

## DFT Gets Reimbursement for Members

The DFT gave out checks to four teachers last week totaling more than \$60,000. The checks were a result of an arbitration award from the 2004-05 school year – the Leslee Jones long-term sub arbitration. The DFT won a series of arbitration decisions on the Leslee Jones case, named after one of the teachers.

The last decision in the case came five years ago in 2008.

In 2005, the district laid off certified teachers then recalled them, in some cases to their own classrooms, as long term substitutes. Some 61 teachers were affected, most of whom have been paid. The DFT received four checks last week. Nine more teachers are waiting to be paid.

Thanks to the diligence of Mark O'Keefe, DFT controller, these checks are starting to come in. In 2009 in his role as executive vice president, O'Keefe committed to getting all of these members paid.

"Mark told me that he would not quit working on this until I



**Retired Detroit teacher Saundra Preston accepts her check from Edna Reaves, DFT executive vice president.**

got paid," said Saundra Preston, who received her check last week. "He's a man of his word. I'd given up on this and I told my family I turned it over to God."

Glenda Hollie, a teacher at Pulaski School, who also got a check last week, said she was grateful to the DFT.

"It's important to have a union," she said. "You don't have the time to fight these fights for yourself. So it's good to have the union to fight for you."

## Settlement Reached Over Evaluations and Recalls

The DFT and the DPS reached a settlement agreement which resolved a number of disputes – one of which was the lawsuit challenging the flawed evaluation, layoff, and recall procedures used by DPS. Approximately 422 teachers were laid off as a result of those flawed procedures, which were neither negotiated nor agreed to by the DFT.

Some of the highlights of the settlement are as follows:

Teachers who received an evaluation score that did not make them "eligible" for retention shall have those scores expunged from their permanent record.

Teachers who received a score that made them eligible for retention may, upon their request, have their scores expunged as well. Given that the evaluation

process was severely flawed we are asking ALL DFT MEMBERS TO HAVE ALL SCORES EXPUNGED FROM THEIR RECORD! A flawed evaluation, positive or negative, IS INVALID!

While some teachers are being recalled right now, the remaining teachers can expect to get recalled and placed no later than the beginning of the 2013-2014 school year. We believe that all will be back given the anticipated number of retirements, resignations, and other separations from DPS.

Due to changes in the Michigan Teacher Tenure Act by the Michigan legislature, the DFT was not able to seek back pay as part of the settlement.

Aside from using the lawsuit as leverage to compel the Emergency Manager (now

Emergency Financial Manager) to negotiate an Agreement regarding wages, working conditions, etc., we were also motivated by the desire to have affected members back to work as soon as possible.

Going through with the lawsuit, because of the path we chose (depositions, interrogatories, exhibits, etc.) would have meant the trial likely would not have begun until September or October. That would mean that at best some of our members may not have returned to work until the second semester of the 2013-2014 school year, or even the beginning of the 2014-2015 school year.

"Our objective was always to see our members back to work as soon as possible," said DFT President Keith Johnson. "This settlement makes that possible."

# Learning How to be a Man

**D**FT President Keith Johnson demonstrated an important lesson for 15 boys at Detroit Lions Alternative Middle School on April 19. He looked each boy in the eye, shook his hand and introduced himself.

Johnson emphasized the importance of even small gestures, like looking someone in the eye. He asked each student to tell what he does well. Shy students most, but one teen stood up to meet Johnson face to face.

These pleasantries occurred before Johnson told the boys about his own troubles as a teen, find-



a dressing down.

“Keith, you are the biggest waste of time, talent and space I’ve ever seen,” said teacher Ben Rosenberg. “If you want to fight, be a boxer. But if you’re not going to be a boxer, find a way to use your talents.”

He chose to be a teacher. “I was no different than you,” said. “At some point you have to grow up.”

A social studies teacher, Johnson brought a prop, a piece of thread.

“Do you know how thin the line is between poverty and prosperity?” he said. “A lot of what you do determines what side of that line you’re on.”

In a two-hour chat, Johnson and the boys touched on heroes, street corners, women, rap, the movie “42,” and speaking “English the way it was meant to be spoken.”

“We should not be going around calling women

names,” Johnson said. “Our role is to protect and provide for them.”

Young black men are an endangered species,

Johnson said, predicting that two-thirds of the boys in that classroom would not make it to 25 years old, either dying on the street or being sent to prison.

He praised the movie “42” about Jackie Robinson being vetted to become the first black player in the major leagues. Robinson was chosen because he was brave enough to handle the taunts without fighting back.

