

THE DETROIT teacher

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TIP LAWSUIT IS BEING APPEALED BY DPS

Administrative Law Judge Tyra Wright has issued an order to DPS to immediately refund the TIP deductions to the plaintiffs who filed the complaint with the Wage and Hours Division of the Michigan Employee Relations Committee (MERC). The district has already filed an appeal of this ruling since it was a negotiated concession between the parties as prescribed under the Public Employees Relations Act (PERA).

The attorney for the plaintiffs has sent out a petition/application asking interested members who wish to join the lawsuit to complete the form.

We encourage all DFT members NOT TO COMPLETE THE FORM. Once the case is FINALLY adjudicated, and IF THE JUDGMENT IS SUSTAINED, the DFT will file an immediate motion for the refund to be returned to ALL DFT MEMBERS FREE OF CHARGE TO THE MEMBERS. There is no need for members to take action at this time.

While we fully anticipate the judgment to be overturned, we will wait for the final decision of the courts and provide further direction to the membership. We will keep you updated as the case proceeds.

Keith R. Johnson
DFT President



Layoffs Disregard Commitment to Transform Detroit Schools

By Randi Weingarten
AFT President

Detroit Public Schools Financial Manager Robert Bobb said he will use Michigan's emergency management law to modify or void existing collective bargaining agreements with the DFT. On April 15, he issued layoff notices to all 5,466 DFT members, and said he expected to close as many as 25 public schools in June. He will issue more notices in the coming weeks to the other bargaining units and will send nonrenewal notices to 250 administrators.

WASHINGTON—Everyone understands that Detroit and its school system are facing a serious financial crisis, but the key to solving it in the best interest of students is to work with—not around—teachers, school staff, parents and others. Robert Bobb's district-wide layoff of every Detroit teacher, coupled with threats to unilaterally modify or void the contract between the district and the

teachers union and lay off other school employees, is shocking and disregards a commitment he made just 16 months ago to transform schools collaboratively. The approach used in the 2009 collective bargaining negotiations resulted in a progressive education reform plan and cost savings. There is no greater attack on a community than one made on its schools, and Bobb has launched an attack that will be devastating for kids and the community.

Detroit teachers agreed—in the 2009-10 school year, in the midst of the worst effects of the great recession—to help stabilize the city by making extraordinary financial sacrifices and implementing progressive provisions to raise academic achievement. The groundbreaking teacher contract represented a shared commitment to transforming Detroit schools by developing a comprehensive teacher evaluation system with peer assistance and review, providing meaningful professional staff development, implementing research-based

“best practices” programs at priority (low-performing) schools, and other programs to improve teacher quality and boost student achievement. The contract also empowered teachers and staff to choose transformative programs for their schools. The advantage of this approach is exemplified by the United Way Venture Fund, a highly successful program to turn around high schools.

The district and the DFT agreed in a covenant to “jointly, with all our resources, commit to transform the Detroit Public Schools.” Bobb now appears poised to turn his back on the covenant and smart investments by making cuts that will result in huge class sizes; an end to neighborhood schools; a halt to genuine and promising education reforms; and silencing teachers, staff and parents when it comes to having a say regarding the education of Detroit students. The school district owes it to the community to resolve its budget problems, as it did in December 2009, in a way that doesn't abandon its kids and its educators.

CLOSING CATHERINE FERGUSON JEOPARDIZES TWO GENERATIONS OF CHILDREN

Keith R. Johnson
DFT President

Six years ago, with the closing of the Charles Vincent Academy for Young Women, Catherine Ferguson (CFA) remained the only Detroit Public School with a program geared specifically for young pregnant women and young women with children.

President's Report



Keith Johnson

Many people vociferously objected to closing Vincent but took solace that CFA would still be there to ensure these young women have the opportunity to complete their education and learn the vital lessons of responsible parenting and care-giving for their babies.

Now with the proposed closing of CFA, or making it available to a charter operator, the future of the school and the invaluable service it provides is in jeopardy. The futures of the young women attending CFA and their children are also in jeopardy.

CFA is a derivative of the Infant Toddler Program that began in the late 1960s at the former Murray-Wright High School, a program that my recently deceased mother helped to build into the most successful program of its kind in the country. The concept was built on the need to address the growing concern of teen-aged pregnancy, adequate pre-natal and post natal care, and early childhood education.

Without such programs, many of these young women face the likely prospect of not finishing high school, thus eliminating post secondary education opportunities, not having sufficient pre-natal care, not learning how to properly care for their babies, and a future on public assistance or under-employment.

CFA provides a nurturing environment where the young women's educational development is closely monitored. Counselors and staff make sure the girls remain on track to get their high school diplomas and teach them the finer points of responsible parenthood.

They learn how to identify irregularities with their babies, and how to address them. They learn that their babies are not a burden but a responsibility, and they learn how to establish the delicate balance between being a typical teenager, and a responsible mother.

There is another component of the



DFT President Keith Johnson and DFT Executive Vice President Mark O'Keefe attend a rally April 13 in Lansing to protest Gov. Rick Snyder's proposed budget cuts to education.

school that is just as important to the babies as to their mothers. The babies are in a tender, loving environment where their health and development is also closely monitored, with nurses on staff to investigate a sniffle, a disturbing cough, or lack of early physical development. Early detection of a minor concern prevents it from becoming a major problem or health risk.

There is no denying that maintaining such a program is an expensive venture. The question that must be

asked is: Does the program pay dividends to those who attend? Ask those women who are alumni of the program and you will receive a definitive YES!

Ask the young women who attend CFA now where would they be without the school, and they will tell you, LOST! This tells you all you need to know about whether this unique and productive school should be saved.

We can invest in the futures of these two generations now, or pay for their pasts later.

