

# THE DETROIT teacher

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MAY 2009

## OH BOY DOUGHBOYS! *Pershing Wins State Basketball Championship*

### Completing the Sweep

After winning the Detroit Public League, the Pershing Doughboys won the Class A State Championship on March 28 at Michigan State University.

Pershing coach Arthur W. Canada won Coach of the Year. Senior Derrick Nix was named Mr. Basketball.

Junior Keith Appling scored 49 points in the game against Kalamazoo Central. Appling broke a 25-year record of most points scored in a championship game.

Calls, congratulations and even fresh flowers poured into the school.

"I guess it was my night," Appling said. The junior said he didn't know



The championship team pictured with Assistant Coach Wydell Henry, left, and Coach Arthur Canada, right.

he broke the scoring record of Southwestern High School's Antwan Joubert until after the game. "I was

just trying to win."

The 6-foot-2 Appling credits his strength as a player to his competi-

tiveness and determination.

"Certain people talk a lot," he said. "I just try to prove them wrong. I just play."

Coach Canada credits hard work for his win.

"We're a family," Canada, 31, says.

"We tell each other the truth. We try to challenge each other." Canada says he did nothing differently this year than two years ago when he almost snared the championship.

"Same as it always is," Canada says. He says he bonds with the players, but they mostly work hard and are disciplined.

Like family,

Canada jokes with Appling to rein him in and appreciate him at the same time.

"He's short but he's special."

### ALERT! We Need You at Meetings

We need members to attend the union meetings. Our contract is up on July 1 and the district has little stability. We need to get organized, unified and vocal as teachers. Come to the following union meetings to keep up to date and learn our strategies.

#### Meeting Dates

May 14: 4:30 p.m. at the DFT  
June 4: 4:30 p.m. at the DFT

## COPE's \$10 Campaign Off to Good Start

Is your job worth \$10? DFT members are saying yes by sending in their \$10 to the COPE Committee.

We need lawmakers and other policy makers in office who will stand and work with us to restore respectability to the Detroit Public Schools. To get them elected takes money. The quality of education in Detroit's public schools has become a national punch-line and a source of embarrassment. As a result, non-educators continue to accuse the union of protecting poor teachers and contributing to the inferior education of Detroit's children.

No one seems to want to acknowledge, and more important correct, the perpetual blend of mismanagement and systemic failures that our teachers and instructional support personnel have to endure while educating our students.

There are continuing efforts by these non-educators to limit collective bargaining rights, eliminate tenure, impose merit pay, expand the number of charter schools, and make it easier to fire

teachers. They believe this will motivate our teachers to "improve their dedication to our children."

While we know this is not the truth, not enough people are listening to us because they are too busy blaming us.

So far, COPE has raised \$5,000 since the campaign started a month ago. But that's a distance from where we're aiming. By June 1, the DFT wants each of our 7,500 members to donate \$10. Some members already are doing that through payroll deduction. But those who aren't should send their check or money order to DFT/COPE, c/o the Detroit Federation of Teachers, 2875 W. Grand Blvd., Detroit, MI 48202.

Here's a benefit to giving extra generously: you'll have your name printed in an upcoming issue of this newspaper.

Platinum Members: (\$100 or more)

Gold Members: (\$50-\$99)

Silver Members: (\$25-\$49)

Please  
Contribute  
to  
COPE



# THE FACTS ON UNIONIZING CHARTERS; SCHOOL CLOSURES; AND LAYOFFS

By Keith Johnson, DFT President

Let's dispel the rumors regarding DFT's decision to organize charter schools in Detroit. The DFT does not support charter schools and/or the expansion of charter schools! However we can no longer afford to keep our heads buried in the sand hoping to look up one day and find that they have all gone away.

## President's Report



**Keith Johnson**

Charter schools continue to be a drain upon our school district as more and more parents begin to turn to charter schools as an alternative for the education and safety of their children. Of course the result is the loss of much needed revenue for DPS to continue to maintain schools, staff and programs. Since charter schools in Michigan, unlike in most states, are not regulated by statute or collective bargaining agreements, charters are allowed to engage in an educational free for all with each deciding how it will operate and without any parameters to govern them other than the agencies that authorize the charter.

Organizing the charter schools in Detroit will allow the DFT with the assistance of AFT Michigan to negotiate contract language that establishes guidelines for salaries, benefits, working conditions, due process, and of course compel the charters to contribute to the retirement system. In short, it will make the odds more even.

