

Contract Extended to Nov. 21

The DFT and DPS negotiating teams signed a Letter of Agreement on Oct. 28 to extend the current contract by 21 days.

Although the teams had been bargaining daily and talks were productive, there were a handful of substantive issues that needed more time to iron out.

“It is important for us to be driven by substance rather than deadlines,” DFT President Keith Johnson said. “We are focused on academic and fiscal reform initiatives necessary to ensure that our members are fairly compensated, and have adequate classroom materials and supplies, while allowing the district to establish a plan for sustained fiscal solvency.”

The contract extension until Nov. 21 will give ample time to resolve those issues. A membership meeting will be scheduled to review the tentative contract.

The DFT team also went to Lansing on Oct. 30 to seek approval for a creative financial plan. Emergency Financial Manager Robert Bobb has commended and embraced many of the DFT team’s creative cost-cutting ideas.

In August, the union committed to helping the district achieve \$45 million in cost savings. The DFT team’s focus has been to do this while preserving members’ paychecks and benefits to the greatest extent possible.

“We are trying to find a few big ways to save money, rather than death by a thousand paper cuts,” said DFT Executive Vice President Mark O’Keefe.

In the academic area, the teams have discussed the reform initiatives introduced at the May 26 professional development day at Cobo Hall. These initiatives include teacher resource centers, school-based performance bonuses, class-size reduction, priority schools, and peer assistance and review.

Keep the Lights On After School

Parker Teacher Urges Afterschool Funding

Cheerleading, martial arts, drum line, basketball, homework help, dance, bowling and computers. These are just a few of the afterschool programs Dwayne Brown wants to save at Parker Elementary School and other Detroit schools.

As site manager for the 21st Century After School Program, Brown (pictured at right) sees the rewards academic and enrichment afterschool programs provide.

“It all has an impact,” said Brown, a special education teacher. “We try to make a real connection about what’s going on in the world.”

Brown organized a “Keep the Lights On After School” program at Parker Oct. 22 to show parents what is offered and urge them to call legislators to keep funding for afterschool programs.

“We’re telling legislators to please keep the lights on for afterschool programs,” Brown told the parents. More than 7,500 communities celebrated Lights On Afterschool. Afterschool programs combat juvenile crime, help working families, and provide enriching opportunities for kids to grow into successful adults. Kids in afterschool pro-

grams do better in school and are less likely to get in trouble.

At the celebration, Brown outlined the benefits for kids: snacks, homework help, and the development in interests such as music and African martial arts.

“I taught a year’s worth of stuff in the first two weeks,” said Jason Clark, Parker’s martial arts instructor. “The whole point of martial arts is to build yourself physically and spiritually.”

David Marshall (pictured at left), a substitute who teaches history, music and physical education, also teaches drum line after school.

“They actually learn to read music,” Marshall said. “It may not look it, but it takes a lot of coordination and discipline to do drum line.”



WALK-THROUGHS INVOKE PRIDE AND CONCERNS

Since the new school year began I have done 65 walk-throughs to see for myself what is taking place in our schools. I was not at all surprised to see so many of our members enthusiastic, passionate, and committed to providing quality instruction to our students. This has been a staple of our existence despite the criticisms we are forced to endure.

President's Report



Keith Johnson

For the most part teachers had few complaints other than not having their full complement of books and supplies, but as usual they find a way to improvise.

There were a number of sights that made me so proud to be a Detroit teacher, let alone president of the DFT. Some examples:

- At Charles Wright Academy I talked with a number of pre-school teachers and witnessed how they were working with their students on shapes, colors, and the alphabet. I went to a fifth-grade classroom and heard a beautiful song, written and sung by a young lady, that should become the theme song for the school.

- At Thurgood Marshall I sat in on a third-grade assembly where the students were demonstrating some of their talents; cheerleading, poetry recital, rapping (of course), and dancing routines. I also met with a group of teachers and parents defining the goals and strategies to keep Thurgood Marshall a high-achieving school.

- At Clark Elementary I watched a fourth-grade teacher review sentence structure and proper tense to her students, distinguishing between see, seen, and saw and the proper usage according to the tense and number of people involved.

- At Bates Academy I saw a math teacher drilling students on the distributive property of multiplication. The students were fully engaged and quick to respond to her commands for answers as she placed scenarios on the overhead.

- At Charles Drew I saw a special needs class of students talking about careers they want to pursue based upon what they had written. This was a truly inspiring sight to me because it once again illustrated that all of our students have dreams, and who are we to diminish them?

- At Cody High School I witnessed one tough young science teacher who refused to allow a young male student to disrespect her and her class, dealing with him swiftly and effectively and returning to her lesson without missing a beat.

But all was not well in my travels. I still saw too many teachers who did not have the books and supplies necessary

to deliver instruction, and this was as late as the seventh week of school. At Mumford High School I saw staff and students traumatized by the violence and disorder at the school. I even witnessed three classrooms that were trashed by students who should have been in class somewhere.

At Fisher Magnet elementary at Heilmann Park I saw a number of classes vastly oversized and a principal struggling to get additional teacher service (we were able to get five additional teachers assigned). But teachers were making good things happen anyway.

