

THE DETROIT teacher

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October 2010

Diane Ravitch Visits Detroit—Defends Public Education

Diane Ravitch, bestselling author, professor and Assistant Secretary of Education under President George H. W. Bush, visited Detroit Sept. 23 and told audiences at AFT Michigan and Wayne State University, that public education is under virulent attack.

Ravitch said a clever narrative is being told about public education.

“The storyline goes like this: America’s schools are awful. They’re dreadful. They’re failing. And the only reason is the teachers who are protected by the unions.”

The narrative plays into the hands of for-profit charters to get more public funds without accepting all kids and showing data that they raise achievement.

“The narrative about charters is totally false,” said Ravitch, author of “the Death and Life of the Great American School System.” “With charters, the research is very clear. Charters as a whole do not improve achievement. The problem is there’s lots of money behind them.”

Charters can hold lotteries and exclude immigrants, English language learners and special education students. Public schools, meanwhile, are the institutions that educate all children and turn no one away, through lottery or otherwise.

“I’m so glad there are public schools where everyone can go and nobody will be picked,” she said.

In addition, a new three-year Vanderbilt University study, concluded that merit pay for teachers does not raise student achievement.

“Teachers didn’t work harder because there was more money at the end of the line,” she said. “They work as hard as they can.”

If doctors, for example, were rated on the number of deaths of patients, Ravitch said they would never take serious cases.

Ravitch sees unions getting defensive and states competing for public funds that are rightfully theirs. Race to the Top granted funds to 11 states and rejected 39. If education is a civil right, why should we have to compete for our civil rights. Money should go to states with the greatest need, not the best grant writer.

See RAVITCH, on Page 4



The DFT’s new Peer Assistance and Review Program is in place with 20 consulting teachers.

New DFT Reforms Take Shape in Detroit Public Schools

Last year, the DFT negotiated with the district to develop a Peer Assistance and Review program to help struggling teachers.

The concept is not new. DFT President John Elliott negotiated it in the 1989 contract. As one of the reform initiatives in the 2009 contract, President Keith Johnson implemented the long-discussed program.

“We’ve been working on this for two years,” said Ivy Bailey, a PAR consultant and one of the original DFT members to study the program. PAR consultants said they believe the program is a meaningful reform.

“We’re restoring respect in the profession,” said PAR consultant Vanessa Parnell. “We are accepting the fact

that reforms must happen.” Parnell was on the original DFT team that ventured to Toledo to review the program.

“We either need to become involved in these reforms or we’ll have to be recipients of what others have decided for us,” Bailey said.

“As part of the decision making group, we have taken on a challenge to promote growth and restructure from within,” said PAR consultant Karen Russell.

PAR’s first priority is to provide assistance to our colleagues who need it or who ask for it.

“We all remember what it was like to be in the classroom for the first time,” Parnell. “Many of us also know

how it feels to be an established teacher but feel overwhelmed with all the state benchmarks, new curriculum requirements and technology advancements like Learning Village.”

PAR is here to help – not hurt – select teachers who are in either of these groups. The 20 PAR consultants were selected over the summer and are highly qualified in their areas of certification, on all levels and disciplines, including special ed.

Although PAR is at the beginning stages, the team has high hopes for its success.

“We’re establishing the program,” Bailey said, “that we know will lead to change in the culture of the Detroit Public Schools.”

WHY PRIORITY SCHOOLS?

Public education is under attack in America. And there is no better poster child for such attacks than Detroit's public schools. Vilified by scores on the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) last spring, Detroit's schools once again became the symbol for what is wrong with public education in the United States.

The Secretary of Education called Detroit "ground zero" in the need for educational reform and claimed he would "lose sleep" over the state of education in Detroit's schools. Never mind the fact that he has only spent two hours in a Detroit school.

President's Report



Keith Johnson

In an effort to compel states and school districts to relax or even eliminate tenure laws and collective bargaining rights for teachers, the secretary dangled the money carrot, "Race to the Top." He dangled billions of dollars in federal aid to struggling school districts as an enticement to "compete" for much needed dollars to promote educational reform.

Michigan, like many other states, jumped at the chance to "win" these funds by adopting sweeping reform mandates by attacking the rights of union members throughout the state, particularly those in poor communities like Detroit.

Coincidentally, the DFT was engaged in intense contract negotiations with a

school district headed by an Emergency Financial Manager with unfettered authority. He saw our contract as an impediment to the reform initiatives he wished to impose upon DFT members including elimination of seniority, merit pay, and the evaluation process.

In addition, the legislature and the state superintendent, with a close eye on Detroit, were developing a plan to impose state-run charters on the lowest performing schools in the state, many of which were in Detroit.

This plan would have spelled disaster for DPS and the DFT. Those schools in the lowest 5 percent in the state could be closed or made into state-run charters, without the protection of a collective bargaining agreement. That is: no seniority rights, step increases, compromised health benefits, etc.

The plan, with the development of the School Improvement Grant application process, identified four options to address the lowest performing schools:

- Close the school
- Close the school and replace it with a charter
- Turnaround Plan, meaning no more than 50 percent of the staff could return
- Transformation Plan, meaning the school restructures itself from within, including a new academic plan, professional development, etc.

Teachers assigned to those schools would be released, and while they could have "bumped" into the remaining DPS schools, other teachers with less seniority would have faced certain layoff.