Clippert Places in Science Olympiad

Thirteen students from Detroit's Clippert Academy competed in the Wayne-Monroe Science Olympiad March 26 at the University of Michigan-Dearborn. They competed against 20 middle school teams from Wayne and Monroe counties.

Clippert's team won fourth place in the event titled "Picture This." The Clippert team, coached by Kathy Meloche, was the only Detroit Public School to participate in the 2011 regional tournament.

"We are very proud of all of our competitors," Meloche said. "They did an awesome job!" Meloche is a regional director for Wayne-Monroe Science Olympiad. If you would like to start a team at your school, contact her at 586-222-3020 or at ae8601@wayne.edu.



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Updates...

Visually Impaired Teacher Seeks Carpool

A visually impaired Detroit teacher, who lives in Southgate, is seeking to carpool with someone from the Southgate area to his worksite, Jerry L. White Center. He originally carpooled with a teacher who retired and is now on a bus. Any interest, please call Bob Rehahn at 734-324-7700.

Detroit Teacher Turns 103



DFT Retiree Chapter Chair Jewel Gines and Program Chair Ricardo Thomas celebrated the 103 birthday of Calvin Rhodes, seated, at the April 19 Retiree Chapter Meeting. Rhodes is in excellent health and attends most of the monthly meetings.

Goodfellows Seek Teacher of the Year

The Old Newsboys' Goodfellow Fund of Detroit is sponsoring the Goodfellow Teacher of the Year con-

test to show its sincere appreciation to Detroit Public School teachers who, each year, work so diligently to identify students in need of its holiday gift packages. Students in grades three through eight can nominate their favorite teacher for the award by answering the question: "Why is your teacher so special?" in 50 words or less.

The winning teacher will receive a "prize pack" from the Detroit Goodfellow, which will include a gift card for school supplies and other special items. The winning teacher also will be acknowledged at the Detroit Goodfellows Annual Tribute Breakfast this fall. Additionally, the winning student will receive a Toys R Us gift card and a pizza party for his or her classroom, courtesy of the Detroit Goodfellows. Nomination forms are now available online at the Detroit Goodfellows web site, www.detroitgoodfellows.org. Entries may be returned to this website or may be returned by mail to the Detroit Goodfellows PO Box 44444, Detroit, MI 48244. All nominations must be received no later than May 27, 2011.

Retirements Announced

The following DFT members have announced their retirements: Nancy Brown, Eleanor Jacobs, Sharon Lumley, Lonnie Spikes and Judith Wilcox. If you have retired in the last six months and would like it announced, please call the editor at 313-875-6776.

Anti-Bullying Conference at DFT

The Detroit Federation of Teachers, the Detroit Federation of Paraprofessionals and Detroit Association of Education Office Employees are working together in a campaign to end bullying behavior in our school communities. We invite educators, support staff, parents and students to join us and stand-up to bullying. The conference will be Saturday, May 14 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the DFT. Curtis Dunlap, a Peer Assistance and Review Consultant, will be a speaker. The conference also will feature a continental breakfast and a panel, including a DFT counselor, a psychologist, community leaders, public safety, parents and students. We are encouraging our members to come out for the event and lend their voices to the problem that they deal with every day.



BLUES HISTORY AT MARQUETTE — Marquette students, music teacher Edward Taber and math teacher Antoinette Williams-Taylor put on a blues music extravaganza March 30 to celebrate Black History Month. The student body was treated to a song and dance show by such performers as Ike and Tina Turner, Billie Holiday and Etta James. The teaching duo puts on several performances with their students each year including a talent show and a holiday concert.

Golightly Teacher Highlights Autism Month

Jeannie M. Jones knows that 13-year-old Timothy is nuts about trains. He draws an intricate train setting and who is in the driver's seat?

"That's me," says Timothy, who has a form of autism. "I'm going under the 8 Mile Road bridge."

Jones' autistic students have their preferences and dislikes. Arrington plays the saxophone and clarinet. Karen likes to read and play with toys.

Jones appreciates them all.

"I have a lot of patience," the 11-year teacher says. "I believe that was my gift from god." Indeed, Jones' classroom is bright and organized and the students are happy.

"She has a compassion for students with special needs," says Dr. Sherrell Hobbs, her principal at Golightly Educational Center. "She goes beyond

the expectations of any administrator and exceeds the expectations of the parents."

To celebrate Autism Awareness Month in April, her students wore special ribbons and participated in the annual school carnival. Jones is reaching out to heighten awareness of the promise of students with autism.

"I include my students all activities and events," she said. "I don't separate them. They are a part of this school."

She has high expectations of her students. Her classroom has a world map and a word wall. Her students walked in the school's Martin Luther King parade. This month they worked on a interdisciplinary project on Japan and the tsunami.

"I'm telling you I'm born for this," she says. "Reach one and teach one and you'll change a child."



Hecker Responds to Governor's Proposals

By David Hecker
President, AFT Michigan

I just returned from Gov. Rick Snyder's Education Speech.

Snyder praised teachers and staff as "great and talented." I couldn't agree more! He noted that teachers are not the problem, it's the system. He noted that in 2011, students need to have post secondary education – technical/vocational, community college, university – to succeed. And he stressed the importance of early childhood education.



David Hecker

He spoke about the need for anti-bullying legislation and the need to address school safety issues. And he called for accountability and transparency for everyone, including administrators.

He cited an AFT study of what teachers say is needed to improve public education, including a comprehensive teacher evaluation system. He discussed creating a master teacher level to provide a career ladder and keep good teachers in the classroom rather than moving on to become administrators.

