

THE DETROIT teacher

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June 2010

Systemic Reform Must Coincide With Academic Reform

So much attention has been placed on educational reform in the nation's public schools. Yet little has been spoken about the systemic reforms that are necessary to make all reform initiatives effective.

President's Report



Keith Johnson

The DFT has gotten ahead of the curve of the reform initiative in Michigan, particularly in light of the sweeping reform initiatives passed by the state legislature in its "lame duck" session Dec. 19, 2009 in an effort to get the coveted "Race to the Top" federal funding. Despite this legislation that mandated change, including the proliferation of charter schools, Michigan did not make the first round to qualify for RTT funds. Ironically the two states that got the RTT funding actually did LESS IN THE AREA OF REFORM THAN MICHIGAN!

While we recognize that we must improve the outcomes of student achievement, district leaders, especially in Detroit, must make systemic changes for reforms to take hold.

The conditions that exist in many Detroit schools are antithetical to what must exist for student achievement to improve. Detroit currently has no attendance policy for students yet has con-

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Vernor math teachers Karen Simister and Willie Brown coached Jamaal Stewart, 12, which aided him in winning the elementary sweepstakes and other medals.

Detroit Student is National Champ at Academic Games

Curious George has nothing on Jamaal Stewart. The 12-year-old Vernor Elementary student is intrigued about everything in the physical world, especially polymath.

"He's very inquisitive," says Vernor math teacher Willie Brown. "In fourth grade he walked around with an algebra book just because someone gave it to him."

Brown and fellow teacher Karen Simister coached Jamaal to winning the elementary sweepstakes and other medals at the National Academic Games competition in Crossville, Tennessee in April. He scored the most points and had the highest overall score in logic, math, language arts, and social studies in the elementary division.

This dynamic teaching team also coached the 2009 national elementary winner. The teachers are thrilled at Jamaal's academic prospects and the opportunity to work with such an interesting student.

"I had to tell him when we were studying to put away his 'Latin Made Easy' book," Simister said. "He's just interested in everything."

Simister said Jamaal buys his own almanacs and gladly accepts an

interesting textbook. Ask Jamaal if he has a special brain that makes academics easy for him, and he has

a surprising answer.

"Not really," the sixth-grader says. "You got to work hard."

Breithaupt Takes First

Monisha Smith, a Breithaupt Career & Technical Center student with a 4.0 gpa won three first-place awards in the SkillsUSA Michigan Competitions in April. Smith is a CADD/3D animation student, SkillsUSA member, National Technical Honor Society Member and Detroit City High School honor student. Smith also was selected to sing the National Anthem at the conference in Lansing.

Furthermore, this exceptional student entered the SkillsUSA State Pin Design Contest. Her pin design won first place from 133 entries. Only the best in the state can compete in the National Conference.

Smith also is the first-place gold medalist for the Promotional Bulletin



Board Competition. She is pictured here with SkillsUSA advisor Cora Duncan-Foster and her CADD and animation teacher Lawrence Neely. SkillsUSA is the only national organization designed exclusively for trade, technical, industrial and health occupational students. Breithaupt students compete in both leadership and skilled areas.

Systemic Reform Must Coincide With Academic Reform

PRESIDENT, from Page 1

sistently tried to impose an attendance standard upon teachers.

Certainly teachers need to come to work every day possible, prepared to deliver quality and substantive instruction. However, if the teachers are there and the students are not, academic achievement is impeded. Last school year the average high school student missed 46 days of school, 10 percent missed at least 100 days. While the problem is not as pervasive at the elementary level, data shows that students who are there every day tend to learn more, retain more, and perform better on standardized and classroom tests.

With a majority of our students eligible for free and reduced lunch (for which DPS receives millions of dollars in Title I funding), perhaps it is time for Michigan to follow the lead of states like Virginia, New York and Wisconsin. Each of these states has passed legislation that ties the amount of public assistance received by families with school aged children to the school attendance of their children. The program is known as LearnFare.

This is not an attempt to punish the families but to compel them to honor their legal responsibility to have their children in school, which is required by law anyway (in Michigan from age 7-18), to receive their BRIDGE cards and other financial vouchers. In these states, the LearnFare initiative has spiked a dramatic improvement in student attendance.

DPS must address the issue of safety and security. While the DFT has negotiated protections for our teachers who

are victimized by parental or student assaults, violence in schools continues to be a persistent concern.

