



THE DETROIT teacher IT

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Summer 2011

A Major City Needs a Vibrant Public Schools System

In a June 7 visit to Detroit, AFT President Randi Weingarten lowered her voice to ensure the seriousness of her message:

Detroit teachers are in the fight of their lives.

After a whirlwind tour to meet civic, religious and educational leaders, Weingarten distilled what she



Randi Weingarten

city that will turn around needs a vibrant educational system.”

Meeting with civic leaders, Weingarten said instruction must be “robust and engaging.”

As hard as Detroit teachers work, they need to create some ideas and

learned to DFT building representatives.

“This is the time that we either create a movement or we see our own demise,” she said. “A

promote them, and not be “just against things.”

“This is the most serious thing I’m going to say: We can’t win by just screaming,” she said. “It doesn’t work in this environment.”

The recession created an environment where everything is stacked against urban, public school teachers. Some people are apathetic. Others don’t want union members to have a voice. Many are attacking the middle class as an unaffordable lifestyle. And corporate interests are eyeing public money that can be in their pockets through charter schools.

“You can’t say there’s one person against us because there’s an unholy alliance,” she said. But that alliance is a real threat.

“For all the craziness you’ve been through the last few years,” Weingarten said. “There’s a huge potential that it gets worse not better. That’s the fight we’re in.”

Weingarten said the anti-union, anti-public schools, anti-due process and anti-middle class groups are try-



Photos by Jim West

ing to “divide, dehumanize, and delegitimize” teachers.

Weingarten also cautioned against mayoral control. Giving one person responsibility for the outcome of public schools makes mayors say: I’m not going to be responsible for all this. So they create “a system of schools, not a school system.” A school system demands shared responsibility and ensures more stakeholders are invested in making it work. A city of independent schools

will always have the “high flyer” schools. But where is the accountability for a school in each neighborhood, or special ed services, or vocational schools?

Weingarten committed the resources of the national union to help Detroit fight to save the district with a concrete plan.

And she stands in awe of Detroit teachers who, she said, come to work each day to do such difficult work with so little praise. “Or no praise at all.”

This is the House that Randolph Students Built

What better way to teach the skilled trades than by building a house? That’s what teachers and students at Randolph Career and Technical Center did this spring.

Starting on Jan. 19, four trades departments at the school built the 1,288 square foot house. They lost a month to weather but still completed it in about 80 days. The house, replete with three bedrooms and one bath, has a cathedral ceiling and a window-bar to the kitchen.

“We kind of surprised ourselves,” said heating and cooling

teacher Clarence Gaudy. “We could do two a year easily.”

The house is the third built at Randolph. The last was built four years ago. As with past houses, a low-income buyer is



Tony McLean, carpentry teacher; Clarence Gaudy, heating and cooling teacher; and Matthew Bracey, masonry teacher.

responsible for coming up with the \$10,000 cost to build it, as well as providing a foundation for the home.

Gaudy said the program is excellent because top students are selected and get equal work

time on the house.

“They love it because it’s hands-on,” he said. The teachers considered putting in skylights as well as arched ceilings. The house is built to code and the teachers require careful craftsmanship.

Randolph teachers believe the skilled trades offer a lot of opportunity to Detroit students, especially with the escalating costs of college and the mass retirement of boomers.

“With constant building and a lack of workmanship,” Gaudy said, “there are lots of guys in apprenticeship programs.”



In a Year of Chaos, Heartbreak and Tragedy, I Still Feel Proud

As we end this school year I am left to reflect on what has been the most tumultuous school year I can remember.

The year began with 600 teachers sitting in the grand ballroom of the St. Regis Hotel waiting to be placed, simply because the district failed to heed the DFT's warnings that we were drastically short of teachers. It comes to an end with the state house passing the most oppressive anti-teacher, anti-union legislation since women were fired for being pregnant.

Our own union was plagued with turmoil after a contentious election led some members to try to divide the DFT by raising false allegations of election impropriety, disrupting membership meetings, and launching venomous attacks against me to promote their own selfish agenda. This was at a time when more than ever, we needed to stand united against those who seek to destroy us.

The Republican-led legislature expanded the authority of the Emergency Manager, potentially giving him the power to terminate contracts and strip away the rights accomplished through 50 years of collective bargaining.

Every DFT member has received a layoff notice, an unprecedented and unwise action that has our community wondering if the next school year will begin as chaotically as the one we

bring to a close.

