

THE DETROIT teacher

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September 2011



Detroit Teachers Rally Against EFM Law, Pay Cut

We aren't taking it sitting down.

Detroit teachers and school staff united this summer to fight the multiple attacks on Detroit schools. More than a thousand members of the DFT and other school unions rallied Aug. 16 in front of the Fisher Building to oppose the attacks. We had record numbers at the Labor Day Parade. AFT President Randi Weingarten came to the DFT Sept. 6 to aid the fight. And the DFT filed a lawsuit against the Roy Roberts in federal court.

The rally was called as new Emergency Manager Roy Roberts imposed a 10 percent pay cut, rejecting all efforts to meet with DFT officials to solve the budget issues.

"The sad thing is this could have been avoided," DFT President Keith Johnson said. "The sad truth is this does nothing to retire the legacy deficit."

Johnson said school unions came up with viable alternatives to put us on a path of fiscal responsibility. The district, however, never sat down with them to seriously discuss ways to reduce the long-term \$327 deficit.

When the DFT negotiated the 2009 contract, it did so with knowledge of the declining enrollment, declining tax base and projected reduction of state funding.

"The only thing that has changed was Public Act 4," Johnson said. Public Act 4 gave emergency managers the right to impose cuts without negotiating. Public Act 4, passed last spring, gave emergency managers authority to, in some cases, undo provisions of contracts on the assumption that the EM would control spending and prevent bankruptcy. "The district is no longer satisfied with us giving," Johnson said. "Now they're simply going to take."

The DFT filed a lawsuit and an emergency injunction in federal court to stop the 10 percent pay cut.

"A deal is a deal," Johnson said. "Especially when we negotiated it in a financial emergency with an emergency financial manager."

"This is not where we want to be. We want a singular focus and that is to deliver a quality education for our children."

AFT Detroit, a coalition of Detroit school unions, is holding a special training session Oct. 8 from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at the DFT Hall for building representatives and activists.

Education Achievement Authority (EAA) Promotes Segregationist Education

In his quest to improve educational quality and outcomes, Michigan Gov. Rick Snyder misses the boat with the EAA. He further complicates the matter by allowing emergency manager Roy Roberts to serve as the head of the authority that will oversee the EAA district.

President's Report



**Keith
Johnson**

While the DFT has no argument with the expressed goals of the EAA, we certainly oppose the approach. The governor and Mr. Roberts have committed additional resources to the schools in the EAA that initially will be comprised of 38 Detroit public schools that are part of the lowest 5 percent in student performance in the state.

Priority Schools, a concept negotiated between the DFT and DPS in 2009, were also designed to address the achievement gap in the perpetually low performing schools in DPS. The idea was to empower the school staff and community to design an educational approach that fit the needs of the students and the culture of the school.

Staff would be interviewed to ensure that they were willing and able to make the commitment to extended school days or years, additional professional development, and additional resources to address the areas of deficiency.

Although Priority Schools were identified (and not all of them were low performing schools), no additional resources were provided to enable the schools to implement strategies and programs to narrow the achievement gap. They became "Priority Schools" in name only.

Now comes the governor and the emergency manager seeking contributions from philanthropic organizations and corporate support to invest in the EAA schools to provide the same support that was promised to the Priority Schools.

Several concerns should be raised:

Why is it necessary to separate these schools from DPS in order for them to receive the necessary support to enhance student achievement?

Where do the teachers come from who will educate these students? If they are the teachers currently assigned to these schools, and the EAA is to be separate from DPS, who do these teachers work for, who pays them, and what happens to them if they decide they do not wish to work for EAA and want to remain with DPS?

When a student goes to a DPS school from an EAA school, does the money to educate that student follow? If not, we face the same dilemma with

charter schools that dismiss students after count day and DPS must educate them without the funding.

The current plan states that once a school improves to the point that it is no longer in the lowest 5 percent, the school can decide to come back to DPS. Who makes that decision? The teachers, the administration? The parents and community? Once the decision is made, where do those teachers fit in with DPS?

How are the EAA schools affected by the DPS deficit? Are they totally freed from the debt service incurred by DPS? If so does that mean the regular DPS schools, reduced by at least 38, are now saddled with even more debt responsibility, thus inhibiting their ability to maintain quality educational programs?

