

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

Union Messenger

"A Union of Professionals"

WSTU April Calendar

4/10-13-AFT PSRP Conf.-Orlando, FL
 4/14-AFT Convention ballots returned to 571
 4/21-571 EB Mtg.-Westmont -5:30p.m.
 4/21-571 HOR Mtg.-Westmont-6:45p.m.
 4/21-571 Area Trustee election ballots ready for pickup
 4/21-571 proposed budget presentation to HOR
 4/26-27-IFT ULI-Westmont

Union Messenger

Jane Russell, President
 Alice Kautsky, Vice President
 Sandra Erickson, Treasurer
 Cathleen Pope, Secretary
 Jonathan Pazol, Financial Secretary
 Ed Hohman, Legal Defense
 Secretary & COPE Chairperson
 Tom Smith,
 IFT Field Service Director
 Arnavaz Mistry-Mujthaba,
 IFT Field Service Director
 Judy Jennings, Office Manager
 Julie Masterton, Office Secretary
 Andrew Bendelow,
 571 Web Administrator
 Kyra Lopez,
 571 Union Messenger Editor



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Right-to-Work "Sounds" Good

by Jane Russell

When the National Right to Work Foundation sends campaign letters to teachers, they make it sound almost glamorous. But the truth is, right to work legislation will take away your voice on the job and in Springfield.

WSTU hosted a workshop on February 27, 2014, in Westmont. The workshop presenters traveled from Austin, Texas. There are 24 states that have passed RTW laws including Texas. We were offered a first hand look at the workshop from Ken Zarifis, president of Education Austin, of what it is like to work in a RTW state. The Austin Independent School District employs approximately 12,000 potential union members. However, there are only 3,000 union members in Education Austin. Ken and his staff organized and fought for each member. The members continue in the union fortunately through a dues check-off, one of the few "union" benefits they enjoy. There is no fair share as we know it.

The WSTU workshop included a piece on student growth as part of the new Illinois teachers evaluation plans. Ken discussed how Austin teachers are "appraised," not evaluated. The "appraisal" has more to do with providing teachers merit pay. Ken also discussed their latest round of "meet and confer," the RTW descriptor for collective bargaining. Education Austin members hung together and instead of a one-year basic contract describing pay and benefits, the agreement provided some three years of stability. But that meet and confer was successful

because the Education Austin members worked to elect school board members who were more favorable to the workers.

Right-to-Work is wrong for IL employees. It is wrong for workers because studies show that wages may be \$1500 less per year than those in states where workers are unionized. Worker's in RTW states are less likely to have health insurance.
Right-to-Work is wrong for the economy. Jobs are lost in communities when wages are lowered as a result of RTW.
 Some industries also have a decrease in employment because of RTW.
Right-to-Work is wrong for business. Business conditions were not improved.
 It has been shown that RTW is not a deciding factor where businesses locate.

By being politically active and encouraging other members to do the same, we can keep the right-wing billionaires who work to elect legislators favorable to RTW out of Illinois. Let's work together to protect our rights and our profession.

For further information go to:
www.wrongforeveryone.com

In unity,

Jane A. Russell

Local 571 President

Teaching Vocabulary for the Common Core

by Bonnie Saracco

The three major instructional shifts for implementing the English Language Arts Common Core State Standards are greater use of content-rich nonfiction, increased emphasis on finding evidence in the text, and regular practice with complex text and its academic language.

All three shifts require effective vocabulary instruction. The fact that students must read above their independent reading levels in Common Core instruction makes vocabulary support necessary.

A literate person's vocabulary consists of three tiers of words. Tier One words, such as *clock* and *happy*, are the most basic words and rarely need to be taught in school. Tier Two words, such as *catapulted* and *rowdy*, are the high frequency general academic words in the vocabularies of mature language users. Tier Three Words, domain-specific vocabulary such as *isotope* and *lathe*, are best learned in specific content area instruction.

It is a prime responsibility of English language arts teachers to teach Tier Two words.

Although the Common Core also requires students to know how to use both print and electronic dictionaries, glossaries, and thesauruses, there are problems with the definitional approach to teaching vocabulary.

Often dictionary definitions are not helpful because the definitions themselves contain words the students don't know, they convey only partial meanings, and they don't contain the in-depth knowledge needed for reading comprehension.

For example, the word *corrupt* may be defined as "dishonest." But to understand *corrupt* in a text about political corruption, a student also needs to know that people in power can act in self-interest, and that bribery can be part of that process.

The word *careful* may be defined as "cautious about danger," which is irrelevant if its meaning in the text is "neat."

The word *contempt* may be defined as "disdain," a word that might not be in the vocabulary of students. Also, if *contempt* is used in the phrase *contempt of court*, to comprehend the text a student needs to understand that a court has strict rules of conduct that go beyond those of the normal polite behavior which is appropriate in a business or social situation.

