

DETROIT FEDERATION OF TEACHERS
Executive Board Meeting Minutes
February 9, 2023

1. Call to Order

Meeting called to order at 4:33 p.m. by President Lokia Wilson-Lumpkins

2. Roll Call of Officers

****There is no quorum. Informational Meeting****

3. Approval of Minutes

January Executive Board and General Membership Meeting Minutes were shared with the Membership. If there are any corrections, please see Secretary Brantley-Phillips.

4. Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Rodney Fresh read the Balance report as of January 31, 2023 and the Profit and Loss report from July 2022-January 2023.

5. Election Committee Report

DeVette Brown gave the report outlining details of the coming election and opened nominations from the floor. Nominations will officially close this evening at the end of this meeting and a report will follow.

6. PAC Report

Marcus Walton gave the report this evening. Both Governor Whitmer and President Biden are alike in that they are both supporters of public education. We need legislation that will protect us from gun violence. In addition, this is where mental health assistance is needed. The Democratic Convention is at Huntington Place this Saturday from 9-3.

7. Organizing Report

Vida Bonacci gave the report this evening. There are 9 new/recommit members to the DFT in January. Mrs. King has been reaching out to people trying to keep them on track with their dues.

The next Building Reps Training Meeting will be held on Tuesday, February 28th @4:30 p.m. Information will be forthcoming as to the meeting's location (virtual or Zoom). The link will be sent out a week before the meeting. Please e-mail Yolanda King if you have any questions to yking@dft231.com.

8. President's Report

President Wilson-Lumpkins asked for a moment of silence in remembrance of Cartier Woods.

The third-grade reading law must go! It defies child development suggests that everyone learns the same way at the same time. We are trying to move this item through this legislation expeditiously.

- a. **Right to Work** – The law states that we don't have payroll deduction – but only in K-12 . No one else in the state has these rules. We have boots on the ground and we are voting! Because we do hit the pavement and speak with those who value what we do, we are making a change. Removal of the payroll deduction weakened our movement. We want this local to be represented. Michigan has been moved up in the Presidential Primary. We will be voting in 2024 in February.
- b. **Contract Campaign** – We are at the ready of a new contract. Our current contract expires on June 30, 2023. As we move into this campaign, we will be meeting with different members - Executive Board Members, committee members and Building Reps to put out surveys to gain an understanding of all the nuances that need to be addressed.
- c. **Grievances: Blended Learning, Headstart, EDIC, Project Find** – The Union and the District are still far apart on the definition of Blended Learning. We are still in discussions in regards to these grievances.
- d. **Organizers** – I am hoping that people take advantage with the Union Building Institute and take an interest in learning about Union building. We want the next shoes in this position to be the right fit. No applicant mentioned discounts, liability insurance. This is where we are with our Members and how much they know about the Union.
- e. **Southeastern H.S.** – The district wants the teachers and students to transfer to Frederick Douglass. The students should not have another first day of school.
- f. **We are S.T.R.O.N.G.E.R. Together!** – Strategic – as a Union, we can't continue to work from the same playbook on how to move forward. We have to be current and educate. Tenacious – The District is counting on us to give up, so we must have some stick and stay. Resourceful-- we must engage our stakeholders in our parents and community groups. We need help in our buildings! Organized – we need to grow the local, but we must have a plan to move forward. Next – we have beat back vouchers, but what's next? Some of us are part of the Party that will remain nameless, but what is their next plan? Grow – we have to grow in numbers, professionally and personally. If you say that you reach out to me. We must be prepared to grow. Energize – this is going to take some work! Talking to others around the state, we are doing good! There is always room for improvement. Ready – it is time out to vent on social media. We need to get on the phones and write letters to these legislators who make decisions against Detroit! We can't sit back and let them do it or assume that it will just be done. Please invite us to your committee meetings and meetings in your buildings. We need to realize that we are stronger together – regardless of our differences in opinion and strategies in getting things accomplished. We need to be strategic in how we proceed. In the end, we agree on education and on kids.

9. Executive Vice President's Report

- a. **Public Service Loan Forgiveness Survey** – PSLF hasn't been in the news a lot in the past couple of months. AFT President Weingarten sued the Department of Education during the Trump Administration about loan forgiveness. Asking for more transparency, better communication and an easier and clearer application process. She has the ear of President Biden and want wants to give him more data about loan forgiveness, so we are going to be asking members to complete a survey on loan forgiveness. Did you apply? How much did you ask for? How much did you receive? Do you still owe? This local had an active bootcamp this summer where members got training on the Summer Program.
- b. **DFT Committees** – Member voice is very important. We use our committees to hear Member voice. We have and have had various committees over the years and we would like to update these committees.

DFT Committee Chapters/Chairs:

Academic Interventionists – Queen Watkins
Career Tech – Marva Fletcher
Communications Disorders - Lindsey Hailey/Sarah Niemi
Community Engagement – Samantha Hoskins
Constitution and Bylaws -Lena Brantley-Phillips
Counselors – Stacy Jackson
Early Childhood/PreK-2 – Dwan McGrady
Gr. 3-5 – Robin Jennings
ESE – Lisa Card
High School – Rodney Fresh
MiddleSchool – Everett Whitfield
OT/PT – Dionne Shell
Political Engagement – Marcus Walton
Social Work – Rachele Green
Montessori – Kim D. Mitchell
Bilingual – Vacancy
Attendance Agents – Tamika Merchant

There will be another survey going out to set meeting dates and issues. There are Executive Board Members on each committee as a duty for each.

