

THE DETROIT teacher

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DFT Demands Information

In pursuit of protecting your rights and jobs, the DFT has formally demanded the following information from Emergency Financial Manager Roy Roberts:

1. The names, subject area, certification, work location, work location for the 2011-12 school year, and seniority of every DFT member whose layoff notice was rescinded effective Aug. 27, 2012.
2. The scoring summary of every contract teacher assigned during the 2011-12 school year, including how the summary scores were determined and the criteria, parameters, and weighing systems utilized.
3. The names, 2011-12 work locations, subject area, certification, and years of seniority of every DFT member whose layoff notice was effectuated Aug. 27, 2012.
4. The names, work location, subject area, certification of every new hire in the DFT bargaining unit for the 2012-13 school year.
5. The names, work location, and subject areas of all retirees, and resignations from the DFT bargaining unit as of Aug. 27, 2012.



DFT members turned out in force for the 2012 Labor Day Parade in Detroit.

In Case You Missed It

The year 2012 will go down in history as the year Michigan politicians went after teachers. Remember: it wasn't the banking system that bankrupted the country and left local governments reeling. It was *teachers* who devastated the country and created the Great Recession. So here is a recap of all of the hits on teachers. In case you missed it.

Seniority: This year the Michigan legislature passed a law that makes it illegal to recall teachers based solely on seniority. This may result in bias and discrimination, including not recalling more experienced and higher paid teachers. "Sometimes rules are there for a reason," said DFT President Keith Johnson.

Prohibited Subjects of Bargaining: The legislature passed a series of laws that made it illegal for teacher unions to bargain over such issues as teacher placement and teacher evaluation.

Teacher Tenure: The legislature drastically weakened teacher tenure laws. Instead of having to provide due process and just cause protections, a school district only needs to show that a firing is not arbitrary and capricious.

We worked to collect hundreds of thousands of signatures to put Protect Our Jobs, Protect Working Families on the ballot to enshrine collective bargaining in the constitution. If it

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Educating Children or Managing People?

Roberts' Edict Misses the Mark

By Keith Johnson
DFT President

Immediately after the DFT's collective bargaining agreement expired, Emergency Manager Roy Roberts issued an edict (we refuse to call it a contract) that contributed absolutely nothing to educational quality or student achievement. It proved Roberts was more consumed with controlling people than educating children.

For a moment, let's separate ourselves from the obvious issues that angered us, i.e. the 10 percent pay cut, decrease in life insurance, and increase in prescription copays. Other initiatives insulted and discouraged DFT members. If you can find the educational benefit, you are smarter than me.

President's Report



Keith Johnson

TWO HOUR STAFF MEETINGS: What is the educational benefit of requiring staff members to spend two hours in a staff meeting after providing instruction all day? In today's age of technology most of what is covered in a staff meeting can be shared via email or other means.

There may be times when it is necessary to bring staff together and we acknowledge that. However, what NEEDS to be discussed that would take two hours? What about those schools on the late tier that dismiss at 4:15? At least with one-hour meetings, some staffs opted to come in at 8 a.m. to hold staff meetings before school. That option is no longer available.

With fall and winter approaching, the days are getting shorter and, when daylight savings time ends in late October, it will be dark shortly after 5 p.m., forcing

staff to go home in the dark in neighborhoods that are not safe.

There is obviously no concern for employees who have family obligations like child care, helping their children with homework, and tending to family needs.

Bottom line: there is no benefit to requiring staff to spend two hours in a meeting after school. Unfortunately, we have some foolish building administrators who will do it just because they can, not because they need to.

I will admit, if I were still in the classroom there is no way I would sit through a two-hour staff meeting. I WOULD LEAVE, come what may. That is just me.

ELEMENTARY PREPS REDUCED TO TWO PER WEEK: As if that weren't bad enough, Roberts adds insult to injury by pretty much giving principals the discretion to tell a teacher how her prep will be used.

Elementary teachers provide the foundation for all teaching and learning that takes place. At a time when the DPS academic plan calls for individual learning plans for every student, when parental contact is paramount, and as teachers implement new programs and a more "rigorous" curriculum, how practical is it to reduce preparation, communication, planning and tutoring time for our baseline teachers?

