



More Building Reps Dinner Photos...

...inside this edition

The **Detroit Teacher**

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Teacher Layoffs Jump from 300 to 800

To deal with an unprecedented budget shortfall, the Detroit Board of Education voted June 30 to make severe cuts, including the layoffs of 518 teachers. These layoffs are in addition to the 300 teachers laid off in April.

District officials said they are dealing with a \$400 million deficit. They also expect to see a decrease in enrollment again this year. Enrollment in the district continues to drop by about 10,000 students a year.

This year the district is expected to fall below 100,000 students, which puts its First Class status into jeopardy. Because of this status the state has kept a cap on the number of charter schools allowed in Detroit.

DFT President Virginia Cantrell has called on state officials to classify the largest district in Michigan as First Class, regardless of whether it falls below 100,000. The measure has passed the state House and is in the state Senate.

"I have many concerns but a major concern is whether the state will allow the flood gates to open to more charter schools," Cantrell said. "That would be disastrous."

Approximately 40,000 former Detroit Public Schools students have enrolled in charter schools since they were first allowed. A report on several of those charter schools shows that Detroit Public School students outperformed charter school students on standardized tests.

Cantrell urged the board at several public meetings not to make cuts to the classroom.

"We've got to preserve instruction," Cantrell said. "We have got to stop putting the budget problems on the backs of teachers."

In addition to the layoff of teachers, the

2008-2009 budget calls for the layoffs of 900 non-instructional and central office staff. The budget also calls for reducing the funds for supplies, services, travel and equipment.

District officials said it will take two years to accomplish the cuts needed to reduce this deficit. They said they will reconsider school closings for August 2009.



DFT members held a rally June 19 at the Detroit Public Schools Board of Education meeting. They protested the large-scale layoffs of teachers to balance a projected budget shortfall.

Facts on Layoffs

Q: What areas were hit by the layoff notices?

A: Of the original 300 teachers laid off, about half of the notices went to home-room teachers (150), with the rest going to art teachers (12), business teachers (18), English teachers (40), family consumer science teachers (2), health/physical education teachers (16), social studies teachers (45), and music teachers (15). The areas

impacted by the additional 500 layoffs was not known at press time.

Q: Are layoffs based on total time I have worked for the district or total time I have worked in the DFT bargaining unit?

A: The district determines the disciplines to be cut. Within those disciplines, layoffs are based on system-wide seniority in the DFT bargaining unit. Your step level

on the pay scale is not necessarily the same as your seniority in the DFT.

Q: What is bumping?

A: Bumping is a procedure used to avoid layoffs. Before you can bump (claim the job of another teacher), you must be certified to teach in that area and have more system-wide seniority than the teacher with the least seniority in the discipline.

Q: I believe my name was mistakenly placed on the list. What should I do?

A: Call the Human Resources Office at

313-873-7100, or call the DFT at 313-875-3500 and speak with the Labor Relations Administrator for your school.

Q: Will I qualify for unemployment benefits if I do not apply for a position as a substitute teacher?

A: The DPS will not contest your eligibility. However, the State of Michigan determines eligibility.

Q: If I turn down a job as a substitute in the Detroit district, can I still return with the same seniority?

See LAYOFFS on Page 2

Layoffs Cast Shadow on District

At a June 30 meeting, the Board of Education announced the layoffs of 818 teachers to balance a potential \$400 million deficit. This is most unfortunate to us as the critical people in the schools, and to our union, which continues to decline in membership.



Virginia Cantrell

President's Report

What's more, the latest 500 layoffs are in addition to 300 made in April. We felt that the number of retirements would offset those 300 layoffs. But that will not happen now.

There's no way around it. These are tough times for Detroit teachers, and tough times will be here for at least two years

while the district tries to dig out from this very deep hole.

I am concerned with the district's inability to project health and stability to the outside world, and to those of us who have invested our lives here. While Superintendent Connie Calloway has been here only a year, the board has been in charge for three years and must be held accountable. These board members must put measures in place to make the budget sound once and for all.

This union will continue to work very hard to get the district to understand that we are looking at no teacher layoffs. The district has made a commitment to hold fast to contractual class size. We will hold the district's feet to the fire.

Tough times are here but, working together, we must resolve to stay strong as a union. I have been working hard on two major issues. I have met with Irma Clark-Coleman, Coleman Young II, Betty Cook-Scott and Senator Carl Levin.

