



Statement by DFT Interim President Ivy Bailey before the Detroit Financial Review Commission

“Thank you for the opportunity to address this body on behalf of the educators in Detroit Public Schools and the students and families we serve every day. Our school district is at an important crossroads where extreme challenge meets with hopeful opportunity.

“Given the financial crisis that continues in DPS, we are facing overwhelming challenges of ensuring that students have the schools, educators and resources they deserve, and that education professionals have the respect through competitive salaries and benefits they have earned.

“Make no mistake about it, the district must do everything possible to retain and attract quality teachers. If not, teachers will continue to leave for other districts or for other professions. It is happening every day.

“Today, there is an opportunity to do the right thing for both students and educators.

“We can look to the lessons of the past. There are ideas that worked, but I also challenge this body to look forward to new ways for the district to operate based on best practices and the things that we know have worked to revitalize struggling school districts.

“Detroit’s educators and our union have been around for a long time. We know what has worked in this district and what has not. We cannot afford to continue to repeat what’s not working. Literally, we can’t afford it financially, and our children deserve better from us.

“If we are serious about improving public education for all children, we have to invest in our children, their schools and their educators. That’s why it is absolutely essential to take a critical look at the resources we have available and how those resources are being allocated.

“And it’s important for education stakeholders to be a part of discussions around the examination of how district resources are allocated. It is clear from comparing DPS expenditures with other districts that spending in a number of categories is out of line in Detroit.

“Detroit has 45,500 full-time (FTE) students. Grand Rapids, Utica, Chippewa Valley and Plymouth-Canton have a combined 78,500. Yet, Detroit spends \$8 million more on central support service, \$21 million more on operations and maintenance, \$22 million more on instructional staff support, and two-thirds as much on general administration, and 77 percent as much on school administration. And, on average, these districts pay teachers 22 percent more at the Masters Max level.

“It is clear DPSCD proposed expenditures must be closely examined, including an immediate examination of the DPSCD budget and the streamlining of non-classroom full-time employees.

“In 2006, the district employed 494 non-classroom administrative personnel—like officials, administrators, managers, supervisors and consultants. At that time, DPS had 130,718 students and 7,628 teachers. The ratio of non-classroom administrative personnel to teachers was one administrator per 15 teachers.

“In 2016, DPS has 442 non-classroom administrative personnel, 46,333 students and 2,644 teachers. Over the past 10 years, the number of non-classroom administrative personnel, or top management, has only decreased by 52; the number of classroom teachers has dropped by 4,984—almost 5,000. The ratio of non-classroom administrative personnel to teachers is now one administrator to six teachers.

“Using the 2006 ratio, only 176 top administrators are needed. Even if we round that number up to 200 administrators, there are still 242 administrative positions that can be eliminated. This translates into savings that can be directed to the classroom for the benefit of students.

“Eliminating 242 administrative positions at an average annual salary of \$120,000 would add up to savings of more than \$29 million. More can be saved by returning to a staffing design DPS used in the past: having one principal for two smaller schools. This could result in \$5 million in savings.

“General Fund money can be saved by compensating instructional specialists fully from grant funds, saving potentially \$6 million. These are just a few examples of the potential savings that can be realized by a close examination of the budget and expenditures, and by not just doing things the way they have been done in the recent past.

“In closing, let's work together—administration, FRC and the Detroit Federation of Teachers—to move this district forward. We all must work together, be innovative, think out of the box. Our students deserve it.”