I agree with the governor on many of these points, although with some, like master teacher, the devil is in the details. However, I do not understand how we achieve universal, quality early childhood education with the cuts he has proposed to education funding; or how colleges provide programs for all students with the proposed cuts.

Additionally, the governor proposed:

1. Increasing competition among school districts for funding by providing bonus funds above the foundation allowance for schools showing increased student achievement. A bonus on top of a reduced foundation allowance is not a bonus; and one could argue that the schools struggling to increase student achievement are more in need of additional funds.
2. Requiring that school districts pay no more than 80 percent of the health care premium for employees. This does nothing to address rising health care costs. Redesigned and innovative approaches to health care are a much better strategy.
3. Lifting the cap on the number of university chartered schools in districts with one "failing" school. As with the first point, these are districts that would be most hurt by funding cuts, and, of course, there is no evidence that charters do better academically than local neighborhood schools.
4. Lifting regulations on schools. We need to look at the regulations he is talking about and see if we can support revising some of them.
5. Reducing "seat time" in schools. While on-line education has a role, nothing replaces the teacher in the classroom.
6. No longer paying teachers by degree and years of service. The current pay scales are objective systems and it is unclear how pay would be determined in the governor's system.
7. Extending the probationary period to five years and firing teachers with bad evaluations. I think four years of probation is adequate. In regards to firing teachers with bad evaluations, how will this differ from current practice? The bottom line for us is due process.
8. Eliminating seniority. If administrators do their jobs, there is no need to eliminate seniority because teachers would have been properly evaluated, provided assistance to improve, and fired if they are not cutting it. Eliminating seniority is rewarding administrators for not doing their jobs.



By Mershira Oliver
DFT Labor Relations
Administrator

In recent years we have experienced an increase in discipline hearings. The vast majority of the cases reference unprofessional conduct or endangering the safety of others.

Years ago most hearings were held by principals and other building administrators. The most serious cases were referred to the Office of Discipline, later renamed Employee Relations. Today all issues are sent to ER, no matter how small the issue. I have found that the majority of cases go to hearings. Years ago, if cases were not well investigated, there were no hearings.

Because of this I want you to protect yourself from possible charges.

We all know we should not give students rides in our cars. Don't do it. We also know not to fraternize with students. This includes inappropriate conversations or interactions. I know this is a heavy topic but I want members to protect themselves from possible charges.

Furthermore, try to use only District phones to contact students and parents, not personal phones with texting.

Here are tips to help avoid problems. Members may see these tips as simple and common-sensical but I want to share them anyway.

- Go to work and do your job.
- At work, teach or provide the best support services you can.
- Limit your social interaction with parents and colleagues.

In the majority of hearings I attend, personal information always makes its way to the table. I have heard about divorce, child custody, court proceedings, problems with spouses, children and other relatives. In these situations I speak with the members

Be Aware of Discipline Charges and Hearings

confidentially and I tell them, "You talk too much." There is NO need for your administrator or colleagues to know all of your personal business.

I tell members not to share personal health issues with administrators. Per HIPPA laws, you only need to inform the medical office and that office remains confidential with member medical records and concerns. Members have discussed or written notes to administrators discussing their medication routines, life-stressors and mental fatigue, all of which have no place in the hands of your administrators or colleagues.

Increasingly DFT members are at hearings as witnesses for the District. I have represented a DFT member out-done that a fellow teacher testified against her and referenced her personal business at the hearing table. I believe that caused her more disappointment than the hearing itself. Years ago, very few DFT members wrote statements or spoke as District witnesses. A decade ago it was unheard of, but today it's common place. Again, watch what you say; people only know what you tell them.

Please hear this: Everything you share in so-called confidence with your coworkers or administrators becomes common knowledge at the hearings. I do what I can to keep the hearings on track, only discussing alleged violations in the charge letter, but that becomes difficult when there is a note in the members own hand disclosing personal information.



Students Stage Sit-In at Ferguson

When Ashley Matthews became pregnant at Mumford High School, she said she was advised to stay home or find another school because she was “a liability.”

Matthews found Catherine Ferguson Academy, where she could pursue a diploma, as well as bring her daughter to the in-house daycare program.

“I want to stay here because this was the best environment for my child and for me,” Matthews says of the unique program. “When I got here it was a whole different setting. I felt accepted. I’m actually getting more credits and classes done. I like the daycare because my daughter learns a lot. I don’t have to worry about who’s around her. I can go down the hall and check on her if I need to.”

Ferguson is slated to close or be chartered under Robert Bobb’s Renaissance 2012 plan. He is proposing to close or give away up to 52



schools to for-profit charter operators. Matthews joined other students and community activists on April 15 to stage a sit-in at the school.

“It doesn’t make any sense,” she said. “I don’t think our school should be based on money. It should be



based on actual learning.”

Breanna Thomas, at left, said she was prepared to stay as long as it took to send the message that it’s not OK to close public schools that are desperately needed for unique student situations. The sit in, however, was disrupted when police came and arrested several girls.

“I’m here to keep my school open,” Thomas said. “A lot of people need this school. I didn’t like school till I came here. The teachers actually teach you and you learn.”

Catherine Buckens likes the school because she wants a diploma. “I’m 19 and most other schools won’t let me in for my age.”

Nakia Wallace, a 14-year-old Spain School student, came to protest Bobb’s plan and support the Ferguson students.

“They understand that the destruction of education is the destruction of young people,” Wallace said. “It means for-profit education. Without Catherine Ferguson Academy, most of these girls would not be able to go to another school.”

SHOES FOR ‘STREET FOLK’

Marquette Middle School art teacher Deborah Brown-Cage and her students provided more than 300 painted shoes for an installation of “Street Folk” on Edmund Place, south of Mack Avenue. The street art exhibit is being assembled by Heidelberg Project artist Tyree Guyton. The shoes are a commentary on the issue of homelessness in Detroit. Brown-Cage’s students took a tour of the Heidelberg Project on Detroit’s near east side on April 13 and had a lively discussion with the internationally acclaimed artist.



