

THE DETROIT teacher

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Pasteur School Returns to Splendor of 40s

“Just close your eyes and imagine not Beyonce but Etta James singing at the inauguration,” said teacher Maia Stephens.

Third-grade teacher Yvette French couldn’t control her excitement at a standing room only crowd at Pasteur Elementary School. She was ready for the grand finale – to lift the curtain for Etta James singing “At Last” for President Barack Obama and the First Lady’s inaugural dance.

Of course her students were fill-ins for the real president and first lady. But you couldn’t tell it from the grace and confidence of the students stealing the show.

French and her colleagues organized two programs March 18 called “Return to Splendor” to celebrate the rich ancestral heritage of African Americans, the recreation of the 1930s and 40s, and the election of Barack Obama.

Students sang African American spirituals, recited poetry of James Weldon Johnson and speeches by Martin Luther King Jr., rehearsed songs of the Civil Rights era – all in a quest to expose the students to their American heritage and the splendor of the artists, activists and thinkers of by-gone eras.

Violinists, dancers and even a saxophonist entertained parents and grandparents in the splendid 40s style.

“I was over the moon,” French said. “I felt very proud of our students because they worked so hard.”



Third grade teacher Yvette French organized the 40s style song and dance extravaganza at Pasteur Elementary School.

ALERT! We Need You at Meetings

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

Meeting Dates

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

Union Reaches Out to Hear from Members

DFT President Keith Johnson listened to the concerns of the union’s different classifications, during a series of forums in March. The DFT represents 35 positions, including teachers, substitutes, educational technicians, psychologists and others.

Johnson held the meetings in an effort to address issues and concerns unique to these job classifications in order to serve them better.

Cheryl Taylor took the mike to unload on things that irk her as a Substitute 3, mostly the lack of respect she feels as a sub.

“Even though we know our jobs, the fact is we are treated very badly,” Taylor said.

An educational technician said he has a master’s degree but still is in the salary and position of ed tech, which requires an asso-



DFT members attended forums.

ciate’s degree. Substitutes asked for clarification on full certification, student teaching while working, and the six credit hours they need to keep their positions.

To keep their status, Substitute 3s, which have benefits and higher pay than Substitute 2s, must either be certified or complete a

minimum of six hours of course work a year in an approved plan of study leading toward teaching certification.

Johnson told members that they need to perform the duties of their position and “stay in your lane.” He noted that sometimes problems arise when members even temporarily fill administrative roles, because that opens them to liability.

Johnson held the meetings to get a clearer understanding of the challenges members face. He also promised to be available to hear their issues and take up any contractual breaches. The meetings were well attended and well received.

“This is very informative and very supportive of ed techs,” said Veda Jenkins-Sigmon, chair of the Ed Tech Chapter. “Every thing he stated is correct.”

REACHING OUT TO THE DFT:

A Good First Step for Robert Bobb

Robert Bobb, the newly appointed financial manager for Detroit Public Schools, has a mission. He must restructure and restore fiscal solvency to a dysfunctional school district whose perpetual mismanagement of valuable funds has left this school district on the verge of financial and academic collapse.

President's Report



Keith Johnson

Mr. Bobb is going to have to make tough, unpopular decisions, eliminate overhead, pay off vendors, close schools, and streamline this district to efficient operating levels. There can be no sacred cows, no pet projects, no special favors solicited or granted if this district is going to restore itself to credibility and create a positive working and learning environment for students and employees.

Mr. Bobb also has to establish a working relationship with the representatives of the employees who work day to day to educate Detroit's 95,000 public school students. He took a great first step in introducing himself to the DFT.

In a one on one meeting with Robert Bobb on March 10, I found him to be an engaging, candid, and well prepared professional who clearly had done his homework on DPS and its challenges. He is acutely aware of the challenges he faces and has no illusions about people being happy to see him here.

It is clear he is less concerned with what people think of him than he is about how effectively he turns this school district around. He also understands the responsi-

bility I have in looking out for the best interest of the DFT. He learned that what is in the best interest of the DFT is in the best interest of Detroit's students as well.

