

# Talking Points on StudentsFirst

*StudentsFirst advocates—*

- Getting rid of collective bargaining laws,
- Getting rid of last-in, first-out layoffs; (over 90 percent of contracts in Iowa do not have last-in, first-out),
- Eliminating teacher tenure (Iowa does not practice tenure),
- Expanded charter schools—where educators are not represented by unions, and
- Annual evaluations.

**Collective bargaining laws**—StudentsFirst and Rhee work with anti-union friends. Rhee appeared on FOX news in Wisconsin to support Governor Walker's plan limiting bargaining rights for teachers. Rhee is an advisor to Florida Governor Rick Scott (who strongly supports public school vouchers and charter schools) and has made no secret of her support for New Jersey Governor Christie's education budget cuts and attacks on the teachers' union.

Articles worth looking at:

[Probe Shows Union Busting Michelle Rhee](#)

[Michelle Rhee Links Arms With the Right](#)

**Last-in, First-out**—The shameful part of this argument is, rather than debating about which teacher gets laid off due to budget cuts, Iowans should be focusing on holding the Legislature and Governor accountable to find adequate school funding. In addition, this is an issue in search of a problem in Iowa. Over 90 percent of contracts in Iowa use other factors such as total teaching experience, certification, licensure, ability, and skill, in layoff decisions. Last-in, First-out simply isn't an issue here.

[Dana Goldstein blog about LIFO](#)

For example, with regard to staff reductions within a building, the Des Moines School District uses these criteria: 1) the needs of the school system as determined by the employer; 2) the affected employee's education preparation and experience, and; 3) the relative skill, ability, and competence of the employee.

**Tenure**—Iowa teachers do not have tenure. This is another example of a national solution in search of a problem in Iowa. Currently, we use a three-tier evaluation process for teachers who are not meeting district standards for performance. In Iowa, teachers have a system of due process and cannot be fired because they didn't change a student athlete's failing grade, or they blew the whistle about cheating on high-stakes tests, or just because the teacher is gay. (See attached PDF.)

**Charter Schools**—Currently, Iowa's charter school laws place any charters under the same public school requirements. HF 2380 eliminates these standards and would allow charters to skirt public school requirements. Standards and requirements are put in place to protect and serve all Iowa students. Eliminating those to create special schools will only serve to alienate certain classes. Additionally, Stanford research says that charter schools do not enhance student learning more than their public school counterparts. [Study Casts Doubt On Charter School Results](#)

**Annual Evaluations**—We are well aware of public opinion on teacher evaluations when asked the generic question "Do you think teachers should be evaluated every year?" If the public understood that educators already have a formative evaluation conducted each year and a summative evaluation conducted in the third year, would they still answer the same way? We also believe there isn't enough time in the school year for principals to do more evaluations. In this instance, more does not equal

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better. We think shoring up the current system so that every teacher receives strong formative evaluations conducted in a timely manner with good, quality feedback is the answer. [Teacher Evaluation 2.0 An Upgrade That Isn't](#)

In addition, the U.S. Department of Education uses the Iowa teacher evaluation system as an example of a proper evaluation system in the ESEA Flexibility – FAQs. Page 33, C-56 What frequency of evaluation constitutes “regularly” evaluating educators? “The Department recommends, but does not require, that teachers and principals in their first three years of service be summatively evaluated annually, and at least once every three years thereafter.”