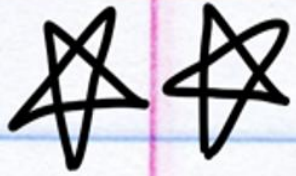
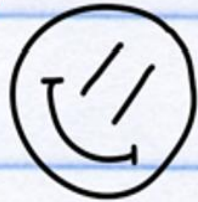


The Detroit Teacher



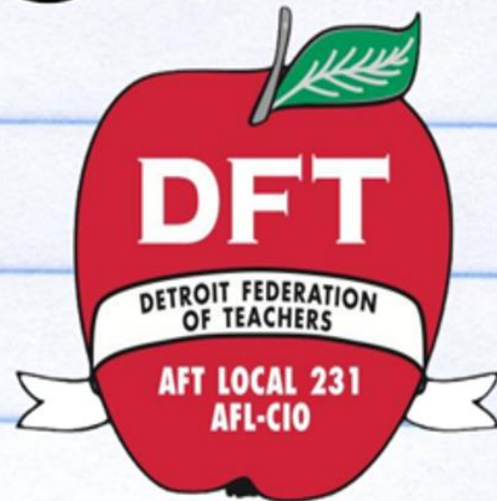
JANUARY 2026



The Detroit Teacher is the official publication of the Detroit Federation of Teachers,
American Federation of Teachers Local 231, AFL-CIO.



Lakia Wilson-Lumpkins, President
Jason Posey, Executive Vice President



**A Statement
from the DFT
President,
Lakia Wilson-
Lumpkins:**



As we enter Black History Month 2026, I must be clear, as cliché as this sounds: this is a critical election year for our union and public education. With the Democratic trifecta in Lansing, we restored key workplace protections — our rights to meaningful grievance procedures, fair discipline and discharge processes, also payroll-deducted union dues. We strengthened our collective bargaining power and stabilized our union. These were not small victories. They restored balance and dignity to our profession. Locally, we also improved salary structures, reinforcing due process, and strengthening our contract after years of erosion under emergency management. But here is the truth: what has been restored can be reversed in the upcoming elections.

This year, we will elect a Governor, a U.S. Senator, and right here in Detroit we will fill five seats on the DPSCD School Board. The leadership chosen will have a direct impact on funding priorities, bargaining rights, school governance, and the stability of our district.

We cannot fall asleep at the wheel. When you fall asleep while driving, your car does not stop, it drifts and veers. It can cross lanes, hit barriers, or crash before you even realize you've lost control. The same is true in politics. If we disengage, power shifts, policies change, and protections erode. By the time we are "woke," the damage can be. Your engagement is not optional this year: it is essential.

We must MOVE:

- **M**obilize our members and buildings to turn out to school board, community and candidate meetings
- **O**rganize strategic efforts for present and future actions
- **V**ote in all elections (local, national, primary and general election)
- **E**ducate, engage and empower members by listening and supporting pro-public education candidates

Black History Month reminds us that rights are never permanently secured. Rights must be continually defended. Let's stay awake. Let's stay organized. Let's safeguard the things we have gained and value.

ELECTION
2026



Michigan Voter Information Center

Your source for Michigan election information

Visit Michigan.gov/VOTE

- View your sample ballot
- Find out if you are registered to vote
- Locate your polling place
- Track your absentee ballot
- And much more!



**Also available on
smart devices**

From the Political Action Committee Chairs



Marcus Walton and
Robin Jennings

Welcome to the New Year, which kicks off the mid-term elections in Michigan and across the country. Although there is much to discuss, we are asking for member participation in this ballot initiative. Please do your part to help us get this on the ballot this year. What a great win this would be for public education. Share the information with everyone you know. (Details on the next page.)

Red for Ed

**WHEN LOVE BEATS GREED
KIDS SUCCEED!**

WILL YOU
TAX THE RICH
WITH ME?

INVEST IN
MICHIGAN
KIDS!