We agree on several points: Teachers must be fairly compensated if they are to be expected to teach under some of the most difficult conditions imaginable. Teachers must be fully equipped with materials and supplies to meet curriculum objectives and goals. Employees must be safe in their working environment and must be respected by students, parents and administrators. All parties must be accountable for the quality of education delivered to our students and must embrace the opportunity and the challenge of making this system work because it is the system we have.

We also agree that it is of paramount importance for school to start on time. That means that we must come to the bargaining table with a singular focus; constructing a contract that is fair and equitable to the Union and to DPS. Mr. Bobb says he wants an "innovative" contract, one that is revolutionary in scope and perspective that focuses on achievement goals.

To that end Mr. Bobb has requested that the two of us meet with Randi Weingarten, President of the American Federation of Teachers, our national organization, to get perspective on the necessary components of a "good contract." I have reached out to President Weingarten to facilitate that request. This speaks to the volume of respect Mr. Bobb has for our national leader, and our organization.

I made it clear to Mr. Bobb that throughout our history we have demonstrated a willingness and ability to operate within the context of DPS's financial challenges and ineptitude, as evidenced by the concessions and cost-saving measures we have negotiated, particularly in 2005 and 2006.

In those two negotiations we attempted to work with the district to allow them to submit a balanced budget, and change their policies and practices in order to become



Robert Bobb, the new financial manager for the Detroit Public Schools, met with DFT President Keith Johnson on March 10.

financially responsible.

However, the district refused to make the tough and necessary decisions to maximize the use of human and monetary resources with emphasis on classroom instruction and instructional support mechanisms to create the optimum opportunity for student achievement.

I also advised him that we would not and could not continue to absorb the financial burden of the district's mismanagement on our backs and in our wallets. We did not cause this mess, and we should not pay for it.

I know that the upcoming negotiations will be tough, but I also believe that if we come to the table prepared with facts we will get it done. I know that Executive Vice-President Mark O'Keefe and Financial Analyst Patrick Falcusan will fully dissect and analyze the district's finances and be prepared to operate within that context.

While we know this is not the truth, not enough people are listening to us because they are too busy blaming us.

I am asking every DFT member to make one \$10 contribution to our DFT/COPE fund. One such donation each year will generate approximately \$75,000 to our political action campaign to elect people to office who are education and educator friendly. Our rights, benefits, and even our jobs could be at stake if we don't have the right people in office.

I ask you again. Is it worth \$10 to you? Please send your \$10 contribution via check or money order to DFT/COPE, c/o The Detroit Federation of Teachers, 2875 W. Grand Blvd., Detroit, MI 48202.

We will be realistic in our proposals and assertive in our belief in a fair and equitable agreement, a sentiment I shared with Mr. Bobb.

At the conclusion of our very productive meeting, Mr. Bobb requested an opportunity to introduce himself at the March 12 membership meeting, a request I enthusiastically honored.

When Mr. Bobb came to the meeting, he received a warm welcome and ovation and reiterated his abiding respect and admiration for the challenges we have undertaken.

Let's hope that respect and admiration is reflected at the bargaining table as well.

Is Your Job Worth \$10

By Keith Johnson, DFT President

We need lawmakers and other policy makers in office who will stand with us and work with us to restore respectability to the Detroit Public Schools. To get them elected takes money, pure and simple.

Is it worth \$10 to you?

The quality of education in Detroit's public school has become a national punch-line and a source of embarrassment. As a result, non-educators continue to blame the Union for protecting poor teachers and contributing to the inferior education of Detroit's children.

No one seems to want to acknowledge, and more importantly correct, the perpetual blend of mismanagement and systemic failures that our teachers and instructional support personnel have to endure while educating our students.

There are continuing efforts by these non-educators to eliminate and limit collective bargaining rights, eliminate tenure, infuse merit pay, expand the number of charter schools and make it easier to fire teachers. They believe this will motivate our teachers to "improve their dedication to our children."

THE DETROIT teacher

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Editor — Margaret Weertz

UPDATES...