On a personal note, my own world was rocked two days before Christmas when I nearly lost my life, thanks to a drunk driver. The accident left me with brain trauma that led to pneumonia. This incident gave me perspective on how precious and fleeting life can be and how we must make the most while we are here.

Of course the death of my mother, to whom I owe everything, created a tremendous void that can never be filled. But she left me a legacy of strength and courage that allows me to carry on in her memory.

Despite all of this I have cause to be extremely proud of the DFT. Here are a few of the hundreds of reasons that keep me motivated to give my best to this union.

I am grateful to Executive Vice-President Mark O'Keefe for the way he took up the mantle and provided leadership to this union as I dealt with my personal loss and accident. His leadership sustained this union through some difficult times and he led with strength and conviction.

I am proud of those 600 teachers, ready to work and with no place to

report, for their patience and perseverance. Despite their frustration, they displayed a level of professionalism reflective of who we are at the DFT, a union of professionals.

I am proud of Ivy Bailey, Vanessa Parnell and the Peer Assistance and Review (PAR) consultants for developing a support system for our teachers, tenured and non-tenured, who may need guidance and direction. Vanessa and Ivy, serving as the co-chairs, were masterful in their selection of the consultants, getting PAR started and assisting a number of members in need.

I am proud of Ann Crowley, Kimberly Kyff and Ann Turner, the co-founders of Palmer Park Preparatory Academy (P3A), our teacher-led school. They took on the tremendous challenge of building a school from the ground up, with little assistance from DPS leaders, including taking on the middle school grades that were not part of the original concept for P3A. DPS even dumped students and staff into P3A because of its disorganization. Yet the staff pulled together and now has P3A on the precipice of greatness.

I am proud of the staffs at DTC East and West that moved into a new building (that wasn't ready, the former Drew Middle School), along with some of our most physically and mentally challenged students. They made the transition as seamless as could be expected. By year's end they made their new house a home.

I am proud of the staffs at Paul Robeson/Malcolm X and Thurgood Marshall for coming together at a time of crisis and adjusting their professional lives in the best interests of the students. When Robeson/Malcolm X sustained a devastating fire, they were forced to complete the school year at Thurgood Marshall. The staff at Thurgood Marshall welcomed their colleagues and their children into their building and made it work.

Finally I am proud of YOU. You are the most challenged and least appreciated professionals in our business. You continue to inspire me with your resilience, grit and determination. Seldom are you glorified. Often you are vilified. Yet you continue to march on, educating the children in your charge without the resources you need.

I salute you for all you do in the name of education. I am grateful for the challenge and opportunity to serve as your president. You are my heroes and I love you for all you do and all you endure.

President's Report



**Keith
Johnson**

Too Much Play

You play too much." Often I hear my colleagues utter that phrase, and I cringe every time. If a student is playing "too much," then how much playing in school is the right amount? I am talking about high school where no amount of playing is appropriate, so why imply otherwise?

The failure of students to take school seriously is the single biggest problem with education today. Many students have come to view high school as an interruption to their social networking,

and they will go to whatever lengths they can to continue that socializing in school.

Today, more than ever, teenagers think that "life's a joke" and school even more so. Though it may seem futile, we, as educators, have to keep striving to convince our students that times actually exist to set play aside.

When students play, just simply say, "If you want to be graded seriously, then act that way."

**Christopher Beck, teacher
Barsamian Prep Center**



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Updates...

Attention Teachers and Retirees: Volunteer for Summer Camp?

A coalition of Detroit school unions is hosting the second annual Literacy Camp this summer from Aug. 8-12 at the DFT hall. The camp helps to strengthen Detroit students' reading and math skills for the MEAP test, which is given early in the fall. If you are interested in this wonderful volunteer opportunity, contact Karin Whittler at kwhittler@dft231.com. The camp runs from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. for five consecutive days. You may volunteer for the entire time or a portion of the week. There will be one training meeting prior to the camp. A big culminating event is planned for the last day.

Retirements Announced

DFT members Jane Jennings-Simmons and Diane Wiley have announced their retirement. If you have retired in the last six months and would like it announced, please call the editor at 313-875-6776.

Chess Attracts Detroit Kids

Nine-year-old Charles Dolton jumped into his chess game so quickly, he didn't take off his backpack. The third-grader plays chess at Brenda Scott School for the fun of it.



