

Contact: Pat Shipe
Akron Education Association
330.434.2181
Fax 330.434.6826

681 North Main Street
Akron, Ohio 44310

**Akron Education
Association**

Press Release

Akron Teachers Demand APS Board of Education Transparency and an Immediate Halt to Outsourcing Educator Jobs

Akron, OH, Thursday, 1/18/24:

The Akron Public Schools Board of Education approved a motion by a vote of 6-1 in favor of hiring “Varsity Tutors” for the purpose of instructing Akron Public School students. The Akron Education Association considers this to be a blatantly aggressive action by the Board of Education in an attempt to outsource professional public educator jobs to a private, for-profit company.

Members of the Akron Education Association will be attending the APS Board meeting, as well as other public labor association members, on Monday, 1/22/24, to voice their concerns.

AEA has filed a grievance with the Board regarding the violations to the Collective Bargaining Agreement that this action triggered and will move either towards resolution or arbitration of the matter. Additionally, the Association will file an Unfair Labor Practice with the State Employment Relations Board against the APS Board for what AEA believes to be violations of the rights of public employees under 4117 of the Ohio Revised Code.

Moreover, after completing our investigation, it is the intent of the Akron Education Association to file an injunction request with the Summit County Court of Common Pleas to stop the implementation of this action by the Board as it is AEA’s belief and opinion that the Board illegally recessed into Executive Session on 1/8/24 for the purposes of secretly discussing the hiring of Varsity Tutors behind closed doors, deliberately stopped a Board member from discussing the matter once they had reconvened into public session, and then edited the public video of the

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censoring of a Board member by removing the attempted discussion from the publicly posted meeting video. We will be asking the court to invalidate the decision to hire Varsity Tutors, and to further order the APS Board of Education to conduct its decision-making process in public, on the record, and transparently.

The Akron Education Association is deeply troubled by the Board's complete lack of transparency during the January 8, 2024 Board meeting. It is the Association's belief that the action of the Board recessing into Executive Session to discuss the hiring of private, for-profit vendor "Varsity Tutors" was done so illegally. Moreover, when the Board reconvened into public session, after a motion to approve was made and seconded, Board President Diana Autry opened up the floor to other Board members for comment or discussion. During this public discussion period, a Board member expressed concern about the hiring of Varsity Tutors. The Board member was immediately shouted down and silenced by another Board member. This confrontation was captured and shown during the public livestream video of the Board meeting. Subsequently, the livestream video of the Board member's attempts to discuss her legitimate concern about hiring Varsity Tutors was edited out of the video currently posted by the Board. The Akron Education Association believes that the deliberate concealment of a critical discussion to this matter is an extremely concerning and serious offense and in no way supports the Board's assertion that they wish to conduct business in a transparent manner.

AEA made a public records request for the original-unedited video of the Board's 1/8/24 meeting. The Board's reply was, "*no portion of the video of the 1/8/2024 Board meeting was edited.*" We believe their response to be inaccurate. AEA will continue to investigate what we believe to be the Board's unlawful use of executive session to prevent public transparency of this matter.