

THE DETROIT teacher

INLAND PRESS
105

VOL. 51 — NO. 3

NOVEMBER 2012

Good News on DPS Enrollment

The numbers are in and they look good. Student enrollment in Detroit Public Schools was 52,508 on count day. That's much better than the number projected: 49,435.

In addition, average daily attendance appears to be improving, at 50,390.

"We're up 539 students," DFT President Keith Johnson announced at the Oct. 11 Membership Meeting. "We will get \$3.6 million more in funding." The good news, Johnson said, is the district is planning to recall 143 teachers.

There is still an attendance issue at the high school level though, where some students are not taking a full load of six classes.

"In high schools we have too many instances where students do not have a full load of classes," Johnson said. "Those numbers are not mixing."

Johnson said daily attendance is key to the revival of Detroit Public Schools, where funding can be lost if attendance falls below 75 percent. He said he visited one school this month where 702 students were enrolled. On that day, 700 students were present.

Enrollment is part of our lifeblood," Johnson said. "That's where we get our money."

Prop 2 – Critical Yes Vote

Facing the most important vote in Michigan's labor history, the DFT held an Action Day Oct. 20.

"We have a government that came in and stripped our rights," said Detroit teacher Monica Drake-Howard.

"We've got to educate ourselves and educate others so we can get our power back."

If the Michigan legislature hadn't passed draconian laws against teachers, perhaps Proposal 2 wouldn't be necessary. But in Michigan the power has tipped against workers.

Jon Curtiss, an AFT Michigan organizer, told 25 DFT activists that enlisting co-workers to vote Nov. 6 is critically important.

The Action Day focused on passage of Proposal 2, defeat of Proposal 1 (the Emergency Manager law) and selection of three candidates for Michigan Supreme Court (Connie Kelley, Shelia Johnson, and Bridget Mary McCormack).

Proposal 2 would enshrine collective bargaining in the Michigan constitution.

Mason teacher Chandra Thomas said union supporters are facing major challenges in DPS.

"I don't know where to start to have a conversation," Thomas said. "I see teachers closing their doors because they don't want to be a target."

With state mandated evaluations, De-



AFT Michigan organizer Jon Curtiss discusses strategies with DFT activists Oct. 20.

troit teachers were subjected to "drive by" evaluations. They are under intense stress and pressure.

"The administrator bullying is real," said teacher Victor Gibson. "You feel you have to be loyal because they're giving you a job."

"It's severe bullying to the point where the superintendent came into our building and questioned teachers," Thomas said. She said DFT officials visited her building seven or eight times for support.

Curtiss reminded the activists why we support unions and Proposal 2.

"The reason we want to change this is because you're so fearful," he said. "Because you worry about getting the evil eye from your administrator. That's why we need to get organized. We're going to figure out how to stand up to this bully."

"We want equality. We want a strong middle class. We want something that's different than the world we live in now."

NO ON PROPOSAL 1 YES ON PROPOSAL 2

Vote is Essential to Our Survival

The Emergency Manager Law (PA 4) and the attacks on the collective bargaining rights of union workers, especially teachers, should compel all union workers to vote NO on Proposal 1 and YES on Proposal 2.

I'm surprised by the lack of memory and interest in the outcome of these proposals. What is particularly surprising is the lack of passion on these two issues within the DFT rank and file.

No organization in the state has been more adversely affected by the actions of the Republican-led legislature and governor (although admittedly a Democratic governor imposed Robert Bobb on us). Through the actions of politicians the union has been placed, literally, in survival mode.

President's Report



**Keith
Johnson**

Here's a brief history of what's been forced on us through PA 4 and the state legislature:

- Imposed pay cuts
- Elimination of seniority rights
- Prohibition against negotiating teacher placement
- Mandatory annual teacher evaluations
- Binding arbitration
- Voluntary dues deduction (pending in federal court)
- Elimination of just cause/due process for teacher termination
- Elimination of "make whole" provisions when teachers are improperly laid off or terminated or improperly paid.
- And the imposed "contract" by the cur-

rent Emergency Financial Manager.

