

## DFT ELECTION

The DFT681 election of officers will take place on **November 23<sup>rd</sup>**. Voting will be electronic, so please watch your email. The voting booth will be open from  
**6:30 am – 4:30 pm.**

Election results will be announced on **Tuesday November 23<sup>rd</sup>**. Below 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.



# DFT CANDIDATES

Treasurer



**John Bayerl**

Greetings Fellow Educators.

My name is John Bayerl and I am your current DFT 681 Treasurer. I began my career at Fordson High School as a science teacher before transitioning to our Career and Technical Education Department. In my current position, I work with High School and Middle School elective teachers to provide meaningful career pathways that not only meet the needs of our students, but also those of the local community and employers. Before becoming a teacher, I worked in Industry for over a decade in a variety of capacities and bring a wealth of “real world” knowledge to my teaching from these experiences.

Prior to becoming your Treasurer, I held office over the past 15 years as both an at-large Representative and a building representative at the heights campus. Additionally, I have chaired the DFT Community Outreach and Contract Campaign Committee (C3) helping to improve the lives of our members, our community and the perception of DFT members in Dearborn. I have participated many training and advocacy sessions offered by AFT and AFT-Michigan and was very active during the Right-To-Work debate advocating for our members.

Over my tenure as both a teacher and employee/employer in the workforce, I have witnessed to unmatched power of collective bargaining to not only provide monetary and workplace benefits to our members, but to work collaboratively (and sometimes stand up in opposition to) management to create benefits for all parties. The current political, economic and labor challenges are increasingly complicated and unions allow us to band together to draw upon the best in all of us to maintain progress for our members and their families.

# DFT CANDIDATES

## Secondary Representative

Dominique Colter Labor Unions, in particular Teacher Unions, are here to create a fair working environment for all. The Union is here to ensure that due process is available for all union dues-paying employees. The Union helps us to maintain our professional status on multiple fronts. As a building representative for Fordson High School since 2004 and a Secondary Representative for DFT 681, I have been part of the process to ensure that every effort is made to create a fair work environment. I also feel it is important for the union to represent the needs and voices of all members, this can be an evolving endeavor as we seek new ways to ensure that everyone has a seat at the table. Although it may seem trite, we are facing unprecedented times in education and must be able to find our voice in the din of noise attempting to influence our profession. I hope that I can continue to be a voice for all within the Union.

My personal experience in education has been varied. I am currently a Special Education Resource Room Teacher at FHS and have been since 2000. Previous to that I was a Classroom Teacher for 3 years at an elementary school in Detroit Public Schools. These experiences have given me perspective on the needs at both levels, special education interests, and insight into the concerns faced by all members. I am a proud Aunt to two amazing nephews and a dog mom to 3.

- 21st year of teaching in Dearborn Public Schools
- Currently co-teaching in U.S. History (10th) and World History (9th)
- 9th Grade Academy Staff
- Volunteers with numerous school and sporting events including Graduation and Honors Night
- Certified Teacher in Cognitive Impairment & Learning Disabilities K-12, Social Sciences
- Previously taught Resource Basic classroom at FHS various subjects
- Building Representative for FHS since 2004
- Currently Secondary Representative DFT 681
- DFT Building Representative training
- AFT State of Michigan Conventions
- Dearborn Public Schools Social Studies Committee
- Co-founded Certificate of Completion Program at FHS
- Served on 1st Certificate of Completion Curriculum Committee
- Attendance to all Union, Executive, & Building rep meetings
- Served on Election Committee in the past



**Dominique  
Colter**

# DFT CANDIDATES

## Secondary Representative



**Joseph  
Sicheneder**

My name is Joseph Sicheneder. I've been an educator for 8 years and worked at Fordson for 2 years. I also live in the same neighborhood I teach in. Though I am a relatively young teacher in the district, that is a strength. I have the energy and drive to continue and strengthen the work the union does for teachers in the district.

I'm running for Secondary Rep because DFT-681 is only at the beginning of a long fight for better working conditions. I want to empower members to make their voices and desires not only heard but acted upon in the union. I am passionate about organizing teachers so that we can work to shape a school district that is better for staff, students, and the larger community.

# DFT CANDIDATES

## Secondary Representative



**David  
Bates**

One of the most important issues we are facing is negotiation of our next contract. I have negotiated contracts with teacher unions from the other side of the table and I understand how school boards think and work. I will be a strong advocate for Secondary Education, but I also understand the needs of and the challenges facing elementary teachers and will be a strong voice for better working conditions and higher pay for all teachers. Working conditions make a difference for student success.

