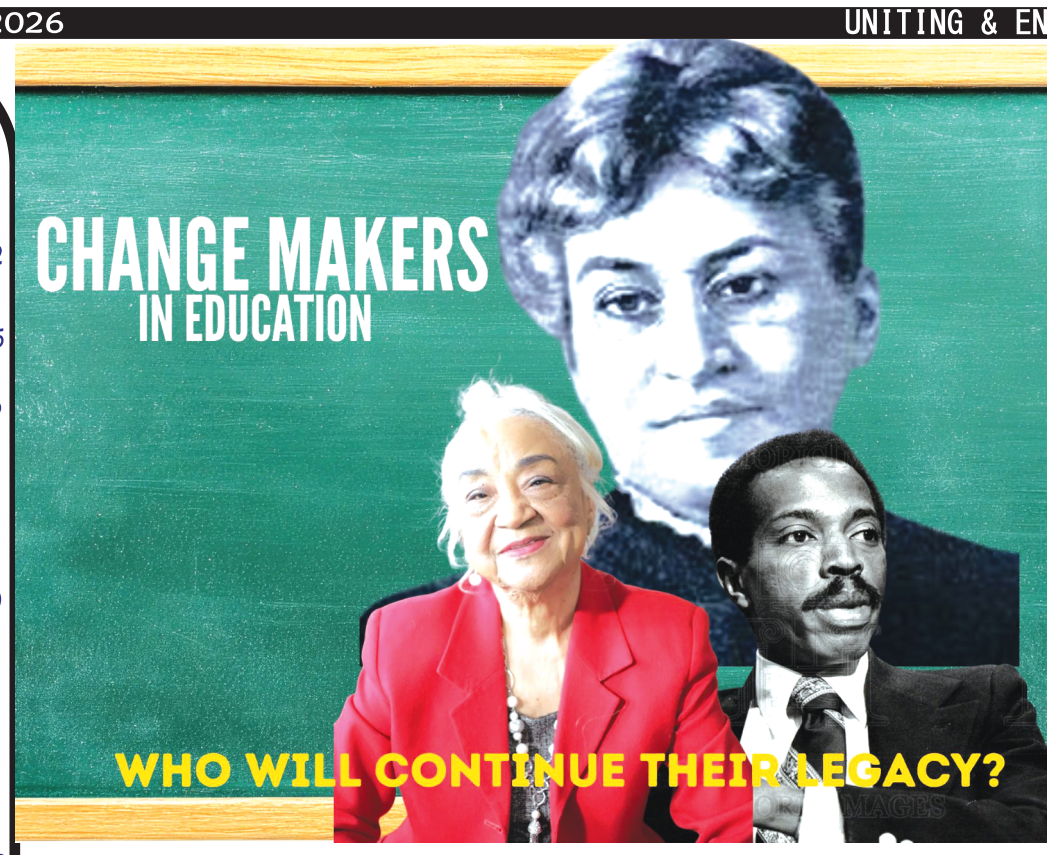
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DETROIT NATIVE SUN

SEPTEMBER - OCTOBER 2026 UNITING & ENLIGHTENING THE COMMUNITY

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"If you don't like something, change it. If you can't change it, change your attitude." - Maya Angelou

Attorney and Activist Helen Moore, Arthur Jefferson, Detroit Public School's first African American superintendent, and Fannie M. Richards, Detroit's first African American teacher, are all change makers. But, who will continue their legacy?

An ABC framework (Attitude, Board members, and Curriculum) is needed to bring about a major transformation in the Detroit Public Schools Community District (DPSCD).

The attitude and culture in the district must be changed to build trust among students, parents, and community stakeholders. A change in board members is needed to stop rubber stamping of administrative policies without thoroughly considering issues and outcomes and to foster transparency. Changes in the curriculum is needed to keep students engaged, increase literacy and decrease absenteeism.

It is deeply frustrating when the people responsible for managing the district work in comfort while students and teachers struggle in stifling, overheated classrooms.

This issue highlights a persistent gap between administrative promises and the daily realities inside public school buildings.

Although half of the district's schools have been renovated to provide air conditioning throughout their school, half of the district's students are still suffering.

Other long-time problems include low literacy rates, high absenteeism, and cover ups of faculty abuse on disabled students.

Despite of Superintendent Nikolai Vitti's recent announcement that students have made significant improvements in literacy, the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) states otherwise in its Trends in Urban Districts Assessment that measures academic achievement in mathematics, reading, science, and writing.

In 2024, the average score of fourth-grade students in Detroit was 174. This was lower than the average score of 208 for students in large cities.

- The average score for students in Detroit in 2024 (174) was not significantly different from their average score in 2022 (176) and was lower than their average score in 2009 (187).
- The percentage of fourth-grade students in Detroit who performed at or above the NAEP Proficient level in reading was 5 percent in 2024. This percentage was not significantly different from that in 2022 (5 percent) and in 2009 (5 percent). The district's average score in eighth-grade reading is 229, with only 6% of eighth-graders reaching the "Proficient" benchmark.
- The percentage of students in Detroit who performed at or above the NAEP Basic level was 20 percent in 2024. This percentage was not significantly different from that in 2022 (21 percent) and was smaller than that in 2009 (27 percent).

In 2024, the average score in Detroit (174) was lower than 24 other districts that include Atlanta, Austin, Baltimore City, Boston, Chicago, Cleveland, Dallas, Denver, District of Columbia, Houston, Los Angeles, Miami-Dade, New York City, Philadelphia, and San Diego.

While administration for the 2026 NAEP exam cycle takes place from January to March of 2026, full national and urban district ranking data is not scheduled for public release until late 2026 or early 2027.

Chronic absenteeism has plagued the district for many years, prompting administrators to bribe students to go to school. Detroit Public Schools Community District (DPSCD) has expanded its multi-million dollar approach to keeping students in classrooms for the 2026-27 school year. High school students earn $100 per week ($100 Visa electronic gift card per eligible 5-day cycle) up to a maximum of $1,000 annually. Students must attend every single class hour to qualify for that week's payout.

-- SEE CHANGE MAKERS on page 11

