

THE DETROIT teacher

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Deaf School Struggling to be Heard

The Detroit Day School for the Deaf was saved for good cause by Emergency Financial Manager Robert Bobb and now is in danger of closing by EM Roy Roberts. The school meets the needs of deaf and hard-of-hearing students for a full communication environment, is ADA compliant, and the "free and appropriate education" for many students under the 1992 Policy Guidance from Congress, now part of IDEA 2004.

Closing the school will not save DPS money, according to advocates. The building will remain open for another program. And the cost of scattering students in other buildings and having to recreate the accommodations already in place at DDSD would be prohibitive. DDSD needs to remain a choice and parents should not be prohibited from enrolling their children, they say.

The advocates have started a petition they will deliver to



Roberts, as well as the Michigan House and Senate, Gov. Rick Snyder, the U.S. House of Representatives and Senate, and President Barack Obama, which says:

"Save Detroit Day School for the Deaf from closure plans. Fully support the right of deaf and hard of hearing children to an education that meets their unique language, communication and cultural needs!"

To sign the petition go to: http://signon.org/sign/save-detroit-day-school?source=c.fwd&r_by=264163

Governor Signs Dues Collection Law

Gov. Rick Snyder last month signed into law a measure that prohibits school districts from automatically collecting dues from public school employees.

While the Republican governor is trying to remove cumbersome and bureaucratic regulations from the state books, why would he do this? It costs next to nothing for the district but adds so much bureaucracy on the union's part.

Answer: to keep unions busy with arduous and trivial administrative work, so they don't work on the major issues, like school safety and fairness.

Now school unions will need to use their resources to have members pay dues through other payment plans. All the while, the larger battles, like discrimina-

tion and principal favoritism, are gaining ground in public schools.

We will be entering a school year in Detroit where a principal can hire her sorority sister over a teacher with higher seniority, in the guise of "reform" in low-achieving schools. We are in the middle of some major fights.

The law does not mean a teacher is not a union member. It just changes the way one pays dues. This is the legislature trying to get us to focus on not dealing with member issues.

This move also was a clear retaliation for a band of unions starting a petition drive to prohibit the right-wing legislature from further eroding labor rights in Michigan.

In spite of this, the DFT has delivered

some recent victories for its members that put money in their pockets.

Hundreds of members got money for a 12-day high school arbitration for the 1995-96 school year. The remainder of those funds was paid out this year with many members getting a \$4,500 check.

We challenged the emergency manager's arbitrary cuts in our salary and benefits through a lawsuit we filed in federal court. We won a settlement that will give back to our members 2.5 percent, lost steps, lost prep pay for the second semester, and a retirement incentive.

In the meantime, if you haven't signed the petition to make a constitutional amendment to preserve bargaining rights in Michigan, make sure you do. Today.

DETROIT PARENTS DESERVE MORE THAN RHETORIC ON EAA

The Educational Achievement Authority (EAA) has served nothing but rhetoric to Detroit parents since the new district was announced. EAA was specifically designed to take over the lowest 5 percent of schools based on student performance.

EAA conducted a series of public meetings. The dog and pony shows revealed nothing about how EAA would truly improve student outcomes.

When EAA Chancellor John Covington met with the DFT leadership in

district that is not sustainable.

Covington's plan is to have at least one-third of the teachers in EAA come from Teach for America (TFA), an organization that recruits top scholars from top universities and gives them a limited dose of teacher training. TFA puts them in the poorest, low-performing urban areas for

two years. After their two-year commitment, they are free to continue teaching or pursue other careers.

Of course, it would benefit our students if the TFA teachers succeed. But we are deeply concerned that these novice teachers will be in the 15 schools selected as the LOWEST of Detroit's low performing schools. Further, TFA's involvement could result in 200 degreed, certified, experienced teachers being laid off.

TFA reports over half of their teachers do not return for a third year, while many others never make it through their first two years. Education reformers often talk about professional learning communities and teachers being involved with the overall school community. Building these relationships take time. They are not achieved with the regular turnover of one-third of the teaching force. Moreover, it is not clear from research that TFA results in students having meas-



Photo by Rick Rodriguez

MARCH IS READING MONTH — DFT President Keith Johnson and Beard Early Childhood teacher Ann Crowley partner-read "Horton Hears a Who" on March 9 for March is Reading Month. Beard celebrated the life and creativity of Dr. Seuss.