“We’re becoming an endangered species because we’re killing ourselves off,” Johnson said. “Sometimes, young men, it takes more courage to not fight back.”

At the end of the talk, Johnson, the father of two sons, said, “We are very protective of our students, because we love you guys.”



ing fights, settling scores, and ending up kicked out of one Detroit high school after another. Johnson was on his last thread when another student started a fight. A teacher vouched that, this time, it was not Johnson’s fault. Still, a well respected teacher gave him

## THE DETROIT teacher

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# We Are Powerful Beyond Measure Western Students Strive for ACT

By Celia Angulo  
Kaitlyn Luszczyński  
Syerra Ramirez  
Western International students

Every Thursday, Avis Renee Taylor's 9th Grade Pre-AP students committed to excel in our English class and to increase test scores. With that in mind, Taylor encouraged us to practice the ACT online in our Media Center at Western International High School. We used the skills taught in class and practiced for an hour preparing for what is expected of us when we go to take the real ACT test.

To make the experience of preparing for college a reality,



every student has their own pen pal that has either graduated from college or is currently in college. Many of the college students are former students from Ms. Taylor's classes. (She has been teaching 29 years at DPS.) To communicate effectively, we email or write them once or twice a month. If we have questions about college or what we should expect, they answer them.

On Saturday, April 13, our entire ninth grade Pre-AP ELA class eagerly arrived at Western to take the ACT. We were the only freshmen in the entire school, the rest were seniors or juniors. As nerve-racking as it was, every single student showed up at least 30 minutes early and stood in the freezing cold. We are waiting on tip toes anticipating our results, and the experience itself was enough to ignite the desire to keep trying until we reach our goal, which is 36 composite score.

These are some activities we had this year:

- Reciting the entire "I Have a Dream" speech by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., and creating a video of our school and its diversity, with our teacher singing a Negro Spiritual "I am free."
- Debate on capital punishment simultaneously using smart boards, projectors, iPhones, etc.
- PowerPoint presentations on universities of our choice.
- Building Elizabethan theatres based on "Romeo and Juliet."
- Nine page book reports on "To Kill a Mockingbird," "Go Ask Alice," "The Crucible," and "The Help."
- Memorizing and reciting poems every month.
- Journaling every day for 10 minutes, at least three paragraphs.
- Contributing to the Inside-Out Program and publishing poems.
- Making a Career Research Portfolio with resume, cover letter and job application, with PowerPoint presentation of the research.
- 17 out of 25 students in our class have a 3.0 GPA or higher.

This is a quote we like from Marianne Williamson: "Our greatest fear is not that we are inadequate, but that we are powerful beyond measure. In fact, who are we not to be?"

## Updates . . .

### Retirements Announced

Mary Ellen Matigian and Maxine Mickens have announced their retirements from the Detroit Public Schools. If you have retired in the last six months and would like it announced, please call the editor at 313-875-6776.

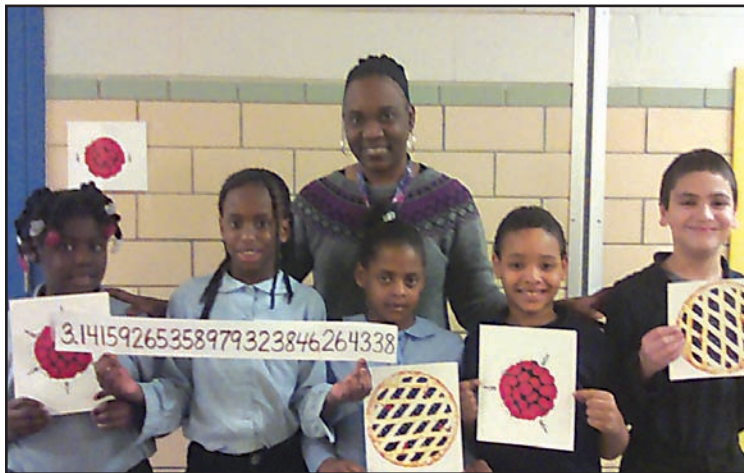
### Benny Napoleon Pays DFT a Visit



Wayne County Sheriff Benny Napoleon visited the DFT April 11 and had an informal discussion with the DFT Executive Board. The DFT was one of Napoleon's stops in his candidacy for the mayor of Detroit. Napoleon said the city is at a crossroads and needs jobs and economic development, safety, and a major cleanup. "We need an education mayor," he said. "I believe it should be a good solid public education system. And I don't believe the mayor should be responsible for taking over the schools."