"I have one loss, one win and one draw," he said at a June 1 chess tournament.

Lionel Scott, a teacher and chess coach, has brought many Detroit teams to champi-

onships. He continues to coach chess at Brenda Scott, where boards were lined up in the cafeteria.

Charles said he learned to concentrate from the school's Gentleman's Club, taught by principal Ronnie Sims. "Mr. Sims teaches the boys how to stay focused and be a gentleman."

Did it work?
"Yes, I can concentrate," he said, "and I'm a gentleman."



AFT Michigan Lobby Day – AFT Michigan President David Hecker and AFT Michigan Legislative Coordinator Louise Somalski organized one of the most successful lobby days in Lansing May 17. At a time when Michigan teachers are doing one of the most important jobs to build the economy and the future of the state, legislators are ridiculing their efforts in the classroom. Hecker called for all teachers to get active. "It's the grassroots work that is essential against these attacks."

Coalition Wins AFT PSRP Award

The DFT, along with the Detroit Association of Educational Office Employees and the Detroit Federation of Paraprofessionals, was recognized with the Child Welfare and Community Service award from the American Federation Teachers.

The unions formed a coalition to work on pressing community issues like literacy, academic readiness, bullying, and nutrition. The coalition won the award for two such community workshops that were extremely successful: last summer's Literacy Camp and the fall Parent Academy, held at the DFT.

"Working along side your brothers and sisters at DAEOE and DFP, as well as other community groups, your local was able to establish two unique programs for the betterment of Detroit public schools' students and parents," said Dr. Lorretta Johnson, AFT Executive Vice President. The award was presented at an AFT Paraprofessional and School Related Personnel conference in Las Vegas in March.

"The Literacy Camp and the Parent Academy are an inspiration to us all, as well as a great example of union and community partnership," Johnson said.



Rosemarie Kirtz (back row), secretary of the DFP; Karin Whittler, DFT Labor Relations Administrator; E'lois Moore of DAEOE, and Mary Snyder of DFP; Ruby Newbold, DAEOE president; and Donna Jackson, DFP president, are the organizers behind the Coalition events.

DFT Members Must Update Information

The DFT must keep its database updated with the current addresses, telephone numbers and personal e-mail addresses in order to keep its members informed. Even if you have updated your address and other information with the district, you also must notify the union of these changes. Give this info by July 1 to the DFT by fax (313-875-3512), phone (313-875-3500) or mail: 2875 W. Grand Blvd., Detroit, MI 48202. Please send your PERSONAL e-mail address. The union cannot use your district e-mail address to relay information.

Name: _____

File#: _____

New home address: _____

Telephone: _____

Cell phone: _____

Personal e-mail address: _____

The New Research Paper? — Make a Web Site —



David Fuqua knows teachers are often intimidated by technology. But students aren't. Kids in public schools today don't remember a time without e-mail, Facebook and Wikipedia. To them, research papers seem like writing with a quill pen.

So when Fuqua, a teacher at the Foreign Language Immersion & Cultural Studies School (FLICS), decided to have his students study bullying, he picked a tech medium in which to do it.

Why not have students design a Web page?

Fuqua, a 20-year teacher, divided his middle school social studies students into groups, and asked them to research aspects of bullying. They put together Web sites using Weebly.com with dashboards. Like a research paper, the students had to document sources and cite authors.

"This generation, we call them tech babies because they grew up with technology," Fuqua says. "If you give them an idea, they can go with it. I'm trying as much as I can to integrate technology. I want to be comfortable with it."

The students launched the sites after leapfrogging from the district's anti-bullying policy. Each student was required to write an anti-bullying poem. And each student performed technical exercises, like uploading an image.

"These Web sites are amazing," said Leslie Nathan, a paraprofessional at FLICS. "I was so impressed with the work they've done at a middle school level."

So what did they learn about most — bullying or creating Web sites?

"Bullying," said Valentine Burton, 12 — the majority sentiment. "Some of us changed because we saw what happens on the other side."

Visit the
DFT Web site
www.DFT231.com



DSA Student Wins Full Scholarship

Detroit School of Arts students were awarded the "Best of Show" prize at this year's Michigan Student Film and Video Festival April 30 at the Detroit Institute of Arts.

