

DETROIT FEDERATION OF TEACHERS

General Membership Meeting

May 13, 2021

1. Call to Order

Meeting was called to order @4:32 by President Terrence Martin.

2. Roll Call of Officers

3. Approval of Minutes

Meeting minutes from the April 2021 Membership Meeting were presented.

M1: Jason Posey (Broughton) made a motion to accept the April Membership Minutes with any necessary corrections. **Motion Passed.**

4. Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Michelle Broughton reminded the Membership to check that the credit cards being used to collect dues is up to date, so there will be no interruption of payments being made. Treasurer also read the March 2021 Statement of Activities, as well as the July 2020 – March 2021 Statement of Activities.

5. Elections Committee Report

Introductions of new committee members was made. Welcome Stacy Jackson (Chair), Chika Ngozi, Charlitta Scott, DeVette Brown, Latonya Archie-Jackson, Kendra Barclay, and Regina Hunter.

6. Organizing Report

Yolanda King and Jason Posey gave the report. There are 35 new and recommitted members. There are 11 new members since the April Membership Meeting. We are asking that the email be forwarded in its entirety in order to RSVP for the shirts.

Building Reps – we thank you for helping to spread the word throughout your building to help build our membership. We are still distributing t-shirts to members who still have not been able to get their shirts.

May 18th @4:30 p.m. is the next Building Reps Training, where we will have actual Building Representatives conducting the meeting. If you are at a school and you don't know who your Building Rep is, then you probably don't have one. If you don't have a Rep or Committee in your building, please contact us to assist with getting this taken

care of. The election packets have been sent out to buildings for Representative, Alternate and Union Committees. Six groups/schools have submitted their information already – Communication Disorders Chapter, Spain, Brewer, Dossin and OT/PT Chapter, and with a shout out to Hamilton school! This is a new building and they have a Building Rep, as well as a Committee.

M2: Procedural Motion - Sarah Niemi (Posey) A maximum of 15 minutes will be allowed for discussion or questions after both the President and the Executive Vice President reports. **Motion Passed.**

7. President's Report

- a. **Bargaining** – Over the past year or so, we have collected Bargaining Asks from members. Please continue to send your recommendations to us. We are at the point now of contract cleanup. \$80,000 for top, Academic Interventionists, supplemental pay, 5 preps for teachers, step acceleration for all who did not get it in the 2020-2021 Contract, and the extra prep for Building Reps. We are also working on the return to work LOA for the fall, online school, as well as summer school.
- b. **Calendar** – There were many questions last month about the calendar. Dr. Rice was not available for today. They would like to set up a day and time for this meeting. Section 388.1701 of the Michigan Legislature statute says that all schools must have 1,098 hours of instruction. This is 180 days. These days are broken down further. DPS students must be present 181 days, which is 1 more day. Our current calendar is based on 186 – which include days teachers only must report. Of the 5 days – 3 are professional development and 2 are teacher workdays. These are used to set up in August/September, and the last one is in June used as a record day. Other districts in the state – AFT affiliate Caesar Chavez Academy is 192 days, Melvindale is 189 days, Eastpointe is 187, Ecorse 187, Roseville 186, with 2 mental health, Crestwood Dearborn 183, Lakeshore, 183, Lamphere 182 (first year teachers 184), Hamtramck and Taylor work 180 days. Although we work 186 days we are paid for 189. There are 9 days in this calendar that we don't work. These days were added because they didn't have an elected school board and didn't have to bargain. Emergency Management allowed them to do what they wanted. There needs to be a Calendar Committee in place to look at future calendars. Mid-Winter Break, teacher work day, mental health days could all be looked at.
- c. **2021 Retentions** – Members are being asked to prepare retention lists. The Superintendent has made many exceptions with grading. The task force is still looking at the retentions. Update is coming soon.
Bonus for ESE Teachers – the district has the ability to do this. It does NOT have to be negotiated with the Union. We are in conversation to see who this will affect. When I get more information, I will pass the information on to the Membership

Evaluations – still continues to be a mess. We are hearing from members across the district about how much student growth is going to be counted. We petitioned the Governor to make this an exception this year, for obvious reasons. When we get an update, we will let the Members know.