A NO VOTE on Proposal 1 repeals Public Act 4, the Emergency Manager law that abrogates collective bargaining rights of workers, and nullifies citizen's votes for mayors, city council members, city managers, and school board members.

The repeal of Public Act 4 will compel elected officials to be more fiscally responsible and prohibit governors and legislatures from appointing someone to eliminate deficits on the backs of union workers. Municipalities cannot cut their way to prosperity and fiscal solvency by simply cutting the pay and benefits of those who make the least.

They will not be able to abrogate collective bargaining agreements that were negotiated in good faith. Our pay and benefits ARE NOT the cause of deficits. Deficits are caused by a perpetual blend of fiscal mismanagement.

A YES VOTE on Proposal 2 gives union workers a CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHT to collectively bargain. Equally important, a YES vote prevents the legislature from peeling away at our rights like skin off an onion.

Many workers are not aware the Public Employees Relations Act (PERA) only gives us a STATUTORY RIGHT to collec-



DFT President Keith Johnson congratulates Detroit teacher Vida Bonacci, who won \$50 at the Oct. 11 membership meeting. The National Teachers Association Life Insurance company sponsored the raffle, giving away three high definition flat screen TVs, cash and other prizes.

tively bargain. This means legislatures can limit the rights of workers, especially teachers and teacher unions.

We MUST share with our members, families and friends the impact of these two proposals and we MUST encourage them to vote. Our survival is on the line with the outcome of these two proposals.

We have the opportunity to correct the legislature's egregious wrong but we must act now. If we fail to act we will have contributed to our own demise.

THE DETROIT
teacher

The Detroit Teacher is the official publication of the Detroit Federation of Teachers, American Federation of Teachers Local 231, AFL-CIO. Member of the Union Teacher Press Association, International Labor Press Association & Michigan Labor Press.

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

The Detroit Federation of Teachers
2875 West Grand Boulevard, Detroit, Michigan 48202
(313) 875-3500

Updates . . .

Retirements Announced

Gwendolyn A. Peoples has announced her retirement. If you have retired in the last six months and would like it announced, call the editor at 313-875-6776.

Building Rep Workshop Nov. 10

The DFT's Annual Building Representative Workshop will be held Saturday, Nov. 10 from 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the DFT Hall. This is a great in-service day where new and veteran building reps learn how to build union activity and solidify our ranks. We're in this together!

District is Recalling, Issuing Layoffs

DFT President Keith Johnson warned the district it was making a costly mistake when it recalled teachers incorrectly. Now that the DFT has succeeded in getting DPS officials to recognize these errors, Johnson is insisting that they get fixed.

District officials have conceded the disarray it caused by recalling teachers incorrectly. Dozens of teachers with high scores on evaluations were not recalled. And other teachers, completely new to the district, will now be facing layoff.

"The district said they were bringing back 105 teachers who met this mythical threshold of theirs," Johnson said. DPS also will lay off an equal number who were new hires.

The recalls and layoffs were to take effect Oct. 29.

"This is a disservice to both those who should have never been laid off," Johnson said, "and to those newly hired who were led to believe they would have jobs until the end of the year."

Johnson said he cautioned district officials about their recall methods.

"This is a self-inflicted wound," he said.

Johnson said the corrective action won't affect the lawsuit the DFT is preparing.

"Certainly the district is now trying to correct its mistake," he said. "But this will not change our direction on the lawsuit."

Say Yes to Proposal S



By Edna Reave
DFT Executive Vice President

Say YES to Proposal S. This millage is not a new tax on the residents of Detroit. It will not increase taxes; it merely extends the current tax on commercial, industrial and rental properties through 2022. The millage covers 21 percent of the day-to-day operations of the district's annual budget. Detroit students deserve the same equitable education as those in the suburbs and throughout the state. We cannot widen the achievement gap by rejecting funds that will hinder our ability to provide services to our students.