Parents, students, and staff have a right to feel safe when they come to work and school. Perpetrators need to be shown the door without return when they engage in acts of violence, particularly upon staff. They should be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law.

No one should enter a DPS facility in fear and the district must adopt a “zero tolerance” approach to school violence, period! Students will fight and that’s understood. But there is a difference between a fight and the vicious attacks some of our students have been subjected to and it must be stopped.

Teachers must be supported by the district’s administration, centrally and locally. “The customer is always right” approach taken by many in district leadership is an indictment against the staff responsible for delivering instruction. There is no justification for the level of disrespect our members are often subjected to by parents and students.

When administration attempts to coddle those who engage in such behavior, the authority and respect for teachers is compromised and the teachers become demoralized. Teachers need to know that their administration has their back and it’s not “way back.” When parents and students know that an administrator will support his/her teachers the likelihood of unacceptable behavior is greatly diminished.

If a teacher is wrong the teacher should not be reprimanded in the pres-



DFT President Keith Johnson visited with the Detroit Free Press Editorial Board this spring to talk about the dedication of Detroit teachers in the national discussion surrounding the Detroit Public Schools.

ence of the students or the parents, but rather in a closed meeting between the affected teacher, the administrator, and of course with Union representation.

Teachers must also be fortified with the materials and supplies necessary to deliver instruction. Books and supplies must be delivered before school is scheduled to begin, properly inventoried and ready for distribution to students. Copy machines must be available so teachers can run off materials for students to practice and perfect what they have been taught.

As much as the emergency financial manager has stressed accountability for teacher performance, DFT will hold him equally accountable for equipping our members with what they need to

deliver instruction.

Our schools must provide a clean and healthy environment for teaching and learning. When students and staff are forced to function in filthy buildings with insufficient custodial staff, not enough cleaning equipment, bathrooms and water fountains that don’t work, and otherwise unsanitary conditions, the district is sending a message to them that they are “less than,” especially when we go to central offices and see lavish or at least comfortable working conditions for those farthest away from the classroom.

Educational reform is necessary, but equally necessary are the systemic changes that make these reforms possible.

The
Detroit
Teacher
Wins
National
Awards

The Detroit Teacher took first place for General Excellence in the AFT

Communications Network contest. It took another first place award for Best Design/Layout. The newspaper took a first place for Best Original Illustration/Photo for a photo collage of a September rally on the front page.



The DFT took second place for its 2009-2010 Calendar. We won second place in the Best Profile category for a story about Paul Weertz, a Catherine Ferguson Academy teacher who was featured on Dutch public television about his agri-science program. The DFT won third place for Best Feature Story on teacher Kurtis Brown's work with young men at Mann School.

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Editor — Margaret Weertz

Updates...

Retirements Announced

The following DFT members have announced their retirements: Gayle Wooten, Dr. Marshall Howard, Anya Johnson. If you have retired in the last six months and would like it announced, please call the editor at 313-875-6776.

ALERT: DFT Chapter Chairs

DFT chapters must elect their chapter chairs before the end of the school year by June 18. Send the information about new chapter chairs to Holley Sabotchick at hsabotchick@dft231.com.

Nominate Your Great Students

A community organization called Parental Boot Camp was developed four years ago in an effort to prepare parents to be involved in their children's education. Recognizing the stress and anxiety that can develop in the school year, PBC set out to address the challenges head on. PBC wants parents to be proactive in their child's development. PBC challenges parents to take the lead role and not leave sole responsibility of educating their youth to the teachers and the school system.

PBC has quickly become a back-to-school rally of sorts, gathering parents, educators, lawmakers, and the youth to an annual August event to discuss issues and lend collective support to the youth of our communities.

At the festival, PBC will acknowledge the academic achievements of Detroit students over this school year, i.e. Detroit spelling bee winners, high GPAs, Science Fair winners, and other special achievements. Students will be acknowledged during the festival.

The host of Parental Boot Camp is Reginald M. Lane, host of INNERVIEW on MYTV20. PBC is Aug. 11-14 with lectures and sessions for adults and youth. Saturday, Aug. 14 is the Festival.

Finally, we would like to invite the teachers of the DFT to attend the Parental Boot Camp sessions Wednesday and Thursday, Aug. 11 & 12 @ 7:00 pm. Bring students to the Youth Sessions. With motivational youth speaker David Mahan, they won't be sorry they came!

