

THE DETROIT teacher

VOL. 47 — NO. 6

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MARCH 2009

ALERT! We Need You at Meetings

We need members to attend the union meetings. Our contract is up on July 1 and the district has little stability. We need to get organized, unified and vocal as teachers. Come to the following union meetings to keep up to date and learn our strategies.

Meeting Dates

March 12: 4:30 p.m. at the DFT
April 2: 4:30 p.m. at the DFT
May 14: 4:30 p.m. at the DFT
June 4: 4:30 p.m. at the DFT

Save Now for July

The DFT is alerting members that they will go three weeks in July without receiving a paycheck. This has nothing to do with the district's finances, but everything to do with the calendar.

"Every seven years or so, there are 53 Tuesdays in a year instead of 52," said Mark O'Keefe, DFT executive vice president. "When this happens, the board has to leave an extra week between paychecks so we don't get another check that year."

There are 365 days in the year, which equals 52 weeks and one day. Every few years, that will make up an extra payday. But employees don't get an extra week of pay.

This year employees on the 26-pay schedule assume they will get paid on July 21. That paycheck won't come until July 28. Their remaining paychecks will be paid on Aug. 11, Aug. 25 and Sept. 8.

The extra week won't affect members on the 22-week pay schedule because they receive their last paycheck on July 7.

By the way, members on the 26-pay schedule don't get more money, they get smaller chunks of their yearly salary paced out in more paychecks. This never ceases to cause confusion among employees.



DFT members discussed issues important to them at three constellation meetings.

Members Voice Concerns for Contract Negotiations

In three constellation meetings held at the DFT in January and February, members aired issues over lack of supplies, safety, clean schools and more.

"I have personally spent \$468 on ink since September," one member said. Others said they have a difficult time delivering the Open Court curriculum because of a shortfall of texts.

Another teacher said her school is stocked with plenty of paper.

"We have more paper than we know what to do with, but there's no working copy machine."

At another school, vandals in the

night peeled back the school fence that has been standing for decades. Now there are only posts. Many, many teachers have had their catalytic converters stolen from their cars.

If anyone thinks Detroit Public School teachers are only worried about their pay and benefits, they have another think coming.

DFT President Keith Johnson said texts and supplies don't arrive to schools, in many cases, because the vendors haven't been paid by the school board. Johnson is hearing out members, through the meetings and a member survey, to head into contract

negotiations.

Detroit teachers teach in the most trying conditions in the country. Yet their salaries rank in the bottom 10 of 83 districts in the metropolitan area.

"We're going to go for everything that's fair and equitable," Johnson said at the Feb. 12 membership meeting.

"The school administration cannot continue this mismanagement and expect the rank and file employees to bear the burden of such fiscal irresponsibility. Detroit's teachers will accept no concessions. We have nothing left to give."

DFT Ready to Help Detroit Schools Succeed

The Detroit Public Schools is at a crossroads. The perpetual mismanagement that has plagued the school district for at least 15 years has led the state superintendent of public instruction, Mike Flanagan, to recommend a financial manager to control the district's finances.

President's Report



Keith Johnson

We became a national embarrassment after a school principal had to petition her parents and other volunteers to donate light bulbs and toilet tissue for her students – a service that should be provided by the school district.

As the newly elected president of the Detroit Federation of Teachers, I have no illusions. The task before me is daunting. But I have prepared myself to take the reins of this great union through my experience as a classroom teacher for 14 years, a labor relations administrator, and a director of staff operations for 14 years, and the past two years as a classroom teacher at Finney High School.

While it is certainly my responsibility to serve as an advocate for the 7,500 DFT members I represent, it is also my responsibility to work with the Detroit Public Schools to develop the optimum opportunity for teachers to teach and for students to learn. These two goals are inextricably connected.

It is important that our teachers, who are consistently required to do more with less, are fairly compensated for the invaluable service they provide. In order to attract and

retain quality, dedicated teachers, Detroit must duly compensate and afford them benefits that are locally and nationally competitive.

It is unreasonable to expect teachers to continue to reach into their pockets to purchase materials that should be provided by their employer, then tell them that those pockets will be lighter due to severe cuts in their salary and benefits.

In 2005 and 2006, DFT members absorbed concessions to allow the district to submit a balanced budget and change its policies and practices to restore itself to fiscal solvency.

