

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

Union Messenger

"A Union of Professionals"

WSTU April Calendar

4/2-Deadline for reservations for 571 TRS Seminar
 4/9-571 TRS Seminar-Westmont
 4/15-571 EB Mtg. -Westmont-5:30p.m.
 4/15-571 HOR Mtg. - Westmont-6:45p.m.
 4/15-571 Officer election & IFT Convention ballots ready for pickup by Councils
 4/15-571 proposed budget presented to HOR
 4/27-29-IFT ULI-Westmont

Union Messenger

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Inside This Issue:

Differentiating Instruction for the Common Core	2
Catching Up on Teacher Evaluation Reforms	3
ISBE Evaluator Pre-Qualification Workshop	3
Retirement Information Seminars	4

Deciphering the Pension Proposals

by Jane Russell

There are several pension proposals and it is difficult to keep them all straight. Let's start out with the We Are One Coalition bill SB2404, filed by Senators Linda Holmes (D) and Pamela Althoff (R). Additional local senators whom we work with have been added as co-sponsors. These include Kimberly Lightford, Dan Kotowski, John Mulroe, Tom Cullerton, and Bill Cunningham. The other Coalition bill HB3162 like SB2404 has the labor-backed framework which includes guaranteed funding by the state to the pension systems, the creation of a pension stabilization fund to help pay down the pension debt and an additional two percent contribution for active members. Jay Hoffman (D) and Raymond Poe (R) were co-sponsors for HB3162. Other local legislators that have also signed on are Representatives Linda Chapa La Via, Chris Welch, Sandra Pihos and Dennis Reboletti. The IFT is urging the support of all legislators as these are the only bills that are considered fair and constitutional to the members. If any of these senators or representatives is from your voting district, call or write to them thanking them for their support. These bills have a long way to go if passage is even possible this session.

Some of the other bills to be aware of that may come up for a vote:

SB01 filed by Senate President Cullerton

This bill contains a Part A and a Part B. Part B is the alternative provision that will take effect if Part A is deemed unconstitutional. Part A caps pensionable salaries, suspends and reduces the annual COLA, increases the employee contribution and requires the pension systems to be 100% funded by 2043.

HB98 filed by Representative Elaine Nekritz and SB 35 filed by Senator Daniel Biss

This is not much different than the bill offered up in the 97th General Assembly. Again Tier 1 retirees would have other conditions to be eligible for different annual increases, and pensionable salary is capped for Tier 1 participants. The cost shift to employers shows up in these bills. And like SB01, the pension systems would be 100% funded by 2043.

HB 2375 filed by Representative Lou Lang

This is the newest bill which increases the retire-

ment age to 67 immediately. Employee contributions would increase by 3% being phased in over six years. This bill is unique in that Lang calls for the current income tax rate of 5% to be made permanent and not be reduced in 2015. The "extra" revenue would be for making the pension payments and retiring the pension debt. If there is annual excess revenue not used as stated above, it would be rebated back to taxpayers. The cost shift to districts is also included at a rate of one-half of one percent each year or about 17 years to fully shift the cost to employers. Several other details are also included.

HB3303 filed by Representative Tom Morrison

Among other suggested changes, this bill moves pension members into a defined contribution plan instead of the current defined benefit plan.

Amendments to HB1154 and HB1165 and HB1166 filed by House Speaker Madigan

You probably heard/read about these amendments being called for a vote by the Speaker on February 28. All these amendments lost and only had a few "yes" votes. Republican representatives would not cast their votes. HB1165 amendment which increased the retirement age to 67 was voted 67 against and 1 "yes"—Michael Madigan the only affirmative vote.

All of these bills can be read in both synopsis form and in their entirety by going to www.ilga.gov/legislation.

The time has come to "separate the wheat from the chaff." The focus should be on the We Are One Coalition bills, HB3162 and SB2404. Legislators have told me they appreciate hearing from their constituents, but they add more credence to the letters, e-mails, phone calls and/or visits that are in the person's own words or how the bill affects them personally. No matter what works for you, continue to reach out to your local legislators. The IFT will do its part to keep you informed. Please do your part. Together we can accomplish real pension reform for all of our members.