With so much of EAA contingent upon philanthropic contributions, how can a sustainable educational program develop? Will it be supplemented by DPS funds?

While none of the answers to these questions is clear, one fact is crystal clear; when schools that serve the same population of students receive varying degrees of support, it creates a segregated system. One group of students will invariably benefit at the expense of the other—within the same community.

One group of students, those who do not benefit from the philanthropic contributions, those who do not have access to a well-rounded curriculum, those who are saddled with a legacy debt, will not have the same access to opportunity



DFT President Keith Johnson with a student who attended the week-long Literacy Camp, sponsored by the DFT, the Detroit Federation of Paraprofessionals, the Detroit Association of Educational Office Employees.

as those in the "select" district.

The educational needs of the critical mass must include the entire Detroit public school population. In addition, if the intrinsic, cultural inhibitors to student achievement are not addressed (truancy, transiency, safety, inadequate books and supplies, etc.) the results will not change, regardless of the names we attach to the schools.

The piecemeal approach is a proven failure and EAA may prove to be the latest example of quick-fix, narrow-minded approaches to the deeply entrenched problems with education in Detroit.

The DFT Wins 10 National Awards!

The Detroit Teacher won nine awards and the DFT Calendar took an award in the 2011 AFT Communications Network contest. The DFT won the following awards:

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|---------------------|--|
| First Place | "Best Publication" for The Detroit Teacher. |
| Second Place | "Best Design/Layout" for The Detroit Teacher. |
| Second Place | "Best Non-Periodical" for the 2010-11 Calendar. |
| Second Place | "Best Column" for "God Bless You, Ray Chaptini," by DFT Exec. Vice President Mark O'Keefe. |
| Second Place | "Best Profile" of teacher Charlene Uresy: "Spain Teacher Shares Her Love of Cuba." |
| Second Place | "Best Feature Story" for Chrysler School's "Dad's Club Runs School Valet." |
| Third Place | "Best Feature Story" for "Mumford Valedictorian Awarded \$500,000 in Scholarships." |
| Third Place | "Best Column" for "Battle Stations: As Assaults on Teachers Continue, We Must Defend Ourselves," by DFT President Keith Johnson. |
| Third Place | "Best Original Photo" for Charlene Uresy's "Detroit Teacher Keeps the New York Times on its Toes." |
| Third Place | "Best Feature Story" for "Burton Engineer Searches for Teacher." |

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teacher

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Updates...

Enter Angel's Night Contest

The City of Detroit's Angels Night Contest is a chance for Detroit students to tell how they feel about their city and promote community involvement. Students can design a poster or recite a speech, rap or poem. Students have a chance to win a computer or digital camera or gift certificate. The deadline is Oct. 7. For more information, visit www.angelsnight.org.

Conference for Families

The 7th Annual Conference on Mobilizing African American Families will be held Oct. 28-29 at the Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History, 315 E. Warren Ave. in Detroit. The free conference is titled "Raising the Bar...Beyond this Moment" and runs from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. for teens between 13 and 17. A section for adults runs on Friday night, Oct. 28 from 6-10 p.m. with speakers, a silent

auction, and a college and vocational fair. Registration is required. For more information, call Kim Travis-Ewing at 313-544-6689 or go to www.ZamZun.com/maaf.

COPE Committee Update

The DFT's COPE Committee will be selling COPE paraphernalia and hotdogs, chili and pop at the Oct. 13 General Membership Meeting at 4:30 p.m. at the DFT Hall. Hot dogs will be \$1.50, a bowl of chili will be \$3, and pop will sell for \$1. All proceeds will benefit COPE – the DFT's political action fund.

Retirements Announced

The following DFT members have announced their retirements: Yvonne Harris, Gwendolyn Robertson, James Dias, Frank Squeo, Linda Duchene, Janis Barnhart. If you have retired in the last six months and would like it announced, please call the editor at 313-875-6776.

Peer Review Program Gets High Marks

Detroit teachers helped by a new program to upgrade their skills gave it excellent reviews in a year-end survey.

The Peer Assistance and Review (PAR) program helps veteran and novice teachers upgrade classroom management and other skills. It pairs these teachers with peer teachers — or consultants.

The concept for the program was included in the DFT's progressive 2009 collective bargaining agreement. The district and union started the program last year and more than 46 teachers were assisted.