Other union and non-union employees bit the bullet to eliminate a deficit. Yet the school district failed to change the policies and practices that created the deficit.

The school administration cannot continue this mismanagement and expect the rank and file employees to bear the burden of such fiscal irresponsibility. Detroit's teachers will accept no concessions. We have nothing left to give.

Equally important, DPS must give this community a reason to bring and keep their children in Detroit's schools. At one time Detroit was the model for the nation of what an urban school district should look like.

Our city grew to a population of 2 million not only because of the auto industry boom of the 1930s and 1940s but also because families established roots in Detroit because of its outstanding public school system.

I believe there is hope and opportunity for our public schools.



DFT President Keith Johnson was interviewed Feb. 6 by Dan Rather at the Westin Hotel in a program focusing on the Detroit Public Schools. The program "Dan Rather Reports," which airs on the cable TV station HDNet, will air in April. For information, visit www.hd.net.



Finney High School's class of June 2008 graduated only 162 students, but they received more than \$2.7 million in scholarships, including our class president (and valedictorian) who received \$190,000, and our salutatorian who received \$202,000 in scholarships.

Going back into the classroom after a 14-year absence gave me a fresh perspective on the challenges our teachers face: insufficient or outdated books, parental apathy, lack of supplies, little support from central administration, etc.

Despite these obstacles, teachers at Finney and other schools continue to make lemonade out of lemons. They take the worst conditions and make the best of them. Students are determined to learn in spite of everything.

As president of the DFT, I will build coalitions and form partnerships. Stakeholders must invest in education, not merely profess their commitment to it. You can't sell what you wouldn't buy.

Our children are our future and they deserve our full attention — now.



THE DETROIT teacher

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Editor — Margaret Weertz

UPDATES...

Retirements Announced

The following DFT members have retired: Peggy Jones, Anne Blazo, Jacqueline Morant, Rosanett Foulks, Kathleen Koziel and Carolyn Childs. If you have retired in the last six months and would like it announced, please call the editor at 313-875-3500 ext. 776.

Future Teacher Scholarships

AFT Michigan offers two \$1,000 scholarships to graduating seniors whose future goal is to become a teacher. Students can be a son or daughter of an AFT Michigan member or be graduating from a high school whose staff is represented by an AFT Michigan local.

In addition, AFT Michigan offers two \$1,000 scholarships to AFT Michigan members who are enrolled in a pre-elementary, elementary, secondary or post secondary teacher certification program. The application deadline for the Rollie Hopgood Future Teacher Scholarships is May 1, 2009.

The AFT Michigan scholarship program is funded by the annual AFT Michigan Scholarship Golf Outing. The golf outing will be held June 25 at Taylor Meadows.

Porter Scholarships

March 31 is the application deadline for the AFT's 2009 Robert G. Porter Scholars Program.

The program offers two types of scholarships: four-year, \$8,000 post secondary scholarships for graduating

high school seniors who are dependents of an AFT member, and one-time \$1,000 grants for AFT members to pursue courses related to their field of work.

The scholarship program was established by the AFT executive council in 1992 to honor the contributions of Porter, the union's longtime secretary-treasurer who died in 1991. Applications and information are available on the AFT website.

Advice on Insurance

The March 17 Retirees Chapter meeting will host speakers to discuss important information on health insurance. Bronko Bojicic, an administrator with Blue Cross Blue Shield, will be a guest speaker, as well as Sheila Powell and Darryl Hibbett of HAP, who will discuss pre-65 and post-65 retiree benefits. The meeting is at 11:30 a.m. at the DFT office.

Retiree Moderates Debate

Dr. Arthur Divers, a retired Detroit teacher and officer of the DFT Retirees Chapter, moderated a mayoral debate Jan. 29 at the Westminster Church of Detroit.

The debate was sponsored by the Winship Community Association, which is within the Greenfield, Schaefer, McNichols and Seven Mile area.

The candidates participating were Dave Bing, Mayor Ken Cockrel Jr., former Deputy Mayor Freeman Hendrix and Rev. Nicholas Hood III.

Retirement Workshop March 10



DFT members attended a Feb. 24 Retirement Workshop. Another workshop will be held March 10 from 4:30-6:30 p.m. at the DFT office. Representatives from the Michigan Public School Employees Retirement System (MPERS) will answer questions, as well as Patrick Falcusan, financial analyst and retirement advisor for the DFT.