Admittedly, my first thought when I was asked to support Proposal S was "no way!" I immediately became enraged. As I was seated at the table with a coalition of union members and Roy Roberts and his team, I was seething at the thought of him asking us to support Proposal S. His mouth was moving, but I didn't hear a word. All I could think about was how hard I campaigned to pass the last Proposal S in 2009, the bond that built the new Mumford High School and he, Roy Roberts, gave it away to the state (EAA).



Edna Reaves

Once I tuned in, I realized this is a millage renewal, not a new tax. Although I recognize the ramifications of this proposal failing, I felt the need to confront Roberts and let him know that I still have a bitter taste in my mouth about his decision to give away Mumford and other schools that were built or renovated as a result of the 2009 Proposal S bond. He and others at the table could feel my wrath as I passionately addressed my feelings.

Despite our personal emotions, come Nov. 6, we must do the right thing! Our students stand to lose too much if Proposal S is not approved. Many of our schools are struggling to offer art, music, foreign language, physical education and performing arts courses that enrich our curriculum.

Without the \$80.9 million day-to-day operating funds, those courses could go away. The district's sports program could become a pay-to-play program, which most of our students couldn't afford. Our instructional and support staff would be reduced by about 900 positions and our class size would increase.

Our students should be afforded a well-rounded and robust education. We as a community must do our part to ensure those opportunities exist. I'm convinced – we must say YES to Proposal S.

THE DETROIT teacher NEWSMAKERS

Double Blessing for Charles Wright Students



The students in Gail Harris's kindergarten class at Charles H. Wright Academy of Arts and Science got two treats Sept. 13. The first was a package from www.donorschoose.org where their project of two LeapFrog LeaPad tablets and accessories was fully funded and delivered. The project was partially funded by the FM 95.5 radio program "Morning Joe" through DonorsChoose.

Harris's class also was nominated through "Morning Joe" to receive free backpacks and school supplies for all the students in her room. The school supplies were donated by "Operation Kid Equip."

"This all happened on the same day and students were excited all day and much appreciative," Harris said.

Students now have another exciting tool to add to their fun and learning in room 109 as they complete their year of kindergarten. The backpacks and school supplies donated by "Operation Kid Equip" will assist students with school and homework assignments. The students in room 109 are off to a good start for the 2012-2013 school year!

Spain Students Perform with Chicago Conductor



Some 26 Spain middle school students and their music teacher Deanna Burrows-Martinez (above), participated in a jam session with other orchestra students Oct. 20 at the Mid-Level String Orchestra Clinic at Grosse Pointe South High School.

The students were among more than 100 middle and high school students at the high-level clinic sponsored by the Michigan School Band & Orchestra Association. A guest conductor from Chicago led the students. Their orchestra learned two pieces throughout the day and performed them for parents later in the afternoon.

"You should keep encouraging your children," said conductor Anthony Krempa. "I never imagined I would be doing this today. But I knew I wanted to play the violin when I was nine."

Detroit Teacher's Generosity Gets Rewarded

At the Oct. 11 DFT membership meeting, Daniel Lake put his name in a raffle sponsored by NTA life insurance company.

Lake was the first to win \$50 cash. He made a split second decision, turned around and donated the \$50 to COPE – the DFT's political action fund.

John Pyle, a representative of NTA, underscored Lake's generosity. "Well, his ticket gets put back for the flat screen TV draw," Pyle said.

Sure enough, Lake's ticket came up again. He was a winner – along with two other DFT members – of a new 22-inch high definition Vizio flat screen TV.

He, Jan Curry and Donna Taylor all took home beautiful new flat screen TVs. Thanks NTA!



Winner Daniel Lake, above, with DFT Executive Vice President Edna Reaves

THE DETROIT teacher NEWSMAKERS



“Swag Your Dream into Reality”

By Delores Alexander

This catchy phrase was used by former NFL player Marcus Ray as he spoke to the third- through eighth-graders at A.L. Holmes Academy on Oct. 5. Ray spoke to the students about having goals in life and the hard work it takes to stay focused on those goals in order to achieve them.

