

What Governor's Plan Means for DFT

By Mark O'Keefe

Finance Committee of the Coalition for the Future of Detroit School Children

Gov. Snyder's proposals for Detroit Public Schools were greeted with a sigh of relief by many DFT Teachers. Although these changes could be modified by the legislature, the initial news is good.

Some early reports indicated that the proposal would result in all DPS schools being chartered, resulting in teachers no longer being covered by the state's pension plan. Others said the district would be split in a way that would divide schools into two different districts. There were fears that teachers would lose their union representation and their collective bargaining agreements. Others worried that EAA would take over more DPS schools. None of those things are part of Gov. Snyder's proposals.

Instead, Snyder proposes that all DPS schools be moved to a new district called the City of Detroit Education District (CDED). All teachers will also move to the CDED, along with their collective bargaining rights and pensions. The new district will be run by a school board that will hire a superintendent.

The CDED school board will gradually transition from an appointed board to an elected board. Initially, the governor will appoint four members, and the mayor will appoint three. Two appointees will be replaced by elected members in 2017. Detroit voters will replace two more appointees in 2019 thereby electing the majority of the board, and will have complete control of the board in 2021. Local control should come much sooner, but at least the governor recognizes it must come.

The Emergency Manager and elected school board would stay with the old district, which will still be called DPS. DPS



The DFT Goes to Lansing

Approximately 300 DFT members took a personal business day and attended a morning rally and an all-day lobbying event in Lansing on April 30. The Legislative Education Action Day was sponsored by AFT Michigan.

would have little to do other than collect property taxes and pay off debt.

If the new district begins operations July 1, 2016, a new collective bargaining agreement will be in place by then. Our current agreement expires June 30, 2016. In the past, the union has encouraged Emergency Managers to bargain, even though the law says they are not required to do so. If the proposals are approved and timetables are met, we can expect a new collective bargaining agreement to be imposed, or possibly negotiated, prior to June 30, 2016.

There will also be a new entity called the Detroit Education Commission. The DEC will have five members, three appointed by the governor and two appointed by the mayor. They would hire a Detroit Education Manager who would function as gatekeeper for opening and closing schools. The DEC would set performance standards for all Detroit schools: public, charter and EAA. They

also will develop a common enrollment process that covers all of these schools. One concern is that the authority to close or charter schools would be vested in a manager who is hired by a board controlled by the governor, with no accountability to the school board. Although this is no different than the current situation where the Emergency Manager can charter schools, it would become a permanent situation.

The new district, CDED, will have more money which is good news for teachers and students. School districts receive their income from state aid in the form of a per-pupil foundation allowance, and homestead property taxes. Since the new district will not have property taxes, the state will pay more to DPS to make up the difference. Therefore, the CDED will have the same income as DPS currently does, but will lower its expenses by

Our Terms for Negotiations With State Takeover Authorities

President Conn handed the following letter to Emergency Manager Darnell Earley at the start of their April 15 meeting.

Over the past three months, the Detroit Federation of Teachers has elected a new leadership and adopted a range of policies and demands to address the educational crisis in our district. I believe that your administration is fully aware of all of these developments. The deteriorating conditions of our schools — as well as the dissatisfaction of teachers and students toward the management of the district — are likewise well known by all parties. For the purpose of this statement, a concise summary of our position and demands should be sufficient.

The Detroit Federation of Teachers finds that the state management of our school system has been unilaterally detrimental to the quality of education and the financial stability of the district. We find that the state management is disingenuous in purporting to remedy either problem, and has enacted a series of policies that exacerbate both. We hold that the state must relinquish its authority over the Detroit schools, must restore democratic control to the local electorate, and must cancel the entire debt which was produced over the course of all state management regimes in the district.

The Detroit Federation of Teachers finds that the specific educational institutions promoted by state management — charters and the EAA — have failed to serve any educational interests and now rank among the absolute worst schools in the nation. We hold that it is necessary to enact a moratorium on charters and to return all EAA schools to the district.