Unfortunately, I apparently was not welcome in some schools. One principal came up to me and insisted that the next time I decide to come to her school I should notify her first. I respectfully but emphatically told her that when I need for her to know I'm coming, I'll tell her. Otherwise, stay out of my business.

Another principal angrily approached the building rep to ask her why she did-



DFT President Keith Johnson congratulates winning coach Robert Hatchett (see story on page 4).

n't tell the principal I was coming. That would have been difficult since the building rep was just as surprised to see me. Don't worry principals; if you have nothing to hide, hide nothing.

There were other principals who were happy to see me and asked for assistance in getting staff and supplies. These principals understand we are all in this together and must work together.

I will continue to do my walk-throughs and meet with the membership as often as I can.

If you would like me to meet with the staff at your school, don't wait for a walk-through, just call.

Keep up the great work. I am so proud to be one of you.

I am worried my union brothers and sisters and I will continue to take the blame for our district's woes and be asked to make more sacrifices when we already lack the support and conditions needed to successfully do our jobs.

This is what happens when you close schools, lay off staff, and restructure schools without providing the resources needed to be successful. If you wanted to boost enrollment you wouldn't have closed schools and laid off teachers and support staff.

Naturally, I am very displeased when I read the editorials condemning union teachers for our district's woes and championing your efforts.

As far as I can see, you are doing what you can to continue to drive students away and create conditions that will not result in increases in student achievement or enrollment. Our community wants safe schools with small class sizes and certified teachers. The use of stimulus money should be seen in the classroom and school edifice, not consultants.

As we approach the deadline for a teaching contract, I am worried. I am worried for the future of public education in Detroit. I am worried I will not be able to pursue the career I chose and dedicated thousands of hours to.

Updates...

Chapter Meetings

All chapter chairs should contact Holley Sabotchick at the DFT office (313-875-3500 ext. 779) to set up chapter meetings.

Retirements

The following DFT members have announced their retirements: Brenda K. Quinn, Deirdre Scott, Petty Officer Howard Brogdon, Katherine McNulty-Walker, Linda Van Woerkom, Thomas DiLuigi, Cynthia Valenti, Shirley Patton, Sheila Christian, Barbara Nolan, Gwendolyn Moore and Pamela Michael. If you have retired in the last six months and would like it announced, please call the editor at 313-875-3500 ext. 776.

Retirees Focus on Outreach

DFT Retirees Chapter chair Jewel Gines joined some 120 AFT retirees from 15 states at the AFT Retiree

Leadership Conference in Washington D.C. on Sept. 30 to network and learn.

During the three-day conference, nearly all retirees headed to Capitol Hill to lobby for healthcare reform.

"You are here on some very crucial days for healthcare reform," AFT President Randi Weingarten said. "The stakes are high. It is important for you to go to the Hill and let them know your reality."

More than 26,000 members in the last two years have joined retiree chapters throughout the country, bringing the total number of AFT retirees to 256,000.

Another highlight of the conference, retiree members honored Sheila Goldberg as the Retiree of the Year. Goldberg is the co-president of the New York State United Teachers Retiree Council 17.

The conference also featured workshops that focused on recruiting new retirees (and those who are near retirement), leadership, communication and advocating for members.

Retirees October Meeting

Kimberly Trent, director of the Governor's Office of Southeast Michigan, spoke to the DFT Retirees Chapter at the Oct. 20 meeting.

Trent discussed the education community imploring the Legislature to balance the K-12 budget. The legislators OK'd a \$165 per pupil cut to the school districts, which reduces school services the kids need to succeed.

The governor has updated qualifications for high school graduates, making us more competitive with the international community. Trent also spoke about the Michigan Promise, a \$4,000 scholarship for Michigan high school graduates to attend a college in Michigan.



Dr. Arthur Divers, Alpha Jordan, DFT President Keith Johnson and Kimberly Trent, director of the Governor's Office of Southeast Michigan.



Detroiters Rally for Universal Health Care

"I'm counting on you," was the theme of a universal health care rally Oct. 14 in the downtown business district. Picketers called on their elected officials to do the right thing by supporting what 77 percent of Americans support: the public option.

Reinforce Resilience in Your Students

Trying to make a child feel better about a disappointment, failure, or loss by simply saying, "It doesn't matter," or "It's not that important," rarely helps. And it is not exactly the best way to handle the situation. Experts say this kind of feedback only makes children feel worse, and it doesn't teach them how to handle stressful events or deal with upsetting news.

Studies show that resilience — the ability to bounce back when something disappointing happens — is what separates students who flourish from those who flounder under stress. That's why resilience may be one of the most important skills you can teach your students. How can you accomplish this? Try these suggestions:

- Remind students that bad stuff doesn't last. Children don't often have the resources to understand that if they get a bad grade, lose a ball game, or get dumped by their best friend, it's not the end of the world. They tend to believe their negative feelings will last forever, or that one failure will ruin everything. Help them understand that these situations are temporary. Show them ways a result can be changed. Give them reasons to persevere.

- Promote problem-solving. Action is the best antidote to feeling helpless and deflated. For example, children who are upset with bad grades will recover more quickly if they can think of ways to sharpen their skills and

improve their study habits, rather than feel sorry for themselves. Then, the next time a problem occurs, they'll know they have the resources to jump in and try to solve it.