That could have meant the loss of 2,100 DFT positions and severely weakened our union, thus setting a precedent for the unbridled expansion of charter schools in Detroit and the potential end of the DFT. We placed ourselves ahead of the curve with the



DFT President Keith Johnson with UAW President Bob King at the 2010 Detroit Labor Day Parade.

concept of "Priority Schools."

Due to the reconstitution of 39 schools at the end of the 2008-09 school year, we were able to avoid the turnaround model because in most instances those schools already had a major turnover of staff.

The school closure and charter plans were eliminated as options, and were not imposed by the state because we developed our own reform initiative with "Priority Schools."

Without question, our proactive approach to educational reform protected the jobs of many of our members as well as their salaries and benefits. We also bought ourselves some time to transition those schools that have been chronically low-performing into schools on a path to success and that narrow the achievement gap.

However, "Priority Schools" must be more than a label. The district must invest additional resources in those

schools in order to effectively address the deficiencies that are an impediment to quality teaching and learning. These schools are slated to receive additional funding to facilitate such needs and equip teachers to enhance student achievement.

The driving force behind the DFT's "Priority Schools" initiative was to place reform in our hands rather than the state or federal government making DPS into what they envision at the expense of our membership.

If we acknowledge that we must improve, we must also acknowledge that we cannot improve without change. We believe that such change, however, must be done with teachers and by teachers, not to teachers.

Tracking Lost Preps

Tracking lost preps just got a little more difficult.

The district scheduled a sixth prep on Fridays for teachers in most K-8 schools. Since this is beyond the number of contractually required preps, if you get this prep, it should be recorded as a make-up prep. If you do not get it, it is not a lost prep; it just means you didn't get the make-up prep that week.

For preschool teachers, lost preps didn't used to be an issue. However, with the district scheduling professional development on Fridays, preschool teachers now need to track their preps.

The contract only requires five preps per week, so preschool teachers should consider one period of their Friday schedule as a make-up prep. Time spent for compliance items (e.g. home visits) on Fridays is not considered a lost prep, since that is what the prep time is for. However, time spent in professional development should be recorded on the lost prep forms.

Since the district only owes five preps per week, preschool teachers who are in professional development for the whole day on a Friday, should record that as five lost preps.

All teachers should update their lost prep forms weekly. You should record lost preps and make-up preps received in your daily lesson plans in case there is any dispute.

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Updates...

Retirements Announced

The following DFT members have announced their retirements. If you would like your retirement announced, please call the editor at 313-875-6776. Hussaina Adam, Dorothy Addy, Marcia Auslander, Gertie Barton, Vanita Beasley, Marjorie Benson, Veronica Blackman, May Booth, Dorothy Bragg, Joan Brees, Roberta Breitberg, Rita Britton, Dianne Brown, Thomas Butler, Anita Daly, Patricia L. Douglas, Helen Drumright, Bernice Dunn, Clara Fletcher, Mary Gawel-Ensroth, Germaine Glass, Walterina Guy, Ernest Harris, Nodarr Hester, Asenath Hilson, Yvonne House, Linda Jackson, Constance Jackson, Ernestine Jones, Ezella Jones, Bonnie Karman, Fadia Kinaya, Mary Kozlowski, Cheryl Ludeman, Ethelyn Manning, Penny McDonald, Juanita McMillian, Harry McTerry, Johnny Mickles III, Clovilla Morgan, Evarnie Mouzon, Audrey Northington, Mildred Peteet, Dianne Peterson, Sandy Pittman, Anne Platt, Susan Radzilowski, Donna Ray, Toya Reece, Walterine Roberts, Deborah

Rutledge-Holsey, Neda Sapp, Deborah Scott, Judy Shapiro, Laura Singleton, Gail Stevenson, Jurretta Tabb, Juanita Tansil, Donna Taylor, Sherrie Tyler, Dianne Upshaw, Ava Wagner, Rosetta Waller, Drewery Watson, Suzette Wegrzynowicz, Jennifer West, Chyvonn White, Theresa Williams, Diane Williams, William Zirngibl.

Ed Techs Wanted

Veda Jenkins-Sigmon, the chair of the Educational Technicians Chapter, would like Ed Techs participation and support of their chapter. The meetings are open to all of the district's Educational Technicians to discuss issues facing members. The meetings are kept to one hour from 3:30-4:30 p.m. bi-monthly. Look at the calendar on the DFT's website at www.dft231.com. The first meeting is Nov. 18.



**Veda
Jenkins-Sigmon**

Retired Detroit Teachers Ease Path for New Teachers



Retired Spain teachers with new teachers from left are: Pamela Mathis (retired), Lynda Wlodarski (new), Eloise Singleton (retired secretary), David Grimaldo (new), Richard McClain (retired), Kym Legreair (new), and Mike McGowan (new). Not pictured are retired teachers Robert Hawkins and Bermecia King.

By Charlene Uresy, Spain Teacher

With the cry through a megaphone "Welcome to Spain School," physical education teacher Gloria Celina ushered the awaiting students inside the building to start a new year. The students looked beautiful in their new school uniforms and smiling faces.

Last year 18 staff members at Spain School retired — a large number for any school. With the start of the 2010-2011 school year, Principal Ronald Alexander had most of his vacancies filled, and the new staff, along with the old staff, greeted their students with enthusiasm.

It was a wonderful sight to see that some of the retired teachers came back to Spain to help transition the new teachers into their classrooms. That action was a true exhibition of dedication and loyalty to students and to the Detroit Public Schools. Indeed, it takes a village to raise a child. Many thanks to the retired teachers and secretary who gave their time (some of them came the entire week) to ensure a smooth start to the new school year.