He shared key events from his own life, highlighting his mistakes as well as his successes.

A.L. Holmes Academy begins every school year with a focus on students, their dreams and what they need to do to make their dreams come true. Ray reinforced how students are capable of achieving anything they set their minds to. He gave them real-world connections as he related his life experiences to the grade levels of the students before him.

Ray, a native of Columbus, Ohio, is a 1998 graduate of the University of Michigan and was an All-American, All-Big Ten defensive back on the University of Michigan’s 1997 National Championship football team. He was tri-captain of the 1998 Big Ten Championship team.

Upon graduation, Ray played in the National Football League with the Oakland Raiders and NFL Europe. Ray has coached both high school and college football. He has a passion for teaching, coaching and speaking to America’s youth. He is the author of Rays of Light, Volume 1 “Let There Be Light” & Rays of Light, Volume 2 “Enlightenment,” two inspirational quote books.



Photos by Edward Cribbs



Retired media specialist Charlene Smith and Compact Coordinator Leslie Holsey in the new Marcus Garvey library.

Marcus Garvey Gets Library Makeover

Marcus Garvey Academy sits in an east side desert of sorts. It has few restaurants and food markets. It has even fewer libraries.

That’s why the library and services inside the public school are so important to the neighborhood. Last spring, Compact Coordinator Leslie Holsey and retired media specialist Charlene Smith teamed up to write a grant for a Target library makeover.

Target performed the \$100,000 makeover over the summer months and into the fall. The reveal on Sept. 28 drew 200 Target employees, Congressman Hansen Clark and community leaders.

A week later Holsey and Smith relished their freshly painted library teeming with colorful furniture, a reading area with bean bags, multi-lingual quotes on the walls, and new carpeting.

Target also donated 150 books for a new parent section within the library.

Holsey said testing data showed the students were under-achieving so she launched a plan to infuse her school with resources. “We were looking at data and in order to get off that list, they need to read,” she said. So each of the school’s 587 students took home seven new books, again donated by Target.

Garvey is a community pillar. Knowing it is in a food desert, the school started a food pantry for families experiencing a shortage of food. The school puts on a community luncheon each November.

“That was one thing Target really liked,” Holsey said. “We already started it.” The grant also addresses the hunger situation and Target works with Heart of America to donate 30 pounds of food for each family monthly. Now each morning the library opens early and welcomes students to come in, relax and read.



From left are Men of Carleton organizers, including guest speaker John Harris of HOPE, Kumash Shah, Carleton facility manager; teacher Chris Drake; Kevin Maclin, facility custodial supervisor; teacher Scott Buckberrough; Assistant Principal Emilio Harper; and teacher Donald Thomas.

Men's Group Forms at Carleton

Need help at school? Almost two dozen fathers said, "Sure."

The fathers answered the call to be volunteers at Carleton Elementary School on Detroit's east side. At a meeting to launch a new fathers group, teachers and administrators asked if fathers could help with Career Day, the talent show, school beautification, lunch buddies, field trips and Math & Science Showcase Night.

"One of the most important things you can do for your kids is help them with education," said John Harris, founder of HOPE (Helping Other People Everyday) and a former City Council candidate.

"It's time for us to be visible," he said at breakfast launch of the group. "It's time for you guys to come into the school."

While the fathers are great at dropping off the kids and picking them up, no one asked them to stick around. So Carleton staff did just that. Donald Thomas, Carleton's computer teacher, organized an Oct. 22 recruitment breakfast meeting, called the "Men of Carleton."

"This world is changing," Thomas said. "We rarely see men in the building. We see them drop off but we want them to stay. I think sometimes they're intimidated. They don't feel like they're needed."

The Carleton staff agreed that children feel great when their fathers are in the school and on field trips.

"Just your presence in the building," Harris said, "is going to encourage more young people than you know. You don't have to do everything but there's something you can do."

Darius Ellis, volunteering for his step child, was all in.