It is irresponsible to expect teachers to do more, prepare better, and be more accountable yet reduce their time to do it. This is retaliation against me and the DFT for enforcing our right to meet with teachers during their prep period. And at the elementary level, the common prep actually SAVED DPS \$11.5 million.

REQUIRING TEACHERS TO COME TO WORK 15 MINUTES EARLY WITHOUT PAY: First of all, most teachers report to work 30 minutes to an hour



Vice President Joe Biden shakes hands with DFT President Keith Johnson at Detroit Renaissance High School.

before school starts anyway. In 2009 we negotiated language requiring staff to be at their rooms or positions at the entry bell. Professionals should have the option of spending their extra time at the end of the day or the beginning. So why was it necessary to REQUIRE them to be at work 15 minutes before students report? TO DO WHAT? Again, what is the redeeming value of this action? THERE IS NONE!

The DFT rejects Roberts' edict. It is not enough, however, to simply reject it. We must provide an alternative and that is exactly what we are doing. A committee of teachers has been working on a document to present to the Emergency Financial Manager and the school board that returns the focus to educating students, not managing people.

I have directed them to review the collective bargaining agreement and extract what they believe to be the essential elements needed for a true contract. I deliberately removed myself from the committee because I want this document to be developed by those who are actually in the schools providing services.

Judge John Murphy ruled that PA4 is suspended and PA72 is resurrected. Thus the Emergency Financial Manager must negotiate a contract. In order to facilitate this, we will present a document that educates children and is good for teachers.

Roberts needs to learn we do not produce cars, we produce leaders.

Updates . . .

VOTE IN THE NOVEMBER ELECTION *Update Your Address*

DFT members will vote in November for officers to lead the union until 2014. It is **CRITICAL** to update your home address on the district's PeopleSoft. The DFT will use only mail addresses, which they are responsible for updating on PeopleSoft. This information is for all purposes, including mailing ballots for the November DFT election.

New Retirees

Debra McIntosh and Dana Lawrence recently announced their retirement. If you are planning your retirement or have retired in the last six months and would like it announced, please call the editor at 313-875-6776.

Mobilizing African-American Families 8th Annual Conference And Still They Rise!

For Teens ages 13-17
Saturday, Oct. 20, 8 a.m.-3 p.m.
Workshops presented by youth and adults
Prizes and Activities
Continental breakfast and lunch provided.

Charles H. Wright Museum of
African American History
315 E. Warren Ave

Space is limited-Pre-registration required

Registration is Free!

For more call *Kim Travis-Ewing @ 313-544-6689*
ktravisewing@yahoo.com

THE DETROIT teacher

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The Law the Law the Law

By Edna Reaves
DFT Executive Vice President

All we seem to hear from Roy Roberts and his team is “the law, the law, the law.” Well, what is the law some might ask. When Robert Bobb arrived, we were under Public Act 72, which allowed the governor to appoint an Emergency Financial Manager. Although he had broad powers, he still had to negotiate with local unions. With Bobb, the DFT negotiated a contract that, while not pleasing, was something we could live with.

Because the school board won a lawsuit getting control over academics, the legislators in Lansing enacted Public Act 4. PA 4 replaced PA 72 with an Emergency Manager, which widened the powers to include control over academics and the ability to modify or nullify contracts.

Under this new law, Roy Roberts wasted no time. He exercised his powers and imposed a 10 percent reduction in our salary and wiped out other compensation. This was unconscionable, even though he now had a law to back him. Why? The DFT with Robert Bobb, negotiated a contract that included concessions and reforms to get the district on a sound path. And it worked! The district showed a \$43 million surplus for the 2011 fiscal year.

The DFT took Roberts to court and eventually reached a settlement. As a result, step increases and loss prep pay were restored second semester and a 2 percent bonus will be paid this month on last year's earnings.

Shielded by the law, Roberts refused to negotiate with the DFT and imposed an edict, which changed our wages and working conditions. PA 4 was suspended pending the results of the November election. Many thought the edict would be thrown out and we would start negotiations.

This summer, the school board took Roberts to court to regain academic control. Wayne County Circuit Judge John Murphy ruled in favor of the school board, but also ruled that whatever Roberts did as an EM was legal when he did it, therefore decisions made before Aug. 8 stand.