- Know when to intervene. Be patient and supportive when your students ask for advice or come to you with questions or problems. Very often a show of support is all a child needs to feel encouraged to succeed. However, if you can see that a situation clearly hurts or confuses a student, you should encourage that child to back away and look for suitable resources elsewhere. Assure your students that you are in their corner and they can always feel comfortable asking for your help.

- Set reasonable boundaries. Children need adult guidance in order to feel confident about how to act in certain situations. Set up rules in the classroom and at home and stick to them. Ask for student input on what the rules should include and how they should be reinforced. Make the expectations clear to everyone.

- Accent achievement. Ego-boosting praise is a great buffer against disappointment. It encourages resilient thoughts and actions. Children will learn to link success with hard work. They'll learn that even when they think they can't do something or believe they failed, perseverance, a positive attitude, and hard work can lead to achievement.

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An Open Letter to Robert Bobb

By Aaron Kottke
Pershing High School

Let me explain the effects of your efforts that I have directly felt. You closed the school



Aaron Kottke

where I'd worked for three years, Cleveland Intermediate High School. At Cleveland I enjoyed class sizes of approximately 20 students. I had textbooks and

books I could send home with students and still have plenty left to use in class. I saw gains in student achievement and was active on the school's leadership team.

ing with at Cleveland. But she is not a miracle worker and it is evident we are being asked to do far more with far less. In the first weeks of class I had classes of over 50 students due to the merger of schools. As I awaited the leveling process, I had to move my classes to the auditorium because there simply was not enough room. Since the leveling process my classes are down to the maximum allowed 35 students. Yes, this is in line with our contract, but hardly ideal.

I was promised my textbooks from Cleveland would be delivered to Pershing. I inventoried, organized neatly, and labeled them for delivery to Pershing when Cleveland was being emptied. It is five weeks into the school year and I have yet to see them. I have been contacting people and my principal has been contacting people about these problems, but still no books.

The first weeks of school are crucial in setting the tone for the year. The first weeks of this school year are certainly setting a bad tone.

Michael Jackson Day Boosts Enrollment at Spain



By Charlene Uresy, Spain School Teacher

"Celebrating Michael Jackson," was the theme at Spain K-8 School on the Fourth Wednesday count day Sept. 30. It was a day of enthusiasm and zeal. The entire school was abuzz with excitement. Many of the students and the staff, including Principal Ronald Alexander and Assistant Principal Mary Fields, dressed like Michael Jackson.

The King of Pop was honored with a program that was TV-worthy. Students danced to his music, recited his lyrics, wrote original poems, and performed a drum line. The teachers put on a fashion show that was so much fun! The program ended with Michael Jackson's signature dance "Thriller." Wow! It was awesome. Spain School was entertained with such a wonderful production.



Our finale was awesome, too. We had 844 students in attendance, well over the enrollment predicted for us at the beginning of the school year. "Celebrating Michael Jackson" was a wonderful way to encourage our students to be in school. Teachers had explained to their classes that the more students who are enrolled in our school, the more money we will have to better our school. Spain School is surely one of the many good schools in DPS.

Robeson Teacher and Coach Honored

Robert Hatchett's countless hours of nurturing, guiding and coaching Detroit kids can't be repaid. But winning the 2009 AAU Boys Basketball National Championship sure feels good. Coach Hatchett, an elementary physical education and middle school math teacher at Paul Robeson Academy, took home an enormous trophy for placing top 10 in the country in the 10 and under age group. The tournament was held in Lexington, Kentucky in July.

"It's quite obvious that the young people you coach think very highly of the contributions you make," said DFT President Keith Johnson at a surprise celebration for Hatchett Oct. 9 at the school.

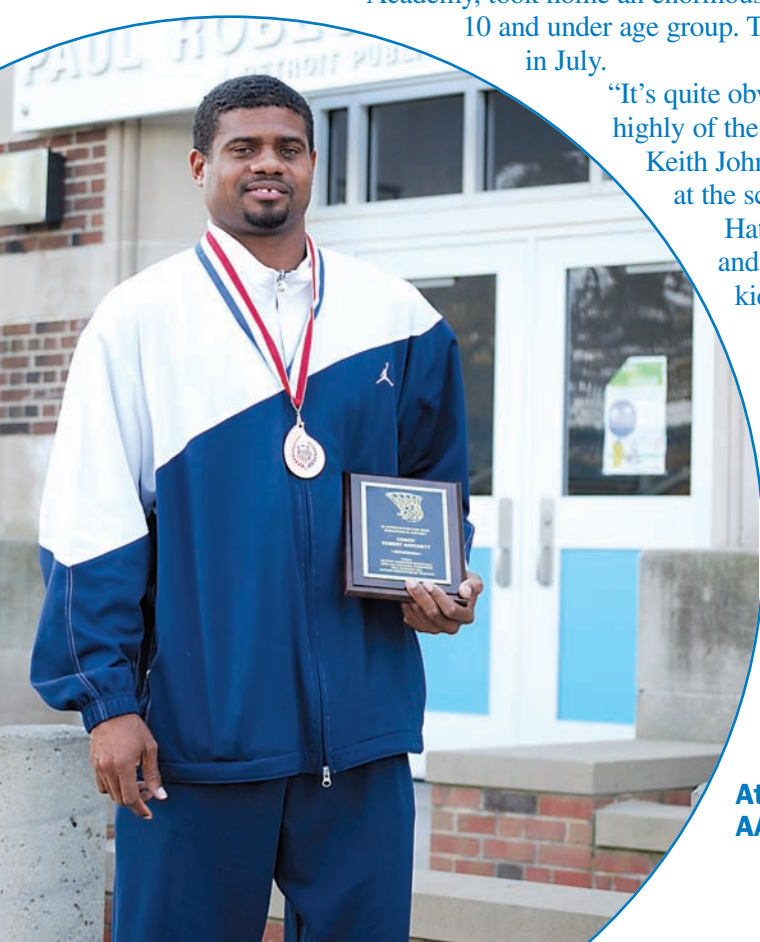
Hatchett, 38, who has been teaching for 11 years and coaching as long, said he relishes his work with kids.