# THE DETROIT teacher NEWSMAKERS

## Celebrating Pi Day at Carver



**Carver third-grade teacher Patriaka Rossell and students celebrating Pi Day.**

## 3.14159265358979323846264338...

On March 14, Carver STEM Academy celebrated Pi day! Pi is the number denoting the ratio of the circumference of a circle to its diameter. It has an approximate value of 3.14, but its exact value is represented by a symbol, the Greek letter Pi.

Middle school math teacher Nicole Ames-Powell organized Pi Day for the school. Carver had a school wide "Pi Bee" where students memorized and recited several digits representing this value. Not only were students engaged in math, they'll never forget the concept of Pi.

The following are Carver's elementary school and middle school winners:

### Elementary Winners:

1. Luke Jorgenson (27 digits)
2. Dillion Bailey (27 digits)
3. Miranda Cunegin (24 digits)
4. Terianna Mitchell (24 digits)

### Middle School Winners:

1. Robert Charnoske (81 digits)
2. Derrick Charnoske (33 digits)
3. Terrena Mitchell (15 digits)
4. Efon Brown (15 digits)



**Pasteur School helps Rene Green, Annie Steen, Aletha Meneff, principal Sharon Lawson, and former Pasteur student L'Nai Cunningham.**

## Pasteur School Feeds the Homeless

Detroit's homeless citizens are being sheltered and fed each week by its churches. Each of 52 weeks, churches take a turn to feed and shelter the homeless.

Sharon Lawson, principal of Pasteur Elementary School, is a 25-year member of the Jefferson Avenue Presbyterian Church. When she learned Jefferson Avenue Presbyterian's week would be April 15, Lawson started recruiting and cooking. She also encouraged her staff to help out cooking a complete dinner for dozens of folks. She said it is something she always wants to do.

"Miss Lawson asks if we'll help out," said Annie Steen, a teacher's assistant. "I enjoy doing it to see their faces. They get a warm meal, a shower, their own bedding, and stay for a week."

Rene Green, a paraprofessional at Pasteur, is sympathetic. "Many people are just a paycheck or two away from being homeless," she said. The gratitude for having a home and family weren't lost on 12-year-old L'Nai Cunningham, a former Pasteur student, who volunteered to serve.

"I feel happy," she said, "because they got a chance to eat."

## Book and Blanket Party at Pasteur

The Book and Blanket event at Pasteur Elementary School is a hit every year. Moms and Dads come after work to lie on a blanket and read a fresh book to their children.



**Brye Joy & her son Ben.**

Robert-Travier Woods is only in preschool but was too excited to pick his book. He hopped between people at the book table, trying to find a treasured "Diary of a Wimpy Kid" to no avail. No matter, he was happy with another book and a huge yellow stuffed bird.

This year, Sheila Langford, academic engagement administrator at Pasteur, organized the March 27 event. The local Kiwanis Club donated 200 books so every child could go home with a new book.



**Robert-Travier Woods and Tierra Woods**



# THE DETROIT teacher NEWSMAKERS

## *Camping for a Fun Place to Read*



By Kim Newell, Instructional Specialist

Sampson Academy students attended a special event April 11 at their school called “Camp Wanna Read.” Sampson’s Reading Recovery teacher Patti Garbacik, pictured above, designed the camp to encourage students to get excited about reading. This was the first year the camp was held at Sampson Academy, but has been held for the previous five years at Jemison Academy (now closed) where Garbacik worked.

Books were donated by Central Middle School in Plymouth and Girl Scout Troop# 41874 from Our Lady of Good Counsel in Ply-

mouth. In previous years books were donated from elementary and middle schools in the Plymouth-Canton school district.

Each year Garbacik sets up tents in the school media center and displays the donated books. Students select books they would like to read, enter the tents, and read the books with their friends. The students get to take the books home to keep.

The Motor Moms group at Sampson (who volunteer each week at the school) read books to the students and provided rainbow fish cupcakes — much to the delight of everyone.

“It’s just a fun way for students to get excited about reading,” Garbacik said, “and to create a memorable event for them.”



Vassar Kilgore serves tofu to DSA student Taron Smith

## Learning to Love Tofu

Students at Detroit School of Arts were treated to something special at their annual spring Health Fair. This year, Goodwells Market on Cass and Willis served students piping hot barbeque tofu with turmeric brown rice and peas. The tofu looked like ribs dipped in sauce.