Let's show Roberts in November he will not be able to hide behind the law to manage people. Our members can TEACH him how to work with us to educate children, something he knows little about.

We have two very important tasks ahead of us that will require the work of every member of this union. We need to repeal PA 4, the emergency manager law. And we must keep politicians' hands off our bargaining rights and protect working families by passing the collective bargaining amendment to the constitution.

What can you do? Join thousands of union brothers and sisters around this state and educate your family, friends, neighbors about PA 4 and the constitutional amendment. Collective bargaining protects all Michigan families and gives workers the right to negotiate fair wages and benefits. That was an important right we won in the Great Depression. It's even more important to keep those rights in the Great Recession.



Edna Reaves

Changes in Pay:

The Good, the Bad, the Ugly

By Mark O'Keefe
DFT Controller

New laws, lawsuits, settlements, and letters of agreement have resulted in a number of potential changes to DFT members' pay. To help you keep track, here is a summary of the good, the bad, and the ugly.

THE GOOD

2.5 % bonus In July 2011, Emergency Manager Roy Roberts issued an executive order cutting pay 10 percent and making other changes in the third year of our collective bargaining agreement. We filed suit in federal court and reached a settlement. As a result, by Sept. 30, 2012, DFT members will receive a bonus of 2.5 percent on their July 1, 2011 through June 30, 2012 earnings.



Mark O'Keefe

Possible 2.0% bonus In December 2012, DFT members (actively employed on Nov. 20, 2012) will receive an additional bonus based on the district's financial results. If the audited financial statements confirm an \$11 million surplus for the year ended June 30, 2012, the bonus will be 2 percent.

2013 bonus Next year, a similar bonus opportunity of up to 5 percent will depend on the district's financial results. Members will receive a 1 percent bonus for every \$5 million in excess revenues over expenditures (surplus) for the year ending June 30, 2013. If the district does not have a surplus, there will be no bonus. Members need to be employed June 30, 2012 to qualify.

3% Health Care Trust refund Under new legislation, the 3 percent health care trust deductions that began in July 2010 will become voluntary this January. In the meantime, DFT members will have paid 3 percent of their pay for two and a half years, for a total of 7.5 percent of their pay. We won a lawsuit to have this money refunded. The Court of Appeals recently upheld that decision. If the State Supreme Court concurs, we expect the full 7.5 percent to be refunded.

Recapping the good news, we expect bonuses of 2.5 percent (guaranteed), 2 percent (likely) and a possible 1 to 5 percent next year. In addition, a favorable State Supreme Court ruling could result in refunds of the 3 percent health care trust deductions, totaling up to 7.5 percent of annual salary.

THE BAD

The latest pension legislation is designed to ensure the system is financially sound, so that there will be enough money to pay your pension and retirement health care claims. To do so, the law requires those who want health care during retirement to continue to pay the 3 percent health care trust deduction. You can opt out of the payment effective Jan. 1, but you will lose the benefit.

The new pension law also reduces your pension multiplier from 1.5 to 1.25 beginning Jan. 1. You can continue to earn 1.5 percent on future years of service, but to do so, you must elect to increase your pension contribution by 3 percent if you are in MIP, or 4 percent if you are in Basic. These changes do not affect 2012 and prior years.

Although the law requires you to make these two critical decisions by Oct. 26, we have filed suit along with AFT Michigan to allow more time for members to make informed decisions. On Sept. 4 a judge granted an injunction requiring the state to give us more time. We will keep you informed via our web site and email blasts so that you can make the best decision for yourself. The retirement system also will be providing further information.

THE UGLY

As our collective bargaining agreement expired on June 30, the Emergency Manager used his powers under Public Act 4 to impose new terms of employment. This edict calls for a three year continuation of the 10 percent cut (later adjusted to include possible bonuses of up to 5 percent), a three year freeze on steps, and the elimination of most of our collective bargaining agreement.

On Nov. 6, Michigan voters will have a chance to repeal Public Act 4. If the effort is successful, we will ask the courts to nullify the imposed working conditions, and require the district to negotiate a collective bargaining agreement.



