



Local 698

East Detroit Federation of Teachers
Educators and more for 66 years



AFL-CIO

November 2007 Newsletter

Where oh where will our freshman go?



The Board of Education is discussing and taking in information from many sources about the location of the future freshman classes in East Detroit Public Schools.

If you don't know, at present the freshman are scheduled to return to Oakwood and Kelly next fall. This will drag the district back to the Junior High School days of many years ago. This is a decision made last year by the Board after several meetings and research they did in an effort to help improve

freshman achievement.

It is significant to note that freshman academic performance at the High School is alarming for many students. Opinions that identify the possible causes of this problem are many in number, but all seem to lack a sure fire way to correct it.

Several teachers and counselors did our best to contribute to the conversation, but a different view prevailed at the time. New graduation requirements and the identification of potential unintended consequences have led the board to reinvestigate the decision. It is very important to the future of this district and its students not to move the ninth graders out of EDHS.

The high school building is designed for many more students than it presently houses. Moving the largest group of students would underutilize this facility to an alarming degree. Fixed costs for maintenance and staffing would drive up the budget in a manner that is not prudent. . It might also create some degree of crowding at the lower levels, which were recently consolidated

Most significantly a regression back to the Jr. High concept has no tangible benefit for the academic success of the freshman class. This is the position of the superintendent's office, administrative staff and counselors at the high school. These are the professionals hired by the district to know.

A movement toward an academy style segregation of ninth graders seems to be the best possible solution to this problem. The need for some physical modifications at the high school may be necessary, but they are necessary with or without an academy.

We all want to find the secret to success for the freshman classes of EDPS. The Jr. High concept is not the secret. Let's get the academy concept off the ground and set it into motion. We have to present a strong academic setting for the freshman and we have to provide it in a fiscally responsible way. We have the model, let's build it & see if they will come.

UNION SHORTS

Common Calendar in County

The State has just passed legislation, PA 101, requiring the ISD to establish a common calendar for all of its constituent districts. It particularly identifies winter and spring break dates. It is encouraged that common PD days be adopted as well. If EDHS adopts the trimester concept, that may exclude our district from compliance. There will be more to come as we discuss this issue with administration.

NEGOTIATIONS

This is a slow process. We have been meeting regularly and still have a couple of very important issues to contend with, but I believe each side is confident that we will come to an agreement in the near future.

What's Up???

Hey! Is something happening in your building or your life that you think your Union colleagues should know about? If so, let us know and we can include it in our newsletter. This rag should be about all of us and we want to share in your success. Drop us a line at the Union office or by e-mail so that we can get the good news out. East Detroit Teachers are Fantastic. Consider this, if we don't tell, who will?

Monarchs fly for Nugent

Congratulations to EDFT member Kevin Nugent for his success as the Macomb Community College Women's Volleyball coach. His team recently won the its introductory level playoff tournament for the NJCAA National Championship. They will be jetting off to the championship level tournament later this month to hopefully bring home the title! Great Job!

Be careful out there

If you have ever been in front of a kid that has lost his temper be smart...get help. The discipline point system seems to be working well. If you have difficulty with a student, don't get into a showdown with them that might end up in an uncomfortable confrontation. Create space and let each of you calm down. Contact the proper administrative personnel to deal with the situation. Allow administration to enforce the discipline code as it is written. It is a wonderful tool if we allow it to be applied properly.

Supplemental Contracts & Job Descriptions

Many of you are receiving a supplemental contract to sign that has terms of your employment that seem very severe in nature. The one year no expectation of renewal clause in particular is an ugly one.

Our supplementals in the past have always been an implied agreement upon the acceptance of the position and the professionalism of everyone involved in the process. New board policy indicates that a signed contract must exist, so we have to sign one if we wish to receive our pay.

If you are not comfortable signing a contract or initialing a job description let the office know. You may need to sign the contract to get paid, but we can be certain that all of the proper concerns are addressed.

I wish I could say that I don't know why there is such a high level of contention over these non-curricular issues, but I probably do. I am however, hopeful that the contracts help define our responsibilities and protect each of us from additional duties being heaped onto our backs without financial consideration.

The difficulty lay in the nature of how some contracts connect to our teaching positions. This is a tricky situation and we are discussing the unique nature of such contracts.

The job descriptions that accompany these contracts are also of concern. The supplemental description must apply to duties conducted outside of the normal school day.

The union is working to iron out differences of opinion on what statements are not applicable for the contracts in several areas. We are also keeping track of job descriptions as they begin to appear.

The Winners Are:

Congratulations to the victors of the 2007 school board election. We look forward to working with you over the next four years.

The four winners were: Jeff Allen, Carol Corrie, Matt Vroman and Kim Zuccarro. Thanks also to the candidates that were willing to make the effort to contest for the positions. Perhaps in future elections you will be called on to serve. We encourage you to remain active contributors at the board meetings.

WWW.edft698.org



You say these marks just appeared when you signed your supplemental contract?

Town Hall meeting on secondary schools

The Board of Education is sponsoring a town hall style meeting at Oakwood Middle School on Wednesday, November 28, 2007. It will start at 7:00 p.m. and will probably be held in the cafeteria.

The topic of this meeting is the alignment of the secondary schools in the district. First in line is the placement of the ninth grade class. If you have concerns about this issue, **YOU NEED TO BE THERE!**

Members of our community should be allowed to speak first, but then make sure that they and the board hear what the professionals of this district believe to be in the best interest of our schools.

Please notice that I'm NOT telling you what you should think or say. Just get out there and say it! The union's position is that the ninth grade is better off in the high school because we believe it is the best system for our district to educate our students. Let the board know how **YOU** feel. They know how I feel.

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Office Manager: Wanda Mazur
 Union Office School Year Hours
 8:30 a.m. - 4 p.m.
 Summer hours as necessary
 Messages (phone and e-mail)
 are checked daily.

Phone: 586-778-3309/445-4699
 Fax: 586-778-1277
 E-Mail: info@edft698.org

New Address: 18223 Ten Mile Suite 200
 Roseville MI 48066

EAST DETROIT FEDERATION OF TEACHERS

Michigan vs. 'Right to Work' States

Economic Indicator	Michigan	'Right to work' states
Average annual wages	\$39,443	\$31,832
Average weekly wages	\$776	\$637
% without health insurance	11.6%	15.4%
% of private-sector workers with employer-provided pension coverage, 2001-2002	51.4%	44.4%

Sources: State Rankings 2005: A Statistical View of the 50 United States, Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Census Bureau, Economic Policy Institute

If you need to contact the Union Officers

President EDFT: Lincoln Stocks e-mail: lstocks@eds.misd.net
 High School V.P. Mike Mayer e-mail: mmayer@eds.misd.net
 Middle School V.P. Doug Ulmer e-mail: dulmer@eds.misd.net
 Elementary V.P. Laurie Hillebrand e-mail: lhillebrand@eds.misd.net