

DFT Election

The DFT681 election of officers will take place on **Tuesday November 29th**. 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 at the General Membership meeting on **Tuesday November 29th**. The following pages in the Greensheet 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

PRESIDENT

Kathi Martin

During my campaign for Affiliations VP, I promised to bring advocacy, member empowerment, and passion to the position. To live up to that promise, I jumped head first into all things Union. Thanks to support from various members, I successfully completed four contract negotiations courses through Cornell as well as attended several training sessions offered by AFT-MI and Labor Notes. In July, I attended the AFT National Convention and helped work with AFT to bring Union Training to Palestinian Kindergarten Teachers. (Did you know AFT works to empower and build unions internationally?)

Over the past two years, I was asked to represent AFT-MI Educators in Lansing when the 18 Bill "Respecting Educators Package" was unveiled. I've also participated in door knocking events to get out the vote to ensure education friendly legislators get to Lansing. We launched the #RedforEd campaign to build solidarity and were successful in getting members to attend school board meetings. Working with other Executive Board members, we have also built relationships with community members and the PTA. As President, I will continue to build these relationships as they can only help with upcoming contract negotiations.



Seeking the role of President is not a decision to be taken lightly. After 20 years in Dearborn Schools, the best years of my career have been those when I've been most involved in advocacy work. The position of DFT 681 President will allow me to advocate at the highest level yet. I hope to be able to represent all the great members of the Dearborn Federation of Teachers for the next two years and to bring forth a contract we're all excited about during this school year.

DFT Candidates

AFFILIATIONS VICE PRESIDENT

Muna Mashrah

Hello DFT members! My name is Muna Mashrah. This is my 10th year as a School Psychologist within the district. I previously worked in charter schools. Throughout my years in DPS, I've worked across various buildings, preschool through 8th grade, in collaboration with general education and special education staff. I am involved in advocacy work through caucuses such as SEAM (Special Education Advocacy Movement) and the Caucus of Yemeni Educators. I actively participate in various building events and activities. Additionally, a colleague and I developed an outreach program several years ago to support our refugee students, and have transitioned to provide social emotional support. I consistently work to help students and families receive the support they need whether through school services or outreach programs.

I have been a dues paying member since joining the district. The Union is a fundamental institution that should aim to empower their members and fight for better working and learning conditions for all. We need to focus on communication, engagement, and diversity. This is more important than ever as we head into contract negotiations. Not only should members have ample opportunities to be heard, but they should see meaningful changes that address those concerns. We should also be actively communicating with our members and collecting their feedback through various methods, including social media and chats like Whatsapp. We need to focus on increasing member involvement and participation, and to do that all members need to feel that they are heard and their concerns matter. That has been my goal as a building representative. This is my third year as a building representative, working to increase member involvement and participation; this year my building reached 100% dues paying member status!! As a building rep, I am actively communicating with my members through email, whatsapp, and face-to-face discussions, and work to address concerns in a timely manner. I am incredibly passionate about making progress within our union and our district to ensure better working conditions for all. In my personal time, I have attended training sessions from DFT, LaborNotes, and AFT to build my union knowledge, and love learning about ways to bring our union forward. If elected Affiliations Vice President, I will continue to work hard to increase member participation and involvement throughout the district, and ensure everyone's voices are heard.



DFT Candidates

AFFILIATIONS VICE PRESIDENT

Jillian Pius

My name is Jillian Pius. This is my eighth year teaching in Dearborn— 6 years at Fordson and 2 years at Henry Ford Early College (where I am serving my first year as Building Rep). I am currently running for Affiliations VP because I think that DFT 681 needs to have stronger relationships with our elected officials, as well as AFT-MI and the national AFT, in order to achieve real change that benefits both Dearborn's students and teachers.



Our schools (and our teaching profession as a whole) do not exist in a vacuum. Both are fundamentally shaped by policies enacted at the local, state, and national levels. After Election Day 2022, labor and public education will have powerful voices in Lansing, and we have the potential to win REAL progress on both fronts in the coming years. We teach in a diverse and unique district, and we need to connect with elected officials and AFT to tell our stories and share our needs.

I believe that I am uniquely qualified to help advocate for our union as your Affiliations VP. Prior to becoming a teacher, I studied Social Relations and Policy at Michigan State. My coursework included labor law and education policy. In addition, I have real-world experience working side-by-side with elected officials, as I have worked on political campaigns and as a legislative intern in the State House of Representatives.

DFT Candidates

SECRETARY

Kathy Lauris

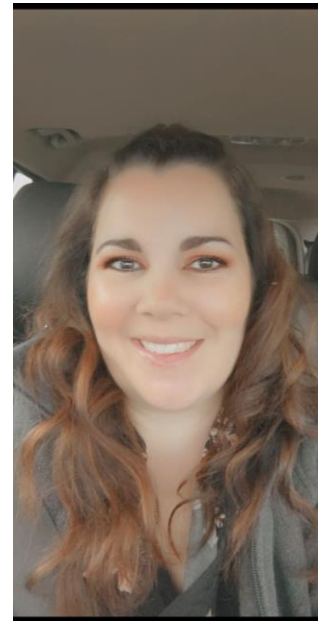
Hello! My name is Kathy Lauris. For close to two decades I have dedicated myself to early childhood education. The last 9 years have been serving Dearborn Public Schools, in our GSRP (Great Start Readiness Program) as a departmental teacher.

I am proud to have been a DFT 681 building representative for 5 consecutive years. This position has provided me with insight from fellow DFT 681 members that has been crucial in being an effective building representative. Growing up I came from a long line of hard workers who had unions representing them every step of the way. I was able to witness the ways having a strong union was able to help better the working conditions of employees through my parents and grandparents eyes.