We will take initiatives to compel charters to cease their "creaming" practices; accepting and retaining only those stu-

dents that are not behaviorally or academically challenged, and denying access to students with special needs.

Organizing charters will also allow us to pursue tenure and just cause/due process rights for charter school teachers, hold them to the same standards that traditional public schools like DPS are held to, thus in theory, helping our efforts to reduce class size at all grade levels.

Most important of all, organizing charters will strengthen our power and influence as a union. It is reasonable to believe that as more charters are faced with having to be more like traditional public schools in terms of accountability, wages and benefits, due process, and paying into the retirement system, many of them will dry up because now they will not be as profitable, thus not as appealing to those seeking to authorize them.

After 14 years of existence, it is obvious that charters are not going away, and they have had enough free rein to operate as they please. It is time for them to be regulated and DFT is going to lead the way.

## SCHOOL CLOSURES

By May 8, Financial Manager Robert Bobb will announce the final decision on school closures. It is never easy to see a school close; it is difficult for students, staff, and the community the school serves. However, as we demand that DPS exercise fiscal responsibility to restore fiscal solvency, we must embrace the need for schools to close to maximize the use of our valuable and limited revenue.

Consolidating programs and staffs into fewer schools, or "right-sizing" the district, is the right thing to do in the best interest of our students and staff.

However, the savings from the school closures must be funneled into the classroom and not carelessly wasted as in years past. Materials and equipment that are in good condition must be distributed to the receiving schools and other schools where they may be utilized.

Mr. Bobb is also developing a long-term plan of what DPS will look like up to five years down the road, including the



**DFT President Keith Johnson visited several schools April 9 on the announcement that they will close. Here he speaks with the Joyce Elementary staff.**

closing of additional schools, and the construction of new education campuses to take their place, maximizing the land wealth that Detroit and DPS has at their disposal. This provides an opportunity for new state-of-the-art K-12 educational centers to be built where developments are planned or currently under construction. This will also allow us to attract and retain students and make DPS a "first choice" school district.

## LAYOFFS

Layoff notices were sent to 609 DFT members on April 9. While this is certainly alarming and a point of concern, the DFT is confident that the following factors will minimize the direct impact upon our members:

- DPS traditionally issues approximately 150 more layoff notices than it actually will need. This reduces that 609 figure to about 459
- In a typical year an average of 300 DFT members retire at the end of a given

school year. That reduces the 459 figure to about 159

- 50-100 members separate from the district for other reasons, e.g. expired certificates, voluntary resignations, or for cause terminations. That reduces that 159 figure to as low as 59.

If this trend holds true, there is reason to believe that very few members will actually be laid off. This by no means diminishes the importance or the impact of anyone who loses their job, especially in the most depressed economy in the nation. But rest assured that the DFT will work diligently to develop strategies to prevent any member from facing unemployment. It will not be easy, but if there is a way, your union will find it.

## Seventy Teachers Face Termination

By Mark O'Keefe  
DFT Executive Vice President



**Mark O'Keefe**

"I can't remember every employee I hired, but I remember all the ones I fired," a former boss once told me. Although the union fights to save jobs for teachers, we are in the unfor-

tunate position of having to notify 70 teachers that they may be terminated for nonpayment of union dues.

Paying union dues, or alternatively agency shop fees, is a condition of your employment. Occasionally, the district makes a mistake and fails to withhold the correct amount of dues. When this happens, we send an invoice to the member for the amount of dues owed.

When members do not fulfill their

responsibility to pay their dues, we are in an unfortunate position. We have to notify the district that employment will be terminated in 35 days if the delinquent dues are not paid.

As much as we may like to "let it slide," the union is owed thousands and thousands of dollars, which we need to pay our bills.

We can't allow some members to pay all their dues while others get a free ride.

**THE DETROIT** teacher

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Editor — Margaret Weertz



# UPDATES...

## Retirements Announced

The following DFT members have announced their retirements: Arttress Askew, Daniel McBroom, Ronnie Robinson, Marquette Davis, Paul Champion, Edna R. Burnett. If you have retired in the last six months and would like it announced, please call the editor at 313-875-3500 ext. 776.

## Noble Teacher Passes Away

Margie Martin Charles, 62, passed away unexpectedly on April 12 of a heart attack. Martin was a language arts teacher at Noble School, K-8. She began her career in teaching at Priest Elementary School and worked at Henderson and Vetal. Margie had a love of modeling and made \$100 as an extra in a promotional campaign for Bill Bonds. She also volunteered for the Girls Scouts of America. She leaves behind her husband Leo Charles, three daughters, extended children, grandchildren and great grandchildren.