8. Executive Vice President's Report

- a. **DFT Day/June Jam** – This will be a day that members and their families can come and get their vaccination. A telephone number will be provided to register for the vaccination if they want. Anyone can be vaccinated at this time. This year has been very difficult to deal with. Our members have done a tremendous job going above and beyond the call of duty. Immediately following the June meeting, we will have a party. Have your snacks and beverages ready and enjoy yourselves. We deserve it! More information will follow via e-mail.
- b. **Michigan Learning Channel** – There is programming all summer that is in place to assist all of our students to assist with the learning slide that occurs each summer. Information for this is being put in the chat. Looking for members who are willing to teach a lesson on television. Please don't shy away when called!
- c. **Dues** - May 4th will be the 17th pay, and the 18th will be the 18th pay. The 22nd pay is always a part of the regular school year. July 13th is the last pay period of the 2020-2021 school year. Dues will begin again with the first pay on September 21st 2021.

If you are retiring or separating from the District, you must also separate from the DFT. Members must let the DFT know that they are leaving, so that dues can be stopped.

Q & A

- **Nancy Cepeda (Attendance Agent)** – will you be going to ask for what the Attendance Agents asked for last year? I think our original submission needs to change. Whatever was submitted before needs to be reframed. If we are vital to enrollment, we need to be recognized.
- **Thomas VanHulle (Osborn HS)** – We are being asked to upload data. We are also being asked if we want to return to the building or continue with virtual instruction. **TM:** *The district is looking into having a virtual school in the district. There is going to be a need, according to many parents, the need to have a virtual option. This may depend a lot on what the state will fund. At Osborn, the question was asked. The terms and conditions of any virtual school must be negotiated with the Union. We have no idea about the pay, class size, or anything else. Members should not attempt to answer any questions in regards to this until more information is gathered.* **LW-L:** *Teachers can use their own assessments and provide this data for the evaluation. You can use iReady to help with the student growth.*
- **Monica Drake-Howard (Attendance Agent DSA)** – The district is adding more to our plate. We need our pay increased. We have guidelines in place, and now they have gone beyond that. Some teachers in the building are not getting the DFT e-mails.

These addresses were forwarded to Posey. The election paperwork was sent, but I'm wondering how to do this with most people being home.

- **Mary Brockman (Marquette)** – Artifacts are by choice. The data is something we must do.
- **Michael Robertson (Western)** - I voted for Whitmer because she said that she was going to address Right to Work. It has not been done at this time. *TM: COVID had a lot to do with how her time has been spent.*
- **Yolanda Smith (John R. King)**– as far as uploading our vaccine card. Is it too late? Will this be used to force staff back to work? This has become a point of contention. *TM: Turning in your vaccine card is **optional**. We are fighting for people to have an option and to be safe and healthy. We are not fighting not to go to work. We want to be healthy and safe while at work. What they decide to use and how to use it, I don't know. Our return to work LOA has to be bargained. We have the responsibility to make those schools safe. Detroit teachers are the only group that had a choice during this pandemic. This, however, has made these other people in different areas to imply that we don't want to work. The Union is here for the members, and this is what we will continue to do.*
- **Regina Hunter (Charles Wright Academy)** – Students are not coming to school, not coming on camera and not turning in work—all since the grade change procedures came through. This was the start of the disengagement. Also, Dr. Vitti says in an e-mail that upon our return, we will be tested each week on site. Can he do this? *TM: Testing is optional. There has been no agreement. The return to work terms and conditions have not yet been bargained. Nothing has been determined yet. If we are back F2F in the fall, it is my hope that the grading system and scale are returned to what it was on March 20, 2020.*
- **Renee Rosa Esperanza (Law)** – Where is the unity and strength? I would like to humbly ask that we do not limit comment. We as Union Members want to make sure that our voices are heard. Also, why are we still being evaluated? *TM: Comments are limited because we will be on the call very late. There have always been several different places where Members have an opportunity to ask their questions – after the reports, New Business, Old Business, as well as Good of the Order have always provided Members the opportunity to ask questions. Asking that the comments are limited is to help with the time spent on Zoom. The Procedural Motion is simply in place to help streamline the questions. Evaluations – the MEA and AFT went to the Governor in regards to evaluations. Evaluations are not a subject of bargaining. Every teacher in the state needs to stand up and demand that changes are made – across the state. They need to come together and fight this. This is where will may see huge change. The requirements being administered varies by school. At any point, the District could file an ULP against the Union for even asking about this. We need TOTAL teacher effort to demand change.*

9. Old Business

10. New Business

- Early Childhood Chapter Meeting -Thursday, May 27th @5:30 p.m. Please be sure to join us – we would love to have you!
- Calendar Committee – if you are interested in being part of this committee, please email Jason Posey or Yolanda King with your information.
- Building Rep Mentor – we would like to pair up a new member with a seasoned member to help you navigate through the new year.
- If you or your colleague has a name change, please let the DFT know.