‘Dance With My Father’ at Schulze

By Kecia Counts

Schulze Academy held its first Father Daughter Dance on April 1. It was a beautiful sight to see so many well-dressed fathers, grandfathers, uncles, brothers, teachers and positive male role models take the night off from their busy schedules to dance all night with their special girl. The emotions were high as the girls smiled, laughed and cried as they danced the night away. The evening ended with pictures taken, giveaways, and a special father daughter song, “Dance with my Father.” The girls had a fabulous time and can’t wait until the next father daughter dance.

Learning About Art at Spain

By Charlene Uresy

"The girls are doing a great job showing off the art," said Tiffany Tait, literacy coach at Spain School. "I feel proud." Tait is a member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, and chair of the Delta-sponsored Dr. Betty Shabazz Academy at Spain, a mentoring program for girls aged 11 to 14.

The girls volunteered as hostesses on a Saturday evening to walk the runway exhibiting art during the 29th Annual Art Auction Benefit, sponsored by the sorority. They had the best time learning about art and mingling with influential people.

This is the third year of the Dr. Betty Shabazz Academy at Spain. Tait and Spain counselor Lakia Wilson provide an interesting agenda of activities, that aid in producing sensible, educated and cultured young women. Some of these activities include: learning about herbs and planting an herb garden, meeting an author, learning about the underground railroad, participating in a financial literacy workshop, and visiting the International Women's Expo.

This excellent program is one the girls love, and couldn't wait to begin this year. The girls also have the potential to be awarded a scholarship from Delta Sigma Theta Sorority. The proceeds of the art auction go to their scholarship fund, making it full circle for the girls.



Pictured in back row from left is Ashanti Dixon, Khadi Badiane, Donnetla Maxwell, Janelle Bradley, Stemika Strickland, Kendra Wheeler, Charlene Uresy. Front row: Angelina Hogan, Davina Hogan, Tiffany Tait, and Aaris Williams.

THE DETROIT NEWSM

Healthy Choice:

DSA Fair Cap

Jalen Dennis was absorbed in a brochure at the Detroit School of Arts.

"I just found out what a sickle cell is," the 17-year-old said. Gathered around a demonstration, DSA students learned that sickle cell is entirely hereditary, asymptomatic, and the cells are sickle shaped instead of round. The result is pain, and other health problems. If both parents carry the sickle cell gene, a child has a 25 percent chance of getting sickle cell disease.

Alyssa Harris was wide-eyed. Her sister has sickle cell.

"I worry about her," Harris, 14, said. Even though her sister has it, Harris was only learning at the health fair what the disease entailed.

This exposure would not have been possible without Dimitri Demetral.

The health and physical education teacher wanted 20 vendors to talk to the students on everything from nutrition and exercise to massage, sexual awareness and diabetes. He got 25 vendors.

"I'm trying to raise awareness," said Demetral, an 11-year Detroit teacher (pictured below right).



Cooke Teacher Hurts for Japan

When Cooke kindergarten teacher Dionne Brantley saw the devastation of Japan's tsunami on CNN, she felt she had to do something.

"My heart just felt so bad," the 15-year teacher said. "The first thing I thought is: What can my school do?"

Soon after, she gathered her empty 2-liter pop bottles, decorated them and gave one to each classroom teacher.

Brantley asked everyone in the Cooke school community to give their loose change. She named the campaign "Pennies Make a Difference."

In only three weeks, some \$1,600 poured in. The money was donated to the American Red Cross to send to the Japanese victims of the magnitude-8.9 earthquake on March 11.

Several Cooke teachers used the experience for educational discovery. They connected their Netbooks to their video screens to show students where Japan is and what happened there through news reports. Math teacher Betty Thomas graphed each class's contributions on the wall outside the office.

Joan Caprathe's third-grade class raised the most money in the school and Anna Graham's kindergarten class raised the second highest amount. Brantley was amazed at her school's generosity.

"This is so much more than I expected."



Dionne Brantley with Cooke students



ROIT teacher MAKERS

atures Students



"We have a lot of couch potatoes. I want them to be physically active. They eat a lot of junk."

Hundreds of high schoolers crowded the sixth-floor common

area to visit the vendors.

At the Planned Parenthood booth, 18-year-old Cortez Ellis was not phased at the frank discussion.

"I think that's the main problem," he said. "People don't want to get help but there's lots of information out there. I'm interested in this because communication is my field."



WAX MUSEUM AT HOWE



Howe teachers organized an amazing wax museum to celebrate Black History Month for all students with posts throughout the school. Students dressed in character and stood near a red button on the floor. When a parent or visitor stepped on the button, the influential person in Black History would introduce herself and say a short narrative about her contributions to American life and progress.

The visitors heard the life stories of such heroes as Elijah McCoy who invented the lubricator machine, Mary McLeod Bethune who founded the first black college, and Richard Spikes, the automatic gear shift inventor. "A lot of African American people have invented a lot of things we don't know about," said Luciana Simpkins, Howe teacher and a key organizer of the event. "African American people have given so much to our society."



Osborn Students Learn How to Help a Heart *Valentine's Day Spent on CPR*

Tanya White, a 20-year veteran of DPS, and her Student Government students at the Osborn Collegiate Academy of Mathematics, Science & Technology, completed their state mandated Service Learning Project entitled "American Red Cross Hands-Only Citizen CPR" on Valentine's Day.