An effective way to help students around the problems of the definitional approach is to use student-friendly explanations. In a student-friendly explanation the teacher characterizes the word, explains its meaning in everyday language, and gives an example. Student-friendly definitions are easily put together with use of the words *if*, *when*, *something* and *someone*.

For example, "If something is *dazzling* it is very bright. Bright sunshine is *dazzling*." Or, "When someone is *amusing*, he is funny. A clown at a circus is *amusing*."

Student-friendly definitions should start with a focused concept of what the word means in the text at hand rather than a presentation of its multiple meanings. Students can more readily extend their concept of the word after mastering one meaning, and too much information at the outset can be confusing.

In other words, keep it simple.

The sharing of student-friendly definitions is an effective instructional practice to help our students succeed in the Common Core.



AFT Task Force on Small Locals

Patty Gill, Riverside Education Council President

I had the pleasure and honor of serving on the AFT Task Force on Small Locals. A small local is defined as having membership fewer than 600 members. The majority of our councils in 571 are the size of many small locals throughout the country. We are a federated local, meaning our twenty-four councils have separate officers and bylaws, yet we enjoy the benefits of a large local. Illinois is the only state with this organization structure. I had to explain the federated local structure many times at the AFT task force meetings.

Could you imagine doing all the work our local does for us as a council? That is the situation 90% of the AFT locals encounter. Our council provides many services such as: professional development, legal assistance and advice, accessibility to field staff, membership and financial bookkeeping, political involvement opportunities, representation at conventions, implementing IFT and AFT initiatives and scholarships. As a council president, if I had to also manage all the local responsibilities in addition to the council responsibilities, the task would be overwhelming.

AFT President Randi Weingarten proposed the Small Locals Unions Task Force to examine the situation of small locals, assess the quality of support to small locals from state and national federations, explore the connection of small local unions in relation to AFT's strategic initiatives, and make recommendations as appropriate.

The task force was comprised of fifteen members from Illinois, Montana, California, New York, Alaska, Washington, Rhode Island, Ohio, Florida, and Connecticut. The various divisions of AFT were also represented: K-12 teachers, PSRPs, health care workers, state employees and higher education employees. We had three meetings: the first in August in Washington D.C., the second in October in Chicago and the third in January in San Diego. AFT staff members who led the discussions included Rick Kuplinski, Lynne Mingarelli, Carol Kurtz and Pat Cochran. Francine Lawrence, AFT Executive Vice President was also present at all the meetings. I was so impressed by the knowledge, concern, questions raised and focused listening the AFT staff brought to the discussions. It was an amazing experience.

The task force discussed many recommendations. However, the following are seven major recommendations:

- **Local Presidents Conference:** The task force recommended that the Local Presidents' Conference be re-instated. The primary focus of the *A Union of Professionals* local presidents' conference should be to provide workshops for more effective leadership, high member involvement, and promote sharing of information.
- **Local Dues/Financial Guidelines:** Information given to help locals set adequate dues amounts
- **Legal Defense Fund Access:** Exploration of making the legal defense fund more accessible to small locals, such as a sliding scale of local union commitment
- **Union Leave Banks:** Develop a union leave bank to support partial or full release time during periods of specific need (difficult negotiations, political elections, membership recruitment, etc)
- **Member/Potential Member Database and Technology for Tracking Member Involvement:** Educate small local unions on what technology is available.
- **Maximizing LeaderNet as a Resource:** Develop a campaign to more effectively promote LeaderNet; create a LeaderNet smartphone application.
- **New Local Union President Outreach/Support:** Review of systems whereby AFT is made aware of the election of new local presidents.



The next step in this process is for the AFT to convene a working group to implement the recommendations. As you can see, Local 571 already provides many of these recommendations. I came back from the task force with a great appreciation of all the work our 571 officers, and especially Jane Russell, do for us. We are part of a great local.

Thank you!

Summer Travel Opportunity- Venturing to Another Continent



Jon is up close and personal with a Komodo Dragon, a large lizard found in the Indonesian Islands.

Traveling south of Bangkok, Thailand and Singapore, to Jakarta Indonesia, Jon Pazol, biology teacher at West Leyden High School and WSTU Financial Secretary, participated in a trip of a lifetime through the Global Education Classroom Program, June 5—25, 2013. At the February Local 571 House of Representatives meeting, Jon shared his experiences with Indonesian students, teachers, culture, education and animals.

Jon and his Leyden students remain connected with the students in Manado, Indonesia. The connection is much closer than we think. When Jon visited a classroom and played a Leyden student-created parody, the Manado students sang along knowing the words to Carly Rae Jepsen's, "Call Me Maybe." Jon felt very welcomed, appreciating his "movie star" status because Americans do not often visit Indonesia.

