

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

Union Messenger

"A Union of Professionals"

WSTU September Calendar

9/16—Deadline for registering for the 571 Choosing Student Assessment Workshop

9/21—Choosing Student Assessments Workshop - Westmont - 4:30 p.m.

9/21—571 EB Mtg. - Westmont - 6:30 p.m.

Union Messenger

Jane Russell, President
 Katy Padberg, Vice President
 Sandra Erickson, Treasurer
 Cathleen Pope, Secretary
 Jonathan Pazol, Financial Secretary
 Brett Blair, 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
 Robin Hancock,
 571 Union Messenger Editor



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For Union, Public Schools, and Community—It's Your Voice

by
Jane Russell



The American Federation of Teachers (AFT) was founded 100 years ago to establish a voice for teachers as workers. This union has stood on the side of social justice since the beginning, fighting against racial discrimination, advocating for school desegregation, defending voters' rights, equal pay and rights for women, and defending the rights of those with disabilities. Now 1.6 million members strong, with members as teachers, college and university educators, educational support staff, state workers, nurses and health professionals and retirees, we continue to champion quality public education, healthcare and public services for our students, their families and communities.

The battle continues, however, and it is one that can destroy all for which the labor movement has worked and fought. There are those who wish to undermine our union, really all unions, and the battle is ultimately who holds the power in the economy and our democracy.

We enter into an era where **member engagement is an absolute**. The AFT has resolved to double the number of member activists to 10%, triple the number of members who engage in union activities to 70% and reach out this coming year to every one of our members including any fair share fee payers. The goal is to have all members choose to have their voices heard.

(continued on page 7)

Professional Development Evening Workshops Earn 3 PDs per workshop attended

The following workshops will be held at Local 571, 500 Oakmont Lane, Westmont, IL. A light dinner will be served at 4:30 p.m., followed by the workshop from 5:00 to 8:00 p.m. There is no cost to members. Contact Judy Jennings at 630-468-4098 or jjennings@ift-aft.org by October 2, if you wish to attend either workshop.

Thursday, October 8, 2015 - Common Core State Standards Language Arts/Literacy: Instructional Implications

You will leave this workshop with comprehension and vocabulary strategies that you can use right away to help your students succeed with Common Core.

Thursday, October 15, 2015 – Supporting Grieving Students

By the age of 18, nine out of ten children will lose someone they love. We all have grieving children in our classes. AFT is a founding member of the Coalition to Support Grieving Students. In this workshop we will share and discuss their research on ways to support grieving students.

Official Elections Notice

For all three elections, nominations are open to all Local 571 members.

American Federation of Teachers (AFT) Convention Delegates

Nominations are now being accepted for delegates to the American Federation of Teachers Convention that will convene in Minneapolis, Minnesota, on July 17-21, 2016. All Local 571 members are eligible to be nominated as delegates to this convention. There can be up to forty-five (45) delegates, including the ten (10) Officers which include Area Trustees, who became delegates by virtue of being elected to office. Ballots will be counted, and candidates will be ranked by the number of ballots received. Allowing for the ten (10) Officers, the thirty-five (35) candidates with the most votes will be declared delegates. The remaining candidates will be declared alternate delegates; and should any delegate(s) notify the Local of an inability to fulfill the duties of delegate, these alternate delegates will be selected in rank order of votes received to serve in place of the delegate who is unable to serve. Delegates who attend the convention will be reimbursed for expenses up to \$966/delegate. Nominations must be printed or typed (name and Council) and received in the Local 571 office on or before February 8, 2016. Nominees will receive a written or electronic acknowledgement of receipt. Voting will take place in each Council of the West Suburban Teachers Union Local 571 via secret ballot. Council leaders will notify members of the date(s) and location(s) that voting will take place.

Local 571 Executive Board Area Trustees

Nominations are now being accepted for Local 571 Executive Board Area Trustees. The Executive Board of Local 571 shall consist of the Officers of Local 571 which include four (4) Area Trustees, at least one of whom is a PSRP member, and the Local 571 Council Presidents who serve as Trustees. All Local 571 members are eligible to be nominated as Local 571 Area Trustees. The term of office is two (2) years beginning July 1, 2016, and by virtue of their election, they shall be elected also as delegates to the AFT and IFT Conventions. Nominations must be printed or typed (name and Council) and received in the Local 571 office on or before March 14, 2016. Nominees will receive a written or electronic acknowledgement of receipt. Voting will take place in each Council of the West Suburban Teachers Union Local 571 via secret ballot. Council leaders will notify members of the date(s) and location(s) that voting will take place. Interested individuals may request further information about the duties of the office by contacting Local 571.



