

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

Union Messenger

"A Union of Professionals"

The Gauntlet Has Been Thrown by Jane Russell

WSTU March

- 3/11—Deadline for registration for Student Learning Objectives SLOs Workshop
- 3/16—Student Learning Objectives SLOs Workshop - 4:30 p.m. - Westmont
- 3/16—571 EB Mtg.- 6:30 p.m. - Westmont
- 3/16—571 proposed budget presented to EB
- 3/16—Deadline for nominations for 571 Officers election

Union Messenger

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 Sandra Erickson, Treasurer
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The new governor's January 12, 2015, inaugural address offered little additional insight into how he and his administration would work with groups in the state. However, the campaign rhetoric about unions reappeared. Here is the portion of the speech.

"Our state's crisis is not only financial. We have a MORAL crisis, and ETHICAL crisis as well. We have a state government that too few have faith in; that lack of faith is JUSTIFIED, and undermines people's willingness to sacrifice and help the government in its mission. Illinoisans see insider deals and cronyism rewarded.

They see lobbyists writing bills for special interests and taxpayers being left with the tab.

They see government union bosses negotiating sweetheart deals across the table from governors they've spent tens of millions to help elect. It's a corrupt bargain and the people of Illinois are left to wonder where they fit in. Who's looking out for them and their families? Taxpayers' money belongs to them; not the government. We have a moral obligation to minimize how much we take and to ensure what we do take is spent effectively.

Every dollar we spend unnecessarily inside government is a dollar we can't put into classrooms or social service provid-

ers, or leave in the pockets of entrepreneurs and homeowners."

The rhetoric did not stop at the inaugural. Since that time the governor has spoken to various groups around the state. At one recent event in Decatur, Rauner provided a Power Point, The Illinois Turnaround, claiming:

"Our goal: Make Illinois the most competitive and compassionate state in America."

So how is that going to happen? By Rauner's review, it's the unions that are getting in the way of THE GOAL. For instance, slide 35 shows the top seven government unions in Illinois. IFT is of course one of these as well as the Chicago Teachers Union and the Illinois Education Association. The slide further states that the seven unions made donations to gubernatorial candidates. Here is where it becomes confusing. As a result of those contributions, slide 35 shows *The Corrupt Bargain* where the donations caused the union dues to be higher which in turn caused a "bigger bureaucracy" followed by "taxes increase" and finally "jobs leaving Illinois." The red arrows in this slide appear difficult for me to connect.

Other slides show that the prevailing wage costs for government projects cost the schools, state and local governments. Slide 27's title is *"project labor agreements = uncompetitive bidding."*

(continued on page 4)

Contacts Compensable Under Workers' Compensation

Workers' Compensation Tips

by John Powers

Throughout the day education workers come into contact with various people, objects and chemicals. These contacts may be compensable under workers' compensation if they require medical care, lost time from work, or cause permanent harm.

Slips and falls in parking lots where the school instructs education workers to park on the education worker's way to school or leaving school is compensable even if the education worker is "off the clock." The law allows a reasonable time to arrive and begin work and a reasonable amount of time to leave.

Slipping and falling within the school in many cases will be considered compensable. However, not all falls are connected to work for purposes of receiving workers' compensation benefits. For example, missing a step while simply walking up or down regular stairs will likely be found not connected to the employment. However, if the education worker is carrying something for work or rushing, the fall may be considered work-related. Slipping and falling on a floor will generally not be compensable if the education worker makes the statement of, "I don't know" when describing how the fall occurred. If something on the floor, such as water tracked in from outside or a freshly mopped floor, caused the education worker to slip and fall, then the fall will likely be considered compensable.

Another common contact among education workers can be a physical assault received from a student. Workers' compensation is not the same as personal injury. A education worker who is injured breaking up a fight between students does not assume the risk of injury. The "assumed risk" defense does not exist under workers' compensation.

Another contact, which is not so common among all education workers, is contact with chemicals. Some subjects, such as biology or shop, require the education worker to come in contact with various chemicals. These education workers especially substitutes, should be aware of the chemicals they come into contact with. Simply arguing, "My job duties require contact with various chemicals. Therefore, the symptoms I am experiencing must be related to the chemicals I am required to handle," is not very persuasive to the Illinois Workers' Compensation Commission. A more persuasive case for benefits is made by having a doctor identify the specific chemical(s) that brought about the symptoms.