In unity,

Local 571 President

Differentiating Instruction for the Common Core State Standards

by Bonnie Saracco



The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) require significant instructional shifts. They present teachers with the challenge of meeting newly rigorous demands while still differentiating instruction to provide an appropriate education for developing, advanced, English language, and special needs learners. AFT has outlined these instructional shifts in our professional development materials.

The English and Language Arts CCSS require students to read and write based on specific evidence from texts that are more complex and contain increased academic vocabulary.

The Math CCSS call for instruction that has a stronger focus on specific standards at specific grade levels to produce conceptual understanding, procedural skill, fluency, and application. This shift requires coherence across grade levels.

At last summer's AFT Pre-Convention session, Dr. Robin Fogarty described strategies to meet these challenges in her presentation, *Brain Compatible Differentiation for Tier 1 Classroom Instruction*.

Dr. Fogarty explained the brain principles that are crucial to learning. A major brain principle is that learning is enhanced by challenge but inhibited by threat. This makes it imperative to tailor instruction and pacing to individual learner needs.

For developing learners, teachers need to identify and eliminate gaps in learning. Interactive direct instruction, with its deliberate and structured format, is ideal for this process. Interactive direct instruction also uses a

high degree of teacher/student interaction and corrective feedback, which is helpful to all learners, but most crucial for developing learners.

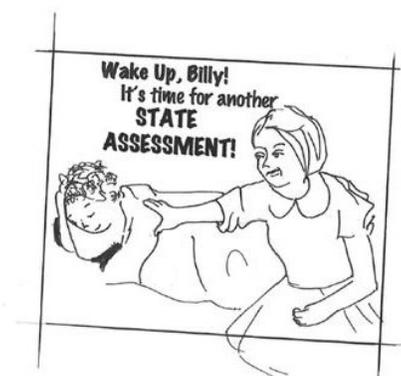
On the other hand, advanced learners should skip the practice of mastered material. They benefit from more complex, abstract, and open-ended activities. The more complex texts and academic vocabulary required by the CCSS will provide new opportunities to advanced learners.

English language learners need extra instructional scaffolds, such as translation partners, visuals, media, and Internet and self-correcting activities. Increased auditory cues and hands-on experiences are also very helpful for English language learners.

A wide array of supports for special needs learners is needed more than ever if these students are to meet the CCSS. Among these supports are IEPs, classroom aides, specialists, resource teachers, increased parent involvement, and software feedback tools.

Our Local 571 professional development courses, all updated to fit CCSS, can help our members bridge the gap between the research on these differentiations and classroom practice. Our reading and math courses now contain information for us to help our students gain a deeper understanding of more challenging concepts, and *Instructional Strategies for all Learners* and *Foundations of Effective Teaching* provide practice in many models for differentiation.

ISBE Evaluator Pre-Qualification Workshop Training Provided an Overview to Council Leaders



Picture courtesy of Shirley Forpe Local 1211

Local 571 council leaders and PERA committee members spent the morning of February 9, 2013, gaining a better understanding of the ISBE evaluator training and pre-qualification program. Led by IFT Field Service Directors, Arnava Mistry-Mujthaba and Tom Smith, members were given a snapshot of the ISBE training. The Performance Evaluation Reform Act of 2010 provided for the creation of five modules for evaluating teachers' professional practice. Any evaluators must have completed the pre-qualification training and passed the state assessments in Modules 1—3 by September 1, 2012, and Module 4 by November 1, 2012. Module 5 on student growth must also be completed if the district evaluation plan includes the student growth piece.

The workshop outcomes for participants included the opportunity to gain a basic understanding of the content of Modules 1—4 of the ISBE evaluator training, as well as areas identified by the IFT as being in need of further clarification. *Growth Through Learning Illinois* participant guidebooks for *Module 1—"Understanding" Teacher Practice* were also reviewed. Additionally, participants gained an understanding of the steps evaluators are trained to follow when they gather evidence of a teacher's practice, align evidence with the district's evaluation plan, and then use the evidence to determine the teacher's level of practice.

Councils are encouraged to form the PERA Joint Committee in their districts and begin informal discussions prior to transitioning to formal negotiations on the addition of student growth to the evaluation plan. A sample *Memorandum of Understanding* to begin these informal discussions in the PERA Joint Committee was also provided.

Please consult with your council leaders or field staff if you have further questions or concerns.



