

Union News – October 2010



Good Things Happening...

Dort Elementary hosted a parent resource night. The PTO sponsored a school wide walk-a-thon. The Roseville Fire Department and the Macomb Daily spoke to students about career choice.

The Roseville Fire Department visited **Steenland Elementary**. Firefighters spoke about fire safety and showed students the ambulance, the fire truck and the equipment necessary to fight fires. Staff and students are working together to maintain the “Green School” status. **Steenland** has been awarded the Emerald Status for meeting the ten requirements mandated by the state of Michigan. Steenland will be the home to a new turbine. A grant was written by Jim Byrnes to obtain the new structure along with a K-12 curriculum that includes the wind turbine, a solar pavilion and a weather station. The energy generated by the turbine will be utilized by DTE. Steenland is awaiting the ground breaking ceremony.

Officers

President	Gary Scheff	RHS
Executive Vice President ...	Susan Steinbacher	Steenland
Elementary Vice President ..	Lahoma Jones	Kaiser
Secondary Vice President...	Jennifer Rose	RMS
Secretary.....	Vivian Knapp	RMS
Treasurer.....	David Skidmore	RHS

Building Representatives

Dort Elementary.....	Michelle Nemitz & Jennifer Sedmak
Fountain.....	Kathy Dworman & Kathy Hartsig
Huron Park Elementary.....	Patti Buhlinger & Connie Burton
Kaiser Elementary.....	Stasi Earl & Terri Simants
Kment Elementary.....	Carolyn Collins & Craig Williams
Patton Elementary.....	Denise Cozzolino
Steenland Elementary.....	Nancy Creech & Linda Bradley
Eastland Middle School	Joe Herbertson & Shelly Servis
Roseville High School	Dawn Bonenfant, Dennis Borse, Sue Radtke, John Reinowski & Bob Smitka
Roseville Middle School.....	Cathy Garant & Craig Goff
Special Education.....	Rebecca Naghski Huron Park
Elementary Paraprofessional..	Cathy Monastero Huron Park
Secondary Paraprofessional..	Lois Arnott RHS
Community Presence.....	Joyce Muszall Huron Park
Newsletter.....	Linda Bradley Steenland
PAC Chairperson.....	Dave Clulo RHS
Social Chairpersons.....	Mike Zimmer RHS
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Educational Issues Coordinators	Cindy Welc RHS
	Amy Serra Patton
Central Sick Leave Bank.....	Lois Arnott RHS
Communication’s Chair.....	Jannis Litz Dort



**Politics has EVERYTHING to do with Education,
from Finance to Jobs**

By: Gary Scheff

The November election is quickly approaching. It is very important that you take the time to learn about your candidates and their position on the issues—especially in regards to education. Below are some of the issues that apply to us in the RFT.

For the first time in Roseville history, there are currently fewer students in K-6 than 7-12. The elementary grades average 350 students' district-wide. At the high school level, this average is 462. This means that eventually the high school and middle school populations will decrease. If our district enrollment does not increase, the district may have to continue the trend of layoffs. Teachers not at the very bottom of the seniority list have been laid off because they did not possess the necessary certification to move into a different position. It is very important that teachers make every effort to have as many certifications as possible in order to keep this from happening to them. Adding to this concern is that the number of teachers who are eligible to retire is the smallest in many years. If enrollment decreases and teachers do not retire, more teachers may be facing layoffs in the future.

In order to balance this year's budget, the district used federal money from President Obama's Educare bill which amounted to approximately \$1.1 million. We will not receive that money next year, so the district will begin the 2011-2012 school year at least \$1.1 million in the hole if our current funding does not change.

The broken promise of money by the legislature and the climate against public education indicates that we are facing an uphill battle. The Michigan Department of Education has manipulated the data to name our two middle schools to its "failure list." This may have contributed to the drop in our district enrollment. Additionally, we have three elementary buildings on the RTT "watch list." AYP is not the standard anymore, and Race to the Top legislation has impacted our district dramatically.

Now, more than ever, we need to find candidates who will support public education. If public education's "public enemy number one" Mike Flannigan has his way, next fall a charter school contractor could take over some low-achieving schools across the state. These schools will provide even more difficult working conditions for their staffs as they will be asked to do more for less money, despite the fact that there is not data to support that charter schools consistently outperform public schools. Flannigan also proposes merit pay for teachers. Studies show this does not result in increased student performance.

The time to act is now. Please vote for pro-education candidates; your jobs are on the line.



Being Opinionated

By: Nancy Creech

When Gary asked me to write an opinion piece for the RFT newsletter I thought, perfect! My husband always accuses me of being opinionated-now is my opportunity to really voice my opinions to a wider audience. Being opinionated is often viewed as something negative. I like to think of my views on things as being passions. I am very passionate about some things and I'm sure I could "take a stand" on the Social Studies MEAP and defend my positions with little problem.

