

DETROIT FEDERATION OF TEACHERS

General Membership Meeting

February 11, 2021

1. Call to Order

2. Roll Call of Officers

Absent: Trustees Rachele Green, Jeffrey Wasilewski (both excused)

3. Approval of Minutes

M1: Michelle Broughton (Posey) made a motion to approve the January Membership Meeting Minutes as well as the February Executive Board Meeting Minutes. Elena Brantley-Phillips made a friendly amendment to approve only the Meeting Minutes from the January 2020 Membership Meeting, with any necessary corrections. **Motion Passed.**

4. Treasurer's Report

No Treasurer's report today.

5. Elections Committee Report – (Elections Committee Election)

- Election Committee Election 2021 will be held March 11-12 2021
- It is to elect 3 new members to the Committee (members King, Mitchell and Green)- Term from 2021 to 2023
- It will be via Survey Monkey
- Members must attend the March General Membership meeting to receive the ballot
- Calendar and nomination forms are available on the DFT website
- Nominations end Thursday February 11 2021
- Members are asked to contact Elections Committee Members privately in the Zoom chat if they would like to nominate someone. They have until the end of this meeting.
- DFT231ec@gmail.com

6. Organizing Report

- There have been 62 schools that have turned in their information for Building Reps and Union Committees.
- There is an initiative to get new members with a goal of 20 per month. We want every DFT Union Member to bring 1 new member to a Membership Meeting per month.

- For the month of January, there were about 45 new and recommitments that came into the Union from the last month. We will be meeting with these people soon. We would like each E-Board member to introduce at least 1 new person per month. We want to get the new hires and encourage them to stay. We are trying to get them to matriculate, but as of now, they will be stuck at Step 11.
- February 12 is the date to meet with the new hires.
- E-Board Members should be invited to all constituency meetings.

M2: Procedural Motion made by Vida Bonacci (Posey):

“A maximum of 15 minutes will be allowed for discussion or questions following both the President’s Report and 15 minutes following the Vice-President’s Report.”

Motion Passed.

7. President’s Report

- Grading** – There were several phone calls following the Superintendent’s new grading protocol that has upset a lot of people. It gives students multiple opportunities to pass tests and turn in assignments. This poses a problem for teachers who have to keep up with these sudden changes. A Duty to Bargain letter has been sent to the District because it is a violation of the Collective Bargaining Agreement to change how to grade in the middle of a school year. We will keep Members up to date if and when any changes are made.
- School Reopening** – The District wants to begin F2F instruction on March 1. All members have a choice to either work F2F or Virtual. This will affect their unemployment status. There are people who have received unemployment benefits because they are not being truthful about employment in taking the Learning Center positions. Hazard pay will only be given to people who elect to teach F2F. COVID-19 tests must be taken before allowed back in the building. Vaccination is a *choice*. You do not have to disclose to the district your thoughts or wishes on the subject. It is entirely your choice.
- Merger** – The process has started again, and we are hoping that an agreement can be brought to the Membership by the spring in regards to the AFT unions merger.
- Bargaining** – We continue to meet with the DFT constituency groups to see what they want to see in the next contract. If your group would like to schedule a meeting, see the Organizing Fellows to set up a time and day. Anyone with ideas needs to submit those so that they can be considered. We will continue to have dialogue with E-Board Members to get their ideas as well.
- Cares Act 2 Funding** – This money comes from the Federal Government to school districts to aide and assist with what is happening during COVID-19. Detroit Public Schools Community District will receive \$446 million dollars. It can be used for devices, internet access, hazard pay, lowering class sizes,

and supplies. Although it is one-time money, it is a lot of money at one time. We should not have to wait for what we deserve. This is also an opportunity for Members, students and families to get the mental assistance that they need. This has taken a mental and emotional strain on us all, and we need staff in each building to help people cope with these issues. This money allows more money for raises, improving class sizes, and more personnel. This does not include the Governor's proposal today. This is going to take time to come through. This will increase the per pupil allotment. They will battle her on the budget as well as everything else.

Q&A

- Karl Burnett – Will Hazard Pay be prorated? *TM: The option to go in the building will still be in place for all DFT Members, for the duration of this school year.*
- Marnina Falk – Are you going to the table about all of the changes to the new grading system introduced by the Superintendent? *TM: Shame on the District for not coming to the Union to discuss changes to our working conditions and wages. They arbitrarily make changes without talking to us first.*
- Thomas Van Hulle – Osborn says that these new changes do not respect us as professionals. What is going on with the State Hazard Pay? *TM: Those checks are due this month. We should give it another week, we will follow up. LWL: The state says that the checks will be mailed out on the 25th of February.*
- Brian Diskin – The new COVID grading system is an attack on our professionalism. We need to let them know that the changes that they are trying to make are out of order. They need to understand that we need to have access to our grades throughout the school year. We need to be able to look for those patterns. *TM: We have issued a Duty to Bargain. This should stop the new grading system – teachers should continue to do what they have always done.*

