



## Hunger strike in Philadelphia enters 12th day

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Philadelphia is now witnessing the 12<sup>th</sup> day of a hunger strike among workers and parents protesting the draconian Philadelphia school district budget plan passed last month. At the center are the noontime lunchroom aides represented by Local 634 of UNITE HERE.

The Republican-controlled state legislature cut \$961 million from the state education budget. Over the last year, the city has closed 30 schools and used unpaid furloughs. Now the school district is going straight for the gut: laying off all guidance counselors, assistant principals, nurses, and cutting out art and music. They're letting go teachers, librarians, security monitors, and secretaries. The mayor's chief education officer described it as "an atrocity."

Parents, union workers, and community activists have decided to fight back by putting their bodies on the line to defend one of the most basic rights of a democratic society. The hunger strike (water only) began last week. Six of the workers are on their fifth day of a week long 24 hour water only hunger fast. New parents and workers have rotated in every few days. They are joined by UNITE HERE hotel workers, who also have children in the public schools. Different supporters have stood by their side each day, or even participated in the

fast for the day. Ministers offer morning prayers. On Thursday, local and state elected officials joined them.

Today, Friday June 28, eleven community activists and union members from New Haven drove to Philadelphia to help defend the very essence of public schooling—all the workers who make a school function, safety and health for students, and enrichment. The New Haven supporters have joined the six Philadelphians in the water-only hunger strike. They are set up under a tent a few blocks from city hall on Broad Street.



Juanita Jones, Roberta Thomas, Coreen Holloway, Nicole Hunt, Demetius Jackson, Mark Karcz are among those who have joined the protest



Rev. Scott Marks of New Haven UNITE-HERE, with Jim Berger and Seth Poole of New Haven Rising



A few blocks from City Hall, protesters support the Hunger strike for justice in Philadelphia





Hunger strike support tent

## Author



• Jennifer Klein