

# DETROIT FEDERATION OF TEACHERS

## General Membership Meeting – April 14, 2022

### Minutes

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#### 1. Call to Order

President Terrence Martin called the meeting to order at 4:34 p.m.

#### 2. Roll Call of Officers

#### 3. Approval of Minutes

**M1:** Jason Posey (Jennings) made a motion to accept the March 2022 Membership Meeting Minutes with any necessary corrections. **MOTION PASSED**

### April is Occupational Therapy Month!

#### 4. Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Michelle Broughton read the March 2022 financial report.

#### 5. Elections Committee Report

- Elections Committee Chair Stacy Jackson announced that immediately following this meeting, the election will proceed for the Elections Committee seats, as well as the vacant Executive Board seat.
- Sister Jackson announced the grievances brought forth by Nicole Conaway and Chika Ngozi. Both grievances were dismissed.
- The Election will end on April 18<sup>th</sup> @4:30 p.m. Only members present in this meeting will receive a ballot.
- There are changes to the Elections Committee ballot. There are 4 seats available with the following members running: DeVette Brown, Melzitta Davis, Chika Ngozi, Mignon Pierce, Nastassia Szpaichler.
- Mary Brockman, LaVar Johnson, Gavin Buckley and Queen Watkins are the candidates for vacant Executive Board seat.
- Nominations begin today for the AFT Convention delegates following this meeting, and will close on Monday, April 18<sup>th</sup> @5:00 p.m.
- The calendar for this election will be posted on the website, along with nomination and acceptance forms.

#### 6. PAC Report

Marcus Walton and Robin Jennings gave the report. The purpose of this committee is to make sure that we have a voice in Lansing. We have been using the Hustle app to reach out to members to talk to them about political action. Money has to be generated in order to promote candidates who support us and our interests. We need to vote or those who have our same interests. Robin Jennings and Michelle Broughton thanks the membership that contributed to the fund. We will have the campaign again.

## 7. Organizing Report

April Report – In March, there were 32 new/recommits back to DFT. Upcoming Tuesday, April 19<sup>th</sup> is the next Building Reps Training - @4:30 p.m. Packs were sent out to reps for building elections. If you are in a building where there is no rep or committee, or if you have any questions about anything, please reach out to Yolanda King or Jason Posey.

**M2:** Vida Bonacci (Fresh) made a Procedural Motion moves that a member be limited to 2 minutes to ask a question following the President's report and the Executive Vice President's report and that no one be given a second chance to speak until all members have had a chance to speak the first time. **MOTION PASSED**

## 8. President's Report

- a. **Nationwide Teacher Shortage** – We are currently under a national educators shortage – which includes, but not limited to teachers and all other support staff. This was happening before the pandemic, and we see it all over the country. It has become increasingly difficult to find and retain teachers and support staff. We are looking for ways to support this shortage. We are looking for ideas to attract and retain teachers and those who support classrooms. One idea for this was vouchers. We need people because we see people retiring or just leaving the profession. The most popular responses as to why they are leaving are pay, and how they are treated – as less than professional. There will be more to come throughout the spring and summer. We will ask for suggestions and solutions as well as communicating with the state.
- b. **Vouchers** – The idea is to give the vouchers to families, but they use the dollars to go elsewhere – and not to the public school.
- c. **Merger** – We are in the midst of merger talks with DFP. We hope that in June we will have something to vote on. We want to increase our power, so we are excited to begin doing this to become a stronger union. We are proud and excited to add others to our union.

## 9. Executive Vice President's Report

- a. **Retirements** – this is retirement season. If you are retiring at the conclusion of this school year, you need to complete the paperwork to Human Resources by May 1. If you do not inform the district by this time, they have no obligation to pay you for your illness bank. 1-200 days. Last year, Patrick Falcusan spoke to the membership, but he felt that it was not beneficial to the whole group. If you have questions about YOUR retirement options and information, please reach out to him individually. There are over 20 different pension plans, so it is best that you have individualized attention. Please have your last pay advice available, as well as your ORS print out when it is time for you to discuss retirement.
- b. **Transfer Process** – It is also transfer season. April 1 – July 15<sup>th</sup> is the official transfer period. We have requested a list of transfers from the district. We will never have an accurate list. If you put in for a transfer, you are your own HR, or advocate. Contact the Principal at your desired location. Please know that potential Principals will call current Principals. Principals only have from July 15<sup>th</sup> – 30<sup>th</sup> to decide. Be sure to gently remind them that they have a short window to complete the survey to finalize that transfer. Keep in mind that anyone can be involuntarily transferred. As an employee of the district, you are guaranteed a place to work, and not any specific work location. Keep in mind that the district has the option to move staff members anywhere and at anytime.

