

THE DETROIT teacher

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Enough is Enough!



OUR FIRST VICTORY

Interim President



Ivy
Bailey

Emergency Manager Darnell Earley called me a few days ago with good news for DFT members. This was a long time coming.

When I first came into this office as executive vice president, the DFT leadership was not meeting face-to-face with the folks downtown. The leadership here felt the best strategy was issuing demands on paper.

But I had been attending meetings with the DFT coalition of unions, health-care representatives, and lawyers about the proposed health care cuts. Initially, Earley was not at the table.

The district was proposing \$6.7 million in health care cuts. And to save another \$1 million, they proposed taking

away a paid holiday!

At first we were not even involved in these talks. A breakthrough came after we asked for help and AFT assisted with a media blitz! We also got a small contingent of members to wear black, don surgical masks and gloves, and walk to Earley's office.

On that day I left him a message that said, "I know you have a plan and a vision. How can we follow it if we don't know what it is?" Soon after, Earley began to attend meetings.

We started talking about our everyday issues and the members' concerns. We talked about the way principals are treating teachers. We talked about the way Marzano, a private company, is presenting professional development. We talked about the two-hour staff meetings and wasting people's time on Friday common preps. We talked about how secretaries wouldn't be able to afford health care at all.

We talked about the negative culture and atmosphere in the district.

We met in more than a half-dozen meetings to talk about these issues and more. I believe we need to be at the table

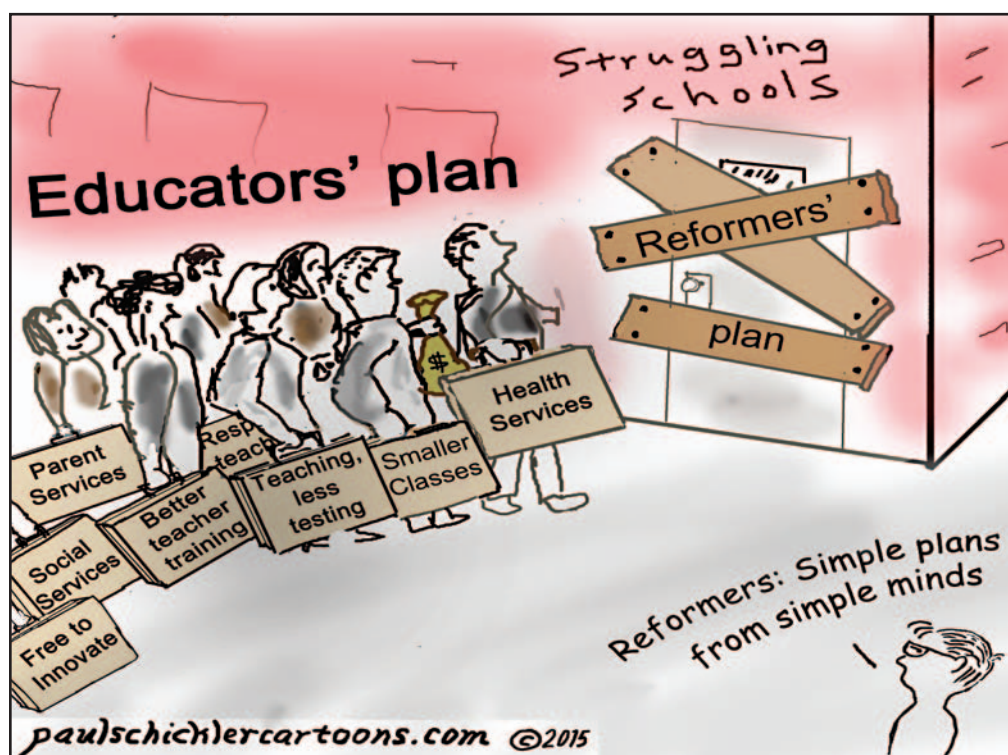
and on the streets. We need local actions like a couple dozen members wearing surgical masks to the Fisher Building, and large-scale actions like last week's hugely successful rally in Lansing, which drew 2,700. We need Solidarity Fridays. We need not one playlist but a dozen different strategies.