In a year-end survey of those participants, a majority gave PAR high regard for providing skills and strategies as well as making them feel comfortable and not judged.

"I like this program and would like to see it become part of a 'formal' review process for the district," one Detroit teacher said on the survey. The teacher said the program was beneficial and motivating. As a result, the teacher is using these new skills in the classroom.

Eighty percent of the participants said the program was beneficial to them. Eighty percent also said the support helped in improving their students' achievement. Another 84 percent said the program was "relevant to my needs." And 76 percent said the program "impacted my teaching practices." 80 percent said PAR "energized and motivated me."

Perhaps most important to a teacher under review, 92 percent said the "mentor made me feel comfortable and was not judgmental." One hundred percent said the mentor presented clear objectives at the onset. And 92 percent said the mentor was knowledgeable.



Tamara Fresh is a consultant in the Peer Assistance and Review Program.



Photo by Charlene Uresy

DFT President named Man of Excellence

DFT President Keith Johnson was one of 60 Detroit men named the Michigan Chronicle's Men of Excellence for 2011. The Men of Excellence Awards celebrate local African-American men who motivate and inspire others through their vision and leadership, exceptional achievements and participation in community service. Chosen from hundreds of nominees, Johnson was honored June 16 as one of the area's most influential men at a dinner at the Westin Book Cadillac. President Johnson is pictured with Anthony Adams, also an honoree.

EAA: A District Without a Plan

By Mark O'Keefe
DFT Executive Vice President

In the fall of 2012, a new state-wide school district will open in Michigan. The Educational Achievement Authority (EAA) district is scheduled to take over the bottom 5 percent of Michigan's public schools. In its first year, it is planning to takeover 38 schools from DPS, and none from other districts or from charter operators.

On Sept. 11, 2011, the Michigan Citizen reported that no decisions regarding curriculum and school management had been made. This is not surprising, since it is a brand new district with only one employee: Chancellor John Covington. Covington will pocket \$400,000 during his first year, for running a district that has no schools, students, teachers, or curriculum.

On Sept. 12, 2011, the Detroit Free Press reported that Mr. Covington admitted "I don't have a plan." Again, this is not surprising, since he just took the job. But it is alarming that the state is planning to make Detroit students the guinea pigs for this latest experiment. Rather than starting small with just a few schools and working out the bugs, EAS will begin with 38 schools, making it one of the largest school districts in the state.

Covington did mention that he has some ideas for the new district. He mentioned longer school days, a longer school year, merit pay, and autonomous schools. In other words, he is propos-

ing to do the exact things we agreed to in the 2009-2012 contract. The difference is: EAA schools will have five years to show improvement. Some priority schools in DPS were not even given one year.

EAA has a board in place. The chairman is DPS Emergency Manager Roy Roberts. I publicly asked Mr. Roberts if he felt his dual roles at DPS and EAA were a conflict of interest. At first he refused to answer, saying it was an EAA meeting, and he would not discuss DPS business at an EAA meeting. Given that he was being paid by DPS to be at the meeting, the conflict seems obvious to me. I rephrased the question and he simply replied "No."

While Roberts cannot see the conflict, others do. As DPS board member Lamar Lemmons pointed out, the only way EAA gets students is if DPS fails them.

All of this places students, parents and teachers in a state of uncertainty. What is the curriculum for the new schools? Who are the principals and teachers? Which schools will be effected? Will the EAA schools be chartered? Will teachers belong to a union? Will they be part of the state retirement system? We won't know the answers until Mr. Covington formulates, and then discloses his plans.



Mark O'Keefe

Detroit Teachers Spend

As sure as Vivian Johnson goes to church every Sunday, she goes to the 8 Mile and Greenfield Office Depot every weekend for school supplies.

"I spend up to \$60 a week," said the Spain eighth-grade teacher. "They know me there. Call them and ask."

In her 20 years as a Detroit teacher, Johnson has bought three overhead projectors, plenty of ink cartridges and cleaning supplies for her classroom.

Last year her receipts topped \$1,000. Some years, she has spent \$2,000. She's not the only one. Last year, Margaret Cantrell, a teacher at Nolan, spent \$742. She spends hundreds each year and figures her total expense over 37 years of teaching is close to \$20,000.

