

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

Union Messenger

"A Union of Professionals"

WSTU September Calendar

9/15 -SB7 Workshop for Council Leaders - Westmont - 5:00 p.m.

9/19 -571 EB Mtg.-Westmont - 5:30 p.m.

9/19 - 571 HOR Mtg.-Westmont - 6:45 p.m.

9/29 -571 Bldg. Rep. Workshop - Westmont

Union Messenger

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 Alice Kautsky, Vice President
 Sandra Erickson, Treasurer
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Common Core Standards Rollout

by Bonnie Saracco

The 2011 AFT Teach Conference in Washington D.C. featured a plenary panel session on the new Common Core State Standards, which will soon be enacted in all of the states except Texas and Alaska. The Common Core State Standards Initiative, under the direction of the Council of Chief State School Officers and the National Governors Association, has developed K-12 standards for both English language arts and mathematics.

AFT has long favored replacing the current hodgepodge of state standards with world-class national standards. Our current Illinois state standards have been widely criticized as among the worst in the nation because they are too numerous, lack depth, and are not organized by specific grade level. In 1997 the Fordham Institute gave the Illinois state standards a grade of "D" in both English language arts and math.

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fewer and are specifically organized by grade level. They are also more focused, more rigorous, and call for deeper levels on understanding. They eliminate the trivial, and address the "mile-wide, inch deep" character typical of too much of U.S. education.

Adoption of the new standards will require a great deal of work, requiring aligned curricula, materials, professional development, and assessment. It will take the time and supportive teaching and learning conditions which require collaborative labor management relationships.

What does this mean for public education in Illinois? Schools are expected to begin now to work toward the 2014-2015 school year target date for the new Illinois assessments.

ISBE is developing a plan to transition from our current state standards and assessments to the Common Core State Standards. Illinois is part of a 26 state consortium on assessment called the Partnership for the Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC). The new assessments will be computer based and include performance tasks.

Schools should now be distributing and discussing the new standards with staff and sharing all ISBE updates regarding them. They should also begin to plan the new curricula and professional development needed to fully implement the new standards in the 2012-2013 school year.

To see the new standards, go to www.corestandards.org. We are beginning to travel a challenging path to improve U.S. schools.

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The enactment of the Common Core State Standards will put our K-12 education framework in line with the rest of the industrialized world.

AFT has played an important role in crafting these standards, participating at every step of the way. AFT members have been part of the work team, the feedback team, the validation committee, and the AFT standards review team. AFT fully supports the new standards, viewing them as significant improvements in both ELA and mathematics.

The goal of the new standards is for all students to be college and career ready by the end of high school. They are more useful than present state standards because they are

Modification, Transformation, Adjustment OR Just Plain Change?

One thing we know in education is that change is constant. New students, new teachers, support staff and other education workers; new textbooks, new policies, and new curriculum, are only a few of the potential changes. This year expect to see several significant differences compared to the past years.

As of January 1, 2011, all the new hires were moved into the new state pension plan called "Tier 2" following the passage of Senate Bill 1946. This past spring, there was a concerted effort by some "reform" groups and legislators to redefine Illinois pension plans again. Senate Bill 512, a pension "reform" bill, contained three major proposals for the pension systems. These were to increase member contributions for those remaining in the Tier 1 plan, provide a benefit choice for current members going forward, and funding changes. There was enough rancor and disgust by union members and many legislators for the proposed changes so the bill was never called. Thanks for raising your voices. Without your diligence and persistence, SB 512 could have been law. The pension reform battle from Spring, 2011 may have been won, but the war on pension changes is not over.

Be sure to read in this newsletter about the rollout of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). Curricular revamping as well as textbook updates will lead the list of changes in districts for the next few years. Even though the CCSS are not yet in place, the framework for the new state tests linked to the standards is already be-

ing reviewed.

The education reform law of the 97th General Assembly, known as Senate Bill 7, had an effective date of June 13, 2011. This broadly written law contains a myriad of changes including subjects of collective bargaining, the school report card, survey of learning conditions, school board member training, a student bill of rights, suspension and revocation of certificates, new and vacant teaching positions, contractual continued service, and layoffs and recalls. The Illinois Performance Evaluation Reform Act (PERA) of 2010 has important deadlines that will need to be

"We need to be vigilant in following our local legislator's work."

met throughout the implementation of SB 7. Because of the significant number of changes, the IFT and Local 571 will provide information and workshops about implementation and effects of SB 7 and PERA. Refer to your council officers as well as the Local 571 calendar for workshop dates.

Another bill, SB 1578, waiting to be signed by the governor, provides for PSRP's to have additional professional development during district institute days. The bill also provides that educational support personnel may be exempt from the workshop if the training is not relevant to the work they do.

