

DFT ELECTION

The DFT681 election of officers will take place on **Tuesday November 17th**. Voting will be electronic, so please watch your email. The voting booth will be open from **6:00 am – 4:30 pm**.

Election results will be announced **Tuesday November 17th**, after the results are verified by the Election Committee. The following pages are the candidates who are running for the open positions along with a bio about them. They have been nominated and accepted the nomination according to the DFT681 Constitution.



It was brought to the Union's attention that some of the candidates for our DFT Executive Board used district technology to campaign for the position . This is a direct violation of district policy and our Union guidelines. The Union is assuming this was an honest mistake. The parties involved have been made aware of the policy and notified that any further violation of the election guidelines will result in AFT- MI determining how the election will proceed.

The Union acknowledges that the current COVID restrictions and "work from home" climate make it difficult for our candidates to campaign. This is the reason the Green Sheet is publishing an election newsletter so members can read about each candidate.

DFT CANDIDATE

President



Jane Mazza

Hi I'm Jane Mazza, your current DFT681 President. I'm running unopposed for this position in the upcoming election!

My qualifications and experience: I taught in the classrooms for 28 years, the majority of that time as an Elementary teacher but I was also a Reading Recovery teacher and a Literacy Coach. Before I was elected President, in 2018, I taught at FHS as a Special Education resource teacher working with self-contained COC students and Co-teaching in the Social Studies dept.

I've been an active Union member my whole career. I've had the privilege of working on the Union Executive Board for about twenty years, holding the positions Rep- at Large, Affiliations VP and President for the last two years. I've attended many Union sponsored workshops and seminars, on bargaining contracts, effective leadership and working with Right to Work issues. I've also attended many AFT- National Institutes on Union Leadership, Union Administration, and Grievances.

I'm currently on the DPS Education Foundation Board, Dearborn Chamber of Commerce Education Committee, President of the DSEHP Health Trust and an AFT- MI Vice President, which means I attend many meetings a month!

What does the Union mean to me?

To me belonging to a Union means that we are a collective group of Educators who have a passion for teaching and working with our students as well as working together for the best working conditions and benefits as possible. Our Union #681 was founded in the 1930's and each generation of educators have worked hard to make our Union strong and improve our working conditions. The pandemic has placed our contract language under increased scrutiny. I'm working very hard to guarantee all our Union language has been followed, class size, prep time, and teaching requirements. I've also made sure our members are taken care of by sharing ADA, FMLA paperwork and other supports.

What ensured this language in our contract was years of Union Members sharing their ideas and concerns and using that solidarity to guarantee a safe workplace. The UNION is the strength of all of the members working together as one group!

DFT CANDIDATE

Secretary

In 2011, I decided to take a more active role in DFT 681 and became a building representative. This experience provided me with many opportunities to learn the contract, as well as the ways in which the union was able to support its membership. In January of 2016, I became an Elementary Representative on the Executive Board. When an opening presented itself the following school year, I took over as Secretary. My ten-year experience of attending all the various DFT meetings has provided me with a strong understanding of what a union can and cannot negotiate according to the State of Michigan, as well as how to best represent our membership.

The reason I became so actively involved in the union was because it fought for me when my administrator broke the contract regarding personal business days. For years, I had been very apathetic and rarely attended a meeting. This experience taught me how much DFT had my back, as well as how much our contract protects us as employees. While it does not have a clause which states that we must all be happy about everything that happens on a daily basis, there is a great deal of language which provides an opportunity for us to be happy with our jobs. Additionally, the union has a committee which provides the membership opportunities to bring forth ideas on how to make the contract even better. This allows for all members to have a voice in what they feel is most important in a contract so that everyone feels supported.

To me, a union is as strong as its membership. If all members are united, we have a greater chance at getting what we deserve as teachers. During a time when the teaching profession is already disrespected in the public eye, it is especially important to be unified. We cannot achieve our goals in small groups. I am hopeful that DFT 681 can come together to support and build each other up as we complete the task of teaching children under extremely difficult circumstances.