"I'm going to stick with it," he said. "I would enjoy it too."

What Goes Around Comes Around

By Pamela Shriman

Last month I shared with you a letter I wrote to the new principal of my school. In it I detailed my exasperation, hurt and anger at being kicked out of my kindergarten room and "thrown under the DPS bus."

The way our teachers with many years of loyal service and seniority were treated was not only unfair but without vision and humanity for the future of DPS students. When you treat someone poorly and are so short sighted only to consider the bottom line (2 Teach For America Teachers = 1 of Me) than sooner or later it may be regrettable.

Many of us whose careers were cut short will not get angry. We are professionals with faith. But the good deeds we want to do in the future will not benefit the students of Detroit. DPS will be the last one on our list.

When I was laid off, I went through a period of not believing it. I told friends and family, "I cannot believe I am not working." When I was laid off, so many people gave me compassion and sympathy and I am grateful for that. The amount of money unemployment paid me was miniscule, would not begin to pay my bills. Certainly if I had to pay Cobra, it would have been used up.

So I just retired. I retired earlier than I wanted. I retired with a smaller pension than I had planned. I retired with less savings. I retired without saying, "Wow, this is my last Halloween or African American month with the kids...." I had to retire for my own piece of mind. I found myself walking around like I had a big gunny sack of regrets. I lost my smile. I cried often. I felt like someone in severe grief mode!

DPS was NOT going to do THIS to ME!

I was fortunate to be old enough to collect Social Security, to have a husband with health care, and to be able to walk away from all the indignity my employer gave me. I was making myself so sick that I had to save myself. I was drowning and I had to swim to the top. I could not continue to fight a mean spirited entity that only knew me as a number on their Human Resources file. "Whoever Angers You Conquers You." I was not going to get conquered or more angry.

I commiserate and salute my brothers and sisters who are laid off and still in the fight. Many have no choice. They need health care. They cannot get Social Security. They need their jobs back!

What comes around goes around. I know that I will never volunteer with the alumni organization for my high school, Henry Ford, as I had planned. My hopes of doing great works for the Detroit Public Schools as a retiree are gone. The powers that be who decided to throw us away — the politicians in Lansing and the Emergency Manager — will find they won't be able to find a friend or helpful volunteer when they need one. Good only follows good. What comes around, goes around.

Detroit Teacher Still Devoted After Layoff Letter



Pictured at left: Cindy Hassenburg, an Einstein Fellow, Detroit teacher Connie Atkisson and student Suzan Shalhout in the Federal Senate Building in Washington D.C.

For DPS teacher Connie Atkisson, a lay off letter changed her life.

But she refused to leave her students behind after they achieved international acclaim for their science work. For more than seven years Atkisson worked with students at O. W. Holmes to bring science out of the book and into their lives. This summer was no exception even with a lay off letter looming over her head.

"I am always looking for organizations that will help me bring science into the world of my students," Atkisson said. "GLOBE was one of those science entities that provided materials, training and exposure for my students. We have participated in the Climate Change Campaign every December for several years." (Global Learning and Observation that Benefits Everyone) spans the globe and brings scientists and schools together around the world.

"As a GLOBE trained teacher, my goal is to introduce science concepts in the field and expose students to opportunities to explore career options and make science real to them," she said. "So many careers today are based in science and engineering and jobs go begging because students are not ade-

quately prepared for them, or even know they exist. Not so with these students!"

For several years, students from O. W. Holmes researched environmental topics, developed hypotheses and conducted research that they presented in science fairs and conferences in Ohio and Michigan. Seven students were featured in GLOBE's international journal last summer, which resulted in Atkisson and one student, Suzan Shalhout, being invited to the White House as guests during the White House Science Fair. Fully funded by the Department of Defense, both teacher and student were honored for their work in Detroit.

This summer three of those same students traveled to Minneapolis, Minnesota for the international GLOBE conference. Danielle Hill, Dania Talos, Suzan Shalhout and Atkisson traveled to the conference with all their posters, pictures, water samples, and test equipment to present their work to scientists and government leaders from 26 countries and 22 states.