Though health care is still undecided, our negotiations whittled down the proposed cuts from \$6.7 million to \$1.7 million.

By meeting us, perhaps the EM saw the real people we are. We just told our stories and told him the stories of our members. We tried to bring the members' voices to the table.

I believe if a person is trying to give you something you don't want, he'd rather not have to do it face-to-face. Taking a holiday from us was hurtful both to our pockets and our morale. The coalition talked a lot about that.

Last week I got the call from Earley that the threat of taking away one paid holiday was taken off the table. This is our first success as a mobilized union. I'm looking forward to having many more!



THE DETROIT teacher

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Updates . . .

Retirements Announced

DFT members Jacqueline Logan and Kathy Hemingway have announced their retirements. If you have retired in the last six months and would like it announced, please call the editor at 313-875-6776.

Michigan School Social Worker of the Year



Kim Travis-Ewing, a DPS school social worker, recently was named the Michigan School Social Worker of the Year for Region D by the Michigan Association of School Social Workers. Travis-Ewing has a long history of presenting, bringing important workshops to parents and children, and union activism. She is pictured above in the center of her colleagues, Detroit school social workers.

2015-16 DFT General Membership Meetings

| | |
|----------|----------|
| Dec. 10 | April 14 |
| Jan. 14 | May 12 |
| Feb. 11 | June 9 |
| March 10 | |

2015-16 Retiree Chapter Meetings

| | |
|---------|----------|
| Dec. 8 | April 12 |
| Jan. 12 | May 10 |
| Feb. 9 | June 14 |
| March 8 | |

The Value of a One-On-One Conversation

As we know, there are a lot of things happening with education in the City of Detroit. And DFT members are primarily affected by it. Proposals are coming out of Lansing to fix our looming debt. Rumors are running rampant about what these proposals might contain. Through all this rhetoric, we still hear the voice of our members.



TERRENCE MARTIN
DFT Ex. Vice President

It's important to understand what our message and strategy is, what we will unite behind, and what we will support. It's also important to know what we will reject.

We certainly want the debt to be paid. We can't go on with this huge problem hanging over our schools and our children. The debt diverts \$1,200 per student from education to paying off our loans. While fixing it, we are reminded that teachers did not cause the debt. State control and emergency management did not solve it. In fact, prior to state control, DPS had a surplus.

This is where the importance of a one-on-one conversation comes in. You can talk to your neighbors, friends and colleagues about what's fair for education in Detroit.

Now that 2,700 of our members and sister union members went to Lansing, we showed strength and solidarity behind our convictions. Now we are strong. You came out because: "Enough is enough!"

Having those conversations by writing a note to your legislature, picking up the phone, or stopping in the supermarket to chat will make a difference. We need to tell everyone that teachers are still engaged, and giving their all, in spite of very trying circumstances.

We are not the culprit for the financial mismanagement but we have paid for it. There are other districts (Waterford, Chippewa Valley, and Plymouth-Canton) that receive a lower foundation allowance than DPS, but manage to pay their teachers at least \$10,000 more. Folks mismanaged the money. But teachers kept doing their jobs.

There is hope and we need the support of those folks who aren't in our schools, but forming opinions about them all the same.

Start a conversation today.

FMLA, Sick Days, Organizing and More

The DFT Building Reps convened at the IBEW Hall on Nov. 6, a Friday night, to talk the Family and Medical Leave Act, grievances, Worker's Compensation, organizing and much more. Bill Bogel, the DPS director of leave management, outlined the rights and limits of the FMLA law. He emphasized that after using seven sick days in a year, it can be counted against your evaluation. The building reps also learned how the DFT is mobilizing its members and the community to stand behind us in these trying times. We are on the move and the muscle.



