

West Suburban Teachers Union, Local 571, IFT, AFT, AFL-CIO

Union Messenger

"A Union of Professionals"

WSTU May Calendar

5/1-Deadline for registration for 571 IMRF Seminar
 5/7-571 IMRF Seminar- Westmont
 5/20- 571 EB Mtg.-Westmont-5:30 p.m.
 5/20-571 HOR Mtg.- Westmont - 6:45 p.m.
 5/20-Vote on 571 proposed budget

Union Messenger

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No Rest For the Wicked

by Jane Russell

Ahhh, spring break. The time to recover, refresh, renew, relax. There was also a scheduled spring break for the U.S. Congress and the IL Legislature. But that doesn't mean that work was not taking place. Constituent meetings with members of Congress and their staffs were conducted throughout the state and work continued on Illinois pension "reform."

Members of the IL Alliance for Retired Americans (IARA) and Local 571 retirees council met with Congressman Bill Foster, 11th CD, on April 1, 2013, in Aurora. The IARA, of which both Local 571 retirees and IFT are members, is a group of union and community members who advocate for seniors. Phyllis Meade, 571 retirees council president, Dee Pospishil, 571 retirees council secretary/treasurer and Jane Russell along with another retired labor group member met with Congressman Foster to discuss his support or opposition to proposed changes in Social Security and Medicare. The Congressman's responses were favorable on nearly every issue presented. Specific issues were:

- Raising or scrapping the Social Security payroll cap
- Changing the COLA to the chained CPI
- Increasing both Social Security and Medicare eligibility retirement ages

- Means-testing of Social Security and Medicare, a supposed cost-savings device
- Medicare negotiating with the drug companies for lower prescription drug prices

Labor leaders from the National Association of Letter Carriers, Communications Workers of America, Illinois Federation of Teachers and Illinois Federation of Labor met with another newly elected member of Congress, Tammy Duckworth, 8th CD, on April 3, 2013, in Schaumburg. Issues discussed with Lt. Duckworth included immigration reform, repeal of the sequestration and proposed changes in Social Security and Medicare. Labor's issues were the same as Congresswoman Duckworth's issues.

Both legislators interviewed related to us they believed bills about immigration and gun reform should come up after the spring break. The budget bills, of which there are several in the House, could be voted on this summer. We were cautioned that when bills are negotiated, sometimes there are good and bad pieces, but overall if they deemed the bill to be best for their constituents, they could vote in support in hopes of minimizing the damaging parts.
 Contd. pg 3

Practical and Effective Close Reading Strategies

by Bonnie Saracco

Court Allan is a high school English teacher and football coach in Olathe, Kansas, who has a blog called *iTeach. iCoach. iBlog*. His post *Five Close Reading Strategies to Support the Common Core* has practical suggestions to enable us to help our students read the more demanding texts required by the Common Core State Standards.

In *Close Reading* teachers present texts beyond students' present comprehension abilities and closely guide them through the material. Research has shown that one of the main causes of dropping SAT and ACT scores over the last five decades has been the "dumbing" down of high school textbooks. Students cannot read college level material in these tests if they have never before read at that level. Also, students are often unable to deal with higher level texts because these texts lack the helpful features of lower level texts, such as pictures, defined key words, and topical breaks.

Although it is impractical to have students write in all of their textbooks, giving them pages of complex passages which they can annotate and guiding them through the process is a powerful comprehension builder.

Students need to be explicitly taught how to annotate text. Many of them do not know how to do it effectively so they simply highlight whatever seems important and write in the margins without a specific plan, resulting in huge amounts of highlighted text and a lot of notes with little effect. Allan suggests a helpful five-step method for annotation that also supports class discussion and instruction.

First students should number the paragraphs or stanzas in the left margin. This makes it much easier to cite the text, as is required in Common Core assessments. It also makes discussion more efficient, as the other

students can easily find specific words and passages. Next students chunk the text into shorter sections by drawing horizontal lines between paragraphs. This makes a sea of print more manageable. They can either draw lines between all the paragraphs, or chunk the text into parts, either independently or with teacher guidance.

iTeach, iCoach, iblog :Five Close Reading Strategies to Support the Common Core

Students still underline and circle, but more strategically. The teacher should specify what to underline and circle depending on the text. For example, students could be told to underline all the belief statements, or circle all the figurative language.

Finally, students can write in margins more effectively. For example, they can use the left margins for very short summaries, and the right margins under teacher directions for producing supports such as questions or pictures based on the passage.

These simple steps can be a great help as we help our students meet the new demands of the Common Core.



No Rest for the Wicked contd.

by Jane Russell

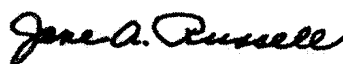
Closer to home, the We Are One Coalition continued to meet regarding the bills/amendments passed right before the spring break. The bills were an amended SB 1 which is being sent to the House and House bills going to the Senate including HB 1154 (pensionable salary cap), HB 1165 ("no growth" COLA limit) and HB 1166 (increasing the retirement age). IFT members are to continue their efforts to contact legislators requesting them to oppose bills that have not been negotiated with the unions. These include the onerous house bills mentioned above. The summary, full text and votes on each bill can be found at www.ilga.gov/legislation or go to the IFT website, www.ift-aft.org for further details about the most current legislation.

Ralph Martire, Executive Director of the Center for Tax and Budget Accountability, spoke at the Local 571 House of Representatives meeting on March 18, 2013, and unequivocally showed through research that the state has a **budget problem** and not a pension problem. However, he also suggested that legislators feel the need to resolve the supposed pension problem by political means, no thanks to all of the entities that have blamed education professionals and the unions

for the state's problems. That is why many legislators have expressed the view, "I will vote for anything that is constitutional regarding pension reform." So the big question still goes back to, is any of the proposed legislation constitutional?