**TWO WEEKS OF PEOPLE-POWERED
ACTION TO FUND MI SCHOOLS!**

JOIN US AT [INVESTINMIKIDS.ORG/LOVEBEATSGREED](https://investinmikids.org/lovebeatsgreed)

FEBRUARY
14-28

PAID FOR WITH REGULATED FUNDS BY INVEST IN MI KIDS, P.O. BOX 11022 LANSING, MI 48901-1022

We need to work some major magic to get this ballot initiative over the finish line, but we believe that we can win this. It will take every single one of us. We have unveiled our new plan to win - our [Red for Ed Weeks of Action from 2/14-2/28.](#)

Here's the plan:

1. Fill out the [individual commitment form.](#)
2. Make your plan to collect 20 or more signatures before the end of February.
3. Send your friends the form and ask them to do the same.
4. Ask any groups you know to fill out the [Feb 14-28 Invest In MI Kids Weeks of Action.](#)

[**CLICK TO SIGN UP & FIND FURTHER INFO**](#)

Invest in MI Kids, so far, has gathered over 100,000 signatures, and is sparking much-needed conversations about education justice across the state. We have the momentum and a plan to get this proposal on the ballot, but it is going to take every single one of us. **We will not get on the ballot without your help - now is the time.** Taxing the rich for public schools is a huge step in fighting fascism.

Do you want to see this win for our kids?

[**Make a commitment to take a shift \(only 20 signatures!\) today.**](#)

We need all parents, caregivers, students, community members, and organizations who care about the future of public education in Michigan.



Work Locations Represented January 2026 General Membership Meeting

- ❖ Academy of Americas
- ❖ AOA Logan
- ❖ Adult Education
- ❖ Bethune
- ❖ Brenda Scott
- ❖ Bunche
- ❖ Burns
- ❖ Carstens
- ❖ Carver
- ❖ Central HS
- ❖ Charles Wright
- ❖ Clemente
- ❖ Clippert
- ❖ CMA
- ❖ Cooke
- ❖ Davis Aerospace
- ❖ DFT Office
- ❖ DFT Retirees
- ❖ Drew
- ❖ EIDC
- ❖ East English Village
- ❖ Edmonson
- ❖ Gardner
- ❖ Golightly CTC
- ❖ Golightly EC
- ❖ Hamilton
- ❖ Harms
- ❖ Jerry L. Wright
- ❖ John R. King
- ❖ Law
- ❖ Lions Academy
- ❖ Mackenzie
- ❖ Mann
- ❖ Marcus Garvey
- ❖ Marquette
- ❖ Marygrove
- ❖ Moses Field
- ❖ Noble
- ❖ Northwestern
- ❖ Palmer Park
- ❖ Priest
- ❖ Randolph CTC
- ❖ Ronald Brown
- ❖ Schulze
- ❖ Southeastern
- ❖ SLP
- ❖ Thirkell
- ❖ Turning Point
- ❖ Vernor
- ❖ Wayne
- ❖ Western

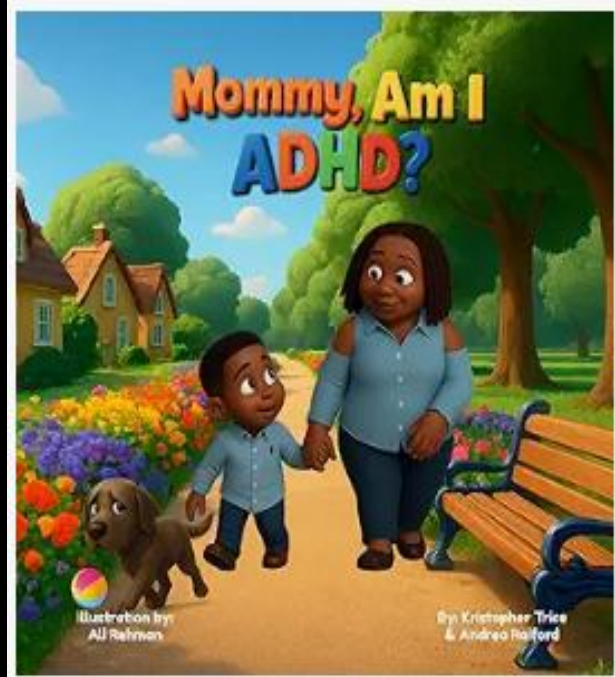
Member Spotlight: ESE Teacher at Jerry L. White



Ms. Andrea Raiford wears many hats—ESE teacher, active DFT member, mother, author, and small business owner—but at the center of everything she does is a deep commitment to helping others feel seen, understood, and valued.