To nominate students or learn more about the event, please call Production Coordinator Felicia Coates at 248.388.3036 or by email at fcoates@comcast.net.

Clippert Student is Winner in NAACP Contest

Congratulations to Amber Aytes, seventh-grade student from Clippert Academy Middle School, who was the first place winner in the middle school art category of the NAACP Art & Essay Contest. The theme of the contest was "What The Civil Rights Struggle Means To Me." Amber, her family, her art teacher Ruth Goldfaden and her principal Kim Gonzalez, all attended a reception at the Charles Wright Museum of African American History on April 16. Amber was awarded a plaque, a \$750 savings bond and tickets to attend to the Detroit Branch NAACP Fight For Freedom Fund Dinner, which was held May 2 at the Cobo Conference Center.



HONORING SCHOOL NURSES — The National Association of School Nurses chose May 12 as National School Nurse Day. National School Nurse Day was established in 1972 to foster a better understanding of the role of nurses in the educational setting. DPS has seven general education nurses, 23 special education and center-based nurses, and many contracted nurses. We recognize all of our DPS nurses for making sure our students are healthy so they can achieve their highest learning potential.

Good Attendance is Everyone's Business

We all know that students who go to school every day tend to graduate. Kids in school every day have more knowledge and are better prepared for college. Those who graduate have more earning power than those who don't. Those who graduate college have even better earning power.

But it all starts with showing up.

This year a coalition of concerned groups in Detroit is raising awareness about the importance of school attendance. These parties include the DPS Attendance Department, the Office of Parent Involvement, the Wayne Mediation Center, Neighborhood Legal Services Michigan, Superintendent Teresa Gueyser and more. They want to do battle on a high Detroit truancy rate.

"We need to change our mindset and our culture regarding the importance of attendance," says George Eason, an attendance officer. "Attendance is crucial in all aspects of life."

Eason said the groups worked this year on the project, including rallies and parent workshops, instead of launching it in the fall. That was a deliberate decision because they don't want the importance of attendance tied only to funds and count day.

"We need to think not just of the financial part but for the benefit they receive, and that's an education," he said.

Raised by adoptive parents, Eason said his parents instilled in him the importance of showing up.

"It was a given that you had to be on time and you had to be on task," he said. "You've got to be where you're supposed to be."

Though his parents taught him the important "rules" of life, Eason wants Detroit educators to be understanding of what today's urban youth may be going through. He wishes all teachers would accept students back to school with kindness and open arms. He wants them to make their classrooms interesting so students want to be there.

"You don't know what they're coming out of," he said. "You may be the most consistent thing they have."

What would Eason say to a truant?

"I'm glad to see you back. Come in and let's see what we can do to get you back on track."

If you know of students who are not in school, you can anonymously call 313-873-5942 (west side) or 313-252-3093 (east side).



George Eason

Vernor Elementary Honors Late Principal



Students and staff members at Vernor Elementary School dedicated a tree and park bench May 14 in honor of Elizabeth Nevels. Nevels served as principal of Vernor for 15 years. She died unexpectedly in January, leaving the school in grief.

"We loved her and the kids had a lot of respect for her," said Principal Alicia Colquitt, a long-time colleague and friend of Nevels. "We're always talking about what kids don't do. The kids have been respectful of her in her life and her death."

The Rev. Brian Ellison said our loved ones leave too quickly from us.

"I want you to spend time with people who love you the most," he encouraged the students.

"Let us be people like Mrs. Nevels," Ellison said. "Let us be scholars and love learning. Let us take time to love someone else. Let us take care of someone else."



McKinney Hosts Parent Day



Parents were treated to special acting and musical talents May 13 at Johnson McKinney Day Treatment High School. The students, many of whom are graduating and received special honors, showcased their talents to an audience of parents and friends. The program included a graduate pinning ceremony and African drumming and dance. Music director Ammie Kelley-White and music instructor Michael Caston (left) put on a stellar show.

The Magic of Disney



The staff at Gompers Elementary School each year puts together arguably the most colorful and exciting musical extravaganza in Detroit. This year the theme was Disney and music teacher Johna Treadwell, and teachers Dolly Osandusky and Lauren Cooper (above) played up their roles. Students, teachers and parents are pulled into the act to sing Zip-A-Dee-Doo-Dah and When You Wish Upon a Star. Special guests included Mickey Mouse, Kung Fu Panda, the Little Mermaid and the Lion King.

