

# Citizens for Union County Teachers

Cutting through the politics to support the Teachers

## UCPS, Under Ed Davis, Blows Another \$100,000.00 (As Devastating Cuts Loom) With Operation Mickey Mouse. I Wish UCPS Would Fund My Family A “Working Vacation”!!!!

May 3, 2012

[Image](#)

So once again government officials have decided to put their traveling shoes on the taxpayer dime. Is there no sanity in the upper management of Union County Public Schools anymore as teachers and assistants jobs hang in the balance? Is there absolutely no recognition in the need to spend money on the actual nuts and bolts that build our children's educational future as supposed to splurging on unneeded bells and whistles?

I've known about what we shall call UCPS “Operation Mickey Mouse” for several weeks now and finally details are starting to emerge. 116 school personnel are being sent to Orlando, Florida this summer for “curriculum retraining”, at a cost of \$100,000.00 in Union County controlled dollars. It is billed as a “trainer the trainer” session but several scheduled to attend (including Principals) plan to take spouses and children along as a working vacation. Oddly enough, sources in the Weddington area schools inform me they are already receiving this training and being required to work extra hours to do it. I guess they will have to forego the good times with Mickey, now how fair is that!

I think many folks in Union County take exception to Dr. Davis' Cadillac taste for spending when we are running on a Chevrolet budget paradigm at best. Here we go again spending hundreds of thousands of dollars when not only are teachers jobs in jeopardy, those left in classrooms after proposed cuts are buying supplies from their own pockets and having to beg PTA's and parents for help. That is ludicrous!

While “train the trainer” concepts are a good thing, would it not make a lot more sense to bring instructors here, possibly even to serve as a regional host while saving a great deal of travel expense? Think of not only the instructional benefits, but also the advantageous networking opportunities for our staff as an added bonus.

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Start adding 100K for this with other things like another 300 to 400K for bus GPS units we could have done without and we begin to see a significant net loss in money that does directly impact our children's education. *This training "may" have an effect, but assuredly the lack of classroom supplies and the daily teaching tools teachers need does indeed have a very detrimental effect. UCPS administrators apparently have lost all touch with economic realities these days.*

It is time for change!

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## Ed Davis Goes Around Splashing Political Gasoline and Striking Matches, Then Cries Foul When It Flashes Back To Scorch Him?

May 1, 2012

Ed Davis started something he should not have rolled the dice on. He picked a fight and used teachers and their assistants as a political lever. Now he is crying foul over questions on UCPS spending practices. He and his Finance Director Dan Karpinski refuse to truthfully answer questions concerning their current budget and operations. They would cast anyone rather themselves as the boogeyman in this situation but guess what, Ed's sleight of hand game has been called for what it truly is.

There are still many unanswered questions about some serious money that can have help fill the teacher / assistant gap; also it should be noted a simple temporary 1.7% reduction (not even accounting for any waste) across the board would allow another year to work on it as asked with **NO** jobs lost. Every teacher I have talked with is willing to sacrifice supplements and make do with a little less to make this work. I hope this goes to mediation, Davis has held good people hostage and caused much angst and anxiety, refused to answer tough questions on finances thus far, responds with his "can't we all get along fluff" and needs to have a Judge force his hand. While Ed Davis might be a good man, he is dead wrong in his game this time. Be there no doubt I am all for schools and the children, but I am also for transparency, accountability and insisting we manage the folks that pay the bills money in a responsible manner. So many households, institutions and governmental agencies are sharing our fiscal pain these days, why should UCPS be any different.

Ed Davis says the money spent on Central Administration is insignificant. That would almost be funny if practically the same amount funds teacher assistants that are subject to cuts. *To them, I would say that is very significant money!*

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## Could UCPS Administrators Use A Lesson In How To Get Things Done?

April 27, 2012

I find it quite interesting that when I request basic budgetary (or other what

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should be readily available information) from UCPS, it takes weeks (in some cases over a month) to even get partial answers. On the other hand, I sent the Union County Manager a multifaceted county budget information request yesterday, and then today I received a reply complete with a very professional, polite and detailed explanation of the material provided. I was also welcomed to follow up with additional questions for clarification if necessary.

