

President's Report



Keith Johnson

Detroit Children Being Used as Pawns

Robert Bobb's mantra: "Create centers of excellence for every child, in every school, in every neighborhood."

Detroit Board of Education's declaration: You handle the finances and leave the academics to us.

The result: Detroit's public school children and teachers are caught in the middle of a political/personal tug of war in which only the children can lose.

In the aftermath of Judge Wendy Baxter's preliminary injunction that prevents Bobb from implementing academic policy, Bobb threatened to eliminate summer school and extended day programs designed to increase educational opportunities to DPS children. The school board fell short of admitting they support the initiative simply because he didn't discuss it with them first. How juvenile is this and what message does it send to the children, and their parents, who are constantly being prodded to entrust their children to DPS?

It tells them that the education of Detroit children is secondary to the power struggle between the school board elected by the citizens of Detroit, and the emergency financial manager appointed by the governor.

It is the height of hypocrisy to tell our children that they must resolve their differences with intelligence, diplomacy, and mutual respect and then see these respective parties act

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DON'T PANIC IN THE FACE OF LAYOFF NOTICES

By Keith Johnson, DFT President

DFT members are understandably unnerved by the volume of layoff notices that were received beginning April 17. I encourage everyone to keep the following in perspective regarding the layoff notices.

The fact that you received A NOTICE DOES NOT MEAN YOU ARE OR WILL BE LAID OFF.

The district ALWAYS issues more notices than necessary. It is easier to rescind notices because you issued too many than to have to issue additional notices because not enough were issued.

This list is unusually EXCESSIVE. The school district could not function without one-third of its teaching staff. I can't explain the rationale for the level of excess, but I know this is roughly three times the number of layoffs possible for the district to function unless we lost approximately 20,000 students next year, which will not happen.

There will be an inordinate number



DFT President Keith Johnson speaks to Bennett Elementary School teachers April 23 about the district issuing 2,000 layoff notices.

of teachers who retire at the end of the school year. We anticipate as many as 600, even more if the governor's retirement incentive should somehow pass the Michigan legislature.

The contractual class size limitations would prevent this mass number of layoffs from being implemented and, if necessary, the DFT would go

to court to prevent them from occurring.

The district has taken recruiting trips to attract new teachers in anticipation of a possible teacher shortage for the 2010-11 school year. The anticipated number of retirements prompted this action by the district as

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Pershing Star Named Mr. Basketball

At 6-foot-2, Keith Appling says he's still growing. And don't call this fierce competitor thin.

"I'm wiry and strong," he says.

Appling, the wunderkind basketball star from Pershing High School, is headed to Michigan State University next year. Named 2010 Mr. Basketball, it was the second year in a row the award went to Pershing. Last year, Derrick Nix took home the trophy.

Appling says five colleges – Xavier, Memphis University, Florida University, Miami University, and U Conn – recruited him but Michigan State was always his goal.

"That's always where I wanted to go," he said. "That's the only team I watched."

The good-natured 18-year-old with a toothy smile says he's always been

competitive. He started playing basketball in second grade.

Appling's competitive nature came out last year when Pershing won the Class A State Championship. He scored 49 points in a single game against Kalamazoo Central and broke a 25-year record of most points scored in a championship game. This year Pershing was knocked out and Appling said he felt bad finishing the season early.

"I just like to compete," Appling said. "I don't like anybody to get the best of me."

Appling's mentors have been his



AAU coach Marcus Webster and Pershing coach A. W. Canada.

"He's real laid back," Appling says of Canada. "But he knows the time to play and the time to be serious."

Canada is proud of Appling and all his senior players.

"I hope they learned some of those things we taught them," Canada said, "to make adulthood successful."

The Truth About Priority Schools

By Mark O'Keefe
Executive Vice President

Priority Schools are a new component of our new contract. Some people, however, are spreading information that is not true about this important concept.

Let's take a look.



Mark O'Keefe

Fiction #1: Priority Schools are charter schools.

The truth: Charter schools are operated under a separate charter granted

by the State of Michigan. Priority schools are DPS run and subject to the DFT collective bargaining agreement. Therefore, by definition, priority schools are NOT charter schools.

Fiction #2: Priority schools are non-union.

The truth: Priority schools are created by language in the union contract. Therefore, they are obviously union schools.

Fiction #3: Teachers in priority schools have no seniority rights.

The truth: The creation of priority schools does not affect the seniority rights of teachers whether they are in

a priority school or not. Seniority rights of teachers throughout the district are intact in the new contract. When it comes to priority schools, the district has some flexibility on where you work, not whether you work.

Fiction #4: The district is hiring in Baltimore to replace teachers in priority schools.

Fact: DPS is recruiting at job fairs in case the State of Michigan passes a retirement incentive and there are massive retirements.

More truths: Priority schools will help protect seniority rights.

In December, the Michigan Legislature passed PA 204 to aid its quest for Race to the Top funds from the federal government. This law places the lowest achieving 5 percent of Michigan's public schools under the supervision of a state school reform/redesign officer (SSRRO), beginning in 2010.

The school district must submit a redesign plan. If the plan is accepted, it remains a DPS school and issues subject to collective bargaining must still be bargained with the union. However, under one of the redesign plan options, the SSRRO makes no guarantees that it will remain a DPS school.

If the redesign plan is not approved, one of the four models (turnaround, restart, school closure or transformation) will be imposed on the school. In that case these PA 204 rules apply: Any contractual or other work rules

Failure in Central Office Leadership

By Arthur J. Divers

In reference to the editorials that appeared in the Detroit Free Press ("DPS Madness Continues," April 18) and Detroit News ("Halting Reform," April 18):

I think the critical challenge facing DPS is the egregious failure in the central office leadership of Emergency Financial Manager Robert Bobb.

First, without consulting with the elected DPS school board, Bobb has proposed an academic plan AND a plan to close 40 more schools in 2010.

He has skillfully silenced the elect-

ed board and the district superintendent. How? The insidiously unfair media narrative of an "incompetent and illiterate school board."

Finally — as a "visionary educational reform decision" — principals and teachers are receiving memos from Bobb directing them to be insubordinate to the superintendent and school board, and to ONLY take orders from him. A chaotic recent example is the quarterly benchmark test that Bobb demands be administered to students — while the school board and superintendent is moving to stop the test from being given!

