



# DETROIT PUBLIC SCHOOLS

**Roy S. Roberts**  
**Emergency Manager**

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July 26, 2012

Ms. Randi Weingarten  
President  
American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO  
555 New Jersey Ave., N.W.  
Washington, DC 20001

Dear Ms. Weingarten:

I am in receipt of your letter dated today, and your request to meet with me tomorrow, Friday, July 27. I welcome that meeting, and I look forward to seeing you at that time.

First let me say that I am profoundly moved by the level of dedication and energy demonstrated by our teachers every day. I have heard directly from a number of teachers who have written extremely thoughtful and in many cases moving testament to the work they do each and every day for Detroit children. Our city and our parents should know that Detroit has great educators and highly caring and committed teachers in their children's classrooms.

Your letter raises a number of points that require my response prior to our meeting, and I believe you, all of our Detroit Public Schools staff and community members should know some critically important facts that have not previously been communicated.

I'd also like to share with you what I have shared directly with a number of teachers who I have met and spoken to these past weeks: Detroit Public Schools faces an unprecedented and historic fiscal emergency that must be corrected to bring much-needed stability back to our schools. DPS faces a Corrective Action Plan and remains in federally-designated High Risk status, one of only two such districts to be designated as such in the country. We are working favorably to turn this around, having put staff and procedures in place and, with the additional sacrifices all employees have had to bear, the once-\$327 million legacy deficit is projected to be at \$72 million at the end of FY 2012.

We have respected organized labor by holding a comprehensive meeting with all unions' leadership at which I directed our Chief Financial Officer to "open the books" and provide a thorough financial overview of the budgetary challenges this district faces. That was followed by three sessions with the Detroit Federation of Teachers.

I am really surprised and disappointed that anyone would suggest that we did not want to further the conversation or offer things to the teachers themselves. We told the DFT President and his team that we were more than willing to discuss any of the issues and to make our CFO available for a further deep-dive into the district's finances. I personally sent a letter dated July 11, 2012 to Keith Johnson further offering additional meetings to answer questions, listen and respond to members' concerns and to further discussions with the DFT.

Ms. Randi Weingarten  
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That never occurred. To this date the union has not approached us with any further issues from these discussions. They simply have not offered any new alternatives.

I personally offered to the DFT President, in the presence of the Michigan AFT President, an incentive program for our teachers. I am aware that such a plan had great success in this district before and under a similar plan the teachers received the highest raise ever in the history. Under the plan, a portion of any operating surplus-1% for each \$5 million-would be set aside to provide to district employees. Under the projected operating surplus, DPS employees would be expected to receive 2 percent of their wages back, in December of this year. I have made this offer on two occasions.

I am unwilling at this time to discussing the further expansion of the Diplomas Now Schools that you mention in your letter. Even though I agreed with you to starting two new such schools, these schools have not been modestly successful, in large part because the teachers' union president used "bully tactics" to control all teachers at these schools. Therefore I am no longer interested in expansion of the program unless there is evidence that it works for the children of DPS.

At this time further rhetoric and unfounded public charges will not be effective or useful. We need everyone in this city to rally around Detroit Public Schools and work together to bring financial stability to this system and assist in improving the education of our children. The very future of our children and our city depend on that.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Roy S. Roberts". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Roy" being particularly prominent.

Roy S. Roberts  
Emergency Manager

Attachment

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July 11, 2012

VIA E-MAIL AND US MAIL

Mr. Keith Johnson, President  
Detroit Federation of Teachers  
2875 W. Grand Blvd.  
Detroit, MI 48202

**Re: Detroit Federation of Teachers ("DFT")**

Dear Mr. Johnson:

I enjoyed meeting with you today to discuss the future of the District and DFT, and I believe our meeting today was both productive and mutually beneficially. As you know, I have always expressed willingness to continue discussions among the District in order to facilitate an orderly start of the school year and the DFT leadership team after the last meeting on June 28, 2012. The District remains open to hearing any proposals of the DFT leadership team, as well as those of the concerned teachers in the District, and to answering any questions you or your members may have about the terms of the new successor DFT contract.

While I believe that further discussions can be beneficial to the District and to our teachers and your members, I am not willing to concede any of my authority, rights and obligations as the District's Emergency Manager provided under the Local Government and School District Fiscal Accountability Act (Public Act 4) in order to stabilize the District's financial position. I am more than agreeable to having District representatives meet with you to answer questions, listen and respond to your members' concerns and review any of your proposals. Toward that end, I have directed staff to continue discussions with the DFT. Please advise me or my office of dates and times your schedule will allow for meetings with District representatives.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,



Roy S. Roberts  
Emergency Manager

RSR:ga

pc: Kevin Smith, Esq., Chief of Staff  
Gwendolyn A. de Jongh, Esq., Chief Labor Relations Officer  
Jean-Vierre Adams, Esq., General Counsel