President's Report



Keith Johnson

October he admitted, "Where we are today with EAA is where we should have been a year and a half ago." That says to me that with the educational lives of our children at stake, EAA shouldn't begin until a year and a half from now.

As recently as six weeks ago, Covington admitted EAA was still short \$24 million in "start-up" donations necessary to implement so-called revolutionary reforms to turn 15 of OUR schools around. No details have been given about how these grandiose promises will be funded. This should raise the antennae of Detroit parents.

If EAA cannot even get the adequate funding for start-up, how will it garner the funds to sustain its programs? The last thing our children need is a new

urable sustained success.

The only thing we know for sure about EAA is the school year will be 220 days, the school day will be eight hours long, and teachers will be paid \$5,000 more than "the regional average," although that is not defined. EAA has not offered any details so parents can make informed decisions about placing their children in EAA or DPS schools. We as residents and taxpayers must demand more. It is our right to know.

Research tells us what works to enhance education: smaller class sizes, programs based on clear empirical data, quality teachers committed to the profession, up-to-date materials and technology, environments conducive to learning, and wrap-around services to help all children succeed. Let's do what has proven to work. And whatever we do let's take the time needed to do it right. Our children deserve no less.

Updates . . .

Breithaupt's Refurbished Mustang

Once again Breithaupt's Auto Service and Collision Repair students customized a car for the 2012 Detroit Autorama at Cobo Hall in February. Breithaupt's refurbished 2005 Mustang GT came in third place for the High

School Custom Display. Also at the Autorama, Breithaupt ran a display to demonstrate its diagnostic tool to find engine trouble. The exhibit was a huge success with attendees.

"Detroit Autorama was a big thing for us because they were trying to close us down," said auto instructor Andrew Thomas. Each year the district eyes schools it can close. The vocational schools, however, have given Detroit students



Instructor Andrew Thomas, Ruben-santos Torres, Micah Graham, Jose Reynoso, and William Locke

work-ready skills and an introduction to the trades.

"The community rallied together," Thomas said, "to show these type of classes are really needed."

Clippert Brings Home Medals

Clippert Academy participated in the Wayne-Monroe County Regional Science Olympiad Tournament at the University of Michigan-Dearborn on March 17. More than 600 students from 41 schools participated in 28 different events.

Clippert was the only Detroit Public School represented at the tournament and Clippert students won medals in three events.

Julio Sandoval and Julia Clepe won fourth place in the event "Picture This." Ricky Alvarez and Ronnie Alvarez won fifth place in the event "Write-it-Do-it." Ashly Arzeta and Ely Escobar won seventh place in "Crime Busters."

"All of our students worked very hard all school year preparing for the competition," said their teacher and coach Kathy Meloche. "We are very proud of our team."



Evaluations are Now Mandated by the State

By Edna Reaves

DFT Executive Vice President

The district has started evaluations even though we are not in agreement on the tool or its use. The union has concerns about how this impacts you. Although it is their duty to evaluate you, many administrators have not made this their priority for years.

I was in the classroom for 25 years and was only formally evaluated three times. Now when someone formally enters your classroom it sends a red flag that someone is out to "get you." When the process is done correctly we should welcome the opportunity to learn how we measure in our craft. Delivering quality instruction for our students to succeed is why we exist.

President Keith Johnson has said the evaluation tool and

process have not been sanctioned by the DFT and he's right. The district cannot use the evaluations as a condition of employment. Having said that, here is why you should care, continue to do your best, and receive the best evaluation possible. The Michigan Department of Education (MDE) now requires that every teacher receive a rating at the end of each year. This is the first year of mandated evaluations.



Edna Reaves

If a district fails to submit teacher ratings, it stands to lose five percent of its revenue from the state. The district can ill afford to let this happen. Loss of funding means fewer resources for our students. Loss of funding means loss of jobs. Having no other evaluation process in hand, the district is moving forward with the evaluation tool we are currently negotiating.

If you receive a rating of "ineffective" two years in a row, the district, by law, must send a letter to parents of every student in your classroom informing them that you have been rated ineffective. How would you feel if you received that letter about your child's teacher? Don't let this happen to you.

Principals have been advised to share the evaluation rubric with you. If you have not seen the rubric, go to Learning Village, link to "Professional Development," listed under "Instructional Staff," you can find the teacher evaluation rubric. Several components generate your rating, including record keeping, classroom appearance and professional development. There should be no surprises and this is not to be used as a "got you" tool.