Members Must Notify DFT if Served a Summons

If a DFT member is served a court summons or notice of a lawsuit regarding his or her employment, it should be sent immediately to the DFT. These documents must be forwarded to General Counsel within seven calendar days of being served.

Friend of Labor—Aldo Vagnozzi Dies

Former State Rep. Aldo Vagnozzi, 83, passed away March 22 after battling pancreatic cancer. Rep. Vagnozzi (D-Farmington Hills) served three terms in the Michigan House of Representatives, was the first directly-elected mayor of Farmington Hills, and was a friend of education and labor.



1925-2009

Vagnozzi served as editor of the Michigan State AFL-CIO News and the Detroit Labor News. He also worked for Cy Aaron Publications and Inland Press as an editorial consultant. His late wife, Lois Vagnozzi, served as editor of The Detroit Teacher for 25 years.

“I called him Lord Mayor when he was the mayor of Farmington Hills,” remembers DFT President Keith Johnson. “He was a staunch advocate for public schools and public school teachers. He was a visionary in terms of being a legislator and mayor. For him to be a Democrat in a particularly Republican district was a testament to people’s ability to see beyond the political agenda and see what was in his heart.”

Retiree Chapter Meets Monthly

The DFT has a very active RETIREES CHAPTER that meets monthly from Sept. through June. The meetings are normally held on the third Tuesday of each month at 11:30 a.m. at the DFT headquarters.

Meetings usually include a guest speaker who focuses on retiree issues, which may include insurances, benefits, health, safety, financial, leisure, legal and volunteer opportunities. The Social Committee plans group activities, including plays, concerts, tours and special events.

Many members participate in continued professional, union and political activities by volunteering for tutoring, lobbying, phone banking to help schools, their union and their retirement system. Many understand that their vigilance and volunteering are needed to maintain the many benefits that were earned through years of hard work and sacrifice of their fellow teachers and unionists.

We ask that all DFT members who are considering retirement join the RETIREES CHAPTER. Full membership privileges include voting rights in DFT elections and pay dues of \$206.58. Regular retiree mem-

bership is only \$30 per year, which includes the Detroit Teacher newspaper. Once you retire, please call the union office for an application to the RETIREES CHAPTER or send in the following information along with your membership level payment to the DFT office at 2875 W. Grand Blvd., Detroit MI 48202: Name, Address, DPS file number, Date of Retire, Length of Service to DPS, and School Retired From.

AFT Retirement Committee Report

By Jewel Gines
DFT Retiree Chapter Chairperson

At its Dec. 2008 meeting, the AFT retirement committee established priorities for this two-year convention cycle. These recommendations follow the priorities outlined in the AFT Futures II Report and the 1998 AFT Executive Council Task Force on Retirees.

Two of the ten recommendations were to “Help the AFT improve reporting on retired members” and to “Increase communication on retirement issues.”

Lori Smetanka, director of the National Long Term Care Ombudsman Resource Center, presented a program that began in 1965 when Medicare and Medicaid provided public money for nursing home care. Because of abuse, neglect, substandard care, and fires resulting in deaths, congressional hearings in 1970 concluded that improvements in quality of care were needed.

In 1978 all states were requested to operate a Nursing Home Ombudsman Program. Due to expanded responsibilities, the name was changed to Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program.

The Ombudsman Program was created to represent individuals in long-term care facilities. Ombudsmen help individual residents benefit from relevant laws and regulations. Although they are neutral in their findings, they adhere to strict privacy requirements.

The job description of an Ombudsman is to provide information to residents, promote development of citizen organizations, provide technical support for resident and family councils, recommend changes in law regulations, and policies to benefit residents, assist residents in asserting rights, identify, investigate, and resolve complaints made by or on behalf of residents.

To locate the Long Term Care Ombudsman Program in your area: www.ltombudsman.org. or call 202-332-2275.