Illinois Federation of Teachers (IFT) Convention Delegates

Nominations are now being accepted for delegates to the Illinois Federation of Teachers Convention that will convene in St. Louis, Missouri, on October 14-16, 2016. All Local 571 members are eligible to be nominated as delegates to this convention. Including the ten (10) Officers and Area Trustees of Local 571 who became delegates by virtue of being elected to office, the number of delegates to be elected to this convention will be at least fifty-eight (58). Ballots will be counted, and candidates will be ranked by the number of ballots received. Allowing for the ten (10) Officers and Area Trustees, the forty-eight (48) candidates with the most votes will be declared delegates. The remaining candidates will be declared alternate delegates; and should any delegate(s) notify the Local of an inability to fulfill the duties of delegate, these alternate delegates will be selected in rank order of votes received to serve in place of the delegate who is unable to serve. Delegates who attend the convention will be reimbursed for expenses up to \$670/delegate. Nominations must be printed or typed (name and Council) and received in the Local 571 office on or before March 14, 2016. Nominees will receive a written or electronic acknowledgement of receipt. Voting will take place in each Council of the West Suburban Teachers Union Local 571 via secret ballot. Council leaders will notify members of the date(s) and location(s) that voting will take place.

Gallup Poll Finds School “Reform” Off-Focus

by
Bonnie Saracco

Gallup does more educational research than any other organization in the world. Gallup polls a representative sample of every country in the world each year, and it polls the U.S. daily.

Brandon Busteed, Executive Director, Education and Workforce Development, Gallup, presented *What Makes Students Successful: The Right Focus of School Improvement* at AFT TEACH 2015. Busteed shared Gallup findings that question the current directions of school “reform.”

What is the word that 70% of Americans use to describe their best teacher? The word is *care*, which is statically unmeasurable, and therefore does not figure into elaborate and misguided value-added teacher evaluation systems. Busteed said, “We have an overzealous obsession on the problem, a deficit-based lens.”

What happens to engagement as students go through school? It drops every year. The drill and test culture has taken a toll, called ‘**the school cliff**.’ Emotional engagement in school is 76% in elementary grades, 61% in middle school, and 44% in high school. The only year it does not decrease is 10th grade because that is the year that many disengaged students drop out.

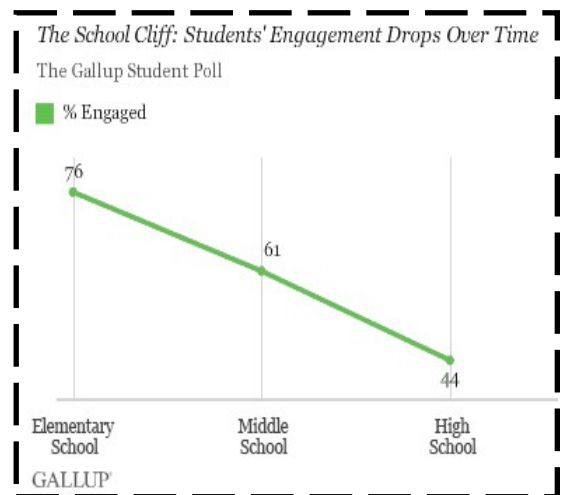
If a student gets to use his or her best skill at least once a day, the chances of disengagement are less than 1%. Less than half of high school students report having the opportunity at school to do what they do best. Similarly only 30% of Americans say they are engaged at work, 52% are not engaged, and 18% are actively disengaged.

Do rising GPAs mean that students are better prepared for the workplace? No. GPAs in this country have gone up 1.3 points in the last twenty years, with the greatest grade inflation at the most prestigious schools. Meanwhile, although 96% of college provosts say that students leave college ready for work, only 14% of Americans and 11% of business executives agree.

Do we really know which colleges are of the highest quality? No. We rank colleges only by inputs such as GPA, SAT, ACT, low acceptance rate, and endowments. Colleges are never ranked by the outputs of the life-time gainful employment and life satisfaction of their graduates.

Since the United States has middling PISA scores, how does it develop so many innovations? Busteed said that we are “too worked up on PISA scores.” There is actually a negative correlation between a country’s PISA scores and its entrepreneurial activity. Our schools do little or nothing to identify and develop the entrepreneurial talent that is a major driver of prosperity.

Next month we’ll look at what Gallup has learned about what really matters in a college education and how teachers view their careers.