Andrea works with students who are Severely and Multiply Impaired at Jerry L. White, where her passion for education is evident every day. That same passion fuels her work as an author and advocate. When she speaks about union membership, her message is clear: standing together in solidarity matters. When we are united, our voices are stronger, and we are recognized for who we truly are.

She is the founder of A.C.RAI Publishing, a creative brand dedicated to uplifting families through stories rooted in faith, love, and emotional growth. With more than 25 years of experience in education, Andrea is intentional about creating meaningful stories that encourage children to embrace themselves fully—just as she has done with her own son.



Kristopher Trice is the children’s co-author of *Mommy, Am I ADHD?* and *Mommy, Am I Fat?* A proud middle school student, Kristopher uses his voice and lived experiences to help other children feel seen, understood, and loved exactly as they are. Living with ADHD himself, he shares his journey to show children that ADHD does not make them “less than”—it means their brains are creative, strong, and full of amazing ideas.

Kristopher shares his mother’s passion for advocating for children who learn and grow differently. He encourages others to be confident in who they are and hopes that through his books, children everywhere will learn to love themselves, use their voices, and know they are fearfully and wonderfully made. He is currently working on his own children’s cookbook, where he teaches kids how to prepare fun, simple, and healthy meals.

Learn more about A.C.RAI Publishing here: <https://acraipublishing.com/>



CALENDAR

February

5 Executive Board 4:30 p.m.
10 DPSCD School Board 5:30 p.m.
11 Count Day
11 SSW Chapter, 5:00 p.m.
12 DFT General Membership 4:30 p.m.
16-20 Mid-Winter Break
17 Retirees Chapter, 11:30 a.m.
26 Early Childhood Chapter 5:00 p.m.

March

5 Executive Board 4:30 p.m.
10 DPSCD School Board 5:30 p.m.
11 PTC-HS
11 SSW Chapter, 5:00 p.m.
12 DFT General Membership 4:30 p.m.
16 Attendance Agents Chapter, 5:00 p.m.
16 Academic Interventionists, 6:00 p.m.
17 Retirees Chapter, 11:30 a.m.
17 Political Action Committee, 5:00 p.m.
18 PTC
19 Middle School Chapter, 5:00 p.m.
19 ESE Chapter, 5:00 p.m.
24 Building Rep Training, 4:30 p.m.
26 Early Childhood Chapter 5:00 p.m.
30-April 3 Spring Break

April

6 Q3 ends
7 Q4 begins
8 SSW Chapter, 5:00 p.m.
9 Executive Board 4:30 p.m.
13 Report Cards
14 DPSCD School Board 5:30 p.m.
16 DFT General Membership 4:30 p.m.
20 Attendance Agents Chapter, 5:00 p.m.
16 Academic Interventionists, 6:00 p.m.
21 Retirees Chapter, 11:30 a.m.
21 Political Action Committee, 5:00 p.m.
23 Early Childhood Chapter 5:00 p.m.

Dates and times are subject to change.