"This year, due to the pay cut, I am not spending nearly as much as I would like to on my classroom set-up," Cantrell said. "However, this is my 37th year of teaching and I already have quite a lot of teaching supplies, reproducible books, a stack of bulletin board posters a foot high, art supplies, etc."

Detroit teachers traditionally spend their own money to make up for notoriously lacking supplies. An imposed 10 percent pay cut this year will impact how much of teachers' incomes go to their students.

David Koslowsky, a science teacher at Davis Aerospace Academy, spent \$270 for aquarium supplies, tissues, cleaners, batteries, light bulbs, audio visual equipment and lab supplies.

Wanda Bryant, a Henry Ford High School teacher, went to a summer conference on her own dime. She drove to the Milwaukee conference "Modeling the Molecular World" and spent over \$200 on kits for her students.

On top of some of the supplies Johnson bought this year – a projector, a



Sending Kids to Summer Camp

James Thrower makes a living from families who frequent his McDonald's franchises at Linwood and Davison and Mack and I-75 in Detroit. So he has a mission to give back to those families.



Thrower and other Detroit McDonald's operators sent 25 Stewart Elementary School students to camp in July in Almont, Mich. The fourth- and fifth-graders were treated to canoeing, archery, fishing, campfire songs and 'smores, among other traditional camp experiences.

The students were selected after displaying academic and leadership accomplishments through the year. In June, the

adults who brought this experience to fruition rallied at Stewart to get the students excited for the summer camp experience.

"Your group earned this privilege," said Charles Small, president of Don Bosco Hall, a human services agency that worked with McDonald's to send the kids to camp. "This is an opportunity to start something new. This is going to be a special experience for each and every one of you."

Kay Huberty of Skyline Camp in Almont says the experience is great for kids. "I love Skyline because it's a place of peacefulness and wonder," Huberty said. "I like to call it 156 acres of God's best work."

"We're not just about burgers and fries," Thrower told the kids and parents. "It's important for me to give back to not just the community but the kids."

Exotic Zoo Visits Spain School

Spain School had an awesome day in the spring when the Exotic Zoo came for a visit. Owner Javon Stacks and his mother, Carol, brought several animals.

They brought a German Giant Rabbit, Nile Monitor Lizard, Rose Hair Tarantula, Snapping Turtle,

Albion Burmese Python, and an American Alligator. The entire school saw the show and was awestruck by the animals' presence and the interesting facts they learned about them. It was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to be up close and touch these exotic wild animals.



Photo by Charlene Uresy

Left to Right: Shepard, Charlene Uresy, Kathy Aaron, Patricia Tyler, Erica Rolack, and Javon Stacks.

Raku Firing in the

If you can't take the heat, get out of the kiln.

Detroit art teacher Kendra Lincourt and her students created stunning ceramics and needed to fire them. In a traditional kiln, it typically takes 24 hours to fire a piece, but raku firing takes an hour or so.

The seventh- and eighth-graders took their creations to an outdoor kiln where the

temperatures reach 825 F. The type of firing is called raku, which uses high temps and strange fuels to create brilliant hues. For the firing of Lincourt's Academy of the Americas students, they plunged the ceramics into a large drum heated by propane gas. Then they put the ceramics into another drum with newspapers, grass, straw – even hair cuttings.

"Each substance throws off other chemicals and changes the color," says Lincourt, a 12-year Detroit



ROIT MAKERS

and \$1,000s in Supplies



Spain teacher Vivian Johnson bought her own school supplies.

HP ink jet printer, a microwave, extension cord, broom, screwdriver sets for a pulley science project, 409 cleanser, poster boards and hand sanitizer – Johnson will continue to donate for pizza parties and field trips.

“I feel like I was called to teach,” Johnson said. And her colleagues at Spain spend liberally as well.

“We don’t think twice about it,” the language arts teacher said. “We just do it. We love the kids.”

e Detroit Outdoors

teacher.

The kiln, behind a non-descript building on the campus of Wayne State University, is operated by fearless artist and WSU ceramics teacher Bill Ebersberger.

Raku uses extreme heat to no heat to cold water, Ebersberger explains. The students loved the process and didn’t leave until late in the



evening.

“It’s an amazing process,” Lincourt said. “And I was so excited that my students got to take part in this!”



Eating from the School Garden

In many Detroit neighborhoods there are no fruit markets. But some Detroit schools are harvesting fresh fruits and vegetables from gardens they planted in the spring.