11. Good of the Order

- **Rachele Green** – please pay attention to the summer school hours being put out there as 8-5.
- **Jennifer Reddick (SSW)** – I am a new SSW that is being evaluated on performance. I want to make it known that if we can't do all of it, we can't do any of it. I have been sequestered into a corner that has me feeling like I can't make it here. *TM: There are many seasoned SSW on this call that can assist you. We want you to get the help and support that you need.*
- **Lavar Johnson (Renaissance)** – The Athletic Director at Renaissance is having issues. What happens when a virtual teacher contracts COVID? *TM: I will reach out to him directly. LW-L : Family First Response Act expired December 31' 2020. A new part with modifications were added. It is no longer a requirement to provide 100% days. The District will only provide for those working F2F– IF they get it in the building.*
- **Renee Webster (Pasteur)** – Need clarity on the evaluation process. The District sent out a webinar about the process. There were things that were said about what we'd be measured on. In doing so, they are suggesting we use mid, and end of the module tests. We are getting the info so late, I may not get to these things. State is lenient about what can be used. What can we use? Many times we ask questions, but I don't get an answer in time. How can I get an answer quickly? *TM/LW-L: Sounds like teachers have the latitude to use what they want. If the answer is not in the video, then it should be with the building administrator. Don't talk to different people! The District has an entire chart of choices that can be used.*
- **Danita Hunt - Matthews** – I am having concerns about working with ESE students at 2 schools. *TM: in the age of COVID, the movement between different locations needs to be addressed.*
- **Benjamin Royal (Maybury)** – Having less than half of your students present or participating questions the validity of any reliable data. The board voted to make these modifications for grading, then why can't they make decisions about evaluations? Summer school and Fall is coming. Vitti's administration has not given anyone the confidence that they will be keeping people safe. I encourage all Members to come to the Board meeting on Tuesday. *LW-L: I agree that the district has done a deplorable job of notifying staff and families about COVID in the buildings. We can't wait for the Health Department to confirm. There is no time. We are not accepting these lags when there is a case. This is unacceptable. We are working on letters that can be sent when it is suspected.*

- **Nicole Conaway (CMA)** – We will need a virtual option in the fall. A decision needs to be made based on what we know NOW. Everyone needs to speak united to the members of the School Board. Demand that teachers do not have to submit their own data. The data is not valid. We need an accommodation this year just like one was given to students with grading.
- **Dorothy Young (Pasteur)** - it is very wrong that teachers are being told that they must upload data. It is wrong for the district to keep changing the policy in the middle of the school year. How can I provide data when they don't come to school, or are coming in and out? This 40% needs to be deleted. We do need to be evaluated, but this needs to be omitted. We are professionals and we work hard each and every day.
- **Gavin Buckley (Henry Ford HS)** – I am heartened by what I am hearing. Members fought for these demands. The Union really fought for us with last Fall's LOA. We want to see raises, we want to see building safety. Winning a strong contract would be a great way to build a Union. Can we have a dialogue about what we can do as members to help with bargaining? *TM: those opportunities will be available for members who want to engage.*
- **Cynthia Carbone (Ben Carson)** - I am a push in/pull out teacher, so I don't have scores to show growth. How will my 40% be determined? *TM: that is an excellent question for the board next week.*
- **Raynard Nelson (SSW – Cass Tech)** – The District is often early and wrong. Having students going back too quickly is wrong.
- **Mignon Pierce (Emerson)** – Marching and gathering in the summer, is it possible that staff members who did not get a shirt because of size, to get a shirt? *TM: we will order these so that everyone will have them. It takes time to get those larger sizes. We must utilize union companies.*
- **Camille Gibson(DSA)** – I was told that if I choose to teach virtually in the fall, I will lose my current teaching position. *TM: the terms and conditions have not been worked out at this time. Once resolved, the information will be disseminated to members.*
- **Regina Hunter (Charles Wright)** – the District told counselors to do Suicide Prevention for students from 8 to 18 years. This is not ethical. It is not legal. They want us to do this without permission from the parent. We should not be doing this, especially with students who are 8 or 9 years old.

12. Adjournment

M3: Jason Posey (Broughton) made a motion to adjourn. **Motion Passed.**

Meeting was adjourned @6:41 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Elena Brantley-Phillips, DFT Recording Secretary