Visit the New

DFT Web site

www.DFT231.com

CAREER DAY IN THE DETROIT PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Schools across Detroit celebrated career day through May to bring real careers into the classroom. Professionals happily obliged. Some of the careerists are captured here telling students the highs and lows of work life and the skills needed in

their daily routines. At Harding, Rutherford and Vetal Elementary Schools, students got a glimpse of the world of work with fire-fighters, a scuba diver, a dental hygienist, a CEO, and a social worker to name a few.



Pictured above is career day organizer Wanda Hudson, a guidance counselor, (right photo), with Detroit firefighters. Also pic-

tured is dental hygienist Aijha Joyner (on left) with her student escort.



A scuba diver demonstrates at Harding. At Vetal, center, speakers included Corlius McQuerry, R.N.; Wayne Bradley, CEO of Detroit

Community Health Connection; City Year tutors Diane Gomez and Joseph Tolliver; and fourth-grade teacher William Gardner.



Harding guidance counselor Wanda Hudson is pictured here with DPS community police officer Claudette Williams, 19th precinct. Rutherford teacher Macell Myers, second from left, organized



career day at her school. She's pictured with student Genesis Jordan, DPS Superintendent Teresa Gueyser, and Principal Miriam Adams.

MORE NEWSMAKERS



MOTHER SON DANCE

Vernor Elementary School held a Mother Son Dance May 7 that got the sons geeked. Vernor mom Denisha Davis, above with son Michael Davis, said Michael kept asking if she bought the tickets. Boys proudly escorted their moms into the immaculately decorated school, thanks to teacher Bethola Chandler, right, and the planning committee.



Mann School Honors Injured Police Officers

Mann Elementary School students visited the Detroit Police Department Eastern District headquarters May 7 to present cards and letters they had written in tribute to slain police officer Brian Huff and the four officers who were wounded on May 3.

More than 300 pre-school through fifth-grade students participated in a school-wide writing campaign, initiated by teacher Pam Namyslowski. They were accompanied by the principal Gwendolyn Frencher and teachers Julie Beatty and Piper Herbert, whose husband is a Detroit Police lieutenant assigned to the downtown district.

The Mann students were represented by first-graders Jada Tolliver and Anthony Boggon, second-graders Charity Wallace and Aaron



Grandberry, third-grader Donell Johnson, fourth-grader Tyler Welch and fifth-grader Angel Walker.

"I can't begin to comprehend the pain you must feel," said one letter a student read aloud, while another young letter reader urged the officers not to "give up hope."

The officers spent time answering the students' questions and making fast friends. Youthful innocence and the officers' raw emotions made for a heart-tugging exchange.



PINK HEARTS, NOT PINK SLIPS – Twenty-two teachers at Renaissance High School received pink slips to take effect Aug. 27. We cannot give our students a quality education if two-thirds of the teachers are laid off. We at Renaissance believe teachers are the key component in providing a good education for our future generation. We work hard every day with 35 students in each classroom. Just think how large the classes will be if more teachers are not in the classroom. We are asking the entire neighborhood to support out teachers by wearing a "pink heart" every day. Write your U.S. senator to demand that he or she support public education.



WALKING FOR A DETROIT TEACHER

The students and staff of Clippert Academy held a walkathon April 30 to benefit Ray Chaptini, our math teacher. Mr. Chaptini has cancer and has been out of work for months. The walkathon raised \$10,350 to help Mr. Chaptini with his medical and other expenses. All of us miss Mr. Chaptini and we hope that he recovers soon. School social worker Carmen Murray is shown at right.

Why Do I Stay Here?

Lake Liverman thinks Detroit children need a heightened vision of African American history and success. Liverman adores the legacy of Martin Luther King Jr. But what of those legends living among us?

Take Ben Carson, for example. Carson, a pediatric neurosurgeon at Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore, is particularly inspiring because of his personal failings growing up in Detroit. That is, before his overwhelming success as a world renowned surgeon. But of 30 of Liverman's students, only five have heard of Carson.

"He had a terrible anger problem," says Liverman, a teacher at Webber Middle School.

Carson and his brother were raised by a divorced, illiterate mother who worked three jobs to survive. When she saw her sons failing in school, she determined to take charge, turning off the TV and making her sons read two books a week. She made them write book reports though she could barely read them.