## Transfer and Pay Period Open

The period for teachers to request transfers is open from April 1 through July 31. DFT President Keith Johnson said teachers should include their first and second choice of transfer on their transfer request form.

The period for teachers wanting to change their pay schedule from 26 pays to 22 pays, or from 22 pays to 26, will be open from July 13 to Sept. 4.

The union has agreed to these dates for processing the changes for the 2009-2010 school year. The changes would be effective with the Sept. 22 paycheck.

## Retirees Chapter Meets May 19

David Hecker, AFT Michigan president, will speak at the May 19 Retirees Chapter meeting about the DFT's plans to organize charter schools in Detroit. The meeting begins at 11:30 a.m. at the DFT office.

## Your Pension is Secure

"Your pension is guaranteed regardless of how the financial market performs," says MSPERS Director Phil Stoddard. "It should be reassuring knowing that our investment strategy centers on diverse funds and steady performance over the long term, placing us in a better position to maintain stability during economic downturns. While our pension funds have not been immune to the market decline, they do remain financially sound and positioned to continue paying your benefits. In short, your pension is secure."

## Social Security Recipients

By early June 2009, Social Security and Supplemental Security Income beneficiaries will receive a one time payment of \$250 as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. No action is required to receive this money. Recipients will automatically receive the payment from the Social Security Administration.



**ELMO, HOT DOGS AND TRAIN RIDES – Preschool and Head Start students from across Detroit attended the Enrollment & Recruitment Fun Day Fair sponsored by the Office of Primary Education at the DFT on April 23. Pictured above are Francott Cooper, school social worker; James Lewis, school social worker; and Sherrill Hall, early childhood supervisor.**

# Burning Sick Days? — Bad Idea —

By Patrick Falcusan  
DFT Retirement Counselor

Here is a tale of twin sisters.



Patrick Falcusan

Both sisters get hired by the Detroit Public Schools on the same day at age 25. They both have master's degrees. They both make the same salary. They both make the same salary. They retire from DPS on the same day when they turn 55.

One sister used all of her sick days. Sister Two used very few.

Because Sister Two will be paid out for a percentage of her 200 unused sick days, she is on track to get a check of \$24,426 when she retires. Sister One leaves and gets zero.

If Sister Two signed up a few years ago to buy universal time, she did another thing right. She could use that \$24,426 to buy two or three years of service to boost her retire-

ment check by \$2,000 to \$3,000 a year. If Sister Two lives to be 80, she's gained approximately \$80,000 more over the life of her retirement than Sister One.

The moral of the story of the twin sisters is that sick days — one or 200 — have value. If you need to use your sick days, fine. But it's important for our members to know that our payment for unused sick days is among the most generous in the state. This is such a good use of your money.

And what if you're not buying time? Putting the allowable amount of the \$24,426 check in a tax shelter annuity is another gift to yourself. Simply put, saving sick days is a gift that just keeps giving.



## DFT Members Must Update Information

This is a contract year. The union must update its database with current addresses and telephone numbers in order to keep members informed. Even if you have updated your address and other information with the district, you must also notify the union of these changes. Mail this info by June 12 to the DFT, by fax (313-875-3511) phone (313-875-3500) or mail: 2875 W. Grand Blvd., Detroit, MI 48202.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

File #: \_\_\_\_\_

New home address: \_\_\_\_\_

Email address : \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Cell or home (circle) \_\_\_\_\_





## Golightly Students Provide Tax Service

On April 3, Cedrisha Smith walked down the hall of Golightly Career and Technical Center and asked whether it was too late for her to get her taxes done. Cedrisha, who works at Little Caesar's, was in luck. At the Finance Academy within Golightly, Cedrisha sat down with student Kyona Gibbs, 16, and started the process to get her taxes done.

Thanks to accounting and finance teacher Joe Quesnelle, pictured above, the center went through a rigorous process to become approved for students to file complete and accurate tax returns. Golightly, on Jefferson Avenue on the east side, draws students for half-day programs from the city's high schools. Golightly has three academies: finance, information technology, and travel and tourism. It also has 16 other programs.

In Quesnelle's view, Golightly is the picture of a successful school. "We have 1,100 students," Quesnelle says. "We have no fights. Why? Because we're engaged."