Elmhurst Council members (l-r) Nan Loerop, Andrew Bendelow and Laura McElligott

Catching Up on Teacher Evaluation Reforms



571 Franklin Park Council Co-presidents Karyl DiPaolo (left) and Carolyn Maschow, reviewed AFT's literature, *It's Elemental—A Quick Guide to Implementing Evaluation and Development Systems*.

Well over 100 IFT members and staff from Chicago and suburban locals including West Suburban Teachers Union members attended detailed presentations about “Teacher Evaluation in Illinois: Where are we now?” The Westmont IFT training center was the location for the February 28, 2013, workshop hosted by Local 571. This was actually the third workshop in as many years to keep IFT members abreast of developments in teacher evaluation.

IFT Union Professional Issues Directors, Kathy Shaevel and Amy Alsop shared up-to-date information about issues on student growth related to Public Act 96-0861, the Illinois Performance and Evaluation Reform Act (PERA). All districts must incorporate multiple measures of student growth as a “significant factor” in their teacher evaluation plans. The Illinois Performance Evaluation Advisory Committee (PEAC) has recommended three types of assessments called Type I, Type II and Type III and growth measures derived from these assessment types to comprise the multiple measures of student growth. Other measurement models may include Student or Shared Learning Objectives (SLOs) or Value Added Measures (VAMs).

Additionally, the PEAC is currently finalizing recommendations on:

- Attributing a student’s growth to a teacher
- Summative rating—combining growth and practice ratings
- Peer evaluation
- Non-observable components of a teacher practice framework

Rob Weil, AFT Director of Field Programs for Educational Issues, presented a lengthy discussion on teacher development and evaluation, with emphasis on student growth. Rob included some perspective on the issues, information gained from the Gates’ Measuring Affective Teaching study, the different common measures (Types I, II, and III as mentioned above), and examples of how weighting is being used in several AFT member districts. Models were included from New Haven, CT; New York State United Teachers; Austin, Texas; Rhode Island; Tennessee; and Washington, DC. Rob cautioned that there is no research to help us know how to combine and weight scores from multiple measures, and states are approaching this very differently. What is essential is the consideration that weights may have an impact on instructional decisions.



Rob Weil, AFT Director of Field Programs and workshop presenter, instructed IFT members about “What is Happening with Teacher Development and Evaluation.”

Finally, several matrices of student measures from the different states were provided. The AFT has two excellent guides available: *Guide for Developing Multiple Measures for Teacher Development and Evaluation* as well as *It's Elemental—A Quick Guide to Implementing Evaluation and Development Systems*. If you are interested in either or both guides, please talk with your council leaders or call the local for copies.

Incorporating student growth measures into teacher evaluation plans is not easy as many have surmised. However, the AFT and IFT professional issues staffs are more than willing to provide and help union locals and councils to do this work to provide teachers with both fair and effective evaluation plans. The continuation of this workshop training will most likely be offered in February 2014 in workshop #4. We look forward to hosting and hope you can join us.



Amy Alsop, IFT Union Professional issues Director-South, makes a point as Edna Rogers and Matt Brown, Proviso Teachers Council, listen intently.



The hands went up when Rob Weil, questioned the overflow crowd at the February 28 workshop.



Announcing Two Retirement Information Seminars for Local 571 Members

Sponsored by the West Suburban Teachers Union Local 571

For Teachers Planning to Retire Soon

- WHAT:** IL Teachers Retirement System (TRS) Seminar
- WHEN:** Tuesday, April 9, 2013
5:00—7:30 p.m.
- WHERE:** Robert M. Healey Conference Center
500 Oakmont Lane, Oakmont, IL 60559
- AGENDA:** Light dinner followed by a presentation by a representative of the Illinois Teachers Retirement System
- R.S.V.P.:** If you plan to attend, contact Judy Jennings by *April 2* at 630-468-4098 or jjennings@ift-aft.org

For Support Staff Planning to Retire Soon

- WHAT:** IL Municipal Retirement Fund (IMRF) Seminar
- WHEN:** Tuesday, May 7, 2013
5:00—7:30 p.m.
- WHERE:** Robert M. Healey Conference Center
500 Oakmont Lane, Oakmont, IL 60559
- AGENDA:** Light dinner followed by a presentation by a representative of the Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund
- R.S.V.P.:** If you plan to attend, contact Judy Jennings by *May 1* at 630-468-4098 or jjennings@ift-aft.org

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What's Missing?

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