

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

Union Messenger

"A Union of Professionals"

WSTU Calendar March

3/14 - 571 EB Meeting - Westmont - 5:30 p.m.
3/14 - 571 HOR Meeting - Westmont - 6:45 p.m.
3/21 - 571 Constitutional Convention - Westmont - 4:30 p.m.
3/24-27 AFT PSRP Conference - Las Vegas

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
Mike Linder,
IFT Field Service Director
Judy Jennings, Office Manager
Julie Masterton, Office Secretary
Andrew Bendelow,
571 Web Administrator
Angel Holmes,
571 Union Messenger Editor



Accountability for All

by Bonnie Saracco

Damaging ideas characterized as "education reform" were presented to the Illinois Senate Education Reform Committee during January's lame duck session. This legislative push is funded by major corporations and was developed by Stand for Children, Advance Illinois, and the Illinois Business Roundtable. It would destroy our collective bargaining power, our ability to advocate for students, and our due process and seniority rights.

IFT, in partnership with Chicago Teachers Union Local 1 and the Illinois Education Association, was

able to halt this dangerous process and to propose our own reform package, "Accountability for All."

"Accountability for All" is research based and was written by educators, the true experts about what is needed to improve our schools. It contains a Students Bill of Rights requiring that every student have access to a rich curriculum and a qualified teacher from the first day of school.

Our plan would also require quality induction and mentoring for new teachers and would provide im-

proved professional development for all teachers. It would mandate training for school board members and require a credential for principals based on performance.

"Accountability for All" would also preserve our due process rights while answering our critics by reasonably streamlining the dismissal process.

The debate will continue in the General Assembly this spring when "Accountability for All" will need our support.

Partners in Political Education (PIPE) Honor Roll

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Once again the West Suburban Teachers Union, has been named to the 2010 honor roll for its efforts to raise political funds for the Committee on Political Education (COPE).

An award plaque and book of honorees were presented to COPE Chair Ed Hohman

at the January Local 571 House of Representatives meeting. Voluntary COPE contributions allow the AFT to represent members in the political process and make our voices heard at every level of government - local, state, and federal. Local 571 COPE funds have also helped Councils support a

number of school referenda campaigns.



Only One Month into 2011...

from your president

Tax increase? Not in our lifetime. No, for real. While we were sleeping. The Illinois General Assembly passed a tax increase by slim margins in both the House and Senate around 1:00 a.m. on January 12, 2011. This passage helps to address the state's \$15 billion budget deficit. For years we hoped that education would be funded in a sustainable way. Well that still hasn't happened, but the increase will help fund our pensions, schools, and frontline services, and create more jobs.

The bill increases the amount the state withholds from workers' paychecks from 3% to 5%. The corporate tax rate increased from 4.8% to 7%. The income tax increase will last four years and then drop to 4%. There are also spending caps limiting future spending growth to 2% annually. Unfortunately a \$1.00 per pack cigarette tax aimed at providing \$300 million for education was not approved.

Another small victory?

No vote was taken on education "reform" and a senate bill limiting the collective bargaining rights of public employees was not acted upon. IFT members and other teacher union members played a big role in this effort. We offered our own innovative reforms and potential legislation.

The 97th General Assembly convenes in early February. Thousands of bills are going to be introduced. The teachers' unions will be advocating for "Accountability for All." This is a collaborative effort between the IFT, Chicago Teachers Union, and the Illinois Education Association. This plan holds school administrators and

school board members, as well as teachers, accountable for Illinois students' education. Proposals include:

- Requiring state-funded, job-embedded professional development for teachers.
- Requiring training for school board members in collective bargaining and other critical responsibilities.
- Establishing a second credential for principals to ensure high quality administrative performance.
- Streamlining the teacher dismissal process.
- Providing A Student's Bill of Rights guaranteeing a well-qualified teacher in every classroom and student access to rich curriculum including the arts.

For further information, go to www.ift-aft.org and click on "Accountability for All."

Focus your efforts with LASR

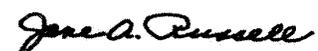
If you weren't convinced before, it is clear that participation in the political process is now an absolute for all of us. The tremendous participation of IFT members statewide made all the difference in what happened in early January in the legislature. Now is the time to join the newest IFT political action program, Local Action for Statewide Results (LASR). The idea is to build and strengthen a relationship with your local state representative and senator. There is some training involved where you gain the information you need to have an informed conversation with your local legislator.

My personal experience

I have met with many local legislators for the last several years. Most recently during the holiday break, I met my state rep. at the local bagel shop to discuss the proposed education "reform" package being presented. I always bring copies of the things I want to talk about and share them with the legislator. Remember, he deals with many more issues than education, so I provide the expert opinion and facts about what is happening in our schools and with our students. The state rep. and I spent about an hour together, but we did some catching up too. I have met with him on a Saturday morning in his local office for a quick 20-minute discussion and have talked with him at my front door when he was canvassing the neighborhood. I sent short e-mails questioning him about how he would vote or how he voted on a particular bill. We definitely do not always agree and sometimes we feel like we let each other down, but like any relationship, there is the good as well as the bad. Overall, we listen to each other and have come to respect each others' opinions.

