



DETROIT FEDERATION OF TEACHERS

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Luis Solano
Detroit Public Schools Community District
Fisher Building, 10th Floor
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Re: Collective Bargaining

Collective bargaining is not just about wage increases. It is about the critical improvement of working conditions for members and those they affect—our bargaining unit members, students and families. Collective bargaining must begin with understanding and respect for professionalism, transparency, and honesty. Both sides, the Union and the District, must work together to find mutual solutions for concerns brought to the negotiating table until a tentative agreement is reached.

The Detroit Federation of Teachers is working from this framework and always has. However, the District has presented false narratives, stalled, and even walked away from negotiations under the guise of fixing a problem—that only begets an onslaught of even more challenging problems...and it is only February.

To put it plainly, money is not the only solution to our District's problems. Thus, it is disrespectful, demoralizing and insulting to think that members can be bought off with a chunk of change while problems are compounding daily due to lack of supervision brought on by departmental downsizing of administration. It is even worse, and more disrespectful, when the District simply walks away from the bargaining table as we try to address the problems together. **For all of these reasons, the Detroit Federation of Teachers emphatically objects to the District's unilateral implementation of this so-called "Certification Bonus."**

As Malcolm X, my favorite political figure so eloquently and brutally honest stated in March of 1964, "If you stick a knife in my back nine inches and pull it out six inches, there's no progress. If you pull it all the way out, that's not progress. The progress is healing the wound that the blow made, and they haven't even begun to pull the knife out much less, try and heal the wound. They won't even admit the knife is there."

60 years later we are still dealing with politicians, and even our own employer that has yet to be honest and deal with the root of the problems.

This most recent turn of events, both literally and figuratively, has further drawn not just a line in the sand, but a wedge between the District and the members of the Detroit Federation of Teachers. The members believe this superintendent and his administration are divisive, arrogant, and short-sighted.

The special education challenges are not limited to Detroit; it is a national issue. Every job category employed by schools, from academic interventionists and general education teachers to coaches, substitutes, and counselors, is making every effort to give students with special needs the education they deserve. Each of us is contributing labor that well surpasses our educational background and means. With the recent press attention on the academic improvements this district is making post-Covid, we have proven that when we all work together, we are powerful!

The Detroit Federation of Teachers stands on this mantra and we are fighting for improved compensation for *all* our members who are truly working exceedingly hard in the face of a myriad of adversities.

Sincerely,



Lokia Wilson-Lumpkins, President
Detroit Federation of Teachers

Jason A. Posey, Executive Vice President
Detroit Federation of Teachers

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