Antonio Johnson, a DSA senior, won the grand prize at the festival: a full scholarship to attend Specs Howard School of Media Arts. He was part of a team of 60 students who produced "Brittany" - a music video based on an original song produced by the students. The awards are sponsored by the Digital Arts Film and Television (DAFT) organization.

Three video productions were awarded prizes at the festival for approximately 100 DSA students. Pictured above are DSA art teacher John Wood and student Antonio Johnson with his father, brother and mother.

Blackwell Hosts International Community

Jacqueline Blake told Blackwell Institute students to sit upright.

"You come from kings and queens in Africa," she told them. "We already were great. No matter what America tells you, you know what you are inside."

Blake visited Blackwell May 25 to celebrate International Day, an annual event organized by teacher Willie Dechavez. Prominent Detroiters from ethnic communities came to enjoy ethnic cuisine and speak to students about their customs.

The students in Tracy Russell's seventh-grade English class were engrossed by Blake. She took them on an imaginary trip to Africa in 1312 when Mansa Musa, the king of Mali, took 100 camels through the desert carrying gold for his pilgrimage to



Blackwell teachers Tracy Russell and Amos Walls with guest speaker Jacqueline Blake.

Mecca.

"The more you read the more you know," Blake said. "The more you know the farther you'll go."

The first ship to bring Africans unwillingly to this country, she said, arrived in 1619 to do the work of building America.

"We came to do the work

nobody wanted to do," she said. "We came to plant the crops, to harvest the crops, to pave the roads, to weave the fabric, to nurse the babies.... For 300 years our people built the country for nothing. We made America great."

Blake marched with Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and was at Rosa Parks funeral. Today she hosts a radio show "Save Our Black Boys" on Thursdays at 7:30 p.m. on WDRJ 1440 AM. But she has spent her lifetime raising awareness of the history of Africans in America.

Randolph Center Produces State Winner

DeShawn Cooley, a senior in Philip Siedlik's Painting and Decorating Program at Randolph Career and Technical Center (RCTC), competed in a February SkillsUSA regional competition and placed first. He went on to win first place in the state competition in Lansing on April 17. In late June, DeShawn will compete at the National SkillsUSA Competition in Kansas City, Missouri.

The Randolph staff describes DeShawn as quiet, very mannerable, and hard working. DeShawn's efforts, like those of fellow students Elize Hall, who placed third in the state competition for masonry, and Edward Campbell, a third-place winner in the state plumbing competition, exemplify the brightest and best of Randolph. They are a testament to the Randolph staff's hard work and leadership.

"It was a privilege to work with him," said Philip Siedlik, teacher in skilled trades. "He was very consistent. He always wanted to practice. He was always improving. Now we're going to nationals and I think he has a chance of winning."



Tonya Walker, assistant teacher of skilled trades; DeShawn Cooley, first-place state winner; and Philip Siedlik, skilled trades teacher at Randolph Career and Technical Center.

Grants...

Healthy Students

The Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine's Golden Carrot Awards are designed to recognize excellence in food service professionals who have developed and implemented healthy and successful school lunch programs. Awards up to \$2,000 go to lunch programs that offer students healthy options, including a variety of vegetarian food choices and nondairy beverages. Deadlines are ongoing. For info, visit www.healthyschoollunches.org.

Diversity Video

The Sikh Coalition is sponsoring a film/video competition on diversity for individuals of all ages. The purpose is to promote discussion on civil rights issues, stereotypes and myths surrounding minority groups. Since bullying has become more prevalent, the competition aims to highlight this. Prizes range from \$500 to \$1,000. Deadline: Aug. 15. For info, visit www.sikhcoalition.org.

Educator Awards

The Veterans of Foreign Wars is taking nominations for its annual

award for the best teachers of American citizenship. The VFW recognizes K-12 teachers who are currently teaching at least half-time in the classroom and who teach citizen education topics regularly. Grants up to \$1,000 are available. Deadline: Nov. 1. For info, visit www.vfw.org/Community/Teacher-of-the-Year.

Music Programs

The ASCAP Foundation is dedicated to supporting music education and talent development. ASCAP give grants ranging from \$1,500 to \$3,000 for its own songwriting workshops, scholarships, awards and recognition programs and more. Letters of intent must be submitted by Aug. 1, 2011. For info, visit www.ascapfoundation.org.

Literacy

The Build-A-Bear Workshop Bear Hugs Foundation supports charities that serve literacy and education. Grants from \$1,000 to \$10,000 are available for a one-time need or for start-up or operational costs for ongoing programs, such as a summer reading program. Deadline: Oct. 28, 2011.