"I have a love of the game," said Hatchett who played high school basketball on the south side of Chicago before a knee injury in his senior year. "Once you're able to put sports and instruction together, you see success."

Hatchett has a goal this year for his team to play and finish in the top four nationally.

"It's always for the love of the kids," Hatchett said to the Robeson student body. "Even though I'm an educator here, I would do it for free because you are our future. One of the things that keeps me going, young ladies and young gentlemen, is I love you with all my heart."

At left is Paul Robeson Academy teacher and AAU Basketball coach Robert Hatchett.



THE DETROIT NEWSMAKERS

Detroit Teachers Study in Turkey

It's the cradle of civilization. And Detroit teachers Makia Alexander and William Bowles spent 10 days this summer in Turkey studying Asia Minor history to relay to their students.

"This part of the world has played host to everything that's important in western civilization," said Bowles, a media specialist at Western High School. "The first settlement, the Greeks, the Romans, early Christianity, the Byzantine Empire, Constantine, the Crusades, the Ottoman Empire, and modern Turkey with Kemal Ataturk."

Although Bowles spent a year in the '90s teaching English in Turkey,

this trip overwhelmed him with the amount of history and culture to digest.



William Bowles and Makia Alexander

"I'm taking a year just to study it all," he said. Bowles' and Alexander's study was sponsored by the Turkish Cultural Foundation and the Detroit Council for World Affairs. They were invited to see modern Turkey with its membership in NATO and its quest to be included in the European Union.

"My favorite was the visit to Catalhoyuk," said Alexander, a teacher at Detroit School of Arts. "Our tour was led by world renowned archeologist Dr. Ian Hodder who gave us a private tour of the Neolithic Anatolian excavation site." This is the site of the first housing settlement, after nomadic life.

The teachers heard Turkey's



DSA teacher Makia Alexander and Western High School teacher William Bowles

views on the Armenian genocide, which they refer to as the Armenian tragedy. During World War I and after, more than 1 million Armenians were massacred or forced to march out of the country, to their deaths.

"Their point is that it should be left to the historians to judge, not the U.S. Congress," Bowles said.

Bowles and Alexander also studied the modern era of Ataturk, who brought Turkey into a modern, secular society. Ataturk instituted universal education, outlawed headscarves, and changed the language to a Roman script.

Bowles says this region's history should be more deeply studied in our curriculum. "To not know all of this

— the Turkish region is underdeveloped in our curriculum."

"You really learn something when you teach it," Bowles said. "We want to give our students a larger picture. In Turkey, there's geology. There's religious history. There's political history, transportation, food, music and crafts. It really doesn't end."



City Council Supports School Social Workers



Leonard Zabawski 'Mr. Z', a recalled social worker. (Picture courtesy of The Detroit News)

The Detroit City Council passed a resolution Oct. 27 to support the 40 school social workers who were laid off effective Oct. 30. The resolution, sponsored by Councilwoman Alberta Tinsley-Talabi, opposes the massive layoffs of Detroit's school social workers. The resolution passed by a 6-1 vote.

Since 1960, school social workers provided mental health services to Detroit students and their families. Today, school social workers are grappling with a severe recession — a third of Detroit's population is unemployed — and its effects on children.

"The Detroit City Council feels that DPS is placing our students at risk and compromising their mental health, safety and security by bringing in new management companies who are not prepared or intimately aware of the individual issue and situations that students may be experiencing," Tinsley-Talabi's resolution said.

School social workers have special certification for work in a school setting.

"In my opinion, citizens of Michigan should be concerned about what is going on, with a new round of 40 school social workers laid off, against the context of millions of public dollars spent on no-bid contracts by the Emergency Financial Manager," said Leonard Zabawski, school social worker from Turning Point Academy on the east side. Zabowski was one of eighteen recalled at press time.

Oprah Winner Returns to McKenny School

When LaShell Griffin sent her five children through McKenny Elementary School, on Detroit's northwest side, she had the same voice, poise and friendliness she has now. But today, Griffin is basking in the fame of having won Oprah Winfrey's Pop Star Challenge Contest in 2004. Since then, she signed a recording contract, sang for Sen. Barack Obama on the campaign trail, and performed with Anita Baker, Brian McKnight and Earth, Wind and Fire.