KNOW YOUR WEINGARTEN RIGHTS

by Tom Smith and Arnavaz Mistry-Mujthaba

Periodically, employees may be required to meet with a representative of the Administration regarding disciplinary issues. Starting in the 1970s the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB), Illinois Education Labor Relations Board (IELRB), and the U.S. Supreme Court have issued decisions supporting what is known as an employee's "Weingarten Rights." Any time you find yourself facing a meeting with any agent of the Administration and reasonably believe this meeting could result in disciplinary action against you, these rights apply. It is not necessary that the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) include these rights for you to be protected; however, the CBA may include broader rights than the statute provides so it is important to know your CBA.

1. Any time you are called to a meeting with your Administration, you should know the nature of the meeting beforehand. If the person calling this meeting does not volunteer this information, ask.
2. If you reasonably believe the nature of the meeting is disciplinary, respectfully request that a Union representative be present. Interrupt this meeting, if necessary.
3. The Administration now faces three options:
 - a. Stop the questioning until the Union representative arrives,
 - b. Cancel the meeting, or
 - c. Give you the choice of ending the meeting or continuing without representation.
4. Do not continue the meeting without Union representation.
5. If the Administration insists that the meeting continue without representation, an unfair labor practice has been committed. You have the option of keeping silent or leaving the meeting. Inform the Union at once and memorialize in writing management's denial of your Weingarten rights.

When you meet with the Administration and the Union representative, the Administration must afford you certain privileges.

1. The Administration must inform the Union representative of the subject of the meeting.
2. The Union representative must be given adequate opportunity for the representative to take you aside for a consultation before the meeting.
3. During the meeting, the representative has the right to interrupt to clarify confusing questions or to end intimidation.
4. The Union may give you advice on how to answer any question.
5. The Union may add information at the end of the meeting to support your position.

The biggest mistake employees make is to meet without the Union being present. Your Union leadership will provide you with a Weingarten rights card. Please keep this card handy, take it with you into a meeting, refer to the back if necessary, and do not hesitate to contact a Union representative. Always remember that exercising these rights and securing appropriate Union representation rest solely with you. The Administration is under no obligation to read you your Weingarten Rights. You must initiate these rights to enjoy the protections which are yours by law.

YOUR RIGHTS AS A UNION MEMBER

As a Union member you are entitled to a number of benefits. One such benefit is the right to have Union representation and/or assistance in resolving disputes that arise out of the work place. This benefit is summarized below.

- You have the right to legal assistance in controversies that arise from incidents occurring in conjunction with your job. The Union determines the level of legal support that will be provided.
- You have the right to file a grievance over violations of the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) by your employer.
- You have the right to Union assistance in processing and resolving any grievance over a violation of the CBA.
- You have the right to appeal any denial of Union assistance in exercising the aforementioned rights to the Local 571 Executive Board.
- You have the right to appeal a denial of assistance by the 571 Executive Board to the Local 571 House of Representatives.

If you have any concerns or questions regarding these rights or the implementation thereof, please call the Local 571 office at 630-468-4098.

Impressions

AFT TEACH 2015

Jane Russell - The AFT TEACH Conference in Washington, D. C., July 13-15, offered a myriad of workshops for attendees. Since Illinois has a newly revised Teacher Leader endorsement with approximately 20 Illinois universities now offering the program, I attended the workshop hosted by New York State Teachers Union about Teacher Leader Programs.

Teacher leadership has been widely recognized as an essential component of school reform and the professionalization of teachers. It is a powerful strategy to increase student learning and can retain teachers, support their effectiveness, facilitate school staffing innovations, improve decision-making at the schools and district level as well as strengthening the teaching profession.

The ways teachers can lead are as varied as teachers themselves. Teachers can remain in their classroom and still provide a leadership role in their school or district. Roles and responsibilities vary considerably depending on the district, its structure, and the population of students it serves. Teacher leaders can be instructional coaches, mentors, professional learning facilitators, department or grade level chairs, data coaches, curriculum assessment specialists or peer assistance reviewers.

Research has shown from across the nation that there are certain design components that labor/management teams should consider when establishing a teacher leadership program. Details such as negotiated conditions and compensations, selection criteria and process and evaluation and performance management must also be agreed to in order to launch and maintain a successful teacher leader program in your district.

