

DETROIT FEDERATION OF TEACHERS

General Membership Meeting

September 8, 2022

1. Call to Order

Meeting called to order by President Terrence Martin @4:41 p.m.

2. Roll Call of Officers

3. Approval of Minutes

M1: Jason Posey (Broughton) made a motion to accept the minutes from the June 2022 General Membership Meeting, with any necessary corrections. **MOTION PASSED**

4. Treasurer's Report

July 2022 and August 2022 read by Treasurer Michelle Broughton.

5. Elections Committee Report

Report was given by committee chair DeVette Brown - who introduced and read the calendar.

6. PAC Report

Marcus Walton gave the report. Elections matter and we are about 61 days out from the November 8th election. AFT/DFT/MEA partner to canvas. This Saturday at AFT Michigan - 26671 E. Jefferson, Bay City – 1483 S. Valley Dr., and 4760 Fulton St. In Grand Rapids are the locations where canvassing will be based. We want to go to home of like-minded individuals are and encourage them to vote in November. We need checks and balances against the superintendent, so we need to know who our candidates are and how their values align with ours and our interests. We are looking for individuals to run on the school board, as well.

M2: Frank Donner (Posey) made a procedural Motion that 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**

7. Organizing Report

Yolanda King gave report. 8 new members and recommits from the month of August. 2022-2023 Building Rep Elections are ongoing. First training is scheduled for Tuesday, October 18th @4:30 p.m. at AFT Michigan. There will be virtual workshops sponsored by AFT Michigan's Lois Lofton-Doniver. These workshops are for **dues paying members, only**. Workshop does offer SCECHS and the hours are 8:30 – 4:30 on this Saturday, September 10th. We need all election results in the office, on file. We need it documented on the documents/forms provided. No answers or information will be provided to any person other than the official building representative.

8. President's Report

- a. **Dues Increase** – Both AFT National and AFT Michigan have increased their dues, but DFT has not. We must increase our dues. We must get ourselves in a position to be updated. We need an app for our members. We should be able to pull up information, have a clerical in the office each day, and to prepare ourselves for the battles that are coming. There will be a number of battles that will come, and what we need to win are resources. We want to continue to have all of these services for our member, and we want to financially secure ourselves for the future. The last dues increase was in 2007. Our dues are the lowest in the area. MEA members pay about \$1,200 a year.
- b. **Schoolboard Race** – What we are seeing nationally are big businesses running candidates for school board seats. People like Betsy DeVos are running candidates who do not support our interests. Mid-term elections bring schoolboard seats. We have 4 seats that are up. Angelique Peterson-Maybury, Dr. Deborah Hunter-Harvil and Bishop Corletta Vaughn will be running again. These are the people who determine policy and are responsible for hiring and firing our superintendent and who are advocates for our children. We need to be engaged and encourage members to participate in this process. We will offer an opportunity for members to ask candidates questions.

9. Executive Vice President's Report

- a. **Duty Assignments** – As anticipated and as we move forward, we want to make sure that the duties assigned are equitable. We don't want anyone being abused. Contract language was shared. Duty assignments do not exclude administrative staff. The same people should not be doing the same duty day in and out.
- b. **Reading Opens the World** – The June event was a huge success. We gave away 10,000 books in record time. We will have 30,000 books coming in October. AFT National President Randi Weingarten will be present at 12 noon to kickoff the event on October 8th @ 12 noon at the Horatio Williams Foundation – 1010 Antietam Ave, Detroit, MI 48207.

- c. **GOTV** – Get Out to Vote! We are pressed about these elections because everything we love and need is taken away with an ink pen. Tenure, pensions, seniority, payroll deductions for teachers are some of the things we have lost over the years. Please be leery about what you are signing! The wording on the petition is misleading in that they state that students will receive certain benefits such as scholarships. Please do NOT believe it! Do not sign these petitions without reading carefully.
- **Lesson Plans** – plans have always been due. Curriculums across the district has plans that already have them. Administrators can request plans, but they should have a schedule. They are not due every 3 days. If your curriculum does not have a plan, you must create and submit your own.
 - **Punch Time** – Many people have not punched. They have so many other things going on, so it is difficult to tote the line if you do not punch. Details will be forthcoming. We are still battling this issue. We will continue to fight for this to end.
 - **Blended Learning** – there is a meeting about this in the morning. Stay tuned for details.