Pop Star LaShell Griffin, center, with McKenny Principal Patricia Smith (second from left) and McKenny teachers.

Still it's the McKenny teachers she praises. "It's so great to see we still have great teachers," said Griffin, a former McKenny PTA president. "So many of you were so important to our family."

Griffin is on a national motivational school tour with a stop at McKenny.

Griffin, whose husband of 22 years is her manager, sang a *capella*. She told the students it wasn't easy growing up in the projects, seeing fighting and poverty, to dream about another life.

"I was told I would never amount to anything because of where I grew up," she said. She became a devoted wife and mother who took care of her family and was involved with her children's education. She urged McKenny students to use the library and build a relationship with a teacher. "You have no idea how important it is as you get older to have a good relationship with your teacher."

Griffin is on a national motivational school tour with a stop at McKenny.

Grants...

Educator Awards

The National Science Teachers Association offers an annual award – the D. Wendell G. Mohling Outstanding Aerospace Educator Award – to an aerospace educator. Eligible awardees are K-12 science teachers recognized for excellence in aerospace education. The award consists of \$3,000 and up to \$2,000 to attend the National Conference on Science Education. Deadline: Nov. 30, 2009. For info, visit awards@nsta.org.

Science Educator

The Zula International-NSTA Early Science Educator awards recognize excellence in teachers of science for kindergarten through grade 2. Two preK-2 teachers with innovative early science programs will be selected to receive \$400 and \$1,000 in expenses to attend the NSTA National Conference. Deadline: Nov. 30, 2009. For info, visit www.nsta.org/about/awards.aspx#zula.

Funds for Seeds

The America the Beautiful Fund’s Seeds that Grow Hope program provides grants of free seeds for community groups with worthy gardening projects. The ABF will provide 100 to 1,000 packets of free seeds to groups depending on the need. The program has provided seeds to grow nutritious food for the hungry, teach about nature in a habitat garden, and beautify communities. No deadline. For info, visit www.america-the-beautiful.org.

Change the World

The Siemens’ We Can Change the World Challenge has opened up to elementary school students in the United States. The challenge offers students the chance to make a sustainable environmental change in alignment with math, science, and reading or language arts skills that

they are required to learn. Funds up to \$5,000 are available. Deadline: Jan. 31, 2010. For info, visit <http://wecanchange.com/classroom>.

Hearing Impaired

High school students who are deaf or hard-of-hearing may enter a competition that allows them to express themselves through digital arts, film, or animation media. The National Technical Institute for the Deaf at the Rochester Institute of Technology is taking submissions for the contest from students in grades 9-12 who are deaf or hard-of-hearing. Funds of \$250 and transportation expenses to attend awards ceremony are available. Deadline: Jan. 15, 2010. For info, visit www.ntid.rit.edu/prospective/daac.

Financial Literacy

The Comerica Charitable Foundation makes funds available for projects that align with its mission in Comerica communities: economic self-sufficiency, neighborhood revitalization, education, access to health care, diversity and inclusion. Cash grants are awarded Jan. 1. For info, visit www.comerica.com.

Fun Learning

The Best Buy Children’s Foundation makes grants to programs that encourage engaged, fun learning programs for children using interactive technology. Deadline: ongoing. For info, visit <http://communications.bestbuy.com>.

Exemplary Teaching

The National Science Teachers Association and Ciba have partnered to offer an award for one exemplary middle school science teacher and one exemplary high school science teacher. Winners receive a \$4,000 award as well as up to \$1,000 to attend the NSTA’s national convention. Deadline: Nov. 30, 2009. For info, visit www.nsta.org/about/awards.

Roll Call...

— Detroit Federation of Teachers Membership Meeting —
October 10, 2009

Academy/Americas	Jemison
Bagley	Jordan
Barsamian	Keidan
Barton	Kettering
Bates	Kettering - West Wing
Beard ECE	King Elem
Beckham	King High
Bennett	Law
Bethune	Lessenger
Blackwell	Logan
Bow	Longfellow Annex
Boykin CEC	Loving
Breithaupt CTC	Ludington
Brewer Academy	Mac Dowell
Brown Academy	Malcolm X Academy
Bunche	Mann
Burton	Marquette
Campbell	Marshall, T.
Carleton	Mason
Carstens	Maybury
Carver	McColl
Cass High	McFarlane
Cerveny	McKinney
Chrysler	Mumford High
Clark	Murphy
Clemente	Neinas
Clippert	Nichols
Cody High	Noble
Cooke	Nolan
Cooley - North Wing	Northwestern
Crockett CTC	Office of Mathematics
Crockett High	Osborn High
Davis Areospace High	Owen Academy
Davison	Parker
Day School/Deaf	Pasteur
Detroit City High	Pershing High
Detroit School of Arts	Priest
DFT Office	Psychological Services
Dixon	Randolph CTC
DTC-East	Renaissance
DTC-West	Retirees
Durfee	Robeson
Early Intervention	Robeson ELC
Edison	Robinson
Edmonson	Rutherford
Ellington	Sampson/Webber
Farwell	Schulze
Ferguson Academy	Scott
Finney High	Southeastern High
Fisher-Lower	Southwestern High
Fisher-Upper	Spain
Fitzgerald	Specialized Student Services
Fleming	SSW
Ford High	SSW Elem West
Gardner	Stewart Learning Center
Garvey	Taft
Glazer	Thirkell
Golightly CTC	Trix
Golightly Educ. Center	Trombly
Gompser	Turning Point Academy
Greenfield Union	Van Zile
Hamilton	Vernor
Hancock	Vetal
Hanstein	VI-POHI
Harms	Wayne
Henderson	Webster
Holcomb	Western High
Holmes, A.L.	Westside Alternative
Homebound	Westside Multi-Cultural Acdy.
Howe	White Elem.
Hughes	White, J.
Hutchins	Wright Adacemy
Hutchins/McMichael	Young Elem.
Hutchinson	