I encourage you to form a relationship with your local legislator(s). Participate in the LASR program by contacting me, jrussell@ift-aft.org or e-mail LASR@ift-aft.org. This is a New Year's resolution you can keep.

In unity,



Local 571 President

Nominations for the six Local 571 officers for the 2011-2013 term are due March 14, 2011. Should you wish to put your name in nomination, please send a written note to Judy Jennings, Office Manager.

Local 571 Officer Duties & Responsibilities

Officers attend all meetings of the Executive Board and House of Representatives, and special meetings called by the president of Local 571. Each shall serve on a committee if appointed. Officers are ex-officio members of each Local 571 Council. Officers are, by virtue of office, delegates to all conventions of the AFT, IFT, and Local 571. All Local 571 officers are founded by the AFT.

- a. **President:** The president presides over all meetings (regular and special meetings of the Local 571 Executive Board and House of Representatives). He/she appoints committee chairpersons with the advice and approval of the Executive Board. The president performs other duties that are ordinarily incumbent upon the office. He/she is the ranking Local 571 delegate to all IFT, AFT, Local 571 and AFL-CIO Conventions. The president serves as a member of the Union Building Fund and as an IFT vice-president (if elected). This is a part-time or full-time position, minimum 20 hrs/month or 20 hrs/week respectively.
- b. **Vice President:** The vice president (and president) represents Local 571 as a member of the Union Building Fund (UBF) Board of Directors and reports business at UBF meetings to the Local 571 Executive Board and House of Representatives. Currently, he/she chairs the Convention Committee. The vice president attends official functions and presides over the Executive Board and House of Representatives in the absence of the president. The current vice president holds an elected office as IFT vice president representing Local 571. 10 to 20 hours/month.
- c. **Secretary:** The secretary maintains the non-financial files and records and is custodian of the seal and charter of the organization. He/she records and keeps minutes of all meetings of the Local 571 Executive Board and House of Representatives. He/she keeps a list of the names, addresses, and phone numbers of members of the Executive Board, delegates to the House of Representatives, and Local 571 committees. 8 to 15 hours/month.
- d. **Legal Defense Secretary:** The legal defense secretary is responsible for chairing the Arbitration and Legal Screening Committee, tracking Local 571's legal defense and arbitration expenses and for applying for AFT/IFT reimbursement funds. Currently, the legal defense secretary also chairs the Committee on Political Education (COPE), maintains the business and financial records for the COPE fund and makes regular reports to the House of Representatives. 6 to 12 hours/month.
- e. **Financial Secretary:** The financial secretary is responsible for monitoring all Local 571 expenses and reconciling all expenses with the approved budget. He/she prepares a report for each House of Representatives meeting, itemizing all expenses and their budgeted category. The financial secretary serves as chair of the Audit Committee and is responsible for monitoring and reporting Local 571's non-budgeted revenue and expenses. 8 to 15 hours/month.
- f. **Treasurer:** The treasurer is responsible for receiving and depositing monies from dues and other sources. He/she chairs the budget committee, prepares the budget, annual financial statement, and monthly treasurer's reports. The treasurer maintains Local 571's financial records and disburses funds for approved obligations including officer, staff, and council payrolls. He/she keeps accurate records available at all times for the Executive Board and Audit Committee and submits quarterly and yearly IRS forms. The treasurer arranges an annual audit by an impartial party. He/she works with Council treasurers and their business offices as needed. 8 to 15 hours/month.

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"A Union of Professionals"

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

FEBRUARY FEATURE Silent Reflection Returns

"In each public school classroom the teacher in charge shall observe a brief period of silence with the participation of all the pupils therein assembled at the opening of every school day. This period shall not be conducted as a religious exercise, but shall be an opportunity for silent prayer or for silent reflection on the anticipated activities of the day." These words were taken directly from Section 1 of "The Silent Reflection and Student Prayer Act." The injunction has been lifted by the U.S. District Court, and no specific time limits have been defined for the period of silence. Each school district may implement the act in a manner that works best for their students. The parent who challenged the act is considering an appeal of the U.S. District's decision.



What's missing from the Union Messenger? Is there something fresh and innovative happening in your school or community? Has a colleague been recognized for outstanding achievement? Is there new legislation that we need to know about? If so, we want to hear from you!

E-mail your comments, suggestions, and accomplishments to Angel Holmes,
Union Messenger Editor, angelholmes@sbcglobal.net.

UNITE For the Fight

Fairness, is that too much to ask? UNITE HERE Local 1 doesn't think so, and they're prepared to fight for what is fair through an organized boycott of the Hyatt Regency Chicago, the Park Hyatt, and the Hyatt Regency O'Hare. Local unions can join in to support this initiative by simply choosing to not patronize or attend any events held at these hotels. Don't let the attempts to weaken strong union standards and the tactics to prevent non-union workers to unionize prevail. Hyatt workers deserve better; they deserve what is fair. For more information, please contact UNITE HERE Local 1 at 312-663-4373.

End childhood hunger in America by 2015.
Take the pledge at <http://nokidhungry.org/aft>



Learn to recognize the signs. A child facing hunger may:

- often feel sick or tired
- sleep in class
- have problems with math and language skills
- be more aggressive
- feel anxious and have difficulty concentrating
- have slower memory recall
- underperform and have poor grades
- frequently miss school or arrive late

Find out what you can do to help at Strength.org.



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