

The Detroit Teacher

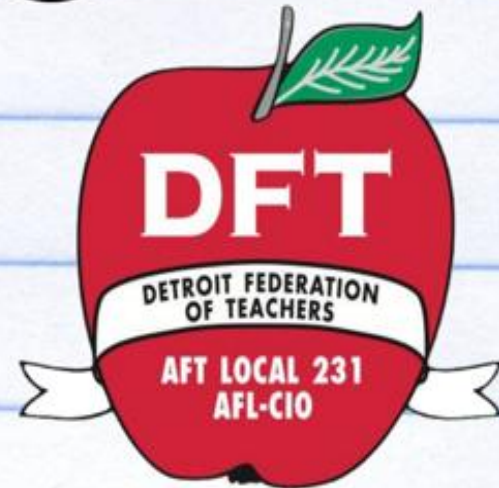
☆☆ May and June 2026



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



From the Pens of the Political Action Committee



Marcus Walton and
Robin Jennings

It may be summer vacation for educators, but not so for candidates who are seeking office. You will soon experience the voting season atmosphere: political signs, mailings, and commercials popping up all over Michigan. 2026 are the midterms and our state is being closely watched by both Democrats and Republicans.

Let's look at why the Great Lakes State is on the national radar.

- Michigan has been decided by narrow margins recently. The best statewide candidates in Michigan usually build a “working-state” brand: strong labor and manufacturing ties, a credible plan for prices and jobs, and a steady tone that can play in both Detroit-area suburbs and smaller cities.
- The last two elections have been a wave for Democrats, electing Gov. Gretchen Whitmer twice. In state politics, the 2018 and 2022 midterms led to major shifts. Democrats won all the major races in the executive branch, governor, secretary of state and attorney general. That marked a major leftward shift for Michigan. In 2022, both chambers of the state legislature flipped blue for the first time in nearly 40 years.
- In Michigan, however, Democrats have many rising stars while Republicans are regrouping after losing the high-profile race for U.S. Senate. In the presidential race, Michigan has flipped every election since 2012. Once part of the Midwestern “blue wall,” the state flipped red for Trump in 2016 by an average of two votes per precinct. Biden won in 2020 by three percentage points. Trump regained it in 2024, but by an even slimmer margin.

That's why participating in this political process is so important. We need to make sure the candidates who strongly believe in public education and the values we hold dear as a Union get our support! It's up to each one of us to use our skills as educators to let the voting public know who we support and why.

Here is what President Lokia Wilson-Lumpkins said a few weeks ago (her words bear repeating):

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 and a school millage. 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

Our 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.

<https://mvic.sos.state.mi.us>

MICHIGAN

ELECTION INFORMATION


04
AUG

Tuesday, August 4, 2026

Election Type:
Primary

Election Location(s):
State Primary

Registration Deadlines:
By Mail: Monday, July 20, 2026 (postmarked)
In Person: Tuesday, August 4, 2026
Online: Monday, July 20, 2026 [Get Registered!](#)

	Michigan Voter Information Center	Home	Your voter information
	Vote at home	Register	Vote in person
Accessible voting	Your polling place	Language services (michigan.gov)	

Information Source for Upcoming 2026 Elections in Michigan



DPSCD Seeking Millage Renewal on August Ballot

Dr. Vitti addressed the DFT General Membership Meeting in May about Proposal S, which isn't a new tax or a higher tax. The district will ask voters to support its collection of an 18-mill levy, which has been collected by Detroit Public Schools and was last renewed two years ago. All school districts in Michigan are legally required to levy an 18 Mill operating millage. We must get voter approval to collect the operating millage by July 1, 2027. If voters reject the millage by that date, then DPSCD will go into a \$120 million deficit.

You can help.

482Forward has officially started canvassing for the DPSCD millage. Join us and help us reach our goal of knocking 4,000 doors this summer! [Sign up for a canvass](#) from now to August 3rd and our community partner will reach out with details for the date(s) you choose.