Astonishingly, Carson started to succeed and feel smart.

Liverman's student, Trevante Redmon, found that he had hidden gifts as well. Liverman coached him to deliver King's speech "I've been to the Mountaintop" to the student body at an April awards ceremony at Webber.

"Mr. Liverman is a very inspirational teacher," Redmon, 14, says. "Before, I never thought of my intellect as a gift. He made me see that public speaking is where I excel."

The social studies teacher with 15 years with DPS has a lot he wants to do, having come to education as a second career.

"On some days I would say to myself, 'Is this the right decision?'" Liverman said of his first years teaching. "Over the years I grew to love it. I absolutely love it."

That is why he chooses the middle school level and he works on students' individual skills, whether poetry writing or oratory.

Liverman sees teaching as a mission, not a job. His next mission is to get the Ben Carson story in a local theater played by Detroit students with natural acting ability.

Or hidden abilities.



McKinney teachers Adrima Caesar and Nytia Dupree

McKinney Teachers Win Grant for School Store

Some students at the McKinney Day Treatment School don't get the opportunity to go shopping for basic necessities. Or even stuff they don't need but is fun to buy.

So teachers Nytia Dupree and Adrima Caesar applied to www.DonorsChoose.org for grants to buy supplies that would motivate the kids.

"Our behavior system is based on points," says Dupree. "They have to get 120 points to participate in Fabulous Fridays." That's the day when the doors of the point store fling open and kids get a glimpse of an assortment of snacks, hygiene items, sunglasses, sport watches, earrings, headbands, lip gloss and other purely fun goods.

The teachers also got enough grant money (Dupree received \$575 and Caesar \$975) to buy new games, sports equipment and a game table.

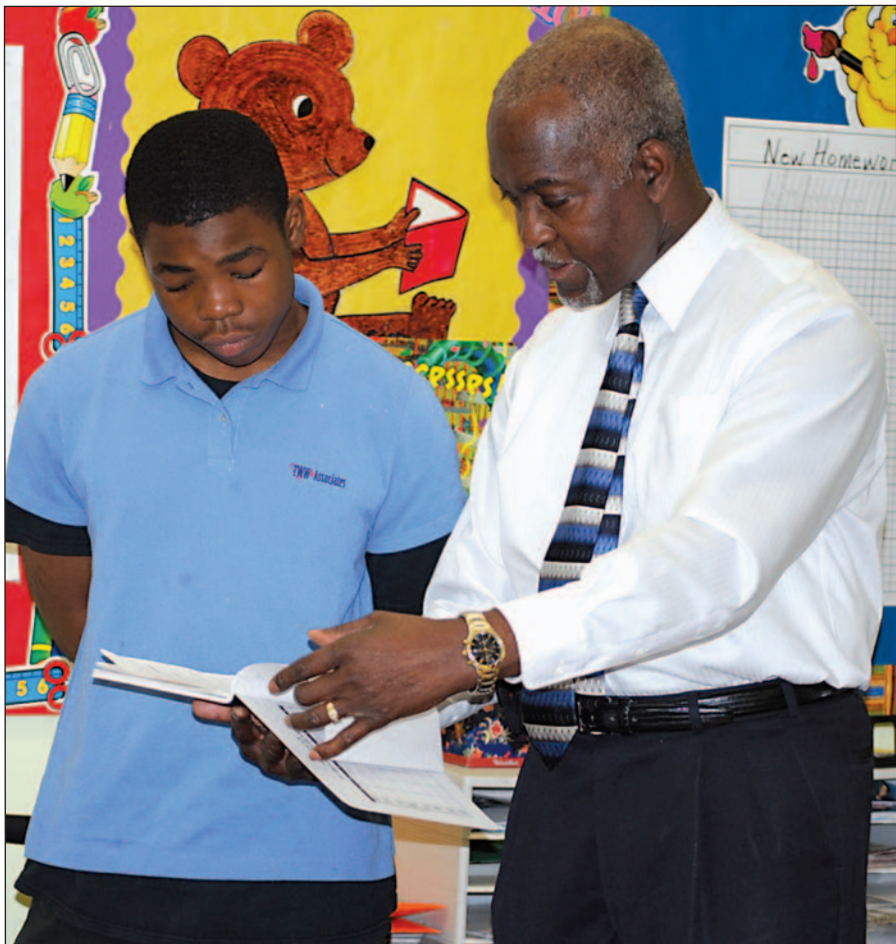
"For our students, it's kind of concrete," Dupree says. "If they behave, at the end of the week, there's a treat."