We have some of the most highly qualified teachers in the state and our evaluations should prove it. Let our legislators know they are directing their venom in the wrong place. Teachers want ineffective teachers to receive proper help and a means to improve. If a teacher can't cut it, we are the first to say she needs to find a career more suited to her talents. All we demand is due process.

In your evaluation, be yourself, do your best and let your talents shine, let it shine, let it SHINE!

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THE DETROIT NEWSMAKERS

A Smart Move — Learning and Traveling through Chess

By Charlene Uresy

Detroit is the only school district in the metro area with a rated chess program recognized by the United States Chess Federation. Major kudos for DPS!

Chess is an excellent way to develop critical thinking in young minds. At Spain School, chess also is providing fun, respect and travel.



Under the leadership of Bryan Wilson, a Spain parent, the chess team is the Middle School City Champion. It is second to Cass Tech in the high school championship. The team is on fire!

Coach Wilson

got his passion for chess from his uncle who taught him as a little boy. He now gives private lessons to children all over metro Detroit and coaches the Spain team with vigor. Keen strategy is how you win in chess. Coach Wilson reads, thinks and dreams about the science of chess, teaching his young proteges how to win at this world class game.

It has paid off. The middle school team will travel to San Diego for the middle school chess nationals this month. The elementary team will compete in May in Nashville, Tennessee.

Wilson's 9-year-old son Bryan is the highest rated child of his age group in the history of DPS, and has a national ranking in the top 100 from the United States Chess Federation. Marcus Baddgett, a seventh-grader, is the most improved player and the third highest player in DPS. He placed second in the International Chess Festival in Dearborn. His improvement is proof to Wilson that the strategies he's teaching are working.

Wilson will lead his teams to the national competitions with confidence, not underestimating anyone, but having his eyes on the New York teams. They have received national attention for their match play. The New York teams have the benefit of practicing with chess masters because many of them live in New York. DPS does not have that benefit.

This year has already been successful for the team. However Wilson's biggest goal will take time. He wants his players to graduate with a chess ranking of 2000 or higher, ensuring them college scholarships to play chess. Yes!

Breithaupt Students are State Leaders

Once again, Breithaupt Career and Technical Center is spreading its peacock feathers.

Four out of seven state officers on the SkillsUSA State Executive Board are Breithaupt students. The Breithaupt students were voted in as president, treasurer, secretary and parliamentarian.

"All of these students are outstanding presenters with high GPAs," said their advisor and coach Cora Duncan-Foster.



Cora Duncan-Foster, Geordan Hall, Bich Pham, Jayla Phillips and Regina Cosey. Mariah Hill, not pictured, also is an officer of the SkillsUSA State Executive Board.

In addition, Breithaupt has 34 students competing in the state conference in April. These state officers plan, present and organize the SkillsUSA State Conference, a national organization for trade, technical, industrial and health occupation students. At state, regional and national contests, the students compete in their skill area under pressure and deadlines.

"We're trying to start middle school visits to excite the young kids to join voc tech," said Geordan Hall, "and take up a trade when they get out of high school." These state officers represent DPS proudly!

Green Eggs at Golightly

Golightly Educational Center held a Dr. Seuss Day on March 2 to celebrate the birthday of the famous children's book author Theodor Seuss Geisel. Geisel wrote the "Cat in the Hat" books. Geisel's birthday on March 2 has been adopted as the annual National Read Across America Day, an initiative created by the National Education Association.

Golightly teacher Lakeisha Tookes invited the Cat in the Hat to visit Golightly to the delight of her students. Teacher Susan Bloodworth served

up the green eggs and ham while the principal read "Green Eggs and Ham" to the students while they ate.

Unlike the Cat, Golightly students did not need coaxing to try the strange eggs. "The kids loved the green eggs and ham," said Bloodworth.



Cuts for a Cause



Breathe Deeply and Stretch

By Charlene Uresy

At Spain School, part of the physical education curriculum includes yoga. PE teacher Charlene Uresy is working in partnership with Danialle Karmanos' Work it Out (DKWIO) to bring yoga to Spain. Yoga is a physical, mental and spiritual discipline originating from India thousands of years ago. Third- and fourth-graders, as well as several teachers, joined the classes.

The classes teach breathing, strength, endurance, flexibility, nutrition, and stress management — all in a fun and non-competitive way.