Everyday Heroes Missing in "Waiting for Superman"

By David Hecker, AFT Michigan President

According to Director Davis Guggenheim and promoters, "Waiting for Superman," the documentary about public education just released in Michigan, is intended to generate community discussions about education reform. A commendable goal, but meaningful discussions and effective actions must be based on a careful, accurate, complete analysis of public education. Everything "Waiting for Superman" is not.

No one defends the status quo. Public education has a myriad of problems that must be addressed if we are to reach our goal of all children receiving an excellent education.

Guggenheim, however, paints public education as a failure; all teachers as bad and; merit pay, standardized tests, and evaluating teachers by student test scores as important reforms. Unions are the villain for opposing these reforms. The saviors are charter schools.

Out of 3 million teachers, there are some who should not be teaching. No one wants these teachers out of the classroom more than other teachers. Whose fault is it that some bad teachers remain? It is administrators who do not properly evaluate and develop teachers in need of assistance, and then follow due process to fire those who do not improve. Although "Waiting for Superman" says otherwise, tenure is not a job for life. It is due process.

Moreover, the movie ignores recent studies, including a new Vanderbilt University report, that show that merit pay does not improve student achievement. Numerous studies, including a recent one out of Stanford, indicate that charter schools do no better than traditional public schools. And many studies highlight the limitations of standardized testing and using them to evaluate teachers.

The film ignores that high performing Michigan public schools are unionized. It ignores another fact: That countries universally recognized as providing an excellent education to all children have unionized teachers and staff.

The Harlem Children's Zone is praised with its charter schools being the reason. The fact is that the Harlem Children's Zone has wrap-around services for families from before a child's birth and throughout their education. Services that help students come to school prepared and ready to learn. Services that eradicate the barriers to academic success. Services that every public school child deserves. Elsewhere in the film, it is said that additional money thrown at public education has not worked. The film fails to state that two-thirds of Harlem Children's Zone funds come from the private sector.

Guggenheim states that there is no school choice within traditional public schools, although in Michigan there is choice within districts and among districts. And getting back to tenure, the movie implies that it comes after two years, ignoring that these provisions vary by state and that in Michigan it can be granted after four years, more than enough time for administrators to properly evaluate.

Guggenheim and Paramount claim that the movie is intended to advance discussion and social action. But it is clear that their real goal is to demonize teachers, eliminate unions and diminish traditional public education, the only education system that serves all children. Why else would they paint an inaccurate, incomplete and misleading picture?

Perhaps the movie's most unfortunate shortcoming is that it ignores programs and policies that are proven to work: developing and supporting great teachers; implementing comprehensive evaluation systems that inform teaching and learning; creating great curricula and the conditions that promote learning for all kids; and insisting on shared responsibility and mutual accountability that hold everyone, not just teachers and staff, responsible for ensuring that all our children receive a great education. The movie ignores the millions of examples of good and great teachers from whom other teachers can learn.

The status quo is unacceptable. Too many of our schools need reform — meaningful reform that targets a school's specific needs along the lines of what the Detroit Federation of Teachers has advanced.

Our communities need to become much more engaged for all schools to be successful. But let's have these discussions based on facts, evidence and research, not someone's political agenda.



David Hecker



By Mark O'Keefe
Executive Vice President

A Tax Loophole for Teachers

Would you buy a \$10 bill for \$6.50? The Flexible Spending Accounts offered by DPS allow you to do just that.

Here's how it works. During the district's open enrollment process, you can elect to have money set aside from your paycheck for health care. For 2010, you could elect to contribute \$260 to \$3,000.

The money is deducted from your weekly paycheck, so it takes the whole calendar year to pay your contribution into the plan. However, you can begin using the money immediately.

For example, if you contribute \$10 per paycheck, the entire \$260 will be put on

a debit card which you can immediately use to pay for eligible medical expenses.

The savings comes out of Uncle Sam's pocket, since your contributions are pre-tax. That means when \$10 is deducted from your paycheck, you save about \$3.50 in taxes, and your net check only drops by about \$6.50. But you still get to spend the whole \$10.

There is one catch. By federal law, the plan is a "use it or lose it" proposition. You do not get back any amounts you don't spend. If you aren't careful, you might only get \$9 for each \$6.50 you contribute.

When you receive your open enrollment materials (traditionally in late October), estimate your eligible expenses (don't forget those prescription co-pays) and be careful not to contribute more money than you will use.

There is also a Flex spending plan for Dependant Care. See the open enrollment package for restrictions.

Grants...

Inclusion Grant

CVS/Caremark is dedicated to supporting organizations that enrich the lives of children with disabilities through inclusion programs. CVS Caremark is focusing particularly on public school programs that provide inclusion and promote independence. Grants from \$500 to \$5,000 are available. Deadline: Oct. 31, 2010. For info, visit <http://info.cvscaremark.com/community/our-impact/community-grants/public-schools>.

Technology

Best Buy's Teach@15 Awards enable teens to take action to acquire new technology for their schools. Students age 13 to 18 may apply. The awards are in the form of Best Buy gift cards of \$500 to \$1,500. The grants are ongoing. For info, visit www.best-buy-community-relations.com/teach-awards.htm.

Math and Science

The Making a Difference Award is the result of a partnership between Drug, Chemical and Associated Technologies Association and the National Science Teachers Association. The award honors one outstanding science secondary education program in grades 6-12 that interests students to explore the science of global problems. The award consists of \$2,500 and more. Deadline: Nov. 30, 2010. For info, visit awards@nsta.org.