Bottom line: The leadership crisis in the DPS central office directly

are an impediment to the redesign plan will not apply to the affected schools. Unilateral changes in pay scales or benefits will not be allowed. Seniority will not apply at the affected school.

Summary: In the new PA 204, some serious changes and oversight can take

place in failing Michigan schools. Thanks to the DFT's new contract language about priority schools, we have in place protections from these designs and a formula to improve schools without giving up our rights.

THE DETROIT
teacher

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Editor — Margaret Weertz

effects principals and teachers who are being forced to remain silent about the lack of textbooks, teaching supplies, resources and materials for classroom instruction and school operations.*

Nevertheless, dedicated principals and teachers continue to go the extra mile — instilling discipline and fostering hope in the development of each child.

Dr. Arthur J. Divers is a retired DPS educator from Detroit.

* "Destruction of a Dream: The State of the Detroit Public School District," Bishop Calvin Turner, 2010.

Give \$10?

Help Elect Friends of Education

Dear Brothers and Sisters:

This year DFT members will help elect a new Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Secretary of State and Attorney General. We also will be voting for ALL 15 U. S. Representatives in Congress, ALL 38 Michigan State Senators and ALL 110 members of the Michigan House of Representatives. Two Justices of the Michigan Supreme Court are also up for election.

Those elected to office this year will have a lasting effect over our state and our members for the next 10 years. They also will make policy decisions that will affect our families, workplaces and neighborhoods.

We are asking each member to donate a minimum of \$10. These funds will be used to make direct contributions to candidates for Governor, State Legislature, the Attorney General, Secretary of State and candidates for the Detroit School Board after a candidate makes his/her case to YOU for why it is he/she deserves your support and your vote.

Recognition will be given in the Detroit Teacher to all members who contribute -- with a special highlight given to those who donate \$100 or more!

Please donate your \$10 today! Make checks or money orders payable to DFT COPE. You may bring it to the next General Membership Meeting, drop it by the DFT office, or mail it to: DFT COPE, c/o Vito Peraino, 2875 W. Grand Blvd., Detroit, MI 48202

In solidarity,
Michelle Broughton Gibson, Chair
DFT COPE Committee

Updates...

Reminder: Summer Paychecks Larger

The TIP \$250 reduction in the paychecks will be suspended from the July 27 paycheck through the Sept. 7 paycheck. TIP and DFT dues will not be deducted in summer paychecks for those on 26 pays.

Speech and Hearing Center

Any teacher or parent interested in scheduling a child for a hearing test can call the Speech and Hearing Center at 313-494-8601. The Speech and Hearing Center is at 1220 W. Canfield at the Lodge Freeway.

Mildred Ellis Scholarship

By Anya Johnson

A dinner is being held for recipients of the Mildred Ellis Scholarship on May 13 at Tabernacle Missionary Baptist Church. The scholarships provide assistance for young people who have overcome adversities while demonstrating the academic and social potential to succeed. The scholarship is named in honor of the former director of the Office of School Social

Work Service and the first African American to hold that position.

Tabernacle Missionary Baptist Church is located on the corner of Grand River and W. Grand Blvd. behind Northwestern High School. Tickets are \$15 and must be purchased in advance by calling (248)-933-6458 or 866-0866. We look forward to seeing you at 3:30-6:00 as our graduates are honored.

DFT Wins Major Arbitration on Seniority

DFT Labor Relations Administrator Mershira Oliver and attorney James Britton of Sachs Waldman won a major arbitration March 16 for a laid-off member who was not recalled when two others with less seniority were. The decision reaffirms that seniority - and seniority only - "governs when determining the order of layoff, bumping and recall." The arbitrator ordered that the member receive back pay of \$23,000.

"The district may not add additional criteria in determining whether a teacher should be laid off or recalled," said Britton. The arbitrator concurred: seniority rights "cannot be overridden."

Gubernatorial Candidate Virg Bernero Visits the DFT

Lansing Mayor Virg Bernero made a pitch to the DFT Executive Board April 13 to support his candidacy for Michigan governor. The DFT has not endorsed anyone but AFT

Michigan has endorsed Bernero.

Bernero, whose wife is a public school teacher, said he strongly supports public education. He said his platform has two goals: a stronger Michigan economy and support for public education.

"Everybody wants to be about the economy," Bernero, 46, said. "One of the top things we must do to improve the economy is invest in education." As mayor, Bernero said he erased a \$40 million deficit without laying off anyone. He said he eliminated his city car before asking for concessions from the unions.

"It can be done when you're working together instead of fighting each other," he said. Bernero said he wants to fight Wall Street and support cities.

"It's cities that make a state great," he said. "An investment in cities pays off." On the other hand, he said investing in Wall Street doesn't.

"I'm ready to take on Wall Street," he said. "Wall Street's not investing in us, why should we invest in Wall Street?"

Executive board members asked tough questions of the governor hopeful, including whether he supports mayoral control of Detroit schools. He said



DFT Executive Board Members Kurtis Brown and Felecia Clark with Lansing Mayor Virg Bernero (center).

he hadn't studied the issue but supports: mayoral rule of school districts in some cases, consolidation of some districts, funding all-day kindergarten, and discipline academies for disruptive students. He questions the Michigan Legislature's, President Obama's, and Education Secretary Arne Duncan's "flavor of the month reform" measures and support for charter schools.

"What if we had taken the money we diverted to charter schools to support public education," he said. "What if we had just focused on public schools?"



A Golightly team (above) put together a carnival to raise funds for Haiti. The core organizing group was (from left): physical education teacher Glen Wilkerson, student Shawn Warren, resource teacher Linda Callahan and art teacher Melissa Petit.

Golightly Education Center Raises \$2,000 for Haiti

It took one day at Golightly Education Center to raise \$2,000 for victims of the Jan. 12 earthquake in Haiti.

But it took lots of teamwork to put on a carnival of games and prizes for Golightly's 700 students.

"We have a wonderful working team here," said resource teacher Linda Callahan, a 19-year Detroit teacher. "Even with the economic crisis this community is in, everyone supported this."

When teachers started donating to Haiti and talking about an event, physical education teacher Glen Wilkerson offered that he had a closet full of carnival games, many that he made himself.