President's Report



**Steve
Conn**

The Detroit Federation of Teachers finds that the state management has greatly worsened the segregated and unequal qualities of the district and violates the civil rights of the people of Detroit. We hold that the state must increase the funding of the district to provide the Detroit schools with equal quality programs, facilities, and salaries comparable to the best public schools in the state. We hold that “separate can never be equal,” and that our school system must live up to the mandate of *Brown v. Board of Education*, both in letter and spirit. Charters are now the most segregated sector of education for black and Latina/o students, and combined with the denial of democratic rights and the absence of public accountability, the state has propagated a Jim Crow regime in our city. We hold that equality and integration must define the policy aims of the district.

The Detroit Federation of Teachers finds that the state management has degraded the most basic, practical conditions for teaching and learning. We hold that the state must lower class size, provide text books for all students, restore and expand music, art, and physical education classes, and increase support staff and ancillary services.

Among the demands of the DFT,

there are measures which your administration can accomplish at absolutely no cost, with the stroke of a pen, effective immediately. We demand that all teachers must receive their fall assignments by the end of the school year in June, and that appeals of all assignments and evaluations be heard immediately afterwards. We demand that all teachers will be guaranteed a daily prep hour (including elementary and middle school teachers). We demand that the state recognize the Detroit Federation of Teachers as the representative bargaining organization for its membership.

Attached to this statement, you will find the resolutions which our members voted on and passed at a mass membership meeting on Jan. 25, which include specific points beyond this summary. Such resolutions constitute the active policies of the DFT. Any further resolutions or decisions that are pertinent to your administration will be made available to you at our earliest convenience.

THE DETROIT
teacher

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

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GOVERNOR'S PLAN from Page 1

the \$53 million per year of debt service that remains with the old DPS.

With the same income, and \$53 million less in expenses, the new DPS (CDED) will be in a much better position to provide the education our students deserve. The first priority for this money will be to balance the budget. In fiscal 2014, the district overspent by about \$75 million, so balancing the budget may consume the entire savings.

The governor's proposals draw heavily on the work of the Coalition for the Future of Detroit Schoolchildren. When I first learned of the formation of this broad-based group, I was skeptical. But as I read through the list of steering committee members, I was greatly relieved to see AFT Michigan President David Hecker's name as one of five co-chairs. Edna Reaves, our former Executive Vice President and AFT Michigan Secretary-Treasurer, joined David on the steering committee. Having the union's voice heard was critical in arriving at the final recommendations.

DFT was well represented on the coalition, with many current and former DFT members serving on subcommittees including Ivy Bailey, Keith Johnson, Patrick Falcusan, Vida Bonacci, Lakia Wilson and Mike Schenk. I was pleased to be asked to sit on the finance committee. We initially were told that the idea of having the state assume the debt was a non-starter, not because of the merits of the idea, but because of the political realities in Lansing. We did not give up. Eventually, the finance committee, the steering committee, and now the governor have embraced a solution that amounts to the state paying for the existing debt.

We also recommended that the district be returned to local control. The governor proposes to do this over six years. We need to significantly speed up the process.

We also asked that the 15 EAA schools be returned to DPS. While that is not part of the plan, the governor did say that he did not expect any more DPS schools to go to EAA.

The governor hopes to get the needed legislation approved in time for the new DPS to start operations on July 1, 2016, and for the DEC to begin operation Jan. 1, 2016.

With teachers keeping their jobs, pensions, and collective bargaining rights, and Detroit's public schools receiving increased funding from the state, the governor's proposals are much better than what many feared. However, we need to see many more details behind the governor's ideas. While it appears many of them are from the Coalition's report, the goal is to have all of the Coalition's recommendations adopted. We have much work ahead of us for this to come out right for the children of Detroit.

When Did Teachers Become the Enemy?

I'm not sure when this happened.

Was it when we began keeping extra food in our classes for students who get to school an hour after breakfast?

Was it when we were buying uniforms, shoes, underwear, etc. for students who needed them?

Was it when we asked for relevant professional development?

Was it when we disagreed with legislators about how schools should be funded and structured?

Was it when we stated that education was not a business?

Was it when we started to talk about testing versus teaching?

Was it when we began to speak out about the top down approach to leadership in schools?

It could have been when the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, President George W. Bush's education-reform bill, was signed into law on Jan. 8, 2002.

Or maybe it was when we allowed talk of merit pay and designated bonuses to divide us?