Sixteen-year-old Taron Smith was reluctant. “What’s tofu?” he said. But after a tasting, the students were smitten. Vassar Kilgore, who works at Goodwells, served up the helpings to delighted students learning that good-for-you-food can also taste good.

This is the third year health teacher Dimitri Demetral held the Health Fair for students.



# Michigan Marches Toward Mediocrity

By Mark O'Keefe  
DFT Controller

In a misguided effort to improve schools, the Michigan Department of Education has developed a flawed system to measure school performance. The end result is that mediocrity is rewarded and excellence is punished.

MDE's criteria for ranking schools is based on student proficiency, achievement, academic growth and achievement gap in math, reading, writing, science, and social studies; and the graduation rate for high school buildings.



Mark O'Keefe

Even if we make the dubious assumption that the state has found valid measurements of student growth, student proficiency, and academic growth, this model is still fatally flawed.

The problem is the "achievement gap," which is defined as the difference between the average scores for the highest achieving 30 percent of students and the bottom 30 percent of students. The wider the gap between your highest and lowest achieving students, the lower your school's ranking. Since a low rank can lead to school closure or takeover by EAA, (the state's city-wide school district), schools have an incentive to reduce the achievement gap.

Ironically, the gap would be reduced by having your high achieving students to get lower test scores. Also, if you have a master teacher on staff whose students consistently outperform the average, get rid of her!

In Atlanta, teachers and administrators are being prosecuted for erasing students' incorrect answers and replacing them with correct answers. If Michigan has a test scandal, don't be surprised if it is because teachers are erasing correct answers and replacing them with incorrect ones.

## State Rep. Philip Cavanagh Visits Vernor School

In celebration of March is Reading Month, State Representative Philip M. Cavanagh visited Vernor School and read to Jessica Hardy's kindergarten class. He emphasized the importance of education and Vernor students attending college.

Cavanagh talked about his daughters and the schools that they attended. Using his hand as a map of Michigan, Cavanagh discussed the location of Detroit, and its geographic



State Rep. Philip Cavanagh with Vernor kindergarten teacher Jessica Hardy

correlation to Lansing. He informed the students that the Michigan House of Representatives is located in Lansing.

Cavanagh gave each student a toothbrush, a Brushing and Reading Chart, book mark, and a healthy foods coloring sheet. The class received a video DVD "Drool to School" from Delta Dental and the book "Tooth Trouble."

Philip Cavanagh is the son of Jerome Patrick Cavanagh (June 16, 1928 – Nov. 27, 1979) former mayor of Detroit from 1962 to 1970. Cavanagh said he has a goal of making college more affordable for all students.



## Wearing Union Colors

The staff at Edison Elementary School showed their true colors on March 28, the day Michigan's Right-to-Work law went into effect. The legislature locked the capital doors in December and in a lame-duck session pushed through the law. DFT members wore red to show solidarity with their union, despite the state's effort to break unions. DFT members solidified that cause by ratifying a three-year agreement that maintains collective bargaining and other teacher's rights. Edison teacher Demetria Jamison sent in this photo.



# Carver Chooses an American Idol

Dozens of Carver Elementary and Middle School students practiced in front of their parents the week before the school's all-student talent show on April 23. When the curtain rolled up, the students were in fine form.

"Carver Idol" featured students from preschool to pre-teens, singing a cappella or with taped music, Sam Cooke to R&B.

Instructional specialist Tricia Barnes and counselor Bettina Carey served as mistresses of ceremonies. Out of 22 acts, three were named best in competition.

The duo J2, comprised of sisters Jaden and Janiyah Henderson, won first place, singing "No Air."

Rabia Foxworth won second place with "Trust and Believe." And third place went to Kierra Robinson for singing "Bleeding Love."



**Rabia Foxworth won second place for her rendition of "Trust and Believe" at the Carver School talent show.**



**Nyema Passmore sings "Awesome."**

## Grants . . .

### Musical Instruments

The Fender Music Foundation provides grants of instruments and music equipment to public school music programs. These are slightly used or imperfect instruments that were obtained from manufacturers. Fender is a guitar company and is currently providing acoustic and electric guitars and other instruments. Deadline: ongoing. For info, visit [www.fendermusicfoundation.org](http://www.fendermusicfoundation.org).

### Playwrights

The VSA Playwright Discovery Competition invites students in middle or high school to submit original scripts that address the issue of disabilities in some way. Plays may be comedies, dramas or musicals. Winners will receive \$375 for his or her school and publication of his or her script. Deadline: June 1, 2013. For info, visit [usainfo@kennedy-center.org](mailto:usainfo@kennedy-center.org).