Erica Charboneau

DFT CANDIDATE

Affiliations Vice President

I am Sue Ladach, your current Vice President for Affiliations. First and foremost, I am a member of DFT 681 and an educator. For me, the union represents strength in numbers, solidarity, and having each other's backs. It has proven to me numerous times that big things can get done when people work toward a common goal. Our union has a diverse membership and that has allowed me to grow as a person through interactions I've had. I am a teacher of students of autism, so I bring that perspective to my current position.

This is the experience and passion I bring to our union:

- Currently enrolled in Cornell's Collective Bargaining Certification program
- Member of the School Reopening Committee, Teacher Evaluation Committee and the Learning Lab Committees
- Provided support via email, texts, and phone calls to members concerned about changing education formats in the current COVID-19 working conditions
- Member of the Public Education Forum in Pittsburgh representing DFT-681/AFT Michigan
- Provide feedback to AFT National to help with the 2020 Presidential endorsement process
- Worked on Project LEAD to organize and talk to members about paying dues under Right to Work
- Walked in protest lines outside the building before school board meetings in support of a fair contract
- Proudly wore the ugly lime-green and blue t-shirt in support of a fair contract at
- school board meetings
- Organized volunteers for the door-knocking campaign in favor of Proposal 2 in 2012, an opposition to the Right to Work movement
- Participated in door knocking efforts and phone banking in the support of AFT Michigan/DFT backed candidates
- Met with state representatives and senators in Lansing to inform them on education issues
- Collected signatures for pro-education ballot initiatives
- Regularly participated in AFT Michigan Leadership training since 2013
- Served as a delegate at the past four AFT Michigan Conventions
- Represented the DFT on the Resolution Committee prior to the AFT Michigan Conventions in 2016 and 2018
- Served on the AFL-CIO Committee on Political Action (COPE) to interview state and local candidates that seek the endorsement of the AFL-CIO.



Sue Ladach

I am asking for your vote to continue supporting all members.

DFT CANDIDATE

Affiliations Vice President



Kathi Martin

Unions are one of the most empowering institutions on the planet. They fight for and create fair, equitable conditions for all. Unions can work for good, not just for their membership, but also for the communities they serve. When people band together for any cause, there's nothing they can't do.

We are a group of people with different ideas and beliefs but united for one common goal. In education, that common goal is equity and justice for all members as well as for students. A Union is there to support members and present as a united front to ensure the best possible conditions for the membership. Unions fight to make sure every member is represented and provides hope and guidance while they work to dismantle unfair and unjust systems. Unions write contracts to benefit all members and hold administration accountable, otherwise the contract is not worth the paper it's written on.

My 17+ years in Dearborn schools have prepared me to run for the position of Affiliations Vice President. I have worked in 14 schools at both, the elementary and secondary level. I have always been a proud Union member and built safe and honest relationships with colleagues who have trusted me with their concerns and ideas. Advocacy for myself, students and others is a passion. This passion ensures I remain true to the causes and people I represent. It is also evidenced in my role as one of the founding members of SEAM, the Special Education Advocacy Movement. This caucus has started a ripple of change in the special education department and I look forward to reaching out to the other four caucuses in the district to help propel our union forward. Those who have seen my advocacy in action can attest to the fact that I don't fight for what's best for me, but what is best for all parties involved. There is much that needs to be changed and I am committed to being the voice of the unheard. Please trust me with your vote for Affiliations VP and hold me accountable to speak on your behalf.

DFT CANDIDATE

Representative at Large



Bruce Liepe

I am Bruce Liepe, Dft681 Rep at Large (incumbent), a father of six children-five boys ages 27, 25, 20, 13 & 12 and a 20 year old twin girl. I'm a second generation Dft681 member, third generation DPS graduate and have had four children attend DPS for elementary, middle and high school. I come from a family of educators with past and current MDE staff of Superintendents, Principals, Teachers, and Paraprofessionals throughout the state of Michigan.