As a teacher educator I have always voiced this opinion to my students; "Teachers of reading should be readers." How can you know the problems of struggling readers if you haven't struggled to read difficult material yourself? How can you get your students hooked on an author, if you haven't been hooked on an author yourself? How can you recommend a book unless you've read it? How can you teach a genre, if you haven't even read something written in it?

I have also always voiced this opinion to my students, "Teachers of writing should be writers." I am not talking the great American novel. My mother recently passed away. She left 20 years of journals. They aren't filled with deep thoughts about the world. They are recordings about her day, who she talked to on the phone, what she had for dinner, how much sun was in her eyes on her drive to church. You can see where she revised and edited in her journals like we all do in the writing process. It isn't Pulitzer material, but she wrote, and I can't put into words how precious those journals are.

Recently I have been passionate about another school subject, Core Democratic Values. These include the right to express my opinions to my representatives, and the right to vote for a different candidate if they don't hold the same beliefs or opinions that I do. In case you aren't aware, there is a lot of teacher bashing going on across the country. Some are calling it a "war against teachers." I was distressed to hear from Roseville teachers after the primary last summer, who didn't investigate who to vote for or worse didn't vote at all. Some items being proposed this November are;

- Legislation promoting homeschooling and charter schools.
- Legislation promoting the use of federal dollars for charter and private schools.
- Across the board pay cuts for teachers.
- Extended school days.
- Basing teacher pay on students' test scores.

If you don't think these policies are going to hit you in the pocketbook, you are sorely mistaken. Every child who attends a private or charter school affects your paycheck. In addition, some candidates have also promoted a 5 % across the board pay cut for all state employees. That includes you.

So now my latest passion is, "Teachers of Core Democratic values should be active participants in the democratic process." Attend rallies; write letters investigate candidates and VOTE. Or when the next layoff or pay cut comes, you'll have no one to blame, but yourself.

Just my humble opinion.

Main Street, NOT Wall Street!

How you vote is a personal decision. Your union believes Virg Bernero is the best candidate to stand up for the issues that matter most - stable and timely education funding, creating jobs, and making sure the legislature is working to help, not hurt us.

Virg Bernero

He is a reformer with real experience as a mayor balancing budgets through innovation and accountability, not layoffs and outsourcing. As Mayor of Lansing he has brought in over \$500 million in new investments that have lead to 6,000 jobs. His running mate, Brenda Lawrence, Mayor of Southfield, also knows what it means to take care of Main Street, not Wall Street in these tough economic times.

Bernero says "education is economic development," and he will fight for "stable and timely" education funding, all-day kindergarten, limited class sizes and high-quality, current instructional materials. (www.votevirg.com)



He will shake things up in Lansing making sure the legislature and special interest groups are held accountable for making life better for average folks not lining their own pockets. Making "reforms" that are real and not just an excuse for going after public employees.



Rick Snyder

He made a personal fortune when he was at Gateway, the computer company. And while he was on the Board of Directors a lot of regular folks lost their jobs when the company outsourced its manufacturing jobs to China and other countries. (Detroit Free Press, 8/5/10)

Snyder says he will revamp the tax system to reduce corporate taxes. He says he would make up for the huge loss in state revenue by cutting the pay and benefits of public employees. (The Detroit News, 1/6/10)

Snyder has a plan for education, it includes - Require competitive bidding for non-instructional services; tightening pension eligibility and 401K style retirement plans; increasing public employee and retiree healthcare co-pays; and merit-pay. (www.rickformichigan.com) His Lieutenant Governor pick, Rick Calley, is on record voting against AFT Michigan positions on issues 80% of the time. (<http://www.aftmichigan.org/files/votingrecords09.pdf>)

VIRG BERNERO for Governor
Support Candidates Who Support Us
VOTE Nov. 2

Developed by AFT Michigan for use by members and their families.

 **Fighting for**
Michigan's Future.
IT'S DOLLARS AND SENSE

opcio42aflcio/cj

VOTE Tuesday, November 2 for the State-Wide Education Boards

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

AFT Michigan Recommends:

The State Board has many direct supervisory duties in connection with local school districts and community colleges and indirect coordinating duties for the four-year state colleges and universities. Specific state laws and court decisions have detailed the Board's responsibilities and extended its supervisory powers over nonpublic education. The eight voting members of the Michigan State Board of Education are elected at-large on the partisan statewide ballot for eight-year terms. Two are elected every two years in the general election. In addition, there are two non-voting, ex-officio members -- the Governor and the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, who is chairman of the Board.

Elizabeth Bauer * Lupe Ramos-Montigny



UNIVERSITY GOVERNING BOARDS

Members are publicly elected by Michigan voters in a state-wide election and have general supervision over the university and its funds. The board consists of eight members elected for eight-year terms. Members serve without compensation.