The application is online. To learn more about the program, visit www.buildabear.com.

Corporate Support

The Cabot Creamery Cooperative, based in Vermont, is closely aligned with outreach programs in the community. The cooperative invites grant requests for education and wellness. The cooperative likes to see proof of in-kind or other fundraising to support worthy projects. It also likes to "get a feel" for the project before providing grant money. The types of projects the cooperative will support include wellness fairs, nutrition workshops, promoting healthy food choices, and other health-related and hands-on projects. Deadline is ongoing. For info, visit www.cabotcheese.coop.

Math and Science

The mission of the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics (AIAA) Foundation is to advance the state of aerospace, engineering, and technical leadership. AIAA Foundation classroom grants aim to improve science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) edu-

cation in classrooms. Current educators who are AIAA members may apply for grants up to \$200 to carry out activities that support STEM learning. Deadline: ongoing. For info, visit www.aiaa.org.

School Technology

The purpose of the Teache@15 Awards is to get schools to improve learning by meeting their technology needs. The awards consist of Best Buy gift cards from \$500 to \$1500. The awards are based on teens nominating their schools and voting consistently over periods of 15 days. The deadline is ongoing. For info, visit www.at15.com/contests.

Teacher Development

The RGK Foundation has an interest in supporting K-12 education, especially reading, math and science. This interest includes teacher development, literacy and higher education. You may learn more and submit a letter of inquiry online by going to www.rgkfoundation.org. The deadline is ongoing. Grants average \$25,000. Allow four months for formal proposals to be reviewed.



Retired Detroit teacher Diane Sampson, GM engineer Kim Billingslea and Bagley teacher Lynda Wlodarski.

A World in Motion at Bagley Elementary

When Kim Billingslea went to Bagley Elementary School, she didn't know what an engineer was. Now a General Motors engineer for 27 years at the Tech Center in Warren, Billingslea wants kids to know about this career path.

Billingslea returned this spring to show Bagley students how to build a jet toy. As part of the World in Motion program, students do hands-on experiments in engineering.

The students learn design, force and friction among other engineering principles. A fourth-grade class used scientific inquiry to design a skimmer and make it move. Another class designed a jet toy.

The Cass Tech graduate wanted to be an architect but got interested in engineering while attending Wayne State University.

"I'm hearing women are not going into engineering as much," Billingslea said. The World of Motion program brings real-world engineers into the classroom to help teach engineering concepts.

The Bagley students got her help designing jet toys and ensuring the wheels moved in a straight pattern. Bagley technology coach Lynda Wlodarski introduced the six-week program. She got the help of retired Detroit teacher Diane Sampson who did A World in Motion for five years with her Logan Elementary School students.

Wlodarski introduces her students to many science programs like a May 25 Friends of the Rouge field trip to test water quality, and raising Madagascan hissing cockroaches, to name only two.

"I like to bring nature into the classroom," Wlodarski said. Or she is taking the kids out of the classroom.

"I just think the kids need to see what's going on in the world," she said. "Sitting in a class doesn't do it."

Detroit Teacher Celebrates Asian Heritage Month



Detroit leaders of Asian heritage include Iqbal Singh, of DTE Energy, State Sen. Hoon-Yung Hopgood, Dr. Sook Wilkinson, MAPAAC Chair, and Willie Dechavez, MAPAAC commissioner and event chair.

Willie Dechavez, a teacher at Blackwell International Institute on Detroit's east side, chaired the Asian American Heritage Month celebration in Lansing May 18. The keynote speaker was Gov. Rick Snyder. Dechavez highlighted the many contributions of Asian Americans in Detroit.

Snyder told the group that the entrepreneurial spirit can generate economic opportunities, attract more people to Michigan, and propel Michigan's progress. The program, held May 18 in the Capitol building, was hosted by the Michigan Asian Pacific American Affairs Commission (MAPAAC), the Michigan Department of Civil Rights and State Sen. Hoon Yung Hopgood.

Snyder said that while he was busy wrapping up the state budget, he wanted to attend the program because there is a need to promote cultural diversity.

"We need to continue our dialogue on culture," he said, noting that Ann Arbor, where he lives, is like the United Nations of the Midwest because of the many ethnicities there. "We have to step up to the plate" to address issues like inequity caused by cultural diversity, he said.

