

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

Union Messenger

"A Union of Professionals"

WSTU April Calendar

4/10-571 IMRF Seminar Reg. Deadline
 4/16-571 EB Mtg. - Westmont - 5:30 p.m.
 4/16-571 HOR Mtg.-Westmont - 6:45 p.m.
 4/16-571 Area Trustee Ballots Pickup
 4/16-571 Proposed budget presented to HOR
 4/17-571 IMRF Seminar - Westmont
 4/19-22-AFT PSRP Conference -
 Washington, DC
 4/28-29-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
 Angel Holmes,
 571 *Union Messenger* Editor



Inside This Issue:

Presidents Report	2
Website of Month/Workers' Compensation	3
Teacher Development & Evaluation	4
NBPTS Announcement/ 2011 NBPTS Certifications	5
IMRF Seminar/Notice of Retirees Council Meeting	6

Teaching with the Internet

by Bonnie Saracco

Our students are "digital natives" who don't remember life before the Internet. But that doesn't necessarily mean they are able to use it effectively to do research and assess its credibility. AFT has given us tips for students to help them develop these crucial skills for success.

Wikipedia is a generally reliable source for starting and getting background information, but because a "wiki" is a site that anyone can edit, it can be biased and inaccurate. In spite of this, Wikipedia does contain links and citations to many reliable sources. In order to use these links, students need to discern which sites have reliable information.

The first step in looking for bias is to find out which individual or organization is the source of the information. Blogs on free services such as Blogger or Wordpress are especially prone to opinion and error, and even the most reputable sites often have misinformed comments.

Websites of schools and colleges, whose URLs end with ".edu" also contain misinformation because they contain statements by students posting on their own Web spaces.

Students should learn to recognize and avoid "content farms," which are composed of short articles based on the most popular search topics. These sites are primarily designed to get people to visit them rather than on presenting accurate information. Students should not practice "dotcomming," in which they simply type the information they need into a Web browser and add "com" to the

end. This often results in erroneous information.

Students can avoid these pitfalls and learn how to use search engines effectively. Two great free resources for this are <http://scholar.google.com> and <http://books.google.com>.



Unfortunately, the Internet has given teachers an additional challenge, identifying students' plagiarized work. Students commonly believe that it is extremely unlikely that they will be caught, and need to know that teachers have tools to find "lifted" writing.

One easy method is to put a sentence in quotation marks and place it in a search engine,

which will then search for an identical sentence. Also, many websites have free "plagiarism checkers." Teachers can paste passages from student papers and the site will identify copied passages. And, obviously, differing typefaces and slightly discolored backgrounds are signs of pasting.

Students must also know that colleges consider using others' ideas without attribution and incorrectly attributing information to be serious offenses. They need to learn how to properly cite internet information. A good resource for this is

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu>. This website, supplied by Purdue University's Online Writing Lab, can be accessed at home or school.

President's Report...

Voices for Illinois Children released its Illinois Kids Count 2012 study in late February. The statistics remain staggering.

- In 2010, one in five Illinois children lived in poverty. Racial-ethnic disparities in family income have increased during the recession.
- One in four Illinois children resides in a single-parent household. Single-mother households have been hit the hardest by the recession.
- There are wide racial-ethnic disparities on indicators of academic achievement and educational attainment. Whereas the ALL Illinois student high school graduation rate for 2011 is 84%, low income students rate is only 75%.
- The state budget crisis has eroded investments in programs such as early childhood, child care assistance, prenatal care, and children's health mental services and after-school programs.
- The percentage of Illinois children without health insurance is 4.5%, but higher for Latino and black children at 6.3% and 5.6% respectively. This may seem high, but Illinois actually has one of the lowest rates in the nation, reducing the racial-ethnic disparities.

Although bleak sounding, some of these statistics can be turned around. James Heckman, Nobel Laureate in Economics from the

University of Chicago, has documented that those investments in early childhood education yield life-long dividends. Heckman believes that by making effective public investments, the economy can be strengthened and deficits reduced, **by investing in early childhood education.** Further, Heckman sees the economics of human potential if investments are prioritized for quality early childhood education for at-risk children, to develop cognitive and



character skills early in the "whole child," to provide developmental resources to children and their families and to invest in developmental resources for at-risk children. For each \$1.00 invested in early childhood programs, the return is 7%. This is greater than the stock market return on investments which is 5-6%.