MAJOR CHANGES ARE COMING TO OUR PENSIONS

By Patrick Falcusan
DFT Retirement Counselor

The Governor has signed into law Senate Bill 1040. This will bring major changes to our pensions. We do not like these changes and we are in court trying to block them.



Patrick Falcusan

AFT Michigan was successful in postponing the Oct. 26, 2012 deadline for members electing various options. But members need to be prepared to act in case the provisions of this law go into effect.

The Office of Retirement Services (ORS) is contacting all current employees who are members of the retirement system by letter with further information outlining the changes.

Each member is strongly urged to access their individual miaccount (michigan.gov/orsmiaccount) and use the personalized calculator to see how these changes will affect them.

The two major changes that impact almost all of our members involve the current 3 percent payroll deduction for retiree healthcare and the change in the multiplier used to calculate pensions from 1.5 percent to 1.25 percent. The calculator on the ORS website will show the difference in

the dollar amount of your pension depending on which option you select.

Members who will need healthcare insurance from the retirement system when they retire, need to give careful thought to **continuing** the 3 percent retiree healthcare deduction. If a person is **absolutely certain** they will **not** need healthcare insurance from the retirement system when they retire, then they might consider opting out of the 3 percent payroll deduction for healthcare.

The most difficult decision to make under the new law is the decision concerning contributing more of your pay to ORS in order to keep the 1.5 percent multiplier. Members with Basic would now have to contribute 4 percent of their pay (pretax) versus the current 0 percent to keep the 1.5 percent multiplier. Members with MIP would now have to contribute 7 percent of their pay (pretax) versus the current approximately 4 percent to keep the 1.5 percent multiplier.

All of the years worked [and purchased] to date would still be under the 1.5 percent multiplier. There are two other options. Members can keep the 1.5 percent multiplier until 30 years of service and then change to the 1.25 percent multiplier. The other is to drop out of the regular pension and switch to a 401k. I am not a fan of either of these two options.

If a person with Basic expects to live at least 15 years after he retires, paying the extra 4 percent might make financial sense because he would have recouped all of the money deducted from his pay and would enjoy a larger pension for the rest of his life.

If a person with MIP expects to live at least 11 years after he retires, paying the extra 3 percent might make financial sense because he would have recouped all of the money deducted from his pay and would enjoy a larger pension for the rest of his life.

It is unfortunate and unfair that folks in Detroit -- who have already had their pay reduced -- are now being asked to endure a further reduction in their current pay in order to avoid a reduction in their pension in the future.

Making the right decision will have an impact on your current and future income, so making the right decision is of great importance. Study and reread the information on your miaccount. Calculate and recalculate the figures on your miaccount. And, if you still have questions, attend one of the workshops that ORS will be conducting. Finally, if you still have questions, give me a call at 313-875-3500 ext. 783. I am in the office Mondays and Thursdays.

Teachers: Be Aware of IDEA Law

By Peggy Collrin
Retired DPS Teacher

If I could give any advice to teachers who will have deaf and hard-of-hearing students, it would be this: Be aware of what IDEA 2004 really states — not just believe what an administrator tells you. Learn what is required under the 1992 Policy Guidance from Congress on the special considerations that must be made for deaf and hard-of-hearing students at every IEP.

A full continuum of programs and placements must be made available, including separate facilities like a school for the deaf. DPS, by order of Roy Roberts, no longer has a full continuum



for deaf children without Detroit Day School for the Deaf. Anything they try to "slap together" will be less than they received at DDS and can't be easily duplicated,

including the Detroit Speech and Hearing Center right next door and Edmonson on the west side of DDS where students who can be mainstreamed take classes.

There is a civil rights case pending about violating deaf students' right to a free and appropriate education, and several parents have filed state due process complaints.

Teachers need to know current law (catch up by looking on wrightslaw.com). Know that when parents are successful in an Office of Civil Rights complaint, they may bring suit for damages.