Even with it being budget season and her regular duties at hand, though short a County Finance Director due to the position being vacant and balancing the other periphery aspects of the position, County Manager Cindy Coto performed far beyond expectation in fielding my request and I appreciate it very much.

***Maybe it is time for the administrative crowd at UCPS to take some notes and follow Cindy Coto's lead.***

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## Are We Really Teaching “The Truth, The Whole Truth and Nothing But the Truth”?

April 26, 2012

Why are UCPS administrators so evasive and cagey in answering questions concerning public funds?

You know, when you testify in court, the gold standard is “the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth”. Anything less is contempt or even possibly perjury, with punishment as a serious crime. Besides, even in our homes, as good parents don't we teach our children that only telling part of the truth in a given circumstance is the exact same thing as lying?

Given these truths, should we allow fat cat bureaucrats entrusted with our children's future, as well as hundreds of millions of public dollars annually be held to any less of a standard in the court of public opinion and accountability? Should we allow this type behavior in our school system's management to go unchallenged? Shouldn't those that attempt to operate in less than very transparent and responsive means concerning the public trust be immediately discharged and replaced? ***Shouldn't we expect the gold standard of telling the truth to be the cornerstone of every other educational building block laid in our children's future?***

I certainly think so. What say you?

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## Why Are Truth and Accountability Like Pulling Hen's Teeth At UCPS?

April 26, 2012

Several areas of high potential fiscal waste and potential savings to help save

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teachers and their assistants have caught my attention lately such as the \$8,000,000.00 surplus maintenance managers have alluded to in a recent employee meeting. There are questions relating to fiber optic networking costs as opposed to a wireless communication nexus to link schools and facilities installed by UCPS. Another major annual expenditure is the UCPS motor fleet. For some strange reason, getting the facts and truth out of Superintendent Davis and his staff concerning these things are almost as difficult as getting the Mickey Mouse character at Disney World to talk.

While I somewhat appreciate Ed Davis' partial responses to my information requests concerning the UCPS motor pool, my inquiries have specifically asked for information on *all* assigned motor fleet vehicles. Particularly those assigned to folks that drive them home each day (of course this is inclusive of Central Administration or vehicles assigned to individual schools as well) and Davis apparently refuses to or cannot deliver an honest accounting. The tab for the UCPS motor fleet is extremely large and at a time local governments are scrutinizing even police departments for take home vehicles, we certainly need to objectively review this very large yearly expenditure.

For the record, I have asked Davis' if his evasiveness purposeful or is getting honest answers to fiscal questions simply much akin to pulling hen's teeth within UCPS? Does Davis think his cat and mouse games are cute? Based upon his failure to be open and honest, as well as his communications spokesperson getting so bent out of shape over recent concerns being raised, do these people feel they somehow operate above and beyond the concerns and accountability to those that foot the bills?

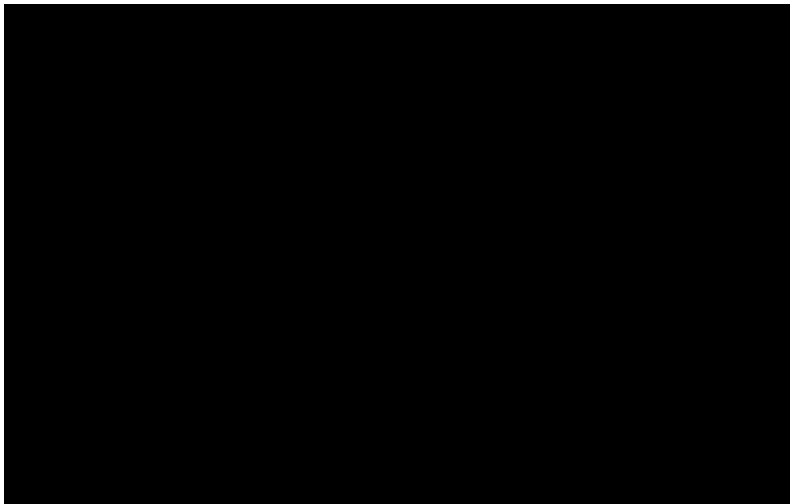
Based on comments he made yesterday morning comparing the US education system to that of Finland (watch for a follow up posting on this one by the way), I bet Ed does wish we would get back to simply giving money to UCPS and solely let him expend those funds without question! Guess what *Ed, this is not Finland and your responsibility to account is long overdue. The folks that pay the bills expect and certainly deserve answers.*