DFT Financial Report for 2008-2009

The Union Puts Its Finances In Order

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

To quote the lyrics of the famous rock band AC/DC, the DFT is “Back in Black.”

After five consecutive years of losses, the DFT is no longer bleeding red ink. For the first six months of fiscal year 2009, the DFT posted a \$530,000 loss.

However, after the new administration took over in January, the DFT posted an \$811,000 profit for the last six months of fiscal year 2009. This resulted in a profit of \$281,000 for the 12 months ending June 30, 2009.

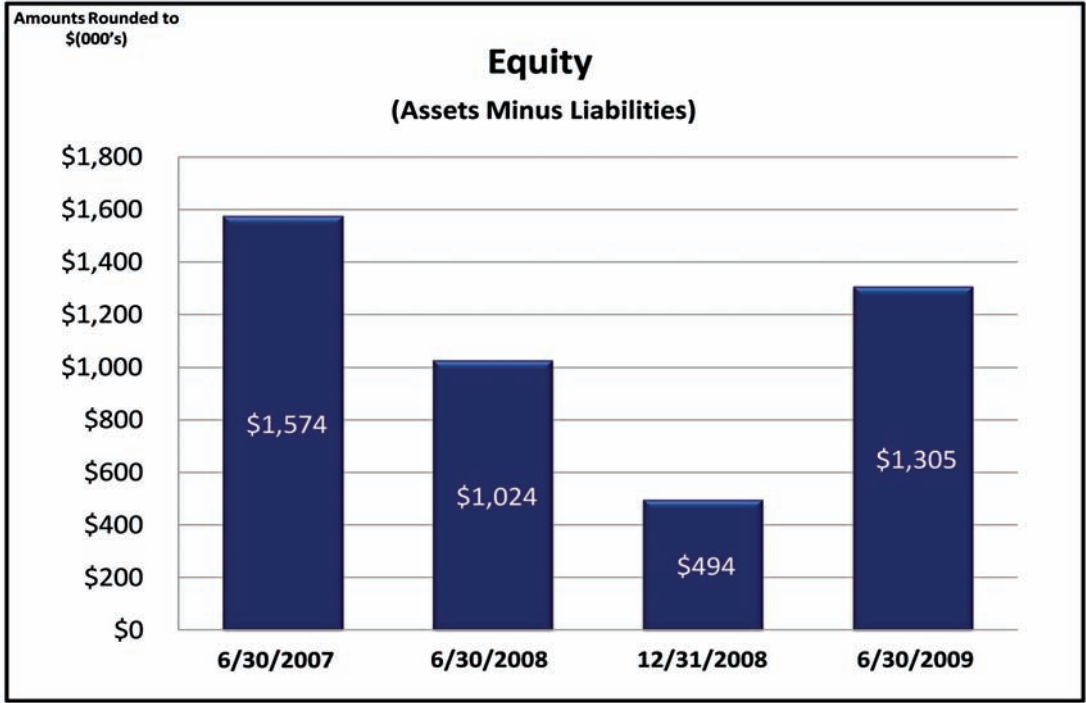
With the DFT’s equity spiraling down to \$494,000 at Dec. 31, 2008, and on the verge of bankruptcy, the turnaround resulted in the DFT’s equity increasing to \$1,305,000 at June 30, 2009.

We took several measures to accomplish this turnaround.