Q & A

- Karl Burnett (Vernor) – Teacher who was not paid who was not able to begin on the earlier start date. *TM: Got the name and was speaking with the District about this. There were a number of people who did not show up on the first day, so we are trying to work to get the money recouped. Some people were on an approved leave of absence and did not get paid. Please contact me offline. I will give you a call this evening.*
- Mignon Pierce (Emerson) – Lesson Plans and not having to uplift the script on another paper. Title of lesson, page number, reference what it is, and state the learning target. This is supposedly why this curriculum was chosen. You are directing the administrator to what and where you are teaching.
- Tracey Baker (Pershing) – When teachers cover classes during our prep, is there a payrate, what is the payrate for that? Can Master Teachers be made to teach more than 3 classes? If they are teaching more than 3, then they are pushed back to being a regular teacher. *LW-L: It is the missed prep payrate - \$. Sounds like MT's are being used to cover a vacancy and requires some reorganization. MT's can also be required to cover classes (substitute).*
- Valerie Murry (Ronald Brown Academy) – The District is making changes and putting students in the classroom that are not ready for school. We are not able to toilet train and teach! What can we do? *LW-L: In this case, these students need to have a Trainable Aide assigned to the classroom, and this is not the responsibility of the classroom teacher.*

- Leslee Przygodski(Clippert) – FLMA and teachers with COVID. *LW-L: We are working on COVID mitigation strategies. We are working on language and an understanding to get something in writing between DFT and the District. The District is willing to entertain giving time. The CDC recommends 5 days. We don't like it, but it must be respected. We are working on an understanding. If a member does not feel well enough, they should stay home.*
- Lisa Mereles (Carleton) – When you separate from the district, you have to call the Union and let us know when you are no longer working for the district.
- Debra Hoerres – Last year, as a MT, I had to sub until January, I was putting in 180 minutes and paid for missed preps. The District is definitely looking at when MT's are not allowed to do their job.
- A.Chika Ngozi (Paul Robeson/Malcom X) – I was told that there are no more MT's and that they are allowed to be put back into the classroom. *LW-L: Before the MT, there were Instructional Specialists were put back in a classroom if there was a need.*
- Tracy Arneau (Bennet) – This is a requirement to assist with changing in an ASD classroom. General Education teachers have such a large classroom, this would be next to impossible. Last year, I was never given my days for COVID. We are getting more and more students coming with toileting issues. Everyone needs to know that the birthrate for Autism today is 1/52 births. Assistance is needed! *LW-L: More training is needed! School board meeting is next week and we need to be there. We need training, and we need to show those coins!*
- Janet Lyons (Nolan) – It is going on 2 hours, and the supplement money that is not carrying over to the 2022-2023 school year. The Letter of Agreement expired in June. It guaranteed Blended Learning and Hazard Pay for folks. I can see how many were misled. Everything on the chart continues *except* the Hazard and Blended Learning. The chart should have been structured in a different way so that there would have been no confusion.
- Mary Brockman (Marquette) – Can we still do Blended Learning so that our students do not fall behind, even though it is not in the contract agreement? *LW-L: We are still at the table working with the District on issues concerning COVID. Even testing needs to be done at limited locations. If a child appears sick, there are kits in a school where a child can be tested in the building. Students can still go through the drive-through at Renaissance and East English Village.*
- Narissa Donald (Blackwell Institute) – Phase out closure schools were told that they should keep the same number of teachers as long as each teacher has a minimum of 10 students. We were told this week that the building would possibly be losing teachers. Is there anything that can be done? *TM: They should have never suggested that if there is low*

enrollment that the classes should not or would not be consolidated. This is just not true and does not make sense. Dr. Vitti often gives misinformation – such as saying that the District is fully staffed.