The Red Cross instructor used soft, toy ambulances and chest outlines to teach ninth- and tenth-graders how to properly deliver chest compressions and restore breathing when someone collapses. The training also included learning to use automatic defibrillators.

The students will demonstrate what they learned in a school-wide assembly so that this valuable skill can be shared in every neighborhood in the community.

Because the group enjoyed the training so much, Principal Tanya Bowman has given the green light for the students to complete the full CPR certification training later in the year.

Simply stated by one trainee, "This experience was awesome!"

MORE NEWSMAKERS

Hard to Engineer a Grand Prize

By Charlene Uresy

Colette Roundtree has been teaching science and has been the Detroit Area Pre-College Engineering Program (D.A.P.C.E.P.) coordinator at Spain School for eight years. Each year her students enter the Science Engineering Fair Metropolitan Detroit, sponsored by D.A.P.C.E.P., at Cobo Center. Her seventh- and eighth-grade students have done well, receiving gold awards many times. One year they received the greatest award of all — grand. "The Grand Award is very difficult to come by," Roundtree said.

Otis Wynn is a tall, basketball-loving eighth-grader at Spain. He is intrigued with science and is a member of D.A.P.C.E.P. This year he won the Grand Award for his project, "Rusting Races." This was the ultimate prize after a day when many Spain students received gold for their projects. Roundtree is now the teacher of two students who have won the Grand Award. Everyone was elated!

For all of their hard work, Roundtree, Wynn (who will be attending Renaissance High School this fall) and all of the other gold and grand prize winners in DPS will celebrate in Chicago. They will have a jam packed, fun filled day of visiting the Museum of Science & Industry, an Omnimax movie, Shedd Aquarium, and dinner at Buca Di Beppo restaurant.

Congratulations to Roundtree, Wynn, and all of the other D.A.P.C.E.P. science project winners. They are a testament to all the Detroit Public Schools in educating their students in science.



Otis Wynn is at left and Colette Roundtree is at right. They are pictured with the Spain D.A.P.C.E.P. members and Wynn's science project.



Linda Mangiapane, Katie Kosko and Susan Florio-Ruane

Detroit Produces Michigan Student Teacher of the Year

The Detroit Federation of Teachers knows a good thing when it sees it. In 2006, the DFT awarded Katie Kosko a \$1,000 DFT Memorial Scholarship to attend the education school at Michigan State University. As part of its five-year program, Kosko was slated to do a one-year internship. She chose Gompers Elementary School in Detroit.

Thanks to a 15-year partnership between MSU's College of Education, the Detroit Public Schools and the DFT, Kosko got a strenuous and enriching year of teaching experience.

"I fell in love with the urban area," Kosko, 22, said. "It changed my mind about urban education."

That enthusiasm, as well as strong strategies to carry out the curriculum, earned Kosko the Michigan Student Teacher of the Year Award for 2011.

"She's very positive," said her mentor Linda Mangiapane, a kindergarten teacher at Gompers. "She looks forward to seeing the children and wants to bring them forward. She's creative and bounces off the curriculum."

Mangiapane says Kosko came equipped with many early childhood strategies in place on day one. One of Kosko's lessons was taped and sent in for the competition.

For 17 years, MSU has been

ranked the top elementary and secondary education program in the nation by U.S. News and World Report. But it depends on active collaboration with mentor teachers, says Susan Florio-Ruane, professor of teacher education at MSU's College of Education.

"We have partnered up with some excellent schools and outstanding administrators in Detroit," Florio-Ruane said. She believes national discussions on teacher quality and student achievement have initiated an exciting era for education.

"It's opened up a really important discussion about what is quality education and how do all kids have access to it. There have been times when there was more complacency in our field. Those aren't learning times."

For Mangiapane, the yearlong internship was an experience of growth as well.

"She's come in with lots of ideas," she said. "I've learned just as much as she has."



My Mom, a Detroit Teacher, is My Hero

By Victoria Potapenko

When my language arts teacher notified my class about this essay, I immediately knew I was going to write about my mom. I know the idea seems so cliché, but she has always been my Michigan hero.

My mom has received her master's degree in education at Wayne State University. She has lived in Michigan for 18 years and has been teaching in the Detroit Public School System for 15 years.

There are so many stereotypes and misconceptions of Detroit today, many of them following the teachers of DPS like my mother. There are so many people in Michigan saying that ALL of the teachers of DPS "don't care about the kids" or "Don't even know what they are doing." Sadly, some teachers are like that. Most of my mom's life consists of her job. She has such a passion for it, and it really shows through her teaching and behavior. These teachers pay out of their pocket for supplies,

posters, and many other things to give these kids an excellent learning environment.

There are so many people in our nation who have their own opinions of the Detroit Public School System.

Some of them say that it's the teachers' fault that the kids don't listen or don't do their homework. But they need to look deeper and see that it is their home environment. So many of the children and their families are affected

by the economy, the criminal behavior of others, and the decisions of others and have to pay for it in their own ways. My mom helps the kids lead a better life and get a quality education so they can change the future of Detroit. But it's never the

teachers, the staff or the principal holding them back.

This year my mom and many other teachers of DPS did not know where they were working up until the

third day they were supposed to report to their

jobs. My mom was so upset saying that she was supposed to be making lesson plans. Teachers that don't care would have been

grateful for the extra days off. My mom is ready to go back to work weeks

before she is supposed to report.

There are not even words in the dictionary to describe the love, passion, dedication and just plain hard work my mom has given to the district and the children of Detroit. She

even keeps in touch with her former students. She was nominated for the "Who's Who in Education" for helping one of her students go to college and is named in the book.

My mom is possibly one of Detroit's most hardworking teachers and continues to show her love for her career. Even though the district has some flaws and doesn't give the teachers what they deserve, my mother doesn't really care. All that my mom does affects these children and proves that they can really have hopes and dreams and can fulfill them.