When Principal Ronald Alexander learned about the program, he wanted it in his school as another way to teach children how to make healthy choices and eradicate childhood obesity. All of this is in conjunction with First Lady Michelle Obama's "Let's Move" platform. Detroit City Councilman Andre' Spivey visited Spain recently and participated in a yoga class. He, too, has a "Let's Move" platform to make Detroit a healthier place to live. The councilman breathed and moved with the students, modeling the benefits of good health. He was very impressed with the class and students, and told them so.

The DKWIO yoga program provides the instructor, mats and workbooks for a 10-week session. Yoga is a sophisticated discipline that challenges the students with moves one might think are easy but are not. The students understand this sophistication and know, with continued practice, yoga will keep them strong, healthy, and at peace — three ingredients that will make Detroit great.



At left, first-grader Judith Grana-dos holds her donation. Above, Aracely Hernandez, a stylist from Favi's Salon, is preparing to cut first-grade teacher Alma Plancarte's hair.

March 9 was a "hair raising" day at the Academy of the Americas. Eighty girls and moms, as well as teachers Alma Plancarte, Kendra Lincourt, Lorena Salazar and Lucy Shaw, gathered in the gym ready to donate eight or more inches of their hair for the second "Cuts 4 a Cause" event.

Two years ago, physical education teacher Jose Ramirez organized the first event that raised 314 inches of hair, or 26 feet! That hair was donated to Children with Hairloss, a local charity from Rockwood, Michigan that provides free wigs to children with any kind of medical hair loss.

The teachers at AoA taught a very important lesson in generosity, charity, and the importance to give and help others in need. The teachers explained to the girls that their hair will grow back, while the kids who are sick may not be so lucky. It worked more than anyone imagined.

With the generous help of stylists at El Ultimo Toque, Pepe Styles and Favi's Salon, all salons in southwest Detroit, Cuts 4 a Cause raised an astounding 874 inches of hair — almost 73 feet!

In today's educational climate when priorities are on standardized test scores, lessons in charity, compassion and generosity are often overlooked. "Today our students received more than math and reading instruction," said teacher Kendra Lincourt, "They learned character building lessons in humanity. That is something that cannot be measured on a standardized test."

Several committee members helped organize this successful event and deserve praise; Jose Ramirez, Donna Plouff, Kendra Lincourt, Nancy Milliman and Alma Plancarte. Principal Denise Fielder gave the staff complete support to teach such an important life lesson.

Before and after pictures of the girls, moms and teachers who donated their hair proudly hang on the wall, with a rope of what 73 feet really looks like.

"It's amazing that a school community pulled together to help kids in need, kids they do not even know, in such a personal way," Lincourt said. It was a proud day at the Academy of the Americas.

This is the Fight of Our Lives

By Mark O'Keefe
DFT Controller

Since January 2011 when the Republican Party took control of both houses of the state legislature and the governor's office, the attacks on teachers and the unions that represent them have been relentless. On March 5, a coalition of labor unions announced it was fighting back. We launched a petition drive as a first step to amending the state constitution to guarantee the right to collective bargaining.



Mark O'Keefe

10 percent pay cut as a direct result of Public Act 4, the emergency manager law. The emergency manager then used his new powers to raise our share of health insurance costs from 10 percent to 20 percent. He eliminated longevity pay and over-class size pay. Now a senate committee has passed a pension "reform"

On the very next day, in a blatant act of retaliation, both houses of the state legislature passed a bill making it illegal for K-12 school districts to withhold union dues from teachers' paychecks. In Sept. 2012 when the new school year begins, we will need to have alternate dues collection procedures in place.

Many teachers are already hard-pressed to pay their bills due to the financial impact of earlier laws passed by this legislature and signed by Gov. Rick Snyder. First, we took a

bill that would take another 4 or 5 percent out of our pay checks. All of this is in addition to the 3 percent retirement health care trust deductions that began July 1.

For a typical DPS teacher, the cuts mentioned above add up to nearly a 20 percent reduction in pay. This takes us back to 1998 wages. The state legislature is hoping these cuts will keep many of our members from being able to pay their union dues. DFT Executive Vice President Edna Reaves was asked if she was worried about losing her job with the union and having to go back into the classroom. She said, "I am not worried about going back into the classroom. I am worried about going back into the classroom without a union." That is something we should all be worried about.

We have two major battles on our hands right now. We are working on our legal challenge to the law banning automatic dues deduction. We are also working on the petition drive to get the constitutional amendment on the November ballot.