The students helped run the games. Students bought \$5 tickets to play games, buy refreshments and win prizes. If one student didn't have the money, another parent stepped up. Of course, teachers dipped into their own pockets to buy prizes. At the end of the day, an announcement came over the loudspeaker.

"Everybody was so proud we came up with that much money," said art teacher Melissa Petit. "When we announced it at the end of the day, the whole school cheered."

How to raise that much cash that fast? Have a cohesive teaching team and supportive administrators that make it happen, even when newcomers join veteran staff.

"A lot of our teachers who came from different buildings fit in with us," said Petit. "They are hard working, fabulous people and excellent teachers."

Teacher Uses Hip Hop to Teach Literacy

When Ben Fox was going to Wayne State University, he hung out in Detroit clubs with musicians. He eventually became a Detroit teacher but never left the music scene. Now he's using his connections in

writing though hip hop in an after-school setting. "My evolution as a teacher," says the 11-year teacher, "is realizing you have to provide something different." Fox says the kids light up when Turner or local poet Joel Greene

comes into his classroom. Eventually, Fox wants to tie the hip hop theme to the GLICS and state benchmarks in literacy. "You could develop it here and it could grow through the city," he said. It could be data driven and

MEAP aligned. "We can use people in the community, in the arts, dancers, artists poets. It could be powerful."



the Detroit music industry to reach his students at Bagley Elementary School.

Two of Fox's students opened a show April 10 at the Music Hall with a hip hop song written by the third-graders, Fox and several prominent Detroit musicians. They practiced their song "Detroit's on the Rise" at lunch and through the spring break to polish their act.

Fox brought in hip hop artist Tashif Turner to work with the kids biweekly. He's using the musical genre to increase his third-graders literacy skills.

"I know that teaching's really tenuous right now," Fox, 34 said. "I see the power of music but hip hop especially speaks to the last two generations of adults and now kids are raised in hip hop."

Fox wants to teach literacy and



CONTRACT SETTLED – The Detroit Association of Educational Office Employees (DAEOE) AFT Local 4168 has ratified a contract with the district after a March 23 Coalition of Unions rally (above). Like the teachers, members will pay 10 percent of their health coverage. They have no longevity and will take eight furlough days next year. DAEOE represents more than 500 Detroit school secretaries and office professionals. The union was asked to take a 10 percent wage cut but it won a 4-year agreement that held the line on salaries. The union gave \$1.3 million in concessions. But members still will get paid for unused sick time upon retirement. "Our members are sacrificing for a stronger Detroit for our kids," said DAEOE President Ruby Newbold. "They didn't think we could unite our members like we did. I'm proud of our members because they showed their solidarity."

Don't Panic in the Face of Layoffs

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a number of teachers have already retired and are retiring as the school year concludes.

School closures do not translate into elimination of teaching positions. In most instances schools that close are merging into other schools, thus the staff follows the students. In other instances teachers will be dispersed to other schools to fill vacancies.

Members who received a notice SHOULD complete the Invocation of Rights form that accompanied the

layoff notice and submit it to Human Resources by the due date. Those members who take it in personally, **PLEASE KEEP A COPY FOR YOURSELF AND HAVE BOTH COPIES STAMPED AT HUMAN RESOURCES!**

There could, however be some members who actually face layoff. The most vulnerable are teachers of business and the fine arts (of low seniority), particularly art itself. Should the membership deem it necessary, we will hold informational

forums at the DFT to go over details of your contractual rights and options.

We also will maintain updates as new information occurs on the layoff situation. If you wish to have me or Executive Vice-President Mark O'Keefe come to your school to meet with staff, contact Holley Sabotchick, assistant to the president, at 313-875-3500 ext. 779, or hsaotchick@dft231.com. I can be reached at ext.778, my cell phone at 683-4049, or at keith7606@sbcglob-

Don't Use Detroit Children as Pawns

PAWNS, from Page 1

in a manner antithetical to their own words of wisdom.

There is no viable reason for Robert Bobb to threaten to eliminate programs that he knows these children need and that funding has been identified to implement. There is no viable reason for the school board not to publicly say that even though they were not consulted, they support these programs and encourage their continuance. In other words there is no rea-

son for these adults not to act like adults and act in the best interest of children.

For Robert Bobb to say that Judge Baxter's ruling "sentenced Detroit children to failure" is an indictment against the statute that allowed his position to exist and to the governor who appointed him to the position. The law is the law and it must be adhered to as interpreted by those charged with its interpretation unless and until a higher force rules differ-

ently or the law is changed. I would feel the same way if Judge Baxter had ruled differently.

These entities must work together and respect each other and check their egos at the door for the sake of our children. Their respective actions do nothing to create optimism about DPS. Indeed it eliminates the optimism that remains.

On a more personal (to the DFT) note, issuing layoff notices to one-third of the teaching staff will not

give parents confidence that their children will receive quality instruction next school year. It may prompt them to look for educational alternatives. Mr. Bobb takes this action while expecting me to agree to allow Teach for America to come into DPS? Not a chance!

We understand that layoff notices had to go out in case the need for layoffs to occur arises. However, this exaggerated, excessive layoff list will further demoralize the workforce and accelerate the exodus of children from DPS. Mr. Bobb defies his own mantra with such irrational decisions.



Closing Detroit Public Schools to Open Charters?

DFT members are questioning the criteria for closing 40 Detroit schools. More important, they're asking if this is a concerted effort to turn the buildings over to charter school operators.

Frank Squeo is a teacher at Ralph Bunche Elementary School, which is slated to close.

"We shouldn't be closing a 1950s building that is so well built," Squeo said. "It even has a bomb shelter in the basement. It's sad. It's the best run school I've ever been at."

Paul Weertz, founder of an agri-science program at Catherine Ferguson Academy, questioned what the criteria are for closing a school.

"I don't know why you're closing us," Weertz said. "It's a beautiful building with new windows." The district has spent \$1.2 million on CFA in the last 10 years. According to the district's handout, it needs only \$24,000 to bring it up to standard. It has 257 students and a capacity of 300. CFA graduates 90 students a year and has been featured in the New York Times, Oprah magazine and Dutch public TV.

"Our school's working," Weertz said.

Certainly, many members agree, it's not the quality of the school, the design of the curriculum, or meeting AYP that is being used as criteria.