DFT Trustee Rahjinah Johnson and DFT Executive Board Member LaShawn Sims attend the Nov. 6 Building Rep Workshop.

We're on
Facebook!

www.facebook.com/DFT231

THE DETROIT teacher NEWSMAKERS



Adra Young, a sixth-grade teacher at Ronald Brown Academy, made sure she got her allotment of free books from the First Book giveaway on Oct. 24. Then she took a photo of her students with their free books. "They were excited about the books," she said. Thanks go out to the DFT, AFT Detroit, AFT and the First Book organization.

A New View of Rats

Carver STEM Academy's social studies teacher Meredith Summer has started an Animal Club at the school. The first animals are ... rats. This new adventure came just in time for Halloween.

"Many myths were dispelled today about this poor, misunderstood animal," Summer said as she introduced the rodents. "Domestic rats are clean, intelligent and friendly little animals."

The students took to them quite well.

"Even some teachers changed their views," Summer said.



Summer Opportunities to Plan Now

By Bill Bowles
Western International High School

Among the assaults to DPS teachers' professionalism are the mandatory torture sessions called professional development. Our employer pays untold millions to private companies who hire presenters on "standards-based assessment" to turn our failing schools into "engines of incremental growth."

To find true PD you have to look outside our system.

Below are four worthwhile teacher-learning experiences in which I have participated.

- National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Programs in the Humanities for School and College Educators: A dizzying menu of funded seminars spanning almost every area of the humanities await you. Indulge in lectures, discussions and site visits guided by the best scholars in their fields. Last summer, I participated in a four-week NEH seminar called "Re-thinking the Gilded Age and Progressive Era" at the University of Illinois in Chicago. Site visits included Chicago's former meat packing district, the Jane Addams Hull-House Museum, the Pullman Historic District, walking tours and library and museum visits. Chicago, what a town! Postings for summer 2016 will be available soon at neh.gov.

- So you thought you knew all about Korea? Well, you don't. Any K-12 teacher or administrator can apply to the Korea Academy for Educators (KAFE). This is a week-long immer-



Western teacher Bill Bowles visits the Baha'i Temple near Chicago.

sion into all things Korean (food, history, music, art, martial arts, and religion). It is fully funded, including your flight. Led by Korean-American author Helie Lee, this takes place in "Koreatown" in Los Angeles. You will learn about the Korean language, create art, dress up in traditional outfits, read Helie's riveting biography and much more – all designed to be integrated into your classroom lessons. Apply at koreaacademy.org.

- Do you think the study economics is just for nerds? Not when you're taking teacher programs at the Foundation for Teaching Economics. Taught by engaging teachers and professors, these funded week-long classes offer graduate credit hours for a nominal fee. I have participated in two: Forces in Economic History and Economics for Leaders. Both were excellent. Learn more at fte.org.

- For a wonderful PD closer to home, try the World History and Literature Initiative at the University of Michigan. Spanning three days in June, history and language arts teachers are taken on a journey of world history and literature. Pedagogy is headed by Bob Bain, Associate Professor of Educational Studies and Associate Professor in the Department of History. Bain, a former award-winning history teacher, has been integral in bringing Big History to classrooms (school.bighistoryproject.com). This is riveting stuff that you will use immediately with your students. SCHECHs available. Send an email to worldhistory@umich.edu.

Ask one of our PD presenters if they can tell you anything about the Japanese occupation of Korea, the life of Jane Addams, the role of the Federal Reserve or the origins of our universe. They likely cannot. But they will inform you about 21st century evidence-based skills like scaffolding and formative assessment on a norm-referenced test.

Happy studying!



Thinking Pink

Priest School took a solidarity picture in October to support breast cancer awareness month. More than two dozen DFT members and other union staff donned pink to bring cancer awareness to the school community.

