

DFT Wins Major Arbitration

An arbitrator has ruled that approximately 82 DFT members who were terminated by the school district are entitled to receive their Termination Incentive Plan (TIP) reimbursement.

The 82 members will get the \$9,000 they loaned the district. The decision is final and binding and the arbitrator ordered the affected members to be paid in 30 days. Had the membership not approved the contract last year, the district would have the right to appeal and an ultimate victory and payments to members would be delayed indefinitely.

The DFT filed a grievance after the district said it didn't owe members who were terminated. The union maintained that the TIP money was simply a loan by its employees to be repaid when they left the district.

The union agreed to the TIP in the 2009 contract in order to help the district's deficit and avoid a 10 percent pay cut.

The DFT tried to persuade the district to pay the members but the district refused, despite former DPS Emergency Financial Manager Robert Bobb testifying for the DFT. Bobb told Arbitrator David Tanzman that he never meant to exclude anyone who left the district from their TIP money.

"The TIP account was never intended to be an unretrievable contribution to the district," Tanzman wrote in his opinion. "It was in effect a loan."

The original grievance was filed by DFT President Keith Johnson on behalf of the teachers, most of whom were terminated due to expired certificates, not violations of district policies. They were told by DPS they were not entitled to their TIP money because they did not retire or resign.

"It was never negotiated or agreed that terminated employees would not receive their TIP money back, and the arbitrator

agreed," Johnson said.

In addition, the arbitrator chastised the district for imposing "double jeopardy." In other words, the district penalized the members twice, by taking their jobs and then taking the money that would help

them address their financial crisis.

"While we had no doubt we would prevail," Johnson said, "it was extremely gratifying for the arbitrator to acknowledge the sacrifice our members made in order help the district return to solvency."

DFT Pushes College Readiness



It's not always enough to teach high school students the skills to pull in good grades and score high on the ACT. They have to think about a college that suits their interests, personality, and wallet.

So DFT leaders secured a program from the American Federation of Teachers to help Detroit Public School juniors find colleges that are invested in student success. Edna Reaves, DFT executive vice president, worked to get 13,000 booklets to Detroit juniors to get them on the path to college readiness.

Several students at Cody High School with the help of counselor Tracey Penick even changed their major when they went through the program and the booklet "Which college is right for you?"

"I thought I wanted to be a doctor, but now I'm not sure," said a Cody junior. Studies show a high rate of urban students taking on debt yet leaving college before getting a degree. The DFT is trying to help high school students choose a college that fits in the beginning with their interests, affordability, and graduation rates.

"I chose a college that was not right for me," DFT executive vice president Edna Reaves told the students. "I don't want you to make the same mistake." Reaves started at Northwood Institute in Midland and then transferred to Eastern Michigan University.

All of these efforts, Reaves said, are the DFT's effort to reclaim the promise of public education.

DFT'S ARBITRATION VICTORY IS SATISFYING BUT FRUSTRATING

Once again the DFT scored a major victory against DPS. An arbitrator ruled emphatically that the district did not have the right to withhold Termination Incentive Plan (TIP) reimbursement to DFT members who were terminated, regardless of the reason for the termination.

President's Report



**Keith
Johnson**

This latest victory continues a pattern of successful challenges by the DFT to actions the district has taken against our members, whether it was a violation of the contract or violations of labor laws.

Don't get me wrong, I certainly am not complaining about continuing to defeat DPS when our members' rights are violated. We continue to demonstrate our strength and viability as a union. We continue to

demonstrate that written agreements are enforceable and we will enforce them. We continue to demonstrate that Emergency Manager or not, DPS will not do whatever it wants to our members when there is written word to the contrary.

The pervasive attitude of distrust, indignity, and arrogance in the district's labor department is costly to DPS and DFT. Just in recent times we have defeated DPS on issues such as: issuing layoff notices long after the deadline, improper layoffs, paying teachers as substitutes when they were in vacancies for which they were certified, unjust discipline, imposing a change in salary and working conditions not negotiated. And of course we defeated the district on the flawed and fraudulent teacher evaluations that resulted in 422 members getting laid off.

Too often the only time DPS wants to enforce the contract is when it works against our members. Even more frustrating is when the district attempts to find justification for their violations. Or, when there are monetary awards, DPS has tried to offer settlements of 50 cents on the dollar. This is an admission of guilt but a re-

luctance to make members whole.