Sook Wilkinson, MAPAAC chair-

person, introduced Snyder and noted the sterling educational credentials of the governor. At age 23, Snyder had already completed three degrees — a bachelor's degree, an MBA and a law degree.

Wilkinson said the mission of MAPAAC is "to help build Michigan into a greater state. We're fully committed to promote the full participation of all Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders living in this great state.

"There has been no other time, more critical than now, when the state needs our contribution of knowledge, talents, expertise and network to build a greater Michigan," she said.

Daphne Kwok, chairperson of President Obama's Advisory Commission on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, was the guest speaker. She cited the success of efforts to politically empower Asian Americans, noting that more Asian American leaders are being elected and appointed to key positions in government.

Fox 2 News reporter Roop Raj emceed the program and Filipino groups performed, including the Isang Binhi Choir and the PACCM's Hula Dance Troupe which danced to "Drums of the Island."

FLICS Student Heads to China



Charlie Cooper has been a student of Chinese culture and language since fourth grade at the Foreign Language Immersion & Cultural Studies (FLICS) School. This summer — before she enters ninth-grade at Cass Tech — she wants to see China with her own eyes.

Cooper, a 4.0 honor student, has been

raising the \$4,000 it takes to visit Beijing for two weeks with the Confucius Institute through Wayne State University's Hanban Chinese Summer Bridge Program.

"I've never really been on a plane before," the 13-year-old said. "It still hasn't sunk in." Cooper will join 35 other students from Michigan and 844 from around the country.

Cooper's social studies teacher, David Fuqua (at left with Charlie), said the Chinese teacher at FLICS retired last year. Thus the Chinese students have been doing online studies. The

online teachers were surprised with the FLICS students' level of Chinese comprehension.

"They said, wait a minute, these kids already speak Chinese," Fuqua said. "They had to change the curriculum to make it more challenging."

In order to show her community spirit and appreciation, she organized a food drive for Gleaners Food Bank in June to gather donations for the hungry.

To support Cooper's trip to Beijing, contributions can be made to her secured donation Web site at www.gofundme.com/3hapk.

Clark Featured in Documentary about Famed Artist

During black history month at Clark Preparatory Academy, art teacher Sherry McKinnon invited about 10 black artists to her art room to work with the kids.

One of those was famed Detroit street artist Tyree Guyton. He was tailed by a Discovery channel film crew that was taping a documentary on his work and philosophy.

"The kids were so excited they didn't know what to do with all these cameras," said McKinnon, a 10-year teacher. The students helped with a Edmund Street installation called "Street Folk" and Guyton needed painted shoes.

Students brought in shoes that were special to them. The shoes represent the souls of people and the exhibit is a commentary on the plight of homelessness in Detroit. According to McKinnon, the students' creativity bloomed. Some students brought in their baby shoes.

"They said, 'You mean we can paint on shoes,'" McKinnon said. "This project gave them the freedom to be creative."

The exhibit is on Edmund Street in Brush Park, just west of Woodward. The documentary is scheduled to show on the Discovery channel in August.



Photo by Geronimo Patton



Hundreds Rally to Save Howe School



No, no and no. That was the response from the Howe community to turning its school into a charter.

Howe is a \$20 million elementary school that is less than a decade old. Yet it was one of the Detroit schools offered up this spring to a for-profit company to take over.

Principal Russell Covington said he never thought he'd look out to hundreds of students and parents assembled for a "Save Our School" rally

May 4 and ask them to help save it. Over spring break Covington's job was to open the school to three charter school companies for tours.

What many members of the Howe community want is to fill the school. They want better starting and ending times (Howe starts at 9 a.m. and ends at 4:13 p.m.). On a survey, parents said they wanted school hours to be 8:15 to

3:30 p.m. And they want to add grades six through eight to the pre-k-5 school.

"Instead of scrapping and re-inventing Howe school, why not upgrade the resources we already have," asked parent Susie Rhodes. "Howe teachers have a community history. If Howe became charter we may lose all the

experience and stability of the present staff, which is very important to the children because they know this school's dynamics.

"Why not give us the same consideration," Rhodes said. "Level the playing field, don't deliberately set us up to fail."

Fifth-grader Kyecia Washington said she excelled at Howe, where she has a 4.0 gpa, and doesn't want it to be a charter.