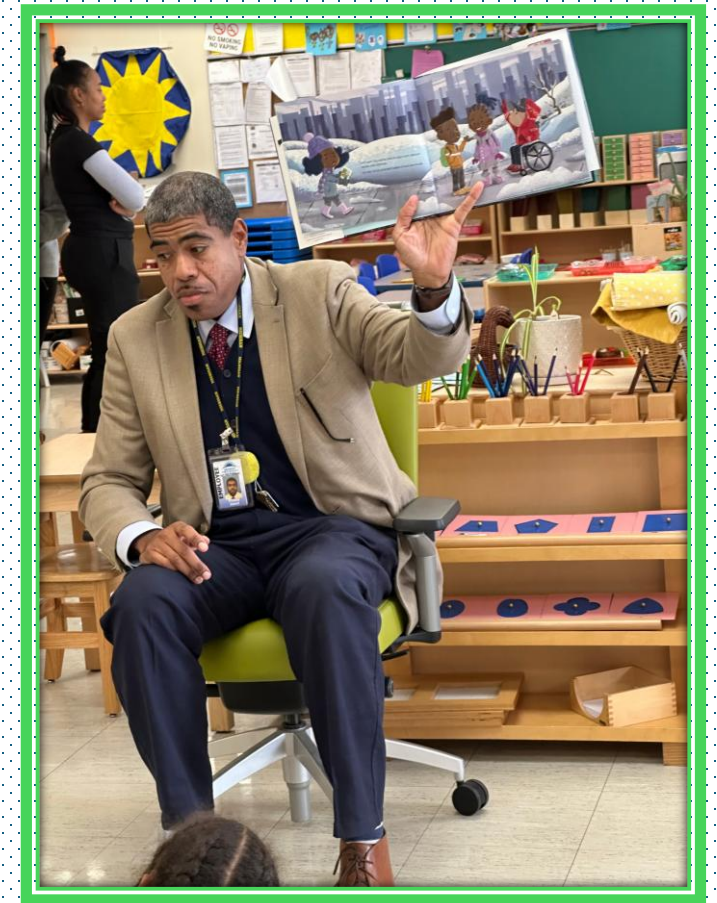
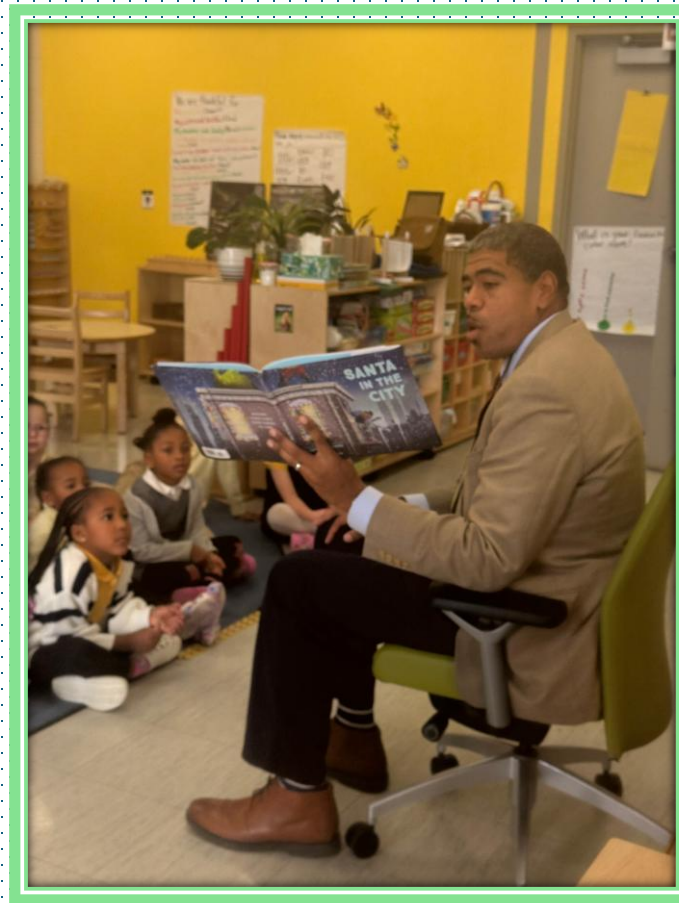
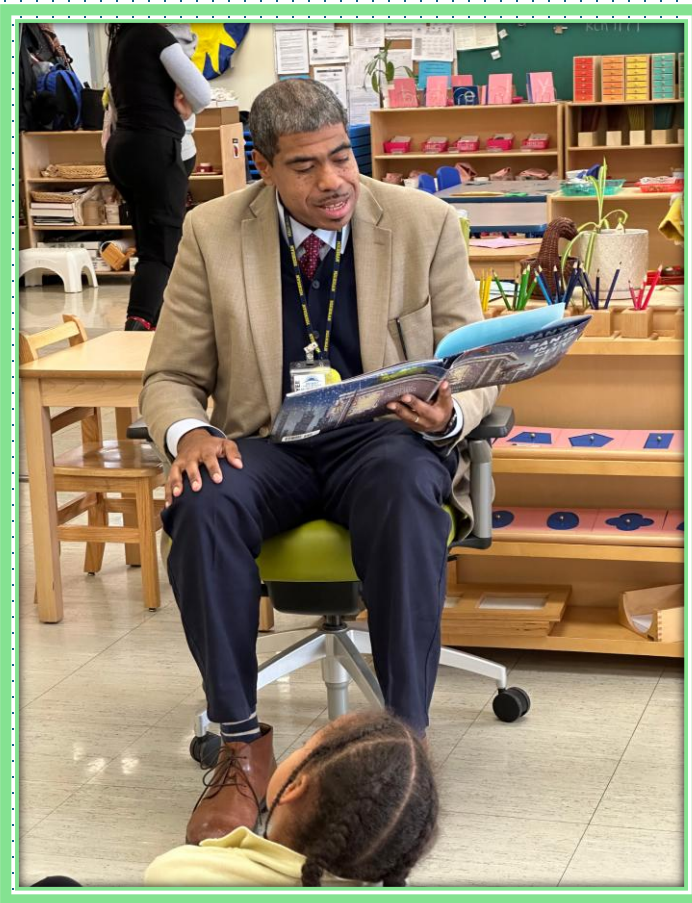
DFT events are on website @ <https://dft231.mi.aft.org/events>.