Thanks to interested Detroit teachers and the Horticultural Education program at Michigan State University, Detroit students are learning a different way to eat.

A.L. Holmes elementary students tasted fresh greens from garden boxes each grade planted in a pilot program.

“More than anything, I’d like to teach them self sufficiency,” said Kristine Hahn, a biologist with MSU Extension in Wayne County. “They can grow their own food in their backyard and it would be better.”

Hahn worked with five A.L. Holmes teachers – one at each grade level – in a science based curriculum that matched the state benchmarks.

“My goal is to teach children where their food comes from, food systems and good food,” Hahn said. She said a third of the students like eating the lettuce, kale and collards from the garden. Another third resisted but were eating the greens by the end of the day.

“I just want them to eat green stuff,” she said. “Because they grew it, they were more interested in trying it.”

Hahn, pictured above, had great cooperation with Detroit teachers, and got surprising feedback from the pilot program. A Blackwell Institute teacher said getting kids to garden outside helped with behavioral issues.

“As we all know, experiential hands-on-learning is extremely important.”



Modern Robber Barons, Charter Schools and the Prison-Industrial Complex

By Leonard T. Zabawski

The Modern Robber Barons are the new captains of industry in Michigan. They started their march to privatize public education under the administrations of former Govs. John Engler and Jennifer Granholm. They now appear to be increasing their efforts under Gov. Rick Snyder. Their for-profit movement's agenda is to bash public education and weaken the defense of public education, and thus accept the oft-repeated dictate that charter schools are superior to public schools.

In Michael Kazin's July 17 New York Times Book Review of "Railroaded: The Transcontinentals and the Making of Modern America" by Richard White, he said the original 1870-90s transcontinental railroad robber barons had not built as demand required, but rather "as part of a competitive dash that caused much waste and hardship as progress." This is similar to the mad dash to privatize the public school system into charters. The "academies" are promulgated sans demand, without regard for hardship caused on the public school system. Meanwhile, a majority of Michigan politicians and the media promote charter entrepreneurs without question.

Why Is Corporate America Bashing Our Public Schools? by Kathy Emery and Susan Ohanian provides an understanding of why public education is under relentless attack. They said the business takeover of public education and the national agenda of the organized business community had developed a "power network" through the Business Roundtable, now helmed by ex-Gov. Engler. The Roundtable's program was developed in 1989 to implement state standards, state mandated standardized testing, and systems of rewards and sanctions, all "reforms" we have been forced to accept in the public discourse.

Budget shortfalls are real and public schools need reforms as well as dollars. I acknowledge that some charters have been valuable. Public education requires accountability. But charters have not faced as much scrutiny as has public education. The movement to bash public education has been boosted by ongoing budget cuts. It is used in a revolving door argument to justify that public education is not worthy of support as it cannot meet all unfunded mandates. Nicholas Kristof recently wrote in an New York Times Op-Ed piece titled Our Broken Escalator:

The United States supports schools in Afghanistan because we know that

education is one of the cheapest and most effective ways to build a country. Alas, we've forgotten that lesson at home. All across America, school budgets are being cut, teachers laid off and education programs dismantled. My beloved old high school in Yamhill, Ore. — a plain brick building that was my rocket ship — is emblematic of that trend. There were only 167 school days in the last school year here (180 was typical until the recession hit), and the staff has been reduced by 9 percent over five years. This school was where I embraced sports, became a journalist, encountered intellectual worlds, and got in trouble. These days, the 430 students still have opportunities to get into trouble, but the rest is harder.

The school newspaper, which once doubled as a biweekly newspaper for the entire town, has been terminated. Business classes are gone. A music teacher has been eliminated. Class size is growing, with more than 40 students in freshman Spanish. "It's like a long, slow bleed, watching things disappear," says the school district's business manager, Michelle Morrison. The school still has good teachers, but is that sustainable with a starting salary of \$33,676?

In a rural, blue-collar area like Yamhill, traditionally dependent on farming and forestry, school has always been an escalator to opportunity. One of my buddies was Loren, a house painter's son, who graduated as salutatorian and became a lawyer. That's the role that education historically has played — but the escalator is now breaking down.

Meanwhile, another story alleges that hedge funds are making tremendous profits off charter schools while public school students lose already-scarce dollars because of the presence of the schools.

