

SCHAUER TO DFT:

Educators and Parents Have Most Important Job in Michigan

Mark Schauer, the Democratic candidate for Michigan governor, bounced into the DFT membership meeting Sept. 11, proud to be among teachers. He was unequivocal about his support for teachers and unions.

"Being the son and grandson of public school teachers, you would not be able to stop me from coming in," he said. "I am so proud to be here."

Schauer said he would elevate education to his top priority as governor and get DPS out from under emergency management, which proved only to grow the deficit and blame Detroit teachers for the lack of administration's budgetary foresight.

Schauer came to the IBEW hall fresh from the DFT's victory to stop a proposed 10 percent pay cut. The candidate rejoiced in the membership's mobilization to stand up to the latest attack.

"You averted an additional 10 percent wage cut for your members. It was a miracle.

"You know more than anyone in the state that teachers are making less than they did five, 10 years ago," he said. "You've been beaten down, disrespected, vilified when you should be put on a pedestal."

Schauer said he wants to stop the practice of emergency managers and put the state's schools — especially

Detroit's — on a more promising path, starting with respecting teachers.

"Thank you for what you do for kids and for the most important profession in society."



Top photo left to right: DFT Executive Vice President Edna Reaves, Democratic candidate for governor Mark Schauer and DFT President Keith Johnson. Photo at right: AFT Michigan President David Hecker, Mark Schauer and Edna Reaves.



CURRENT TEACHER SHORTAGE IS EARLY WARNING SIGN FOR DPS

As of Friday, Sept. 26, DPS had 158 vacant teaching positions, even in Social Studies and English where there is rarely a shortage. In desperation, the district temporarily reassigned at least 107 Instructional Specialists, Literacy Coaches and other personnel to classrooms to ensure stability as we head into the all too critical "Count Day."

President's Report



**Keith
Johnson**

As much as DPS lamented the fact that the early retirement incentive, ESP, did not attract the desired number of separations (target number was 600-700), that may have been our saving grace. Imagine how catastrophic it would have been had another 300-400 vacancies occurred at the start of the school year. Housing students in auditoriums and lunchrooms, or stuffing 50-60 students in a classroom, is certainly not going to draw parents to "See it Believe it" when it comes to educating their children.

I would like to acknowledge and thank the administrators for not thinking that going into a classroom to actually TEACH was beneath them. Many of them stepped up and stood out in helping their staffs to cover classes and deliver instruction.

I also want to thank the counselors and other DFT members who stepped up, including teachers who housed 40 plus students in their classrooms, gave up preps and went above and beyond to make lemonade out of bad lemons.

There are several contributing factors as to why this chaos occurred, but I will focus on a couple of them.

In anticipation of a larger acceptance of the retirement incentive, DPS engaged in teacher recruitment activities throughout the summer. In fact a number of positions were accepted by the new recruits. However, when the Emergency Manager announced in August that to address the mounting deficit he was going to implement an ADDITIONAL 10 percent wage cut and INCREASE CLASS SIZE many of them said "thanks but no thanks."

On top of this, DPS restructured our healthcare, in a move that amounts to a pay cut (a move we are actively challenging). There are no raises forthcoming, and salary steps are frozen. These are deterrents to teacher recruitment, not attractions.

The worst, however, may be on the horizon. Over the next couple of years a number of teachers in Detroit are sure to retire, incentives or not. They have already seen the highest salary level of their careers and have nothing to gain by working any longer than absolutely necessary. They will either retire from DPS or resign if other school districts, including higher-paying charters, extend offers to them.

Younger members, seeing the futility in remaining with DPS, will cer-

tainly seek opportunities in suburban school districts as they replenish an aging teaching force. The difference between this group and those eligible for retirement is they have yet to top their earning potential and fail to see how that will occur by remaining with DPS.

Newer teachers will not accept remaining at Step 1, 2, or 3 for an undetermined amount of time when they can see an immediate opportunity elsewhere.

In the end, unless DPS developed a way to incentivize teachers to stay, what we experienced at the start of this year will pale by comparison to what happens next year and beyond.

The restoration of steps and a meaningful pay raise is paramount to our ability to attract and retain teachers. The alternative will be to lower our hiring standards or endure shortages.

Our students, our parents, our profession deserve more than that.

THE DETROIT
teacher

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Updates . . .

Perfect Attendance Bonus for Building Reps

The DFT approved a \$100 perfect attendance bonus for building reps whose schools are represented at every General Membership meeting from October 2014 through June 2015.

