Q - Subcontracting Custodial Services/Private Company – What does that mean?

A The school district would use a private business to operate custodial services and has said some current employees could choose to work for the outside company. The truth is that’s ONLY IF the company has enough positions. A national study on contractor proposals for privatizing public school custodians showed how more than 90 percent of the cost savings the district would gain from outsourcing comes directly from cuts to compensation. This is done by cutting hours & full time positions.

A The school district says how private company employees would go through the same background check process as district employees, but ultimately this would be with much less oversight by the school district, as they will not be in direct control of this process and limited to only what the private company reports.

Q - What about my job?

A Some current school board members have been vocal about the goal to privatize ALL school district operational services (including SNS, Maintenance, and Transportation). Custodial is only the beginning; if passed, this kind of action will impact more than just custodians in the long run. HCPS leaders are also using Chicago Public Schools as an example for outsourcing custodians. Things haven’t gone so well for students and schools in Chicago.

A HSEF contract language protects bargaining unit members from termination or lay off due to privatization. However, the outside companies, eager for profit, can offer jobs similar to what employees have now, but typically for less hours and loss of some benefits, which means less compensation.

Q - Why now?

A After large increases in administrative staff, the school district claimed they saved by reducing administrate staff, but only at an average of 6.7% per year, over the past three years, while not following other recommendations in The Gibson Report (the result of a study to find ways for our district to operate better).

A Contrary to what you’re being told by school district leaders, THE GIBSON REPORT DID NOT FIND SUBCONTRACTING CUSTODIAL SERVICES COULD SAVE OUR SCHOOL DISTRICT MILLIONS OF DOLLARS! In fact, the report suggested increases to supplies and equipment for workers.

A The school district says “savings could be used for many needed expenses; we need to make sure we’re maximizing how our limited dollars impact students.” Outsourcing will only save the district the effort of having to manage custodial operations directly, and this will be done off the backs of the lowest paid employees in our school district. We need to make sure we’re maximizing how limited dollars have a POSITIVE impact on students, employees & the community.

A Although referendum money can’t be used for custodial or other employee’s salaries, this means the general fund will not be used as heavily for capital projects. The general fund is what is used for custodial and other employee salaries. The superintendent and school board members explained to voters how the referendum would help schools and employees’ salaries before the referendum passed.

Q - Items that will be more clear when bids from subcontractors eager for profits come in:
Would the HSEF union still represent custodians at a private company?

The Request For Proposals (RFP) sent out to bidders by the school district states that any bidding company shall be bound by the terms of the Blue Collar Contract ONLY until June 30, 2020. There can be no promise of a future contractual relationship between any company and HSEF.

Future pay, benefits & retirement with private company?

In examples found all over the country, it has been shown that any savings that are passed on to the school district come from LOWER PAY & DECREASED HOURS TO EMPLOYEES. When an employee works less hours, they do not reach full-time status, so there is no obligation for the employer to provide health or retirement benefits to employees.

DEMAND YOUR SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS ADDRESS THE SOCIAL COST OF PRIVATIZATION, SUCH AS THE POTENTIAL FOR SEVERE ECONOMIC HARM TO A GROUP OF EMPLOYEES WHO AVERAGE $24,000 PER YEAR IN SALARY!

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