Harding Holds Living Afro-Centric Museum

Teachers at Harding Elementary School on the northwest side opened a one-day Afro-Centric Living Museum March 12 to put history in action. The students did a Motown Review as well as acted as African American heroes Langston Hughes, Martin Luther King Jr., Tiger Woods, Dr. Ben Carson, Harriet Tubman and Frederick Douglass. “It makes it come to life this way,” said science teacher Leslie Smith, left, who organized the event with special education teacher Wendy Newberry and music teacher Edward Gooch.



Are You Psychologically Ready to Retire?

By Patrick Falcusan
DFT Retirement Counselor

I counsel hundreds of DFT members each year to help them decide if they’re ready to retire.

My responsibility is to help members crunch the numbers and find out whether their financial house is in order.



Patrick Falcusan

In most cases, I can demonstrate that they can retire with an adequate pension and savings to enable them to jump into the next phase of life without financial worries.

In some cases, after we look at the numbers, members find out that they only make a few thousand dollars more working than if they retired. In essence, they are going to work not for \$72,000 but about \$7,000 to \$10,000.

That is, we consider what they’d bring home with their pension versus what they actually bring home by working.

In other cases, members discover that between their pension (based on 30 years or more) and Social Security, they are

actually paying to come to work.

But the money is the easy part.

Prospective retirees need to decide whether they are psychologically ready to retire. For some, that’s easy too. They know if the money is right, they are on their way to world travel, gardening and sleeping in late.

For others though, it’s much more tangled. Their identity and self worth is embedded in their profession and the challenge that’s at work each day. Their social life is at the school where colleagues have turned into dear friends.

Retirement is a much more significant decision than moving to another job. And I’ve counseled many people whose conflicting feelings make this passage especially emotional. And sometimes, that leads them to say they just aren’t ready.

However, for the members who do retire, I traditionally get the same responses to the four questions I ask members a year after they retire:

Do you miss teaching? “No.”

Do you have any regrets? “Yes, I should have retired earlier.”

How about your money? “I have more money than I ever had.”

How about your time? “I’m so busy I don’t know how I ever found time to go to work.”



Detroit Team Gets National Attention

Crary Elementary School pre-kindergarten teacher Carla Clavon, left, and paraprofessional Rosemarie Kirtz are featured on the cover of the PSRP Reporter, an AFT publication:

When you ask paraprofessionals in successful classroom teams what they like best about working with their teachers, they say it's the respect. And when you ask if there's a way to build respect if it isn't there, they say "communication."

Talk with your partner and the rest will follow, says Rosemarie Kirtz, a pre-K paraprofessional at Crary Elementary School in Detroit who has worked with teacher Carla Clavon for three years. "We're an excellent team," says Kirtz, a member of the Detroit Federation of Paraprofessionals. "In fact, our colleagues are jealous of us. They're like, 'There couldn't be that much love.' But there is." It's the same story with other paraprofessionals and teachers all over.

Courtesy of PSRP Reporter, January/February 2009

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Barbara Jordan Challenge Kids

Why do you run the water while you brush your teeth? That was the discussion recently among the pre-teens and teachers at Barbara Jordan School. The teachers are challenging students to look at embedded habits that are wasteful as part of a school-wide environmental program.

Why does every grocery item go in a single-use plastic bag?

"There's not the connection of where this goes afterward," said Chevon Kay, a middle school science teacher.

"Follow the path after the trash," she says. Or better yet, don't make any to begin with.

Chevon and K-5 science teacher Lori Mitz have joined forces with Lizzy Baskerville of the East Michigan Environmental Action Council to teach students to reduce, reuse and recycle their consumption.

Barbara Jordan is part of a Greener Schools program that is integrating environmental education in DPS. Several schools are having a competition

The school also started an organic garden and June 5 at the Main Art Theatre in Royal Oak.

Mitz and Kay said the challenge is greater today in our society, which is especially hazardous and toxic to our children's quick studies.

"It's just habits," Mitz said. "We just have to break them."

Detroit Public School Teacher goes to China

For 10 days this winter, Rhoda Littles' world changed. The Detroit teacher was immersed in Chinese culture and education systems as part of the People to People Ambassador Programs.