DPSCD Seeking Millage Renewal on August Ballot

If Detroit voters approve Proposal S on August 4th, DPSCD can continue to invest in:

1. Art/Music, PE, and athletics in all schools
2. Expanded career and college programming for high school students
3. Higher teacher and staff salaries
4. More classroom supplies for students and teachers
5. Additional repairs of school buildings

Important Note

Homeowners pay nothing

Proposal S costs nothing to Detroit voters who own or rent their home. Proposal S will simply replace the tax previously levied by DPS, now that the legacy debt has been paid.

For more information:

<https://millage-2026.squarespace.com/>

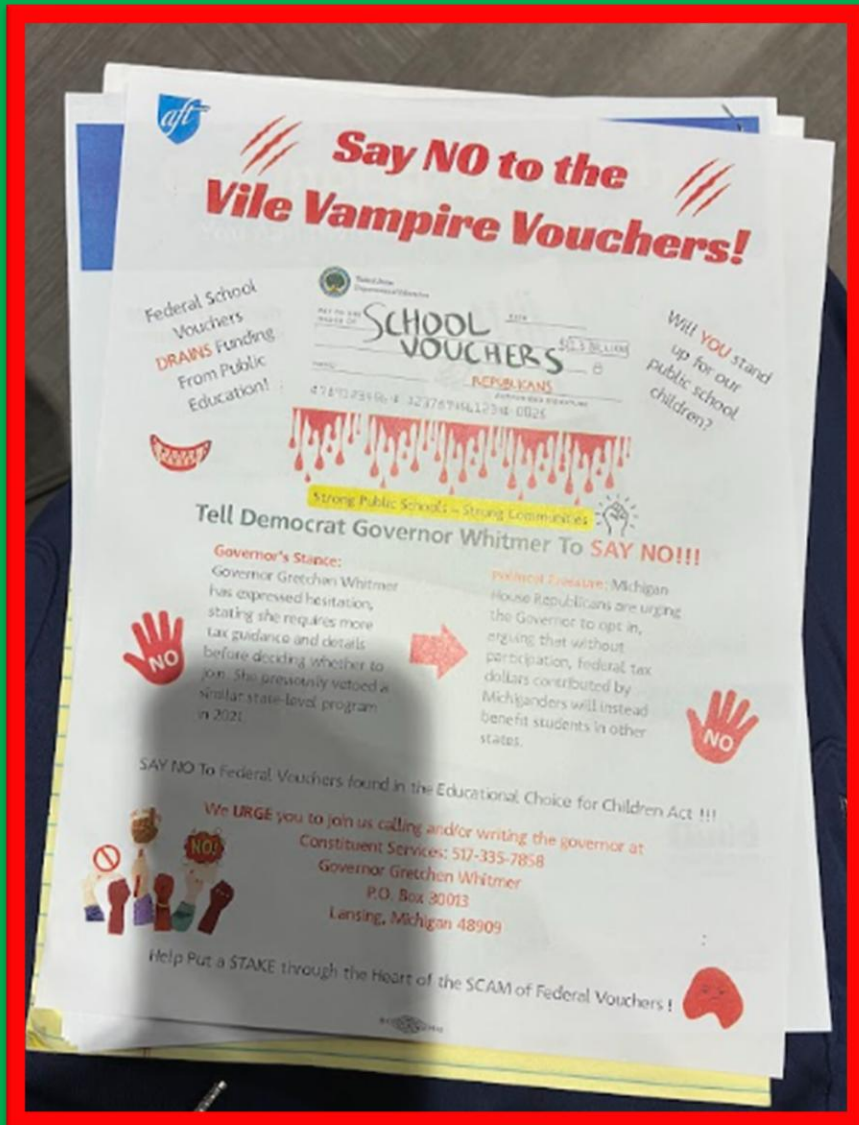


Say **NO** to School Vouchers

Members at the May General Membership Meeting heard from AFT Retiree-Activist, Lois Lofton-Doniver, as she discussed the Trump administration's Education Freedom Tax Credit program. That program gives up to a \$1,700 tax credit to people who donate to certain organizations that provide K-12 school scholarships. Public education advocates including school principals, superintendents, and teachers' unions say it's a backdoor school voucher scheme. The Michigan Constitution prohibits spending public money on private schools. We are asking Governor Whitmer to reject the federal plan, but she has indicated she's waiting for more federal guidance on program administration before deciding whether to opt Michigan in.