At a Northwestern High School town hall meeting April 12, Emergency Financial Manager Robert Bobb said it's about numbers and capacity of buildings.

"If we take all the schools here tonight and consolidate those schools, we'd have a population of 3,826," Bobb said. "Compare that with the capacity and that's 7,768 seats. We have fewer students and more buildings. We have great

schools. It's not our desire to come in on the community and close schools."

But every decision is not divisible by a dollar, teachers, students and parents say. At Jamieson Elementary School, the fall MEAP math scores were 80 percent, reading: 71 percent. The school has 456 students. The capacity is much higher and the condition of the building is rated poor by the district. But the school is critical to the health of the neighborhood.

"Jamieson has long been a jewel of our community," said Kimberly Kyff, who was voted 2007 Michigan Teacher of the Year. "Recently Jamieson has made phenomenal improvements. Our focus at all times is on student achievement."

Kyff, like others at the back-to-back meetings, offered many suggestions to save the school and the neighborhood. She suggested Jamieson be made a K-8 building to add another 150 students.

"We know that our children need stability and that's what our school provides," Kyff said.

Greg Moore, a teacher at Malcolm X Academy, told Bobb: "Your goal was to rid the system of the schools that weren't performing. Malcolm X has a proven track record of success in our community."

Malcolm X was the first public African centered school in the nation when it was conceived 20 years ago. Like many at the meetings, Moore said it's not about the building, but about the community, the curriculum, and the students who feel stable going to the same school year after year.

At the April 15 DFT membership meeting, teacher Desiree Clinkscale said we may be watching the total dismemberment of the district.

"When you talk about closing Hally and Bagley – good schools in good neighborhoods – it's not business as usual," Clinkscale said.



Denby High School English Teacher Tackles Robotics

By Kathryn Joyner

Denby High School's FIRST Robotics team is led by student Breana Haywood and teacher Murleen Coakley, who is the lead mentor.



Denby teacher Murleen Coakley

Coakley is a ninth-grade English teacher who specializes in student services. She was asked two years ago to participate in FIRST Robotics. She embraced the opportunity to make sure both special services and general students worked together planning, designing, programming and implementing their engineering project.

"This year we did more than just plan, design and build a robot," Coakley said. "We built a team."

Coakley is an energetic, multifaceted, dedicated educator who encourages her students to think and lead, to be self-confident and responsible. She firmly believes that all children can learn.

The team consists of 15 pre-college students with and without learning disabilities who work cooperatively. They learn together, and support each other.

FIRST Robotics is an acronym for: For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology. Schools team up with real-life engineers and mentor teachers to design robots to perform tasks in competitions. Denby's team members are: Erica Green, Breana Haywood, Kevin Waddell, Deonte Cook, Larry Huntley, Eric Green, Danyel Rice, Shontiz Hargo, Adam Fordham, Fredrick Davis, Juwan Todd, Charles Parker, Ramon Haynes, Kenneth Taylor, Diamond Rice.



(front left) students Breana Haywood, Larry Huntley, Juwan Todd, Danyel Rice and Erica Green

Pershing Business Student Competes Nationally

Teacher Honored at National Conference

Deidraanee Wright, one of Pershing High School's top students, won a second-place award in basic office systems and procedures at the Business Professionals of America State Leadership Conference in Grand Rapids in March. Wright will go on to the national competition in May in Anaheim, Calif.

"The conference is a culmination of a school year's worth of business workforce education and training," said Gwendolynne Howell, Pershing teacher of co-op office training, management support and computer applications. Howell also is a BPA chapter advisor.



Pershing teacher Gwendolynne Howell with students Armenthia Stewart and Deidraanee Wright

BPA is a national organization for high school and college students preparing for careers in business and information technology occupations.

Howell will take two students, Wright and Armenthia Stewart, to the national competition. They will compete against 5,000 other students from across the country in business skill competitions and leadership workshops.

The Anaheim conference is important for another reason. Howell will receive the BPA Service Award for her 25 years as a BPA advisor.

"I'm very proud because it's my last year," said Howell, a DPS teacher for almost 40 years. "And what a way to go out."

THE DETROIT NEWSMAKERS

Putting an End to the "R" Word

"Take the Pledge Today to Spread the Word to End the R Word"

Five Detroit schools piloted a program this year to bring regular and special ed students together socially. Cody, Holmes, Duffield, Lessenger and Mann schools had a mission: to build understanding of special needs students and get young people to abandon a well-worn word: retarded.

"We're really trying to get the regular ed kids to see that the special ed kids are really no different than they are," said Beverly Brown, special ed teacher. Brown said the program was a huge success at Lessenger.

To get to that goal, teachers at all five schools, with the help of Special Olympics Michigan, organized weekly events with a group of select students.

The five schools are the first in Michigan to pilot "Project Unified" this year.

"Everybody wants to be in this," Brown said. "Some of the kids have made friendships outside of school. Normally they wouldn't have made those friends."

"My students loved it," said Lessenger science teacher Tim McGraw. "Once every two weeks they go on a trip. They get to know each other socially." Lessenger students went to a Red Wings hockey game, Detroit Tigers game, horseback riding, the Jiffy Company, Morley's candy factory, and more.

At a culminating event March 31 at Lessenger, students took the pledge and determined that well-worn word would be retired. The new R word is: respect.

"I pledge to respect myself and all people who may be different than me," a poster said. Students lined up and signed the pledge.



Lessenger students take the pledge to stop using the R word.



Lessenger teachers Beverly Brown and Charlotte Banks participated in Project Unified.

"Retarded"

By Karim Shabazz
Mann Elementary School parent

Physically or mentally backward.
Even though I think their mind goes forward.
Even at a slower pace.
By God's grace.
Look in their eyes and what do you see?
You see not a retarded person just someone
Who learns slower than others.
Innocence, compelling, intriguing.
But leading for a path of learning.
Yearning and pondering a future of excellence.
A slower pace.
By God's grace.
Not retarded but leading to a path of learning.