### **Experience:**

- 34 years in Dearborn Schools
- 34 years in Dearborn Schools as a building rep at three different schools, Howe, Long Elementary, and Unis
- Coached High School Soccer
- Coaching Middle School Robotics and ChessNi
- Served 8 years on the Ypsilanti Board of Education, 7 of them as president of the board.
  - Guided the Board of Education through the largest merger in Michigan history with the Willow Run School District.
- Co Chair of the Middle School Science Committee

# DFT CANDIDATES

## Elementary Representative



**Ghada Burks**

Hi my name is Ghada Burks. I am the current elementary representative for DFT 681. I began my role as a building representative because I wanted to make sure all members were represented, were being treated fairly and had accurate information.

I have attended meetings to keep members informed, to advocate for better working conditions, and to work on keeping health care a top priority.

The union is our strength, it is our home. We should be able to depend on our fellow teachers to support us with any help we may need. The union works for all people, no matter the ethnicity, the religion, or race. The union is the backbone of this country. When we work together, we can accomplish anything we set our minds to.

On a personal level, I have been married for 27 years. My husband and I have 3 children and 4 grandsons.

### **Experience:**

- 25th year teaching for Dearborn Public Schools
- I have taught, 4th grade, 3rd grade, 2nd grade, kindergarten and have been a bilingual resource teacher
- Building Rep since 2011-2017, 2019-2021
- Served on many district committees: speaking on behalf of our union members
- Elementary Representative 2017- current - working with many building representatives
- Various AFT- Michigan Workshops and Trainings
- Created DFT 681 Union Brochure with the Community Outreach Committee
- DFT 681 Building Rep training
- Summer Book distribution Homecoming
- Door knocking for " Right to Work": met with many community members to support Unions
- Attendance at all union meetings and events to support all members within our local
- I have meet with Governor Whitmer during the COVID shut down for safety in our schools



# DFT CANDIDATES

## Elementary Representative

Hello. My name is Amy Gwizdz and I have been nominated for Elementary Rep at Large. I have been with Dearborn Public Schools for 24 years, and have taught in many different roles in the elementary setting. Currently, I am a Technology Instructional Coach, working with teachers across the district.

I have been a DFT member my whole career with DPS, and have served as a building representative in 3 of the 4 buildings in which I have been a staff member. I have attended all building rep trainings and multiple social activities hosted by the union.

The union has always been important to me. It is, and always has been, a strong, cohesive unit that represents a group of people who want to teach kids and enjoy doing it. Our union works very hard to maintain a healthy and safe working environment, and I am proud to be a part of it.



**Amy Gwizdz**

# DFT CANDIDATES

## Elementary Representative

Unions should be endlessly committed to member engagement, diversity, democracy, and transparency. I am running for Elementary Representative in order to promote these values in DFT 681.

My name is Diana Goodhue. I am a 16 year veteran teacher. I have worked in private, charter, and public schools. I worked many years without a union and can tell you first hand how detrimental that was. When I moved to public schools, I was involved in the union during my years in DPSCD and learned quite a bit. Since coming to Dearborn I have been a Building Representative for the last 4 years. Win or lose, my goal is to help members feel more engaged with and supported by their union



**Diana Goodhue**



# DFT CANDIDATES

## Elementary Representative



**Linda Lilly**

My name is Linda Lilly and I am a candidate for the Elementary Representative position. This is my 17<sup>th</sup> year as an occupational therapist in Dearborn, and I have been a union member in good standing since the beginning. I have been an active member at the building level, and it became official by becoming a building representative two years ago. Being in multiple buildings as an ancillary staff, I have been able to attend union building meetings across the district and network with staff, both general education and special education alike. As a mobile staff member, I have created significant relationships and have witnessed and discussed struggles and positive attributes in countless educational teams throughout the district. I have developed an atmosphere of mutual respect between staff and administrators to create a partnership that will benefit all students. I have taken on leadership roles within our department for the betterment of special education and the district overall. I work alongside general education teachers to create a positive and rewarding experience for all students.

DFT 681 is an avenue to work together to advocate for needs within the district, while supporting students. It creates solidarity or unification throughout the district and it protects the rights of teachers. The union allows the teachers to have a voice in policy making, however, it can lessen the impact than can occur with political changes.

It is vital that all teachers and staff have a voice to have a piece of the decision-making process. As the Elementary Representative, I vow to listen and advocate for all DFT 681 members. I will speak on behalf of the rights of all staff and the requirements of an excellent education for our students.