Say **NO** to School Vouchers



Here is a statement from DFT President Lakia Wilson-Lumpkins:

“Michigan families already have school choice and freedom, with hundreds of charter schools, public and private schools available. This \$1,700 credit falls far short of covering tuition, transportation, and hidden costs, while this voucher program only widens equity gaps—especially for students with disabilities in underfunded public schools.

The real question is not about choice or freedom—it’s about accountability. Shouldn’t public dollars support public schools that serve all students and are governed by elected boards and transparency laws, rather than private institutions that aren’t held to the same oversight and standards?”

Democratic Gubernatorial Candidate Meets With DFT Members

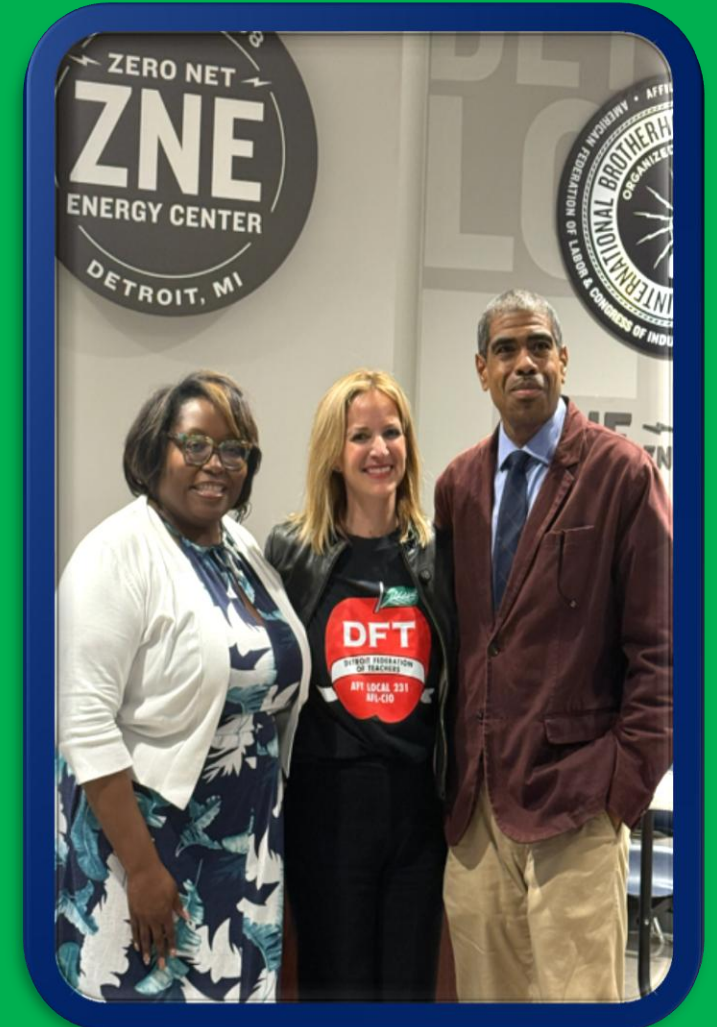
36 governor's elections are on the ballot this year in the US, including six in presidential battleground states. Michigan is one of those battleground states.



Michigan's Secretary of State, Jocelyn Benson, attended the June DFT General Membership Meeting to discuss her platform about public education. She also answered questions from members.

She spoke about her education plan, which you can read here:

<https://www.jocelynbenson.com/benson-education-plan.pdf>





Work Locations Represented May 2026 General Membership Meetings

- ❖ Academy of the Americas
- ❖ Adult Education
- ❖ Barton
- ❖ Bennett
- ❖ Bethune
- ❖ Brenda Scott
- ❖ Brewer
- ❖ Burns
- ❖ Burton
- ❖ Carstens
- ❖ Carver
- ❖ Central
- ❖ Charles Wright
- ❖ Clemente
- ❖ Clippert
- ❖ CMA
- ❖ Cooke
- ❖ Davis Aerospace
- ❖ Davison
- ❖ DIAYW
- ❖ DFT Office
- ❖ DFT Retirees
- ❖ Detroit Lions
- ❖ Dossin
- ❖ Drew
- ❖ Duke Ellington
- ❖ Earhart
- ❖ EIDC
- ❖ Edmonson
- ❖ Emerson
- ❖ Fisher
- ❖ FLICS
- ❖ Gardner
- ❖ Golightly EC
- ❖ Gompers
- ❖ Hamilton
- ❖ Harms
- ❖ Hutchinson
- ❖ Jerry L. White
- ❖ John R. King
- ❖ Keidan
- ❖ Law
- ❖ Mackenzie
- ❖ Mann
- ❖ Marcus Garvey
- ❖ Mark Twain
- ❖ Marquette
- ❖ Marygrove
- ❖ Maybury
- ❖ Moses Field
- ❖ Mumford
- ❖ Munger
- ❖ Neinas
- ❖ Noble
- ❖ Palmer Park
- ❖ Priest
- ❖ Randolph
- ❖ Renaissance
- ❖ Schulze
- ❖ Southeastern
- ❖ SLP
- ❖ Thirkell
- ❖ Vernor
- ❖ Virtual
- ❖ Wayne
- ❖ Western



Work Locations Represented June 2026 General Membership Meetings

- ❖ Academy of the Americas
- ❖ Adult Education
- ❖ Bates
- ❖ Bethune
- ❖ Brenda Scott
- ❖ Bunche
- ❖ Burns
- ❖ Carstens
- ❖ Central
- ❖ Charles Wright
- ❖ Chrysler
- ❖ Clemente
- ❖ Clippert
- ❖ Cody
- ❖ CMA
- ❖ Cooke
- ❖ Davis Aerospace
- ❖ Davison
- ❖ DFT Office
- ❖ DFT Retirees
- ❖ DIAYW
- ❖ Detroit Lions
- ❖ Dixon
- ❖ Dossin
- ❖ Drew
- ❖ Duke Ellington
- ❖ Earhart
- ❖ EIDC
- ❖ Edmonson
- ❖ FLICS
- ❖ Gardner
- ❖ Golightly CTC
- ❖ Golightly EC
- ❖ Gompers
- ❖ Harms
- ❖ Jerry L. White
- ❖ John R. King
- ❖ Law
- ❖ Mackenzie
- ❖ Marquette
- ❖ Mason
- ❖ Moses Field
- ❖ Mumford
- ❖ Neinas
- ❖ Noble
- ❖ OT/PT
- ❖ Palmer Park
- ❖ Pershing
- ❖ Priest
- ❖ Randolph
- ❖ Sampson-Webber
- ❖ Social Workers
- ❖ Southeastern
- ❖ SLP
- ❖ Thirkell
- ❖ Vernor
- ❖ Virtual
- ❖ Wayne
- ❖ Western

Honor Roll

CONGRATULATIONS

Work Locations 100% Attendance at 2025-26 General Membership Meetings



Academy of Americas

Bethune

Brenda Scott

Charles Wright

Cooke

Drew

EIDC

Edmonson

Gardner

Golightly EC

Harms

Jerry L. Wright

Law

Marquette

Moses Field

Noble

Priest

SLP

Thirkell

Vernor

Western

DeVette S. Brown at Bunche



As a proud DFT dues-paying teacher union member in good standing, a Co~Building Representative at Bunche Preparatory Academy, Sister DeVette believe strong schools are built through educator voice, collaboration, integrity, and a shared commitment to student success.

Union membership is more than belonging to an organization—it is an investment in protecting public education, strengthening our profession, and ensuring educators have a meaningful voice in decisions that affect our work.

Being a dues-paying member reflects her commitment to supporting the collective work that advances our profession—advocating for fair working conditions, protecting professional rights, strengthening educational environments, and ensuring educators can focus on what matters most: students.

Her decision to become a Building Representative came from a deep respect and loyalty to what our contract stands for. She believes contracts represent more than negotiated language—they represent fairness, accountability, consistency, and protections that support all members equitably.

Serving as a Building Representative has allowed her to help ensure members understand their rights, responsibilities, and available supports while promoting fair representation for every member—not only when perspectives align, but especially when they do not.

She says that representation is not about automatically agreeing or disagreeing with leadership decisions. It is about ensuring members are informed, respected, heard, and understand the reasoning and processes behind decisions that impact our professional environment. Effective representation includes helping members navigate change, ask informed questions, and advocate constructively while maintaining professional relationships.