This is being implemented to:

- Help ensure that we have a quorum at our membership meetings,
- Ensure that information provided at meetings is communicated to members at schools,
- Ensure that members have an opportunity to have their concerns brought to membership meetings,
- Provide an incentive to serve as a building rep,
- Provide a stipend for service.

Building reps must sign in for each meeting. Sign in sheets will be used to verify attendance prior to payment of the bonus.

A list of members attending will be printed each month in the Detroit Teacher. Be sure to notify the DFT immediately if there are any omissions.

When a building rep is unable to personally attend, he or she will still be eligible for the bonus as long as someone from the building attends the membership meeting and signs in.

The bonus will be paid at the June meeting in the form of a gift card. It is left to the individual building representative's discretion as to whether and how the bonus will be shared with any members who helped cover meetings the rep was unable to personally attend.

This concept was approved by the executive board in June and included in the budget. Approval of details was held until the October executive board meeting to verify that our dues income would be received as budgeted.

Retirements Announced

The following DFT members have announced their retirements: Shirley Campbell, Donna Pope-Johnson, Pamela Latimore, and Teresa Webb. If you have retired in the last six months and would like it announced, please call the editor at 313-875-6776.

Act Now or Pay Later

By Edna Reaves, Executive Vice President

We need to act now or we will spend decades trying to undo what will be done to us for years. This was the message from AFLCIO National President Richard Trumka Friday night.

Whether we are talking about time or money, if we don't get involved in this mid-term election we will pay dearly for years to come.

The governor's race is practically a dead heat. We will win, however, if the voters who usually skip the midterm elections turn out to vote. The special interest groups with deep pockets will pour millions of dollars trying to influence the election over the next few

weeks. They can buy ads, but they can't buy our vote. We just need to exercise our vote and we win.

There was a time when we would remind ourselves of the sacrifice that our ancestors made in order for us to vote. Now all we have to do is look around us. We are under attack. Our voice is being silenced by emergency managers, right-to-work (for less) laws, and special interest groups who are trying to eliminate the middle class. Let's remind this administration that we haven't forgotten they took away our voice once. Now we WILL take away their power with our vote.

If we turn out all of our members, friends, and family, we can win this election without question. It's time to take action! Call our office, the AFT Michigan's office, or the AFLCIO's office to volunteer on a phone bank or knock on doors to encourage citizens to get out to vote. If each of our nearly 3,900 members volunteer one hour between now and Nov. 4, we can make a difference.

Here's the direct impact on us from lack of time spent volunteering and low voter turnout in the last midterm election:

- 10 percent wage cut imposed by the appointed emergency manager
- 3 percent imposed health care trust paycheck deduction
- 4 percent retirement deductions
- 3 percent deduction for retirement health care
- 20 percent employee payment of health care cost
- Increased taxes on teachers' pensions

Things are bad now. If we don't elect people who care about the working class, things will get worse. We have to act now or we will pay later. Take action now! Don't wake up on Nov. 5 wishing you had done more.



Edna Reaves, DFT executive vice president, with AFLCIO National President Richard Trumka at the Solidarity Dinner.

Putting TIP to Bed

By Mark O'Keefe, Controller

In 2009, the district's answer to solving its financial problems was to propose a 10 percent pay cut. (Amazing how little has changed.)

During the first two years, the pay cut would have cost members at Master's step 10 \$14,503.20 that they would never have gotten back. Instead, the union proposed the Termination Incentive Plan (TIP), which provided that members have \$10,000 taken from their pay in biweekly deductions of \$250. The contract language provided for a Termination Incentive that allowed members to get their money back when they separated from service.



Mark O'Keefe

Although the contract language was approved by DFT members, it was very unpopular. Some members questioned whether the district would really have imposed the threatened 10 percent cut. Those of us who were at the bargaining table knew they would have. The rest of the members found out how true this was when the state appointed Emergency Manager was given the power to impose a cut. He did in fact impose the 10 percent cut along with every other cut they tried to get through negotiations. He also canceled the last four TIP payments, leaving the maximum total at \$9,000.

The other objection to TIP was a concern over whether the district would ever repay it. At the time we expressed confidence that it would be repaid, but also said, "A \$10,000 cut that you might get back is still better than a \$14,000 cut that you won't get back."