Will a change in your Illinois legisla-

tors or congressman make a difference to students, union members or your families? Possibly not this year, but the November, 2012 election will provide for many new faces in Illinois politics. The March 20, 2012 primary election is five months from now, but candidates are jockeying for positions to run for office in many of the new districts that have been redrawn through the redistricting process that followed the 2010 census. We have learned our lessons in the last couple of years. We need to be vigilant in following our local legislator's work. To determine if your legislative and congressional districts have changed, go to the website of the Illinois

Speaker of the House,
www.ilhousedems.com.

Change is inevitable. At the same time, the back-to-school optimism helps us put all of the proposed changes into perspective. Working together we can all

help to improve our students' education and the conditions under which we work. The officers and staff of West Suburban Teachers Union, Local 571, look forward to working with you. We wish you a successful and fulfilling school year.

In unity,



Local 571 President

Summertime and the Livin' is Easy

by Jane Russell



Ask Local 571 members who participated in conferences, classes, golf outings, back-to school fairs or fall planning, if the summer was enjoyable. You will probably hear a resounding “yes”.

A Local 571 golf 4-some didn't win a prize for outstanding golfing, but showed some of the other DuPage union brothers and sisters golfing can still be fun.

The 571 golfers enjoyed the camaraderie at the annual DuPage Democrats golf outing in West Chicago.

Twenty-five 571 members went to school in July and August by participating in either the ER&D class, Managing Anti-social behavior, taught by Maureen Kaufman (Retiree), Thinking Math - Journey to Algebra, instructed by Nancy Bensfield (Elmhurst), or School-Home Connection: Partnership Supporting Student Learning, with Chris Schulz (Leyden). You'll see the smiling faces of the participants **on the next page**.

With a background of the Washington DC, US Capitol, five Local 571 members attended the AFT TEACH (Together Educating America's Children) conference July 11—13, 2011. The theme for the conference was “making a difference everyday”. AFT President Randi Weingarten reviewed in the opening session *AFT's Quality Education Agenda*. Along with about 3,000 other AFT members and international visitors from Haiti, Ireland, the United Kingdom and Finland, Paul Krugman, a Nobel prize winning economist from Princeton University, described how big government is not always the problem when moving the country toward sustainable recovery.

Along with AFT TEACH general sessions, over 80 workshops were offered covering 20 different topics such as best practices for English Language Learners, high school

and adolescent learners, strengthening teaching practice, teacher development and evaluation systems and working together to improve schools.

Even though they may have been in an idyllic vacation setting, four members of West Suburban Teachers Union took advantage of the 2011 Great Lakes Union Leadership Institute at Pheasant Run Resort, St. Charles, July 31 - August 4. These council leaders participated in courses Introductions to Negotiations, Union Leadership Skills and Effective Grievance Administration.

A very well-attended event sponsored in part by the DuPage Regional Office of Education, the Back to School Fair, was held at the DuPage County Fairgrounds on August 3rd. Once again volunteers from Local 571 as well as members of the North Central Illinois Labor Council (of which 571 is a member organization) handed out over 1800 backpacks and school supplies to low-income families residing in DuPage County.

The easy living of summer is quickly fading and schools are back in session. WSTU will continue to sponsor many events, seminars, workshops and courses throughout this school term. Take advantage of all the summer planning by attending one or several of the events being offered. Consult this regular publication as well as the union bulletin board in your building for further information.

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Paul Krugman (Princeton University Professor and Nobel Prize winner) speaks at AFT TEACH.

Local 571 Summer 2011 ER&D* Classes Were Popular

SCHOOL-HOME CONNECTION: PARTNERSHIP SUPPORTING STUDENT LEARNING



(l-r) Carolyn Mascow (Franklin Park Teachers), Diane Chathas (Argo-Summit), and Mary Kay Weir (Indian Springs Teachers) working on a project about home-school partnerships in the class taught by instructor Chris Schulz.



Instructor Schulz discussing project ideas with Carolyn Mascow.

MANAGING ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOR

Maureen Kaufman had another successful class, teaching Managing Anti-Social Behavior. Participants earned 30 CPDU's and for an additional fee, 2 semester hours of graduate credit from Governor's State University.



Back row (l-r): Lois Wick (Leyden), Eileen McCormack (Morton), Helen Pawelek (Elmhurst PSRP), Tony LaCivita (Morton), Maureen Kaufman, Instructor. Front row (l-r): Marilyn Milne (Indian Springs Teachers), Anne Nystrom (Argo-Summit), Margaret O'Riordan (Indian Springs Teachers), Mary Rozos-Kladis (Riverside), Jean Barber Mathis (Riverside).

THINKING MATHEMATICS FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL-JOURNEY TO ALGEBRA



Back row (l-r): Instructor Nancy Bensfield (Elmhurst Teachers), Robert Brunet (PAEC), Diane Chathas (Argo-Summit), Mary Kay Weir (Indian Springs Teachers), Front row (l-r): Margaret O'Riordan (Indian Springs Teachers), Jerilyn Krsek (Argo-Summit), Colleen Niemeyer (Elmhurst Teachers), Mary Banholzer (Riverside), Michelle Bowles (Elmhurst Teachers).