

# The Detroit News

THE FINAL WORD

## What's the answer to Detroit teacher strike?

*The following are opinions solicited by The Detroit News from members of the Detroit community and education experts on the Detroit teachers strike:*

### Reform failed labor model

**Ryan S. Olson, director of education policy, and Thomas W. Washburne, director of labor policy, Mackinac Center for Public Policy in Midland:**

The Detroit teacher strike is a byproduct of Michigan's choice to mandate an outdated, industrial, union-based system for managing our public schools. School boards, teachers, administrators, parents and children are all hampered by a system of collective bargaining that politicizes boards, hinders decision making, inhibits open communication and fosters conflicting agendas. This strike highlights the fact that public schools must be allowed to function in a new way.

Sensible employment policies, incentive-based reforms that improve instruction and the effective use of money are all impeded by the present system. Unfortunately for most Detroit parents and children, the scarcity of educational options prevents students from leaving schools where employees are refusing to provide instruction.

We can only hope that this instructive lesson on collective bargaining will provoke reforms that place the needs of Detroit's parents and children first.

*Mail letters to The Detroit News, Editorial Page, 615 W. Lafayette, Detroit, MI 48226, or fax them to (313) 222-6417 or e-mail them to [letters@detnews.com](mailto:letters@detnews.com).*