

DETROIT FEDERATION OF TEACHERS

General Membership Meeting Minutes

September 16, 2021

1. Call to Order

Meeting was called to order by President Terrence Martin @4:34 p.m.

2. Roll Call of Officers

Absent: Marva Needham-Fletcher (excused)

3. Approval of Minutes

M1: Jason Posey(Broughton) made a motion to accept the Executive Board Meeting Minutes from September 9, 2021 with any necessary corrections. **MOTION PASSED**

4. Treasurer's Report

There was no Treasurer's Report available for this meeting. We are in transition from the old finance company to a new finance committee. There will be a report in October for both September and October.

5. Organizing Report

If you are a Building Rep that has not turned in election information for this school year, we are asking that you do this as soon as possible. If you need materials or assistance, please reach out to myself or Jason Posey as soon as you can. We would like to suggest that committees meet weekly at least just to check in. Consider meeting with your Principal bi-weekly. Building Reps Training is Tuesday, October 19th. New staff, New member meeting tentatively set for October 12th. Virtual school needs a Union rep as well if you are interested.

6. President's Report

- a. **COVID Protocols** – This has been a start to the school year like no other. As we have been moving from building to building, it has been encouraging to see members in the building, but what has been discouraging is the lack of protocols in place. There is no consistency throughout the school district. We are seeing the daily checks and mask wearing. There have been teachers that have had to redirect students to put on their masks, but we aren't getting the clear-cut answers that we deserve. Quarantine protocols have been inconsistent. We are pushing for the district to provide a written document as to what the COVID protocols will be for both students and staff.

- b. **Class Size** – Class size has been a problem at the virtual school. These numbers are extremely high. The size should be the same as they are in the collective bargaining agreement. If there are large class sizes, at the virtual school, please let us know. This is true at some schools that are face to face. Let us know so that we can address it as soon as possible. *LW-L: The District has hired some but not enough. Places are bursting at the seams. These people that Dr. Vitti says have been hired, have not materialized as of yet. We have no answers for what is happening because this is new territory for us all. During the pandemic, we were home, so while buildings were closed, there was no need for security guards. They found other jobs and they have not been replaced. We are mad about it, but we need our parents need to be mad about it. The school board needs to hear from parents and teachers about what is really happening in these buildings.*
- c. **School Calendar 2022/2023** – This committee will meet next Friday to discuss our current calendar as well as the calendar for the 2022-2023 school year. The goal is to know what the calendar will look a year ahead of time. We convened a committee to discuss the calendar. We want to come up with 2-3 options for next year's calendar. We want to move from 186 days to fewer days. We have to sit at the table with the district to discuss this. We are trying to cut out as many days as we can. We are in school too late, but in order to get out earlier and maintain our breaks, we need to start earlier. We need to get this done quickly so that people can make these adjustments accordingly.
- d. **2021/2022 DFT Meetings** – We will be providing the dates of our meetings by the weekend. We will stay virtual for the remainder of the school year. Hopefully if we get COVID under control, it makes sense to remain virtual.

7. Executive Vice President's Report

- a. **Union Dues** – First dues pull is Tuesday, September 21st, with 21 more to follow throughout the school year. Deductions are taken for 22 pay periods, so July 2nd will be the last deduction date. To be members in good standing, you must pay the dues beginning this first pay period. You get a bill on Saturday but on Tuesday is the date that your dues will be deducted from your account. If there is not enough money in the account, it will not deduct. You can pay yourself online.
- b. **Evaluations – Cycle Zero** – we need to begin with the end in mind which is the final evaluation. Administrator will have a debrief meeting with you, which includes an unscheduled 15-20 minute observation that does NOT count in your evaluation. You discuss your growth and goals. Information about Cycle Zero can be found on the HUB.
- c. **Healthcare** – Healthcare is not a subject of bargaining. The District pays 70-80% of our healthcare. When we meet with these companies, we receive an overview of what is going on with the district. It shows how many staff members are being covered under our benefit plan. See healthcare sheet attached to these Minutes. These are some of the driving forces that increase the expenses of our health insurance. We have a limited number of carriers.

Many of the carriers do not want to co-exist with other networks/providers. We are in a limited and consolidated markets. Our insurance goes up each year because they have a projection of how much it will cost to insure all of the employees. If they go over that budget, they need to make up for it the following year - by increasing the rates.

- d. **Walkthroughs** – There are huge disparities within our District. Some buildings purchased purifiers for their buildings, while others had the teachers request them. Class sizes have a gravy train while others are stressed. Our leadership is different, so.... We have seen some beautiful things in different buildings that are working for these buildings. Anyone with a teaching certification should be included in the rotation for subbing.