Our last legal battle was a great success. Salary steps were restored. Pay for lost prep in the second semester was restored. DFT members will get a 2.5 percent bonus by Sept. 30, and a retirement incentive allowed hundreds of members to retire with pay for sick days. As difficult as that battle was, the next ones will be harder.

- We need to win our challenge to the automatic dues deduction law.

- We need enough signatures to get the collective bargaining amendment on the November ballot.

- We need to pass the ballot issue in November.

We cannot win these battles without your help.

In the next eight weeks, with help from AFT national and AFT Michigan, the DFT will contact every member about the issues we are facing. When you are asked to do your share, ask yourself if you want to be in a classroom with no union to support you.

Vacations Can Make Kids Smarter

Study Shows Link to Academic Achievement in First Graders

As the nation's children look forward to summer, many parents and teachers wonder how the summer break affects their children's academic achievement. Analysis of a U.S. Department of Education study found that children who travel over summer break – whether to a beach, historic site or a national park – did better in reading, math and general knowledge than their peers who didn't vacation.

"The data is clear – and gives hard-working parents another reason not to put off a summer vacation trip," said Dr. Bill Norman, Clemson University. "Providing kids with the experience of travel broadens their horizons and opens up their minds to learning."

A series of analyses were conducted to determine the relationship between summer vacation travel and academic achieve-

ment in children entering first grade. Specifically, the study explored whether going on a vacation, the number of days spent on a vacation and places visited were linked to academic achievement in the areas of reading, mathematics and general knowledge.

Children who traveled with their family over summer vacation scored higher on academic achievement assessment tests than those who did not travel. The days spent on family trips had a modest significant relationship with academic achievement.

Children who visited plays or concerts, art or science museums, historical sites, beaches or lakes, national or state parks, and zoos or aquariums had significantly higher academic achievement scores than those who did not.

"To date there has never been a study that plainly shows the correlation between travel and academic achievement," says Jessica Parker, researcher, Clemson University. "It was interesting to see the impact on a child when they spend vacation time away with their family."

Over 75 percent of the participants responded that the child had taken a family summer travel vacation prior to starting first grade. For those children who took a family summer vacation trip, the average number of days spent traveling was 11.8 days.

Although the results indicate that summer vacation travel and academic achievement are linked, other factors such as income level, parent's educational level and language spoke at home may influence these findings.

Grants

Math Training

School In-Service Training Grants for Grades 6-8 teachers is supported by the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics and the Clarence Oleander Fund. The grants provide support for middle schools for in-service trainings for math teachers. Up to \$4,000 may be awarded to pay for consultant expenses, materials, substitute time and conference registrations. Proposal deadline is May 4, 2012. For info, visit nctm@nctm.org.

Arts and Humanities

TEAMS, the Consortium for the Teaching of the Middle Ages, is taking submissions for its teaching prize. The Once and Future Classroom prize honors K-12 teachers of medieval studies for exemplary lesson plans, units or components of a course. Teachers of history, literature

or art history are invited to submit their lesson plans. Lessons may have been designed as part of a medieval unit or drawn from a classic text (such as Beowulf or Robin Hood). Funds of up to \$5,000 are available. Deadline: May 1, 2012. For info, visit www.teamsmedieval.org.

Literacy

The Mazda Foundation gives grants in education and literacy and projects that fit the goals of the foundation. Applications are accepted between May 1, 2012 and July 1, 2012. For info, visit www.mazdafoundation.org.

Technology

K-12 schools may enter a technology sweepstakes sponsored by Discovery Education and CDW-G to possibly win a wireless lab for their classrooms. Three grand prizes and

weekly winners will be selected to win a wireless lab or items like notebook PCs, carts, projectors or cameras to be used for online Discovery Education projects. Deadline: May 3, 2012. For info visit www.ala.org.

Challenging Curricula

The National Education Association Foundation provides grants for educators' efforts to close the achievement gap, develop creative learning opportunities, and enhance teachers' professional development in any subject area. The proposed work should improve students' habits of inquiry, self-directed learning, and critical reflection. The foundation encourages proposals for work resulting in low-income and minority student success with challenging curricula. Grants from \$2,000 to \$5,000 are available. Deadline: June 1, 2012. For info, visit www.neafoundation.org.

Membership Meeting Attendance

School representatives who were in attendance for the months of January and February 2012 are listed below.

