscally responsible blue print to rescue

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urban kids from the pitfalls of educational mediocrity perpetuated by a cadre of teachers that are set in their ways, some inept., and a great many of whom are resistant to the change necessary to enhance educational outcomes.

Cleveland teachers, most of whom are suburbanites, are following Quoke's lead, whichever way he is leaning.