My mom has always had a positive attitude in whatever she does. I admire her for keeping her chin up even during the toughest times. My mom, Lisa Potapenko, changes Detroit one child at a time. This is why she is my Michigan hero.

Victoria Potapenko is an eighth-grader who wrote this essay for the America and Me essay contest sponsored by Farm Bureau Insurance. She won ninth place out of thousands of entries and will meet the governor.



Charles Wright Academy teacher Lisa Potapenko and her daughter, Victoria.

Ways Teachers Can Reduce Spirit of Violence

By Ron Seigel

A young girl was recently shot by a classmate outside her high school. A teenage boy was shot at his birthday party. Such tragedies represent a growing spirit of violence.

City councils in Detroit and some neighboring suburbs have proclaimed the 22nd of every month as a time for people to make attempts to prevent violence and create healing.

United Communities of America (UCA), the metro Detroit organization that persuaded different cities to make these proclamations, is urging different groups, whether block clubs, citizen district councils, community organizations and labor unions, to use this time "to focus on ways to create peace."

Pastor Ovella Andreas, who heads UCOA, suggested schools can encourage young people themselves to promote peace. As an example she noted what was going on in Romulus

High School.

Hal Heard, the Romulus High School principal, said around the 22nd of February and March, students attempted to create a consciousness of peace and wore blue to symbolize their support. He noted the school provided some incentives by giving those who participated a free ticket to raffle. He noted that around the 22nd of both months, the school did not even have a fistfight.

One retired teacher suggested creating empathy by showing students the reality of how violence affects people's lives. She recommended bringing in speakers who were victims of violence or had loved ones who suffered violence or those who committed violence and were sorry they did.

She also suggested encouraging students to write inspirational essays (like those that appear in the Chicken Soup for the Soul series) on the subject of peace and harmony.

Some suggested that violence

often results when people are emotionally hurt or feel their dignity is threatened or attacked.

A retired Detroit middle school teacher suggested students be encouraged to write down things that bother them and to share their feelings with people they trust.

"A lot of time," he noted, "they'll find that things are not as terrible as they seem."

He also suggested schools adopt a program where students and teachers are encouraged to settle conflicts either themselves or by submitting them to a panel of teachers, parents and students. In his school, these panels would often work out a sensible compromise.

"Life is full of compromises," he added. "It is what happens in real life, but young people today don't want to compromise."

An old anti delinquency organization, Save Our Sons and Daughters (So-Sad), believed in helping students by teaching them conflict resolution

techniques to enable them to resolve their own conflicts and help others to do so.

Kimberly Bishop Yankee, who heads Boys and Girls Empowered, suggested teaching young people skills to deal with bullying, which sometimes leads to violence.

This, she said, can give them the capacity to "stand up against bullying, but not be mean themselves." People can help their students do so by calling (313) 757-0912.

An organization I head, which is called the Respect Month Committee, can help teachers reduce the spirit of violence in their own classroom. It suggests ways that teachers can emphasize areas in their subjects that deal with respect. For suggestions on how to do this, call (313) 728-2360 or write Respect Month Committee, 10 Ferris Street, Room 106, Highland Park, Michigan 48203.

Then again perhaps you can come up with ideas of your own.

Something to Dance About in Detroit

By Charlene Uresy

Dance in the Detroit Public Schools is a silent sensation that should be whooped and hollered about. In the background of DPS' financial and academic problems is the oldest public school dance curriculum in the United States. Detroit has had a dance curriculum for 75 years!

The program recently presented its 69th Annual All City Dance Concert and it was splendid! Only 12 schools participated — much smaller than the 33 schools that had dance programs in 1994. The level of dance in this year's concert was exceptional. The dances were intricate, technical, sexy, fun and memorable.

The few dance teachers left are concerned about the future of the curriculum. They see a school like Mumford, with a good dance program for years, now gone because a new dance teacher was not hired after the retirement of Debra West. They go out of their way to make their students shine — spend their own money, provide workshops with professional dancers, make costumes, and fundraise — all to keep dance relevant.

"Dance offers our students so much," says Gina Ellis, Renaissance High School dance teacher. "It taps into all of the different ways a person learns. It gives our students confidence, self-respect, discipline, problem solving — all of this comes out of the creative process that encompass dance."

On the high school level, Cass Tech, Detroit School of Arts, King and Renaissance have taken up to 60 students to participate in the International Association of Blacks in Dance Conference, and the National High School Dance Festival. These assemblies gather high school students from all over the country to dance and learn from each other. The Detroit dance curriculum is held in high esteem at these conferences, more recognized nationally than in the city of Detroit.

The Cass Tech and Renaissance dance companies have been featured in the International Association of Blacks in Dance Conference. After auditioning in front of a panel of notable dance authorities, they were selected to perform in the student showcase — a distinguished honor, giving them more prestige on a national form. Dance at Spain School is very popular with students. Teacher Heidi Herbert has been teaching in DPS for 17 years. "Dance is very athletic," Herbert says. "It gives the students a sense of purpose and poise. They develop life long goals through dance, and personal pride."



Photo by LEONARD CROSBY

Most of her students have never had a dance class until they walked into her studio. They work hard learning different styles of dance, choreography, and music. They commit to practice after school and during holiday breaks. Herbert's young students are exposed to the professional side of dance. This school year they had workshops with professional dancers Shelly Herbert and Sean Smith, members of the Dallas Black Dance Theater. Herbert is also concerned about what is happening to dance outside of school. In private dance studios the emphasis is on competition and winning, not the true artistic expression of oneself.