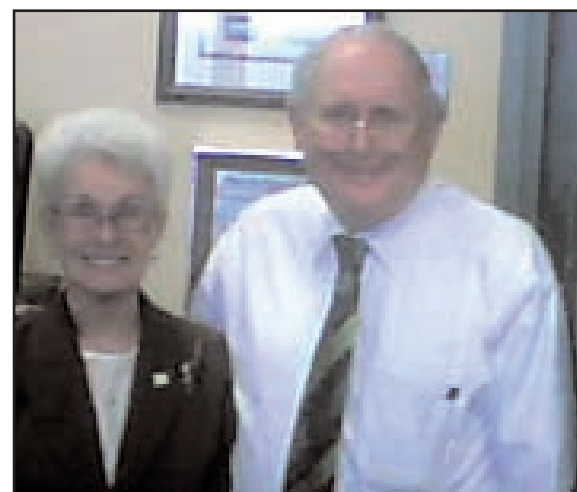
My concern with state officials is our

designation as a First Class district. That designation stands for our district as long as it maintains 100,000 students.

Enrollment is sure to dip below 100,000 this year. I am urging state officials to make the largest district in Michigan a First Class district. That idea has passed the state House but is sitting in the state Senate. We will continue to work on that cause.

On another front, some people have suggested that a new administration may take up the cause of tweaking the disastrous No Child Left Behind law. While speaking at length with Sen. Levin about NCLB, I said that the law does not need a nip and tuck. It needs to be canned.

NCLB has been given years to show its true colors. It's punitive, it's anti-public education, it aligns all teaching with testing, and it hasn't proven to raise the learning and critical thinking skills of students.



DFT President Virginia Cantrell met with U.S. Senator Carl Levin to discuss NCLB.

In my opinion there's only one thing the new administration should say about NCLB:

So long, good bye, it has not been good to know you. If we never saw you again, it would be too soon!

Facts on DFT Layoffs

LAYOFFS, from Page 1

A: Yes, as a laid-off teacher, you return with the seniority you accrued before leaving.

Q: Will I qualify for unemployment benefits if I turn down a position as a substitute teacher?

A: According to the Michigan Unemployment Insurance Agency, if you committed to accepting a position as a substitute, then declined that job after it was actually offered by the district, you will forfeit your unemployment compensation benefits. By initially agreeing to accept the position when it was offered, you agreed to accept a "gainful employment" opportunity. If you have additional questions, contact the agency hotline at 1-800-638-3995.

Q: If I'm laid off, how long will my health insurance last?

A: The district will pay health, dental and life insurance benefits through Oct. 5, 2008.

Q: What is the difference between seniority, service time and pay level?

A: Seniority is the total accumulated service and/or permanent assignment service you have in the DFT bargaining unit in any DPS school since your most recent date of appointment. Seniority for DFT members carries from one job classification to another when a transfer in job classification occurs – i.e. from school social worker to teacher. (See the contract: page 31, Article D, paragraphs 1 and 2).

Service Time is the number of years you have worked for a public school system in the State of Michigan regardless of the position. Service time is used in determining the amount of your pension from the retirement system.

Salary Level is the pay step upon which your pay is based. New teachers can receive salary-step credit for teaching in another district, serving in the military, or working 180 days in substitute service in the DPS.

Q: My principal doesn't want to lose me. Can my school administrator save my job, even though I received a lay-off notice?

A: No. Your employer is the Detroit Public School district, not the school where you work. To prevent favoritism, layoffs are based on your seniority in the entire DFT bargaining unit. Individual principals cannot circumvent the lay-off procedures.

Q: Since Building Reps get Super Seniority, can I avoid being laid off by becoming a Building Rep?

A: No. Building Reps shall be considered by reason of their position to have the top seniority within their building and within their discipline for the purpose of transfer and assignment of duties. Super Seniority does not apply to layoffs.

Autistic Students Set Up Flower Shop

It's the small things in life that matter.

For Cary Watkins, it's the really, really small things.

Watkins is a Cooley North Wing teacher of autistic children functioning at a very low level. Three of her six students are in diapers. None speak.

"They like to do the same things over and over," Watkins says. But each of her students has different abilities and preferences.