The next few weeks will be a whirlwind of completing the 2012-13 school year. The IFT will try to do its part in keeping you up to date on the possible tornado-like activities of the Illinois General Assembly. IFT Lobby Day is scheduled for Wednesday, May 1, 2013. As always, we want to fill the capitol with our members using the opportunity to educate our legislators. Join us if you can and stay tuned for a busy spring!

In unity,



Local 571 President

Local 571 Professional Development Classes



Back row: Foundations of Effective Teaching Instructor, Bonnie Saracco; Mary Krejca, Indian Springs; Donna Maibusch, Leyden; Mark Reeves, Leyden; Laurie Gilbin, Elmhurst; Marilyn Milne, Indian Springs; Jane Russell, Reading Comprehension Instructor

Front row: Mary Kay Weir, Indian Springs; Lisa Adams, Leyden; Gene Marie Szukala, PAEC; Therese Shelven, Retiree; Ethan Cooke, Proviso

The 2013 Brown Center Report
on American Education:

HOW WELL ARE AMERICAN STUDENTS LEARNING?

This is the title of the 2013 Brown Center report on American education which reviews the data of state,

U.S. and international assessments. The report also reviewed tracking and ability groupings finding resurgence since the 1990's when there was a marked decline in both.

When looking at the trends in the International Math and Science Study (TIMSS) released in December 2012, the U.S. fared well, gaining in mathematics, reading and science. Only nine states are involved in the TIMSS testing which is given once every four years. Finland, often touted as having a superior educational system to other countries, showed declines from the last TIMSS testing. Notably, fourth and eighth grade scores on the TIMSS mathematics assessments were very similar for both the U.S. and Finland.

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) documents refer to a resurgence in ability groupings in fourth grade reading and mathematics. Tracking continues in eighth grade math where nearly three-fourths of students are in tracked classes. Ability groupings mostly in reading groups were used during most of the 20th century except for the last ten years. Now ability groupings seem to be back in the beginning of the 21st century.

The third part of the Brown Center report focused on the national push for eighth graders to take algebra. As a result NAEP scores were expected to increase but have not done so even though there is a rise in schools teaching algebra to either seventh or eighth graders. Is it possible that the rigor in the algebra courses being offered should be reviewed? The study shows that states have shown math achievement gains when students are not aggressively placed into advanced courses.

The countries that continue to receive the highest scores in international testing may well be influenced by their cultures which value academic success, positive parental involvement and peers who believe that students who work hard in school should be respected and admired.

For additional information, the entire Brown Center report can be downloaded from www.brookings.edu/about/centers/brown.

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Local 571 Professional Development Courses—Summer 2013

Managing Anti-social Behavior for Support Staff - for Support Staff

Dates and Times—5 sessions: June 10, 11, 12, 13, 14 (8:30 a.m.—2:00 p.m.)

Workshop Credit: 24 PTP's

REGISTRATION DEADLINE: Friday, May 24

***Beginning Reading Instruction - for Teachers & Support Staff**

Dates and Times—5 sessions: June 10, 11, 12, 13, 14 (8:30 a.m.—3:00 p.m.)

Workshop Credit: 30 CPDU's or 30 PTP's

REGISTRATION DEADLINE: Friday, May 24

***Instructional Strategies That Work for All Disciplines - for Teachers & Support Staff**

Dates and Times—5 sessions: June 10, 11, 12, 13, 14 (8:30 a.m.—3:00 p.m.)

Workshop Credit: 30 CPDU's or 30 PTP's

REGISTRATION DEADLINE: Friday, May 24

***Managing Anti-social Behavior - for Teachers & Support Staff**

Dates and Times—5 sessions: June 24, 25, 26, 27, 28 (8:30 a.m.—3:00 p.m.)

Workshop Credit: 30 CPDU's or 30 PTP's

REGISTRATION DEADLINE: Friday, June 7

***Thinking Mathematics 6-8: Journey to Algebra - for Teachers & Support Staff**

Dates and Times—5 sessions: June 24, 25, 26, 27, 28 (8:30 a.m.—3:00 p.m.)

Workshop Credit: 30 CPDU's or 30 PTP's

REGISTRATION DEADLINE: Friday, June 7

Location: All courses will be held at the Robert M. Healey Conference Center
500 Oakmont Lane, Westmont, IL 60559-5520

Cost: \$50/member or \$100/non-member per course (includes materials & light lunch)

Course Descriptions & Registration Forms: Visit www.wstu571.org for course descriptions and registration forms or contact Judy Jennings by phone at 630-468-4098 or by e-mail at jjennings@ift-aft.org.

** Courses are for teachers and support staff. Teachers earn 30 CPDU's and support staff earn 30 PTP's. For an additional cost, participants can earn two (2) Governors State University graduate credit hours or two (2) Prairie State Community College undergraduate credit hours. Participants may enroll and pay for university or college credit hours at the first class session.*

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500 Oakmont Lane
Westmont, IL 60559
P: 630-468-4098
F: 630-468-4088
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**What's Missing from
the Messenger?**



E-mail your thoughts to
Kyra Lopez at
Kyra_Lopez@hotmail.com

We're on the Web!!!
www.wstu571.org

West Suburban Teachers Union Local 571

500 Oakmont Lane

P.O. Box 390

Westmont, IL 60559-0390

Phone: 630-468-4098 Fax: 630-468-4088

Email: jjennings@ift-aft.org