While it is true the state legislature has eliminated many of the subjects of bargaining, the Public Employees Relations Act (PERA) still provides the DFT and other teacher unions with the enforcement power we need to protect the rights of those we represent.

Neither the legislature nor the district will deter us from our duty to effectively and decisively represent and protect the rights of our members.

I write this not to gloat over our consistent victories but in the hope DPS will eventually understand that where we come from, our word is our bond. We hope the district will honor their word and, when called on, take corrective action rather than engaging in unwinnable battles.

When it comes to doing right by our members, we will continue to emphatically protect and enforce the rights of our membership. Resistance is futile.



THE DETROIT
teacher

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Editor — Margaret Weertz
mweertz@dft231.com
313-875-6776

Updates . . .

Cellist Yo-Yo Ma Visits Spain School

World renowned cellist Yo-Yo Ma brought his extraordinary talent to Detroit and played with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra April 9. The next day he stopped at Spain School to improvise with students in the classrooms of teachers Kimberly Legreair and Kathy Aaron.

Accompanying Ma was a keyboardist and bagpipe player, a ballet dancer, an impressionist dancer and a violinist. They collaborated with students to show the art of improvising and creating art.

"When I collaborate," Ma told the students, "I don't feel scared. I can rely on other people."

Ma and ballet dancer Damian Woetzel founded a youth program with the Aspen Institute Arts Program. They reach out to schools and teach students to take risks, even make mistakes, and get comfortable with things not working out the first time.

Fourth-grader Kurniecia Jackson smiled watching the action. Ma, a child prodigy who played for Presidents Dwight Eisenhower and John Kennedy when he was five-years-old, relished letting loose with the students. He wanted to underscore the importance of risk and creativity.

"That's part of learning, to ask the question," Ma said. "It's not to get the right question, it's to become curious."

Ma said he was impressed with Spain's orchestra and the work in the classrooms. Principal Ron Alexander said it was a great day at Spain with Ma and his entourage spending several hours working with students.

"Walking the halls and gracing our stage is Yo-Yo Ma," Alexander said.

"It doesn't get any better than this."



Detroit Public Schools Has a New Payroll Reporting System

By Edna Reaves,
Executive Vice President

The district recently launched its upgraded PeopleSoft payroll reporting system. Many of our members have not noticed the change because secretaries have worked laboriously with limited training to make sure they have reported your time correctly. I commend all the members of the Detroit Association of Educational Office Employees for their diligence in this matter.

Many of them formed teams and support systems with each other to ensure that their coworkers' time was reported correctly. There were a few glitches, but because of DAEOE's team work, errors were minimal.

Although many of the changes to the system are designed to enhance the functionality of the payroll reporting system, I am concerned about the impact on our substitute teachers. Substitute teachers should monitor their self service accounts weekly.

Time reporting for substitute teachers is tied to Subfinder. When you accept your assignment, it should post in PeopleSoft immediately. But the principal of your reporting school must approve your time to verify that you actually worked in that building on a given day.

What happens when you have a problem with your pay? The first step is to check with the principal in your building. The principals approve the time the payroll secretary enters. If there is a problem at the building level, the principal or payroll secretary can correct the error directly in PeopleSoft and the payroll department will conduct an audit. Once everything has been updated correctly, most checks can be issued within two to three days.

If you have a problem or face resistance, feel free to contact the DFT office for assistance.

You should be able to access PeopleSoft using the same login information as your DPS mail system.

I encourage everyone to log onto PeopleSoft and browse through the features. You can view and print your pay advice, compensation history and voluntary deductions. You can check your direct deposit information, see your W-2 statement, and access a number of other features.

I would advise you to get acquainted with the system and use it to keep your personal information updated.



Edna Reaves

THE DETROIT teacher NEWSMAKERS



Drew Students Show Can-Do Spirit

At Drew Transition Center, a disability awareness workshop is set apart from others. All the student presenters have disabilities themselves. The workshop participants experience people with disabilities, firsthand, while other similar programs have presenters without disabilities talk about people with disabilities. The student presenters share their experiences about being disabled, such as being bullied, and daily life.

On March 14, the Drew students presented their workshop to Nicole Helm's third-grade class at Mackenzie K-8 School. The third-graders learned about people with different disabilities, such as developmental disabilities, sensory impairments, and physical disabilities.