School Reform

The Braitmayer Foundation provides financial support for innovative K-12 education programs particularly curric-

ular and school reform initiatives, and professional development opportunities for teachers. Grants of up to \$10,000 are available. Deadline: Nov. 15, 2010. For info, visit www.braitmayer-foundation.org.

Math and Music

The National Council of Teachers of Mathematics offers a grant for teachers using music to teach mathematics in grades preK-2. Grants of up to \$3,000 are available. Deadline: Nov. 12, 2010. For info, visit www.nctm.org.

Reading

The International Reading Association offers its Jeanne S. Chall Research Fellowship to support research into reading in areas of beginning reading theory, methods of practicing the difficulty of texts, diagnosing limited reading ability etc. Past year's grant winners and their projects are listed on the web site. Grants up to \$6,000 are available. Deadline: Nov. 1, 2010. For info, visit www.reading.org.

Professional Development

The Mathematics Education Trust makes grants to support the professional development of a math teacher currently teaching in a high school to improve competence in the teaching of mathematics. Grants up to \$3,000 are available to teachers with membership in NCTM. Deadline: Nov. 12, 2010. For info, visit www.nctm.org.

Science Teachers

A partnership between the National Science Teachers Association, Delta Education, Frey-Neo, and CPO

Science sponsors awards in recognition of outstanding science teachers. The award will honor three full-time preK-12 science teachers who have demonstrated success in using inquiry-based science to enhance learning. Awards of \$1,500 are available. For info, visit www.nsta.org.

New Teachers

The Maitland P. Simmons Memorial Award for New Teachers provides K-12 teachers with funds to attend the National Science Teachers Association annual conference. Eligible teachers are NSTA members who have been teaching full-time for fewer than five years. The \$1,000 award pays for attendance to the conference. Deadline: Nov. 30, 2010. For more info, visit www.nsta.org.

Technology

In an effort to bridge the digital divide for under-privileged children, GTECH After School Advantage provides grants of computer labs to eligible programs. GTECH provides up to \$15,000 worth of equipment for computer labs for minority or at-risk children ages 5-15. For more info, visit www.gtech.com.

Gardens

Annie's Grants for Gardens offers small grants to community gardens, school gardens and other educational programs that connect children directly to gardening. These funds can be used to buy gardening tools, seeds or other needed supplies. For info, visit www.annies.com/grants_for_gardens.

Diane Ravitch Visits Detroit

RAVITCH, from Page 1

"Unfortunately, there's no national leadership on education," Ravitch said. "There are more people who get it than the leadership."

Steve Portnoy, a Detroit school psychologist, questioned when administrators would be made accountable.

"In Detroit it's a shambles," Portnoy said. "Teachers are not placed in time. We're waiting for a super administrator," he said, referring to the new documentary "Waiting for Superman."

We are living in an era of unprecedented inequalities, Ravitch said, and propaganda against public institutions. "Everything public is being demonized," she said.

This is all diverting attention from the real problem, huge social issues and inequities.

"The inequality gap is probably bigger than the robber baron era. So we have all these billionaires saying how to do we improve education? Fire the teachers," she said. "Why don't they just pay taxes?"

Attacking the public institutions that raise the standards of living is wrong, she said.

"There's no nation in the world to point to," she said, "to say this nation got strong by dismantling its public schools."

DFT Financial Report for 2009-2010

The Union Continues To Be Profitable

By Vito Peraino, C.P.A.
DFT Controller

Despite declining dues revenue of \$300,000 (due to declining membership), the DFT still recorded a profit of \$418,000 for the 2010 fiscal year. This exceeded our budgeted profit of \$270,000.



Vito Peraino
DFT Controller

This was primarily accomplished by our continued profit maximization initiatives including:

- Rental income generated by the lease

of the second floor.

- Reduction of legal expenses (even though it was a contract negotiation year), due to the ability to

resolve more questions in house.