For at-risk children from disadvantaged environments, investing in early childhood education for these children could provide developmental stimulation, which could prove successful in school, college, career and life. Poor health, dropout rates, poverty and crime could be reduced in Illinois and substantially reduce the costs to taxpayers by investing in pro-

grams for at-risk children now. Although the governor's budget address on February 22, 2012, holds funding flat for K-12 and higher education, he proposes that the state increase early childhood funding by \$20 million.

Kathy Ryg, President of Voices for Illinois Children, says we must invest now in opportunities for children. The research and data show we cannot afford to not invest. The economics of Illinois can improve if we "make sure the people understand the state of the state for children." For those of us working in the schools, we see firsthand what lack of investments has on our youngest at-risk children. When you talk to legislators and candidates, be sure to share your stories and support of Illinois investing in our children. We can be their voice. Go to www.voices4kids.org to download the report or order online.

Remember to vote in the primary election on Tuesday, March 20, 2012. IFT has endorsed candidates who believe in public education and providing our youngest residents with quality educational programs. Be sure to vote for those candidates. One vote can make a difference, especially for our kids.

In unity,

Gene A. Russell

Local 571 President

Website of the Month

Women's Equality and Women's History

Women's Equality Day, Aug. 26, was established by Congress in 1971 to commemorate the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment in 1920 giving women the right to vote.

While Women's History Month* is celebrated in March, the AFT website, www.aft.org, provides materials and resources which can be used to celebrate both Women's Equality Day and Women's History Month. The people and events on the website provide just a glimpse into the many significant contributions women have made in **the fight for both legal and social equality.**



* National Women's History Month has its roots in a March 8, 1857, protest against low wages and harsh working conditions launched by female garment and textile factory workers in New York City. Although there had been increased concern about the lack of representation of women in history throughout the 20th century, it was not until 1981 that Congress established National Women's History week, the second week in March, coinciding with International Women's Day (March 8).

Workers' Compensation

What do the new changes to workers' compensation procedures and law mean to you?

- The process and procedure of reporting a case has changed. Now more than ever you must be informed so you don't lose out on benefits you are entitled to.
- If possible, talk to an attorney before you see the doctor to learn what must be documented on your medical charts.
- You only get coverage on one doctor of your choice. Choose wisely!
- If your doctor wants you to see a specialist, have him write a referral. Don't make the appointment by yourself without a written referral in hand.
- Workers' compensation benefits have new AMA guidelines, restrictions on length of coverage, and restrictions on coverage for certain medical conditions. Now more than ever it's important to talk to an attorney to guide you through the process to ensure you receive all coverage and benefits possible from your illness or injury.
- When in doubt, call a lawyer. Calling a lawyer does not cost anything. Proceeding unadvised may cost you your right to receive workers' compensation benefits and jeopardize your livelihood. Don't sign anything until your lawyer reviews it.

Workers' Compensation Tips
By Charles Haskins & David B. Menchetti
Cullen, Haskins, Nicholson & Menchetti, P.C.
Leading Lawyers in Workers' Compensation
www.chnm-law.com
312-332-2545



TRAVEL
 visit <http://www.aft.org/benefits/travel.cfm>
 call 877/670-7088, option 1
 code 20952

Save an additional 20 percent off the "best available rate" at more than 6,400 participating hotels in locations worldwide when you book online or call using the AFT discount code. This offer is available at participating locations of the Wyndham Hotels and Resorts, Days Inn, Ramada, Super 8, Wingate by Wyndham, Baymont Inns & Suites, Howard Johnson, Travelodge, Knights Inn and Amerihost.

- Best available rate defined as the lowest rate publicly available to consumers on the Internet.
- Advance reservations required.
- Offer is subject to availability at participating locations, and some blackout dates may apply.
- Discounts may vary by location and time of the year.

