

▶ **Privatization—What Happens to My Job?**

Privatizing or contracting—out school services is a threat to school employees—especially support staff and the communities they serve.

By definition, contracting-out happens when the production or delivery of goods and services is taken away from public employees and given to private, for-profit businesses. When a school district hires a private company to clean buildings, or serve lunch, it's taking away jobs that association members could be doing.

Talk to your association rep or officers to find out what type of threat privatization is in your district. Many Michigan school districts are facing tough financial times and are looking for ways to cut costs. Frequently, contracting out is their answer to saving money. Support staff is often the first target for cost cutting. They figure that if they turn your job over to a private company, they can let you go and the company can hire people who will get paid less and have no benefits.

Arm yourself with these facts. It may save your job!

- Studies show that contracting out doesn't save money in the long run. To get the business, companies will low bid the job and then raise their fees later.
- Public school employees are more experienced and more interested in providing services in their community than employees hired by a private company. This is important since you serve the needs of students and teachers.
- Regular school staff are usually more sensitive to the needs of children in the community. It makes sense since support staff have developed a relationship with students, teachers and the community.
- Studies show that workers who belong to a union are more productive, take their jobs more seriously and have lower turnover rates. In addition, the association is there for members when it comes to bargaining and advocating for its members.