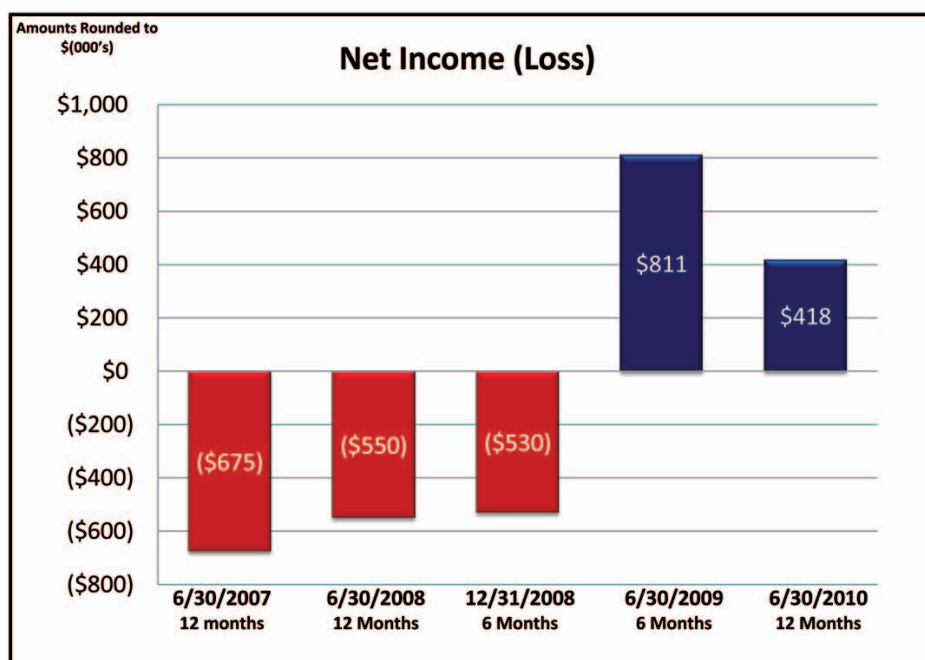
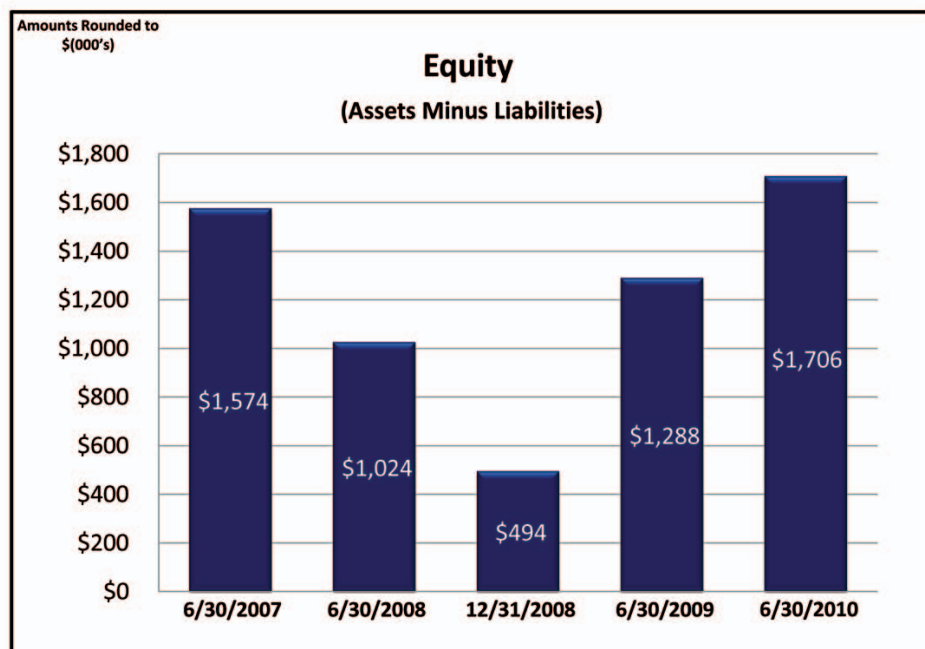
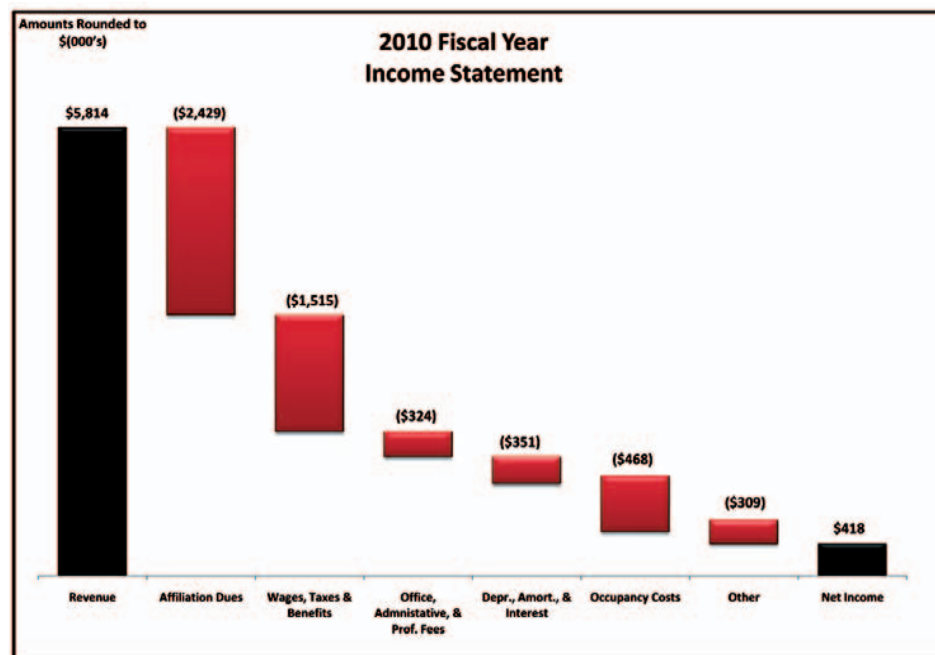
- Closely monitoring and reducing office, administration, and occupancy costs.
- Competitive bids from printers, election companies, and other vendors.

Furthermore, we are current with our vendors and are up to date with our current year affiliation dues.

The DFT, however, faces significant challenges ahead including declining dues revenue due to student enrollment, increasing occupancy costs, and paying down our outstanding long term debt of \$1.4 million owed to AFT National for affiliation dues collected but not remitted prior to 2008.

Even with these challenges, we still anticipate we will meet our budgeted profit of \$150,000 for fiscal year 2011.

Additionally, we are taking measures to ensure the long term financial stability of the DFT.