CAR RENTAL

visit www.aftplus.org/carrental
 call Alamo 800/354-2322 code 93643
 Budget 800/455-2848 code T544500
 National 800/227-7368 code 5130283

Time to get away?
 (you pick the dates—we'll help with the plans)

For more information about these and other savings, go to:

+ aft.org/members
 The Community Advantage

AFT+ is your advocate. For information on all AFT+ programs, call 800/238-1133, ext. 8643, or e-mail aftplus@aft.org. The AFT has an expense reimbursement and/or endorsement arrangement for marketing this program. For more information, please contact AFT Financial Services at 800/238-1133, ext. 4493; send an e-mail to disclosureinfo@aft.org, or visit www.aft.org/benefits/disclosure.

Continuous Improvement Through Teacher Development and Evaluation

by Jane Russell

The length of the title provides you an idea of the scope and depth of the workshop held on February 16, 2012, in Westmont. WSTU sponsored the event attended by over 90 participants from five area IFT locals including Local 571 members. Topics covered were the IL Performance Evaluation Reform Act (PERA) review of teacher evaluation plans and professional practice, incorporating student growth measures and evaluator training.

Sue Walter and Amy Alsop, IFT Professional Development Directors, discussed the PERA Public Act 96-0861 with details of the evaluation plan implementation dates, required components, and how both professional practice and student growth measures should be incorporated into the evaluation model. Nearly a third of the workshop participants' districts are using the Charlotte Danielson Framework for Teaching although this framework only addresses professional practice and not measures of student growth. Walter and Alsop agreed there is no one correct method to determine summative evaluation ratings, so at least two possible methods for determining were sited.



571 Argo-Summit Council members question presenters about student growth measures.



Stephanie Myers, AFT Educational Issues, shared several AFT local student performance and teacher evaluation plans.

Stephanie Myers, assistant director in the AFT Educational Issues Department, discussed current work in the area of teacher development and evaluation. Teacher evaluation models and contract language from AFT locals in Cleveland and Cincinnati, Ohio; Rochester, New York; and New Haven, Connecticut, were given as reference. These districts and their unions have been working on instituting teacher development and evaluation plans for the last several years and may serve as a source for unions to discuss with their districts. Myers believes that because of the breadth and depth of changes in teacher evaluation along with needed teacher support, there will be a shift in how the school day is defined. For example, the New Haven matrix to track student growth is one where each student has his/her own "individualized learning plan." This matrix contains a composite

rating score by using student learning growth as a function of teacher instructional practice and professional values.

One of the greatest areas of concern is for teachers being evaluated based on student growth measures for their English Language Learners or students with disabilities. The Illinois Performance Evaluation Advisory Council (PEAC) has not yet made recommendations to the Illinois State Board of Education regarding the incorporation of student growth measures for special student populations, but this is still on the PEAC agenda.

Although often overwhelmed by the amount of information and materials presented in an evening, workshop participants were grateful for the depth of knowledge of the presenters, their abilities to break down the vast topics into understandable, intertwined segments and the level of support being offered to provide local members with creation and implementation of PERA defined teacher development and evaluation models for their districts. One attendee summed up with "All three (presenters) were amazing, answering many questions and easing many fears." Many participants suggested a longer period of time be given for the presentation. Plans are being made for a third workshop in February, 2013, updating work on teacher development and evaluation with presenters from both the AFT and IFT. For handouts and power point presentation from the February 16, 2012 workshop, which included several internet informational sites, contact your council officers.

“National Board Certification can improve the school and support the school’s professional development efforts”



NBRC

NATIONAL BOARD RESOURCE CENTER
Illinois State University

The 2012 Window for the Illinois NBPTS Candidate Fee Subsidy will open on February 15, 2012, at 10:00 a.m. for 500 First-Time Illinois Candidates!

The National Board Resource Center (NBRC) at Illinois State University is excited to announce that the 2012 Window for the Illinois NBPTS Candidate Fee Subsidy is ready to open on Tuesday, February 15, 2012, at 10:00 a.m. GREAT NEWS! Funding is available for 500 *first time candidates* to receive the Illinois NBPTS Candidate Fee Subsidy of \$2,000. The number of candidates may increase if additional funding becomes available, so continue to watch our website for regular updates.

Before the application date, we encourage you to read and become familiar with the details and links provided below. Take the time to read the short and very helpful ‘Common Errors’ and ‘Helpful Hints’ documents. These will help guide you to completing the online application.