Her union work extended to serving ten years on the Election Committee because she values integrity, transparency, and trust in the democratic processes. The goal for her was to have fair elections that strengthen and ensure every member has confidence that their voice matters. Serving in this role reflects her belief that leadership opportunities and organizational decisions should be guided by impartiality, ethical practice, and consistent application of established rules and procedures. DeVette has also been a delegate to state and national AFT conventions.

She adds “I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge the parent partnership and family engagement as essential components of when educators, families, and leadership work together with mutual respect and shared goals, stronger school communities are created.”

Thank you Sister Brown for your Union activism!

DETROIT MAY DAY 2026 RALLY

International Workers' Day

JOIN WORKERS, FAMILIES, AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS AS WE STAND TOGETHER IN SOLIDARITY AND CELEBRATE THE POWER OF WORKING PEOPLE.

Friday, May 1, 2026

Location: Roosevelt Park

2231 Michigan Ave, Detroit, MI 48216

Rally Begins: 4:00 PM

Program & Speakers: 4:30 PM

Hosted by:
Metro Detroit AFL-CIO



Scan QR Code for more info
maydaydetroit.org



May Day, also known as International Workers' Day, is observed every May 1st as a global day of solidarity, advocacy, and action for workers' rights.

President Lokia Wilson-Lumpkins was a featured speaker at the event and then was interviewed about her comments.

Jerry L. White Staff in Red to Support May Day/International Workers' Day



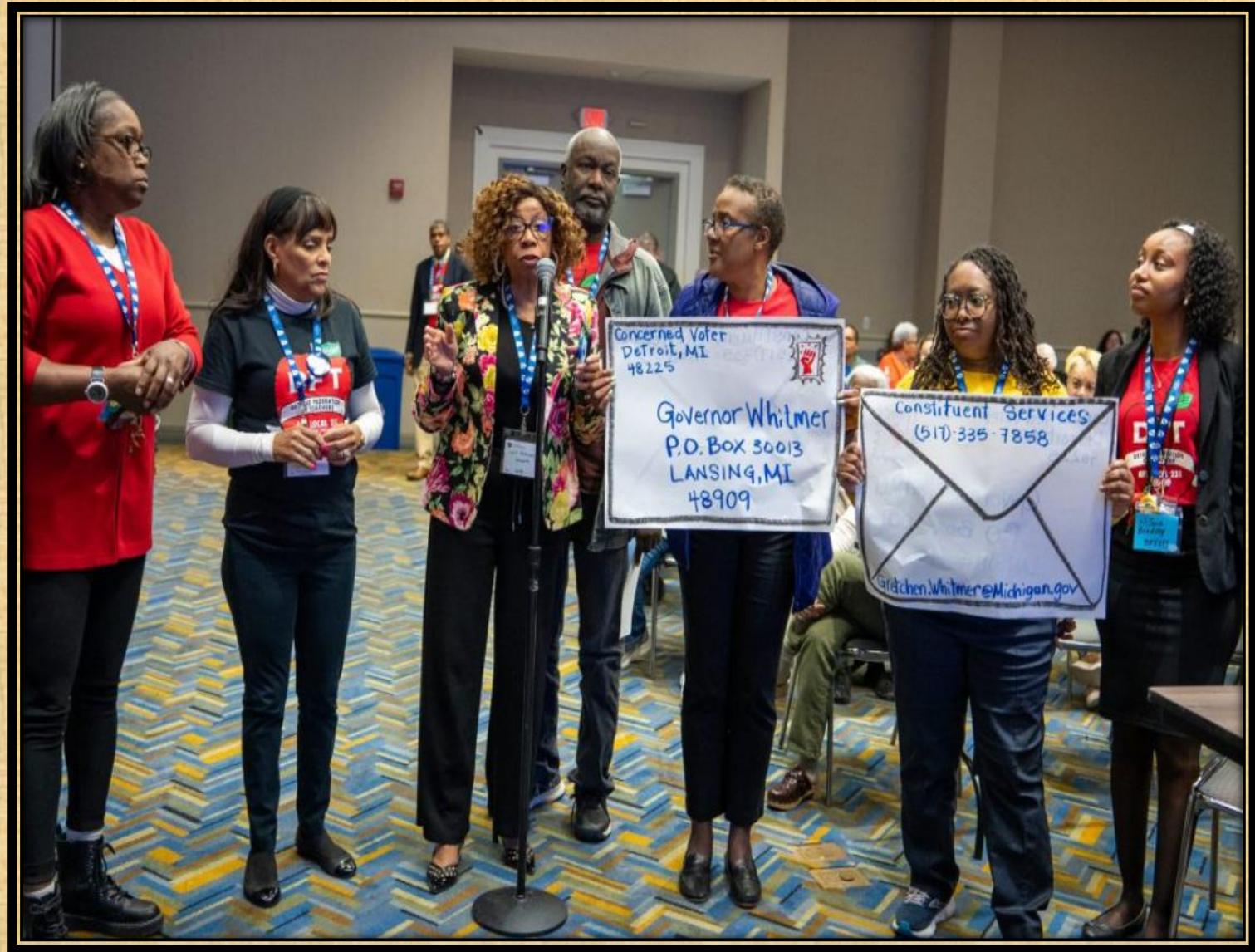
**L to R: Madeline Everson, Karen Kohfeldt,
Marcus Walton, Janice Duncan**