DPSCD information can be found @ <https://www.detroitk12.org/>

Storytelling Time With The EVP

Jason Posey reads aloud a holiday story to Kim D. Mitchell's Montessori class at Palmer Park Prep. If you are not familiar with this children's book, here is a video of the author reading it aloud.

[Santa in the City read aloud by author Tiffany D. Jackson, illustrated by Reggie Brown.](#)



Modeling the DFT Winter Hat



The cold days of winter are perfect for wearing the “red DFT apple” on our heads to stay warm.



Modeling the DFT Winter Hat



From the Pen of the Communications Specialist



Vida Bonacci

Welcome to 2026 and thank you for being a member of the Mighty, Mighty DFT. One of my duties as the Communications Specialist is to send information so you can be an informed member. There are several ways we impart communications to our Union brothers, sisters, and siblings.

1. Weekly Notes (Updates) and Union Hotlines are sent to your personal email. We cannot send Union business to an employer-provided email address, so nothing is sent to your DPSCD email. The Union Hotline are messages of an "urgent" or immediate attention; often these will reflect our "Calls to Action" where we ask for members to write, call, or email on a particular topic. We post our Calls to Action on the DFT website under the *Take Action* menu.
2. Wellness Wednesdays (via your personal email and website): these columns focus on tips for health, well-being, safety. All Wellness Wednesdays are posted on the DFT website: <https://dft231.mi.aft.org/sites/wellness-wednesday>.
3. *The Detroit Teacher* (via your personal email and website): this monthly publication highlights what members are doing in our work/school locations, community outreach by members, legislative updates and other items of interest to our members. You can find previous issues on the DFT website: <https://dft231.mi.aft.org/publications-and-reports>. **We encourage members to submit items of interest, so please reach out to me @ VBonacci@dft231.com.**

4. Don't forget to use our DFT website: <https://dft231.mi.aft.org/>. We encourage you to take some time to peruse through the website as it can answer so many questions.



- The home page is used for information we share with the public.
- Join the Union is used for signing up for DFT and DFP, along with membership dues information.
- About Us has a staff directory (contact us), who we are, names of leaders, and links to AFT.org, AFT Michigan, AFL-CIO, AFL-CIO Michigan, and Metro Detroit AFL-CIO
- News features news and legislative articles, publications and reports, and videos.
- Actions & Events list our "take actions" and a calendar of events.
- Membership lists information about membership meeting dates, member benefits, key DFT and DFP documents, letters of agreement, the retirees chapter and professional development offered by the union.
- Resources are used for information about programs, information about voluntary deductions, Wellness Wednesday.

5. Social Media for DFT: Facebook: The only source of accurate information direct from the DFT: <https://www.facebook.com/DFT231> and X (Twitter): <https://x.com/DFT231>.

As part of the DFT, you also are a member of AFT Michigan and AFT National.

6. AFT Michigan President's Updates come weekly to your personal email. Their website is <https://aftmichigan.org/>. To sign up for communications: <https://aftmichigan.org/signup/>. AFT Michigan on Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/aftmichigan/> on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/aftmichigan>; on X (Twitter) <https://x.com/aftmichigan>.