Violin Teacher Takes Students to DSO

Detroit violin teacher Flo Paterni took her students and their families to see the Detroit Symphony Orchestra March 13. Paterni was gifted \$650 from the Generation Project (www.thegenerationproject.org). She chose to buy tickets for her students and their families to see the DSO. Parents, students, grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins (and of course, friends) all met at the Max Fisher (the concert was in Orchestra Hall) for a morning of Arts and Scraps, an Instrument Petting Zoo, Radio Disney (one of our Schulze students won an iPod!), and of course, the PIED PIPER performed by the Detroit Symphony Orchestra. Paterni teaches violin at Vernor Elementary, Schulze Elementary, Pasteur Elementary, Barbara Jordan Elementary/Middle, and MacDowell Elementary schools.

You be the Chemist

It wasn't a fluke that Lessenger eighth-grader Adam Johnson came in first place at the You Be the Chemist competition March 25 at Renaissance High School.

He studied.

"I had better self confidence because last year I came in fifth," said Johnson, 14.

Johnson credits 31-year science teacher Tim McGraw for giving him detailed instructions on how to study for the chemistry contest, which is sponsored by PVS-Nolwood Chemicals of Detroit. He also credits fellow Lessenger contestant Tremanii Lancaster for the big win.

"Tremanii was one of the many reasons why I studied," Johnson said. They cracked the textbooks and got heaps of information under their lab coats.

"I had current knowledge and I used common sense," said Lancaster, also 14. "Because some of the things in the competition was stuff that wasn't in the book."

The other contest winners were: second-place winner Jayla Anderson, Bagley Elementary School; third-place winner Tamera Clay, Ludington Middle School; and alternate Cierra Huston, Bethune Academy.



Adam Johnson, teacher Tim McGraw and Tremanii Lancaster



CLARK WAX MUSEUM – Mayor Coleman Young, Queen Latifah, surgeon Ben Carson and Mohamed Ali showed up at Clark Elementary School March 31. They and other prominent Americans were impersonated by students studying famous African Americans in history. Clark students researched their famous person, wrote a speech and dressed the part of their famous person in history. Just push the button in front of them and visitors heard how rich and interesting this history is. The Clark programs committee (above) organized the event.

Breithaupt Students Win with SkillsUSA

Cora Duncan Foster is a cheerleader. She's a cheerleader for her students at Breithaupt Career and Technical Center, where they can learn skills in everything from culinary arts to robotics to auto service to cosmetology. She's a cheerleader in getting them ready for a future of interviewing and presenting themselves professionally.

One avenue for developing professional and leadership skills is through SkillsUSA, a national organization for trade, technical, industrial and health occupational students. At regional, state and national contests, the students compete in their skill area under pressure and deadlines.

Breithaupt students continually come out shining.

"SkillsUSA is wonderful," says Duncan Foster, a special education consultant. "They develop high self esteem. The students begin to glow. They also get to leave their home and travel outside Detroit." Also important, according to Duncan Foster, is that they meet and mingle with students of different cultures and ethnicities.

Caleb Latimer, a Breithaupt sen-

ior, concurs.

"I got to meet people all around the U.S.," says Latimer, who competed in the national SkillsUSA convention last year in Kansas City, Mo. "It was great to actually fly on a plane."

Duncan Foster says the students in



SkillsUSA are the "best of the best." They learn a variety of time management and communication skills.

Duncan Foster has been a SkillsUSA advisor for 20 years and finds the program propels students to study harder on their skill set in order to compete. So far, Breithaupt students don't seem to have a problem.

"I'm sometimes terrified because they're so good," she says. "They're well disciplined and polished from head to toe."

HOWE LITERACY NIGHT — Every classroom at Howe Elementary School stayed open after school March 31 for Literacy Night. The teachers read treasured books from "Rainbow Fish" to "The Night I Followed the Dogs." One Howe teacher brought in a box of dog biscuits and started eating them. Thankfully, she filled the box with edible human food. Fourth-grade teachers Simona Pentecost and Kimberly Murray, below, prepared pizza with students after reading "How Pizza Came to Our Town." Tamara Jackson and Latoya Wilson, right, readied students for the busy reading extravaganza.

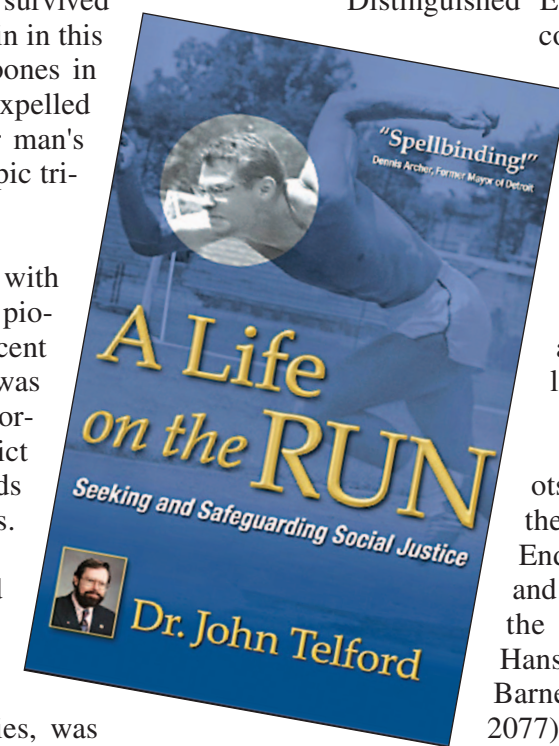


BOOK REVIEWS: Recommended Reading

Dr. John Telford has led more lives than a cat and survived more setbacks. A Detroit teacher 50 years ago and again in this century, he bled in the amateur boxing ring, broke bones in football and fights, was incarcerated as a teen and expelled from a Detroit high school, sired a son with another man's wife, and tore his hamstring muscle in the 1956 Olympic trials.

Decades later, skinheads riddled his Rochester house with midnight gunfire when as deputy superintendent he pioneered the hire of black administrators in that 98 percent white district. He endured a messy divorce he admits was his fault. He was fired from two DPS executive directorships for whistle blowing and from the Madison District Public Schools superintendency for bringing in hundreds of Detroit students against the wishes of white residents.

But he also outran Olympic champions, was named to the 1957 NCAA All-America team, was undefeated at 400 meters on the U.S. team in Europe, and came home to coach champions in the PSL. Decades later, he led school districts, directed human-rights agencies, was inducted into sports halls of fame, was named a Kettering Foundation IDEA



Distinguished Educator in 1982, wrote more than 1,000 newspaper columns (including the current Telford's Telescope column in the Michigan Chronicle), and was named WSU's Distinguished Alumnus of the Year in 2001. The Finney track is named for him.