Gary A. Flowers wrote:

"When one set of students is perceived as getting preferential treatment over another or the city refuses to work with parents to fix problems at a school before closing it, the inequity leaves all our children suffering."...The United States of America has never fully embraced a strong public school system. When public schools were established in 1853, the wealthy elite in many instances opposed public schools. After all, their children were educated in private academies."

The former Hamilton K-8 and four other DPS community schools were converted to charter schools over the summer of 2011, as announced June

10, 2011. This gave the staff and students one week to terminate and start planning their education or careers for fall. Flowers noted the failure to inform public school parents of school closures. This is the apparent DPS methodology, to impose so-called "perverse privateers" versus public education before the community has any recourse to organize an informed response.

Winnie Hu recently wrote in the New York Times that charter schools are now having to expand into affluent suburbs as they have already saturated the urban landscape. One U.S. suburb is fighting the encroachment of charters which rob public education of resources.

MILLBURN, N.J. — Matthew Stewart believes there is a place for charter schools. Just not in his schoolyard. Mr. Stewart, a stay-at-home father of three boys, moved to this wealthy township...three years ago, filling his life with class activities and soccer practices. But in recent months, he has traded play dates for protests, enlisting more than 200 families in a campaign to block two Mandarin-immersion charter schools from opening in the area. The group, Millburn Parents against Charter Schools, argues that the schools would siphon money from its children's education for unnecessarily specialized programs. The schools...would draw students and resources from Millburn and other area districts. "I'm in favor of a quality education for everyone," Mr. Stewart said. "In suburban areas like Millburn, there's no evidence whatsoever that the local school district is not doing its job. So what's the rationale for a charter school?" Suburbs like Millburn, renowned for educational excellence, have become hotbeds in the nation's charter school battles.

Leaders in Michigan government should remediate this madness to turn public education into a for-profit business and destroy public education.

For our society I have these policy questions:

1. Do all students — regardless of race or resources — in rural, suburban and urban areas have a right, rather than a privilege, to a high quality education and a chance to board the "escalator"?

2. Does DPS/public education need to be destroyed, put on display in a museum, to allow privatized, for-profit entities unfettered access to provide all education?

Prison Industrial Complex

A corollary factor of the modern robber barons phenomenon is the Michigan and U.S. Prison Industrial Complex [PIC] expansion. This is also an industry that started to privatize under the administration of Gov. Engler. There are clues as to how Snyder intends to "pare" everything other than its "core mission" of corrections. The U.S. has the highest incarceration rate in the world, which is seen as a business opportunity.

So-called "systems of care" in Michigan have dual tracks of failing urban schools (cited in the film by Oren Goldenberg, "Our School") as well as "justice" system complexes for youth and adults. The process to railroad minority youth into the aptly named School to Prison Pipeline (STPP), as described by the ACLU-Michigan, continues unabated. Perhaps many people do not make the connection between the modern robber barons and the prison industrial complex. Soon it will become Charters-to-Prison-Pipeline. Both industries call for privatization of their spheres of influence under cost-savings or "reform."

An example of youth who have difficulty fitting into the tight rigors of standardized testing in education (it is a widely known shell-game that charter schools reject such students after claiming them on "count day") may be the population of Emotionally Impaired students, or those who require an alternative educational setting. The most severe EI students of Detroit, Highland Park, Hamtramck, Harper Woods and the Grosse Pointes use DPS's Turning Point day treatment.

These EI students require support individually, in groups, in community-based instruction with rewards when desired behaviors are shown. Such day treatment in DPS and other districts provides therapeutic intervention and academic programming for students whose educational needs cannot be met in a basic classroom setting. DPS has (as of Aug. 29) laid off 33 school social workers, who work with these troubled populations. It is not clear what the district plans to do to help special populations if the layoffs remain.

I wonder:

3. How does DPS/public education and its privatized entities intend to serve the needs of special populations, particularly while laying off school social workers?

4. To what extent are the STPP and PIC intended to solve the first question by higher incarceration rates?

Osborn Teacher Wins Award

Maxine Mickens, an economics and government teacher at Osborn Academy of Mathematics, Science & Technology, will be presented the High School Teacher Award by the Michigan Association of Certified Public Accountants.