Dupree and Caesar are specifically using behavior modification to teach their emotionally impaired students how to improve their social skills, get along, and work together.

A lot of kids don't even know how to play a game together," Caesar said. "These kids want to be successful but they haven't been given the strategies to succeed."

The store especially helps kids in residential homes who don't have an opportunity to buy deodorant, soap, toothpaste and other items. Then there's Mother's Day and birthdays.

"A lot of them buy gifts for their friends or their moms," Dupree said. "The kids were so excited. They look forward to coming up here and shopping. They actually get to pick for themselves and they respond to that."



Webber Middle School teacher Lake Liverman coaches speech student Trevante Redmon.



Detroiters Raise Funds For Haiti



Davison Elementary School students and staff raised \$1,255 for the Haiti Relief Fund. They presented their check to a representative from the American Red Cross. Pictured above are Davison principal Dianne Holland, a Red Cross representative, and kindergarten teacher Judy Robinson.



The disaster in Haiti gave students at Johnson McKinney Day Treatment an opportunity to learn more about this small Caribbean island and to learn about earthquakes. Because "J Mac Cares" the school was able to raise \$281 for the Haiti Relief Fund through pancake sales, candy sales, water sales and a free dress day. Teachers Yvonne Graves and Thomas Townsel organized the fundraiser.

Grants...

Healthy Students

The Apps for Healthy Kids competition is an initiative of First Lady Michelle Obama's Let's Move campaign to end childhood obesity. Childhood obesity is increasing in America and its costs are growing as the nation spends \$150 billion each year to treat obesity-related problems. The purpose of the competition is to invite software developers, game designers, students and others to design software tools and games that encourage children to embrace healthy lifestyles. Prizes range from \$1,000 to \$10,000. Deadline: June 30, 2010. For info, visit www.apps-forhealthykids.com.

Teen Driving Safety

The Allstate Foundation is accepting new applications for funding for its Teen Safe Driving Program. Car crashes claim more young lives than any other behavior or hazard. The program is to address the problem of dangerous teen driving and instill a

lifetime of safe driving attitudes and behaviors. Deadline: July 15, 2010. For details, visit Grants@Allstate.com.

Environment

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and other groups are inviting proposals for their Nature of Learning Grant program. The theme this year is Climate Change and Citizen Science. Eligible projects include using field experiences and interdisciplinary learning approaches. Winning proposals will receive up to \$10,000 in start-up funds. Deadline: June 14, 2010. For info, visit www.nfwn.org.

Libraries

Children's book author Lois Lenski's concern for children having access to books was the motivation for her to establish a grant-making foundation that provides books to children. The Lois Lenski Covey Foundation provides grants to organizations with lending libraries to pur-

chase books for young people through grade 12. Grants range from \$500 to \$3,000. Deadline: June 15, 2010. For info, visit www.loislenskicovey.org.

Math and Science

The American Association of Physics Teachers provides grants for a variety of activities related to teaching physics. Only physics teachers who are members of AAPT may apply. Deadline: July 1, 2010. For info, visit www.aapt.org.

Athletics

Nike and Ashoka's Changemakers have kicked off another competition focusing on athletics and social change. Anyone can enter the Changing Lives Through Football competition. The competition seeks innovative solutions to use football to strengthen community, accelerate development and drive social change. Entrants may be eligible to win up to \$30,000. Deadline: June 11, 2010. For info, visit connect@changemakers.com.

International Programs

The National Association of Independent Schools invites public and private K-12 schools to participate in this year's Challenge 20/20. The program arranges for schools to be involved in partnerships with classrooms in another country. The program is an online partnership. Partner classrooms work together and tackle a global problem in a way they can address locally. NAIS will do its best to connect schools to global partners by September if they don't already have one. Deadline: Aug. 16, 2010. For info, visit www.nais.org.

Service Learning

Do Something is giving out one grant per week to help sustain youth-led community service projects. U.S. or Canadian citizens who are under 25 and have developed a service project may apply for the Do Something Growth Grant of \$500 each. No deadline. For info, visit www.dosomething.org/grants/growthgrants.

Detroit Teachers Are Fighting Childhood Obesity

Since Michelle Obama has made child obesity her focus, many Detroit teachers are jumping on the first lady's bandwagon.