Or maybe it was when the first Emergency Financial Manager was assigned to our district, because legislators realized there was money to be made if education was turned into a business?

What kind of impact could we have if every teacher in the U.S. chose a day to rise up and march on Washington? We could make T-shirts with "Teachers vs. Everybody" on them. Maybe we could again be recognized for the professionals we are.

I still can't fathom why a profession that should be revered has become public enemy number one. We nurture and teach the world's most precious asset, our children. This sad state of our professional status must be changed. But first we need to examine how it all started.

These are some things to think about. But I believe we can reconstruct our image in the public eye. Staying true to the work of our union is the first step.



Ivy Bailey

DFT Executive Vice President

Ewing Wins School Social Work Award

Kim Travis-Ewing, an active DFT member, 25-year Detroit school social worker, and entrepreneur has won the Michigan Association of School Social Workers' "Social Worker of the Year" award for Region D, which covers Detroit. She will now compete for the state award.



Ewing was nominated by three people. "I had competition from two of my colleagues," Ewing said.

Ewing instituted an African American Olympics, designed on the Jeopardy format. She also designed a Leaders of Tomorrow student incentive program to underscore positive behaviors like kindness and responsibility.

Ewing is the founder of Mobilizing African American Families, a nonprofit that helps Detroit youth and parents navigate the stresses of the 21st century with an annual teen conference at the Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History.

"She's a trailblazer in the field of school social work," said Ivy Bailey, DFT executive vice president. "She's unyielding when it comes to serving her students."

Ewing has presented on grief and loss and many other issues. Closer to home, she chairs the DFT school social work chapter. She studied at MSU, Case Western, and the University of Kingston in Jamaica, and has traveled to Senegal in Africa.

Robeson Malcolm X Students Win at Cobo

Students at Paul Robeson Malcolm X Academy won four of five categories in the C-STEM Challenge (Communication, Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) on April 11 at Cobo Hall.

Students of fourth-grade teacher Azanthus Nichols won in Geosciences. Nicholas Nagy's third-, fourth-, and fifth-graders won in Sculpture, Film Making, and Creative Writing. Dr. Ramona Sherman's third grade won in Photography. Yvonne Brady (kindergarten and first grade) won in Robotics. Darati Forbes-Mulibwa (fifth grade) placed in the third round of competition.

Robeson Malcolm X students also were winners of the Stem Spirit Award (Dr. Ramona Sherman) and won a 3D printer valued at \$1,100. A special "great job" goes out to all the students at Robeson Malcolm X who participated in the 2014-15 CSTEM challenge and took home "ALL" the awards. A heart felt "we love you" also goes out to Dr. Rosemary Amene, instructional specialist for science.

"She had faith in us and worked hard," said Sherman. "We appreciate her."



THE DETROIT NEWSM

Hakuna M Jerry L.



Lion King producer Katrina Walker, a special education teacher and paraprofessional Kim Drew.

To a crowded auditorium in the Renaissance High School auditorium, Jerry L. White students performed the Lion King on April 1. The vibrant costumes and musical score resulted from a collaboration between teachers, special education students and Renaissance students who came after school to help with costumes.

"We focus on our ability not our disabilities," said a glowing Katrina Walker, special education teacher at Jerry L. White, about the performance. "We have the best students and the best staff. And with the best students and staff, we have the best principal."

DETROIT teacher MAKERS

Matata at L. White



Special education teacher at Jerry L. White,



Dr. Lynn Bradley, in purple, with prominent Detroit leaders at Dossin.

Please Read to Me

Dr. Lynn Bradley, instructional specialist at Dossin School, organized a "Mr. Read to Me Day" in March in honor of March is Reading Month.

The event drew prominent male leaders, including Detroit City Councilman James Tate, several fraternity members, dads, and a pastor.

"It allowed men for a change to come in and read stories or choose books of their own," Bradley said. The Dossin staff welcomed the volunteers and the eighth-grade boys escorted them to classes.

"The men enjoyed the event and were very enthusiastic about reading to the children," Bradley said. "They all wanted to know when was the next time they could volunteer and work with the students. They did not want to wait until next year's event."

To show appreciation for the men, Bradley gave out goodie bags and certificates. The bags included books and a T-shirt saying "No limits."