The business teacher at A. Philip Randolph Career Technical Center was part of a education delegation to exchange ideas with professional counterparts in China.



Detroit teacher Rhoda Littles visiting several schools in China.

Visiting Beijing, Guiyang and Qingyan classrooms, Littles studied the professional teaching standards, equity and access of education in kindergarten through university.

"The experience was life changing to me as an educator," said Littles, a National Board Certified teacher. "The major difference in American and Chinese education is that the U.S. does not set expectations on the family to challenge their youth intellectually."

"The children were very disciplined and they didn't want to dishonor their family by doing poorly."



Science teacher Barbara Jordan is part of a school-wide environmental program.

Urban Teachers Lead to Recycle



Teachers Lori Mitz and Chevon Kay started a successful recycling program.

to see which recycles more by weight.

will be featured at the Green Screen Film Festival

because these students grew up in a disposable environment. But the students, they say, are

break them of their habits.”



Pictured, left to right: Annette Neal, Christopher Robinson, Devinnia Moore, Ms. WaSeana Ballard, Ms. Lakia Wilson, Dazae Peoples, Mrs. Tiffany Taylor Tait, Erika Reid, Lauren Ransom, Ms. Daisy Benton, Shamelia Washington, Ashanti Dixon, and Thomaja Boyd.

Dr. Betty Shabazz Academy Opens at Spain School

By Charlene Uresy, Physical Education Teacher

Spain School has embarked upon an exciting new mentoring program. The Dr. Betty Shabazz Academy, a program sponsored by Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Inc., prepares girls ages 11-14 for the 21st century.

The Academy provides leadership through service learning, instruction in class work, cultural events, and college exposure. Teachers who are Deltas and participating students are very excited about this program.

The Academy recently completed a service project of collecting stuffed animals and donating them to sick children at Ronald McDonald House. Before donating their stuffed animals, participants gave remarks on why they were making this donation.

The group toured the facilities and learned how Ronald McDonald House provides a much-needed service for sick children and their parents. They became more aware of how important it is to help bring smiles to others in need.

The combination of the Dr. Betty Shabazz Academy and Spain School, taking measures to prepare girls to become happy and successful women, provides a great service to our city and country. This is a wonderful opportunity that Detroit Public Schools provides for its students.

AND I STILL RISE

By Barbara Yancy-Braceful
Barbara Jordan School

Though I'm often disrespected, yelled and sometimes cursed at, and just plain misunderstood,
I still rise,

Though it's sometimes frustrating at 6:30 in the AM to be stuck in traffic,
slipping and sliding, moving forward through any and all nature's elements
(and I'm not even a mailman),
I still rise,

Though there may be someone waiting for me, who will continue to curse and yell at me,
and be disrespectful, (a parent you say),
I still rise,

And every two weeks when I open that green
or purple advice, all I can do is shake my
head,
but I still rise.



Often misused, and sometimes confused, why
day after day I take the abuse, and wonder
why I did not choose some other profession,
anything else but this,
but still I rise,

I rise each day for those who come back, say thank you and are doing well...
maybe in college, or employed, not in jail,
I rise each day for that good morning and a smile from a person who has walked in my
shoes...(Good Morning Principal...).

You may be wondering why I still teach? Because...
I do rise each and everyday, knowing that I've answered a calling to do what I do,
that can only be mastered by few.

For — these are takes of a teacher, often abused, and sometimes misused,
and I still rise each and everyday, knowing that someday I will be respected,
no longer neglected and content that,
I decided to still rise!

Detroit Asian Teachers Promote Heritage

Willie DeChavez, Mumtaz Haque and Ning Xue hail from different countries but have a common mission — to promote their rich Asian Pacific heritage to Detroiters.

The Detroit teachers are rallying for their latest project — a food, music and dance extravaganza in celebration of Asian Pacific American Heritage Month.

Splendor of the East will be held Friday, May 1 at 7 p.m. at the Ford Community & Performing Arts Center in Dearborn. General admission is \$20 and \$30 and tickets are available by visiting www.capa-mi.org.