JANUARY, 2012

Academy of Americas
Barton
Breithaupt CTC
Brewer
Beard
Bennett
Blackwell
Bow
Brown, R. Academy
Bunche
Burton
Carstens
Cass
Central
Clark
Clemente
Clippert
Cody
Comm. Media Arts
DCH
DDSD
Dixon
Drew
Earhart
EIDC
Edison
Emerson

Ellington
Farwell
Field, M
Finney
Fisher Lower
Fisher Upper
Fleming
Ford
FLICS
Gardner
Garvey
Golightly Ed.
Golightly CTC
Harms
Holmes, A.L.
Holes, O.W.
Homebound Tchg
Jemison, Mae C.
Kettering
King, M.L.
Langston Hughes
Law
Logan
Ludington
Mann
Marquette
Marshall, T.
Mumford

Neinas
Nichols
Noble
Northwestern
Oakman
Osborn College Prep.
Palmer Park Prep.
Parker
Pasteur
Peer Assistance
Psychological Services
Priest
Randolph
Renaissance
Robeson
Sampson
Schulze
Southwestern
Speech & Hearing
SSW West
Thirkell
Turning Point
VernorVI-Support
Westside
Western
White, J.L.
Wright, C.
Young, C.

FEBRUARY, 2012

Academy of Americas
Barton
Bates
Beard ECC
Bennett
Brewer
Bow
Blackwell
Breithaupt CTC
Brenda Scott
Brewer
Bunche
Carelton
Carstens
Carver
Cass
Chrysler
Clark
Clemente
Clippert
Cody @ DIT
Cody @ MCH
Cody Upper
Cooke
Denby
Detroit City
Detroit Day School
for Deaf
Detroit International
Academy for Women

Detroit School of Arts
Douglass, Fred Adad.
Drew Transition Center
Edison
Farwell
Finney
Fisher Lower
Fisher Upper
Ford H.S.
Garvey
Golightly CTC
Golightly Ed. Center
Harms
Head Start
Holms, A.L.
Holmes, O.W.
Keidan
Kettering
King H.S.
King J.R.
Langston Hughes
Law
Logan Ludington
MacDowell
Mann
Jemison, Mae C.

Marquette
Marshall, T.
Mumford
Neinas
Noble
Northeast Attn. Center
Northwestern
Osborn
Palmer Park Prep.
Parker
Pasteur
Peer Assistance Cons.
Pershing
Prest
Psychological Services
Pulaski
Renaissance
Robeson Academy
SSW Elem West
Thirkell
Turning Point
Vernon
VI Support
Western
West Side
White, J.L.

The Kings and Queens of the PSL

Both the girls and the boys basketball teams at Martin Luther King High School won the 2012 Public School League championship. This was the first time since 1999 that one school has won both the boys' and girls' city championships. The school that scored the double pennant in 1999? King.

King athletic director Gerald Weatherspoon said the school and the community were flying high.

"It was just a spectacular thing to happen to one school," Weatherspoon said. "All of our supporters, faculty, administrators, parents and community members were so excited."

*Photos on these pages
by Jeffrey Harrison*



Martin Luther King H.S. Boys & Girls Basketball Teams are the Public School League Champions



LEARNING STYLES DEBUNKED:

No evidence supporting auditory and visual learning, psychologists say

Are you a verbal learner or a visual learner? Chances are, you've pegged yourself or your children as either one or the other and rely on study techniques that suit your individual learning needs. And you're not alone—for more than 30 years, the notion that teaching methods should match a student's particular learning style has exerted a powerful influence on education. The long-standing popularity of the learning styles movement has in turn created a thriving commercial market amongst researchers, educators, and the general public.

The wide appeal of the idea that some students will learn better when material is presented visually and that others will learn better when the material is presented verbally, or even in some other way, is evident in the vast number of learning-style tests and teaching guides available for purchase and used in schools. But does scientific research really support the existence of different learning styles, or the hypothesis that people learn better when taught in a way that matches their own unique style?

Unfortunately, the answer is no, according to a major report published in 2009 in *Psychological Science in the Public Interest*, a journal of the Association for Psychological Science. The report, authored by a team of eminent researchers in the psychology of learning—Hal Pashler (University of San Diego), Mark McDaniel (Washington University in St. Louis), Doug Rohrer (University of South Florida), and Robert Bjork (University of California, Los Angeles)—reviews the existing literature on learning styles and finds that although numerous studies have purported to show the exis-

tence of different kinds of learners (such as “auditory learners” and “visual learners”), those studies have not used the type of randomized research designs that would make their findings credible.