"Howe has been in our neighborhood for over 98 years," she said. "Howe is not just a building," said Jakai Jefferson, another high-achieving fifth-grader. "It's a place where we learn, grow and have fun."

As for the building, many community members said it was a disgrace that the taxpayers funded the new school to offer it to a for-profit company.

"We're taking a \$20 million investment of taxpayers dollars that should not be handed over to private enterprise when it was meant for this area's populace without restrictions," said Rhodes.

DPS announced that the school will stay open, be renamed Hutchinson, and take the staff and students from Hutchinson.

Music to JR King's Ears

Music teacher Annette Anderson is used to winning at vocal music competitions. The "Angelic Chorale" at J. R. King Academic and Performing Arts Academy was rated "excellent" in the Michigan

School Vocal Music Association and performed at the State Vocal Music Program at Jackson Community College.

But bringing home three trophies for "superior" performances, as well as metals and pins, from an Ohio festival felt like getting the whole treasure chest.

Anderson, a 24-year Detroit teacher, says her students placed so well at the "Music in the Park Kings Island Festival" because she is a strict but low-keyed teacher.

"I don't water anything down," Anderson says. She auditions the students she takes to competition. "They have to sing on pitch."

Anderson's choir caught the attention of 90.9 FM WRCJ disc jockey Donald Walker and Emergency Financial Manager Robert Bobb, who commissioned the group for his holiday greeting.

Her students performed so well at Kings Island that they brought home five of the highest honors: first place "superiors" for the middle school jazz swing choir and two middle school mixed choirs, and highest ratings for best female vocalist and best male vocalist. This summer the students are headed to Blue Lake camp.

"I attended Cass Tech," Anderson said of one of Detroit's stellar high schools, "and I teach the same way I was taught."



Best female vocalist Ivana Butler, music teacher Annette Anderson, and best male vocalist Immanuel Swayne.

Edison Wins First Place in Battle of the Books

Thomas Edison's "Lightening Bolts" smiled radiantly when they realized they won this year's Battle of the Books Competition, sponsored by the Yes Foundation.

Competing against seven other elementary schools, there was no doubt of the pride and accomplishment felt by Edison's fourth-graders, teachers and parents. Team coordinator Rosalind Cox embraced her victorious team in a group hug.

The students read 10 classic books including "Snow Treasure," "Sarah Plain and Tall" and "The Sign of the Beaver" and answered specific questions on each of them.

What is the secret to coaching a winning team?

"It is very simple," said Cox, an



instructional specialist. "We had 100 percent support from principal Beverly Green and the entire staff. The students were committed to reading. We had two dedicated volunteers, fourth-grade teacher Doneta Webb and Lyn Diedrich, from Wells Fargo."

Cox also commended a host of colleagues (paraprofessionals Denise Price, Chandra Addison, Brenda Mayfield, and officer Leslie Stokes) who stepped in anytime they were called upon to assist.

THE DETROIT NEWSM

Detroit Social Worker Scholarships

Eula Rice, a school social worker, has helped lots of kids through her 13 years in Detroit schools. When she arrived at a ceremony May 19 to give scholarships to Detroit kids, she couldn't believe a former student was a recipient.

The student, Chelsea Wheeler of the Detroit International Academy, tragically lost both parents in elementary school. Rice helped her through it.

"She sustained all of it through her paternal and maternal grandparents," Rice said. Now a group of Detroit school social workers is giving her \$1,000 to go to college.

"When I saw her name I couldn't believe it," Rice said. "It came full circle this time. You actually get a chance to help someone."

With Wheeler, six other Detroit students won the Mildred Ellis scholarship this year. Mildred Ellis was the first African American to be appointed director of the Office of School Social Work Service. Detroit's school social workers named the scholarship in her honor after her passing in 1988.

The social workers give their own money and raise other funds for the scholarships. Since 1989, they have given \$213,000 and helped 156 students go to college. Applicants write an essay telling about an obstacle they have overcome.

"These kids have gone through extraordinary odds to get here," Rice said. The recipients and the social workers shared a dinner at the Tabernacle Baptist Church.

Keyshawn McDaniel won all city awards in basketball and football and



Retired school social worker Denby High School; J'Maris Academy; Keyshawn McDaniel Kenneth Williams, Northwest worker Kathy Hemingway.



Earl Kendrick, Keyshawn McDaniel and Dr. Roger Manela