This trip follows his amazing experience in 2009 to the Arctic north of Alaska where he was part of a team mapping the ocean bottom on a research vessel in a sea of ice.

Jon's travel opportunities can also be yours. Below are three websites with additional information. Describes a multitude of summer travel opportunities for teachers at low cost:

Teacher Travel/Grant Opportunities: <http://paperchasersblog.com/2013/04/13/teacher-travel>

Jon's blog with resources about the program and his travels:

Global Education Resource Guide: <http://pazoltgc.blogspot.com/>

Pictures, pictures and pictures with information about the trip:

Indonesia and Arctic Travel Blogs: www.pazoltravel.blogspot.com



Teacher Evaluation in Illinois: What Should We Be Thinking About Now?



Leyden Council members Chris Schulz, Steve Marten (president) and John Rossi, had several questions for the presenters.

The title may have provoked some uneasiness among participants at the workshop on February 27, 2014, in Westmont. By the time participants left, however, they were more knowledgeable and comfortable with implementation requirements of Public Act 96-0861. WSTU sponsored the event attended by over 80 participants from five area

help improve their students' educational growth. Over seven years, there have been successes as well as challenges and the Austin model has adapted over time.

Workshop participants were grateful for the depth of knowledge of the presenters, their abilities to break down the topics into understandable, intertwined segments and the level of support being offered to provide local members with creation and implementation of PERA defined assessment of student growth in teacher evaluation. One attendee stated that "finding out that SLO's are only used to measure a certain objective or concentrated area was beneficial. I also liked the way it was used to see growth of the students." Another participant recognized that "SLOs are geared to individual classroom needs." Many participants suggested there be training on how to develop a district plan with Student Learning Objectives. Plans are being made to provide further training to IFT members. For handouts and power point presentations from the February 27, 2014, workshop, which included several internet informational sites, contact your council officers.

IFT locals including Local 571 members. The workshop concentrated on Student Learning Objectives (SLOs) and the connection to the IL Performance Evaluation Reform Act (PERA) incorporating student growth measures through assessments.

Amy Alsop, IFT Professional Development Director, discussed the PERA law with details of who has to include student growth measures in their evaluations, how much should the student growth "count" and three types of assessments that may be used for assessing student growth.

The Performance Evaluation Advisory Council (PEAC) will make recommendations to the ISBE regarding assessment types and a student measurement model, Student Learning Objectives (SLOs). The Illinois draft template on SLOs, which can work with all three assessment types, is currently under construction with the help of the Center for Assessment. The elements of the IL draft SLO template include:

- Learning goal
- Assessments and scoring
- Expected growth targets
- Actual outcomes
- Teacher rating



The workshop presenters had an opportunity to exchange information.

Pictured (l-r) Amy Alsop, IFT Professional Issues director, Joann Taylor, Austin Independent School District, and Ken Zaritis, AFT Education Austin President.

Two Texas educators, Ken Zarifis, president of Education Austin, and Joann Taylor, the Assistant Director of Strategic Compensation for Austin Independent School District, discussed the

implementation of the Austin Model and its SLO design to

Finally, a participant stated that the best feature of this workshop was "the input from others that have been through this process which validates the steps we are taking; that we are heading in the right direction." Local 571 will continue to provide assistance to all councils as they work with their administrators to create and successfully implement the IL Performance Evaluation Reform Act in their districts.



Cicero Council members discussed council business during dinner and prior to the workshop pictured are (l-r) Sharon Stone, Eilene Grandau and Rachel Esposito (president).



**Local 571's
TRS Seminar on
April 8, 2014,
has been
CANCELLED due
to the lawsuit
on pensions.
It will be
rescheduled
a.s.a.p.**

**AMC & Marcus Movie Tickets & See's
Candies Discounts**

Discounted Marcus or AMC Movie Tickets and certificates for See's candies are available again from the WSTU office. Order forms can be downloaded and printed from www.wstu571.org or requested from your council president.

TRS is expanding its outreach to members through Facebook and Twitter.

Like us on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Teachers-Retirement-System-of-the-State-of-Illinois/129451380453866>

Follow us on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/ILLTRSTRS> is expanding its outreach to members through Facebook and Twitter.

Like us on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Teachers-Retirement-System-of-the-State-of-Illinois/129451380453866>

Follow us on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/ILLTRS>



The Union Plus Credit Card program is one of 40 Union Plus benefits—from AT&T wireless discounts to mortgage savings—designed to meet the needs of hard-working union members like you. Cardholders can earn unlimited, no-hassle, 1.5% cash rewards on every purchase.



**Learn more at
UnionCardApply.com
or call 1-800-522-4000**

Another card option is available. Credit approval required. Terms & Conditions apply. Union Plus Credit Cards issued by Capital One, N.A.



What's Missing from the Messenger?

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

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