DFT members Steve Conn and Franco Iaderosa and 400 other members celebrated the 78th birthday of the Detroit Federation of Teachers at the Feb. 12 General Membership Meeting.

Changing the School Climate for Students

By Ron Seigel

In my last article I described how teachers might help youngsters evaluate the harmful attitudes many of them have about their sexual identity — boys associating masculinity with aggression and a willingness to cause pain, girls identifying femininity with an ability to please and attract, basing their sense of self worth on other people's approval.

Some psychiatrists suggest it might also be necessary to change the climate of the schools, to deal with peer pressure, fear of the teasing, bullying and rejection when youngsters don't live up to such stereotypes.

Dr. Mary Pipher wrote schools "often ignore what happens to students when they are herded from one class to another." Detroit school district administrators found how true this was in high school after the violence at Henry Ford.

This clarifies it is essential to lower class size so that teachers can give more individual attention. Teacher unions ought to bring together parents and students to pressure the school board, the state legislature, and the governor to do this. Combining schools in areas of gang rivalries ought to be unthinkable.

Dr. William Pollack suggests schools (1) Create groups where students meet with adult authorities to discuss social pressures, (2) Organize special events for students who are new to school (which can also apply to students coming in after old schools are closed), (3) Create a "buddy system" (or mentoring program) between older and younger students and a system

where students of all races can help others with academic problems. (4) Invite guest speakers to talk about issues students face, including substance abuse, sexual harassment, date rape, racism, sexism and homophobia. Have classes that inform students about conflict resolution techniques and deal with chemical use and sexual decisions. (5) Communicate that bullying is a violation of human rights and a national problem. Let students know that telling an adult about it is an act of courage, not cowardice...BUT... (6) In dealing with those who bully, don't rely only on harsh punishments, but leave room for personal growth and healing.

Dr. Pipher called for clear enforcement of guidelines against sexual harassment.

She noted too "Schools can foster groups around talents, interests, and needs, rather than cliques..." (or one might add teen-age gangs), such as clubs and groups, arts, athletics and festivals.

Pipher notes that in such groups, girls can be leaders. Pollack suggests in art, music and writing, boys express their "vulnerable" and non macho emotions as well their exuberance. Talk clubs might also be formed where young people can express concerns and get to know each other better.

Pollack suggests class work can be connected to projects of service in the community. Recognition, publicity and special honors during the school year and at graduation ceremonies might be given for acts of service and concern.

Ron Seigel is a freelance writer from Highland Park, Michigan.

Southeastern Student, Teacher Win Trip to Disney World

By DELECIA HOWARD, Southeastern High School

Southeastern teacher Nadonya Muslim and senior Domonique Hunter went to Disney World in February after being selected from the 2009 Disney Dreamer's Academy with radio host Steve Harvey.



Teacher Nadonya Muslim and senior Domonique Hunter are proud to say they're going to Disney World.

Hunter was one of 100 student winners selected from Disney's Dreamers Academy. She and Muslim headed to Disney World for three days, all expenses paid.

"I still can't believe I won," Hunter said. "Dreams do come true. I am just so happy and can't wait until the time arrives to leave." To enter the contest, Hunter wrote an essay about her life experiences. More than 3,000 entries were submitted.

Social Studies teacher Nadonya Muslim recently was voted best high school teacher for the Steve Harvey Hoodie Awards. She was selected from Walt Disney Talent Research to participate in the 2009 Disney Dreamers Academy.

The academy uses mentors and positive role models to help deliver on this promise. They motivate, inspire and encourage young people

to set their dreams in motion. Muslim was selected because her life story was one that resonates with teens.

"As an educator, I am extremely thankful to have been chosen for this wonderful trip to Disney World," Muslim said. "My zeal as an educator could not remotely be as intense as it is without the solid foundation that was laid for me at Tennessee State University."

Central Coach Keeps it Old School

Attend every class. Every day. That's what it takes to stay on the Central High School basketball team.

It wasn't always so.

Last year, Coach Ben Kelso didn't like what he was seeing. Many of his players lacked discipline and the respect for the academic program at high school. He thought: Something's got to change.