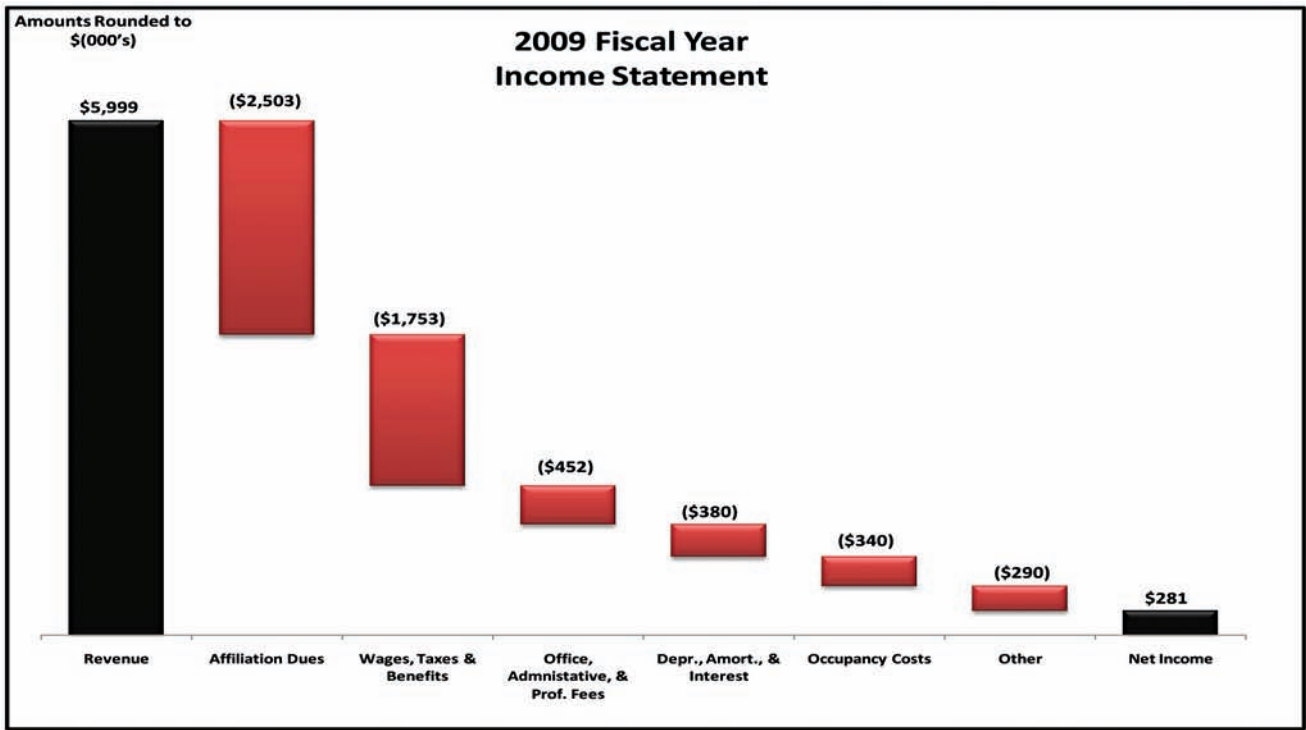
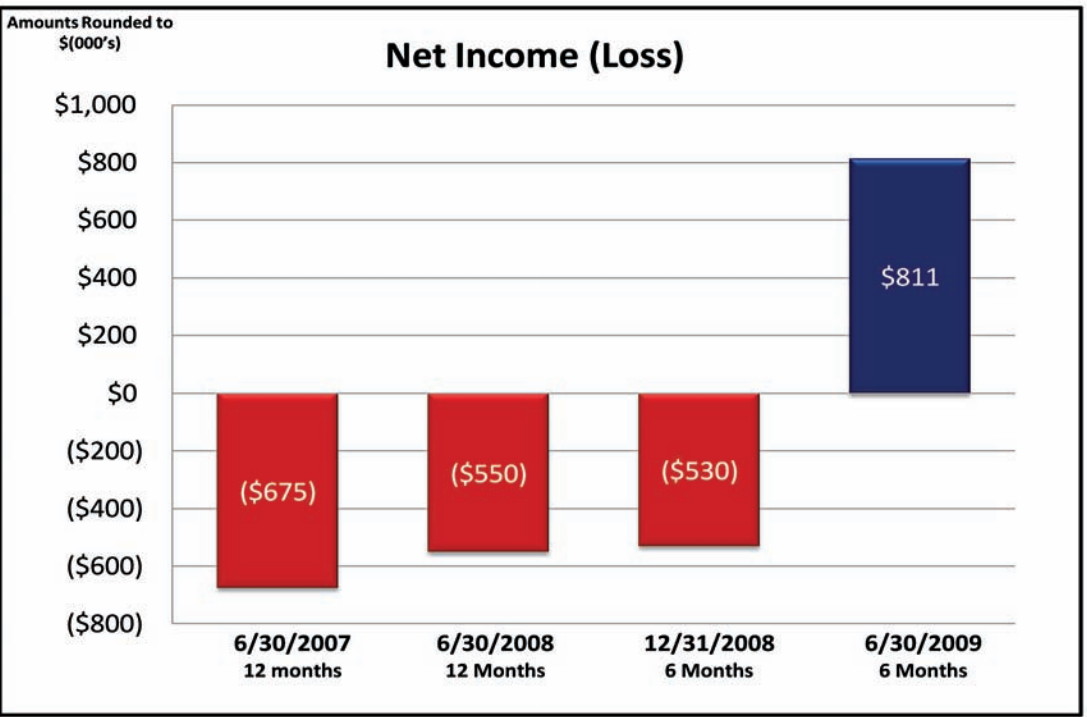
- We took all DFT funds out of the stock market where the union lost over \$100,000 in 2008.
- We are paying property tax bills and other bills on time (paying the August 2008 bills late resulted in over \$30,000 in fines and penalties).
- We reduced phone expenses by 50 percent by streamlining services and changing providers.
- We collected over \$15,000 in past dues, strike loans and dues that had been written off in prior years.
- After the bank announced a rate increase on our mortgage, we protested and won, saving \$20,000 in interest expense.