"It was a thrill to represent Michigan for GLOBE and to know the students in Detroit are doing something this amazing," she said. Students worked alongside scientists conducting research on the campus of St. Katherine's University.

Atkisson was able to collaborate with scientists and government leaders from the Kingdom of Oman and Saudi Arabia to determine research topics on climate change and water quality.

3M was a major sponsor and presented each student with a \$300 camcorder projector. They were among the first students to be certified as GLOBE trained and able to enter REAL data as part of the scientific database GLOBE monitors and maintains worldwide.

After an exciting week in Minneapolis, Atkisson and Suzan were invited back to Washington D. C. to be honored at a Congressional Reception held in the federal Senate Building. This time Suzan would also present her work to experts from around the country.

Atkisson met with leaders from the National Science Foundation and the Einstein Fellows and developed ideas for future science projects with students. Where these students will be, remains to be seen.

"Science is my passion and I certainly have been able to transfer that love to my students wherever I have been." Atkisson said. "I want to see our students succeed, wherever they go."

AFT MICHIGAN ENDORSEMENTS

| | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|-----|----|---------------------|-----|-----|----------------------|-----|
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| 13 John Conyers, Jr* | DEM | 37 | Vicki Barnett* | DEM | 81 | Patrick Phelan | DEM |
| 14 Gary Peters* | DEM | 38 | Chuck Tindall | DEM | 82 | John Nugent | DEM |
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| 3 John Olumba* | DEM | 43 | Neil Billington | DEM | 87 | Mike Callton* | REP |
| 4 Rose Mary C. Robinson | DEM | 44 | Tom Crawford | DEM | 89 | Don Bergman | DEM |
| 5 Fred Durhal, Jr.* | DEM | 45 | Joanna VanRaaphorst | DEM | 91 | Collene Lamonte | DEM |
| 6 Rashida Tlaib* | DEM | 46 | Daniel W Sargent | DEM | 92 | Marcia Hovey-Wright* | DEM |
| 7 Thomas F Stallworth III* | DEM | 47 | Shawn Desai | DEM | 93 | Paul E Silva | DEM |
| 8 David E. Nathan* | DEM | 48 | Pam Faris | DEM | 94 | Judith Lincoln | DEM |
| 9 Harvey Santana* | DEM | 49 | Jim Ananich* | DEM | 95 | Stacy Erwin Oakes* | DEM |
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| 14 Paul Clemente* | DEM | 54 | David Rutledge* | DEM | 100 | Ida DeHaas | DEM |
| 15 George T. Darany* | DEM | 55 | Adam Zemke | DEM | 101 | Allen O'Shea | DEM |
| 16 Robert L. Kosowski | DEM | 56 | Larry Crider | DEM | 102 | Brendan P. Maturen | DEM |
| 17 Bill LaVoy | DEM | 57 | Jim Berryman | DEM | 103 | Lon Johnson | DEM |
| 18 Sarah Roberts | DEM | 58 | Amaryllis Thomas | DEM | 104 | Betsy Coffia | DEM |
| 20 Tim Roraback | DEM | 59 | Mike Moroz | DEM | 105 | William J. Wieske | DEM |
| | | 60 | Sean McCann* | DEM | 106 | Kenneth C Hubbard | DEM |
| | | 61 | Michael E Martin | DEM | 107 | Suzanne Shumway | DEM |
| | | 62 | Kate Segal* | DEM | 108 | Sharon Gray | DEM |
| | | 63 | Bill Farmer | DEM | 109 | John Kivela | DEM |
| | | 64 | Barbara Shelton | DEM | 110 | Scott Dianda | DEM |

* Incumbent

Position

Michigan Supreme Court (Partial-Term)

