

DFT Members,

As your president, I am proud to go to my office each day to speak with the people who make decisions that impact you. A phone call, a visit from you the member, or meeting with a member or the entire staff at your school is important to me.

I have tried to build a reputation as a leader who is compassionate as well as passionate; a leader with integrity, and forthright as well as caring, but most of all effective at getting the job done. There are many times when resolution does not come as swiftly as I would like, whether it takes two years or two weeks I will not stop until the job is done and done right.

I stand for *honesty*

I stand for *strong union leadership*

I stand for *service*

I stand for *justice*

I stand for *integrity*

Thank you in advance for all of your support.

In Solidarity,

Virginia Cantrell

President, Detroit Federation of Teachers

Just what has Virginia Cantrell done?

This is what Virginia Cantrell has done!

- Got the 2.5% raise that was negotiated even though the District tried to push a letter of understanding that said it would not give the 2.5% pay raise.
- Has consistently enforced the contract by taking grievances to MERC regarding:
 1. Class size
 2. Excessive paperwork
 3. Substitute service

- To Arbitration
 1. Class size
 2. Excessive paperwork
 3. Substitute service
 4. Pay issues such as:
 - a. Substitutes being terminated (won) with back pay- (\$63,000 award and a \$53,00 award)
 - b. A teacher not given a contract- received a contract and back pay of more than \$200,000
 - c. Jones Arbitration – K. Johnson got 26 people paid. Virginia has been back to arbitration twice to get the additional 73 teachers the money that they are owed by the district.

- Elementary prep restored (this prep was to be restored in 2008-2009 was not stated in ratified contract).

- Took and returned more than 3,776 phone call since February 2008.

- Worked with DPS to get teachers and support staff returned to work which included paying the postage to send the recession letters to the members.

- Restored working relationships with DPS.

- Worked to get parent-community to support Detroit Public Schools.

- Met with teachers and support staff both at DFT office and local schools to discuss concerns, working conditions, safety and cleanliness of local schools.

- Met with Superintendent monthly to discuss DFT issued and concerns; was able to resolve many concerns.

- Attends most DPS committee and Board meetings, speaks with several Board members and Superintendent regarding DFT concerns such as layoffs/recalls, class size, working conditions, lack of substitute service, lack of books and supplies, lack of prompt pay for oversize classes and lost preps.

- Worked with the DPS Assault Committee to revise and change procedures in order to better address this serious problem.

- Stays in contact with legislators in Lansing, either meeting with them or by telephone regarding education issues.

- Stays in touch and meets with City of Detroit Mayor to discuss how to move DPS forward regarding safety issues in and around schools.

- Works with legislators to reduce the number to 60,000 that constitutes a first-class school district to protect Detroit from influx of charter schools (as late as week of December 1, 2008).
- Helped to bring in additional revenue by bringing the Obama campaign headquarters to the DFT office.
- The first week I took office a \$45 check bounced. Upon being sworn in I requested for AFT National to assist in auditing the Detroit Federation of Teachers. The audit showed that more than \$3,000,000 was owed by the DFT for:
 1. An arrearage of per capita dues to AFT National and AFT Michigan
 2. Back property taxes, outstanding bills, and excessive payroll expenditures.
- Working to restore financial stability to the DFT, the following has been done under my leadership:
 1. Worked out a payment plan to pay back dues owed to AFT National and AFT Michigan which exceeded \$2,000,000.
 2. Paid back property taxes in excess of \$170,000.
 3. Cut 7 staff members and other expenditures.
 4. Rented space at the DFT for the Obama headquarters and Michigan State University.
- Met with State Education Committee to discuss mandatory kindergarten.
- Won arbitration regarding maternity leave (see March 2006 Detroit Teacher).
- Director of Staff, Keith Johnson was assigned to work on the negotiated contract in 2006, but when I took office in January 2007, nothing had been done to get the contract language written up as late as February 2007. In fact I had to start from scratch in April 2007. By this time it took weeks to get it typed up and get the draft to DPS. By this time DPS was experiencing serious problems and most staff that would be able to make decisions were gone and were not replaced until late December of 2007. Trying to clean up the contract (going back 20 years) has been difficult because no one is in place long enough to finish.
- The position of Director of Staff was written out of the budget by the then President Janna Garrison in 2006.
- Director of Staff, Keith Johnson was given due process; had opportunity to have union representation, he refused; brought his discharge to the executive board and MERC.
- Michigan State has located off campus to DFT office bringing additional revenues to DFT.