In these difficult economic times, and in spite of decreasing membership, the DFT is still on track to meet its budgeted profit of \$270,000 for fiscal year 2010.

We will accomplish this by additional cost-cutting initiatives and analyzing all expenditures of the DFT. Also, we implemented new revenue-generating initiatives like the lease of our second floor to Evergreen Children’s Services for about \$150,000 per year.



Vito Peraino, DFT Controller, compiled the financial reports.



Visit the New DFT Web site
www.DFT231.com

Can We Get Kids More Interested in School?

By Ron Seigel

Last year The Michigan Chronicle noted only 20 percent of black males graduated from Detroit schools.

They suggested many dropped out because they found school boring. Many youngsters have been unable to tolerate boredom, including brilliant minds like Thomas Edison.

However, as Dr. Joseph Novak of Cornell University noted in the 1980s, successful students who accept boredom may cause society problems too. He declared they often drop out mentally, memorizing facts without understanding their significance.

As a result, he suggested, they often grow up into adult professionals without initiative or understanding of changing conditions, bureaucrats unable to respond to human situations or technicians who fail to anticipate technical disasters.

It may be impossible to completely eliminate boredom and there are times students must perform monotonous tasks through duty and self-discipline. However, there are two fascinating rules teachers can use to reduce boredom: “RULE ONE: B =

Minus M. Boredom equals a lack of meaning or the amount of boredom in a give class equals the lack of meaning students find in it. If you want to reduce boredom, make a subject meaningful.”

This is where RULE NUMBER TWO comes in: “To help students find meaning in your subject, relate it to something they already find meaning in.”

This can be done even with impersonal subjects. I personally discovered this as a highly nervous substitute teacher. I was hastily assigned to teach a very disorderly class the rule of division for turning remainders into fractions. The kids cared little about remainders or fractions, but I recognized they might find meaning in friendship, fairness and adventure.

So I told them a story of three honorable friends searching for diamonds, who solemnly swore to share equally whatever they found. As the kids began to identify with my heroes, I abruptly announced these honorable people discovered four diamonds. How, I asked, could three honorable individuals share four diamonds?

The mostly noisy kids became



intent on solving this dilemma. One boy noted four divided by three was one with one remainder. I asked if that meant they should throw the extra diamond away. Nobody wanted to do that!

Then one girl excitedly found the answer — divide the extra diamond into thirds. The kids discovered the rule for turning remainders into fractions and with some explanation and memorization, would hopefully never forget it.

Finding some meaning in one area leads youngsters to find meaning in related areas and no one can tell where the process will stop.

One fascinating thing is that my students were disorderly even with the regular teacher and some adults might have labeled them “bad.” However, what they found meaning in was essentially a moral issue, settling a problem fairly. They were interested when the subject related to their moral values.

Anger Management for School Staff

As we deal with children of all age groups, with co-workers, and with families of our students, we have all known times when we have felt that quickening of pulse, that feeling of tension in our forehead, and the frustration of negative emotions. We are angry!

Many people say that it is important to let your feelings out and immediately express the way you feel. That way you will get rid of your anger. But do you rid yourself of the love and tenderness you feel for a person by telling him or her of your feelings? No. You only feel more and more love for the person.

The same is true with your feelings of anger. The more you vocalize your anger, the more resistant you become to letting it go.

Anger clouds your judgment and keeps you from seeing all the possible solutions to a problem. Staley E. Hibbs, Ph.D., says in an article titled, “The Anger Habit” that when anger goes up, the IQ comes down. Perhaps that is why we say and do things when we are angry that later seem to show little sense or intelligence.

When you feel those anger signals with students, co-workers, or parents, take time to calm yourself.

- Slow down your breathing. Breathe composure in and anger out.
- Count to 10. This gives you time to regain your focus and avoid saying or doing something inappropriate.
- See yourself dealing with the problem in an acceptable way.

When people see you take time to calm yourself in a tense situation, you will be setting a good example for all to follow. Your school will become a better place in which to live and work when others learn how to handle their anger without losing their intelligence.

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Calendar

All meetings will be held at 2875 W. Grand Blvd., Detroit, unless otherwise noted. Dates and times are subject to change. The DFT telephone number is 313-875-3500.

NOVEMBER

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| 10 | Social Workers Chapter Meeting, 4:00 p.m. |
| 12 | General Membership Meeting, 4:30 p.m. |
| 17 | Retirees Chapter Meeting, 11:30 a.m. |
| 17 | Educational Technicians Chapter Meeting, 3:30 p.m. |
| 19 | Psychological Services Chapter Meeting, 4:30 p.m. |

DECEMBER

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| 3 | Executive Board Meeting, 4:30 p.m. |
| 8 | Retirees Chapter Meeting, 11:30 a.m. |
| 8 | Social Workers Chapter Meeting, 4:00 p.m. |
| 10 | General Membership Meeting, 4:30 p.m. |
| 17 | Psychological Services Chapter Meeting, 4:30 p.m. |