He also remarried. He and the former Gina Morris—a much-younger old flame he calls "the most beautiful girl in Detroit"—divide their time between his place in the River House on East Jefferson (where he still votes) and a Tudor mansion he bought two years ago on a little lake in Shelby Township.

Dr. Telford's races, his romances, and his battles with big-ots are all in his spellbinding new autobiography, "A Life on the RUN - Seeking and Safeguarding Social Justice." Endorsed by Dennis Archer, Geoffrey Fieger, Huel Perkins, and NAACP director Heaster Wheeler among other notables, the 420-page, illustrated, hardcover book—which Sen. Hansen Clarke calls "unadulterated dynamite"—is available at Barnes & Noble bookstores, at Harmonie Park Press (586-979-2077), and at www.ALifeontheRUN.com. Pick it up and you won't put it down.

By John Mohn Burton International School

What if you woke up one morning to find that everything you believed about school reform was wrong? This would depend, of course, upon what you believe. If you're like the President of the United States, most state and federal legislators, a host of billionaire philanthropists, and at least one emergency financial manager, you believe that test scores are the best indication of student academic success, and that these scores can be used to judge the success or failure of schools, teachers and administrators.

In her new book, "The Death and Life of the Great American School System," acclaimed author, research professor and former assistant secretary of education Diane Ravitch disputes widely-held beliefs about testing, accountability, "choice" in education and the supposed success of charter schools.

Once a proponent of No Child Left Behind (NCLB), Ravitch begins her book by explaining why she once supported

Of course, most educators "in the trenches" have seen the fallacy of NCLB since its inception. Given the overriding importance placed on test scores, it is inevitable that educators and school district leaders might react in ways that are ultimately counter productive:

- Excessive time and resources spent on "test prep" activities
- Reduced teaching of subjects that are not tested
- A general dilution of the curriculum
- Attempts to cheat or otherwise "game" the system

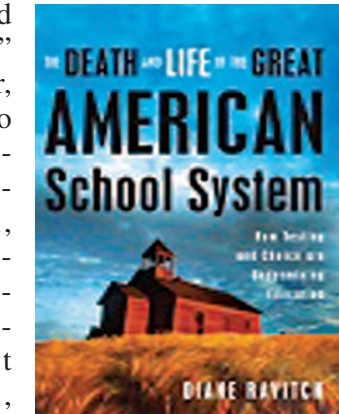
Chapter-by-chapter, Ravitch plumbs the depths of what has become the latest scheme to reform our nation's schools. One chapter, especially compelling to today's Detroit educators, titled "The Billionaire Boy's Club," sheds light on the murky world of the philanthropic organizations that would seek to reform education by applying market-based principles.

In another chapter, titled "What

would Mrs. Ratliff Do?" Ravitch tells of her favorite teacher in high school—an "old school" educator, who demanded well-written, grammatically-correct papers, and who instilled in her students a love of great literature. Ravitch speculates that in today's test-scores-are-everything world, Mrs. Ratliff's exceptional abilities would go unnoticed and unappreciated.

Given Ravitch's wide-ranging respect among education experts and policy-makers throughout the political spectrum, this is a very important work. Perhaps it will be a wake-up call to a nation that seems to have forgotten what good education is:

A strong curriculum, high expectations, well-trained teachers who have the respect of the parents and the support of the administration, and a commitment on the part of the citizenry to supply the resources needed.



Grants...

Adult Volunteers

The National Retired Teachers Association honors selected volunteers who are retired educators working with youth. The volunteer activities must address the needs of the youth and the broader community. Groups of retired educators and individuals who volunteer to improve the lives of youth are eligible for recognition. Winners receive an award and publicity regarding their activities. Deadline: June 8. For info, visit www.aarp.org/aarp/NRTA.

Educator Awards

The American Association for the Advancement of Science is offering an award for science teachers who show outstanding leadership. The AAAS Leadership in Science

Education Prize for High School Teachers is designed to recognize excellent high school teachers who develop innovative teaching methods and encourage the next generation of scientists. Funds of \$1,000 are available. Deadline: May 21. For info, visit www.aaas.org/about/qaas/awards/hs_sci_ed_leadership.

Save Our History

The History Channel has opened up its online application process for its annual Save Our History grant program. The program will make up to \$10,000 in grants to organizations that design historic projects and partner with a local elementary, middle or high school. Schools themselves cannot be the applicant so schools must work with a local historic commission

or library to have that organization submit the application on their behalf. Deadline: June 5. For info, visit saveourhistory@rockpa.org.

Earth Sciences

The National Association of Geoscience Teachers is inviting applications for its Outstanding Earth Science Teacher awards. These awards recognize K-12 earth science teachers who make exceptional contributions to stimulating interest in the subject among students. Grants of \$500 and other prizes are available. Deadline: ongoing. For info, visit www.nagt.org.

Barnes & Noble

Barnes & Noble's corporate donations are chiefly focused on literacy,

the arts and preK-12 education. The company offers support for projects that meet its mission, in communities where stores are located, and serve the greater good of the community. Deadline: ongoing. For info, visit contributions@bn.com.

Excellent Schools

The National Association of Secondary School Principals and the MetLife Foundation have teamed up to recognize secondary schools that have made breakthroughs, dramatically improving achievement for students in low-income areas. Middle and high schools in the U.S. are eligible to be nominated for the \$5,000 prize. Deadline: May 15. For info, visit www.principals.org.

DFT Retiree, 102, Talks About Life

Calvin Rhodes will gladly talk to you about the meaning of life. At 102 years old, the retired DFT member has some definite opinions. "I'm so appalled about what's happening in the world today," he said at the April 20 DFT Retirees Chapter meeting, "that people of goodwill don't speak out against all that's happening."

Namely, the greed and selfishness. When so many people are in need, he thinks it unjust that others make off with incredible wealth.

"Nothing that we have belongs to us," the former math and science teacher said. "It's all material and it's going to go away."

Born in the Theodore Roosevelt administration, Rhodes has lived through 19 American presidents. The best era, he says, was Franklin Roosevelt and the New Deal.

