

GREEN SHEET

February 2010

Official Newsletter of the Dearborn Federation of Teachers

Dearborn Rotary
St. Paddy's Party
Friday March 12, 2010, 5:30 to 11 p.m.
Park Place
23400 Park (corner of Outer Drive)
Irish Entertainment by
iris-ceol
Island Music

Irish Food Cash Bar. Seafood chowder. Fish fillets. Corned beef and cabbage \$20 cover charge includes food, Irish Baskets, Waterford Crystal, and more prizes. Please invite your friends, family, neighbors, and fellow employees!

PAC Donations

See your building rep to donate to the dft Political Action Fund. Kudos to the Whitmore-Bolles staff for donating over \$400.00 dollars!

More Public Union Members

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, 51.4% of America's 15.4 million union members were employed by the government in 2009. This is the first time that the public union members have surpassed the private sector members. Private union membership has continued to decline, even as unions have organized more public employees. In 1980, there were more than twice as

many private as public union members. Private union members are subject to natural market forces. Government employees are often unaware and unaffected by market forces.

AFT Sees Mixed Picture in President's Budget Proposal

President Obama's fiscal year 2011 budget proposal reflects his commitment to improving our schools, even in these difficult economic times, says AFT president Randi Weingarten, noting that his proposal for increased education funding clearly shows he understands the connection between a strong economy and the strength of our public schools. "Budget priorities are not just about funding; they also map out new policy directions," Weingarten says. "We are pleased that the budget proposal seeks to reform the Elementary and Secondary Education Act in ways the AFT has championed. These changes include replacing No Child Left Behind's accountability system with one that takes into account student growth and school progress. Also, the push for states to adopt stronger standards will help teachers define what students need to know to succeed in our knowledge economy. Similarly, the president's proposals to make college more accessible and affordable, particularly by increasing the maximum amount for Pell Grants, will prepare a generation of students for work and life. "While there is much to applaud in the budget, we are concerned

that virtually all of the proposed increase is for competitive grants, while Title I—the lifeblood for our most disadvantaged children—is flat-funded. Students with the most needs should not have to rely on how well adults compete for dollars. "We welcome the significant investment in a revised ESEA, and look forward to working with Secretary Duncan and Congress to ensure that any new proposal reflects our members' experience in the classroom and creates more opportunities for children."

source: AFT

School Start Times

A proposal to change the school start times has been tabled by superintendent Brian Whiston until further notice. Word is the superintendent will sleep on it.

Charter schools' growth promoting segregation, studies say

The growth of charter schools has promoted segregation both in California and nationwide, increasing the odds that black, Latino and white students will attend class with fewer children who look different from themselves, according to two new studies.

Charter school advocates contend that the researchers' presumptions about racial separation are out of date. They said parents -- including low-income minority parents -- are turning to charters for a quality education that traditional schools have not provided.

Charters are independently managed public schools that are exempt from some rules that govern traditional schools. About 2.5% of the nation's students attend charters -- a threefold increase over seven years. The Los Angeles Unified School District has more charters -- enrolling about 9% of district students -- than any school system in the country.

The trend toward segregation was especially notable for African American students. Nationally, 70% of black charter students attend schools where at least 90% of students are minorities. That's double the figure for traditional public schools. The typical black charter-school student attends a campus where nearly three in four students also are black, researchers with the Civil Rights Project at UCLA said Thursday.

The other researchers also focused on economic segregation, looking at private companies that manage schools, in most cases charters. The enrollments at most of these campuses exacerbated income extremes, they concluded. Charters tended to serve higher-income students or lower-income students. Charters also were likely to serve fewer disabled students and fewer English learners. This report, soon to be officially released, was developed by education policy centers at the University of Colorado at Boulder and Arizona State University.

source: LA Times Feb 5 2010

Raise one bar while lowering another?

Even though the number of students getting a high school diploma has climbed to 75%, according to the U.S. Department of Education, almost half take remedial classes in math, writing, or reading when they get to college. Half drop out.

As for those who go straight from high school into the workforce, some 60% of employers rate the graduates' English and math skills as fair or poor, and businesses spend millions per year on remedial training.

Demanding that all students cross over some bar and then lowering it so they can, cheats those that have actually accomplished the initial requirements imposed. Do you feel like your college degree means as much today as it once did?

Granholt proposes change in pensions

Jennifer Granholt has proposed modifying the pension and health care plans for future school and state retirees, but also would offer an incentive to any who retire this summer, according to media reports.

Speaking to the Lansing Rotary Club, Gov. Granholt said employees with at least 30 years of experience who retire between July and September would get a pension boost ranging from \$1,000 to \$2,000 per year, according to reports in the Lansing State Journal and The Oakland Press. But the proposal also would cut spending by requiring employees to contribute more to their own pensions and by cutting retiree dental and vision benefits, the Journal reported.

Granholt also suggested consolidating school districts and services, and aligning the school and state budget years, The Press reported. The proposals would require legislative approval.

Michigan Education Association spokesman Doug Pratt called the retirement incentive "pretty tiny" and a "political game and gimmick," the Journal reported.

Steve Serkaian, spokesman for the Lansing School District, told the Journal that aligning the state and school budget years would help schools by providing state funding information earlier. Currently, schools must adopt budgets by July 1 and sometimes don't know their per-pupil funding level until the state budget is adopted Oct. 1, the Journal reported.

AFT Michigan response

Governor Jennifer Granholt has unveiled her agenda to reduce the structural budget deficit. AFT Michigan doesn't question the Governor's commitment to education and her respect for the

women and men who work to educate our children and adults, but we believe her proposals do not solve the financial problems facing this state and undercut the very sector – education – that will have the biggest impact on Michigan's future.

Call Governor Granholt today and tell her:

- Creating a two-tiered retirement system is unacceptable.
- Paying 3% more into the retirement plan is unacceptable.
- The elimination of retiree dental and vision coverage is unacceptable.

We don't have to cut our way out of this budget deficit, we need a tax system that is adequate, stable, broad-based and progressive.


Governor Jennifer Granholt


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 (313) 456-0010 Detroit Office
 (906) 228-2850 Marquette Office

Grievances

According to VP David Atkins, an understanding has been reached in the grievance filed concerning Athletic Directors that also coach. The argument was that one is not available to coach when serving as an athletic director. The administration agreed that the athletic director cannot do both simultaneously.

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