“We have a lot of Asian Pacific people living in Detroit,” said

Haque, an Indian American and third grade teacher at Marshall Elementary School.

“Normally every ethnic community does their own celebration. What’s great about this is we have one big celebration for all of us.”

All three Detroit teachers are active in the Council of Asian Pacific Americans. Xue, a Chinese American, teaches at FLICS, the Foreign Language Immersion School. DeChavez, vice president and founding member of CAPA, is Filipino-American and works at Blackwell Institute.

“It’s very rewarding,” DeChavez said. “We are doing educational programs and promoting our heritage.”



GRANTS...

Library Awards

The Gale/Library Media Connection TEAMS Awards are designed to recognize and encourage critical collaborations between teachers and media specialists that promote learning, increase student achievement, and develop the skills students need today. Three winners will receive \$2,500 cash awards, \$500 worth of Gale products, books and more. Past winners have used libraries to ignite interest in history, or used libraries to explore world cultures, or used simulations to explain complex material. **Deadline: June 15, 2009.** For info, visit www.galeschools.com/TEAMS.

Math Mentoring

The Actuarial Foundation offers Advancing Student Achievement (ASA) grants to schools willing to implement a math mentoring program for students using local actuaries as volunteers. ASA projects bring together actuaries as mentors and math educators to provide programs to enhance learning and create a love of math in students. **Deadline: ongoing.** For info, visit www.actuarial-foundation.org.

Innovative Educators

The Heartspring Award for Innovation and Creativity in Special Education is honoring special educa-

tion teachers who are pioneers and use innovation and creativity to get results for children with special needs. Winners receive \$1,000 awards and more. **Deadline: April 20, 2009.** For info, visit www.heartspring.org/award.

Childhood Obesity

The Saucony Run for Good Program was created to address the problem of childhood obesity, which is linked to a lack of physical activity and poor diet choices. The RFG program will award grants to nonprofit organizations that create running and fitness programs for children under 18.

Grants of up to \$10,000 are available for running programs. **Deadline: June 13.** For info, visit www.sauconyrunforgood.com.

Community Projects

The Lowe’s Charitable and Educational Foundation supports community improvement projects and K-12 education. The foundation supports projects such as construction and trades-related education projects, clean-up, landscaping and painting projects, playground improvements, and minor repairs of public school buildings. Gifts range from \$5,000 to \$25,000. For info and applications, visit www.lowes.com.

Technology

Discovery Education and CDWG are sponsoring the Win a Wireless Lab Sweepstakes to help bring classrooms into the 21st century. Educators who enter the sweepstakes may win a mobile wireless lab for their school worth over \$41,000 or other prizes. **Deadline: May 1.** For info, visit www.cdwg.discoverededucation.com.

Music Mini-Grants

The Michael Davis Music Is Revolution Foundation offers mini-grant opportunities for K-12 teachers. The purpose is to help fund activities designed by teachers to improve the quality of music education for their students. Mimi-grants of up to \$500 are available. **Deadline: April 15.** For info, visit www.musicisrevolution.org.

Jordan Fund

Michael Jordan and Nike created the Jordan Fundamentals program to recognize outstanding teaching and creativity in public secondary schools that serve students who are economically disadvantaged. The program gives \$1 million per year to public schools that qualify. Grants average \$10,000. **Deadline: April 15.** For info, visit jf@compass-consult.org or www.nike.com.

Please visit the
New DFT Web site
www.DFT231.com

We Need Alternative High Schools in Detroit

By Alvin A. Sims
Jared W. Finney High School

As a parent of a Detroit Public School student, and a DPS employee, I have several concerns regarding the issues our district faces. My most serious concern is the pervasive violence in our schools, especially our high schools. I have come to realize that the society we live in is very violent.

Historically schools have been a safe haven, protecting our young people from mainstream violence.

Violence has spilled over and is consuming our students and our schools. Parents, teachers, students, and the surrounding school communities have all been victimized by this violence.

Clearly, there is a multiplicity of social issues that have contributed to this rise in violence. Our students have been contaminated by the social pollution of our time. They neither have the social skills nor support from our community to function in this type of dysfunction. Although we can't control their homes, we can create an environment conducive for promoting positive behavior.