Some injuries due to exposure to chemicals, such as allergies or chemical sensitivity, may take time to develop. For instance, wearing latex gloves over time can create an allergy to latex in general rather than simply latex gloves. Therefore, education workers should keep their own lists of the chemicals they are using in their classrooms and when those chemicals are in the classrooms.

Generally, neglecting to wear protective equipment such as safety glasses, gloves, aprons and helmets will not bar a claim

for workers' compensation benefits. However, there is one case decided by the Illinois Supreme Court in which a worker was injured as a direct result of violating a safety rule, and was denied compensation. The Workers' Compensation Commission examines various factors, such as whether the safety rule was strictly enforced, in evaluating determine whether compensation will be allowed.



Contact with malfunctioning or unclean HVAC systems can aggravate the asthma or allergies of some education workers while other education workers exposed to the HVAC at the same time might not have any symptoms. Aggravations of pre-existing conditions are 100% compensable. However, as explained above, the education worker has the burden of proof.

Information provided by : Cullen, Haskins, Nicholson & Menchetti, P.C. Leading Lawyers in Workers' Compensation

www.chnm-law.com

About Cullen, Haskins, Nicholson and Menchetti, P.C.

As an advocate for workers' compensation education, Cullen, Haskins, Nicholson & Menchetti P.C. lecture frequently on workers' compensation issues. At the request of the State Fed, our firm has served as technical advisor to the Illinois AFL- CIO. In this role we were involved in the day-to-day nuts and bolts negotiation and drafting of Public Act 94-277, which increased workers' compensation benefits for union members and preserved freedom in choosing medical providers in 2005.

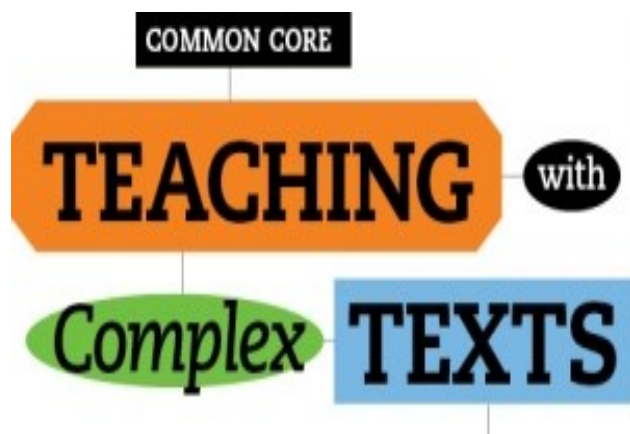
Call us today for a complimentary and confidential consultation. Get all your questions answered. 312-332-2545

The Need for Complex Text

by Bonnie Saracco

Common Core's three major English Language Arts/Literacy instructional shifts are the use of content-rich nonfiction, finding evidence from text, and practice with complex text and its academic language. AFT's professional development materials on Common Core present the strong case for the need for practice with complex text.

The need for practice with complex text was demonstrated by a 2007 ACT study. It found that what students can read in complexity, rather than critical thinking skills, is the greatest predictor of success in college. Because independent and accountable reading of complex texts is the norm in college and careers, reading comprehension skill is the most important benchmark for success.



The dumbing down of high school texts has been going on since the sixties. Today's gap between the complexity of high school and college texts is great. The majority of present high school graduates have not read texts at the complexity required by college. This is an equity issue.

The remedy is to use a staircase of increasingly complex texts, beginning with more advanced read-alouds from kindergarten to grade two, and building with more advanced instructional materials through elementary and high school.

The most commonly used formulas for text complexity are based on the quantitative measures of word frequency and sentence length. Examples of these are Metametric's *Lexile Framework*, Pearson's *Reading Maturity Metric*, and Renaissance Learning's *ATOS*.

Other factors also make reading complex text very difficult. It typically has subtle transitions, multiple themes, dense information, little review, and mixed structures. It also has large vocabulary and knowledge demands, and the reader considerations of motivation and interest must be considered.

Many of our students are English Language Learners, have special needs, or live in poverty. A large group of them deal with a combination of these obstacles. The danger of their frustration with challenging materials is great, and they need considerable supports.