To reach her students and get them to learn new skills, Watkins uses a host of crafts. Making rag rugs, for example, involves great repetitive tasks like tearing fabric into strips and needling thread in and out.

Two years ago, Watkins started a flower shop in her class, making arrangements for Mother's Day or corsages for proms. It involves cutting and de-leafing stems, and putting the buds in water buckets. And with almost 3,000 florists in Michigan, it's a great possibility for a job for her students.

Mario, a high achiever, can do all of those tasks. Albert, however, is learning to wash his hands.

"No two snowflakes are alike," says Mary Fussell, an art therapist who works with the students when she rotates between schools. The disparities and abilities are especially true for autistic children.

Most of Watkins students can not perform two steps in a task. For many teachers, this pace of growth would bring few rewards. Not so for Watkins.

"Are you kidding me?" she says. "This is the most fun. I taught Mario

how to make coffee." Watkins pulls out a six-step visual chart that Mario uses every morning.

"For a lot of us, it's internal," says Fussell. "It's not about the paycheck."

One day, Watkins saw huge progress: two students were working together. Albert and Justin were bobbing back and forth. One was tearing off the leaves and one was putting them in a box.

Watkins recognizes that she is a rare bird. "Most teachers wouldn't take on this population," she said. Watkins said she would never trade special ed for regular ed. In fact, "I wouldn't trade it for a higher ability level."



Cary Watkins is working with one of her students in the classroom flower shop.

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2008 DFT Building Reps Dinner

More than 150 DFT Building Representatives and union members came together June 13 to enjoy an evening of relaxing, reconnecting and dining with friends at the 24th annual DFT Building Representatives Appreciation Dinner at the Doubletree Hotel in Detroit.

“You are the leaders in the struggle to protect our union rights,” DFT President Virginia Cantrell said. “In these times, that is not an easy job. This year has been truly, truly challenging. We once again have layoffs, and we are undergoing reconstruction of schools.”



President Cantrell at the podium addressing the audience.

Cantrell praised the building reps and members for teaching all day, and tending to families too. She said building reps act as counselors, confidants, cheerleaders and crusaders for their DFT brothers and sisters.

Building Reps seldom receive the recognition they deserve and that is why the

union holds the dinner in their honor.

“This is your night,” Cantrell said. “It will be short on speeches and long on fun.”



Judith Harper peruses the delectable spread



Heritage Optical's George Barnes Jr. leads contestants in "Name that Tune with a Twist."



Seated left to right: Stacie Lewis, Dianne Browne and Regina Fields-Washington. Standing left to right: James Britton and Robert M. Bennett.



Sharon Guyton-Rogers and Samele Ambrose enjoy a laugh.

2008 DFT Building Reps Dinner



Dyan Jenkins-Ali of Delta Dental with Samele Ambrose and David Scott of Delta Dental.



Keisha Allen, Dorian Evans, Glenda Booker, Mershira Oliver and Cynthia Pearson-Matthews.



Building Reps Sherry Samuel and Gina Porter.



DFT President Virginia Cantrell talks with Melaine Tillman and Miranda Washington.



Timothy Michalak chats with Doris Falherty.



DFT financial analyst/retirement counselor Patrick Falcusan chats with Daniel Roelant and Curtis Dunlap.

2008 DFT Building Reps Dinner



The dinner planning committee: Curtis Dunlap, Mershira Oliver, Samele Ambrose, Keisha Allen, Glenda Booker, Betty Moore and Sandra Ambrose.



Sharon Brock of Blue Cross presents a raffle gift to Diane Smith with DFT President Virginia Cantrell.



Contestants of "Name that Tune": Pamela McIntosh, Delisle Horton-Willis, Sandra Hughes and Andrea Payne.