A helpful brochure is available about the AFT Teacher Leaders Program at:

http://www.aft.org/sites/default/files/br_teacherleaderprogram2015.pdf



Bonnie Saracco - At AFT TEACH 2015, I got a lot of up-to-date information for upcoming *Union Messenger* articles. I also received the tools to present union professional development classes on helping grieving children and dealing with school violence. And the highlight of my experience there was being interviewed about Illinois politics for the Rick Smith radio show. It was so empowering and perfectly fit the theme of the conference, "Reclaiming the Promise: Your Voice Matters."



Bonnie Saracco being interviewed by radio host Rick Smith

Katy Padberg - Attended several workshops at AFT TEACH 2015 and would like to share some of what she learned with the Local 571 members. Katy was so impressed by the documentary, *I Learn America*, she bought the rights to be able to show the film to her students as well as union members. We are planning a movie night to view and discuss the documentary which is the story of child immigrant students, for which there are nearly one in four in our classrooms today. How we fare in welcoming these immigrant students will define who we are for years to come. Watch this newsletter for the movie night date and time (with popcorn and PD hours available) in Westmont, coming this fall.

Katy also participated at AFT TEACH in "give voice to your story" by sharing her teacher story at the AFT video booth. Katy, along with Bonnie Saracco, another AFT TEACH participant, was interviewed at the AFT Radio Row. Katy emphasized through her participation, the theme for the conference, "Your Voice Matters."



Katy Padberg being interviewed by a local Washington, D.C. radio station

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AFT TEACH 2015 (cont. d)

Matt Brown - This was my first AFT TEACH Conference and hopefully not my last. The workshop offerings were overwhelming, so I made the decision to focus on a specific topic, building relationships between Union, Administration and Community. This topic is weighing very heavy on my heart this year, and I was seeking inspiration and ideas.



Fedrick C. Ingram, President of the United Teachers of Dade (Florida) and Karla Hernandez-Mats, Secretary-Treasurer of the United Teachers of Dade (Florida) led the workshop, "The Value of Building Partnerships with Community Organizations." Through their presentation I learned it is important to set goals and "stick to it." It is crucial to have a line item in your local budget in order to support these endeavors financially. Through their presentation I began to ask myself these questions: What community organizations could the Proviso Teachers Union reach out to, and how do we organize events within the community to show the community that the Proviso Teachers Union cares about the community?

The next workshop experience I want to share is "Collaboration to Innovation: Moving a District Forward." This workshop was lead collaboratively by the Administration and Union Leadership of Meriden Public Schools and the Meriden Federation of Teachers. This unique partnership has developed a long list of initiatives aimed at supporting teachers and ultimately students. Some of these initiatives include:

- No layoffs – creative transfers
- Adopting a "Bring your own device to school"
- School Climate Surveys (students, parents and staff)
- Online support portal
- District welcoming AFT to provide PD for Common Core. Train the trainer model
- No Zero Grading Policy

I asked if this type of relationship has always existed. Erin D. Benham, president of the Meriden Federation of Teachers stated that the relationship has always been good, but not as strong as it is now. Mark Benigni, school superintendent, stated that he saw what was working well and decided to build on what was working. He also stated that his greatest challenge has been assuring the Board of Education that his decisions are in the best interest of the district. Finally, as a teacher in one of the lowest performing school districts in Illinois, I chose the workshop, "Learning from Unexpected Schools." Karen Chenoweth, Writer-In-Residence for the Education Trust, has been researching several unexpected high performing schools. She found they all have 5 best practices:

1. Keep a laser-like focus on what students need to learn
2. Collaborate on how to teach it
3. Assess frequently to see whether students have learned it
4. Use data to inform instruction
5. Build personal relationships

She also found in her research that the Wallace Foundation studied 180 schools that are improving and found no single case of a school improving its student achievement record in the absence of talented leadership. Chenoweth went on to say, "leadership retains teachers." If a teacher has the option to flee a "bad" principal, he/she will, and as we all have learned, the work teachers do with a "bad" principal will be undermined.

Her workshop encouraged me and I am ready to share these ideas with our Executive Board and begin developing strategies on how we can begin having courageous conversations with Administration and the Board of Education about what the Proviso Teachers Union believes is needed to move our schools forward.

The theme of the conference was "Your Voice Matters." It is one of my goals this year to encourage and empower the teachers of Proviso that their voice matters and this is the year that we can make our voices roar.

Cathy's Corner

This is a new addition to the newsletter. Selected books about education and labor will be reviewed each month by various members. Cathy Pope, Rosemont Council President and Local 571 Secretary, shares her review. Cathy would like your suggestions on what education/labor books you might be reading and want to share with others. Please send your suggestions to 571editor@gmail.com.