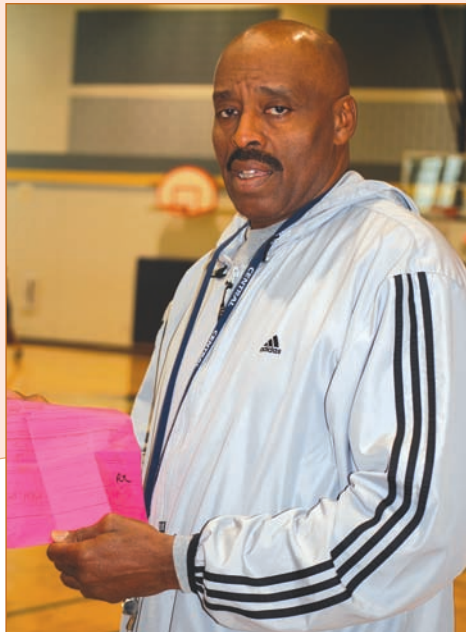
"I had to revamp the whole program," he said. "The kids were not getting what they needed at home to succeed as far as discipline is concerned."

Kelso decided that the players had to attend every class, every day and prove it. They also could not have a D grade at any time.

As school ends and practice starts, the players stream in with

their pink schedule of classes signed by each teacher.

Kelso means business because he knows business pays.



Central Coach Ben Kelso, is a former Detroit Piston.

"I had to allow some very good players to leave because they wouldn't bring that report every day," Kelso says. "What's needed is more hands on commitment to make them succeed. We're not here for any other reason."

Kelso is concerned that more and more kids are falling by the wayside because they aren't given boundaries, discipline and expectations.

"I believe - in spite of this modern philosophy - kids do not mind discipline," Kelso said. "We actually use basketball to force these values on them. And it works. These kids are accepting the discipline."

Mayor Cockrel Luncheon

Mayor Ken Cockrel Jr. is egalitarian with his constituents. He may have a dinner with business people, but he also reserves lunch for cognitively-impaired adults from Kettering West Wing.

Nine Kettering West Wing students and their teachers invited Cockrel to lunch at My Sister's Place on East Warren. "I get asked to speak to a lot of classrooms but usually it's at the school," Cockrel said. "This is one of my favorite restaurants so I was glad to come here."

The students, who are registered to vote, prepared questions in advance to ask the mayor on his campaign trail. It was an outgrowth of their political science curriculum. But it also is an outgrowth of their community based instruction, which teaches them how to react and respond in public.

Duwayne Darby, the Kettering West Wing Community Based Instruction assistant, said the students grew a mile from the experience.

"We're proud of our kids," Darby said. "They did everything appropriate. When you go out and sit with the caliber of person the mayor is, that is a real experience for them. You want to see them have access to opportunities in life."

Darby said the students were beaming when they returned to school and piled in the office to relay their experience to the principal.

"It was like, I'm part of the club now."

Teacher Grew Up



Motown in her second-grade year a good education. Russell Marvelet She was with Gordon were artists. The live eyes. At the perfect re "Thing home bef Hitsville U Russell Miss Tan Theatre. "I

More Than

These past few seasons in the business of teaching, I have found myself being more than and thus became transformed into being a recruiter. While I coached girls' basketball for this task of recruiting was different. Rather than trying to get prospective girls to become asking all my relatives who had grade school children to send them to our Detroit Public

It resulted in a solid success because a number of those recruited kids attended Star and Denby Technical High School, thanks to three relatives whom each had at least seven So, being a recruiter is being more than a teacher. Having to make telephone calls, send the many things teachers normally do in the course of educating students. Being a recruiter and trying to persuade them to send their children to Detroit Public schools despite the

It means following up from that first point of communication and making a second make certain that your child gets performing arts at the elementary level. It means work inclusive of basic lessons in stage concepts, public speaking and fundamental vocal training school has met AYP consistently. It means being proud to be a Detroit Public Schools comments.

There are many more stories to hear about this subject: More Than a Teacher. Teacher Networkers, Public Relations Practitioners, Marketing Professionals and more. You will you scan this column again, remember, you are the teacher, but you are much more!