I know first hand the power a strong union voice can have for its members. Early in my career, I worked for a charter school where we did not have a union. I experienced the negative impact of not having a strong union. From pay decreases, extra working hours, unsafe working conditions, and countless other unfavorable working conditions my experience without a union was heartbreaking.

I take pride in my notes and recording as a current building representative as well as recorder/note taker/communicator for staff meetings, PLC committees, and district/building level committees. This has helped me learn and have a deep understanding of how having clear and open lines of communication can help the collective whole. My goal is to continue to help more and more members find their voice and find ways within their comfort levels to make their voices heard. We are stronger together.

Serving our local as secretary is my next step. I am excited and ready to support all members of our local DFT 681. Together we can achieve so much more.



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, 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. Before 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 of two amazing nephews and a dog mom to 3.

- 21st year of teaching in Dearborn Schools
- Co-teacher for U.S. History (10th) and World History (9th)
- 9th grade Academy Staff
- Volunteers with numerous school and sporting events
- Certified Teacher in Cognitive Impairments & Learning Disabilities K-12, Social Sciences
- Previously taught Resource Basic classroom at FHS various subjects
- DFT Building Representative training
- AFT State of Michigan Conventions
- Dearborn Public Schools Social Studies Committee
- Co-founded Certificate of Completion Programs at FHS
- Served on 1st Certificate of Completion Curriculum Committee
- Attendance to all Union Meetings
- Served on Election Committee in the past



DFT Candidates

SECONDARY REPRESENTATIVE

Paul Ruth

With this being my second year as a Fordson English Teacher, you may only know my name from DFT's Contract Campaign Committee. I also have a long history in union and education activism. To start, this is my 10th year as a full-time teacher with an additional 5 years in education beforehand. The 5 years I spent in part term positions was when Michigan was facing drastic funding cuts and attacks on the profession like never before seen. I had 8 years as a full time teacher at Eastpointe High School before Fordson where I was a building rep and then Vice President of Secondary with the Eastpointe Federation of Educators AFT local 698. In my time at Eastpointe, I recruited building reps and networked active members, maintained and built membership rates through high turnover, was the lead union representative on the district health care committee, sat on the negotiations team for two contracts, sat on the grievance committee, and defended the contract and profession every day.

I have published op-eds, letters, and columns in The Detroit News, Bridge Magazine, and more. My Father was a teacher for 40 years, and I view his best years in terms of pay, benefits, and respect as the foundation from which we advocate. I have attended the last 4 AFT Michigan Conventions and participated on the Resolutions Committee and the Credentials Committee. As a Secondary Representative I seek to raise member voices because I know the struggles to be new, I understand midcareer members' feelings of being forgotten, and know what it was like for my father to retire. The protection and growth of the profession takes a continuous effort that becomes a way of life for those who have the honor to serve in union elected positions. We are called a Federation of Teachers, but I know we are also social workers, counselors, instructional coaches, nurses, speech and language professionals, psychologists, and more. In the end we are all DFT 681.

Next summer I plan on marrying the love of life Dr. Sigrid Streit who is currently serving as the president of the University of Detroit Mercy Professors Union. I enjoy traveling, reading, writing, and time with our Old English Sheepdog.



DFT Candidates

SECONDARY REPRESENTATIVE

Denise Tomlinson

My Dad was a Teamster for decades, so I grew up knowing the critical importance of labor unions to our society. Similarly, teacher unions serve a vital role in education. As an attorney, I have had experience building consensus and negotiating desirable outcomes for my clients, collectively and individually. As a teacher, I have advocated for the best interests of students at every level of schooling. I am a graduate of Rutgers College (BA), The University of Michigan School of Law (JD) and Wayne State University (MAT, EdS).

I have lived in Huntington Woods for 22 years with my husband Matt. We have 5 kids, ages 19-25. Over the past 14 years, I've taught: Spanish I and II, Pre-Algebra, Algebra and Geometry Support, HS and MS resource, HS and elementary self-contained SXI. I was also an IB Coordinator for both MYP and PYP. I love hanging out at the lake with our golden retrievers, Stella and Dave, and playing tennis.

I am running for Secondary Representative to support all Dearborn teachers as we fight the good fight for the benefit of all students. I promise to listen to you and focus on harnessing our collective power to achieve excellence for both students and teachers.



DFT Candidates

ELEMENTARY REPRESENTATIVE

Nicole Wozniak

Greetings DFT members! My name is Nicole Wozniak and I serve on the Executive Board as one of two Elementary Representatives. I wanted to take this opportunity to introduce myself to all the members. I have been active in our union for about 7 years. I began my service as a building representative for Maples. This will be my third term on 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 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 7 years as well as built positive relationships with administration. I look forward to continuing to serve you! In Solidarity,
Nicole

DFT Candidates

ELEMENTARY REPRESENTATIVE – ONE YEAR

Bruce Liepe

I am Bruce Liepe, current Dft681 Rep at Large who is changing to the Elementary Rep position. I am the father of six children-five boys ages 29, 27, 22, 15 & 14 and a 22 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 21 years as a Dearborn teacher I have had the pleasure of working at Salina, Woodworth, Oakman, Miller, Cotter and Whitmore Bolles.



My experiences at the different levels and schools in Dearborn and my experience on the Executive Board for the past 14 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 six 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 its numbers, and that our goal is to do what is best for all of us.

Looking forward to continuing to represent the membership as Executive Board Elementary Representative!

DFT Candidates

REPRESENTATIVE AT LARGE

Shelby Liebler-Kukuk

I've been teaching ELA for 6 years at Unis. At Cesar Chavez Academy Middle School, I was a part of unionizing the district, learning many things about the importance of solidarity to win a fair contract. I'm ready to do the same for the 1300 teachers of Dearborn.