Studying the art of dance opens the student to other art forms. They become aware of music, painting and poetry. They introduce their families to the arts, and become more appreciative of different forms of expressions, creating a more educated and tolerant society. The Evening of Fine Arts, a concert at the end of the school year, is a tradition in DPS for over 40 years. This free concert celebrates the best of DPS in vocals, instrumentals, visual arts, and dance.

Changes in how children are being educated are in existence now. Detroit's oldest dance curriculum in the United States is a gem. Let's keep this curriculum funded and around for many years to come.

Grants...

Media Centers

Dollar General is committed to supporting literacy through its Dollar General Back to School Literacy Grants. Grants of \$5,000 are available to enable a school's library or media center to purchase new technology to implement literacy initiatives. Deadline: May 18, 2011. For info, visit www.dollargeneral.com.

Science Teaching

The American Association for the Advancement of Science is accepting applications for its Leadership in Science Education Prize, which recognizes innovative achievements in science teaching at the high school level. The prize acknowledges high school science teachers for using

novel and imaginative methods to encourage the next generation of scientists. Grants of \$1,000 and a one-year subscription to Science magazine are available. Deadline: May 27, 2011. For info, visit www.aaas.org.

Educator Awards

The National Council for the Social Studies honors educators who have shown outstanding performance and provided unique educational social studies programs or activities. Through its Award for Global Understanding in honor of James M. Becker, the NCSS recognizes a social studies teacher who has made a significant impact in helping social studies students understand the world. Eligible honorees must be members of NCSS. The winning teacher will

receive a \$2,000 prize and other gifts. Deadline: May 15, 2011. For info, visit www.socialstudies.org.

Science Academy

The National Science Teachers Association, with support from Amgen Foundation, is taking applications for the New Science Teacher Academy to improve teacher confidence and classroom excellence, enhance quality science teaching and improve teacher content knowledge. Deadline: June 13, 2011. For more info, visit www.nsta.org/academy.

Arts and Humanities

The Pioneer Drama Service offers its program, Toughing Lives through Theatre Grants, to provide support for

schools in implementing dramatic presentations. The PDS believes strongly that theater can make a difference in students' lives. Grants from \$100 to \$500 are available. Deadline: June 30, 2011. For info, visit www.toughinglivesthroughtheatregrants.com.

Technology

The Entertainment Software Association Foundation provides funding for projects that use technology and serve youth ages 7 to 18. The foundation supports projects that use the collective power of the entertainment software industry to make a difference to the lives of youth in America. First-time applicants may request up to \$50,000 for projects that serve youth and use entertainment software. Deadline: May 15, 2011. For info, visit www.theesa.com/foundation.

Marquette Middle School Has 'The Blues'

By Antoinette Williams-Taylor

The staff at Marquette School decided to educate the students on "the Blues" to celebrate African American history month. School social worker Michelle Thompkins and math teacher Antoinette Williams-Taylor developed the theme and planned events for the school-wide celebration. These included door decorations to feature Blues artists, a Blues museum, and a daily unknown Blues fact contest. The finale was a program featuring students performing Blues music. The celebration extended into March because of the excellent educational opportunity and by popular demand from both students and parents.

This celebration became a family event. Each classroom participated in the unknown Blues fact contest. Students drew signs and fabricated railroad tracks for the museum. Parents assisted with practicing and rehearsing the students for the African American History Program. Staff volunteered their time and materials to make the celebration an educational success.

The library was transformed into a museum, which featured a social studies lesson with videos of Blues artist performances, modern art, photography and original music of Blues figures. The objective was to educate students about this form of music and its evolution from the hardships of African Americans.

Museum exhibits featured the cotton fields of the South, railroad tracks showcasing the under ground railroad, fashions of the era, instruments typical of Blues artists, records, authentic African artifacts and a variety of books detailing Blues music and its affect on today's society. Williams-Taylor, Thompkins, and music teacher Eddie Taber acted as guides as each class visited the library and learned about the Blues.

For the finale to the celebration, the teachers held a program featuring students playing, singing and performing the blues, which featured the Marquette Motion Dancers, directed by Carlotta Prince; authentic artwork by the art club, directed by Deborah Cage; and the Marquette Choir directed by Eddie Taber.



Teacher Michelle Thompkins at the Marquette Blues Museum

Election Materials Review Goes Smoothly

The teacher review of voting materials from the January 2011 DFT officers runoff election went very smoothly on April 30, according to DFT Election Committee Chair Mary Helen D'Angelo. For those teachers who couldn't attend April 30, DFT members still have a chance to review any ballots, envelopes, tally sheets or other voting materials on Saturday, June 18, starting at 10 a.m.

D'Angelo reported that the Denby and Glazer school ballots got mixed together in one envelope. Combined, the numbers added up but the votes couldn't be separated by school. Unimatic, which conducted the election, had apologized for this and said the error did not affect the vote count.

"The numbers of the two schools combined do add up to the signatures of the two registration lists," Unimatic said in its Jan. 20 report.

For the other schools, the reviews did not show any irregularities. However, there were votes that weren't counted because people never signed a membership card when they hired in. If they retire or go off the payroll entirely, members need to sign a new card on rehire. If a member was laid off but got recalled before going off payroll, they didn't have to sign a new card.

"Just a reminder to everyone," D'Angelo says. "in order to be eligible to vote, you must have signed a union application. Just because union dues are being withdrawn does not automatically make you eligible to vote."

If you have received a membership card, you are a member in good standing. If you don't have a membership card, D'Angelo says you should check with the dues clerk that a signed application card is on file.

Barbara Downey, the DFT dues clerk, said the ballots that were ineligible showed they did not have an application card on file. Automatic deductions through DPS do not mean automatic membership.