DFT Awards Scholarship to WSU Student

The DFT Memorial Scholarship Fund award recipient for 2015 is Stefan L. Carter. The scholarship committee awarded the \$3,000 scholarship at the Wayne State University College of Education Annual Scholarship Awards Reception on May 5.

Detroit Teachers LEAD in Lansing

Every year on a day in April teachers take a personal business day, go to Lansing, and talk to their legislators about their profession, school funding and new mandates.



DFT members attending LEAD in Lansing: Kristin Peart, Ivy Bailey and Lisa Card.

AFT Michigan organizes the Legislative Education Action Day (LEAD), formerly called Lobby Day. AFT Michigan briefs the teachers, then sends them to meet face-to-face with state lawmakers

who decide on such issues as bargaining rights and evaluations.

David Hecker, AFT Michigan president, advised members to ask legislators about the retirement system, the K-12 budget, collective bargaining rights, and the future of DPS.

Julie Rowe, legislative mobilization coordinator for AFT Michigan, said April 30 was one of AFT Michigan's most successful lead turnouts in recent years.

"It's the greatest problem to have hundreds of teachers excited about legislative action," Rowe said. She said teachers are asking legislators to always work "in consultation with teachers" when making decisions on public education.

Detroit teacher Ann Turner said she learned a lot attending the event.

"I think it's important to get the information back to our staff," Turner said. "So much is going on in Lansing and we need to know about it."



Jeanetta Cotman and Paula Trilety, of the DFT Memorial Scholarship Fund committee, attended WSU Annual Scholarship Awards Reception.

The reception was held at the McGregor Memorial Conference Center on Wayne State's campus.

Stefan attended Fairbanks Elementary School, Hutchins Middle School and Northern High School. He is a lifetime resident of Detroit, has one son, and hopes to teach in the Detroit community. Stefan is a Morris Hood Scholar and works for the College of Education as a student assistant and peer mentor.

Stefan plans his pre-student and student teaching in the fall and winter semesters of the 2015-16 academic year. He is enrolled in the Secondary Education program and is majoring in Social Studies and minoring in English.

"The DFT Memorial Scholarship Committee is delighted to have such a worthy recipient," said Paula Trilety, treasurer of the committee.

The DFT Scholarship Fund was established by former DFT President Mary Ellen Riordan in the 1980s. Since that time we have awarded scholarships to worthy WSU education students on a yearly basis.

The Scholarship Fund is a non-profit organization and donations are tax deductible. If you would like to contribute, kindly send a check payable to the DFT Memorial Scholarship Fund, Attention: Paula Trilety, Treasurer; 7700 Second Avenue, Suite #427, Detroit MI 48202.

Membership Meeting Attendance

School representatives who were in attendance for the month of April 2015 are listed below.

APRIL 2015

Academy of the Americas
Ann Arbor Trail
ASD Support City Wide
Bagley
Blackwell Institute
Carleton

Carver STEM Academy
Cass Tech High School
Clemente, Roberto
Clippert Academy
Cody APL
Davis Aerospace
Dixon

Dossin
Drew
East English Village Prep
Academy
Edison
Ellington, Duke
Emerson

Field, Moses
Fisher Upper Academy
FLICS
Garvey Academy
Gompers
Greenfield Union
Holmes, A.L.

Keidan
King, J.R.
Marquette
Marshall, T.
Mason
Neinas
Palmer Park

Priest
Renaissance
Sampson
Schulze
Spain
Western International
Wright, Charles

English Teacher Has an Eye for Soccer Talent

Kristen LaMagno is the kind of teacher who can give the stern eye to keep her high school students in line. The next minute she's laughing at one of their witty remarks.

The Western International High School English teacher developed a closer relationship to several students when she saw their talent on the soccer field.

"I realized watching them at a varsity game that they could benefit from travel soccer," said LaMagno, a 16-year DPS teacher. She invited them to play on a travel team with her son, Devon, in the Grosse Pointe Soccer Association. But there was a problem with the expensive fees.

"I told the coach, you have to decide if you want them on your team or you want the fees," she said. After seeing their talent, that coach invited them on the team. Soon after, a new coach took over. Things gelled with the Western players, most of whom are Latino-American. The new coach recognized their talent and speaks fluent Spanish.