In his accounting class, appearances show a college level class with students asking questions and looking as if they left their jobs to attend night school. Quesnelle says 96 percent of the program's students go on to college.

Upon applying to Golightly, Quesnelle asks two questions: Do you have a C in math? Do you come to school? Though he rarely turns anyone away, the center seems to transform students with employability skills and a working knowledge of finance and accounting.

"I see a huge transformation over two years," he said. "We have a lot of kids coming out of our program making very good money. We have kids working on Wall Street, Comerica, Fifth Third Bank and the Federal Reserve."

Even if they don't choose finance, Quesnelle says the students have skills they can use forever, like doing taxes for co-eds while in college. "I've never been an unhappy DPS employee," Quesnelle said. "If you really, truly want to teach, this is where to teach."

## Intense Program Goes Beyond Basics

By mid year, Piere had 17 books to call his own. That is, books he wrote, illustrated and published.

Thanks to an intensive reading and writing program called Beyond Basics, Piere and his classmates at Barbara Jordan School have been telling their own stories while sharpening their skills.

"Every day they write," says Joelle McCormick, the program director. The non-profit Beyond Basics is a costly program that is free to four Detroit Public Schools because it is sponsored by benefactors.

At Barbara Jordan, remedial students get one-on-one help daily with phonics, reading and writing. Beyond Basics set up a publishing center in the media center where students write original stories



**Barbara Jordan teacher Darneice Rutledge with her student Piere Browner and Beyond Basics program director Joelle McCormick**

and receive assistance editing their stories before they become hard cover.

Over breaks from school, students are told to keep writing and bring in material for one story. Piere, 12, brought in five stories.

"Piere is just famous in this school because he has the most vivacious personality," McCormick said. He writes a series based on Mac, a dog.

Darneice Rutledge, a middle school special education teacher, said the program, piloted last year to third-, fourth-, and fifth-graders, pushed her students to new levels.

"This is one of the best programs," Rutledge said. "I've been teaching a long time. We had sixth-graders barely writing a sentence. This pushed them over the top."

# THE DETROIT NEWSM

## From Grief at Crary

When two Crary Elementary School staff members died unexpectedly last year while still in their 40s, the staff was traumatized. Brenda Campbell and Ira Reena Adams, teacher's assistants both, were too young and too important to the school to lose.

"We have to do something," thought Rosemarie Kirtz, a paraprofessional. Kirtz looked around the community and noticed too many people neglecting their health.

She applied for grants and won \$15,000 from Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan. Lowe's gave her \$5,000 toward her program – the Crary Connection Community Health Initiative. With the money, Kirtz is buying gym and playground equipment, holding aerobic classes, teaching healthful cooking, and renovating a dilapidated greenhouse at the school.

To kick off the initiative, the school held a "Go Red Tea" in February with the American Heart Association to give the Crary community information on heart disease, the number one killer of African American women.



**Rosemarie Kirtz, a paraprofessional at Crary Elementary School, is leading a community-wide health awareness initiative.**



# DETROIT teacher MAKERS

## From Theory to Action at Spain School

But Kirtz started her mission a few years earlier when she was diagnosed with sarcoidosis, an inflammation of the organs.

“Diet is the key to everything,” she said. The mother of four stopped eating meat, planted a garden at the school and even started bee-keeping. While some of her colleagues resisted her prescription of vegan cheese, they changed their tune when Kirtz started feeding them arugula salads from her garden.

Now with the grant money, Kirtz is determined to grow year round in the greenhouse. The soft-spoken Kirtz has nothing but praise for the district that helped her create the school garden.

“They gave me everything I asked for,” Kirtz said. “They gave me fencing. They gave me soil. They gave me woodchips to get started.

I was shocked.” District personnel volunteered their time for carpentry and landscaping.

“We need to show people how to grow food, how to grow soil,” she said. “If we teach the parents to take care of themselves, they’ll teach the children.”



Professional at Crary, is starting a business campaign.