Details about the Application Process

February 15, 2012, at 10:00 AM - May 15, 2012, at 4:30 PM

Step 1: Register at NBPTS and pay the \$65 registration fee online www.nbpts.org

Step 2: Apply online for the Illinois [NBPTS Candidate Fee Subsidy](http://nbrc.illinoisstate.edu) (nbrc.illinoisstate.edu)

Step 3: Once your name is on the Approved List, return to the NBPTS site and pay the non-refundable \$500 by May 30.

Available Links

- **Illinois NBPTS Candidate Fee Subsidy Application** will be ONLINE!
- [Helpful Hints](#) to help candidates complete the online Illinois Candidate Fee Subsidy Application.
- [Common Errors Document](#) to help candidates complete the online Illinois Candidate Fee subsidy application accurately.
- Approved List for the Illinois NBPTS Candidate Fee Subsidy: Names of candidates who are approved to receive the \$2,000 Illinois Candidate Fee Subsidy will start to be announced on Monday, February 20 at 10:00 a.m. on the [NBRC website](#). Once candidates see their names on the Approved List, they should return to [NBPTS](#) and pay the \$500 by May 30, 2012.

Congratulations!

Congratulations to the following WSTU members who received National Board for Professional Teacher Standards (NBPTS) certification in 2011.

- Lisa Baran-Janco, English as a Second Language, Leyden Council
- Mary Cunningham, Science, Argo H.S. Teachers Council
- Donna Dewar, Librarian, Elmhurst Teachers Council
- Beth Leidolf, World Language, Elmhurst Teachers Council
- Megan Mehilos, Mathematics, Elmhurst Teachers Council
- Heidi O’Hanley, Art, Indian Springs Teachers Council
- Catherine O’Rourke, Modern Language, Leyden Council
- Jessica Weldon, Social Studies, Elmhurst Teachers Council



MORE VALUE FOR YOUR MEMBERSHIP

MEMBERS KNOW

FAMILY MATTERS



AFT + INSURANCE

Pet Insurance

Your pet can have its own insurance. Policies include older pets, accident-only coverage and more. For as low as \$11.95 a month, **AFT +** pet insurance can protect you against large, unexpected veterinary expenses.

For more information about this and other savings, go to:

aft.org/members



AFT + is your advocate. For information on all **AFT +** programs, call 800/238-1133, ext. 8643, or e-mail aftplus@aft.org. The AFT has an expense reimbursement and/or endorsement arrangement for marketing this program. For more information, please contact AFT Financial Services at 800/238-1133, ext. 4493; send an e-mail to disclosureinfo@aft.org; or visit www.aft.org/benefits/disclosure.

IMRF Seminar

For Local 571 Support Staff Members Only

Sponsored by the West Suburban Teachers Union

Local 571, AFT, IFT, AFL-CIO
500 Oakmont Lane
P.O. Box 390
Westmont, IL 60559

P: 630-468-4098
F: 630-468-4088

Website: www.wstu571.org

A speaker from the Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund will present information and answer questions for PSRP (support staff) members of the West Suburban Teachers Union, Local 571.

DATE: Tuesday, April 17, 2012

TIME: 4:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

LOCATION: Robert M. Healey Conference Center
500 Oakmont Lane
Westmont, Illinois 60559



RESERVATIONS DEADLINE: Tuesday, April 10, 2012

If you plan to attend, contact Judy Jennings via e-mail at jjennings@ift-aft.org, or phone at 630-468-4098.

COST: Free

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

- Seating is limited and on a first-come, first-served basis.
- Dinner will be served at 4:30.

RETIREES - SAVE THE DATE!!!

The Retirees Council will have a meeting on **Tuesday, May 22, 2012, at 10 a.m. at the Westmont office**. Nominations and election will be held for President, Secretary/Treasurer, and House of Representatives Delegate. Also on the agenda will be updates on what is happening in the State Legislature (pension reform, TRIP insurance) and plans for our new members luncheon in September.

What's Missing from the Messenger?



E-mail your thoughts to Angel Holmes at angelholmes@sbcglobal.net

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
E-mail: jjennings@ift-aft.org