Q & A

- **Regina Hunter (Charles Wright Academy SSW)** – In regards to Mr. Martin to our meetings be virtual half the school year. We need to get parents involved with us. We need to train to form strong parent groups. Regular communication needs to happen.
- **Mary Brockman (Marquette)** – The CDC’s guidelines and Dr. Vitti’s guidelines are very different, especially in regards to how social distancing is supposed to occur. Fights are happening at these schools and we have no security. *TM: Please be cognizant of your abilities. The Union does not recommend that we do not get in the middle of a fight. Respond without getting physical. The third grade sizes have to be corrected in writing and it will be addressed and resubmitted.*
- **Jennifer Reddick (Primary Bates Academy SSW)** – Was informed yesterday that I am the MET rep for an OHI student because she was told by a supervisor to do so. What are we doing about this? *TM: Haven’t heard about this. Let us of any additional information.*
- **LaTisha Myles (Earhart SSW)** - We have been discussing with this Union leadership the issues with this SBET team. We feel that we have been totally ignored with our concerns about this. I am expected to give up my coordination day to address families. Why did this leadership ignore this when we were told about it. How were we ignored in this contract? Is there anyway that SSW’s can have their coordination day away from the building. Can we get an LOA that will include us having a cord away from our building? *TW: We try our best to include all of our disciplines. We did not win with what we took to the bargaining table with the SSW. We will look at including/addressing your needs in an LOA. There are things that you need to take care of on your time, and we need to make sure that this is being honored. LW-L: The District only wants to give anything to teachers – ever. Any language that says all members was a fight to get in. We win some and we lose some. The District wants to own all of your time. We have to do the best that we can to advocate for ourselves. I am always going to be on your side. I’m always going to fight for you.*
- **Sabrina Sanders-Marable (GSRP SSW)** – GSRP was not included in the \$1,000 stipend. We also do assessments, IEP’s and carry caseloads. Can this be looked at to be put in an LOA? *LW-L: There is always an opportunity to go back to the*

table. We want to see you get your earnings up. The District is still in negotiations. Teachers are done, but everyone else is still there or are just getting started.

- **Nashan Robinson (Counselor - Dr. Vitti was pissed that I spoke out.** Vitti says the class size 30 was a target. What was the purpose of the LOA in regards to class size? *TM: The 30 is the maximum. One of the things we always go by is what's in writing. We will continue to enforce them as we always have. We have remedies, such as pay, if they are exceeded. The goal is to be reduced for quality learning. Anything more is anti-quality learning. We will continue to push for those size to be small. He also claimed that they would be hiring additional people. L W-L: During negotiations, the District offered to have better class oversized management. It as thought that they had workers ready to come in, just to find out that he has just made up stories, as we have not seen these people he claims that he has hired.*
- **LaTonya Archie-Jackson(SSW/ESE Pasteur)** – To clarify, if we need to get with more experienced SSW's to get the support that we need, will the Union support us? We have been told that ESE students are not being allowed to attend virtual schools. *LW-L: Yes, we will always support you. TM: Now teachers are being called to see if they want to work F2F. The District wants to discuss this.*
- **Tracey Baker (ESE Teacher Pershing)** – Can a teacher be told to teach a class outside of their certification area? *TM: No teacher should not be asked to teach outside of their certification area. This is a direct violation of the collective bargaining unit. This should be brought to the attention of the administrator. If you need further assistance with this, call Karin Whittler, who services the east side.*
- **Meredith Summer (Davison)** – I am tired of the lies that Dr. Vitti keeps telling the school board. Kids are not wearing their masks. He whitewashes everything and it is just not safe. *TM: If there is a schedule deviation, it is allowed. We are visiting schools to see exactly what is happening. LW-L: we have to be creative to help our students keep those masks. We have to be sure that we keep our masks on as well. Lead by example and encourage them to wear the masks.*
- **Tocara Bailey(SSW/ESE Jerry L. White)** – It seems that when the question was asked why aren't we going to the media, that it is not being asked/answered directly. I am a dues paying member and I don't feel that we are the squeaky wheel, and I do believe that this is a BS contract. For us to have our coordination day taken is not right. I don't feel that my dues are reaping any benefit. *TM: There's no issue with this leadership going to the media. When we speak, we want to speak factually with data in front of us when we do it. I don't know when we've had a more diverse E-Board. I take offense that you said that SSW's are not represented by the DFT Executive Board when there are sitting members that are SSW's.*
- **Dionne Shell (Moses Field OT/PT)** – No one comes over to talk to these staff members. In May we were told that we would be given a budget by Nzoma,

Frazier and M. Johnson. Now we are no longer a department. We need the Union to speak to Vitti because we need these supplies.