#### Q & A

- Thomas VanHulle (Detroit Virtual School) – thanks to President and EVP for stepping in to the grievance hearings. It is amazing how different the tone is when you are present. AFT summer program is excellent! If you have never done this, please look into it. As an FYI, I was told by an administrator that a transfer will not be honored until all new hires are on boarded first.
- LaRhonda McCann(Fisher Upper) – How much time do you have your things if you are transferring. *TM: You will have 3 days. We try to influence the process, although it is no longer a subject of bargaining.*
- Toriè Anderson(Detroit School of Arts) – I have a few qualms about AFT. Are they just talking about the shortage, or will there be some real action? We should be using this shortage as bargaining leverage. We won't get anyone if they have to go in debt to become a teacher. *TM: This is a WE! It is important that all of us push our National Union to action. Student debt is a huge reason for our shortages. We have been able to take some advantage with the student loan forgiveness. The biggest issue is that we don't hear about these wonderful things that our union does.*
- Stacy Jackson – Does the voucher system also work for tutoring? *TM: It does include tutoring, but it will all depend on how it is written. You may have tutoring, but it may be offered only by and for certain groups.*

- Jassmyne Ali (Academy of Americas) – Where are we with the Blended Pay for members who have not been paid, and where are we with vaccine mandates? *TM: Hopefully everyone eligible will be paid by the end of the school year. We have not gone back to the table about the vaccine.*
- Shatonya Hollis (Detroit Virtual School)– Does Detroit Public Schools have its own charter schools? How does that work? *TM: unlike other states, there are regulations that authorize who can have charters. These schools are former DPS schools, and one of the thoughts was that instead of selling off these buildings, we could keep them and charterize them. It does not make sense. Turn them back to charters, and send them packing.*
- Gavin Buckley (Henry Ford HS) – is there anything that we can do as DFT members to get paraprofessionals to help this effort along. *LWL: They have great leadership in Donna Jackson and Rose Aldridge. DFT – Vida Bonacci, Crystal Lee and Michelle Broughton. They need to be encouraged to vote their conscience. We want to be able to answer any questions that they may have. We need to work the members of our own membership. Many of our DFT members are leaving, and we need to prepare to continue to build and strengthen our own.*
- Marnina Falk (FLICS) – What will the leadership structure with the merger look like – what can we expect? Is there a discussion about the calendar for the new year because people are trying to make plans. *LWL: We are still working on it. The calendar hasn't been presented because it we don't like what we have been presented with. We want to have a calendar in place before June 28<sup>th</sup> this year.*
- Tracey Baker (Pershing HS) – Will school begin before Labor Day? The Superintendent has set the first day of school for teachers as August 22<sup>nd</sup> – but it is tentative.
- Kendra White (Virtual School) – Can we work on getting a cap on overclass size? *LWL: I agree and was blown away by the numbers at your building. We will be working on that.*
- Maria Davis (Charles Wright Academy) – teachers on 26<sup>th</sup> pay – how will that coincide with the new school year pay? We know that the district cannot multitask when it comes to money. *LWL: It depends on us completing the calendar so that the new pay dates can be implemented. TM: This was brought up by Patrick Falcusan. I would imagine, that you would essentially get paid twice – one for the old school year at the old rate, and one at the new school year rate.*
- Lisa Canty( Charles Wright Academy) - will we still be eligible for Hazard Pay in the new school year? *LWL: Yes.*
- Stacy Jackson – Update: As long as a member logged into this meeting tonight, they will receive a ballot.

## 10. New Business

- Nicole Ames Powell – We worked an extra hour for Parent Teacher’s Conferences. We have not had a comp hour for the meeting. My principal may need a phone call. *LWL: You are owed 1 hour for each conference.*
- Sedricka Campbell (Pershing HS) – I would like to go on a Religious Pilgrimage, but I am afraid that I will lose my job. The Sabbatical and this Pilgrimage means a lot to me. *LWL: Please call or e-mail me after this meeting.*
- Meredith Summer (Davison) – Usually throughout the school year we have PLC’s. Are we doing that this year? I’ve not done any this year. *LWL: You should be getting these twice a month for SCECH’s, for renewal.*

### **11. Good of the Order**

- David Redfield (Western) – We did the SAT yesterday and it was a nightmare. Many teachers did not get a lunch or prep. How are we to be compensated? *LWL: You need to log and submit a missed prep sheet.*
- Dorothy Young (Pasteur) – The AP emailed us that grades are due on April 18<sup>th</sup>. *LWL: Yesterday, today and Monday at the close of business.*
- Lisa Card (Central HS/ESE Chapter) – Keep in mind that the ESE Chapter meeting is on the third Thursday of the month. If you want to be part of this chapter, contact Jason Posey to be added.
- Marva Fletcher (Dianne Banks Williams) – last month we could not acknowledge the Teacher of the Year – Christian Young – Adult Education and Carl Brownlee – Region 10. CONGRATULATIONS!

### **12. Adjournment**

**M3:** Jason Posey (Fresh) made a motion to adjourn. **MOTION PASSED**

**Meeting adjourned at 6:12 p.m.**

Respectfully Submitted,

Elena Brantley-Phillips, DFT Recording Secretary