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## UCPS Wastes Money and Then Gets Testy About It!

April 25, 2012

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Luan, looks like you got some 'splaining to do!

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## Should the Board of Education Serve as a Traveling Circus or Involve More Folks in the Process of Educating our Children?

April 24, 2012

***Why do we even bother to elect "leaders" or employ administrators that simply go with the flow?*** We hear complaints about NC DPI and federal burdens now that we have a real problem on our hands with teachers and assistants, but where I ask has been the concern and outrage heretofore. Where has the proactive vision and demand for accountability been for the past couple of years as this "educational storm of the century" approached? We have a School Board that has either been simply asleep at the switch, only interested in serving as a rubber stamp for the Superintendent or perhaps more focused on political aspirations than minding the store as they swore to do. The School Board (as well as the Central Administration), knew this day would come, but simply chose to cast it as a political play rather than actually getting in front of the situation. The price for that attitude now is gauged in anxiety, pain and uncertainty for people that have dedicated their lives to the calling of educating our children. That folks is a real disgrace and disservice. ***We can and must do better.***

While the Board of Education traveling from school to school for meetings is an interesting opportunity to network and interact locally in clusters, it is past time for our School Board meetings to be broadcast and recorded to allow transparency and grant all citizens the ability to access the process that consumes the vast majority of the taxes they pay. We hear folks saying we need to view schools as one big picture and confront state and federal issues as such, well then we need to make sure we are allowing "big picture" access and continuity in dissemination of information, objective evaluation and execution of planning and policy.

***We elect leaders to represent our best interests.*** Crowds of people should

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not have to pack meetings wearing green to affect honest debate and accountability in our government only when a crisis appears. With a School System that is supposedly so technologically perceptive, there is no excuse for failing to disseminate the people's business throughout the land. Doing such could and in fact would be a vast improvement in access to the process, provide greater open discussion of crucial matters and restoring confidence in a system that is highly suspect and lacking real creditability with teachers, parents and the folks that pay the bills. Besides that, it would afford an excellent means for the children directly affected by our leader's decisions to observe and develop an understanding the process that plays a very pivotal role in their futures.

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## Will Someone Tell Ed Davis and Dan Karpinski To Man Up and Face the Music?

April 24, 2012

A \$200,000.00 UCPS School Superintendent (Chief Executive Officer), hiding behind a \$150,000.00 Chief Financial Officer, hiding behind a \$125,000.00 Chief Communications Officer that feigns "outrage" to the media over people being upset over fiscal irresponsibility and abuse of teachers and their assistants. Not only is this a case of far too many chiefs and too few indians, it is a downright disgrace when we foot the bill for high dollar bureaucrats that can't even fend for themselves when the going gets tough! ***Quit hiding behind skirt tails Ed and Dan, face the music; Luan, suck it up cupcake, you get paid very well to answer questions.***

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## WSOC Is Asking Questions Concerning UCPS Priorities

April 23, 2012

[WSOC Is Asking Questions Concerning UCPS Priorities](#)

Everyone is talking about the debacle that is the fiscal policy at UCPS. ***It is time for change!***

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## Union County School Administrators Upset?

April 23, 2012

Oh my, Union County School Administrators are upset folks are challenging their spending practices and priorities; imagine that. ***I have news for Ed, Luan and all the others; you might want to find a cast iron arse and some asbestos britches because the fire under you is only beginning to burn!***

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