The third-graders also interacted with Drew student presenters, and learned a few American Sign Language signs. The purpose of this workshop is to teach students acceptance of people with disabilities, as well as empower the Drew student presenters to advocate for themselves and improve their communication skills.

This workshop is available to all DPS students in grades 3-5. Please contact Michael Domzalski, michael.domzalski@detroitk12.org, or call 313-873-6880 for more information, or to schedule a workshop.

Carver Hosts Green Eggs and Ham Jam

Carver S.T.E.M. Academy let off a little steam on March 14 and celebrated a "Green Eggs and Ham Jam." Staff members were encouraged to dress up like book characters and the students sported green gear to celebrate the day.



Western High Represents Detroit at World Quest

Western International High School sophomores Nicole Gonzalez, Sue'nisha Driver and Malik Ochoa represented Detroit at the 2014 Academic Worldquest at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C., on April 26.

The students competed with 45 other four-member high school teams from throughout the country. Sponsored by the World Affairs Council of Detroit, they answered questions on a wide range of topics, including global health, geography and cyber security.

The WACD encourages Detroit-area high school students and teachers to apply to next year's competition. For more information, send an email to Dellashon Di Cresce at del-lashon@globaldetroit.org

THE DETROIT teacher NEWSMAKERS



Western High School students at the Washington Monument.



Participants attended a reception at the Embassy of Singapore. Pictured (from left) are Western teacher William Bowles, Sue'nisha Driver, Ambassador to Singapore Ashok Kumar Mirpuri, Nicole Gonzalez and Malik Ochoa.



Western students Sue'nisha Driver, Malik Ochoa and Nicole Gonzalez before the competition.

THE DETROIT teacher NEWSMAKERS

Buon Viaggio DPS Students!

Four hard-working Detroit students and Cass Tech AP English Literature teacher Shar Willis are heading to Rome, Milan, Florence and Venice this summer on a study abroad program.



Shar Willis

The students, two from Cass Tech High School and two from Martin Luther King High School, are the winners of an intense study and writing contest, called the Palazzo Strozzi Renaissance Award. The award includes a free trip to study humanism and the Renaissance in Italy.

They were presented the award at a reception at Breithaupt Career and Technical Center on April 15.

"I'm excited about Venice because of the boats," said Edith Conn, a winner from Cass Tech. The other winners are

Derrick Shaw and Montia Thompson, juniors from MLK, and Jade Rhodes, from Cass.



Derrick Shaw, Montia Thompson, Mario Calvo-Platero, Edith Conn, and Jade Rhodes

"This is not just about the winners, it's about the process," said Mario Calvo-Platero, chairman of Palazzo Strozzi Foundation. He said the difficult reading list and very intense process prepares the students for the college level study they will do in Italy.

"The study of the Renaissance and humanism is very important because it's the glue that keeps together American society," he said. Only in its fourth year, Palazzo Strozzi started with New York students, then expanded to Los Angeles.

"Last year we were looking to expand to a new city," Calvo-Platero said. "Detroit was not having a good moment. Detroit was down so we hoped this would bring it up in a tiny, tiny way. We want to say how important public education is."

Calvo-Platero was impressed with how the Detroit students handled the rigor of the competition and interviews.

"We had tough interviews because we wanted to see how students react to this toughness," he said. "We came out with the conclusion that the students from Detroit were probably the best of all the students in New York and L.A."



Evrod Cassimy Visits Thirkell

Evrod Cassimy, morning anchor on WDIV's Local 4 News, visited Thirkell Elementary School on March 28. Cassimy read to the second-graders, ate lunch

at the school, and was presented a souvenir Thirkell sweatshirt. Cassimy is pictured above with second-grade teacher Cari Chagnon and her students.

The DFT Takes Concerns to Lansing

DFT leaders, members and retirees visited Lansing to talk with legislators about our educational concerns on April 30 — AFT Michigan's Legislative Education Action Day (LEAD).

AFT Michigan President David Hecker said the annual event is an opportunity to talk about our values and discuss our issues with legislators. AFT members from across the state said many state leaders do not understand the reality of what happens in the classroom.

In a preparation session, AFT Michigan staffers were blunt with the teachers assembled in Lansing.

"Legislators are fine people," said Julie Matuzak, AFT



DFT Executive Vice President Edna Reaves talks about building strong schools at the AFT Michigan Legislative Education Action Day.

psychologists and librarians in all of your buildings full time."