"Either they were not on our computer database yet because they were so new," said Downey, "or because they had not signed an application card. We can't assume people want to be a member, they must sign a card." Downey said some members, for religious or political reasons, do not want membership in a union.

Detroit Teacher Wins National Science Fellowship

As part of an effort to promote excellence in science education, the American

Physiological Society awarded its new 2011 Frontiers in Physiology fellowships to 30 middle and high school science teachers in 17 states, including Wanda Bryant from Detroit Public Schools.

Bryant began her teaching career at Munger Middle School in 2000 then transferred to Henry Ford High School in 2001 where she continues to work today. She has taught all science disciplines except physics. In addition to this honor, Bryant was selected to participate in a two-year project sponsored

by Wayne RESA and funded by NASA to help teachers and students develop a better understanding of climate change. She

received kites she will be flying with students and an iPad that will be used for data collection.

APS's new online professional development course allows the fellows to explore effective teaching strategies, understand the research process, and strategically enhance classroom

lessons. From January 2011 to September 2011, teachers are engaged in course assignments, effective hands-on activities and online experiments, and dynamic discussions with one another across the nation.



Advice to the New EM:

Don't Use Weapons of Class Destruction

Mark O'Keefe
DFT Executive Vice President

When Gov. Rick Snyder appoints a new Emergency Manager for Detroit Public Schools, he or she will have unprecedented power to shape the future of



Mark O'Keefe

our district. This couldn't come at a better time, with the current Renaissance 2012 Plan accelerating the liquidation of the district and the current manager's threats of pay cuts, loss of

seniority and bumping rights, and closure or chartering of our public schools serving to undermine rather than bolster academic and financial success.

The new emergency manager will be encouraged to use powers granted under Michigan's new Public Act 4. While the powers are heralded as tools, they are better described as weapons: Weapons of Class Destruction.

My recommendation to the new EM is to begin by setting an example. By definition, we cannot afford luxuries, and chauffeurs are the epitome of luxury. We also expect five-year-old girls to walk in the dark to schools that the most powerful person in the district won't enter in broad daylight without a bodyguard.

After eliminating chauffeurs and bodyguards, the gravy train for consultants also must end. In the limited cases where we do need consultants, we have plenty of talent right here in Michigan. We should not be paying for airfare, hotels, or meals for anybody.

We should use resources we have

before buying new materials. We need to search every closet, cupboard and shelf to find the books and supplies we already have and get them in the hands of the teachers who need them. Out-of-date materials can be sold or recycled. These changes may not save a lot of money, but they will send a powerful message.

The district's deficit was over \$200 million in 2009 and it ballooned to \$327 million as of June 2010. The DFT contract helped stabilize the district's finances, allowing Robert Bobb to announce that the district will be in the black for the year ends June 30, 2011. However, we will never be able to pay the legacy deficit from current operations.

We need a responsible, realistic plan to pay the deficit. DFT continues to advocate for issuing Deficit Elimination Bonds funded by either a local millage, or preferably, the State of Michigan who was running the district when most of the deficit was created. If the state refuses to be accountable for its actions, the taxpayers of Detroit will be forced to pay the price or lose their district.

Next, the EM will need to address the high cost of special education. The general fund contributes about \$40 million per year to cover unreimbursed special education costs. DPS receives hundreds of millions per year in special purpose funds that are frequently used for things we don't need. We need the state and federal government to allow us to use these funds for unreimbursed special ed costs.

The Renaissance 2012 plan to reduce the district's size without any realistic possibility of reducing the deficit should be abandoned. This plan will do nothing to reduce our debt, but will instead impose that burden on a smaller district as DPS continues the process of liquidation.

Studies have repeatedly shown that

converting schools to charters will not improve academic performance. Rather than turning over our schools to for-profit charter operators, let's adopt measures they have used successfully. Parents and students should be required to sign contracts covering attendance, student behavior and parental support. Those who don't comply would be removed from their neighborhood schools. We should also enforce class-size limits and have a lottery for admission to schools that are overcrowded.

There is no need to eliminate seniority and bumping. Observe and evaluate all teachers on a regular basis. Use the tools currently in place to mentor and assist struggling teachers. Those who can not or do not improve should be fired. This does not require any change to the collective bargaining agreement or the tenure laws. However, the new EM should encourage the state to adopt the tenure-streamlining reforms that AFT and AFT Michigan have recom-

mended.

The DFT can serve as a resource and partner to the new EM as we work together to ensure the survival and resurgence of the Detroit Public Schools. Or we can engage in a struggle that will benefit nobody. The new EM will have a choice; use tools to build or weapons to destroy.

Calendar

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

MAY

- 10** School Social Workers Chapter Meeting, 3:45 p.m.
- 10** Attendance Agents Chapter Meeting, 4:00 p.m.
- 12** General Membership Meeting, 4:30 p.m.
- 16** Special Education Chapter Meeting, 4:30 p.m.
- 17** Retirees Chapter Meeting, 11:30 a.m.
- 17** School Counselors Chapter Meeting, 4:00 p.m.
- 19** Educational Technicians Chapter Meeting, 3:30 p.m.
- 19** Early Childhood Chapter Meeting, 4:15 p.m.
- 30** School Closed, Memorial Day

JUNE

- 2** Executive Board Meeting, 4:30 p.m.
- 3** Building Representatives Dinner, 4:30 p.m.
- 7** School Social Workers Chapter Meeting, 3:45 p.m.
- 7** Attendance Agents Chapter Meeting, 4:00 p.m.
- 9** General Membership Meeting, 4:30 p.m.
- 13** Special Education Chapter Meeting, 4:30 p.m.
- 21** Retirees Chapter Meeting, 11:30 p.m.

Visit the
DFT Web site

www.DFT231.com