- **Maria Davis (Charles Wright)** – What if a Dean of Culture wants to go back into the classroom? What are the options with a teacher who wants to teach virtual? With COVID protocols, a parent just had a baby, with children in ESE and General Ed. She wants to know her options. *TM: They will receive whatever a DFT member receives if they are qualified. Teacher should apply for the virtual school. Parents need to contact the District in regards to their options.*
- **Rozalyn Mitchell (Mumford Attendance Agent)** – Security is an issue. There have been at least 6 major fights. Is there something in the contract that speaks to these hazardous working conditions? Teachers are calling off and it creates an even larger problem. Another visit may be helpful. *TM: Mumford and EEV are worth visiting again.*
- **Lavar Johnson (Renaissance)** – Trying to pin Vitti down about the 3 ft and 30 students. It has been my position that we measure 3 feet from students. The rooms are different, and we need clarification in the LOA. The LOA is clear – the Superintendent is not clear. If you can only fit 15 students in your space with 3ft of social distancing – then THIS is your class size. I want to be very clear: *TM: 3ft of social distancing up to the number of students you can fit in your space, not to exceed the maximum number.*
- **Merrill Grossfield (Greenfield Union)** – Can we get a list of schools that the Union has visited? If we closed and we have to be quarantined. What are my responsibilities? Only 3 kids have computers. It would be the district and school's responsibility to provide students with those resources needed.
- **Germaine Clinkscales (EEV)** – Schools are saying that we can't go hybrid because we don't have the support of the parents. We are a ticking time bomb for someone to be hurt. I am afraid for our school's security. *LW-L: We were all outside of your building in concerns to the issues in the buildings. The District did NOT make good on the promises made. I was there to assist with lunch duty! As a paid membership can vote to change your schedule change. Parents do not have the power to change schedules.*
- **Tyloaha Parker (Mumford)** – We have had COVID issues already. We are bursting at the seams as well. The lack of security is a big issue because things get out of control quickly.
- **Stacy Jackson (Randolph)** – Does the change of time apply to the career tech centers? *LW-L: We have to look at that, and this is something that will be addressed. Bussing is the issue with these centers, as well as at Drew.*
- **Michelle Myers (Mumford)** – There was a fight at both ends of the hallway. It is scary. We are being told to not fill out the health checker at home – we have to do it at work. We are told that if you have a runny nose, sinus issues, or a caught, you should not put that down. Is this true?
- **Cassandra Davis (Speech Pathologist Durfee)** – I asked our supervisor why we are still business as normal. I'm still expected to have a caseload of 60, participate in SBET teams, part of IEP's for ASD students. Are there talks about

these students? *TM: We are discussing with the Union how to address these issues.*

- **Tricia Barnes (Carver Stem)** – There was a case in my classroom. I found out through my class Dojo. The principal knew but didn't tell us. I am now quarantined because I had symptoms. I asked if I am supposed to teach during quarantine. Does this constitute as blended learning for the supplement? When there are COVID cases, can we get some information that does not violate the HIPPA laws? *TM: We need to do a better job about exposure. We need to know so that we can get the word out. We did not discuss that type of blended learning, so I will look into that.*
- **Mitzi Davis (Thirkell)** – Should the water fountains be uncovered now? The capacity signs have been changed outside of each classroom. *TM: Please address it with the building administrator and if you need our help, let us know.*

8. Old Business

- **Regina Hunter (SSW/Charles Wright)** – Coordination day is important. We deal with children who have seen trauma. We need opportunities to discuss with our colleagues and assistance with getting questions answered.
- **Yolanda Smith** – Has the COVID Matrix been released? I would also like to be on the calendar committee. *TM: It's on the District's website. LW-L: Please direct message Jason or Yolanda your e-mail address.*
- **Robin Chambers (J.R. King)** – We were told that there will be NO blended learning at JR King at all. A student came the first day, but hasn't been in school since because the entire family has COVID. I have to provide student with work, through virtual outlets, and call parent daily for attendance – *LW-L: this is blended learning. You should be paid the \$2,000 for this.*
- **Selina Wilkins – Section 504.** Deans have been told not to suspend students. I needed assistance today in separating girls fighting. Not suspending sets a bad example for all the other students. I was told that Counselors are backup testing coordinators.
- **Michelle Myers** – by state law, we are not certified to break up fights. You must have a certification to physically restrain students. We are putting ourselves at risk of being prosecuted and losing our license. What is the policy if a teacher gets injured in fights? *TM: we should address it without being physical as best as we can.*

9. New Business

10. Good of the Order

Karin Whittler – An e-mail sent by Dr. Vitti from August asked for laptops that are not working should be turned in for repair through the school level to be fixed or replaced.

Nakisha Winters (Kindergarten Brenda Scott) – The max occupancy on my classroom door says 20, but I have 25 students in my classroom. *TM: we will address it.*

11. Adjournment

M2: Vida Bonacci/Jason Posey (Broughton/ Booker) made a motion to adjourn.

MOTION PASSED.

Meeting adjourned @7:11 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Elena Brantley-Phillips, DFT Recording Secretary