Furthermore, the contract language allows members to roll their TIP contributions into their 403(b) accounts, which they can use to buy years of service from the retirement system. This has allowed many members to retire earlier, and to increase their pensions by about \$1,000 per year. A member who retires at age 60 and lives to 85 can turn her \$9,000 TIP account into over \$25,000 in pension income.

Concerns over repayment of TIP have been answered. Thousands of our members have left the district and have received their TIP money. The district tried to deny payment to members who were terminated. We challenged this, won our arbitration case, and got checks for all members who had been denied.

Given the accuracy of our predictions on repayment, and the irrefutable logic of the argument that the certainty of losing over \$14,000 is worse than the possibility of losing \$10,000, I was surprised to recently hear a member complaining about TIP.

In order to put TIP to bed once and for all, I will make the following offer to all DFT members: I will buy your TIP account now for the full \$9,000, if you pay me the \$14,503.20 pay cut you would have endured without TIP. Rather than swapping checks, you can just send me a check for the net amount, \$5,503.20.

If you think this is a bad deal for you, it can mean only one thing. TIP was better than the alternative.

October is Respect Month

By Ron Seigel

In Detroit October has been proclaimed "Respect Month," an occasion for adults with influence over young people to talk with them about respect.

To commemorate this occasion, I am submitting this article for young people. Teachers can put it up on their bulletin boards and use it for their subjects, discussing, for instance, how a group in history or a character in literature struggled for respect or denied it to others.

Though this was written for kids, it is relevant to people of all ages. Anyone interested in other free suggestions on how to emphasize areas in their subject, can call the Respect Month Committee at (313) 728-2350 and we will send you material. Above all, remember such ideas and this article itself are relevant every month of the year.

EXPECT RESPECT!

STAND TALL!

We all face anger and pain when we are denied respect, when others put us down.

Some of us face continued disrespect. It may be because of our race, our religion, our family's income, the clothes we wear, having a disability, because we are considered too short, too tall, too fat or too thin, because we are female or male. It can be for any reason, no matter how silly.

Sometimes when we face disrespect, it feels more than just mockery or rejection by individual human beings. We may feel as if we were rejected by the entire world, the universe, by reality, and feel we are an inappropriate part of it. We begin to reject ourselves, even to hate ourselves. When that happens, we have to free ourselves from such feelings and find strength within ourselves, so we are not dominated by the attitudes of others.

Some people seek respect for themselves by showing disrespect for others. They want to get acceptance by hurting others – to stand tall by tearing them down. Some have been brainwashed into believing this makes them strong or it is a part of manhood. Don't fall into this trap.

STAND TALL AND HELP OTHERS TO STAND TALL!

Let's try to get more respect into the atmosphere. Show respect for your neighborhood and city and people all around the world. Let's come together and make things better for everyone.

Detroit Pistons Makes its Mark on Carver Library

Patriaka Rossell was looking through the DPS website when she spotted a contest for a library makeover. It required taking "before" photos.



"That's all we have to do?" she thought. "I can do that. I love to take pictures. I'm the school's photographer."

The photos launched a grant bid for a library makeover contest sponsored by the Detroit Pistons and Farm Bureau Insurance.

Rossell's school, Carver STEM Academy on the far west side, won the contest. Earlier this summer work started on cleaning and painting, and replacing the shelves and furniture. The media center features bold grays and reds. It has an upscale locker room feel, bleachers for students to assemble, and orange basketball beanbag chairs.

The Detroit Pistons and Farm Bureau Insurance staged the big reveal on Sept. 25 to students, staff and parents. Rossell took center stage, a position the 18-year teacher doesn't relish.



"I like the behind the scenes," she said. "I love children and I want them to be in an environment conducive to learning."

While renovations were underway, the workers asked teachers if

they wanted any painting in their rooms.



"Don't threaten me with a good time," Rossell said.

Soon Rossell's classroom was painted pale yellow

and bright blue. The workers also cleaned and repaired all of her window shades.

"I'm indebted to them. They did such a great job."

