

It's time TO GET REAL

For years, the students and educators in Detroit's public schools have been short-changed, disrespected and robbed of the resources they need to succeed. The new tentative agreement between the Detroit Federation of Teachers and the school district gives educators some gains and puts us in a position to fight for more. The agreement doesn't give us everything we want and deserve right now, but it's time to **get real**.

It's time to face the financial realities.

We know members want the restoration of the 10 percent, immediate repayment of TIP and a raise. We want that, too. But the **reality** is:

- The cost of restoring the 10 percent is **\$28 million** for teachers, **\$43 million** for all school employees;
- The cost of repaying TIP is **\$27 million**; and
- The cost of a permanent raise is **\$2.5 million per 1 percent**.

During the last legislative session Lansing lawmakers—once again—ripped off Detroit's schools, kids and educators. They left us in the lurch. They provided \$615 million, not in a lump sum, but spread out over seven to 10 years. The lion-share of that money went—right off the top—to pay back the debt incurred by the state to the old Detroit Public Schools. The amount left to the “new” district, after loan repayment to the old, was **\$25 million**. That \$25 million had to be stretched to pay for:

- Facilities updates and repairs;
- Current operating costs to open schools for the 2016-17 academic year;
- Curriculum; and
- Existing salaries.

That left precious little in the district's coffers for increases. Those were the financial realities our union negotiators faced at the bargaining table. We fought hard to get the district to be creative, to rearrange priorities and to change the way money is spent.

We knew our members need, want and deserve money now. While it's not nearly enough, the reality is the new agreement provides that.

It's time to face the political realities.

The chronic under-funding of public education in Detroit by legislators in Lansing is deliberate, discriminatory and despicable. The reality is Republican lawmakers in the Michigan House made one thing clear: They value support from their billionaire backers over providing the supports our schools, students and educators deserve. They refuse to do what's right for Detroit's kids and educators.

If given the chance, they would hand Detroit's public schools over to charter corporations who place profits above the needs of students and educators. Educators, standing together with colleagues in our union, are what's standing in the way.

It's time to get real!

This tentative agreement represents the best possible deal for educators—given the current financial and political realities. Don't forget, Judge Steven Rhodes is the emergency manager of the school district. The law says he can **throw out the gains** we have negotiated for members, **impose a contract** on us and **give us absolutely nothing**.

It's time for us to get real about where we are and commit to the work of moving forward. The reality is, the best way to move forward is to:

- **Vote to ratify the tentative agreement;**
- Vote on Nov. 8 to flip the seats in the Michigan House; and
- Vote on Nov. 8 to elect members to the new school board who will stand with Detroit's students and educators.
- **Sign up today to recommit to our union and the fight for a strong voice for educators (join.aft.org).**



Vote YES on the tentative agreement!