My education includes a B.A. (Eastern), a M.S.Ed in Early Childhood (Oakland University), an English as a Second Language & Reading Recovery Endorsements (Wayne State) and have completed coursework for Administration Certification (Michigan State University). I have taught at the Elementary, Middle School, and Prekindergarten levels. In my 18 years as a Dearborn teacher I have had the pleasure of working at Salina, Woodworth, Oakman, Miller, Cotter and Whitmore Bolles. I attend school board meetings to keep informed on current events and issues in our district, so I can accurately represent them at Dft681 meetings.

My experiences at the different levels and schools in Dearborn and my experience on the Executive Board for the past 10 years have given me much insight into the workings and politics of Union Leadership. In addition, I have been an AFT National Delegate at three conventions, a Michigan AFT delegate at five state conventions and have represented Dft681 eight times for Lobby Day in Lansing. I regularly bring concerns, questions and inequities to the Dft681 meetings. I have learned over the years that an amicable relationship is much more effective in implementing positive change than an adversarial one. A Union is only as strong as its membership. Our Union works together with administration to try and get things done that are both good for the students and good for teachers. I believe that it is important to remember that the power of a union is in it's numbers, and that our goal is to do what is best for all of us.

Looking forward to continuing to represent the membership as your Rep at Large!

DFT CANDIDATE

Representative at Large



Jillian Pius

My name is Jillian Pius. This is my sixth year teaching Social Studies at Fordson. Prior to coming to teach in Dearborn, I attended Michigan State where I majored in Social Relations and Policy. My coursework included labor law and education policy. Once I started teaching in Dearborn, I have often attended our building union meetings. I am running for the Representative-at-large position.

What does the Union mean to me?

I started teaching after Right to Work passed in Michigan, so I did consider why I would want to be a part of the Union. Initially, I joined the Union because I knew about all of the valuable perks that came with being in the union (the power of collective bargaining, union representation, etc.), but also because I wanted to be a team player. My understanding of the Union's importance has evolved as I have continued my teaching career.

The longer I have spent teaching, I have realized how hard it is for teachers to have their voices heard, and to bring about the change we hope to see. It often feels like I am screaming into a void when I express my discontent with the myriad of problems we experience every day. I am running for Representative-at-Large because I am no longer satisfied with just expressing my discontent with my peers. I want to be able to use my voice to stand up for myself and my colleagues and actually affect change. I think that it is an asset that I am a newer teacher in Dearborn. My first five years of teaching have been in Dearborn, so I know what challenges are facing new teachers in our district in the current environment. I want to advocate for the needs of new teachers so that they feel supported enough to stay in our district.

DFT CANDIDATE

Representative at Large



Nichole Hartrick

My name is Nichole Hartrick, I teach band and orchestra at STEM Middle School, Howard and Howe Elementary. This is my seventh year in the district and my second year as a building representative. I am a student of the Wayne State Labor School and last year I launched the Dearborn Specials Caucus to unite electives/specials teachers from across the district. I actively organize around education issues that impact Michigan teachers and have found much joy in the connections organizing brings. To me, the union means a leg up for workers, a safe space for complaints against the boss, solidarity and knowing that no one has to be alone in the struggle. If elected, I will be proactive in reaching out to building reps and members in my feeder track to ensure that issues being experienced at the building level are resolved collaboratively with the help of union leadership. In addition to advocating for the issues impacting the Specials caucus, I would like to uplift the work of the Special Education, Black and Yemeni caucuses as well. I will work collaboratively to ensure these groups have a seat at the table. We should utilize our website to create union email addresses for all members so we can communicate off of the district platform. Currently, all union emails and communications can be monitored by the district admin which puts us at a disadvantage, especially as it gets closer to a contract negotiation. I believe DFT can increase transparency and communication with a social media platform, a revamped email blast and a regularly updated website. I want diversity, inclusion and equity to be a regular part of union conversations. How can we ensure minority voices are heard? Are we creating work environments and classrooms that welcome all students and workers? What can we do to improve in this area? Finally, the time to begin work towards a successful contract negotiation is now. Every member should have a voice in this process. Let's dream big and cement in place contract language that makes us feel safe, valued and empowered.