With all of the chaotic changes from DPS and the "dumping" of special ed

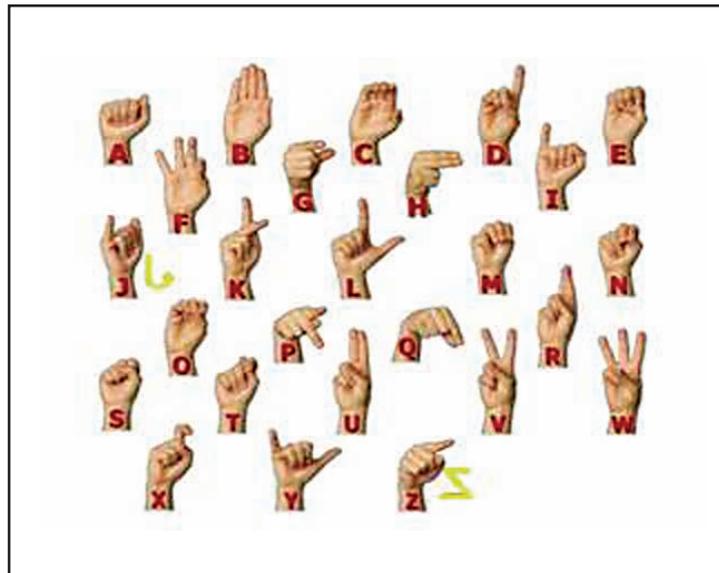
students in the name of "inclusion," teachers must become more knowledgeable about their own liability for a bad administrative decision. The U.S. department of Civil Rights will do free training on IDEA, Section 504 and the 1992 policy guidance. DPS administrators were required to have training due to apparent complaints several years ago. They were then to train teachers. That never happened.

Also, Wrightslaw Training for teachers would be very helpful. We can ensure IEPs and placement decisions are made properly and are based on the unique needs of the children.

Most important at an IEP is to determine what special education and related services the child needs to provide a Free and Appropriate Education (FAPE). Only when you know what is needed for FAPE and you to discuss the full continuum of options, can you determine what the child's Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) will be. FAPE is paramount. Any setting in which FAPE can't be achieved for the student is not the LRE.

In the case of deaf children, some deaf and hard-of-hearing students will be in general ed with supports all or part of the day. For others, a school for the deaf will be their LRE. We must understand this or outcomes for many deaf students in Detroit will continue to decline.

"Inclusion" is NOT addressed in federal law. It is NOT the same as "mainstreaming." Whether or not a child is "mainstreamed" is a matter decided at an IEP meeting, with the parent, persons with expertise, and knowledge of the child and the child's special needs. It is not to be decided unilaterally by DPS or



an Emergency Manager.

In the case of students at Detroit Day School for the Deaf, a unilateral decision was made forcing them into other placements that may not meet their needs for a "full communication access environment" and meet their "unique language and communication, educational, social, emotional, recreational and cultural needs" as required by federal law.

DDSD is the only facility built expressly with the physical environment planned to maximize the learning potential of every child - special acoustic tile and other adaptations for a population that must rely on keen visual attention to gain language. DDSD didn't close, it only moved out the deaf children and now houses administrators.

What society would have administrators taking over classrooms designed expressly for the needs of deaf children? What society would put deaf children in older buildings that cannot provide the right physical environment for them to learn?

Peggy Collrin is a retired Detroit teacher who taught hearing impaired students at the Detroit Day School for the Deaf.

Closing of Detroit Day School for the Deaf

By Peggy Collrin

Retired teacher of hearing impaired students

There has just been crazy, depressing chaos everywhere in DPS.

A special board meeting was scheduled for Aug. 23 at Frederick Douglass. Detroit Day School for the Deaf was on the agenda. I planned to give a statement to the board and others planned to speak to the academic needs of the deaf and hard of hearing students evicted from DDS or prevented from enrolling there. In addition, three state due process trials were scheduled regarding violations of individual students' rights as well as Office of Civil Rights complaints.

My argument is simple: DDS should remain open as the building is already paid for and equipped for deaf students. The building will remain open for other services. The deaf and hard-of-hearing students are unique in that they thrive in a setting with peers and teachers who know sign language. Mainstreamed deaf students need interpreters everywhere they go or will have to travel as far as Flint for a similar setting. While DDS served only 45 students last year, the district drove off many deaf students with perpetual talk of closing.