Teachers told stories of working in schools with a 97 percent poverty rate and buildings that saw the turn of the century — twice.

"Our infrastructure is crumbling," said Michelle Cook, a teacher from Hamtramck Public Schools. "We've disinvested in public schools." She said a school in her district was built in 1896 and is still being used.

A special education teacher said he was alarmed when he asked his own daughter, a third-grader, several months into the year what she was learning in school. Nothing, she said, we're just preparing for the test.

"I had no idea that half of the year was spent teaching to the test," Jeff Whittle said.

A teacher in Warren said the level of poverty and number of students with mental illness in her school is startling. But there are few resources. To make matters more discouraging, one of her students missed 60 days of school. Yet her principal said his academic achievement must be included in her annual evaluation.

Matuzak urged the teachers to visit legislators' offices and tell their experiences in detail.

"They have to hear our stories."



State Sen. Hoon-Yung Hopgood and AFT Michigan President David Hecker.

Michigan political coordinator. "But they have not been in your classroom. They do not know what it's like to have 30 first-graders. They actually still think you have nurses in your buildings. They think you have social workers,

Shared Sacrifice

By Mark O'Keefe, Controller

Many elections are decided by people who "vote their paycheck." In other words, they give their vote to the candidate whose actions will provide the biggest positive impact on their take-home pay.



Mark O'Keefe

This fall, if Michigan voters decide to vote their paychecks, it will be bad news for many incumbents. Their actions during the last two years have been devastating to working families.

Under the banner of "shared sacrifice," the state house and senate passed a number of detrimental laws that the governor signed.

The Emergency Manager Law has been used to decimate the pay of teachers in Detroit Public Schools. Although Michigan voters threw out this law, our legislature thumbed its collective nose at the voters and

passed a new, nearly identical law.

The law allowed imposition of a 10 percent pay cut, a subsequent pay freeze at the new, lower level, and the loss of salary steps. Members who were about to advance to step 10 took a cut to 90 percent of the old step 9 rate. Instead of making \$72,516 a year, they are making \$56,759. That's a \$15,757 "sacrifice."

Then the same group passed pension reform that cost members another 7 percent to maintain retirement benefits. That's another \$3,973 sacrifice.

Another law requires the district to deduct 20 percent of health insurance costs from members' paychecks. That's another \$3,000.

Elimination of pay for over-sized classes, lost preps, special ed bonuses, and longevity pay resulted in another \$500.

That's a total sacrifice of \$23,230 per year, and it's only part of the damage.

The pension reform bill increased state income taxes during retirement, when people can least afford it.

With a sacrifice of over \$46,000 in the first two years, and a retirement filled with higher taxes, our colleagues who are stuck on step 9 could ultimately lose over \$100,000.

And what is business's share of this sacrifice? They got a \$1.8 billion dollar tax break. We are tired of being the sacrificial lambs slaughtered on the altar of corporate greed.

We have protested. Over 15,000 protestors were on the grounds of the state capitol when the so-called right-to-work law was passed. The governor did not care. He signed the bill anyway.

We have used the referendum process. We threw out the emergency manager law. The legislators did not care. They passed a nearly identical law anyway.

We are not going to change what is happening in Lansing until we elect new leadership. We need a governor and legislators who support working families.

With your reduced income, they are hoping you cannot afford to make political contributions. The truth is: you cannot afford not to make political contributions.

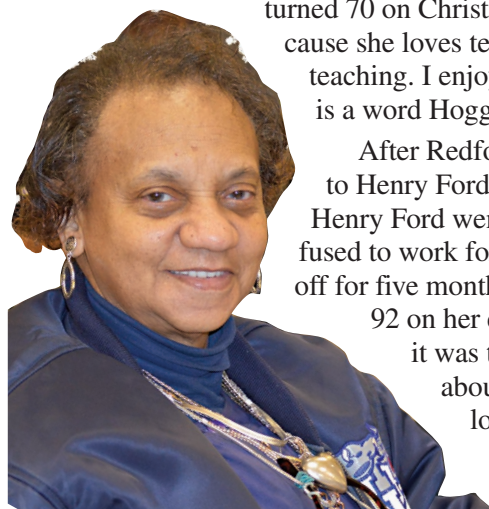
Detroit Teacher Retires After 48 Years

She may not own the record but she comes close. Wanda Hogg taught 48 ½ years with Detroit Public Schools, most of it at Redford High School. She retired Dec. 31.