40,000 Free Books for Detroiters

Detroit kids, parents, and teachers had their pick of 40,000 free books on Oct. 24, thanks to the DFT and its sister unions.

A truck delivered the books to the AFSCME Council 25 warehouse on West Lafayette. Union members took two days to unpack and sort them all.

DPS staff members were invited to take up to 40 books and parents could choose up to eight books to take home.

Rhema Davis, a parent at Thurgood Marshall, was beaming at the warehouse of books.

"This is awesome." Her 6-year-old daughter, Rhiel, had a stack of books.

"My daughter loves reading," she said. "She's been reading since I put a book in her lap." The books added to her personal library of 150 books.

Detroit teen and avid reader Avondrick Hackwort, 14, browsed the titles.

"This is my first time hearing about it," he said. "I had to choose a couple books for school. I just always liked reading."

This is the third time the DFT has partnered with AFT and First Book, which acquires and redistributes excess new books from publishing houses. The first truckload brought 70,000 books in 2013. A second delivery that year provided bilingual books for students and families in southwest Detroit. The DFT worked with the Detroit Association of Educational Office Employees, the Detroit Federation of Paraprofessionals, AFSCME, and the Office of School Administrators and Supervisors.



Questions Remain Over Governor's Plan

Gov. Snyder held a press conference regarding the future of education in Detroit. We anticipate legislation soon, and will need your help to stand up for a public education system that provides the best possible outcomes for our students in Detroit and across the state.

AFT Michigan will continue to fight for our values and principles of equity and democracy, including communicating with decision makers and the public to ensure our voices are heard. I wanted you to see the statement we sent out, as well as a summary of the Governor's proposal:



DAVID HECKER

“We have needed to stabilize education in Detroit for a long time, and addressing the Detroit Public Schools financial crisis is an imperative step. Obviously we are

pleased to hear solutions where the state would take responsibility for the DPS debt, which has grown considerably under state control.”

“But the Governor’s plan also calls for the type of state control we’ve seen in Detroit for nearly two decades. We have deep concerns about what happens to the thousands of hard-working people employed by the Detroit Public Schools and their collective bargaining agreements during the transition to a new district. The Governor needs to commit to making the governance transition seamless for students, teachers, and staff, returning EAA schools to DPS, and fully empowering an elected school board. We will continue to work with our community partners to ensure the final legislation truly builds the strong schools and strong communities our students deserve.”

Below is a summary of what Gov. Snyder addressed during his press conference:

1. **State Takes Responsibility for Detroit Public Schools Debt:** The governor’s proposal calls for the creation of the Detroit Community School District (NewCo), which would take on the responsibility of educating Detroit students while the accumulated debt would remain with Detroit Public Schools (OldCo).

a. **GOVERNANCE:** Per the Governor’s plan, the Detroit Community School District would have a board that would initially include four members appointed by the governor and three members appointed by the mayor. Over five years, these appointed positions would be replaced through elections. AFT Michigan, as part of the Coalition for the Future of Detroit Schoolchildren, asserts that the city of Detroit should have an elected school board like any other district. Furthermore, the Governor’s proposal does not address the return of Educational

Achievement Authority schools to the city school district.

b. **FUNDING:** "OldCo" would continue to collect local property tax for the purposes of paying off the debt. "NewCo" would be funded by the state, which would make up for the loss of local property taxes, allowing the new district to receive the full amount of the per-pupil allotment. The governor calls for this additional money to come from the School Aid Fund, which would likely cost approximately \$50 per student from districts across the state. AFT Michigan does not support this method of paying off the debt. After the DPS debt is paid off, "OldCo" would be dissolved and local property taxes will be transferred to the "NewCo."

c. **JOB SECURITY:** The governor’s proposal does not guarantee the transfer of all employees to "NewCo" and there is no specific requirement that the Detroit Community School District honor collective bargaining agreements and serve as the successor employer to Detroit Public Schools. Even worse, the governor’s proposal allows for the outsourcing and privatization of instructional staff. AFT Michigan is in constant conversations with legislators and stakeholders to ensure that dedicated staff maintain their employment and there is no privatization.