### Civil War

The Civil War Trust invites teachers to submit their best lesson plans on the Civil War. Lesson plans must be original. Awards up to \$2,500 are available. Deadline: July 1, 2013. For info, visit [education@civilwar.org](mailto:education@civilwar.org).

### Playgrounds

Communities or schools that have built a playground without using any funds from KABOOM! are eligible for KABOOM! Completion Grants. The grant is a \$500 American Express gift card to be used toward improving an existing playground. Deadline: ongoing. For info, visit <http://kaboom.org>.

### Math and Science

The Toshiba America Foundation supports the teaching of math and science by providing funds for teachers in grades 6-12 for innovative classroom learning projects. The foundation strongly supports projects created by teachers and implemented in their own classrooms. Grants of up to \$5,000 are available. For info, visit [6to12Applications@tai.toshiba.com](mailto:6to12Applications@tai.toshiba.com).





Jose Ramirez

## Denise Fielder Was First Proponent of Wrestling

Although Detroit has 100 schools, a wrestler is a rare find. When former wrestler Jose Ramirez wanted to start a wrestling program at Academy of the Americas, the physical education teacher made a pitch to principal Denise Fielder.

"Half an hour later she said, 'My son was a wrestler,'" Ramirez recalled. "Well why didn't you tell me that in the beginning?" he said.

Fielder was so supportive of Ramirez and wrestling that she would show up unannounced for meets.

"She was just a tremendous supporter," he said.

Fielder was in her third year as principal of the Academy of the Americas when she was diagnosed with cancer and died on Feb. 19. She left behind many good friends and colleagues, fond memories of her generosity, and a fund to continue the wrestling program.

Fielder was 54 when she died and a strident supporter of the school and the district, where she taught in the classroom for 25 years.



## Archery Grows in Detroit Area

Academy of the Americas hosted an archery exhibition April 19 against Davison School. The gym grew quiet and dozens of students focused for the competition.

Archery is a budding skilled sport in DPS and the students have a growing interest in it.

"Right now there's really no winners and losers in it," said Jose



**Detroit physical education teachers Jose Ramirez and Thomas Barnes.**

Ramirez, physical education teacher at Academy of the Americas. "We're trying to get kids interested and exposed to different sports and hobbies."

Kathy Garland, archery education coordinator for the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, says the sport is excellent for all kids.

"It teaches physical attributes like hand-eye coordination. It also teaches social skills," Garland said. "A basketball star could be next to the math club president. You don't need to be athletic to be good. You can make friends with someone whose different from you."

Right now 543 schools in Michigan participate in the program. In Detroit, about a dozen schools have archery programs.

"Despite what people think, this is the safest sport next to table tennis," Garland said.

Ramirez has been psyched about the program for a few years. He sees surprises with the kind of students who succeed in archery. It's one of those sports where competitors can look completely different.

Davison won the overall competition by 200 points. Academy of the Americas' Abigail Menendez won first place and Ricardo Rodriguez placed second.



# 60 Years of Raising Money for Detroit Kids

More than 70 DPS attendance agents and supporters attended a fundraiser dance and strolling buffet to raise money for Detroit students.

The Student Assistance Services, Inc. celebrated its 60th year of serving Detroit students. SASI was founded by DPS attendance officers in 1953 to help school aged children remain in school. SASI buys students clothing, shoes, glasses and much more.



**The SASI Inc. board of directors.**



**Carnette Johnson mans the reception desk at the American Serbian Memorial Hall.**

The board of directors wanted to celebrate in a big way and they were successful. Almost immediately, a phenomenal deejay got the guests dancing. There was dinner, dessert and even a SASI birthday cake.

SASI president Kathy Cornish said the lovely fundraiser is going to be an annual event.



**SASI supporters do the hustle.**



**Linda Howard and Dr. Marshall Howard, retired DPS employees.**

## Calendar

All meetings will be held at 2875 W. Grand Blvd., Detroit, unless otherwise noted. All Meetings start at 4:30 p.m. Dates and times are subject to change.

### May

- 2 Executive Board Meeting, 4:30 p.m.
- 9 General Membership Meeting, 4:30 p.m.
- 21 Retirees Chapter, 11:30 a.m.
- 27 Memorial Day, schools closed
- 30 Executive Board Meeting, 4:30 p.m.

### June

- 6 General Membership Meeting, 4:30 p.m.
- 13 Last day for students
- 14 Last day for teachers
- 18 Retiree Chapter, 11:30 a.m.