Fortunately, there are several very effective research-based strategies we can use. Multiple readings, read alouds, chunking text, close reading, and text-generated questions are all strong scaffolds for struggling readers.

AFT has help to meet this challenge. All of our professional development courses have been updated to accommodate Common Core. Specifically, Beginning Reading Instruction, Reading Comprehension Instruction, and English Language Arts Common Core, all offered by Local 571, give teachers the opportunity to practice the research-based strategies we need.

The Gauntlet Has Been Thrown (cont. d)

by Jane Russell

Of course teacher pensions were also criticized through “guaranteed pension spiking.” The entire PowerPoint can be found at <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B4Bi-iePG1O6SnBRTnRxZ2FRWUU/view?>

Taking the governor’s goals one step further, one can begin to see the laying of the groundwork for Illinois to become a Right-to-Work (RTW) state. This would obviously spell disaster for state workers, but all workers in general. (Remember our union brothers and sisters in Wisconsin and Michigan having gone through this.) Several studies have been done on the impact of RTW on labor market outcomes. In the 2013 policy brief from the U. of Illinois the brief found in non-RTW states, unions have done better at raising wages and protecting workers earnings than the RTW states. The brief states that if Illinois should adopt RTW laws, earnings could fall by around 5.7 to 7.3 percent over time. If earnings fall, worker purchasing is less which leads to less taxes collected for the state to use for education, services, etc. Find *The Economic Effects of Adopting a Right-to-Work Law: Implications for Illinois at* http://www.ler.illinois.edu/labor/RTW_policy%20brief_spreads05.pdf

You may want to dust off those boxing gloves. Looks like we are going to need those gloves for the next four years. Our unity may be challenged, but together we will all be stronger and survive.

In unity

Jane A. Russell

Local 571 President

2015 Inauguration by Jane Russell

It was an honor to be invited as a special guest by then treasurer- elect, Michael Frerichs, to attend the inauguration and January 11-12, 2015 festivities in Springfield with him and his staff. The Sunday activities began with a “thank you” dinner for supporters, legislators and Congressional representatives. We were then shuttled to the “public” party, the Inaugural Eve Reception, at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Museum, where hundreds of Frerichs’ supporters were able to eat, drink, network and view the museum displays and exhibits.

On Monday, we followed Frerichs to the Inaugural Interfaith Service at the First Presbyterian Church of Springfield. Abraham Lincoln and his family worshipped in the church beginning in 1850 and until he left to assume the duties of President in 1861. The Lincoln family pew is still in the church where a magnificent pipe organ was installed in 2000. The service included choirs, scripture readings and musical selections. Reverend Robert Freeman from the Grace and Kumber United Methodist Churches of Springfield provided the prayer of commitment for the treasurer elect. All of the religious leaders present called for unity in Illinois government.

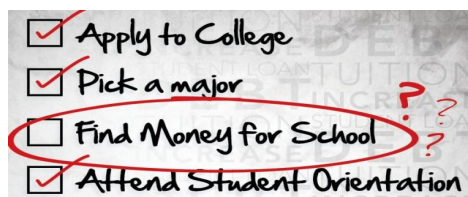
Following the service, everyone was whisked off to the Inaugural Ceremony at the Prairie Capital Convention Center. The very scripted, two-hour ceremony included music by the Illinois Air and Army National Guard Bands, introduction of all of the state constitutional officers and their families, the “Star Spangled Banner” sung by the Blackhawks Jim Cornelison, welcome by the Springfield Mayor, a moment of silence for deceased comptroller Judy Barr Topinka, the oaths of office and the new governor’s inaugural address. Mike Frerichs received the oath of office, the last of the state officers, which was administered by Justice Rita B. Garman, Chief Justice of the Illinois Supreme Court. Frerichs’ young daughter dutifully held the Bible where Frerichs placed his hand for the swearing-in.

A private lunch followed the inauguration and then all of the newly sworn-in state officers held statehouse receptions in their state capitol offices. These included the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Secretary of State, Attorney General, Comptroller and Treasurer.



Jane and son, Kent Russell, enjoying the ceremony of the 2015 IL Inauguration at the Prairie Capital Convention Center in Springfield.