Gayle Owens has been a vegetarian for 40 years. She's fit and knows quality food. But it's another story for some of her students at Jerry L. White Center. For them, chips and pop is a regular snack. Owens, a music therapist, wanted to expose her special education students to better food choices. How to do it through music?

Owens won a \$500 grant from United Health Care to help students learn about nutrition and healthy choices. She used the money to write a musical about healthy lifestyles, expose kids to healthy snacks, bring them carryout from a Lebanese restaurant, and paint T-shirts depicting fruit and healthy slogans.

"I kept it simple and basic," said Owens, a 23-year teacher. Her students performed the musical wearing their colorful T-shirts at several venues including the Michigan Performing Arts Talent Show in Birmingham.

"One of the aspects of healthy lifestyles is to try new foods and eat a variety of them," she said. So Owens exposed the students to Mediterranean cuisine.

Before starting the nutrition program, Owens' students thought chips were healthy snacks. Now they report to her when they ate their vegetables.

But Owens main venue is music, not food. Through music therapy, her students meet many non-musical goals, like coordination, following directions, and enhancing their oral skills.

Her latest venture in nutrition really excited the students, Owens said. "They loved performing."



Music therapist Gayle Owens and Jerry L. White students



Dr. Kerrie Saunders and Detroit teacher Wanda Lundy-Colquitt with students

How can we combat childhood obesity? Let kids take charge of the fridge.

That's the message Henry Ford West Bloomfield Hospital is giving at its new Demonstration Kitchen. When kids learn that healthy foods are tasty too, they may influence their parents.

"They're conditioned to think that healthy foods don't taste good," says Kerrie Saunders, who has a PhD in nutrition.

Saunders was the guest chef who demonstrated how to make a fruit kabob to 16 preschoolers from Coleman A. Young Elementary School.

"We feel that by working with the kids, that's our entrance with the families," said Joy Blumenau Bebry, supervisor of the Demonstration Kitchen, which was conceived to teach healthy eating and nutrition.

Young Elementary teacher Wanda Lundy-Colquitt took her students to the kitchen May 17 after seeing it featured on Channel 7 this spring. The students and their parents learned about fresh fruits and vegetables.

"We do a parents needs-assessment at the beginning of the year," explained Colquitt. "And the parents wanted more information on healthy snacks. I thought it would be good to get here with the kids and parents."

Bebry believes ending childhood obesity starts with the kids and building new habits. "It's easier to create a good habit," she said, "than break a bad one."

Beth Dzodin-Fuchs, a drama teacher at Spain School, was invited to address Congress last spring. The prestigious invitation, from the Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine, asked Fuchs to speak about a play at her school entitled "The Classroom on Good Nutrition/The Classroom on Bad Nutrition."

The play — written, produced and acted by Fuchs's sixth-grade drama class — shows the importance good nutrition plays in a student's ability to perform well in school. It compares a classroom of young people whose diet consists of nachos and stimulant drinks with those who consume a balanced, nutritional diet. The no surprise ending shows that students with a well balanced diet fare much better in their schoolwork and in social situations.

"I was surprised and delighted to receive the request to speak," said Fuchs, a 20-year teacher. "The play sends an important message about the connection between what students eat and how they perform in school. This is a palatable way to get the lesson across."

The Congressional briefing in Washington emphasized the need for healthful, non-dairy vegetarian options in students' diet. Fuchs showed how creative programming can give children a voice in their food choices at home and at school. The speech aimed to influence the House and Senate to pass the Child Nutrition Act, which impacts the school lunch program.

Fuchs worked with Carolyn Trapp, R.N. and specialist in diabetes education, to create hands-on lessons in healthy breakfast foods. Trapp also brought in speakers to address 200 sixth- through eighth-graders and their parents about plant-based diets.

"When students have a voice in their own food and lifestyle they influence their parents, their peers, their relatives and community to choose healthier food choices," Fuchs said.



You Can Resolve Prescription Problems

By Mark O'Keefe
DFT Executive Vice President

When DFT members ratified the new collective bargaining agreement, they approved changing the prescription co-pay to a three tier system (\$5, \$25, \$40) and changing the mail order co-pays to double those amounts for a 90 day supply. Those are the only changes that the DFT and its members signed off on.