ROIT teacher MAKERS

aches with Students



at Motown Records

own Records founder Barry Gordy was gentle to Katherine Russell when she begged for an audi-
er early teens. "He told me I was too young but be sure to get a good education," says Russell, a
grade teacher at Fleming Elementary School. That didn't deter her. She got a second audition a
s later. "You're still too young," Russell was told. "Work on your harmony and make sure to get
education."
ll hung out at the record company, watching stars like Marvin Gaye, Stevie Wonder and the
tes being made. She saw success walking in and out of the building on West Grand Boulevard.
here to celebrate Motown's 25th anniversary in 1983 and became good friends through the years
dy's sister, Esther. "I was inspired," Russell says. "Most of us were from broken homes. These
sts. They were being successful. We thought we could be successful too."
ing proof of success wasn't in a magazine or on TV, it was walking and singing right before her
he time, the girls could hang out in the building and sit in the lobby watching the goings on. A
cipe for Russell and her girlfriends to think success wasn't such a faraway ideal.
s weren't so great at home," she said. "We felt love there. Sometimes Barry would tell us to go
ore we got into trouble." To ignite interest in that history, Russell takes Fleming students to tour
USA several times a year. This year, the Motown Museum is celebrating its 50th anniversary.
feels blessed to have lived it in the beginning and through two anniversaries. She entered the
America beauty pageant, and won a reception with the Supremes at a 1967 concert at the Fisher
It was so exciting living through it all."

n A Teacher

an a teacher. I had been asked to "get more kids"
r 11 years at Detroit Southwestern High School,
e a member of an athletic entity, I found myself
c Schools.
k School of Technology, Catherine C. Blackwell
en children.
nd letters and visit homes is different from one of
ter requires preparing a list of possible candidates
stories they've read in the newspapers.
effort. It means assuring that parent, yes, I will
king out a program with the administrator that is
ing. It means assuring those parents that, yes, my
s teacher and showcasing that pride with positive



achers are Assistant School Leaders, Community
will read about them as these stories unfold. Until

Renaissance Teacher Wins Coach of the Year

Rick Miotke and his wife of 35 years have almost no common interests. But they do every-
thing together. When they go out on their boat in Lake Michigan, he fishes and she reads books.

"She's the kind of person who reads six books a week," said Miotke, a Renaissance High School physical education teacher. Luckily, she tolerates his rolling in at 9 p.m. during track season.

And lucky for the girls track team, Miotke pours his heart and soul into his students. For the efforts of Miotke and co-coach Harry Weaver, the team has won 10 state track and field championships in the last 12 years.

Miotke recently won the 2008 Coach of the Year award for the central division, which includes Illinois, Indiana, Iowa,

Michigan and Wisconsin. In June the National Federation of State High School Associations will name the national coach of the year from the eight regions. Needless to say, Miotke is breathing rare air.

Miotke also won eight awards from the Michigan Interscholastic Track Coaches Association.

"I love working with kids," says Miotke, 58. "I love being outside. The kids at Renaissance are extremely bright. They keep you young. They keep you active."

Miotke is concerned about the DPS budget and keeping a program afloat that sees great payoffs, many times in the form of college scholarships.

"I've got to run a program," he says. "I've got to get these kids to the state finals."



Carstens Students are Building Brighter Futures



What a difference tools make. At Carstens Elementary School, veteran teacher Mark Paruszkiewicz won a Hands-On-Projects (HOPS) grant from the Junior League of Detroit to start an after-school "Kids Workshop" for the Carstens students.

With the cooperation of the Warren Home Depot on Hoover near Ten Mile Road, Paruszkiewicz has acquired wood kits, shop aprons, tools and tool boxes for the Carstens students to use in this unique after-school program.

Carstens principal, Dr. Theresa Mattison, says it is important for the students to have an opportunity to apply their knowledge. This program enables students to read and follow sequential directions, learn to use and care for simple tools, and build self-esteem knowing they have completed a job well done.



Veteran teacher Mark Paruszkiewicz uses building projects to teach students.

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ROLL CALL...