Michigan Supreme Court

Michigan Supreme Court

State Board of Education

State Board of Education

Michigan State University Board of Trustees

Michigan State University Board of Trustees

University of Michigan Board of Regents

University of Michigan Board of Regents

Wayne State University Board of Governors

Wayne State University Board of Governors

Name

Shelia Johnson DEM

Connie Marie Kelley DEM

Bridget Mary McCormack DEM

Michelle Fecteau DEM

Lupe Ramos-Montigny DEM

Joel Ferguson DEM

Brian Mosallam DEM

Mark Bernstein DEM

Shauna Ryder-Diggs DEM

Sandra Hughes-O'Brien DEM

Kim Trent DEM

Ballot Proposals:

Proposal 12-01 – Emergency Manager

Recommend a **NO** vote

Proposal 12-02 – Collective Bargaining

Recommend a **YES** vote

Proposal 12-03 – Clean Energy Proposal

Recommend a **YES** vote

Proposal 12-04 – Quality Home Health Care

Recommend a **YES** vote

Proposal 12-05 – Tax Proposal

Recommend a **NO** vote

Proposal 12-06 – Statewide Vote on Building Bridges

Recommend a **NO** vote

A complete list of endorsements is available on the AFT Michigan website – www.aftmichigan.org

Follow us at www.facebook.com/aftmichigan or twitter at www.twitter.com/aftmichigan

Grants . . .

Bio-Technology

Bio-Rad Laboratories sponsor the National Science Teachers Association (NSTA) Ron Mardigian Memorial Biotechnology Explorer Award. The award was created in memory of Ron Mardigian, who was the founder and inspiration for the Biotechnology Explorer program. NSTA will select an outstanding high school teacher who has made biotechnology accessible in the classroom to receive this award. The winner will receive \$250, a gift certificate of \$500 of Bio-Rad products, and \$750 in expenses to attend the NSTA National Conference on Science Education. Deadline: Nov. 30, 2012. For info, visit awards@nsta.org.

Geometry

The Mathematics Education Trust, the grant giving arm of the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, is offering a grant for preK-8 teachers to improve students' understanding of geometry. The grant supports teachers developing activities that help students comprehend geometry and applications to other fields such as art, music, literature, nature and other relevant areas. Grants up to \$4,000 are available. Deadline: Nov. 9, 2012. For info, visit nctm@nctm.org.

Math and Science

The National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, through the Mathematics Education Trust, is offering professional development funds for preK-5 math teachers. Grants up to \$3,000 are awarded to teachers to improve competence of math teaching. Deadline: Nov. 9, 2012. For info, visit nctm@nctm.org.

Math and Science

The National Science Teachers Association (NSTA) with Vernier Software & Technology is offering the Vernier Technology Awards for teachers of science in grades K-16. The awards recognize and encourage science teachers who are

using data-collection technology in an innovative way in the classroom. Grants up to \$3,000 in Vernier products are available. Deadline: Nov. 30, 2012. For info, visit awards@nsta.org.

Science Awards

The National Science Teachers Association will recognize three preK-12 teachers for excellence in science teaching. A \$1,500 grant and \$1,500 toward a trip to the National Conference on Science Education will be awarded. Deadline: Nov. 30, 2012. For info, visit awards@nsta.org.

Science Education

The National Science Teachers Association (NSTA) with sponsorship from Dow Chemical Company, honors an individual who has made significant contributions and shown leadership in science education through the Robert H. Carleton Award for National Leadership in the Field of Science Education. Funds up to \$5,000 and an all-expenses paid trip to National Conference on Science Education are available. Deadline: Nov. 30, 2012. For info, visit awards@nsta.org.

Math

The National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) is offering a grant supported by the Theoni Pappas fund for teachers in high school who connect math to other subject areas. Grants up to \$4,000 will go to the winning teachers. Deadline: Nov. 9, 2012. For more info, visit nctm@nctm.org.

Kids Gardening

Through generous support from Home Depot Gardening Club, the National Gardening Association and Kidsgardening.org are able to offer the Youth Garden Grant Award again this year. The grants of gift cards worth up to \$1,000 are meant to support schools or youth groups that garden with children between ages three and 18. Deadline: Dec.