DFT Recommendations

Michigan House of Representatives

District	Party	Candidate Name	District	Party	Candidate Name	District	Party	Candidate Name	District	Party	Candidate Name
1	D	Timothy Bledsoe	23	D	Jimmy Beaubien	52	D	Pam Byrnes	83	D	John Espinoza
2	D	Lamar Lemmons	24	D	Sarah Roberts	53	D	Rebeka Warren	84	D	Terry Brown
3	D	Bettie Scott	25	D	Jon Switalski	54	D	Alma Smith	85	D	Judy Ford
4	D	Coleman Young	26	D	Marie Donigan	55	D	Kathy Angerer	86	R	Dave Mildenbrand
5	D	Bert Johnson	27	D	Ellen Cogen	56	D	Kate Ebli	87		No Endorsement
6	D	Brian White	28	D	Lesia Liss	57	D	No Endorsement	88		No Endorsement
7	D	Steven Butler*	29	D	Tim Melton	58	D	Jean Anne Kennedy	89		No Endorsement
7	D	Michelle Gibson*	30	R	Tory Rocca	59	D	Carol Higgins	90		No Endorsement
7	D	David Points*	31	D	Fred Miller	60	D	Robert Jones	91	D	Mary Vealentine
7	D	Carol Weaver*	32	D	Jennifer Haase	61	D	Julie Rogers	92	D	Doug Bennett
7	D	Al Williams*	33		No Endorsement	62	D	Tim Nendorf	93		No Endorsement
7	D	Jimmy Womack*	34	D	Woodrow Stanley	63	D	Phyllis Smith	94	D	Bob Blaine
8	D	George Cushingberry	35	D	Vincent Gregory	64	D	Martin Griffin	95	D	Andy Coulouris
9	D	Shanelle Jackson	36		No Endorsement	65	D	Mike Simpson	96	D	Jeff Mayes
10	D	Gabe Leland	37	D	Vicki Barnett	66		No Endorsement	97		No Endorsement
11	D	Jeanean Bryant*	38		No Endorsement	67	D	Barb Byrum	98	D	Garnet Lewis
11	D	Gary Pollard	39	D	Lisa Brown	68	D	Joan Buaer	99		No Endorsement
12	D	Denise Hearn*	40		No Endorsement	69	D	Mark Meadows	100		No Endorsement
12	D	Carl Ramsey*	41		No Endorsement	70	D	Mike Huckleberry	101	D	Dan Scripps
13	D	John Harris	42	D	Harold Haugh	71	D	Mark Eagle	102		No Endorsement
14	D	Ed Clemente	43	D	Scott Hudson	72		No Endorsement	103	D	Joel Sheltroun
15	D	Gino Polidori	44		No Endorsement	73	D	Bruce Hawley	104		No Endorsement
16	D	Bob Constan	45		No Endorsement	74		No Endorsement	105		No Endorsement
17	D	Andy Dillon	46	R	James Marleau	75	D	Robert Dean	106	D	Andy Neumann
18	D	Richard LeBlanc	47		No Endorsement	76	D	Roy Schmidt	107	D	Gary McDowell
19		No Endorsement	48	D	Richard Hammel	77		No Endorsement	108		No Endorsement
20	D	Marc Corriveau	49	D	Lee Gonzales	78	D	Judy Truesell	109	D	Steven Lindberg
21	D	Dian Slavens	50	D	Ted Hammon	79		No Endorsement	110	D	Michael Lahti
22		No Endorsement	51		No Endorsement	80		No Endorsement			
						81		No Endorsement			
						82	D	Bill Marquardt			

* Indicates candidates that have been deemed Qualified by the DFT.

AFT Recommendations

U.S. Senate and House

U.S. SENATE

Party
D

Candidate Name
Carl Levin

CONGRESSIONAL CANDIDATES

District	Party	Candidate Name
1	D	Bart Stupak
2		No Endorsement
3		No Endorsement
4		No Endorsement
5	D	Dale Kilkee
6		No Endorsement
7	D	Mark Shauer
8		No Endorsement
9	D	Gary Peters
10		No Endorsement
11		No Endorsement
12	D	Sander Levin
13	D	Carolyn Cheeks Kilpatrick
14	D	John Conyers, Jr.
15	D	John Dingell

AFT Michigan Members Run for Local Office

Charlie Robinson, Detroit Federation of Teachers (retired)
Oakland County Commissioner District 21

Wendy Readous, Wayne County
Community College Federation of Teachers
36th District Court Judge (Wayne County)

John Olekszyk, chairperson, AFT Michigan Retiree Network; retired
president, Roseville Federation of Teachers
Macomb County Charter Commission District 6

Kenneth Reid, president, Macomb ISD Federation of Teachers
Macomb County Charter Commission District 12




PRIMARY ELECTION ON AUGUST 5, 2008

REGISTER AND VOTE