AFT Michigan now represents thousands of workers at these three public universities, as well as at Eastern Michigan, Western Michigan, Ferris State, and Central Michigan. The work of these governing boards directly affects our ability to get good contracts and conduct organizing campaigns.

Regents of the University of Michigan

Paul Brown

Greg Stephens

Trustees of Michigan State University


Colleen McNamara*

Dennis Denno

Governors of Wayne State University

Ed Bruley

Brenda Moon

 **VOTE Tuesday, November 2**

AFT + Endorsed Insurance

Auto and Home Insurance

Provides protection for members' most valuable assets - their cars and homes. Benefits include special member discounts, convenient payment options and a deductible savings benefit for safe drivers.

Term Life*

Designed to provide financial protection for your loved ones in the event of a premature death. New AFT members are entitled to \$10,000 of coverage for a period of one year at no cost. **



Disability Income*

Provides up to 60 percent of a member's monthly income in the event he or she is unable to work due to an accident or extended sickness.

Universal Life*

If actively at work, a member can obtain up to \$150,000 of protection with no medical tests or health questions.

Catastrophic Major Medical Plan*

To help avoid the financial hardships that accompany major illness and injury, this plan acts as an umbrella that supplements a member's basic health insurance by paying expenses not covered by his or her primary coverage or Medicare.

Long-Term Care*

Maintains a member's financial freedom and gives flexibility in making choices in the event of a long-term illness or a chronic condition.

Workplace Violence Insurance

Members are automatically covered for \$100,000 for the loss of life resulting from a felonious assault that occurs while at work or on a work assignment. This is provided at no cost to all AFT members.

Pet Insurance

Your pet can have their own insurance. Policies include older pets, accident-only coverage and more.

Pet Assure Veterinary Care Savings

Members can save 25 percent off their bill at participating veterinarians.

* NYSUT members have similar programs through NYSUT Member Benefits Trust. To obtain more information about these plans,

Weingarten Heads AFT Delegation Studying

Finland's Schools AFT president Randi Weingarten is heading a delegation of top AFT staff that is visiting Finland on Oct. 24-28 to learn more about the country's education system. Finland has transformed what was a mediocre education system 30 years ago into one that has ranked among the highest in the world in student achievement for more than a decade. The country has done that by focusing on recruitment of talented and highly qualified individuals to the teaching profession; structuring its schools to support teachers and students; and ensuring teachers have time for professional development to enhance their professional status.

The AFT was invited to Helsinki by the Opetusalan Ammattijärjestö (OAJ), the Finnish teachers' union, which represents 95 percent of the country's educators. In addition to consultations with the OAJ, the delegation will visit schools and daycare centers.

In Your Contract

Article VII, Section 10 states..."If as a result of state or federal mandates, a school within a d administration reserves the right to reassign staff, with input from the union.

This first appeared in the contract in 2004. This gives administration the right to move employees as they see fit if schools fail to make AYP or RTT.

In Conclusion...

With today's economic pressures, political jousting and need to point the finger in someone else's direction it's hard to see the light at the end of the tunnel.

Teachers remain the foundation regardless the mandates. We are not only resources for academic progress; we are called upon for a multitude of tasks. We deal with crisis. We teach the poor and homeless. We even parent. And in doing so, we continue to decipher a plan for tomorrow while keeping every child's best interest at heart.

As we trudge forward we continue to pave the way for those who follow in our footsteps.

Remember your purpose.

Remember that what you do on a daily basis is synonymous with noble.

Newspaper Editor: Linda Bradley



Proposal 1

Proposal 1 is back on the ballot. It has been voted down the last two times it appeared.

In 1978 and 1994, voters rejected the idea of another constitutional convention by a combined 2.7 million votes.

Michigan's budget can't afford it.

They also cite an estimated \$45 million cost for a convention.

Bernero and Snyder oppose the plan.

Critics from across the partisan spectrum say a convention would paralyze the state for months, if not years, as a new governor and Legislature continue the struggle to keep the state's finances in balance and respond to Michigan's ongoing economic trouble. Michigan's 2010 candidates for governor, Republican Rick Snyder and Democrat Virg Bernero, are both opposed.



Proposal 1 stances of candidates for Michigan governor:

Rick Snyder, Republican: "Rick thinks the democratic process would be hijacked from the people by special interests trying to influence the process," said Bill Nowling, campaign spokesman. "It would also delay doing things we need to get done by at least 18 months, and Michigan just can't afford to wait that long."

Virg Bernero, Democrat: "Virg is opposed to throwing out the state's constitution and forcing state leaders' attention on writing a new one," said Cullen Schwartz, campaign spokesman. "The focus should remain exclusively on getting Michigan's economy back on track and getting people back to work."

[Michigan voters face decision about the state constitution on Nov. 2: Should we go back to square one?](#) By Peter Luke

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