Local 571 Scholarship Opportunities



- **West Suburban Teachers Union, Local 571, Mary Wheeler Scholarship** - six \$2,250 one-time awards - open to high school seniors graduating in 2015 whose parents or guardians are members in good standing of Local 571. Applicants must plan to continue their education in the Fall of 2015. Applications are available at www.wstu571.org, or call 630-468-4098.

All application materials must be postmarked on or before March 1, 2015.

- **West Suburban Teachers Union, Local 571, Jo Ann Horowitz Scholarship** - One \$2,250 scholarship will be awarded in 2015 by the West Suburban Teachers Union to a current undergraduate college/university student pursuing a career in teaching or in Women's Studies. Eligible recipients include any member in good standing, or the child/grandchild of a member in good standing of the WSTU, Local 571. Applications are available at www.wstu571.org, or call 630-468-4098.

All application materials must be postmarked on or before March 1, 2015.

- **West Suburban Teachers Union, Local 571, Mary Ann Karlovsky Scholarship** - One \$2,250 scholarship will be awarded in 2015 by the West Suburban Teachers Union to a current undergraduate college/university student pursuing a career in elementary (K-8) teacher education. Applicant must have passed the Basic Skills Test or Test of Academic Proficiency. Eligible recipients include any member in good standing or the child/grandchild of a member in good standing of the WSTU, Local 571. Applications are available at www.wstu571.org or by calling 630-468-4098.

All application materials must be postmarked on or before March 1, 2015.

Important:
Please make
sure to include
an **“official”**
transcript with
all three of the
Local 571
scholarship
applications.

At a Morton Council holiday party, funds were raised so that a donation was made to the Cicero-Berwyn-Stickney Food Pantry.



Pictured are l-> r: Diane Eddy (Food Pantry Coordinator), Dave Waldron (Food Pantry VP) Karen Klafeta (Morton Council Secretary) and Tony LaCivita (Morton Council President)

Local 571 Officers' Election



Nominations are now being accepted for Local 571 Officers.

The Officers are a President, a Vice President, a Secretary, a Legal Defense Secretary, a Financial Secretary, and a Treasurer. All Local 571 members are eligible to be nominated as Local 571 Officers.

The term of office is two (2) years beginning July 1, 2015. Nominations must be printed or typed (name and school district) and received in the Local 571 office on or before March 16, 2015.

Nominees will receive an acknowledgement of receipt. The elections will take place by secret ballot in all of our Councils. Retirees will vote by U. S. postal service. The Officers' duties and responsibilities can be found on the Local 571 website (www.wstu571.org).

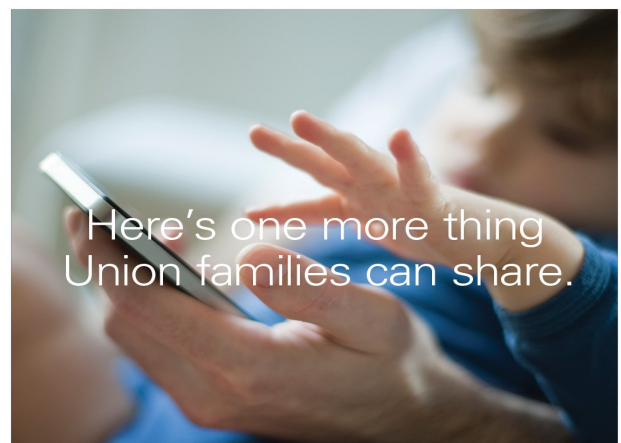
Workshop Change

Local 571's March 2015 pre-meeting workshop has changed. The new topic will be the **LUCE** Program Training (Local Union Charter Education Program). The workshop will be held at the Robert M. Healey Conference Center in Westmont from 4:15 p.m. to 6:15 p.m. on March 16, 2015. A light dinner will be served. More details will be sent to all Council Union leaders.

What's *Missing* from the Messenger?



Email your ideas, news and thoughts to:
Robin Hancock at:
editor571@gmail.com.



Save with AT&T Wireless and Union Plus. Just because you're union, you can save 15% on select wireless service from AT&T, the only national wireless provider that's union—like you. You can save whether you're already an AT&T customer, or switching to all-union AT&T. Plus, if you use a Union Plus Credit Card on qualifying purchases, you're eligible for up to \$250 in rebates. For union members, this is an easy call.

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**We're on the
Web!!!**
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