Mickens, an 11-year Detroit teacher, is being recognized for her outstanding coursework in economics and personal finance and her advocacy for the accounting profession.

Mickens joined the MACPA organization several years ago to expose her students to accounting professionals. She will be honored at a special awards dinner Oct. 3 at the Townsend Hotel in Birmingham.

"You just do what you do and you don't think anything of it," Mickens said. "It's always nice to be appreciated."



Osborn teacher Maxine Mickens with student Michaela Mitchell

Grants...

Science Teacher

Shell Oil Company and the National Science Teachers Association are accepting applications for the annual Shell Science Teaching Award. It recognizes a science teacher with at least eight years of experience who has a positive impact on his or her students through exemplary science teaching. Nominees submit a DVD no longer than an hour featuring classroom activities. Ten finalists will be chosen, with the winner receiving a \$10,000 award. Deadline: Oct. 17, 2011. For info, visit awards@nsta.org.

STEM Students

The College Board and the Siemens Foundation are offering a competition to reward talent among students who excel at science, technology and mathematics. Students may enter research projects in topics ranging from astronomy to toxicology. The students may win scholarships ranging from \$1,000 to \$100,000. Deadline: Oct. 3, 2011. For info, visit www.collegeboard.com.

Summer Academy

The Mickelson ExxonMobil Teachers Academy is an opportunity for teachers in grades 3 to 5 to gain intensive professional development in math and science through attending a

one-week camp in the summer. Selected applicants attend the academy free of charge with travel and lodging expenses paid. Teachers may apply for the 2012 academy now. Deadline: Oct. 31, 2011. For info, visit matt@sendmyteacher.com.

Pets in the Classroom

According to the Pet Care Trust, studies show children who have pets are better able to fight off infections than those from non-pet households. Studies also show that children turn to pets for their emotional well-being. The Pet Care Trust supports teachers who wish to have small pets or aquariums in their classrooms by providing grants to help purchase new pets, pet environments, or food and supplies for existing classroom pets. Deadline is ongoing. For info, visit www.petsinthe classroom.org.

Grants from PepsiCo

PepsiCo Contributions supports communities where the company does business through community investments. The company wants to advance objectives related to education, health and wellness, diversity and inclusion, and thought leadership. Grant seekers must submit a letter for grants under \$100,000. For info, visit pepsico.foundation@pepsi.com.

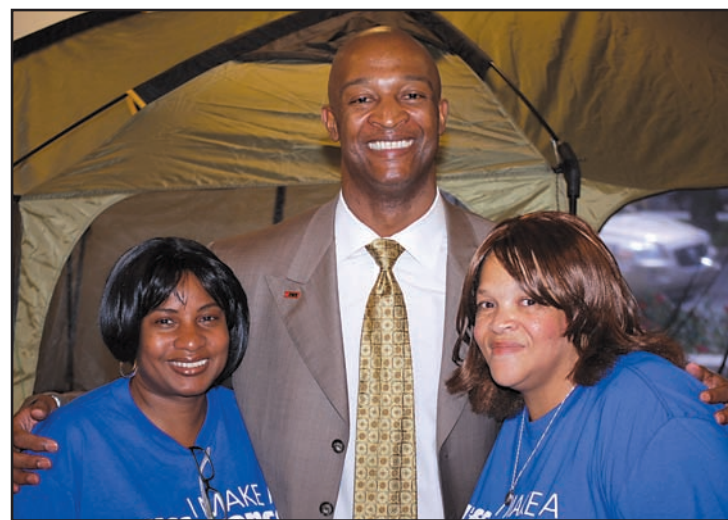
Detroit Kids Make Academic Gains at Literacy Camp

Literacy Camp gave Tasha Young such an academic boost last year that her grades and MEAP scores improved dramatically.

"I got double promoted to the seventh grade," the 10-year-old said. She returned to the camp this summer to keep her skills elevated over the long summer.

Literacy Camp, sponsored by the DFT, the Detroit Federation of Paraprofessionals, and the Detroit Association of Educational Office Employees, grew this year to include 86 students. For seventh-grader Stephanie Hamilton, Literacy Camp did exactly what it promised.

"I became a better writer and a better reader," she said.



Literacy Camp ran from Aug. 8-12 at the DFT Hall free of charge for the students. The intensive program to boost literacy skills in preparation for the MEAP is a brainchild of the coalition of unions and funded in part by the unions, the AFT and Health Alliance Plan.