— Detroit Federation of Teachers Membership Meeting — February 12, 2009 —

- | | | | | | | |
|----------------------|------------------|-----------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------------|---------------------|
| Bagley | Cass | Davidson | Garvey | Kettering WW | Moses Field | Robeson ELC |
| Barbour | Central | Denby | Glazer | King Elementary | Mumford | Robinson |
| Barton | Chadsey | Detroit City | Golightly Voc. | King High | Munger | Sampson/Webber |
| Bates | Chrysler | DFT | Greenfield Union | Law | Murphy | Sherrill |
| Beard ECC | Clark | Detroit International | Ferguson Academy | Lessenger | Neinas | Scott |
| Beckham | Clemente | DTC-East | Guyton | Lodge | Nichols | Schultz |
| Bennett | Cleveland | DTC-West | Halley | Logan | Noble | Social Workers-East |
| Birney | Clinton | Dixon | Hamilton | Longfellow Annex | Nolan | Southeastern |
| Blackwell | Clippert | Dossin | Hancock | Loving | Northwest EC | Southwestern |
| Bow | Coffey | Douglass | Hanstein | Ludington | Northwestern | Stark |
| Boykin | Cody | Drew Att. | Harding Harms | McColl | Office of Mathematics | Stewart |
| Boynton | Cody 9 | Drew Middle | Hellmann | MacDowell | Osborn | Taft |
| Breithaupt | Columbus | Duffield | Hellmann Park | McFarlane | Owen | Thirkel |
| Brewer | Comm. Disorders | Durfee | Holcomb | McKenny | Parker | Trombley |
| Brown | Comm. Media Arts | Earhart | Holmes, A.L. | McKinney | Pasteur | Van Zile |
| Bunche | Cooke | Edison | Holes, O.W. | McNair | Pershing | Vernor |
| Burns | Cooley | Emerson | Homebound | Malcolm X | Prfrest | Webster |
| Burt | Cooley-North | Edmonson | Houghton | Mann | Priest ELC | West Side |
| Burton International | Coolidge | Farwell | Howe | Mark Twain | Psychological Services | West Side Mult. |
| Butzel | Courtis | Ferguson Academy | Hutchins | Marquett | Pulaski | Western |
| Campbell | Crary | Finney | Jemison | Marshall, Jr. | Randolph | White, J. L. |
| Carleton | Crockett Voc. | Fisher | Jordan | Marshall, T. | Renaissance | White, K. B. |
| Carstens | Crosman | Ford | Joyce | Mason | Retired | Winterhalter |
| Carver | Davis | Gardner | Kettering | Maybury | Richard | Wright |
| | | | | | Robeson | Young |

News at Your School?

Do you have a great idea for a story for The Detroit Teacher? Or the DFT website? Well, let us know.



The editor is a phone call away (313-875-3500 ext. 776) and would like to hear about your news. The Detroit Teacher also accepts articles of 300 words or less. And announcements are placed daily on the DFT website.

To submit articles, send a brief story describing the event or person.

Remember to include the five Ws:

Who, What, When, Where and Why.

Whether you are writing about a student, a DFT member or an event, please include the names of the participants and, where appropriate, their grade

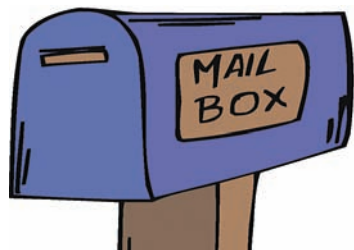
levels or job classification. Include first and last names of all those involved. Include your name and phone numbers where you can be reached in the daytime.

DO NOT, DO NOT, DO NOT send Polaroid pictures. They will not be used. Digital camera photos are acceptable if the image is sharp and clear.

Photo Tips: When taking a picture, do not stand more than 8 feet from the subject. Unless you are a professional photographer, do not try to get a shot of your entire class. The faces will be lost. Do not pose subjects directly in front of a blackboard, a white wall or metallic lockers. Be creative. Take photos of people in action. Take lots of photos; the more you take, the better your chances of getting a good shot.

Articles and photos can be mailed to: The Detroit Teacher, 2875 W. Grand Blvd., Detroit, MI 48202. We can not guarantee the photos will be returned. Articles and photos can be emailed to the paper c/o mweertz@dft231.com. Please send photos as an attachment to the email and send it in jpeg format.

Letter to the Editor



Dear Editor,

I'm a Detroit Public Schools teacher and I read with interest The Detroit News editorial, "Detroit's next mayor must take over schools," (Feb. 5, 2009) and must say I disagree with your assertion that the mayor "must take over schools." If the mayor "must take over schools" it should be by the will and the vote of the people. With the present financial state of the city, facing a projected \$300-million budget deficit, it doesn't bode well that the mayor should be controlling the purse strings of the \$1.2-billion Detroit Public Schools. Robert Bobb, recently named as the emergency financial manager, hasn't even been able to warm the seat up and do what he's been brought in to do and that's to get the District's finances in order and there's already talk about the mayor "must take over schools." Give me a break.