# DFT CANDIDATES

## Representative at Large



**Allison Wolski**

Labor unions were created to support and protect workers. Now is the time to unite and work together, collectively for all members. We need equity across the board. We need to defend our contract and empower our membership with information about their rights in the workplace.

All members must be heard! I want to continue to build relationships between groups within our union and make us stronger. Being involved in our local union has empowered me to encourage others to also be active within our union. Everyone should be able to share their passions in a safe space.

As the current DFT 681 Representative- At-Large I have worked to provide avenues for members to feel supported and empowered. Since being Representative- At-Large I have attended many union building level meetings. Attending these meetings has given me insight into issues at different building levels. I want to continue this proactive approach of listening to members' concerns and seeking the right solutions for the issues at hand.

On a personal note, I am a proud product of Dearborn Public Schools. I am a mother of three children that all attend Dearborn Public Schools, and I have been married to my husband Rich for 20 years. We live in Dearborn and I enjoy being very active within our community.

### **Experience:**

- 17th year teaching for Dearborn Public Schools
- Taught upper elementary for the last 16 years, currently 7th grade ELA
- Building Rep since 2015
- Current Representative- At-Large DFT 681
- Currently serving on Community Outreach Committee
- Currently serving on Dearborn Union Education Committee
- Spring 2021 AFT-Michigan Social Justice Cohort Training participant
- Various AFT- Michigan Workshops and Trainings
- DFT 681 Building Rep training
- Summer Book distribution at Food pick up sites: Salina Intermediate, Edsel Ford, and Dearborn High
- Organized DFT 681 social events: Virtual Trivia night, Zee the Cook cooking demonstrations
- Door knocking for " Right to Work": met with many community members to support Unions
- Attendance at all union meetings and events to support all members within our local

# DFT CANDIDATES

## Representative at Large



### Ammerah Saidi

Unions must have fundamental commitments to democracy, transparency, and diversity; our union must do better in these areas. I am running to ensure that every member is seen, heard and represented.

My name is Ammerah Saidi. I am an educator of 18 years, a lifelong Dearborn resident, product of DPS, and mama of the next generation of DPS graduates, inshaAllah! Having come from charter and private schools, I can tell you what working without a union feels like firsthand. For advocating for students and colleagues, I was constantly disciplined. In each instance, I had no protections and no way to demand due process. As a member of DFT681, I have cherished our protections, and I have never taken for granted what having a union means.

As a building representative at Edsel and Salina, I have fought alongside colleagues to strengthen our collective solidarity. Together with a dedicated team of energized members, we have seen our union grow in member engagement and power. We have taken DFT, AFT-MI, and LaborNotes trainings that expand what it means to be a union member. I have attended workshops and joined book clubs that center on worker solidarity and powerful rank-and-file engagement. We have learned about and implemented innovative ways to gather rank-and-file member voices via surveys, contract action teams, building Whatsapp groups and our member-created union FB page.

When we each build our capacity and involvement in our union, we exponentially grow our strength. As your representative at large, I will strive to ensure that these opportunities to learn and engage will continue to be made accessible and available to all members.

Our union is due for a reawakening.

Whether I win or lose, the greatest victory is to have every single member vote during this election. I hope to **EARN** your valuable vote.

# DFT CANDIDATES

## Representative at Large



**Christina Randall**

By definition, a union is an organization of workers who have come together to achieve common goals, such as protecting the integrity of their trade, improving safety standards, and attaining better wages, benefits (such as vacation, health care, and retirement), and working conditions through the increased bargaining power wielded by solidarity among workers.

For me, the union is a little like my family growing up, working for a common goal with different ideas of how to get there. I think together we can hear those differences and be a united voice to the district to create an environment where we feel valued and students continue to achieve.

I have been teaching in Dearborn for 22 years. All of those years have been working directly with special education students. I taught in a POHI (physically or otherwise health impaired) center-based classroom at Lowrey and Nowlin for 15 years and am now a resource teacher at Nowlin. I have been a union building representative for 10 of those years. I have been active in our union during less stressful times and currently where so many of us feel more stress in our jobs and lives than ever before.

My plan as Representative-at-Large is to offer a calm objective voice to the board. I will bring ideas with an understanding of the needs and feelings of elementary general education teachers in addition to my direct understanding of the unique needs of the special education department teachers and staff. Being a POHI teacher I had a close working relationship with the ancillary staff involved with my students. It is a unique job not understood by many.

I can offer our union an open mind, fresh ideas, and a level-headed approach as we tackle the challenges we are facing today.