Nominations Open for DFT Election 2014 Calendar for Biennial Election of DFT Officers, Executive Board Members and Trustees

- **Oct. 9:** MEMBERSHIP MEETING. List of nominees posted and additional nominations will be accepted from the floor. NOMINATIONS CLOSED as last order of business.
- **Oct. 13:** Notice sent to those nominated with request for acceptance and statement for Special Election Edition of the DETROIT TEACHER.
- **Oct. 20:** Second notice to nominees who have not responded.
- **Oct. 27:** DEADLINE FOR ACCEPTANCES AND STATEMENTS. Must be in PO Box by 4 p.m. or hand delivered to the DFT office by 5 p.m.
- **Oct. 28:** List of eligible candidates sent to each candidate and to schools for posting. Notice sent to candidates who did not send a statement for the DETROIT TEACHER that no information will be printed.
- **Nov. 6:** DEADLINE FOR FILING GRIEVANCES on nominations and acceptances. Grievance(s) heard by Election Committee and Executive Board.
- **Nov. 13:** Grievance appeal(s) to membership.
- **Nov. 17:** VOTING BEGINS. Ballots mailed to members' homes.
- **Nov. 30:** VOTING ENDS. All ballots must be postmarked by Nov. 30..
- **Dec. 6:** Ballots counted.

New Study Finds Retention Reduces Odds of Graduation

An article released by Social Forces titled, “The Scarring Effects of Primary-Grade Retention? A Study of Cumulative Advantage in the Educational Career” by Megan Andrew explores the effect of scarring in the educational career in the case of primary-grade retention. Just as is the case for labor-market careers, events early in the educational career can leave lasting scars. Through the study, Andrew finds that primary-grade retention has lasting effects on educational attainments well after

a student is initially retained: Retaining a child in early primary school reduces his or her odds of high school completion by about 60 percent in propensity score matching and sibling fixed-effects models.

These results suggest that the scarring effects of primary-grade retention operate mainly at high school completion—despite previous findings to the contrary. Based on the research here, grade retention in primary school leaves lasting scars on students' educational careers, lowering the odds of completing a high school credential with the best hopes for recovery relatively early in the educational career. Given the advent, maturation, and extension of a high-stakes environment in US education, it is important to understand the implications of potential triggering events in the educational career often tied to singular indicators of ability.

Megan Andrew is an assistant professor of sociology in the Center for Research on Educational Opportunities at the University of Notre Dame. Her primary research interests lie in the inter-generational and social psychological sources of young adults' educational and health attainments.

School Social Worker DFT Chapter Meeting Dates

(DFT Office, 7700 Second Ave., Suite 427)

Oct. 7, 2014
Nov. 18, 2014
Dec. 2, 2014
Jan. 13, 2015
Feb. 10, 2015
March 10, 2015
April 14, 2015
May 12, 2015
June 2, 2015

DFT Retiree Chapter Meeting Dates

(Triumph Church, 2760 E. Grand Blvd at I-75)

Oct. 21, 2014
Nov. 18, 2014
Dec. 16, 2014
(Holiday Luncheon TBA)
Jan. 20, 2015
Feb. 17, 2015
March 17, 2015
April 21, 2015
May 19, 2015
June 16, 2015

Teen Conference:

Leaders of Tomorrow



October 18, 2014

8:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Charles H. Wright Museum
of African American History

315 E Warren Ave,
Detroit, MI 48202

Ages:

13 -17 years old

Registration

Required:



KTRAVISEWING@YAHOO.COM

(313) 544-6689

Keyboarding Skills Needed at Earlier Ages

Common Core standards are the current hot topic among education experts, as their relevancy is debated. Written by governors and state educational officials, the Common Core standards were designed to raise the bar on the US education system to help our students compete internationally. They incorporate consistent math, reading and writing standards from kindergarten to 12th grade throughout the nation.

If Common Core Standards are put in place within schools, one thing is certain: students will need to learn how to type and at earlier ages and schools will need to ensure there is substantial computer education in place, as most of the assessments will be online. Some schools and

districts are way ahead of the curve, however. According to an article by The Washington Post, children are learning to use a keyboard as early as kindergarten – this is a direct result of the new national Common Core academic standards.

The Common Core academic standards state that students at every age must be able to use the Internet and computer technology in their schoolwork to integrate images, sound, and video with writing. Standardized tests linked to the Common Core will require students to use a mouse to click, drag, and type their

answers, as well as write using a computer.

“It’s important now that all students become proficient in their typing skills even at these younger ages so that they can focus solely on their writing during these tests – not the typing,” said Charmaine Waddell of Typing Agent. “Aside from learning typing for the Common Core tests, typing is an important life skill that in order to compete on a national and international scale should be taught to students of all ages as technology becomes more common in all different areas of life.



Shortage of Teachers, Classes Full

Detroit Public Schools is experiencing a teacher shortage resulting in overcrowded classrooms. DFT President Keith Johnson predicted this scenario many months ago when the district offered a severance incentive.