## Retired Detroit Teacher Turns 101

What’s the secret to living to 101 with a clear mind and a sound body? Don’t look over your shoulder, says retired Detroit teacher Calvin Rhodes, who turned 101 April 15. “Don’t worry about other people’s success,” he said. Rhodes worked as a high school principal in Mississippi before coming to Detroit during the war effort. He built aircraft during the war and returned to teaching in 1962. He retired in 1978 from teaching math at Barbour Middle School. His wife of 71 years, Leonia, passed away in 2004. His only child, Sheila Rhodes, drives him so he can attend every DFT Retirees Chapter meeting. “I don’t look at anyone with disdain,” he said. A deeply religious man, Rhodes said he tried to keep his path in life on the straight and narrow. He was careful with money, saved and paid his bills, but didn’t worship it. Rhodes never went in for the styles and customs of his generation or any other. He kept his own thoughts about things. Mostly he doesn’t judge foolishness but neither does he begrudge people their success. “I consider myself as a citizen, not as an ethnic



group,” he said. “Now we have to determine how we’re going to get along with each other. Obama is right; we have to talk to these people.” His reaction to the election of Barak Obama? “I think it’s great,” he said. “There’s nothing we can say now that we can’t do this or we can’t do that.” Rhodes takes satisfaction in the loyalty of his marriage. He held his wife’s hand as she took her last breath. “She knew I was there,” he said. “She could pass out of this world with a smile.”

## Recycling at Spain School



Front row: Lyrik Eonex, Raynneisha Bridges, DeCarlo Thomas, Nijaia Bradley, Maurice Badgett, Ms. Susan Wahl. Back row: Helen Paige, Ma’kayla Jackson, Kevin Green, India Reeves, Lorian Tompkins, Courtnie Ramsey

By Charlene Uresy

The act of recycling has become second nature to Spain School. This is the second year the school has participated in the recycling project contest, under the direction of teachers Erica Rolack and Susan Wahl. Last year, the school was awarded a \$500 first-place prize. This year, students collected paper, old computers, batteries and plastics. Teachers, students and parents got involved in this project to help the environment and to raise money for Spain School. Participation in this recycling project has brought deeper awareness to the students about taking care of the earth. They are much more conscious about wanting to inherit an earth that is self-sustainable. They want clean air, pure water, and good crop production, so that all people on this magnificent planet can eat sufficiently and live comfortably. Planting the seeds about recycling in the formative years of Spain School students will contribute to achieving these results.



# GRANTS...

## Math and Science

The National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) established the Mathematics Education Trust (MRT) to support improving learning and teaching in the mathematics classroom through grants and scholarships. The purpose of MET's Mathematics Study and Active Professionalism grant is to provide financial support for teachers who are seeking to improve their appreciation and understanding of mathematics through course work toward an advanced degree or taking an active professional approach toward teaching math. The grant may be up to \$24,000 and will be awarded to someone teaching math for three years, with 50 percent of the time in the classroom at the K-6 level. Deadline: May 9, 2009. For more info, visit [www.nctm.org/resources](http://www.nctm.org/resources).

## Math, Science and Tech

Teachers of math, science and technology may receive funding support from The American Institute of Aeronautics (AIAA). The AIAA's mission is to advance the state of aerospace, science and technology in K-12 classrooms. Grants of \$200 are available. Deadline: Ongoing. For more info, visit [www.aiaa.org](http://www.aiaa.org).

## New Skateparks

The Tony Hawk Foundation wants to support the construction of new skateparks for communities with low-income populations. The one-year, one-time grants of \$1,000 to \$25,000 are intended to pay for the design, development, construction and operation of new quality skateboard parks. Deadline: Oct. 1, 2009. For more info, visit [www.tonyhawkfoundation.org](http://www.tonyhawkfoundation.org).

## Excellent Schools

The MetLife Foundation teamed up with the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) to sponsor the MetLife-NASSP Breakthrough Schools project. Middle level and high schools that serve econom-

ically challenged students are eligible to be nominated for these awards. The purpose of the project is to identify, recognize and highlight middle level and high schools that serve large numbers of students living in poverty but still manage to be high achieving or significantly improving student achievement. Grants of \$5,000 are available. Deadline: May 15, 2009. For more info, visit [www.principals.org/breakthrough](http://www.principals.org/breakthrough).

## Child Literacy

The Build-A-Bear Workshop Foundation supports children's literacy and education. Grants of \$1,000 to \$10,000 are available and go to specific programs with measurable outcomes, such as summer reading programs, literacy programs for children with special needs, and early childhood education programs. Deadline: ongoing. For more info, visit [www.buildabear.com](http://www.buildabear.com).