"He put money into people's hands," Rhodes says of FDR.

In his opinion, that's what should be happening today. He supports stimulating the economy by putting money in the hands of people with needs.

"They can't put it in the bank," he said. "They can't save it for a rainy day. The only thing they can do is spend it because they have so many needs. They'll buy a hamburger."

Rhodes peppers his talk with quotes from the Bible. He abhors jealousy and dishonesty.

"There are too many people who accept something for nothing."



DFT retiree Lucille Miller gives birthday wishes to Calvin Rhodes, 102.

Roll Call...

— Detroit Federation of Teachers Membership Meeting — January 14, 2010

Acad. of Americas Attn'd., Drew	Bunche Burns	Cooke Cooley	Edmonson Ellington	Hancock Hanstein	Logan Longfellow	Office of Mathematics Owen	SSW Stewart
Adult Ed. Eastside Adult Ed. Westside	Burt Burton	Cooley North Wing Crockett	Farwell Ferguson	Harding Harms	MacDowell Malcolm X	Osborn Parker	Stewart Southwestern
Ann Arbor Trail	Burton Int'l	Davis Davison	Field, M Finney	Henderson Holcomb	Mann Marquette	Pasteur Pershing	Spain Stewart
Bagley	Campbell	Denby Detroit City High	Fisher Upper Fisher Lower	Holmes, O.W. Homebound	Marshall, T Mason	Pasteur Pershing	Taft
Barsamian	Carleton	Detroit City High	Fitzgerald Ford High	Homebound	Maybury McColl	Psych. Serv. Pulaski	Thirkell Trix
Barton	Carstens	DFT	Gardner McColl	Hutchinson Jamieson	McFarlane Mumford	Randolph Renaissance	Turnng Point
Bates	Carver	Detroit Int'l Acad	Glazer	Jemison Jordan	Mumford Murphy	Robeson Robinson	Van Zile
Beard ECE	Cass	DTC - East	Golightly Ed. Ctr	Keidan Kettering	Neinas Nichols	Rutherford Sampson	Vetol
Beckham	Central	DTC - West	Golightly	King, J.R King High	Noble Nolan	School for Deaf Schulze	Webster
Bethune	Chrysler	Dossin	Durfee	Law Lessenger	Northeast Attd. Northwestern	Scott Sherill	White, J.L White, K.B. Young
Blackwell	Clark	Douglass, F	Duffield	Hamilton			
Bow	Clemente	Ford	Durfee				
Boykin	Clippert	Ford	Earhart				
Breithaupt	Coffey	Garvey	Early Intervention				
Brewer	Comm. Disorders	Golightly	Edison				
Brown	Comm. & Media Arts	Gomper	Edmonson				
Boynton	Cody	Greenfield Union	Edington				

— Detroit Federation of Teachers Membership Meeting — February 11, 2010

Acad of Americas Adult Ed Eastside	Burton Int'l Campbell	Davis Day School for Deaf	Farwell Ferguson	Holmes, O.W. Homebound Teaching	Malcolm X Mann	Owen Parker	Stewart Taft
Ann Arbor Trail	Carver	Denby Detroit City High	Field, M Finney	Howe Hutchins	McColl McFarlane	Pasteur Pershing	Thirkell Trombly
Attn'd, Drew	Cass	Detroit City High	Finney Fisher Upper	Jemison Jordan	Mark Twain Marquette	Phoenix Priest	Van Zile Vernor
Bagley	Central	DFT	Fisher Lower FLICS	Keidan Kettering	Marshall, T Maybury	Psych. Serv. Pulaski	Webster West Side Alt
Barsamian	Clark	Detroit Int'l Acad	Ford Ford	King, J.R King High	Maybury Mumford	Randolph Renaissance	Western White, J.L
Barton	Clemente	Detroit School of Arts	Garvey Golightly	Law Logan	Murphy Neinas	Robeson Robinson	White, K.B. Wilkins
Beckham	Clippert	DTC - East	Hamilton	Lessenger Longfellow	Nichols Northwestern	Sampson Sherill	Wright Young
Bennett	Comm. Disorders	DTC - West	Hancock	Loving Ludington	Office of Mathematics Osborn Global Comm	Southwestern Spain	
Blackwell	Comm. Media Arts	Dixon	Hanstein		Osborn College Prep	SSW	
Bow	Cody	Dossin	Harms				
Boykin	Cooley	Durfee	Henderson				
Breithaupt	Cooley North Wing	Earhart	Holmes, A.L.				
Brewer	Crary	Early Intervention Diag.					
Brown	Crockett Career Tech.	Edison					
Bunche	Crockett High	Edmonson					
Burt	Crosman	Ellington					

— Detroit Federation of Teachers Membership Meeting — March 11, 2010

Bagley	Burt	Cooley North-Wing	Durfee	Golightly CTC	Kettering	Marshall, T.	Osborn Upper
Barsamian	Campbell	Crockett CTC	Earhart	Crockett CTC	King, J.R.	Maybury	Osborn MST
Bates	Carleton	Crockett High	Early Int. Diag.	Edmonson	King High	McFarlane	Owen
Beard	Carstens	Davis	Edmonson	Hancock	Law	McKinney	Parker
Beckham	Carver	Davison	Ellington	Hanstein	Lessenger	Mumford	Pasteur
Bethune	Cass	Day School for Deaf	Farwell	Henderson	Logan	Murphy	Pershing
Blackwell	Central	Detroit School of Arts	Ferguson	Holcomb	Loving	Nichols	Pulaski
Bow	Cooke	Denby	Finney	Holmes, A.L.	Longfellow	Noble	Priest
Boykin	Comm. Disorders	Detroit City High	Fisher-Lower	Howe	Ludington	Nolan	Phych. Serv.
Breithaupt	Comm. Disorders	Detroit Int'l Acad.	Fisher-Upper	Hutchins	MacDowell	Northwestern	Randolph
Brewer	Clippert	DTC-East	Fitzgerald	Jemison	Malcolm X	Office of Mathematics	Renaissance
Brown	Cody	DTC-West	Ford High	Keidan	Mann		Robeson
Bunche	Cooley	Dixon	Garvey		Mark Twain		Sampson
							Scott

2010 AFT Convention Delegates

By DFT Bylaws, all DFT Officers and DFT Executive Board members are delegates and will represent the membership at the 2010 AFT and AFT Michigan Conventions. In addition, 20 other delegates are elected to attend the

2010 AFT Conventions.

The AFT Convention takes place in Seattle July 7-11. The AFT Michigan Convention takes place May 15 at the Detroit Marriott Renaissance Center.