- Renee Webster – The way that Hazard and Blended Pay were presented let the entire Membership to believe that this pay would be ongoing for 2 years. I feel that the Union did a poor job and mislead us in regards to this money. *TM: I just want to remind folks from last year that we bargained a 2 year agreement and a Return to Work LOA. Some were due to expire in one year, two years or last for the duration of the contract. In no way did this leadership try to mislead members in any way. As much as we were able to get, to suggest that we intentionally did this to mislead. Our county, city, state and nation has relaxed the requirements surrounding COVID. When all of these entities have relaxed these rules, it makes it difficult to demand any more. We did our best maintain as much as possible.*
- Canica Currie () – Why do some schools have guards and some don't? *LW-L: Availability, culture, panorama surveys, prior incidents and other factors determine security placement. Schools had the option of getting a greeter.*
- Rachele Green – Are we getting the Longevity/Retention Bonus? *TM: Yes.*
- Dawn McFarlin (Vernor) – We have to stick together. None of us should be taking anything personal. We can agree to disagree. The devil is in the details. During COVID, we had people for and against the vaccine and it almost broke our Union. We have to stick together even when we disagree.
- Julie Hughes (Western) – we need to be united. It's us against the administration, but we need to be able to discuss openly and trust each other. We can't argue, but say how we feel.
- Faith Sorrell (Bennett) – I want to thank Terrence, Lokia, Jason and the entire Executive Board for all that they do. We need to stick together.
- Latonia Clark (Ann Arbor Trail) – The new calendar said that every other Wednesday is staff meeting, but my Principal says that this is not what this means. *TM: Under contract, we are to avail ourselves each Wednesday. Staff meetings should take place, no more than 10 minutes following the exit bell.*
- Steve Conn (Western) – I think the unspoken thing is the trickery with Dr. Vitti. We need to respond to all of these lies for the sake of our members, our students and our communities. We need a new superintendent.
- Regina Hunter (SSW) – There has been a request that a grievance be filed. *TM: Additions to the work load can be addressed. Many staff members have not done it and the District has not responded to that. Keep this office abreast of any changes.*

10. New Business

- Renee Rosa-Esperanza – If there are 3 consecutive years of evaluation, are we supposed to still take place in the evaluation process?
- Nicole Conaway (Employee Transition Center) – created a resolution to have her reinstated. *TM: I understand that there is a lot surrounding this. Over the e-mail, I told you that this action would be out of order. Parliamentarian states that there are several, unconnected issues within the resolution. This is out of order.*
- Nicole Ames-Powell (Carver Stem) – MT are allowed to fill vacancies in a rotation. Oversized classes will probably stay until count day. Carver was under the impression for all schools to use one entrance. Teachers are being asked to use a parking lot that we have to walk around the school to the front and enter. My concern that it is getting dark. This is unsafe. *LW-L: I believe that there have been a rash of school shootings, the training has recommended that 1 door be utilized. It may not be feasible for where people park, as this would put members in a different, unsafe situation. There are some things that probably needs to be done and needs to be addressed to the department of safety.*
- LaVar Johnson (Renaissance) – 4% pay raise for this school year, and HR says that the JROTC classifications do not qualify for this increase. *TM: The increase should have been on the September 6th paycheck. Everyone should have been included. I will check on that and try to get back with you on Monday.*
- Jen Leija (DSA) – Speaking in favor of adding Theater teachers to the coaching pay scale. *TM: Please provide a list of all the things that you provide above and beyond the regular work day, that would be great!*
- Melissa Lipsmeier (A.L. Holomes) – I am upset that we do not have Short and Long Term Disability. It needs to be reinstated. *LW-L: Vitti ended it because he could. Members can still get this, but it will not be payroll deducted. Benefits are not negotiated.*
- Gina Hatcher (Duke Ellington) – If we have slated 12 Wednesdays for PLC's, then why do we have to do grade-level PLC's during a prep once a week? *LW-L: You don't. DFT members are only allowed 4 preps. If you have 5 preps, then they can control that 5th prep.*
- Onza Stokes (Northwestern) – we are forced to have 2 PLC's each week. Should we be having a PLC during our prep, and should we be paid because that is a missed prep for us? *LW-L: You should be paid for that prep.*

11. Good of the Order

12. Adjournment

M3: Jason Posey (Brantley-Phillips) made a motion to adjourn. **MOTION PASSED**

Meeting adjourned @8:06 p.m.