79th Convention Summary



DFT DELEGATES IN ACTION





DFT RECOGNITIONS

1. **The Walter Bergman Human Rights Award**: Members Cynthia Hollingshed, Carlos Salazar, Kristen Schoettle, and Heidi West advocating for immigrant rights
2. Local Mergers: Detroit Federation of Teachers and Detroit Federation of Paraprofessionals
3. Leading the way in PAC fundraising: Detroit Federation of Teachers, Local #231
4. Delegates elected to the 2026-2028 AFT Michigan Administrative Board: 3 Vice Presidents (General) are Lakia Wilson-Lumpkins, Jason Posey, Marcus Walton and Retirees Representative Andella White, DFT #231R
5. Adoption of resolution written by DFT: **Addressing the Disparity in Special Education Services and Staffing Shortages**
6. Adoption of 2 resolutions written by DFT with other locals: **Protecting Our Communities and Fighting for Immigration Justice** and **Call for Peace, Humanitarian Aid, and Solidarity with Working People and Communities Around the World**

For more information about the convention, look here:

<https://aftmichigan.org/79th-aft-michigan-convention/>



Receiving the Walter Bergman Human Rights Award at the convention are Kristen Schoettle and Carlos Salazar



Here is what member Heidi West had to say about being honored:

Being recognized by the AFT for this award is so important and meaningful because it shows that the state federation understands how extra challenging teaching during these times can be. By giving me this award it shows how they appreciate and support the work we do and they know that our work shouldn't go unrecognized and that makes me want to continue to do the hard work of teaching.

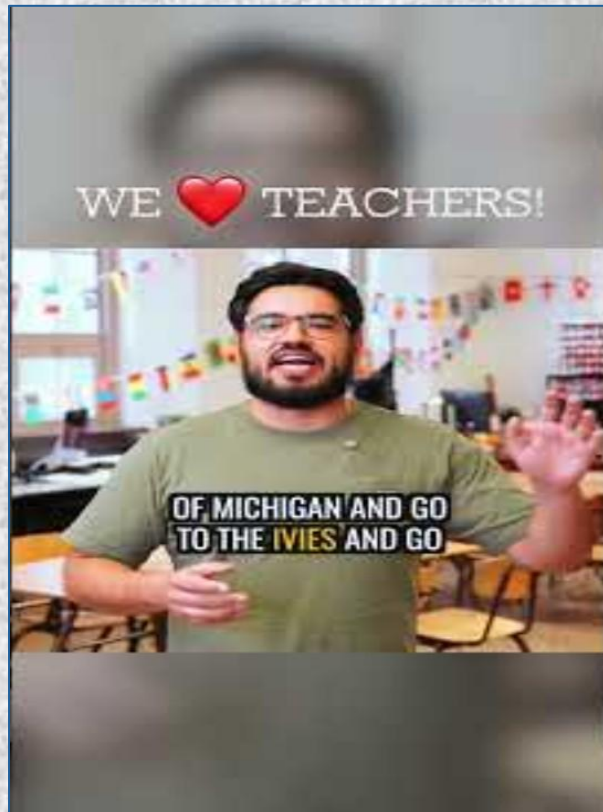
Michigan Secretary of State, Jocelyn Benson Visits Palmer Park

Classrooms of Kimberly D. Mitchell and Sarah Grange
On the Last Day of School for Students





DFT and Teacher Appreciation Day on Social Media



Watch here: [AFT YouTube Frank Espinosa](#) from Western International High School



It Was a Brew-Tea-ful Day at Ronald Brown Academy! Let's Par-tea!