As a front line employee (Dean of Students) for the past six years, I have witnessed first hand the surge of violence from year to year. Every year I cringe awaiting the arrival of a new freshman class that is more violent and angrier than the one that preceded it. Parents with underdeveloped personal, parenting and coping skills often knowingly or unknowingly perpetuate this senseless violence. Some students have used the lock from their locker placed inside of a sock as a weapon. I have personally removed three handguns, and countless knives, razors and box cutters from students.

When questioned about their behavior, many students state that their parents armed them with weapons to use as personal protection because they view the school as being unable to provide adequate protection. Students are afraid to come to school because of this violence; others have left our district in a mass exodus in order to escape it. Our teaching staff closes their classroom doors; often afraid to open them, fearing what may lie on the



Alvin A. Sims

other side. The stories of other teachers who have been victimized are often in the news and our staff remembers those stories and works in fear.

"Come Home to D.P.S." is a wonderful slogan, but if "home" is not safe who wants to stay there. We need solutions that match our slogans.

With this information, I would like to make the following recommendations. I believe the district should create a minimum of four alternative high schools specially created for students who have been involved in violent acts with or without weapons.

Vacant or reconstituted DPS buildings can be used to house these students. The schools should be placed strategically, two on the west side and two on the east side, separating our young men and young women within those four schools.

Historically we recycle our administrative transfer students within the district. These students bring the same anger, rage and disruptive behaviors to their new host schools. These students would be placed for one calendar year into this new alternative school. Students would need to meet the following criteria in order to return to their neighborhood school.

- The student must be able to demonstrate a change in behavior.
- The student must be able to identify and control the social/emotional triggers that led to his/her violent behavior.
- The student must maintain a grade point average of at least 2.0.
- The student must have an 80 percent or higher attendance record.
- The student must complete significant amount of course work in conflict resolution and management.

In terms of design, the school should have in place administrators and a staff who believe in change, courses in anger management and conflict resolution, school social workers and group counseling, and a school psychologist.

We need to alleviate violence and fear, and give a ZERO TOLERANCE policy on violence to our parents, students and community. Students will get the help they need. We can no longer operate schools from the past, sit back and watch our district's rapid demise.

We can bring our students "Home to DPS" when we create a positive and empowering environment that alleviates the greatest fear — the fear of violence.

Enrollment & Recruitment Fun Day Fair

The 2009-2010 Enrollment & Recruitment Fun Day Fair for Head Start and preschool children in Detroit will be held:

Thursday, April 23

at the

DFT, 2875 W. Grand Blvd.

from

9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

through the Office of

Primary Education Pre-Kindergarten Programs

Children must be four years old by Dec. 1, 2009 to apply for the 2009-2010 school year. Parents must bring four documents in order to apply for the pre-kindergarten programs:

- Original birth certificate
- Proof of income (FIA payment /voucher, current check stub, SSI statement, Social Security payments)
- Current immunization record
- Child's health insurance card



All DPS elementary schools with Head Start or preschool programs will be open for individual recruitment and enrollment on Friday, April 24. Spring recruitment begins March 16. An Enrollment Fair will be held on April 24 from 7:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. at Law Elementary School.

Head Start is a federally funded program for low-income children and their families. The Great Starts Readiness Program (GSRP) is a state funded Preschool program for four-year-old children, who meet at least two of 24 risk factors.

Enrollment and recruitment will continue throughout the year until all programs are fully enrolled with 17 eligible Head Start students per classroom and 16 GSRP students per classroom. Classroom staffing consists of a teacher with early childhood certification (Z-A endorsement), a School Service Assistant (SSA), and a Noon-Hour Aide.



Marquette Middle School (left to right) first row: Dawana Brown, Principal, Jasmine Owens, DeSare Merritt, Demond Thomas, Assistant Principal; second row: Camren Watson, D'Erricka Jones, Tanjanay Williams, Yolanda Johnson, Cathy Wilkins (DAPCEP Teacher); third row: Raymond Harris, Dajana Ross. Not pictured: Kijuan Gordon, Kathryn Reynolds, Troy Ginyard.