All winter, LaMagno took the students from southwest Detroit to the Pontiac Winstar minidome for late night games.

In April, she took them to the Mid-American Soccer Classic in Cincinnati.

LaMagno got five kids in her car and headed south on I-75. After a weekend of games, fun at the hotel, and a team feast at a local restaurant, the boys had an experience they would not have had otherwise. Two Grosse Pointe mothers pitched in several hundred dollars to defray hotel and food costs.

The tournament offered the Western players competition at a higher level. After winning throughout the weekend, they lost to a tough team in pouring rain.

"They were disappointed in Sunday's performance," LaMagno said. "But they had a lot of fun."



Western students David Avalos, Salvador Vargas, Liborio Lopez, Dylan Borczak and Angel Espinosa with teacher Kristen LaMagno.

For The Teachers, By The Teachers First Annual Teachers Appreciation Gala

"For the Teachers, By the Teachers" is a newly formed entity, composed of DPS teachers, which will celebrate the contributions of All Detroit Public School educators via our First Annual Teachers Gala. The purpose of this Gala is to celebrate those of us who have made the commitment to educate the children of Detroit.

Committees are formed and pledges of support are being made. It is imperative that a moment in time is taken to say "Thank You" to the teachers of Detroit Public Schools for our dedication and commitment to the children of our great city. If you wish to join this pivotal effort, please make immediate contact to join a committee, recommend a sponsor or simply state your interest in attending this event.

EVENT DETAILS

When: Saturday, June 13, 2015 — **Time:** 8 p.m.- 12 a.m.

Where: Doubletree by Hilton Hotel ~ Detroit – Dearborn

IF INTERESTED, PLEASE SEE THE CONTACT INFORMATION BELOW:

For The Teachers, By The Teachers

P. O. Box 5144 Detroit, MI 48205

RSVP: (313)884-4364/ (248)635-6802

RSVP: fortheteachers@outlook.com

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Artist at Heart Fires Up Unused Kiln

Even though Karl Hartwig is a resource room teacher at Hutchinson Elementary School, he's an artist in his bones.

Hartwig noticed the never-used kiln in his school, squeezed between a stove in a work room. He decided to use it and get students learning about ceramics, something the former art student studied at Wayne State University.

"We've got this kiln in the building that's never been fired," he said. "When they said it's a go, I had to find clay because we didn't have clay and we didn't have money.

"I'd gone and begged at Pewabic Pottery but they turned me down," he said.

Hartwig looked up his former WSU professor of ceramics, Joe Zajac, and found luck. Zajac said he'd be pleased to donate clay to Hartwig's school.

Now Hutchinson students stay after school to watch YouTube videos on coiling and learn other techniques.

Walking down to the kiln, seven-year-old Jae Brown, slips her hand into Hartwig's. The teacher's patience and positive attitude with students clearly attracts them to him.

"Can I give you a hand with that base," Hartwig says. "What kind of shape would you like?"

Ceramics is part of the school's STEAM project, (science, technology, engineering, arts and music). And ceramics is not just for fun and creativity. Students learn about chemical and physical changes of earth materials.

"On the crazy test," Hartwig says, "there's always a question about what you use earth materials for." Hutchinson students will ace that question. And have a beautiful hand-made creation too.



Karl Hartwig rolls clay with his students.



CALENDAR

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

May

- 12 **Retiree Chapter Meeting, 11:30 a.m., Michigan First Credit Union, 27000 Evergreen, Lathrup Village**
- 14 **General Membership Meeting, 4:30 p.m. (IBEW Hall, 1358 Abbott)**
- 25 **Memorial Day, Schools Closed**
- 28 **DFT Executive Board Meeting, 4:30 p.m. DFT Office (7700 Second Ave.)**

June

- 4 **General Membership Meeting, 4:30 p.m. (IBEW Hall, 1358 Abbott)**
- 9 **Retiree Chapter Meeting, 11:30 a.m., Luncheon at Henry Ford Village**
- 11 **Last day for students**
- 12 **Last day for teachers**
- 13 **DFT "For the Teachers, By the Teachers Gala"**