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"Making Teachers Better Teachers"
AFL/CIO #2265
DCFT.net

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Dear Douglas County Teacher:

You've heard it before—the two reasons to join the union are to get liability insurance and to support salary and benefits negotiation. But, as we begin a new school year and as I begin my term as the DCF President, I hope to show you why joining and supporting our organization brings you so much more.

Let me take this time to remind you of what we've accomplished thus far. Since I joined the DCF over a decade ago, we have worked hard to create programs for teachers that are nationally recognized, to provide you with more opportunities to grow professionally, and to improve compensation for all the great work you do. The highlights include:

- Performance Pay, which adds \$1800 to an average teacher's salary
- Educational Research & Dissemination (ER&D), a research-based professional development program offering Skill Blocks to teachers
- On average, a 3% negotiated raise each year
- Representation on the PERA Coalition to secure our state's retirement plan
- Increased planning time for elementary teachers through the Elementary Planning Grant
- Representing and helping teachers in various situations (i.e. Performance Improvement Plans, sick leave bank access, full utilization of benefits, etc.)

But our important work to help Douglas County teachers is not done. While we'll continue to support individual teachers and to negotiate the best benefits possible for you, we've developed several initiatives to work on this year. You should expect us to:

- Communicate better with our members and to be more visible in the schools
- Remain a non-partisan organization continuing to educate our members about issues important to them, such as the upcoming Amendment 39 debate
- Realign and improve the Teacher Evaluation System so as to provide for continuous self-improvement
- Assist in the development of the Learning Center, a joint venture between the district's Staff Development department and the DCF to improve career opportunities for our teachers and classified employees
- Reassess the Outstanding Teacher and Master Teacher programs to improve their effectiveness for staff and students
- Continue to work with the DCFCE, forging important relationships between certified and classified employees to help all Douglas County students

I am proud of what the DCF has accomplished on behalf of Douglas County teachers, and I am even more excited about the future of the DCF and what we can achieve with your help. If you are already a member, I appreciate your continued support for the DCF's initiatives and urge you to become more involved. If you are not yet a member, please consider joining our organization. I look forward to meeting many of you over the next year.

Sincerely,

Brenda Smith
President