DFT CANDIDATE

Secondary Representative



Ben Harmon

This year is my 23rd year in Dearborn Public Schools. I have spent most of my career teaching numerous subjects, in various departments, at Fordson High School. Since my hire date, I have been an active participant in our union. Specifically, I have served as a building representative since September 2004 and was elected to the Executive Board in January 2013.

The teacher's union is a vital piece of the educational puzzle; with a strong union there is a positive and continued focus on the educational system, with the children we teach at the forefront. Being an involved member helps to strengthen that focus. With a strong union everyone benefits: teachers, students, staff, parents-the whole community.

In these uncertain times, the union will play a vital role. With the state of education changing almost daily, the union must be there to protect the teachers and staff from new laws and regulations that impact our ability to effectively do our job. We need to hold administration accountable now more than ever. Under the right leadership, the union is equipped to do that. The contract we have in place now, as well as future contracts, must be protected so that all teachers are treated equally under said contract.

If there is to be meaningful change and protection, we must stay organized and not splinter off into different ideological groups. Administration must view us as one union, fighting for one cause. Every person is a key component in the union and all the member's viewpoints must be respected.

It is the responsibility of the whole union to forge a sense of community. And as a community, we need to put aside our individual agendas and make choices that are beneficial for the group as a whole.

If re-elected, I will continue to work hard for the rights of members and follow the contract and constitution of our union.

In Solidarity

Ben Harmon

DFT CANDIDATE

Secondary Representative



Hussein Beydoun

My name is Hussein Beydoun and I am a Social Studies teacher, Department Chair, and varsity soccer coach at Edsel Ford High School. This is my 8th year in the district and 3rd year as a building rep. As a coach, I was blessed to guide a group of kids this year who won our school its first District Championship in 20 years. As a building rep, I've worked tirelessly to support my coworkers and ensure their voices are heard. Along with my fellow Edsel reps, we've organized Contract Reading Sessions and empowered our members to ensure the rights we collectively bargained for were honored. As a department chair, I've advocated for the needs of people in my department and done whatever I can to ease our collective workloads. I treat the people I work with as family and I relentlessly fight for my family. I also relentlessly fight for my students, and have spoken up for them at staff meetings, board meetings, and many other avenues. To me, the union means doing whatever we can to build solidarity, strengthening our profession and working conditions, and advocating for better learning conditions for our students. As Secondary Rep, I will work with my fellow building reps to develop ways to engage members in their buildings and empower them to ensure every member knows their rights. I will work to lift up every voice in our union and excite others to get more involved and active within our union. I value my role as an educator and the impact we can have on our communities, and our union allows us to organize and create spaces that help us deepen our connections to the community. I currently spend every day of my life serving and working to empower my coworkers and students at Edsel Ford. I want to serve my union as Secondary Rep in the same way as well.

DFT CANDIDATE

Elementary Representative

Greetings DFT members!

My name is Nicole Wozniak and I serve on the Executive Board as one of two Elementary Representatives. While my position is unopposed, I wanted to take this opportunity to introduce myself to all the members. I have been active in our union for about 5 years. I began my service as a building representative for Maples. Two years ago I was elected to the Executive Board. My main responsibilities include serving as a liaison between the teachers and both Administrators and the Executive Board. I attend monthly meetings with the Board, a building meeting with my principal and I also hold building meetings for my members. I also assist other building reps with issues they may be having in their buildings.

Being active in the union is very important to me. I grew up in a UAW family and I saw firsthand how the union builds positive relationships between labor and employers. Through these positive relationships the union can negotiate contracts that provide optimal working conditions for its membership and see that the contract is upheld. This is what I strive for as your Representative. I have gained extensive knowledge of our contract over the last 5 years as well as built positive relationships with administration. I look forward to continuing to serve you!

In Solidarity,
Nicole



Nicole Wozniak