## Gardens for Children

The National Gardening Association's (NGA) Healthy Sprouts Awards support projects that involve creating gardens for children between ages three and 18. The purpose of the awards is to address the problems of hunger and nutrition in the nation's children. Many U.S. children struggle with nutrition problems whether it's obesity or not getting enough to eat. Research has shown the connection between children's food gardens and improved nutrition. Gift certificates worth up to \$500 from Gardener's Supply are available. Deadline: Oct. 17, 2009. For more info, visit [www.kidsgardening.com/healthsprouts.asp](http://www.kidsgardening.com/healthsprouts.asp).

## Do Something

Do Something Awards of up to \$500 are available for young volunteers who are U.S. and Canadian citizens ages 25 and younger. The grants provide \$500 to support youth who recently created a sustainable community action program, project or organization, or who have ideas for such projects to take place in their communities. The application process is online at [www.dosomething.org](http://www.dosomething.org).

# ROLL CALL...

## — Detroit Federation of Teachers Membership Meeting — March 12, 2009

Adult Ed.-Puritan Ctr.	Duffield	Marquette
Bagley	Durfee	Marshall, T.
Barbour	Earhart	Maybury
Barsamian	Edmondson	Mumford
Barton	Ellington	Munger
Bates	Elmdale	Murphy
Beckham	Emerson	Neinas
Birney	Farwell	Nichols
Blackwell	Finney	Noble
Bow	Fisher	Nolan
Boykin	Fleming	Northwest ECC
Boynton	Ford H.S.	Northwestern
Breithaupt	Garvey	Office of Mathematics
Brewer	Glazer	Osborn
Brown	Golightly CTC	Owen
Bunche	Hamilton	Pasteur
Burt	Hancock	Pershing
Burton International	Hardin	Priest
Butzel	Harms	Psychological Services
Campbell	Hanstein	Pulaski
Carleton	Heilmann	Randolph
Carstens	Heilmann Park	Renaissance
Carver	Heilmann Middle	Richard
Cass	Holcomb	Robeson
Cerveney	Holmes, A.L.	Robinson
Children's Museum	Holmes, O.W.	Rutherford
Chrysler	Homebound Teaching	Sampson/Webber
Clark	Houghten	SSW
Clemente	Howe	Schulze
Cleveland	Hutchinson	Scott
Clinton	Jamieson	Sherill
Clippert	Jemison	Southeastern
Coffey	Jordan Elementary	Southwestern
Columbus	Jordan Middle	Spain
Comm. Media Arts	Joyce	Stark
Cooke	Keidan	Stewart
Cooley	Kettering	Taft
Cooley-North	Kettering W.W.	Thirkell
Crary	King	Trombly
Crockett Career Tech	King H.H.	Turning Point
Crosman	Law	Vernor
Davis Aerospace	Lessenger	Vetal
Davison	Lodge Logan	VI/POHI
Day School for Deaf	Loving	Webster
Denby	Longfellow	Western
Detroit Fed. of Teachers	Ludington	West Side Alt.
Detroit International Academy	McColl	Westside Multicultural
Detroit Transition Center-E.	MacDowell	White, J.
Detroit Open	McFarlane	White, K.B.
Dixon	McKinney Day Treatment	Wilkins
Dossin	McNair	Winterhalter
Douglass	Malcolm X	Wright
Drew	Mann	Young

## — Detroit Federation of Teachers Membership Meeting — April 2, 2009

Adult Education	Cass	Hutchins@	Scott
Bagley	Central	McMichael	Sherill
Barbour	Chrysler	Hutchinson	SSW
Barsamian	Clark	Jemison	Southeastern
Barton	Clemente	Jordan	Southwestern
Beard ECC	Cleveland	Keidan	Spain
Beckham	Clinton	Kettering	Stark
Bethune	Clippert	KetteringWW	Stewart
Birney	Glazer	King Elem.	Thirkell
Blackwell	Golightly	King H.S.	Trombly
Brewer	Gompers	Lessenger	Turning Point
Brown Academy	Guyton	Lodge	Van Zile
Bow	Hamilton	Logan	Vernor
Boykin	Hancock	Loving	Vetal
Boynton	Hanstein	Ludington	Wayne
Bunche	Harding	MacDowell	Webster
Burton	Heilmann Park	McFarlane	West Side
Butzel	Holmes, AL	Randolph	West Side
Burt	Holmes, OW	Renaissance	Westside Mult.
Campbell	Holcomb	Retirees	Western
Carleton	Homebound	Richard	Wilkins
Carstens	Houghten	Robeson	Winterhalter
Carver	Howe	Robinson	White
			Young

Please visit the  
New DFT Web site  
[www.DFT231.com](http://www.DFT231.com)



# Why Do I Still Teach?

**W**ith the Detroit Public Schools in a financial takeover and working conditions among the toughest in the country, we are asking Detroit teachers why they still teach. This is one in a series of profiles.