2. **Rationalizing the Education Landscape in Detroit:** The Governor would place all traditional public, charter and EAA schools in the city of Detroit within an Empowerment Zone governed by a board called the Detroit Education Commission, managed by a Chief Education Officer, and charged with crafting citywide facilities, enrollment, and accountability plans.

a. **DETROIT EDUCATION COMMISSION (DEC):** The DEC would be a five-member board, with three members appointed by the governor and two members appointed by the mayor. AFT Michigan believes local community voice is essential and should be included in this process.

b. **CHIEF EDUCATION OFFICER:** The DEC would hire a Chief Education Officer, who is responsible for creating and incorporating community input into the Zone Accountability Plan (an A-F grading system for measuring school success, based primarily on student test scores), the Zone Facilities Plan (siting schools), and the Zone Enrollment plan (a voluntary lottery-based common enrollment system). The CEO would be responsible for closing or reconstituting schools.

We will keep you updated as the situation develops.

David Hecker,
AFT Michigan President

We Did It In Lansing!

DFT members have had enough.

Some 2,700 members of DFT and DPS unions went to Lansing Nov. 3. More than 71 schools were represented there and at the Fisher Building in the afternoon.

John Cook, a 22-year DPS teacher from Schulze, carried his hand-made sign: "Why Don't Teachers Trust Snyder? Flint."

"My heart goes out to the Flint students," he said. "They're paying the price for the oversight Snyder did in his state. Now he's dishing out money that could have totally been avoided.

Heads should be rolling. That's why we don't trust him."

The rally in Lansing boasted the largest turnout in a decade. Clearly Cook's frustration resonates with the people on the front line of Detroit classrooms. They came with terse signs and comfortable walking shoes. The numbers were so great, there was a continual march around the triad of sidewalks from the capitol steps.



"In 1999 a lot of people feared the new millennium would bring the end of the world," DFT member William Weir told the crowd. "The world is still here but the apocalypse of DPS of that year began when Gov. Engler signed PA 10, which took power from the elected school board. The reason for this action was because of DPS's declining enrollment and poor test scores."

But Weir emphasized that the district had a \$100 million surplus and a \$1.2 billion bond for building and refurbishing schools. Weir said the slow decline of DPS began "under the control of the four DPS horsemen known as Robert Bobb, Roy Roberts, Jack Martin and Darnell Earley." They did nothing but increase the debt and keep their drivers and body guards.

The DFT showed our power when state rep after state rep came out to address the crowd and stand with us in our fight to keep our wages and healthcare.

"It's time to make folks accountable for their actions," said State Rep. Morris Hood. "When we see our kids hurt, we've got to do something about it.

"This isn't rocket science, take care of each other and we'll be alright."

In the afternoon, circling the Fisher Building, members reconnected, reunited, and determined to rebuild the DFT.

"We finally realized," said teacher Patti McCain, "that the union is us."



Solidarity on Friday and Every Day

The Durfee Elementary School staff showed its solidarity on Friday, Oct. 9. The DFT members wore their "United We Bargain - Divided We Beg" buttons and united for a photo in front of the school marquee. The DFT and our sister unions are finding creative ways to show solidarity to begin negotiations for a new contract in June. The DFT contract expires on July 1.

CALENDAR

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

December

- 3** DFT Executive Board Meeting, 4:30 p.m.
- 8** Retiree Chapter Holiday Luncheon, Breithaupt Career & Technical Center, 9300 Hubbell, Detroit, 11:30 a.m.
- 10** General Membership Meeting, 4:30 p.m. IBEW Hall, 1358 Abbott
- 21-31** Schools Closed, Winter Break

**DFT Website
has up-to-date
information**

www.DFT231.com