



Detroit Federation of Teachers

LARONDA PADEN: inspiring kids to dream through teaching and learning

MY DREAM FOR MY STUDENTS is for them to be well-rounded and empowered to walk into any room with anybody and own it.

Teaching was not the path of my original dream when I chose to pursue higher education. As I matriculated through college, however, I was continually presented with opportunities that steered me toward education.

Well-rounded, to me, means students are versed on the rudiments of art, music, and the humanities.

That's what intermediate education used to be—when we still had art, music, physical education/health, shop and home economics. I want my students to be their best selves—whatever that may mean.

Unfortunately, all of the cuts and changes at the administrative level and above, coupled with poor management decisions, have left our children lacking in extracurricular instruction that helps the development of their analytical and problem-solving skills.

This dilemma disenfranchises our public school students by limiting their opportunities for creative expression and emotional release, and by hindering their ability to compete. As a result, it becomes more difficult for them to be prepared when they enter college.

If we're serious about raising test scores and giving kids an authentic education, we need to bring back these extracurricular activities that have been proven to enhance students' overall academic success.

It's time to invest in kids and their dreams

We need to end wasteful spending on trial-and-error testing practices and unfounded programs that neither illustrate best practices nor motivate students to succeed.

We've got to end the cycle of constant debt created by those who look at the students we serve as numbers and test scores, rather than as REAL people.

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