Student council sponsor. Clean-up committee chair. Grant writer. After-school tutor. Summer school teacher. Cinco de Mayo parade organizer. Boys and girls scouts sponsor.

Second-grade teacher Estherline Mack does it all.

Her principal told her: Don't say yes to anything else. Say no. Say no.

But Mack has been saying yes for 28

years at Bennett Elementary School on the southwest side. Why?

"Because it's good for the school," says Mack. "It's good for our children."

Mack's classroom is dripping with projects hanging from the ceiling, taped to the walls, hung up by clothes wire. The kids finished the dinosaur and fossil unit. Now they're doing a unit on courage. Her students know how Mack ends the day – with her book felled over her head, snoring.

She beats up the day. And she wouldn't have it any other way.

"I'm a servant," Mack says. "I'm serving these kids and their parents." Even though the majority of her parents can't speak English, they get the message that



**Bennett teacher Estherline Mack still loves teaching after 28 years.**

the dinosaur diorama must be done with the family at home. Dozens of dioramas return to the classroom, one more extravagant than the other. How did she get the parents so involved?

"I told them this was very, very important," Mack said. "And they stepped up to the plate." Teaching is honorable work, Mack says.

"If you are not willing to be a server, this job is not for you. All of your other issues, just drop them at the back door when you come in."

"I love doing what I do. I feel it's a ministry. I'm very spiritual and I understand my calling on this planet. My calling is helping other achieve. It's honorable if you believe you're helping others."

## School Social Workers Are a Vital Link

By Kim Travis Ewing  
SSW Chapter Chair



School social workers are uniquely trained to provide services for the emotionally impaired, autistic, and children with behavior disorders, as well as intervention for traumatic events, suicide and school violence.

School social workers provide services for students who face enormous challenges like poverty, discrimination, abuse, addiction, grief and loss.

School social workers play a central role in creating partnerships with parents and the community to ensure academic success. Consequently, they are vital members of the school team.

To become a school social worker, one must have a master's degree from a graduate school of social work, 500 or more hours of a supervised practicum, 30 hours of post graduate work, two years of professional social work experience, a current license by the State of Michigan, and training in psychological testing and behavior disorders in children.

The need for school social workers is becoming greater because antisocial behavior is increasing and it directly hinders academic achievement. Here are some numbers:

- 4 million youth suffer from a major mental illness.
- One in 10 children and adolescents has a mental illness severe enough to cause some level of impairment. Yet, only one in five receive mental health services.
- In Michigan, children are grossly underserved by the public mental health system. In 2005, of the 284,000 children in Michigan with serious emotional disturbances, fewer than 38,000 received treatment.

A new state report details how Michigan's long economic slump has pushed more children into poverty – increasing from 14 percent in 2000 to 19 percent in 2007.

The good news is that the School Social Work Department has the ability to provide intervention for what ails our children's mental health. We can intervene in times of crisis and deploy a crisis team in record time. We provide our traditional services and add new ones whenever we see a need. Our Lenscrafters partnership, for example, provided free eye exams and glasses to over 15,000 kids since 1999.

The message from our department is this: Times are very, very hard in Detroit. Your school social workers are here to see our kids through these times to a healthy and productive tomorrow.

## Keiden Center Teacher Saves Student's Life

**J**esus Lewis isn't the kind of kid who doesn't talk. So when he went to his teacher with tears streaming down his face on March 18, she asked what happened. But nothing came out.

That's odd, thought Marsha Chatman, a 26-year teacher. "That's very unusual because he's very talkative," said Chatman, who teaches at Keidan Special Education Center on the west side.

"Did someone hit you?" Chatman asked. But Jesus said nothing.

Jesus, 14, was choking. Though Chatman had learned CPR, she never thought she'd have to use it. Chatman pushed the emergency button in the classroom.

"I knew it takes four to six minutes before the brain dies without oxygen," she said. So Chatman did the Heimlich maneuver.

"Nothing happened, nothing happened,

nothing happened," she said. Chatman opened Jesus' mouth, put her finger down his throat and tried to fish out the obstruction. There was nothing.



She did the Heimlich again and again. This time a bagel piece came flying out.

"It popped like a cork," she said. "It flew out of his mouth and over by the front door." Then Chatman calmed the panicked Jesus.