8. Executive Vice President's Report

- COVID-19 Leave** – This has been on the Agenda for the last few months. This expired on December 31st. This month, the District has said that they still honor the Family First Response Act. The first 2 weeks will not affect your ill bank, and Members will still receive their full pay.
- COVID-19 Vaccine Webinar** – We are praying that we are at the beginning of the end of this pandemic. We will have local doctors available to answer questions concerning the vaccine. We need to educate our Members so they will make an educated decision to take the test. More information for a date and time will be forthcoming.

- c. **Attendance Agents** - This department has been under attack by this administration. They have belittled, demeaned, talked down to, and harassed these members! Attendance Agents have a LOA in place that protects them.

If it isn't in writing, it does not exist.

The LOA was being explained by the District, with "extras" added to it. Their expectations are not part of the agreement. One extra was that agents visit 20 homes per day. This is horrible and impossible, especially with the amount of paperwork and data that has to be captured to this. Administration continues to bash them and harass them. Agents cannot continue to work under this stress and distress inflicted by the Deputy Superintendent and Dwight Jones. Taking an Intermittent FMLA, and paperwork from the ADA are not necessary if you are not comfortable with doing home visits.

- d. **Quarter End/Marking Window** – We heard from many in regards to the cardmarking window when the marking period had not yet ended. DFT does not agree to the cardmarking window. The District stated that the Union signed off on the calendar. The District wants to keep pushing the overlaps that essentially cheats the students out of extra time to complete the cardmarking/semester. We have our 3 days to mark in the window, but our students lose that time to complete assignments.
- e. **Prayer Vigil** – There is a lot going on with our nation now. From the murders of George Floyd and others, to the Capitol Insurrection last month, we need a moment to get calm. Adriane Robinson-Blair, Darnese Wilkinson, Terrence Martin, Father Norman Thomas, Rabbi Alana Alpert, Iman Mika'il Stewart Saadiq, Minister Flinnoia Hall III, Heaster Wheeler and Bishop Gregg A. Booker are all on the agenda. This will be held after the Membership Meeting next week. This is meant to be a good mental health booster.

Q & A

- Rodney Williams – has been to work and doing home visits and did not receive the full Hazard Pay. *TM: Contact me offline so that we can help you with this.*
- David Redfield – They are asking for us to put in TEAMS what we are already putting in Schoology? They want the 2 graded assignments in two different places. Is this necessary? Is this being addressed? *LWL: If you are posting in one, there is no reason to post anywhere else. Schoology and TEAMS do not connect. If your assignments are posted in Schoology, there is no reason to post in TEAMS as well.*
- Rozalyn Mitchell – A lot of DFT Members are Title 1 funded. The district may decide what positions will be at each school. Is this true? If so, what will this look like? Will they move people out? The District is getting aggressive about the logs that need to be done and what needs to be in it, without being specific about what they want to see in it. *LWL: DataCom should not be a requirement. This should be on a volunteer basis. Agents who wish to share should be voluntary. Much of the information should be done by someone else – not the Attendance Agents. We do not*

want this to become something that is expected or a requirement. We will continue to push against this. Trying to make people backlog from September to now, is unethical. If you worked, you earned Hazard Pay. It begins in the school, so if you did not receive it, you need to see your Principal and Payroll Secretary.

- Robert Muha – There is a lot going on right now. The workload of the Agents and teachers is unbelievable. There is just too much going on that they want us to do. Nothing ever gets paused in lieu of something else. We don't know why Agents were told that they were not eligible for any of the state aide. DataCom should be optional. It is an attempt to put us in the hot seat and holding us accountable for these things connected. *LWL: The state has identified support staff as part of the Hazard Pay. This does include Attendance Agents – as non-instructional staff. Ms. Lena Pernell was handling all of the appeals for the COVID-19 Grant for Support Staff. It should be on the HUB. Fill it out and submit it.*

9. Old Business

10. New Business

11. Good of the Order

DFT Union Members who have been nominated from the floor for the Elections Committee:

• Alena Acoff	• Karen Williams
• Mignon Pierce	• Latonya Archie-Jackson
• Frank Donner	• Spring Hardy
• Kendra Barclay	• Regina Hunter

- There have been questions about the accommodations and considerations for teachers being evaluated. These adjustments need to be made because the platform is different.

12. Adjournment

M3: Jason Posey (Broughton/Brantley-Phillips) made a motion to adjourn.

Motion Passed.

Meeting adjourned at 5:54 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Elena Brantley-Phillips, DFT Recording Secretary