- c. **Regions** – Five years ago, this was brought to the forefront. We have had some starts and stops with this, but we need this in place to keep reps informed and to get information back. We want Executive Board Members to reach out to each building to give and receive accurate and relevant information. Building Reps – please reach out to your Executive Board Member with any information or questions.
 - Nicole Ames-Powel (Carver Stem Academy) – During negotiations, please keep in mind other districts and their contracts. Keeping snow

days as snow days and not going virtual. Are non-Union members allowed to ask for representation. *LWL: Yes they are.*

- Maria Davis (Charles Wright) – February 20th PD – do you have to be in the United States to participate in the PD? *LW-L: That day has been ratified as a PD day. It is a work day. If you don't participate that day, you must take a day. The Firewall/Server may prove to be a problem if members are out of the country. If you are out of the country, I would attempt to log on. Take a picture and send to your admin and ask what you should do. If you can't – have evidence.*
- Deena Gibson (Charles Wright) – Is there a reason why the Calendar Committee was left off of the committees? *LW-L: I will let you know. There has been no decision one way or another.*
- Mark Davis - Is there a list of what we are looking for in the coming contract? Can we press for aides for safety reasons – especially in the lunchroom? *LWL: I need to have input from the Membership before I put out anything. This is the purpose of the survey. I will not create a list or platform without you.*
- Donna Rowell-Davis – Employee Transition Center – What is being done for the employees in this center. We have some who have been there for over a year. I feel like we have been forgotten. Understanding that all situations are different and I was told that there are people quitting. We are accused of doing things that we didn't do in many cases. Can you see to that? *LWL: I figuratively blew the District's head off today for this very thing today. Those there are accused to some work rule violation. Our issue is the length of time it takes to complete an investigation, and the time that they are put back to work. We cannot bargain what happens, but we can influence these decisions. Principals have become White Castle managers with no power. I've seen many attorneys come and go from that office and left because of the sheer volume of cases. Make a decision and move on. We feel that the minor cases do not have business being there. Give them a warning and let them go back to work! We are treated like criminals! We feel like we have been forgotten.*
- Marcus Walton (Jerry L. White) – Region 2 has issues with the cameras in the buildings. They are as effective as a Chinese weather balloon. The PA system in a lot of our buildings don't work. There is a lockdown and no one knows. This needs to be part of our contract.
- Robin Crawford (Gardner) – Master Teachers to fill vacancies in buildings. Was this supposed to be for the entire year? When is this supposed to end? *LWL: This involves a conversation with the Principal. This will change a job code. There was an issue from the beginning. Instructional Specialists moved to this position, but it's difficult because if the Principal is satisfied with you being there? How can you do your job? Are you still being compensated? The district does have the right to place you within your certification.*
- Onza Stokes (Northwestern) – Resource teacher has been acting as a ELA general education certification. Is this something that she has to do on a daily basis? She is not able to service her caseload students.

College Transition Coordinator is forced to do lunch duty 3rd, 4th and 5th hour every day. This prohibits her from doing the work she is there to do.

- Steve Conn (Western) – 8% inflation with 2 years in a row with our decline in pay. We need a big pay raise. This Union needs to ask about the surplus. Health care has always promised a hike. What we make in pay can be wiped out with the increase in health care. Discipline – I think the public would be outraged to know that teachers have been there for months and not in the classroom. Dr. “we have all the teachers we need” Vitti would be embarrassed if he were to be put on the spot. We have to let the public know.
- Amy Kohlar (Hutchinson) – The PD and 75% attendance. I feel that this is a constant stress. Others do not care about their attendance. Mental health of our students each day. These kids need more help. Our SSW is out on maternity leave and there is no replacement. These kids are suffering! We don’t have the manpower in the building to address these issues. *LWL: I will follow up with these issues. Admin should be doing lunch duty and covering classes.*
- Nicole Wells (Westside Academy) – In 2019, we were asked to change our culture and climate. We don’t have all those fights like we did. Now Vitti wants to combine Legacy, Lions and Westside and move into Frederick Douglass. They are making updates because of the move there of Southeastern. If we are 6-12, how is it okay for the building to hold 20 year olds? We are on the quarter system. This has changed the culture where now we will have this mix that will change the culture and climate. Isn’t it illegal to have 6 -12 together? *LWL: DIA and Durfee/Central have PreK-12. This has been on Dr. Vitti’s plan for a while. I understand the rationale with buildings that are under utilized. Combining these different locations have very unique cultural differences.*
- LaRonda McCant (Fisher Upper) – Members want to have the virtual component back in place. *LWL: I have spoken with the Executive Board and they are willing to have some meetings online, but we do not have the bandwidth to hold dual meetings.*
- Gavin Buckley (Henry Ford) – Can there be a contract action committee put in place to help with contract demands. *LWL: We had these committees in place. There will be surveys moving forward so the information will be forthcoming.*

10. New Business

11. Good of the Order

12. Election Committee

DeVette Brown announced nominees for the coming Special Election:

Executive Board Nominees (1 Vacancy)	Election Committee Nominees (3 vacancies)
Gavin Buckley	Debra Bondy
Stephen Conn	Cheryl Constantino
Cedric Cook	Hope Gibson
Rachele Green	Tamika Merchant
Kwesi Matthews	Jacqueline Robinson
Kimberly L. Mitchell	Theodosia Gulley
	Queen Watkins

Candidates will be properly vetted and full list will be available on the website this week.

13. Adjournment

M2: Samantha Hoskin (Wasilewski) made a motion to adjourn. **MOTION PASSED**

Meeting adjourned at 6:25 p.m.

Respectively Submitted,
Elena Brantley-Phillips, DFT Recording Secretary