Mark O'Keefe

However, when DPS signed its contract with Caremark, it included a number of additional cost-saving measures. Caremark's contract with the district

includes guaranteed savings, which they cannot achieve if they remove the additional measures. Instead, they have instituted procedures that should allow our members to pay only the amounts they approved.

The changes that have impacted our members, and the procedures to work around them are as follows:

Problem: Co-pays of more than \$40 when a generic equivalent is available

When DFT members take a brand name drug and a generic equivalent is available, they are being charged the difference between the generic and the name brand, instead of the regular co-pay. In one case, a teacher was charged \$400.

Solution: The easiest way to resolve this, of course, is to take the generic. However, in some cases there are legitimate medical reasons that prevent people from being able to take the generic, such as: allergies, drug interactions, or the generic was ineffective when tried previously. If you have a medical reason to not take the generic, send a cover letter requesting the name-brand drug at the regular co-pay. Explain the medical reason you cannot take the generic and attach a doctor's verification. Send it to:

Human Resources: Compensation and Benefits
Detroit Public Schools
7430 Second Ave., 4th Floor
Detroit, MI 48202

Do not send any other prescription problems to this address. All other problems are handled by Caremark.

Problem: Mandatory Mail order for maintenance drugs

The DPS-Caremark contract provides that our members must use mail order for maintenance drugs. The first two refills of a prescription can be done at the pharmacy, but the third refill will be flagged as a maintenance drug. At this point, you are required to use mail order.

Solution: Use mail order! You'll save money. The annual cost of a generic will be \$40 (\$10, four times per year) instead of \$60 (\$5, twelve times per year). If you don't want your prescriptions delivered by mail, you can get your 90-day supply at any CVS, Advance Homecare Pharmacy, Homecare Pharmacy, and Westland Maple Drugs.

Problem: Quantity limits

Much of the waste in prescription costs can be traced to unused pills. For a limited number of drugs, the DPS-Caremark contract now includes quantity limits. For example, a prescription for a migraine pill may carry a limit of 12 pills per month instead of 30. In most cases, this does not present a problem, but some people need more pills than allowed under the quantity limits.

Solution: For those who need more pills than the quantity limit allows, call the Caremark customer care number on the back of your prescription card: 1- 866-587-4803. They will explain the procedure for you and your doctor to successfully appeal the limit.

Problem: Higher co-pay on 30 day mail orders

Per the DFT contract, the double co-pay on mail order prescriptions should only apply to 90-day prescriptions. However, the DPS-Caremark contract provides for the higher co-pay (\$10, \$50, \$80) on all mail orders, even if it is for a 30-day supply.

Solution: Make sure your doctor writes a 90-day prescription for mail orders. If a 30-day prescription is sent in error, have the doctor prepare a corrected prescription and call the Caremark customer service number: 1- 866-587-4803. Request that the additional 60 pills be sent at no cost.



MILDRED ELLIS SCHOLARS – For the past 21 years DPS social workers have kept alive the Mildred Ellis Scholarship Program. The program is named in honor of Mildred A. Ellis, the first African American person appointed DPS Director of the Office of School Social Work Service. Since 1989, the program has given more than \$200,000 in scholarships to 149 scholars. This year six seniors were given \$1,000 grants toward college. The monies are raised by the contributions of Detroit school social workers and their friends. Selection committee members Curtis Stout and Kathy Hemingway, are pictured above with the recipients (from left) Mercedes Mosley, Katrina Allen, Deniqua Gunn, De Lawrence Billingsley, Angel Mills and (not pictured) Nocomis Miner.

Calendar

All meetings will be held at 2875 W. Grand Blvd., Detroit, unless otherwise noted. Dates and times are subject to change.

JUNE

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| 3 | Executive Board Meeting, 4:30 p.m. |
| 3 | Preschool/Head Start Chapter Meeting, 4:30 p.m. |
| 8 | Social Workers Chapter Meeting, 4:30 p.m. |
| 8 | Special Education Chapter Meeting, 4:30 p.m. |
| 9 | Attendance Agents Chapter Meeting, 4:00 p.m. |
| 10 | General Membership Meeting, 4:30 p.m. |
| 10 | Psychologists Chapter Meeting, 4:30 p.m. |
| 15 | Retirees Chapter Meeting, 11:30 a.m. |
| 17 | African Centered Education Chapter Meeting, 4:30 p.m. |
| 18 | Last Day for Teachers |