A Sign of the Times

By Mark O'Keefe, DFT Executive Vice President

At our September membership meeting, we announced that we will be signing an agreement to list our office building for sale. With the union's improved financial position, one might wonder why we are considering a sale. The answer is, although we can afford the building now, we may not be able to in the future.

When DFT purchased the office six years ago, we were 12,000 members strong. At the time, projections showed we could still afford the building even if our membership dropped to 9,000. Although our membership has dropped to about 6,000, we still expect to announce next June our third consecutive year of profitability.

After that, the picture gets worse. Demographers estimate that lower birth rates and other factors will lead to a loss of about 6,000 students per year for the next four years. That will cause dues income to drop significantly each year. As a result, the union would begin losing money by the 2012-2013 fiscal year.

Facing a continued drop in membership, we have three choices. We could increase dues, cut staff, or reduce costs by selling the building. We did not need to take a survey to figure out what our members want. The only responsible option is to list the building for sale.

By acting now, while we are still profitable, we can afford to be patient. If the right buyer comes along now, we will act quickly. If not, we can still afford to wait.

So don't be alarmed when you see the "For Sale" sign on our building. It is not a sign of a return to financial problems in the union office.

It is instead, a sign of our proactive commitment to avoid financial problems.

Union Members Want Reforms that will Make a Difference for Kids

By **Jerry T. Jordan, President,**
Philadelphia Federation of Teachers

At the heart of the PFT's mission is our conviction that our members know how to educate children. We know what they need. We want students to succeed academically and socially, and we believe that we stand a better chance of helping them



Jerry Jordan

succeed when we work in a collaborative, professional environment where we are respected, our talents are valued and our ideas are incorporated into efforts to improve our schools.

We understand the urgency of "fixing" under-performing schools. But we want reform done with us, and not to us. Unfortunately this year, we've seen too little of that spirit of cooperation from the District.

After two years of difficult negotiations, we reached a "ground-breaking" and "historic" labor agreement that we hoped would create a real partnership in improving school climate, supporting teachers and staff and raising student achievement.

We created a Peer Assistance and Review (PAR) Program to give teachers greater ownership over our profession and to allow us to support our colleagues and encourage excellence. I am happy to report that this program is moving forward in the spirit it was created and will be up and running in 45 schools this fall.

We negotiated a more orderly process for transfers and assignments and refined the staff selection process to meet the challenge of using site-based selection to fill vacancies.

And we agreed to help turn around low-performing schools, allowing the District to designate "Renaissance schools," which were to be in-district turnaround schools that would give PFT members and the District the tools needed to raise achievement.

We were extremely disappointed when, after designating 14 Renaissance eligible schools, instead of rolling up our sleeves and working together to improve achievement, the District chose to make school improvement someone else's problem and converted many Renaissance schools to charters.

PFT members, it seems, have more faith in the potential of public education

than the people who are paid handsomely to improve schools.

We hoped the difficult process of reassigning PFT members would be made as painless as possible, but, again, the administration's unwillingness to work with the PFT created unnecessary frustration, errors and delays.

At a hastily called Saturday transfer session on June 5, District officials violated the letter and the spirit of the contract — a contract signed in January by the superintendent and SRC chairman and me.

The violations were so blatant that after I sent a letter detailing the numerous violations to the superintendent, she had her staff halt the process and begin anew.

Among the violations detailed in my letter to the District was:

- Staff Selection Committees at Promise Academies were hand-picked by administrators, instead of composed of principals, teachers and parents as specified in the contract.

- New "hoops" were added for teachers applying to remain at Promise Academies to jump through, including "observations" not authorized by the contract.

- School Based Instructional Support Specialists were told they must interview again for their positions (although it is a tested position that does not require interviewing).

- The vacancy report did not list content areas nor grades as required by the contract.

- Failure to provide the PFT and Promise Academy applicants with program descriptions prior to staff interviews and failure to complete interviews and notify successful candidates so they would not have to pick new positions unnecessarily.

We are arbitrating our claim that the District violated our agreement by establishing Staff Selection Committees.

This has been a difficult year for PFT members, who have been denigrated repeatedly by the administration in public statements that question our qualifications, abilities and professionalism.

We have watched as the superintendent has appointed a growing number of high-paid administrators while PFT members struggle with dwindling resources amid growing demands for accountability.

Although the District budgeted for a 4.5 percent increase in spending next year (in a record \$3.2 billion budget) there are 50 fewer teachers — thanks to charter school conversions, as well as

20 fewer NTAs, four fewer community relations liaisons, three fewer secretaries and 40 fewer CELC teachers, paraprofessionals and staff.

These cuts strike at the most basic need in our schools: to create safe, orderly environments in which to teach and learn. This administration would rather purchase cameras to monitor violence than hire NTAs to work with students to improve behavior.

The PFT-District contract is many things. It's a legal agreement to which all parties must adhere, of course. But it's more than that. It's a framework outlining a commitment to work together, in mutual respect, to help students reach their potential as students and as adults.

We'll continue to advocate for our students, for public education and for the respect we deserve. We must do this

together — new and veteran teachers, professionals, paraprofessionals and support staff.

We must make it clear to the administration the benefit of having teachers and staff as partners in reform, with a real voice about what happens in our schools. No matter the issue — professional development, a safer environment, small classes or securing resources to meet students' special and individual needs — we know that public education will only succeed if everyone is involved in making it work.

I will know we've succeeded when the voices of the people who "fight the fight" every day in schools and classrooms are given more weight than the theories of people who have never set foot in a classroom.