3, 2012. For info, visit <http://grants.kidsgardening.org>.

Children in Need

The Toy Industry Foundation invites proposals that meet its goal of bringing joy, comfort and learning to children in need through play. Educational organizations that enrich the lives and further the wellbeing of children or families in need through play are invited to apply for varying amounts of funds. Deadline: ongoing. For info, visit mmedina@toyindustryfoundation.org.

Elementary Reading

The International Reading Association is offering its annual IRA/Weekly Reader Eleanor M. Johnson Award to honor an excellent educator who teaches reading and language arts to students in an elementary classroom. The prize of \$1,000 is sponsored by the Weekly Reader, and the winner will be expected to attend the IRA annual convention. Eligible educators must be working in the field of teaching reading and language arts for at least five years. Deadline: ongoing. For info, visit committees@reading.org.

Early Literacy

Children's book author Bruce Larkin, with support from Wilbooks, offers travel grants to help finance attendance at literacy conferences for early childhood literacy professionals. Grants up to \$200 are intended to help pay for educator's travel expenses to the International Reading Association or Reading Recovery conferences. Deadline: ongoing. For info, visit www.wilbooks.com/scholarships/travelagent.php.



Is the Financial Emergency Over?

By Mark O'Keefe
DFT Controller

When the state appointed an Emergency Financial Manager for the Detroit Public Schools in 2009, the deficit was \$218 million. If that did not constitute a financial emergency, the \$109 million deficit reported for the 2010 fiscal year certainly removed any doubt.

Since that time, the district's operating results have been exemplary. After reporting a \$43 million operating surplus for the 2011 fiscal year, the district is expected to report a surplus of \$11 million for the 2012 fiscal year.

The operating surpluses for the last two years, along with a debt restructuring program have reduced the district's cumulative deficit from \$327 million, to \$73 million. With the district over two years ahead of schedule on its deficit elimination plan, one has to wonder, "When will the emergency be over?"



Mark O'Keefe

You would be hard-pressed to find any governmental entity that has produced the kind of surpluses reported by DPS over the last two years. By definition, an emergency requires immediate action. After three years, all actions have been taken, the annual deficits have been turned into surpluses, and all logic would indicate that the financial emergency is over.

DPS should be commended. So should the DFT because these savings came out of the 2009 contract we negotiated. The emergency is over.

So why do we still have an EM? Benton Harbor has had one for 12 years. Is it a way of life? Is it job security for the EM? Is it fear of returning control of the school district to the citizens of Detroit? Or does the state want to ensure a steady supply of schools to the EAA?

The law provides that the financial emergency is not over until the state treasurer determines it is over. If you don't like those rules, you have a chance to change them. Proposal 1 would invalidate P.A. 4, the Emergency Manager law.

If you called 911, and three years later they said they were still working on it wouldn't you do something about it? Here is your chance.

DFT Ballots Being Mailed

For the first time, DFT members will get their ballots for the DFT Election of Officers in the mail. The Department of Labor requires a paper ballot for officer elections in case a recount is required. Look for your ballot in the mail around Nov. 15. The ballots will be mailed to your home address on record with the district. If you don't receive a ballot by Nov. 20 and feel you are eligible to vote, please call the DFT dues clerk at 313-875-3500, then press 6. Ballots must be in the Post Office Box by 5 p.m. Nov. 30. The ballots will be counted on Dec. 1.

We're on

Facebook!

Check us out at

www.facebook.com/DFT231

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.

November

- 8 DFT Executive Board Meeting, 4:30 p.m.
- 12 Veteran's Day, Half day of school
- 15 General Membership Meeting, 4:30
- 20 DFT Retirees Chapter Meeting, 11:30 a.m.
- 22-23 Schools Closed, Thanksgiving

December

- 6 Executive Board Meeting, 4:30 p.m.
- 11 Retiree Chapter Holiday Lunch, 11:30 a.m.
- 13 General Membership Meeting, 4:30 p.m.
- 24-28 Schools Closed, Christmas Break