Nearly all of the studies that purport to provide evidence for learning styles fail to satisfy key criteria for scientific validity. Any experiment designed to test the learning-styles hypothesis would need to classify learners into categories and then randomly assign the learners to use one of several different learning methods, and the participants would need to take the same test at the end of the experiment.

If there is truth to the idea that learning styles and teaching styles should mesh, then learners with a given style, say visual-spatial, should learn better with instruction that meshes with that style. The authors found that of the very large number of studies claiming to support the learning-styles hypothesis, very few used this type of research design. Of those that did, some provided evidence flatly contradictory to this meshing hypothesis, and the few findings in line with the meshing idea did not assess popular learning-style schemes.

No less than 71 different models of learning styles have been proposed over the years. Most have no doubt been created with students' best interests in mind, and to create more suitable environments for learning. But psychological research has not found that people learn differently, at least not in the ways learning-styles proponents claim. Given the lack of scientific evidence, the authors argue that the currently widespread use of learning-style tests and teaching tools is a wasteful use of limited educational resources.

Are You Retiring This Year?

By **Patrick Falcusan**,
DFT Retirement Counselor

Several hundred DFT members have decided, or may still decide, to retire July 1. Following is a timeline to help members through the retirement process.

1. In order to retire, you must meet certain criteria:

If you have MIP, you must be at least age 46 with 30 years of service credit, or age 55 with 15 years of service credit (with 10 years actually worked) or age 60 with 5 years actually worked.



Pat Falcusan

If you have Basic, you must be at least age 55 with 30 years of service credit, or age 55 with 15 years of service credit (with 10 years actually worked) or age 60 with 10 years actually worked.

2. In order to retire, you need to determine if your pension (and Social Security if eligible) will provide you with enough income. Go to the retirement system's website (www.michigan.gov/orsmiaccount), calculate what your pension would be and compare that to your bring home pay now. (If you are eligible for Social Security, check with Social Security to see how much that would be).

3. In early April, submit your retirement application to the State (www.michigan.gov/orsmiaccount). If you are 65, or older, you need to apply for Medicare parts A and B if you have not already done so. (See pages 6 and 7 of the October, 2011 issue of the Detroit Teacher [on the DFT's website] for instructions.)

4. In early April, if you have a TDP (buying time through payroll deduction) and wish to apply any of your lump sum payout money from the District (TIP,

sick days, last four pays [if on 26 pays] etc.) toward your TDP, stop by the DFT office (call first [313.875.3500 ext. 783] to make sure I am there) to pick up the forms needed.

5. In early May, contact your TSA agent if you wish to shelter any of your lump sum payout money from the District (TIP, sick days, last four pays [if on 26 pays] etc.).

6. In early June (if you have not already done so), turn in your irrevocable Separation from Service (SFS) form to the District. Go to HR (10th floor Fisher Building using the Second Avenue elevators), ask for two SFS forms, fill them

both out (putting July 1, 2012 as your retirement date), check the box that says "retiring," get both SFS forms date-stamped, and take one SFS form with you for your records.

7. If you retire July 1 and follow the instructions above, you should expect to get:

- your new insurance card from the state in June.
- one last pay from DPS in early July.
- your first pension payment on July 25.
- your lump sum payout money (TIP, sick days, last four pays [if on 26 pays] etc.) in August .
- your 2.5 percent bonus by Sept. 30.

Calendar

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

APRIL

- 6-13** Schools Closed, Easter Break
- 17** Retirees Chapter Meeting, 11:30 a.m.
- 17** School Social Workers Chapter Meeting, 4:00 p.m.
- 19** General Membership Meeting, 4:30 p.m.
- 23** Special Education Chapter Meeting, 4:30 p.m.

MAY

- 8** School Social Workers Chapter Meeting, 4:00 p.m.
- 10** General Membership Meeting, 4:30 p.m.
- 14** Special Education Chapter Meeting, 4:30 p.m.
- 15** Retirees Chapter Meeting, 11:30 a.m.
- 28** Schools Closed, Memorial Day

JUNE

- 4** Special Education Chapter Meeting, 4:30 p.m.
- 5** School Social Workers Chapter Meeting, 4:00 p.m.
- 7** General Membership Meeting, 4:30 p.m.
- 14** Last day for students
- 15** Last day for students
- 19** Retirees Chapter Meeting, 11:30 a.m.