7. AFT National: <https://www.aft.org/join>, find this sentence under the heading *Do you work in:* "If there an AFT local in your worksite that you are eligible to join, please go to [this form](#) and select **YES.**" Then, fill out the form and click the box (near the bottom of the page) that allows you to opt in to receiving emails: <https://www.aft.org/join-aft>. You can connect to the various social media in which AFT participates by scrolling down to the bottom of the home page on their website ([AFT - American Federation of Teachers - A Union of Professionals](#)) and enter your personal email and zip code.

8. DFT Bulletin Board: Each work/school location is to have a dedicated space for a Union bulletin board. Please be sure to know where this is located. Information about School Union Committees and contacts can be found be at your work location site.



If a member is not receiving our communications, have that member email me so we can determine why.

REMINDERS

❖ DUES/MEMBERSHIP CONCERNS

Contact an Organizing Fellow: West Side locations handled by Yolanda King; East Side locations handled by Regina Fuqua, for Paras, Food Service and NHAs, contact **Quanita Cunningham**. You may also contact Office Assistant, Mae Winters.

❖ ADDRESS, EMAIL, PHONE NUMBER CHANGES

Please make sure your correct personal email, home address and telephone number are on file with the DFT Office. If you change it with the district, that information is not sent to the Union Office. You may send corrections to dues@dft231.com. *We are not allowed to send communications to your DPSCD email address.*

❖ SEPARATION FROM THE DISTRICT

It is the member's responsibility to notify the DFT Office when you separate from the district, whether resignation or retirement or Please contact an Organizing Fellow or the Office Assistant, Mae Winters.

❖ CHECK TO SEE IF YOUR CERTIFICATION EXPIRES IN 2026

You should be making plans to have your requirements fulfilled. The state is now accepting your credentials. More information can be found by logging on to your account at <https://mdoe.state.mi.us/moecs/login.aspx>.

ALL DFT CONTACTS ARE ON THE LAST PAGE OF THIS DOCUMENT



VIEWING PAYROLL COMPENSATION HISTORY

1. Log in to PeopleSoft with your DPSCD credentials.
2. Click on the **Compass** icon in the top right corner to open the Nav Bar. A drop-down menu will appear.
3. Click on **Navigator** icon.
4. Click on **Self Service**.
5. Click on **Payroll and Compensation**.
6. Click on **Compensation History**.
7. View your current salary with its location on the DFT Salary Schedule.

REMINDERS

ABOUT YOUR RIGHTS

If you are called to a meeting with management that you suspect will be disciplinary in nature you have the right to request union representation under the U. S. Supreme Court ruling, NLRB v. Weingarten.

If in a meeting with management you are questioned to obtain information and you have reasonable apprehension that your answers could be used as a basis for discipline or other adverse action, it is your responsibility to ask to reschedule the meeting or resume when your union representative is present. If you choose to remain you may refuse to answer.

If you are in a situation where Weingarten may apply, read or present the statement exactly as outlined below.

WEINGARTEN RIGHTS

If this interview could in any way lead to my being disciplined or terminated, or affect my personal working conditions, I respectfully request that my union be present at this meeting. Until my representative arrives, I choose not to participate in this discussion.

CONTACT INFO FOR DFT STAFF

<https://dft231.mi.aft.org/contact-us>

- Lokia Wilson-Lumpkins, President, 313-875-6788, LWilson@dft231.com
- Jason Posey, Executive Vice President, 313-875-6786, JPosey@dft231.com
- Karin Whittler, Labor Affairs Administrator, 313-875-6776, KWhittler@dft231.com East Side locations (east of Woodward), also Cass Tech, DSA, Burton
- Felecia Slappy, Labor Affairs Administrator, 313-875-6780, FSlappy@dft231.com, West Side Locations, (West of Woodward)
- Jacqueline Washington, Labor Affairs Administrator, JWashington@dft231.com, 313-875-6789, Paras, Food Service, NHA
- TBA, Organizing Fellow, West Side Locations/DFT
- TBA, Organizing Fellow, East Side Locations/DFT
- Quanita Cunningham, Organizing Fellow, 313-875-6789, Paras, Food Service, NHA
- Patrick Falcusan, Retirement Counselor and Financial Analyst, 313-875-6783, PFalcusan@dft231.com
- Mae Winters, Office Assistant, 313-875-3500 press 6, MWinters@dft231.com
- Vida Bonacci, Data Communications, 313-875-3500, VBonacci@dft231.com