"He said, 'You're my hero. We'll be best friends forever.'" In fact, Chatman will receive the Heroism Award on May 7 from

the Learning for Life program of the Detroit Area Council for the Boy Scouts of America.

When he really considered it, Jesus said, "I can't die now."

"Why can't you die?" Chatman asked.

"I got to meet Barak Obama, the president."



# Detroit Nurses Aim to Reduce Obesity, Diabetes

The numbers are scary. While there are almost 24 million diabetics in the U.S., there are 57 million pre-diabetics.

“I would say at least 40 percent of the patients I see every day are overweight or obese,” says Dr. Stacey Leatherwood, a pediatrician at Henry Ford Health Systems. “I’m seeing a lot, a lot of high blood pressure. I’m seeing a lot of high cholesterol.”

In children, that is.

And diabetes is the little sister right behind the obesity. To start to conquer this epidemic in Detroit children, the DPS Office of Primary Education partnered with Henry Ford Health System on April 7 to hold the first Childhood Diabetes and Obesity Conference at Henry Ford Hospital.

Teams of pediatricians, nurses and educators convened to start the war on obesity.

“Prevention, not intervention,” was the



Hilda Carter, DPS nutrition coordinator, Barbara Maddox, parent involvement coordinator, and Cynthia Shore-Banks, school nurse.

motto. Parent and DPS teacher Vanessa Aldridge told how her daughter was diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes. The family learned to inject her with insulin. Then Jennifer learned how to inject herself, first in her legs, then arms, then stomach. After the story, prevention certainly sounded more appealing.

Henry Ford is promoting its new 5-2-1-0 education program: Five servings of fruits and vegetables a day, limit children’s screen time (TV, computer, video games) to two hours a day, one hour of exercise, and zero sweetened drinks.

Judy Haefner, a certified nurse practitioner, told parents to take back the house, impose limits on their children, and know the difference between needs and privileges. Screen time and snacks are not needs.

“Parents, you are smarter than your kids,” Haefner said. “Out-think them.”

Pamela Milan, a diabetes expert who has operated diabetes camps for children for 18 years, said fast food is a huge culprit. A Value Meal at McDonalds, for example, totals 1,700 calories – the amount of calories a child should consume in an entire day.

Milan said schools can better reduce using sugar treats for birthday and holiday celebrations if they do it as a school-wide policy.

“You have 30 children and 30 birthdays and 30 opportunities for snacks,” Milan said. “When you multiply it by 30, it’s not so occasional.”

Portion size, nutritional food, and exercise are the proven fighters of obesity and diabetes, the experts said. And don’t be fooled by what kids like.

“Kids are newphobic,” said Milan. “They don’t like new things.” She said it takes seven to 10 tries before a child likes a new food. So keep trying to feed kids good food.

Great Health Websites for Teachers

Diabetes.com

MyPyramid.gov

Letsgo.org

Nutritionexplorations.com/kids

Kidshealth.org

Dole5aday.com

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.

MAY

4

Counselors Chapter Meeting, 4:00 p.m.

4

African-Centered Education Chapter, 4:30 p.m.

7

Executive Board Meeting, 4:30 p.m.

11

School Social Workers Meeting, 3:45 p.m.

14

General Membership Meeting, 4:30 p.m.

19

Retirees Chapter Meeting, 11:30 a.m.

19

Westside closing schools forum, 4:30-6 a.m.

20

Attendance Officers Staff Meeting, 3:00-4:00 p.m.

21

Eastside closing schools forum, 4:30-6 a.m.

21

Educational Technicians Chapter, 4:15 p.m.

26

Nurses Chapter Meeting, 4:30 p.m.

JUNE

1

Executive Board Meeting, 4:30 p.m.

4

General Membership Meeting, 4:30 p.m.

5

Building Representatives Dinner at the Doubletree Hotel, 4:30 p.m.

8

School Social Workers, 3:45 p.m.

12

Last Day for Teachers

LEGISLATIVE TOWN HALL MEETING

A photograph showing a group of people, including legislators and members, seated around a long table during a town hall meeting. Some are looking towards the camera, while others are looking towards the right. There are water bottles and microphones on the table.

AFT Michigan sponsored a series of “Mini Lobby Days” or town hall style meetings between members and legislators in specific geographic areas in March. The Detroit area legislators attended a town hall meeting at the DFT on March 30. Pictured above are Detroit area legislators taking questions and concerns from members.