Hogg said she stayed working until she turned 70 on Christmas Day simply because she loves teaching. "I enjoy teaching. I enjoy the union." "Enjoy" is a word Hogg uses frequently.

After Redford closed, she moved to Henry Ford High School. When Henry Ford went to the EAA, she refused to work for EAA. She was laid off for five months despite scoring a 92 on her evaluation. "I'm sure it was the money," she said about being laid off as a long-time teacher with a specialist degree.

The English literature teacher



used OnStar as she bounced around the district substitute teaching.

"That was a great experience because I saw that some of the needs of our students are overwhelming," she said. "And I saw that our elementary teachers are excellent."

At one school, she said, "I never experienced poverty like I experienced there."

Hogg graduated from the University of Kentucky in 1965 and was offered a job in Kentucky for \$5,000 a year. Instead she took a job with DPS for \$7,500. She worked under Dr. David Snead who called Redford "The Harvard of the west side."

Hogg served as DFT building rep both at Redford and Henry Ford. She still attends DFT meetings and is an avid union supporter. She's also an avid DPS supporter.

"I would have no problem, believe it or not, working on recruiting for our district," she said. "There are still a lot of positive things here."

When Hogg gets stopped by former students, she always asks them what year they graduated and what they're doing now. One young woman hesitated to say her line of work.

"We teach everybody," Hogg says, "the principals, the pimps and the prostitutes." The young woman was changing the course of her life by taking classes at the college of education. Hogg offered encouragement.

"Good," Hogg said, "you were always smart."

Major Union Win at Cesar Chavez

By Julie Matuzak

On César Chávez's Birthday, March 31, teachers at César Chávez Academy (CCA), Detroit's largest charter school, won an impressive settlement that will return educators to the school and provide over \$75,000 in back pay.

Representatives from the teachers union, The César Chávez Academy Alliance of Charter Teachers & Staff (CCA ACTS), reached a late deal on March 31 with The Leona Group — the for-profit company that manages the day-to-day operations of the charter school.

"This win could not have come on a better day," said Rose Crowley, a Reading Specialist at CCA High School. "It's incredible that we were able to celebrate this victory on Cesar Chavez's birthday, and I'm elated that we were able to share this moment with hundreds of our school's amazing students and parents."

CCA teachers were joined by over 600 parents, students, alumni, teachers, union leaders, public officials, and community representatives at a screening of the new Diego Luna film, "Cesar Chavez," sponsored by AFT Michigan and CCA ACTS. The film documents Chavez's struggle to unionize immigrant farm workers in California.

Currently, CCA ACTS is negotiating a first contract with the CCA Board of Directors and The Leona Group. Throughout the



organizing campaign and contract negotiations, teachers at CCA have drawn inspiration from Chavez's work and his legacy as a union organizer.

Lynne Santoscoy, a social worker from the CCA Middle School, will be returning to work as soon as the settlement is finalized by the National Labor Relations Board.

"I'm so excited to get back to CCA and work with our wonderful students and families," she said. "I have been so supported by my colleagues and the community over these past six months. What was done wrong has been made right and we will continue to work with The Leona Group to reach a fair first contract that will make our school community an even better place to work and learn."

At the close of the movie, hundreds gathered in the lobby to hear the announcement of Santoscoy's reinstatement, chanting "si se puede!" in the spirit of Cesar Chavez as they surrounded her in celebration.

"This is a fitting tribute to Cesar Chavez on his birthday," said David Hecker, AFT Michigan President. "Charter school teachers are a growing part of AFT Michigan and they can accomplish amazing things when they join together with parents and community to reclaim the promise of public education."

Jerry L. White Puts on the Wiz

Detroit teacher Catrina Walker put on the musical "The Wiz" with her students at Jerry L. White Center High School March 21. The west side center-based special education school is reaching out to give its students many more experiences in the arts and sciences. Dressing in the elaborate costumes, the students said, was almost as much fun as the musical score.



Workers Memorial Day in Detroit



Each day American workers leave their homes for work and 12 will never return home. Each day we hear news of workers dying on the job, whether in a Texas fertilizer plant or in a post office or carrying supplies up Mount Everest. In Michigan in 2012, 127 workers died in the workplace. Another 105,000 injuries or occupational diseases were reported.

