

FORWARD

The Official Newsletter of the Dearborn Federation of School Employees

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

By Al Lerini, President

Welcome Back! How exciting to start another school year after the nice summer weather we all enjoyed. While most employees were off work for the summer months, the union was very hard at work securing some very important gains, namely a new contract. But our contract was not the only thing we addressed, we also continued working with our legislators in Lansing to change the laws and make them more favorable toward unions and working families. For all these gains, which will be discussed below, our biggest challenge is yet to come: The renewal of our millage. Between now and February, 2024, this newsletter will continue to remind all employees of the importance of voting for this piece of school funding.

Celebrating David Hecker

In Celebration of Emeritus President David Hecker's retirement, union leaders from across the area gathered to honor him for his 27 years of service and dedication to the working families of Michigan. In his honor, AFT Michigan office was renamed "David Hecker Building". For those of you who are not familiar with David, he has been a guiding presence and a strong supporter of the DFSE. Over the years, he sat with us many times as a negotiator when we were in our most difficult discussions and was the catalyst to their resolutions. We wish him the happiest and healthiest retirement and offer our deepest gratitude for his tireless support of our union.

Noon Hour Supervisors

We recently concluded bargaining for the Noon Hour Supervisors, and they will be getting a 5 yr deal with the same percentage increases that we negotiated for the main DFSE contract. Many people do not realize that the DFSE represents three distinct bargaining units which include the Noon Hour Supervisors, The Childcare Workers and us. Each unit is separate from the other, but the DFSE represents all three groups. Each of our groups has its own contract that must be negotiated.

Childcare Workers

As mentioned above, the Childcare Workers are a separate bargaining unit, we recently bargained and secured a Tentative Agreement on their contract. The funding for this bargaining unit is different from the DFSE and the Noon Hour Supervisors, it is tuition-based. In other words, unlike our units, the Childcare workers are not funded by the State of Michigan but rather by the tuition that is charged to parents who utilize their services. This means that less funding is available to apply to wages, benefits and other needs. Nonetheless, the CCW bargaining team (Patricia Zander, Cristina Greco and Al Lerini) secured some notable improvements in their contract. Wages were increased by a minimum of \$5/hr from their 2018 amounts plus an additional 2% on these wages. The longevity amounts were tripled, an increase in paid vacation days, improvement in healthcare coverage and more employees are now eligible for healthcare, an increase in the number of paid snow days and an expansion of the HFC tuition benefits. In addition to these gains, the CCW has grown its ranks by adding Developmental Preschool Teachers and Assistants to their bargaining unit. This is an additional 7 positions! These are people who were not represented by a union and recognized the value of belonging to a union and having our support behind them.

Bargaining Update

The contract we just signed this summer produced the biggest wage gains in many, many years. Not only were our wages improved, but our longevity was substantially increased, and we continued our investment in our pensions. This is a five-year deal which will provide stability to our group and keep us on the same bargaining cycle as the other bargaining units. When coupled with the fact that our healthcare costs have remained steady, the true value of this contract becomes even greater.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Our success is not just limited to the bargaining table. Since January of this year, here are the legislative accomplishments in Lansing that directly benefit us:

- Restored payroll deduction of union dues for school employees;
- Repealed "Right to Work";
- Restored the right to bargain support staff privatization;
- Repealed PA 54 that tilted contract negotiation to favor employer by penalizing workers with no contract;
- Transparency and protections against privatization.

Millage! Millage! Millage!

In early 2024, the district will schedule a renewal millage for a vote by the residents of Dearborn. This renewal is for money that pays our wages and salaries and is critical to the continued operation of the district with the current staffing levels. This millage is a renewal of approximately \$40 million and the failure of its passage would be catastrophic, possibly leading to layoffs. All of the wage gains and job creations that have occurred in the past few months could be jeopardized if continued funding is not approved. This union will be promoting its passage and will make it a constant point of discussion during every union meeting in order to get the message out to our entire bargaining unit that this is an important matter that needs our attention. If you are a resident of Dearborn, and are employed by the district, it is in your best interest to approve of this renewal. If you are not a resident but know friends or have family that live in Dearborn, encourage them to support this renewal.

DFSE ELECTION YEAR

This year is our biannual election of officers. Each officer has a term of two years, and the elections fall on odd-numbered years. Nominations are made during the November General Membership Meeting and the Election is held at December's. If you are interested in running for an office, please contact the union office for more information.

MEMBER ENGAGEMENT



If you are interested in joining our union, please contact Khitam Rabadi Tiffany Thomas or Al Lerini through their contacts listed 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 encourage them to contact us.

Sign up for DFSE membership by using the QR Code or link:
<https://bit.ly/DFSEdues>



UPCOMING EVENTS

General Membership Meeting – October 12

Our next General Membership Meeting will be on October 12, 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 need assistance or have any questions and you need a fast response, please feel free to speak with one of our Executive Board members. These are their contacts:

- Joe Coulter: coultej@dearbornschools.org; 313-676-7178
- Laurie Kurth: kurthl@dearbornschools.org; 313-758-9337
- Kathy Rabadi: rabadik@dearbornschools.org; 313-682-4272
- Kyle West: westk@dearbornschools.org
- Dennis Burkholder: burkhod@dearbornschools.org
- Anna Munoz: amunoz278@gmail.com
- Tiffany Thomas: pankeyt@dearbornschools.org; 734-788-2180

CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE!

dfse4750.mi.aft.org