"Your Voice Matters" was the 2015 AFT TEACH call to action this summer. One of the presenters was Dana Goldstein who wrote the book, *Teacher Wars: A History of America's Most Embattled Profession*. Dana Goldstein calls for an end to the war on teachers by asking teachers to help bring the conversation forward by adding their voices in decision-making. In her book, Goldstein reviews how throughout history, teachers have been unnecessarily maligned. Working conditions for teachers matter. Trust, integration and conceptual learning and collaboration with other teachers are important to improve teacher effectiveness.

Dana Goldstein comes from a family of public school educators. She states, "When we see that our education debate is focused on a 'moral panic,' we should bring the conversation back to evidence. Instead of talking about how to improve instruction in the classroom for kids, we are finger pointing at certain types of teachers and implying that by firing or getting rid of them, that would somehow magically improve our education system."

In her book that includes the history of 175 years of teaching in America, Goldstein uses her voice to help the reader find answers from the past to help solve the problems we have in our public schools today. Every teacher should have this book on their "must read" list.

For Union, Public Schools, and Community—It's Your Voice (cont. d)

For all Local 571 members, there will be many opportunities to engage in union work to fight for our students and their parents, the communities in which we live, for social justice issues, for our profession. Please take this opportunity to use your voice in whatever way you can. Talk with your council officers about how you can become better involved in your union. Take the first step. Let your voice be heard.

Best wishes for a very successful and fruitful 2015-16 school year. The Local is your partner. Together **WE** can continue to reclaim the promise of America for all of us.

In unity,

Jane A. Russell

Local 571 President

Local 571 Professional Development—Summer 2015

Summer professional development was fun when Local 571 AFT trained PD instructor and Cicero retiree, Terry Griegoliet, presented Thinking Mathematics Gr 3-5: Common Core Edition, in late June to enthusiastic 571 members. This course was redesigned to help teachers examine and make specific links to the Common Core Mathematics Standards. Using diagrams, charts, t-tables and arrays as well as models and manipulatives help students to

comprehend relationships in mathematics. Stress was placed on the importance of matching language to problem solving situations



Mary Bystriansky (Cicero)



Members in the Thinking Mathematics class included:

Top Row (l->r) Karen Cosentino (Cicero), instructor Teresa Griegoliet, Colleen Niemeyer (Elmhurst) and Kristen Rea (Cicero)
Front Row (l->r) Mary Bystriansky (Cicero), Job M. Ramos (Cicero) and Kathy Lustgarten (Franklin Park)

Morton Council Union Plants Butterfly Garden

Morton Council Union (MCU) members took part in an event recognizing and celebrating the contribution of parents and parent liaisons throughout the district. The evening was a brainchild of member Angela Barrera and her Parent Involvement Committee.

The event included delicious food, awards, raffle prizes donated by MCU, and the dedication of the land that will be planted as a butterfly garden.



Dedication of the Garden

SHARE MY LESSON CONTEST



Register for Share My Lesson (it only takes a minute and it's free), and submit a [completed entry form](#) for the prize being offered that week.

This Week's Contest: 8/19 - 8/26 — \$150 gift certificate for Fitbit
8/26 - 9/2 — \$150 gift certificate for Lee & Low Books library, Constitution Day t-shirts

<http://www.sharemylesson.com/article.aspx?storyCode=50039813#.Vc4kv5dfvLI>



10th Annual Legislative Breakfast

Plans are underway for the 2015 West Suburban Teachers Union Local 571 Legislative Breakfast on **Saturday, November 7, 2015.**

This event will take place at Hilton Oak Brook Hills Resort.

Please mark your calendars and plan to attend!



Save on education expenses with Union Plus. The rising cost of higher education can be a real barrier to union families who want the best for their kids. Union Plus offers annual scholarship awards, discounts on college test prep courses and college counseling, plus grants to help erase college loan debt. Don't let money complicate your family's college goals. Turn to Union Plus for help.

Save the union way at
UnionPlus.org/AFT



CELEBRATE LABOR DAY ON MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 7

Dedicated in honor of the worker, it is also appropriately called the "workingman's holiday." The first Labor Day was held in New York City on September 5, 1882, and was started by the Central Labor Union in New York City. In 1884, it was moved to the first Monday in September where it is celebrated today. On June 28, 1894, the U.S. congress voted it a national holiday.

What's Missing from the Messenger?



Email your news and thoughts to: Robin Hancock at: 571editor@gmail.com



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