A Former Detroit Public School Student Gives Back

By Cathy Wilkins

Bart Scott, founder of "A Son Never Forgets Foundation" recently gave back when he purchased a laser jet color printer and laminating machine for the Detroit Area Pre-College Engineering Program students and his former teacher of Howe Elementary School, Cathy Wilkins, who now teaches at Marquette Middle School under the leadership of Dawana Brown, principal, and Demond Thomas, assistant principal, of the middle school.

Bart is a graduate of Detroit Southeastern High School where he played football under one of his mentors who has since left the district after 18 years. Scott, #57 of the Baltimore Ravens, has been giving back to his community since he became line-backer five years' ago.

Marquette Middle School DAPCEP students have placed several times in both gold and grand categories during competition.

"It is sometimes difficult to get things completed because of time restraints and limited access to equipment" says Cathy Wilkins, and her dedicated assistant Vivian Wade. The students truly appreciate and thank Bart and his foundation for the generous donation.

The equipment came in use during the 51st Annual Metropolitan Science Fair in March, with Wilkins' students winning a grand prize, four golds and a second place.

There Goes My Raise

By Mark O'Keefe
DFT Executive Vice President

As a classroom teacher, whenever I saw wasteful practices I thought to myself, "That's the reason I didn't get a raise."



Mark O'Keefe

Windows are left open on cold winter days to cool down classrooms that have been overheated: "There goes my raise."

Portables that are wired for the internet within months of being demolished: "There goes my raise."

Vandalism of television sets left in vacated schools that could have been used in other buildings: "There

goes my raise."

Principals forced to pay for new textbooks when perfectly good books were abandoned in nearby vacant schools: "There goes my raise."

Let's do something about this. The arrival of Robert Bobb, our district's new financial manager, gives us an opportunity to present cost-saving suggestions to a new, empowered, receptive audience. Let's present him with ideas to save money to fund the raises we all know we deserve.

I am asking each DFT member to forward any and all cost-saving suggestions to your building representative by April 20. If the building reps will email these suggestions to the DFT office (mokeefe@dft231.com) by April 30, we can present the suggestions in time to begin saving money this school year.

Calendar

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

APRIL

- 2** General Membership Meeting, 4:30 p.m.
- 6** Counselors Chapter Meeting, 4:00 p.m.
- 10-19** Schools Closed, Spring Break
- 20** School Social Workers Chapter Meeting 3:45 p.m.
- 22** Attendance Agents Staff Meeting, 3:00-4:00 p.m.
- 23** Head Start/Preschool Recruitment Fair, 9:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m.

MAY

- 4** Counselors Chapter Meeting, 4:00 p.m.
- 7** Executive Board Meeting, 4:30 p.m.
- 11** School Social Workers Meeting, 3:45 p.m.
- 14** General Membership Meeting, 4:30 p.m.
- 19** Retirees Chapter Meeting, 11:30 a.m.
- 20** Attendance Agents Staff Meeting, 3:00-4:00 p.m.
- 21** Education Technicians Meeting, 4:15 p.m.
- 26** Nurses Chapter Meeting, 4:30 p.m.
- 28** Executive Board Meeting, 4:30 p.m.

Detroit Federation of Teachers

Election of Three (3) Election Committee Members (Term of Office: March 2009 – March 2011)

OFFICIAL RESULTS

Following are the results of the election held at the March 12, 2009 General Membership meeting:

Booker, Glenda	106	Elected
Ewing, Kim Travis	100	Elected
Jackson, Rynel	131	
Rasheed, Vanessa	60	
Sims, LaShawn	51	
Stewart, Yolanda	64	Elected

Detroit Federation of Teachers Election Committee:

/s/ Beverly Wilkerson, Chairperson	/s/ Mary Helen D'Angelo
/s/ Keshia Allen	/s/ Edna Reaves
/s/ Dorothy Burk	/s/ Melissa Stewart