This was the second annual Tea Party with Mrs. Tamara Robinson! Entry to the party required dressy attire, and the 7th-graders didn't disappoint! One student shared that it was both her first time wearing heels and attending a tea party. The students drank tea, enjoyed a full brunch spread, listened to jazz, and danced with a jazzy twist! Mrs. Robinson was the perfect hostess.

Every detail made the afternoon feel elegant, welcoming, and unforgettable. The Tea Party was a beautiful experience filled with laughter, new memories, and a touch of sophistication. Thank you, Mrs. Robinson, for creating such a special tradition for our 7th-graders! We can't wait for next year's tea party!

Sixth-grade teacher Ms. Davis stated that this annual event is already a hot topic among the rising 7th-graders! Assistant Principal May gave the event rave reviews and shared that she would love to see it expanded across multiple grade levels!















Time-Traveling at Jerry L. White

During the Month of June at Jerry L. White things got HOT with our Anite Egypt Art Exhibition ! Patricia Moor, Charles Swan and Brittney Beasmon decided during a PLC meeting to bring one of TeachTown stories to life , "The Sands of Time."

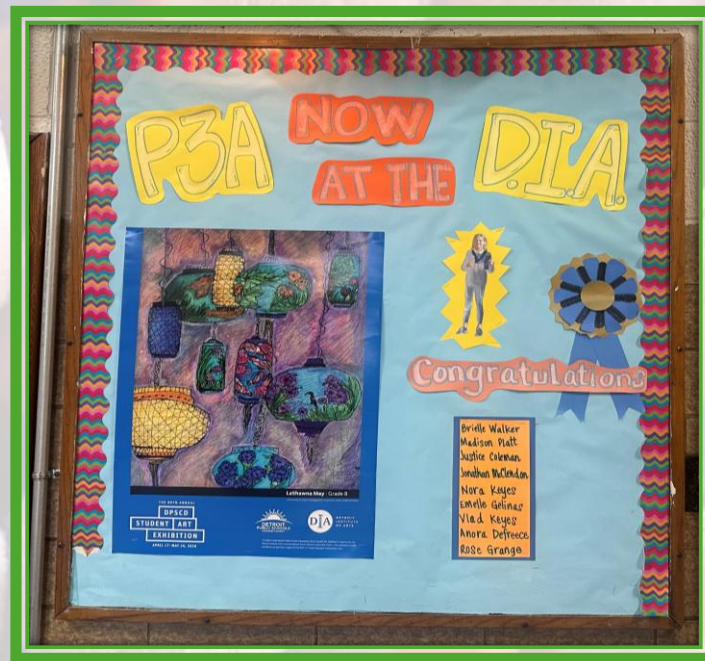
It is a hands -on experience for all students; they can visually go back in time to understand one of History's Greatest Civilizations that lasted for more than 3,000 years . Ancient Egypt is located along the Nile River of Africa. Student could do fun activities and experiments. The JLW ESE teachers believe in hands-on activities for ESE students!