Some classes across the district have over 50 students “It concerns me,” Johnson told the Free Press. “It’s not conducive to learning, having that many students in a classroom.”

To help with the problem of teacher vacancies, the district notified instructional specialists last week that they would be reassigned temporarily to classroom teaching positions. This measure is designed to ensure the continuity of instruction for students at least through the Fourth Wednesday Count. Some teacher consultants are also affected by this shortage of teachers.

Johnson said every effort will be made to fill those vacancies as soon as possible, including reorganization and teacher deployment once teacher service is solidified on count day reports.

The district said 107 instructional specialists and literacy



coaches were reassigned to the classroom.

DPS has held several teacher fairs but has had difficulty competing with other districts for teachers. The district also lost teachers when it cut health care benefits, and attempted to impose a 10 percent pay cut before school started in August. That cut was averted after the union’s mobilization effort led to a community-wide outcry.

While a teacher shortage is preferable to layoffs, the district isn’t dealing with it effectively. First, it should have planned for this possibility, Johnson said. Further, the district should try to attract and retain teachers with a different culture and budgeting that allows for adequate compensation to teachers.

“The district has to realize if it wants to have enough teachers,” he said, “it has to pay and treat teachers properly.”

How to Engage Students in the Art of Writing

It comes as no surprise that US students are struggling with writing. According to the most recent national survey taken by the National Assessment of Education Progress, only one in four eighth-graders and one in four 12th-graders were proficient or advanced in writing. Vantage Learning, a creator of writing improvement technologies, reports that one of the biggest culprits is texting. Texting not only compromises schoolwork but professional writing as well. Worse, it is teaching students to think only in simple sound bites, without complex reasoning.

Below are some of the most common student writing mistakes, according to Elena Cupingood who is the product manager of MY Access!®, Vantage Learning's award-winning classroom writing tool:

- Poor spelling — Which is compounded by "text speak"
- Problems with subject-verb agreement
- Incomplete sentences (fragments) and run-on sentences
- Commonly confused words — When do you use its or it's? They're, their or there? Loose or lose? Affect or effect? Two, to or too? Weather or whether?
- Misuse or lack of commas

So, how do you engage students in the art of writing when they would rather be texting? Vantage Learning recommends these strategies with some unique twists:

- 1 Demonstrate what you consider to be good writing. Provide examples of good and bad essays, and post tip sheets with easy-to-understand examples of good and bad word usage.
- 2 Reverse roles. Have your students become the teacher and let them talk about what constitutes good writing. Have them grade papers.

- 3 Turn the tables on texting. Have students write paragraphs using only text speak. Next, have another student read their paper to the class to see if they can understand what the student is trying to communicate. Likewise, have a poor writing contest. Who can make the most mistakes using 200 words?
- 4 Read what your students are reading. Encouraging reading helps to engage students in the writing process. Teen books have taken off and are fueling Hollywood. Have your students recommend books to you. Be sure to follow your school's guidelines on recommending books to your students. Have your students write an essay focused on a secondary character in their favorite book. Or an alternate ending.
- 5 Demonstrate the power of good writing. Arrange to have local classroom guests who have writing careers -- authors, copywriters, journalists, playwrights, songwriters, technical writers, speech writers, editors and more. Invite professionals who need to write well as part of their careers: advertising and PR execs, attorneys, lobbyists, fundraisers and more. Not only can they talk about how their writing created their careers but they can discuss how they got into the business, if they struggle with their writing, earnings potential and more. When students learn about the careers that are open to them and the opportunities they present, they become engaged.

We're on
Facebook!

Check us out at

www.facebook.com/DFT231

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

October

- 2 **DFT Executive Board Meeting, 4:30 p.m.**
(7700 Second Ave., Detroit, MI 48202)
- 9 **General Membership Meeting, 4:30 p.m.**
(IBEW Hall, 1358 Abbott, East of Trumbull)
- 21 **Retirees Chapter Meeting, 11:30 a.m.**
(Triumph Church, 2760 E. Grand Blvd.)

November

- 6 **DFT Executive Board Meeting, 4:30 p.m.**
(7700 Second Ave., Detroit, MI 48202)
- 11 **Veterans Day, Half Day School**
- 13 **General Membership Meeting, 4:30 p.m.**
(IBEW Hall, 1358 Abbott, East of Trumbull)
- 18 **Retiree Chapter Meeting, 11:30 a.m.**
(Triumph Church, 2760 E. Grand Blvd.)
- 27-28 **Thanksgiving, Schools Closed**