



The Spearhead

***A Newsletter for the Jefferson
Federation of Teachers***

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Change is Inevitable

David Shearouse, TJ VP

After I graduated the 8th grade from a small private school in New York City, a new principal was hired, and the new principal summarily fired the entire existing faculty at the school, including some who had worked there for more than 20 years. Many of the students were naturally upset by the development, but as my father explained to me, “A new broom sweeps clean.”

Two decades later, my father’s mantra remains true. Our district has seen the election of a new school board who, in turn, has hired new administrators tasked with improving our district. As a result, new policies have been implemented, including two-hour delay professional development days, a revised parent-teacher conference schedule, and the use of learning targets both on lesson plans and in classrooms.

Indeed, the change that accompanies a new school board and district administration will only intensify with the opening of the new TJHS next fall. The school will feature new technology, new classroom configurations, and new policies designed to help students make the utmost of their abilities and educational opportunities.

Change is inevitable, but in order to be the best teachers that our students need us to be, we need to embrace it. As one administrator at Mentor High School in Ohio phrased it, imagine a staircase symbolizing the changes that are coming to our school and district; some teachers are going to sprint up the staircase of change, others are going to walk, and some of us are going to crawl; however, the most important thing is that everyone is heading up the staircase. To remain at the bottom refusing to climb reeks of, at best, stubbornness and, at worst, laziness; to think that one can teach the same way one has taught for five, ten, or twenty years is futile. The students have changed and so, too, must our instruction.

Given the changes that have been implemented in the district, combined with the election of President (Comrade) Trump, his appointment of anti-union judge Neil Gorsuch to the Supreme Court, the Supreme Court’s hearing of *Abood v. Detroit Board of Education* (a case that could destroy public sector unions), and the pending decision of the State to remove teacher seniority from school district furlough decisions in favor of teacher evaluations, it’s in every JFT member’s best interest to embrace the changes that have come (and will come) to our district as much as possible. Unfortunately, I fear that those who choose not to will be new evidence of my father’s mantra from some twenty years ago.

Fall News

Just Vote Yes: Building reps will be meeting with every member of the JFT to allow them to cast their vote for a series of amendments to the PAFT constitution. The changes are mostly designed to add seats to the PAFT Executive Board, which should benefit smaller local unions such as ours, and so the position of the JFT is to ask its members to vote “YES” on the amendments.

Sick Bank Changes: The JFT has again approached the WJHSD about implementing the same changes to the Sick Bank that were suggested and approved a few years ago. Unlike a few years ago when the district was not amenable to the JFT’s suggested changes, the new administration *is* interested and shares the JFT’s vision of making the Sick Bank sustainable into the future. Once the WJHSD develops a Sick Bank policy, the JFT will once again ask its members to fill out new sick bank cards in accordance with the guidelines of the new Sick Bank policy.

Dues Increase: The JFT Executive Council recently voted to increase monthly dues \$3 (\$1.50 per pay) check to cover increased costs at both the state and national union levels. Over the past few years, the state and national unions have increased monthly dues more than \$6 (\$3 per pay), but due to the frugality of Treasurer David Hiller and the Executive Council, these increased costs were not passed onto JFT members. However, with this small increase, the JFT will be able to continue to meet its obligations to both its members and the state and national unions in a financially responsible manner.

Contract Knowledge

Per the Contract, did you know:

Section 13: Grievance Procedure: A. Definitions 1. Grievance: A “grievance” is hereby defined as: A complaint by an employee regarding the meaning, interpretation, or application of any provision of this Agreement (AKA the contract). (Page 62).

Section 13: Grievance Procedure: B. Procedure: Step 1- An employee having a grievance shall attempt to resolve the matter through informal discussion of such grievance with his/her chief building administrator and, if the grievant elects, the Federation representative, within ten (1) work days after the occurrence of the event giving rise to the grievance or after such event should reasonably have become known, whichever first occurs. (Page 62).

Upcoming Dates

Wednesday, September 27, 2017-
General Membership Meeting at Middle School

Friday, December TBA, 2017- Christmas Party

Tuesday, January 23, 2018- TJ JFT Winter Meeting
in Library at TJHS

Recognitions

Ashley Gallagher- Marriage

Rebecca Reeb- Baby

Julie Kolenda- Baby

Nicole August- Baby

Have a marriage or birth to celebrate? Tell us about it! E-mail: jjakubowski@wjhsd.net