On April 28, Workers Memorial Day, more than 50 workers wearing black walked from Mariner's Church to the Labor Legacy Monument at Hart Plaza to remember those lost workers.

"Today we remember them all -- those who have died and the thousands who have been injured or disabled because of their jobs," said Rick Blocker, president of the Metro Detroit AFL-CIO. The

Metro-Detroit AFL-CIO and the Southeast Michigan Jobs with Justice sponsored the walk.

"These tragedies and deaths could have and should have been prevented," he said. "These workers should not have died."

Blocker cautioned against those in government who want to weaken regulations and worker's protection laws.

"On this Workers Memorial Day, we call for an end to the unnecessary deaths of our brothers and sisters," he said. "We want stronger safety laws that protect all workers."

One of the best ways to prevent deaths at work, said those gathered at the walk, is having a union to make sure workers have a voice on issues of health and safety.

Are Your Rights Worth \$10?

DFT Members Say Yes!

The COPE committee, chaired by DFT executive board member Ivy Bailey, urged members to give \$10 during this school year. The aim is to support candidates in the fall who are friends of public education. We are still far away from our goal of having each member give at least \$10. If you have given and your name is not on the list below, call us at 313-875-6776 and we will print your name next month. If you have not given yet, please do so today and your name will be printed next month. Send that check TODAY made to AFT Michigan COPE, and mailed to AFT Michigan, 2661 E. Jefferson, Detroit MI 48207 or dropped off at the DFT office.

More than \$500

Reaves, Edna

\$499 to \$200

Doniver, Lois
Falcusan, Patrick
Hogg, Wanda
O'Keefe, Mark
Sims, Judith
Weertz, Margaret

\$199 to \$100

Artt, Michele
Bailey, Ivy
Johnson, Keith
Luttenberger, J
Thomas, Ricardo

\$99 to \$50

Ames-Powell, Nicole
Bradford, Mary
Chudy, Lynn
Harvey, Chery
Lee, Dollie
Schenk, Michael
Simpson, Joyce
Sims, LaShawn

Under \$50

Alexander, Angela
Allen, Shirley
Almeranti, Lisa
Andrade, Maria
Balogh, Nancy
Black, Laura
Bonacci, Vida
Booker, Glenda
Brown, Cassandra
Cheff, Marilou
Cleveland, Caprice
Cooper-Tyler, Tina
Cross, Richard
Davis, Maria
Duren, Inealia
Egnatios, Nadine
Foreman, Evelyn
Fresh, Tamara
Giles, Edith
Gines, Jewel
Gordon, Agatha
Graham, Candace
Hendrix-Brown, Regina
Jakubus, Valerie
Jamison, Sharon
Johnson, Carnette

Jones, Maria
Lewis, Carmen
Marshall, Lawanda
Martin, Terrence
Matthews, Cynthia
Murphy, Sandra
Nance, Mona
Neely, Lawrence
Newberry, Wendy
Oliver, Mershira
Parnell, Vanessa
Peoples, Gwendolyn
Portnoy, Steven
Posey, Jason

Riley, Elaine
Rossell, Patrika
Scott, Lisa
Scott, LaTisha
Smith, April
Smith, Emily
Smith, Patricia
Stuckey, Tracy
Walton, Marcus
Washington, Yvetta
Woods, Darnise

We're on

Facebook!

Check us out at

www.facebook.com/DFT231

All Meetings start at 4:30 p.m. Dates and times are subject to change.

May

- 8 Membership Meeting, 4:30 p.m.**
(IBEW Hall, 1358 Abbott, East of Trumbull)
- 20 Retirees Chapter Meeting, 11:30 a.m.**
(Triumph Church, 2760 E. Grand Blvd.)
- 26 Memorial Day, Schools Closed**
- 29 Executive Board Meeting, 4:30 p.m.**
(7700 Second Ave., Detroit, MI 48202)

June

- 5 Membership Meeting, 4:30 p.m.**
(7700 Second Ave., Detroit MI 48202)
- 6 Building Representatives Dinner, 5 p.m.**
Double Tree Hotel, Detroit
- 12 Last Day for Students**
- 13 Last Day for Teachers**
- 17 Retirees Chapter Meeting, 11:30 a.m.**
(Triumph Church, 2760 E. Grand Blvd.)