AFT CONVENTION DELEGATES

OFFICERS:

Johnson, Keith
O'Keefe, Mark
Jones, Marjorie
McGriff, Othniel
Clark, Felecia
Muslim, Nadonya

Richardson, Joyce
Ross, Regina
Conaway, Nicole
Sims, Linda
Ellison, Tonya
Jamison, Sharon
Porter, Gena
Brown, Nancy
Childers, Enid

EXECUTIVE BOARD:

Adams, Valda
Brown, Kurtis
Daly, Anita
Flaherty, Doris
Gibson, Victor
Hatten-Mathis, Valeria
Lee, Sidney
Moroni, Mark
Newberry, Wendy
Puryear, Michelle
Scott, Lisa

ALTERNATE DELEGATES:

Gardner, William T.
Portnoy, Steven
Morrison, Shirley
Schenk, Michael
Reaves, Edna M.
Curry, Jan
Sims, LaShawn
Clark, Jennetta L.
Summers, Judy
Butler, Tyra L.

REGULAR DELEGATES:

Conn, Stephen
Miller, M. Heather
Johnson, Gregory
Burton, Patrick
Simpkins, Luciana A.
Scott, Joel
Bonner, Christal
Byrd, Wilbert
Ford, Veronica Johnson
Dixon, Regina
Porter, Kimberly

DFT Election Committee

s/ Beverly Wilkerson, Chair
s/ Tracy L. Arneau
s/ Glenda Booker
s/ Dorothy Burk
s/ Mary Helen D'Angelo
s/ Kim Ewing
s/ Yolanda Stewart

AFT MICHIGAN CONVENTION DELEGATES

OFFICERS:

Johnson, Keith
O'Keefe, Mark
Jones, Marjorie
McGriff, Othniel
Clark, Felecia
Muslim, Nadonya

Summers, Judy
Clark, Jennetta L.
Butler, Tyra L.
Simpkins, Luciana A.
Crump, Jennifer
Rasheed, Vanessa
Brown, Andrea R.
Dixon, Regina
Parnell, Vanessa

EXECUTIVE BOARD:

Adams, Valda
Brown, Kurtis
Daly, Anita
Flaherty, Doris
Gibson, Victor
Hatten-Mathis, Valeria
Lee, Sidney
Moroni, Mark
Newberry, Wendy
Puryear, Michelle
Scott, Lisa

ALTERNATE DELEGATES:

Scott, Joel
Stewart, Yolanda
Bonner, Christal
Ford, Veronica Johnson
Benson, Stacey
Liddell-Love, Kimberly
Smith, Theresa
Conaway, Nicole
Goss, Jamell
Byrd, Wilbert

REGULAR DELEGATES:

Conn, Stephen
Miller, M. Heather
Portnoy, Steven
Johnson, Gregory
Schenk, Michael
Morrison, Shirley
Gardner, William T.
Reaves, Edna
Sims, LaShawn
Curry, Jan
Burton, Patrick

DFT Election Committee

s/ Beverly Wilkerson, Chair
s/ Tracy L. Arneau
s/ Glenda Booker
s/ Dorothy Burk
s/ Mary Helen D'Angelo
s/ Kim Ewing
s/ Yolanda Stewart

EDUCATING THE WHOLE CHILD THROUGH MUSIC

By Charlene Uresy, Spain School

Spain School offers music education to educate the whole child. Teachers Deanna Burrows Martinez and Robert Hawkins, and accompanist Gary Haverkate, deliver this core curriculum to the students. The introduction to music education begins in kindergarten and goes through third grade, with general music classes and the debut of the wind instrument recorder. Orchestra teacher Burrows Martinez teaches a beginning violin class to all fourth-graders. From there students may select classes including orchestra, band and drum line taught by Hawkins.

Within these classes there is so much opportunity to explore the possibilities of music. All fourth- and sixth-graders attend a live Detroit Symphony Orchestra performance at the Max Fisher Music Center. Orchestra students participate in the nationally renowned Sphinx Competition in Ann Arbor. The band has performed for Pepsi Cola, the Detroit Food Cooperative and the PAL Football League. The drum line brings excitement to the community in performances throughout the year. The young musicians also participate in Noel Night, which brings holiday spirit to the city each year.

The Spain music department has received honors on the state level. It participated in the Michigan School Band and Orchestra Association (MSCBOA) qualifying for state. And last year the Advanced Orchestra received a Division 1 rating, the highest, beating out suburban and private schools! Spain music students auditioned and won placement at the Summer Blue Lake Fine Arts Camp in Muskegon — an experience they will have with them for the rest of their lives.

When leaving Spain, most of the music students continue music education in high school. Once there, the young musicians discover they are with like-minded students, interested in music. This musical community helps to keep students in high school and to graduate!

College exams scores, such as ACT and SAT, are higher among music students. They have better memory, critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

Spain School understands and encourages the creative spirit that comes from music education. Their students think, communicate and get along-better with people, making them better citizens. Learning music helps students build valuable skills for their future.



Pictured above: Orchestra teacher Deanna Burrows Martinez, accompanist Gary Haverkate, and band teacher Robert Hawkins deliver music education to Spain students.

Calendar

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

MAY

- 3 Special Education Chapter Meeting, 4:30 p.m.
- 6 Executive Board Meeting, 4:30 p.m.
- 6 Preschool/Head Start Chapter Meeting, 4:30 p.m.
- 11 Social Workers Chapter Meeting, 4:30 p.m.
- 12 Attendance Agents Chapter Meeting, 4:00 p.m.
- 13 General Membership Meeting, 4:30 p.m.
- 18 Retirees Chapter Meeting, 11:30 a.m.
- 18 Educational Technicians Chapter Meeting, 3:30 p.m.
- 20 Psychological Services Chapter Meeting, 4:30 p.m.
- 20 African Centered Education Chapter, 4:30 p.m.

JUNE

- 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