DPS rushed the administrators into the DDS building before school started but since this is an academic issue, we are hoping the

board may be able to stop it.

I had offered to store materials till fall for the art program. I was told things would be moved but I knew better. I heard from another staff person that once everyone was out, movers threw away furniture, old but usable computers, and filled dumpsters with text and library books, including American Sign Language dictionaries. We retrieved some art books from the dumpster but there are thousands of dollars of text books and supplies still in it. We could not reach full packs of craft materials like felt, mats, art overhead sheets, science books and materials.

What was thrown out at DDS by "movers"? In the dumpster were science, library, art and other books, art materials (some still in packages), science materials, dictionaries (including ASL dictionaries, which are about \$75 each to replace). This is just a small amount of what was thrown out in books, furniture, computers... in this one dumpster were thousands of dollars of good, usable textbooks and materials.

It made me ill.

The staff was told these things would go to their new assignments or be stored for the Hearing Impaired program.



It Is Not Fair

Sometimes it is hard when you have either never been a teacher or are not one at present to feel the way we feel. Thus, I wrote Roy Roberts how unfair it was that a principal from a closing school could come in and replace our staff with hers! I did feel that I was getting kicked out of my school (Sampson) and wrote to Roberts. Amazingly enough, he read it and forwarded it to Karen Ridgeway who wrote the replacing principal. — Pamela Shriman

Dear [Principal],

This is not your fault that I was upset about moving buildings again. It is not you I was upset at. The only thing I was upset at is that I felt I did not get a fair interview because I was interviewed during the last days of school, had to leave my kids, and was interviewed by two people who were not you. No one could ever know the wonderful teacher I am by a 15 minute interview and

that is not your fault. No one can know any of our teachers by the 15 minute interview or the observations made. Without our seniority and without collective bargaining, the process is not equitable. So my having to leave many things, which I am unable to take, is a result of the unfairness in DPS this year. It is not fair that Jason Patton did not get another year at Sampson to try and mold his vision. One year is not enough for him either. That is not your fault either.

I was upset and in fact hysterical at the thought of moving my belongings into another building after only being at Sampson for a year. I really did not think that a principal would not want me to stay because I thought I did a wonderful job there. So, I had mistakenly thought that either I would get to stay in my building or by the time I would have to move my things, I would know what grade and school I was going to and therefore know what to leave and what to take. I do not have the financial means to rent a storage facility or I do not have a

garage to store my school supplies. There were roaches and mice in our wing and I did not want to chance an infestation in my home.

I am so sorry that you have taken personally the chaos the district has thrown at our teachers. I was misinformed about things being thrown out from the now defunct art room storage closets, I have obtained most of what I can handle now. I know that G-d will be placing me where I'm needed but this has been the most stressful summer of my teaching career. I wrote my email in tears.

I will close wishing you good tidings at Sampson because the community deserves the best of everything. I will cc this letter to Ms Ridgeway so she knows you are not at fault and it was due to chaos in the district, and misinformation and my bad feelings.

Pamela Shriman, Master Teacher
School and Grade Unknown as of
August 18, 2012

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 Teachers' 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.

Grants . . .

Low Income

The NEA Foundation-Nickelodeon Big Help Grants are designed to support K-8 public school teachers with innovative ideas in four key areas: environmental awareness; health and wellness; students' rights to a quality education; and active community involvement. Proposals for low-income or minority students are particularly welcomed. Grants are for \$2,000 or \$5,000 for resource materials, supplies, transportation, technology, or scholars in residence. Deadline: Oct. 15, 2012. For info, visit www.neafoundation.org.

Windowsill Gardens

The Donald Samull Classroom Herb Garden Grant provides teachers in grades 3-6 with windowsill herb gardens for educational purposes. Deadline: Oct. 1, 2012. For info, visit www.hearbsociety.org.

Art Competition

Students ages 10 to 18 are eligible to enter an art competition, sponsored by Universities Space Research Association. The purpose of the competition is to encourage young people to learn about human space exploration and to express their vision of "How humans will use science and technology to explore space, and what mysteries will they uncover?" Winners will receive awards and their artwork will be displayed and performed worldwide. Deadline: Oct. 21, 2012. For info, visit humansinspaceart@lpi.usra.edu

Playgrounds

KaBOOM! And the Dr. Pepper Snapple Group offer different grants for schools looking to build or improve playgrounds. Grants of \$500 American Express gift cards toward improvements are available. Deadline: ongoing. For info, visit ejohnsoncooper@kaboom.org.