The city can't even file financial audit reports on time and there are tens-of-millions of dollars in revenue sharing that's being held up, money that the city seriously needs. The running of the city is a herculean task in-and-of itself and there doesn't need to be the burden of the financial complexity of the debt-ridden Detroit Public Schools to detract from moving the city forward. Let Robert Bobb do what he was put in place to do, by Gov. Granholm, and that is to get the Detroit Public Schools' financial house in order.

Thomas A. Wilson Jr.
Detroit



Union Honors Virginia Cantrell

DFT President Keith Johnson and former DFT Vice President Sandra Ambrose honored former President Virginia Cantrell with a bouquet of flowers and a crystal memento at the Feb. 12 membership meeting. "Virginia is one of the toughest ladies I have ever met," Johnson said.

GRANTS...

Honoring Innovation

The Heartspring Award for Innovation and Creativity in Special Education honors educators who have demonstrated innovative and creative ideas for special education. The winners receive a \$1,000 unrestricted award, a unique program sculpture, and an expenses-paid trip to attend the program's summer session, July 22-25. **The online application deadline is April 20** and includes a narrative describing the teacher's innovative contribution to special education. For more info, visit www.heartspring.org.

Jenny's Heroes

Former talk show host Jenny Jones makes charitable contributions to help communities. Grants of up to \$25,000 will go to worthy projects that are likely to improve their communities. The program focuses on smaller communities where fundraising can be difficult. Winning projects have included after-school homework help, soccer programs, the purchase of sports equipment, and coats for children in shelters. The online application is available at tojenny@jennysheroes.com.

Presidential Awards

The prestigious, annual Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching (PAEMST) recognize exemplary instruction by teachers in grades K-12. This year the award goes to math and science teachers of grades 7-12. The program gives teachers an opportunity to build lasting partnerships with their colleagues across the nation and aims to keep America globally competitive by improving math and science education. Teachers eligible to be nominated must

work full time math or science for the last five years. **The deadline is April 1.** The award consists of \$10,000 from the National Science Foundation, a trip to Washington, D.C., and a Presidential citation. For info, visit info@paemst.org.

Science Grants

The Lemelson-MIT InvenTeams program launches young inventors by supporting projects that put the minds of students in high school to work problem-solving. This national grant initiative provides up to \$10,000 to selected teams of high school students, mentors, and teachers who collaborate on identifying a problem and setting out to solve it through scientific invention. **The deadline is April 24.** For info, visit inventteams@mit.edu.

Educator Scholarships

The Horace Mann Companies will give out \$30,000 this year in scholarships to K-12 educators who are planning to continue their education by taking courses at a two- or four-year college or university. The scholarship money ranging from \$500 to \$5,000 will be paid directly to the applicant's college or university for tuition costs. **The deadline is March 12.** For info, visit www.horacemann.com/resources/scholarships/default.aspx.

Expand Technology

Schools interested in expanding their use of technology in the classroom will be excited to learn about Educational Resources IDEAS (Implementing Digital Resources for Advancing Schools) contest. Two schools will be chosen to receive a \$2,500 voucher for new technology. **The application deadline is April 1.** For info, visit <http://ideas.edresources.com>.

Success in Life is not a Fluke

In his latest best-selling book "Outliers — The Story of Success," Malcolm Gladwell argues that success is not a fluke. It's a series of fortunes: timing, cultural legacy, education and other opportunities.

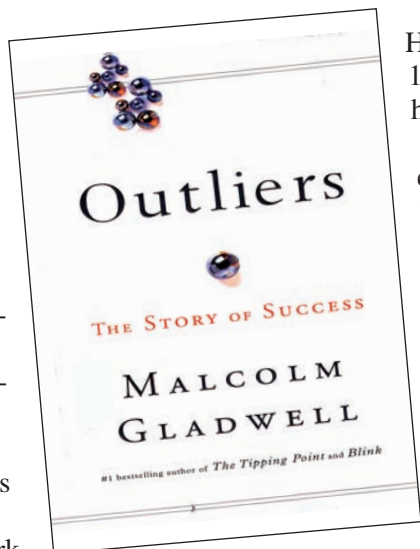
In researching the extraordinary success stories of Bill Gates, the Beatles, New York attorneys, and star athletes, Gladwell looks not only at their ambition and intelligence but at the conditions surrounding their lives.



