

# FORWARD

The Official Newsletter of The Dearborn Federation of School Employees

1107 Washington Street, Dearborn, Michigan 48124 313-274-5900

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Holy Harbles!!! Two Ice Days!!!

We hope everyone is safe at home and not experiencing the many power outages that are a result of this storm. **Our scheduled Paraprofessional meeting that was to occur this afternoon at the ASC has been CANCELLED and will be rescheduled at a later date.** While most of us are at home and receiving a full day's pay (thanks to the union) some of our members are required to work on these days. Our Trades and Grounds members are required to work on these days, and we are grateful for their effort.

This month, union representatives had the opportunity to meet with several employee groups comprising eight different classifications and had productive conversations relative to our upcoming negotiations. At the top of everyone's list, as one would expect, was the desire to increase wages. Each group had various suggestions on how to achieve that goal, but the desire was the same. Below are some of the other topics discussed during these meetings.

February 8<sup>th</sup> was the date that union representatives met with our GSRP Paraprofessionals. The discussion included items they would like to see addressed in our negotiations such as: More planning time with their teachers; an increase in their workweek to include Fridays and reimbursement for their costs to obtain and maintain their professional certifications. Also, there was a misconception of how union dues are calculated, and we were able to clarify that union dues do not have to be paid all at once in one lump sum but can be paid bi-weekly in an affordable amount. The amount that is deducted is approximately one hour of pay every two weeks.

On February 9<sup>th</sup>, our Food Service Department met with union representatives at our General Membership Meeting and discussed issues related to their classification for this year's negotiations. Much of the discussions centered on professional development and additional training for current and new employees; how employees should be reassigned during temporary school closures and more training for managers regarding the SFE menu. We also discussed how the Food Service Department has grown and how that has benefitted our employees over the past few years by increasing many employees' profiles qualifying many more people for health benefits; adding more positions into the kitchens and providing more selections for the students.

On February 15<sup>th</sup>, union representatives met with the Transportation employees to hear their thoughts and ideas regarding issues pertaining to their classifications for the upcoming contract negotiations. Another topic that was discussed was the importance of union enrollment and how Bus Drivers and Transportation Assistants are protected by a \$1,000,000.00 liability policy if they enroll. This means that if a student is ever injured on or near a bus, the union employee is covered by this insurance policy so that they will not need to fear losing their personal assets if they are blamed for the injury. Non-union employees are not covered by this insurance and may be exposed to liability.

One theme that was repeated to each employee group as we prepare for bargaining is that too many employees believe that they can simply sit on their hands, do nothing for themselves or their colleagues, and then expect the union to fulfill all of their wishes at the bargaining table. This is not how bargaining works! It is a collective effort which requires employees to care enough about their own welfare to participate. If employees choose not to participate, then it becomes impossible for the union to convince anyone that these people are serious about their issues and/or frustrations. As a result of these conversations, more employees became dues-paying union members.

On March 1<sup>st</sup>, we will be meeting with the Technology Support Analysts.

Looking ahead, we are scheduling dates for future meetings with other individual classifications and will eventually meet with all Major Classifications in preparation for bargaining. If we have not met with your group yet, please be patient as we work our way to everyone.

Our next *General Membership Meeting* will be on March 9<sup>th</sup>, in room #12 at the ASC building, located at 18700 Audette Street in Dearborn. The meeting will begin at 6:30 p.m. and will last about two hours. We hope to see you there.

**If you are interested in joining our union, please contact [Khitam Rabadi](#) or Al Lerini through district email, or call our office at: 313-274-5900.**

**They are our go-to board members for enrollment and will help you through the process.**

**If you are already a registered member and know others that may be interested, please ask them to contact Khitam or Al for more information.**