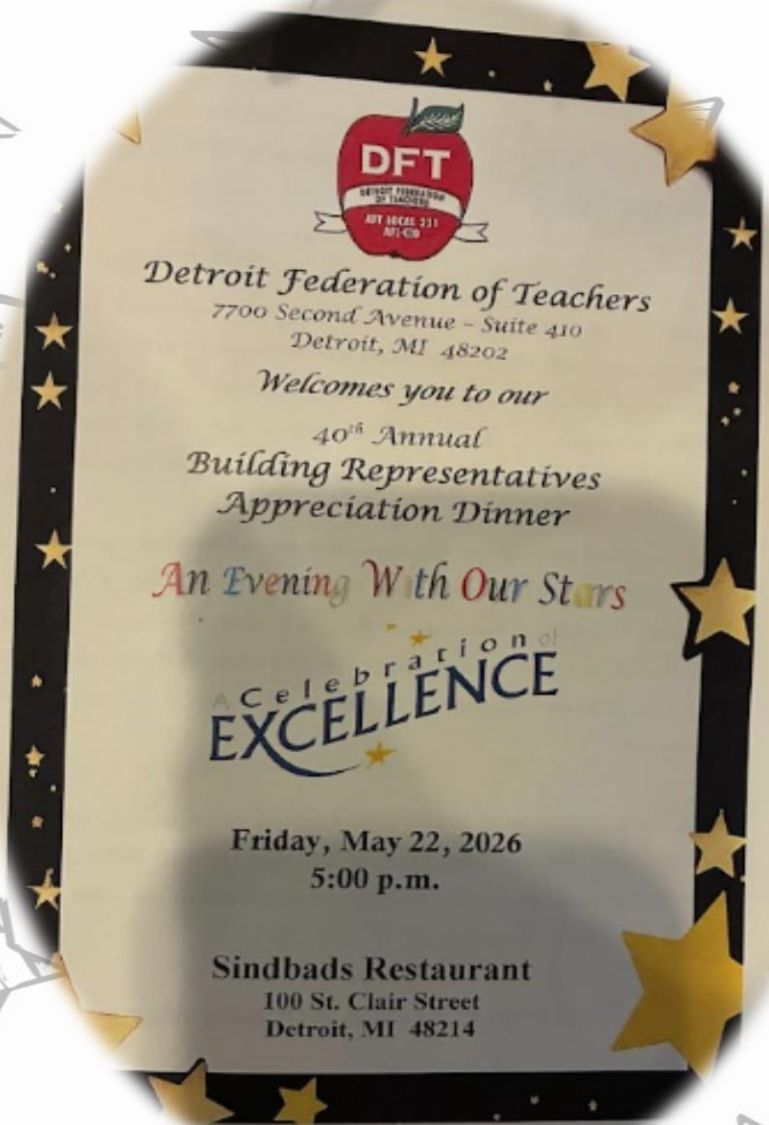


Art Gallery at Palmer Park









**Greeting Guests are Organizing
fellow Quanita Cunningham
and Nijala Bradley**



Recognitions



**Kristen Schoettle and Heidi West
with the Walter Bergman Award**



**Certificates of Appreciation for the
Labor Affairs Administrators: Felecia
Slappy, Jacqueline Washington, Karin
Whittler**



**Appreciation Plaque for
Jason Thomas, Blue
Cross Blue Shield**



**Appreciation Plaque for
Combined Insurance,
Deb Stotler**



**Appreciation Plaque for Heritage
Optical, George Barnes, Jeanette King
and Catherine Watson,**



**Appreciation Plaque for HAP,
Daryl Hibbitt and Darla Johnson**

Prize Winners



Socializing and Dinner









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

CHECK TO SEE IF YOUR CERTIFICATION EXPIRES IN 2027

You should be checking your credentials to determine if it expires in 2027. Make sure you will be able to renew on time, so you do not put your job in jeopardy. More information can be found by logging on to your account at <https://mdoe.state.mi.us/moecs/login.aspx>.

REMINDERS

❖ DUES/MEMBERSHIP CONCERNS

Contact an Organizing Fellow: West Side locations handled by Nathan Horn; East Side locations handled by NiJaia Bradley, 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.

ALL DFT CONTACTS ARE ON THE LAST PAGE OF THIS DOCUMENT

CONTACT INFO FOR DFT STAFF

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

Lakia 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, 313-875-3500, FSlappy@dft231.com, West Side Locations, (West of Woodward), Greenfield Union

Jacqueline Washington, Labor Affairs Administrator, JWashington@dft231.com, 313-875-6789, Paras, Food Service, NHA

NiJaia Bradley, Organizing Fellow, 313-875-6775, NBradley@dft231.com East Side Locations/DFT

Nathan Horn, Organizing Fellow, 313-875-6775, Nhorn@dft231.com West Side Locations/DFT

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Vida Bonacci, Data Communications, 313-875-3500, VBonacci@dft231.com