Fulbright Teacher

The Fulbright Classroom Teacher Exchange offers K-12 educators the opportunity to teach in a foreign country, gaining understanding of different cultures and education systems. Teachers exchange for a semester or full year in the following countries: Czech Republic, France, Hungary, India, Mexico and the United Kingdom. Application deadlines: Oct. 15, 2012. For info, visit www.fulbrightteacherexchange.org.

Michigan Schools

The Meemic Foundation for the Future of Education is taking applications from eligible school employees in Michigan to provide financial support for innovative programs, projects or events that significantly enhance students' classroom experiences. Grants up to \$2,500 are available. Deadline: Oct. 31, 2012. For info, visit www.meemicfoundation.com.

In Case You Missed It

LEAD STORY, from Page 1

passes, changes to seniority, prohibited subjects of bargaining, and teacher tenure may be ruled unconstitutional.

The Emergency Manager Law: Public Act 72 of 1990 authorized the state to intervene — via an emergency financial manager — in cities and school districts that were close to bankruptcy. With lawsuits and push back over the law, the Michigan legislature passed a more strident law, Public Act 4, that gave Emergency Managers unprecedented powers to nullify contracts and take away benefits. The DFT and other unions collected over 700,000 petition signatures to put a proposal to repeal this on the ballot. On Nov. 6, we have a chance to abolish this horrible law.

DFT Contract: The DFT's three-year contract expired June 30. As soon as it expired, EM Roy Roberts imposed a contract with a 10 percent pay cut, the elimination of steps and some prep periods. The last DFT contract was one of the most progressive in the union's history. It initiated Peer Assistance and Review (PAR), a reform to help new and veteran teachers get on track to better classroom management. The contract also included the TIP. We lent \$9,000 over two years to the district to avoid taking an outright larger pay cut. These new laws have allowed them to impose the concessions we successfully avoided. Two-thirds of our members approved the contract with the TIP concessions. Not one single teacher has approved of the imposed edict.

Dues Collection: The Michigan legislature passed a law making it illegal for school districts to collect dues on behalf of teacher unions. All other public and private entities with unions were exempt from this law. AFT Michigan filed a lawsuit. Fed-

eral Judge Denise Page Hood ruled in our favor. It was obvious to the judge that this law was only designed to cause hardship for unions.

EAA: The Educational Achievement Authority was created for Michigan's lowest performing schools. The EAA took 15 Detroit public schools (some brand new buildings for which it paid \$1 each), and put them into an authority to compete with DPS. This enterprise further hurt DPS finances and its most important resource: teachers. Some 700 teachers lost DPS jobs because EAA teachers have no employee rights and no pension system.

School Board: A judge ruled that once the Emergency Manager law was put on the November ballot, PA 4 was put on hold. Therefore, he ruled that the Detroit school board has authority over academic affairs of the district. Quickly, the Detroit School Board hired a new superin-

tendent, John Telford. We will get more clarity on their roles after the November ballot.

Pensions: The new pension law requires us to decide whether to pay into the health care trust and whether to pay an extra 3 to 4 percent to keep the 1.5 percent multiplier (see page 5). We won an injunction extending the time.

With AFT Michigan, the DFT has filed lawsuits, started petitions drives and worked to get our voices heard. We were successful on the dues collection suit and bringing the Emergency Manager law to a vote in November. We were successful in getting a settlement that provided teachers a 2.5 percent bonus on 2011-12 earnings.

Our biggest initiative, with other unions, is to make collective bargaining a right in the Michigan constitution. This needs a yes vote in November from you and everyone you know. Let's get started!

Calendar

All meetings will be held at 2875 W. Grand Blvd., Detroit, unless otherwise noted. All Meetings start at 4:30 p.m. Dates and times are subject to change.

2012-13

DFT Membership Meetings

September 13

October 11

November 15

December 13

January 17

February 7

March 14

April 18

May 9

June 6