This article is reprinted courtesy of the Philadelphia Federation of Teachers.

HighScope Training Gets High Reviews

More than 200 Detroit preschool and Headstart teachers got a four-day inservice in September on the HighScope Preschool Curriculum. Many teachers felt the inservice was valuable and validated the methods already being practiced.

"We're learning," said teacher Maria Goike. "A lot of it I'm doing already but it's giving us more detail. I didn't realize I'm doing that all along."

The preschool educators were thankful the workshops were held for all teachers involved in preschool, instead of offering it at different times to teachers and associate teachers.

"What's great about this is the training is for both the teacher and associate," said Nancy McRae, an associate teacher. "That's why it's so positive. We feed off each other. It partners the relationship."

The workshops focused on "scaffolding" — building upon knowledge, gently introducing a new concept, and becoming a play partner with students.

"Conversation is the magic word," said Patricia Brokman, a HighScope facilitator. Brokman showed teachers how to engage students into higher thinking.

"Notice I did not say, 'Zip up,' 'Put on your listening ears,'" Brokman said. "I did not say, 'Criss cross applesauce.' I did not say that because then they're focused on crossing their legs."

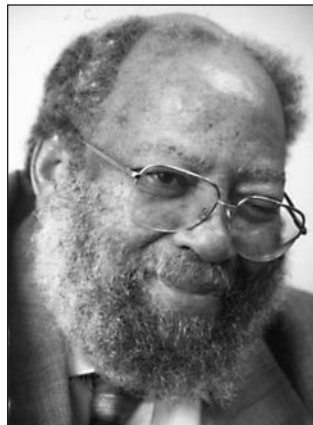
Instead, she guided teachers in inquisition, how to get students to ask more questions and be engaged.

"When we have conversations with kids," Brokman said, "we become a play partner with the child."



Preschool teacher Wanda Lundy-Colquitt, standing, Early Childhood Officer Wilma Taylor-Costen and preschool associate teacher Nancy McRae.

One Tough Guy



Ted Madison

By **Mershira Oliver**
DFT Labor Relations Administrator

Years ago when I started working at the DFT, I was lucky to work with three good guys. Ted Madison was the feisty one. Marvin Green was mellow and laid back. Tim Michalak was high strung like me and ready to conquer all evil doers to the contract.

At the time it was a good ole boys network at the District and you had to be tough. I decided I was going to familiarize myself with Ted. But Ted had different ideas. He limited his interaction with me and pushed off my questions. "Go check with the director of staff," he said. Eventually I told him, "No, I need you to help me."



Mershira Oliver

Now, some people would call Ted a handful. But I knew Ted stored fantastic knowledge about the district and our contract. Ted served in the military, went to law school and loved words.

He taught me that the intent of language affects the interpretation. That bent or misinterpreted language could and would be abused. He was right about so many things that pertain to the contract and the climate of public education today.

Having worked at the DFT for more than two decades, he had history with many cases and could recall facts. He bargained many contracts and served on countless committees and task forces, in an effort to better educate children and the community.

This year I am dealing with Adult Education matters and I miss being able to call on him to set the record straight. After Ted retired in 2003, I still called him for advice on how to get cases resolved. When I called him recently he said, "You're dealing with a different animal."

The culture now, he said, is designed to perpetuate confusion and a disregard for union workers. He gave me stern advice on staying the course in the midst of a storm.

Ted passed away Aug. 17 at age 82, leaving Wylene, his wife of 46 years, a son and three grandchildren.

Ted was a rare colleague whom I treasured. He was from a generation that could level with a person, be direct, and deliver candor.

He could control a classroom, having taught for 18 years, and was intimidated by no one. That's because few were as brilliant as he.

He was caring, especially about special education students. But you had to break through that tough Teflon exterior. All of that toughness was good for me, his young protégé, and for the greater cause that unites us all, the DFT.

Theodore Madison: 1928 to 2010

By **Estella Burnette**
DFT Accounting Clerk

Looking back over the history of the Detroit Federation of Teachers, you will find many strong leaders driven by passion, dedication and courage. Theodore Edward Madison dedicated 40 years of his life serving the DFT and 18 years as a classroom teacher educating children in the Detroit Public Schools.

Ted was a man driven by passion because he valued education and knew that not all children learned at the same rate. Some have vision, hearing, and physical difficulties that require special accommodations to ensure they receive a quality education. Ted taught Special Education at all levels within DPS. He was a member of the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) Speaker's Bureau and of Citizen Alliance to Uphold Special Education.



Estella Burnette

Ted fought relentlessly to protect public education and was a profound advocate for civil and human rights. Ted knew the value of educational funding needed for children to excel. In his leadership role, Ted fought to balance the scorecard with funding special education services by making sure resources were properly allocated in every DPS classroom.

Ted also was a fighter for teachers' rights by challenging procedures on both sides of the fence. If the DFT contract needed changes, he fought to change them. On the other hand, if DPS did not get things right or moved too slowly, he was a voice to be reckoned with.

Ted believed strongly that "sense should make dollars." If not, start by questioning yourself first because "you" should make a difference. Ted understood that to provide a quality education for all children, teachers must be equipped with all the tools to teach our most valuable human resources, our children.

On a more personal level, I had the pleasure of working with Ted for many years and will miss him dearly. Ted taught me the following:

- #1. The most intellectual person uses his ears instead of his mouth.
- #2. Blessed are the people who have no expectations, for they shall never be disappointed.
- #3. People who talk a lot, often do not say very much.
- #4. Education is a journey and not a destination.
- #5. Do not forget #4.