The students had a full week of academics, motivational speakers, and fun.

"Take these challenges to heart," encouraged former

NFL Player Nolan Harrison II. "Make people notice you. Stand up on the chairs and make people see the brilliance inside of you."

The coalition gives special thanks to organizers Karin Whittler, Rosemarie Kirtz, Ruby Newbold, Donna Jackson, E'Lois Moore, Darryl Hibbett of HAP, and Nolan Harrison II, of the NFL Players Association, Rosalind LaRocque and Linda Stelley of AFT, Karen Ridgeway and Jack Elsey of DPS, and Midtown Corner Cafe.



They cut your pay. They cut your benefits. *Now they want your voice!*

By Julie Matuzak
AFT Michigan

The Republican plan for Education Reform has reformed you into earning less money, paying more for healthcare, putting more children in classrooms, and limiting your collective bargaining rights.

Bills are being acted on now that will end payroll deduction for union dues just for school employees and prohibit the use of public facilities for union meetings. And a so called "Right to Work" bill just for teachers is being proposed.

These bills do nothing to enhance education for our students. They create no jobs. They are just an attack on education employees and an attempt to silence our collective voices. It is business as usual from some Lansing politicians who are more interested in political payback than real ideas that will increase student achievement and partner with the women and men who are in classrooms.

There is a lot happening in Lansing and it is all happening at once!

HB 4929 (Haveman, R-Holland) and SB 636 (Meekhof, R- West Olive) would amend the Public Employment Relations Act (PERA) to prohibit the collection of union dues by a public school employer. Specifically, the bill says that a public school employer's use of public school resources to assist a labor organization in collecting dues or service fees from wages of public school employees is a prohibited contribution to the administration of a labor organization.

Currently, collection of dues in this manner is something that is decided at the local level and schools are not required to do it. Union dues through payroll deductions are largely automated, so school districts have little work to do on a regular basis. HB 4929 was introduced on Sept. 8, reported out of the House Oversight, Reform and Ethics Committee on Sept. 13, and passed the House on Sept. 15 and is now in the Senate.

HB 4052 prohibits public employees and their unions from meeting or using public facilities to conduct union business - no after-school meetings in the cafeteria! It carries a \$10,000 fine.

There is also a fine if union members talk to others about organizing in a workplace.

Sen. Majority Leader Randy Richardville (R-Monroe) has spoken to the news media about his intention to introduce a "so called" Right-to-Work proposal just for teachers. This would prohibit us from negotiating fair share clauses in our contracts.

The purpose of all of these bills is to keep public school employees from having a collective voice through their unions. These proposals don't create jobs and they do nothing to improve student achievement.

It is important our members understand what is at stake and take action. Call or email your state senators and representatives today.

The new Carstens at Remus Robinson is jumping off to a great start!

By Alleccia Bowman

Principal Janice Richardson invited BMX worldwide stunt team Wonder Wheels to the school for a 2011-2012 school year kick-off assembly. Bullying, diversity, proper social network usage, as well as, bike and play safety were topics covered through Wonder Wheels.



Calendar

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

OCTOBER

- 6 Executive Board Meeting, 4:30 p.m.
- 8 Building Representatives Training, 8:30-4:30
- 11 School Social Workers Chapter, 4:00 p.m.
- 13 General Membership Meeting, 4:30 p.m.
- 17 Special Education Chapter Meeting, 4:30 p.m.
- 18 Retirees Chapter Meeting, 11:30 a.m.

NOVEMBER

- 3 Executive Board Meeting, 4:30 p.m.
- 10 General Membership Meeting, 4:30 p.m.
- 11 Half Day, Veterans Day
- 14 Special Education Chapter Meeting, 4:30 p.m.
- 15 Retirees Chapter Meeting, 11:30 a.m.
- 15 School Social Workers Chapter, 4:00 p.m.

DECEMBER

- 1 Executive Board Meeting, 4:30 p.m.
- 8 General Membership Meeting, 4:30 p.m.
- 12 Special Education Chapter Meeting, 4:30 p.m.
- 13 Retirees Chapter Meeting, 11:30 a.m.
- 13 School Social Workers Chapter, 4:00 p.m.
- 26 Schools Closed, Winter Break