Malcolm Gladwell

Gladwell shows that to be a top hockey player, it is critical to be born near January 1 of a given year. To be a Silicon Valley success, it's likely you were born in one of three years.

Gladwell also argues for the 10,000 hour rule. That is, few world-renowned violinists are prodigies. All great violinists and other musicians have to put in 10,000 hours of practice. The Beatles, for example, practiced at nightclubs in



Hamburg, Germany for 10,000 hours before they hit the Ed Sullivan show.

Most interesting for educators is the study of why Asians perform so well in math.

Studies find that children willing to spend up to 20 minutes on a difficult math problem were more likely to succeed in math, regardless of IQ or other abilities.

Because of a legacy

of rice farming, Gladwell argues, Chinese families are accustomed to long days of intricate work.

Further, students in China, Japan and other Asian countries attend school between 220 and 240 days a year to our 180 days. They also have a longer school day, which is a benefit to taking time with those difficult math problems.

"Students in Asian schools don't have long summer vacations," Gladwell writes. "Why would they? Cultures that believe that the route to success lies in rising before dawn 360 days a year are scarcely going to give their children three straight months off in the summer."

Gladwell argues that all students improve academically when they attend school. "When it comes to reading skills, poor kids learn nothing when school is not in session."

Social Workers Host Holiday Reception

By Leonard Zabawski, LMSW

The DFT School Social Work Chapter and the Michigan Association of School Social Work, Region D were pleased to host a Thank You holiday reception at the DFT on Dec. 18. The joint effort highlighted the great work of teachers, parents, administrators, students and support staff on behalf of students of DPS.

The group made an effort to "keep the faith" for 40 laid-off DPS Social Workers with an expressed hope that they will return back to their posts soon. Approximately 50 people attended, representing teachers, parents, administrators, students and support staff.



Tracie McKissic, of Region D, and Leonard Zabawski, of the DFT School Social Workers Chapter, hosted the event and welcomed those in attendance. After welcoming remarks from Arzell Brown, Director of the SSW department, two DPS Board members — Terry Catchings and Marie Thornton, spoke.

DFT President Virginia Cantrell and Toni Clover addressed the audience. Keith Johnson greeted members or attendees one on one. The evening was capped by a positive presentation by Carmen Murray, LMSW, who facilitated a large-group session on how to make lemonade out of lemons, which involved participation of the DPS students present. The memories of the warm glow of the evening lasted well beyond the massive blizzard which closed down all DPS schools the next morning.

Calendar

All meetings will be held at 2875 W. Grand Blvd., Detroit, unless otherwise noted. Dates and times are subject to change. The DFT telephone number is 313-875-3500.

MARCH

- 5** Executive Board Meeting, 4:30 p.m.
- 9** School Social Workers Chapter, 3:45 p.m.
- 10** Retirement Workshop, 4:30-6:30 p.m.
- 12** General Membership Meeting, 4:30 p.m.
- 16** Meeting with DFT President—Career/Technical Centers Staff, 4:00 p.m.
- 17** Retirees Chapter Meeting, 11:30 a.m.
- 18** Attendance Agents Staff Meeting, 3-4 p.m.
- 19** Ed Technicians Meeting, 4:15 p.m.
- 19** Meeting with DFT President—Substitutes & Ed Techs, 4:00 p.m.
- 24** Meeting with DFT President—Non-Instructional Personnel, 4:00 p.m.
- 26** Executive Board Meeting, 4:30 p.m.

APRIL

- 2** General Membership Meeting, 4:30 p.m.
- 6** Counselors Chapter Meeting, 4:00 p.m.
- 10-19** Schools Closed, Spring Break

DETROIT FEDERATION OF TEACHERS

2008 DUES FOR TAX PURPOSES

Full Dues	\$742.10
Three-Quarter Dues	\$556.52
Half Dues	\$371.16
Quarter Dues	\$185.58

Check your last paycheck for 2008 and it will list the actual amount you paid for the year.