Passion and dedication are needed to have an impact on leadership. Courage, however, is the single most important element that separates leaders from followers. Ted was a wise man that never confused wisdom with courage. My friend and colleague, Ted, fought a good fight for the underdog, held politicians accountable, and questioned policies and procedures.

Ted challenged others to strive for perfection but he was a man who accepted you for the person you were while helping you to become the person you wish to be.

Rest in Peace
THEODORE EDWARD MADISON
February 1, 1928
to
August 17, 2010

DETROIT FEDERATION OF TEACHERS

NOTICE REGARDING UNION SECURITY AGREEMENTS AND AGENCY FEE OBJECTIONS

As a general matter, employees covered by a collective bargaining agreement containing a union security clause are required, as a condition of employment, to pay an agency fee equal to normal union dues. While the wording of these claims is not perfectly uniform, none require more than the payment of this agency fee to retain employment.

Under the Detroit Federation of Teacher's By-Laws and policy on agency fee objections, employees who are not members of the union, but who pay agency fees, pursuant to a Union security clause, may request a reduction in that fee based on their objection to certain kinds of Union expenditures.

The policy provides an objection period each year from Sept. 30 to Oct. 30 followed by a reduction in the objector's fee for the twelve months beginning with the start of the school year.

Briefly stated, the Detroit Federation of Teachers' objection procedure works as follows:

- The agency fee payable by objectors will be based on the Detroit Federation of Teachers' expenditures for those activities or projects normally or reasonably undertaken by the Union to represent the employees in the bargaining unit with respect to their terms and conditions of employment.

Among these "chargeable" expenditures are those going for negotiations with the employer and employing departments, enforcing collective bargaining agreements, informal meetings with representatives of the employer or employing departments, discussion of work-related issues with employees, handling employees' work-related problems through the grievance procedure, administrative agencies or informal meetings and Union administration. In the past, approximately 85 percent of the Detroit Federation of Teachers' expenditures have gone for such activities. Reflected in this percentage is the chargeable portion of the affiliation fees (per capita) paid to the American Federation of Teachers (AFT).

Among the expenditures treated as "non-chargeable," which objectors will not be required to support, are those going for community service, legislative activity unrelated to wages, hours or working conditions of represented employees, certain public relations activities, support of political candidates, cost of affiliation with organizations (and unions) other than the AFT and members-only benefits. In the past, approximately 15 percent of DFT's expenditures have gone for such "non-chargeable" activities. The percentage of the AFT's expenditures on "non-chargeable" activities has been generally between 20-25 percent.

- Objectors will be given a full explanation of the basis for the reduced fee charged to them. The explanation will include a more detailed list of the categories of expenditures deemed to be "chargeable" and those deemed to be "non-chargeable," and the independent certified public accountant's report showing the Union's expenditures on which the fee is based. Audited financial information relating to the chargeable, non-chargeable expenses of the AFT will be provided at the same time. Objectors will have the option of challenging the union's calculation of the reduced fee before an arbitrator, pursuant to the AAA Rules on Impartial Determination of Union Fees. Details on the method of making such a challenge and the rights accorded to those who do so are found in the DFT's By-laws and policy on agency fee objections, a copy of which will be provided to objectors along with the explanation of the fee calculation.
- Objections must be received by DFT between Sept. 30 and Oct. 30 of each school year. In addition, agency fee payers who are new to the bargaining unit may object within thirty days of receiving this notice, either in the new employee packet or in the Detroit Teacher (where necessary, retroactive to the commencement of their union security obligation and for the duration of the current agency fee year) and employees who resign union membership may object within thirty days of becoming an agency fee payer. Employees filing late objections for either of these two reasons should so indicate in their letter of objection.
- The letter of objection should include the employee's name, address, and school at which employed. Objections must be sent to: Agency Fee Objection, c/o Detroit Federation of Teachers, 2875 West Grand Blvd., Detroit, MI 48202.

Notice of Elections

- Nominations for the Biennial Election of DFT Officers, Executive Board Members and Trustees will close as the last order of business at the Oct. 14, 2010 DFT General Membership Meeting. Candidate's Eligibility is Oct. 13, 2009.
- Nominations for the 2011-2014 Delegates to the Michigan State AFL-CIO will close as the last order of business at the Oct. 14, 2010 DFT General Membership Meeting. Candidates Eligibility is Oct. 13, 2009.
- Nominations for the 2011-2014 Delegates to the Metropolitan Detroit AFL-CIO Central Labor Body will close as the last order of business at the Oct. 14, 2010 DFT General Membership Meeting. Candidates Eligibility is Oct. 13, 2009.

Calendar

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

OCTOBER

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| 14 | General Membership Meeting, 4:30 p.m. |
| 19 | Retirees Chapter Meeting, 11:30 a.m. |
| 28 | Executive Board Meeting, 4:30 p.m. |

NOVEMBER

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| 4 | General Membership Meeting, 4:30 p.m. |
| 11 | Veteran's Day, Half Day |
| 16 | Retirees Chapter Meeting, 11:30 a.m. |
| 18 | Ed Tech Chapter Meeting, 3:30 p.m. |

DECEMBER

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| 2 | Executive Board Meeting, 4:30 p.m. |
| 9 | General Membership Meeting, 4:30 p.m. |
| 14 | Retirees Chapter Meeting, 11:30 a.m. |
| 17 | Last day for teachers and students |