

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

Union Messenger

"A Union of Professionals"

WSTU October Calendar

10/2—571 Legal Limits Wkshp. for New Teachers & Teachers' Aides - Westmont 5 p.m.
10/3—Deadline for registration to ULI North
10/15—Deadline for filing IRS forms for Councils that closed their books in May
10/15—Deadline for registration for the 571 CCSS ELA/Math Wkshp for Certified Staff
10/17-18—IFT PSRP Conference—Springfield
10/20—571 CCSS ELA/Math Wkshp for Certified Staff—Westmont—4:30 p.m.
10/20—571 HOR Mtg.—Westmont - 6:30 p.m.

Union Messenger

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 Secretary & COPE Chairperson
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Can We Lose it All?

by Jane Russell



While I am not an alarmist, I was taken aback by the message from our Wisconsin

AFSCME brothers and sisters. They have produced a video to warn Illinois union

members about what happened in Wisconsin under Governor Scott Walker. Watch the 3 minute video and see if you are alarmed. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IO-QcK7GFcI>.

Candidate Bruce Rauner sees Scott Walker as a role model. Wisconsin teachers, union members, their families and others have been negatively affected over the last three years by Act 10 which was proposed and signed into law in 2011 by Governor Walker.

These are only some of the results of Act 10. Take-home pay for two teacher households has been reduced by up to 22 percent. Job growth has stalled because of loss of take-home pay. Teachers have lost their voice and are often scapegoated being referred to as "public enemy #1." Veteran teachers left the profession because of many losses including seniority and tenure. Class sizes have increased. Work days are longer. The list goes on. Is it possible that Bruce Rauner as governor

could issue executive orders similarly taking away what we in Illinois have worked so hard to gain and maintain for workers and their families?

Instead, if we re-elect the current governor, could being a union worker in Illinois change like it has in Wisconsin? Unlike Walker, Governor Pat Quinn believes in funding public education, supports collective bargaining and the right to strike and is a proponent of increasing the minimum wage. His opponent does not. As Kim Colhaus, AFT Wisconsin President and 3rd grade teacher from Superior, Wisconsin, reminded us in a recent IFT teletown hall phone conference, "One of the two will be governor."

This election is not a referendum on pensions; the Illinois legislature passed the bill and Governor Quinn signed it. While many union members are unhappy about this law, there is hope that it will be struck down in the courts as unconstitutional.

In a teletown hall call with Bruce Rauner held with Elmhurst residents, he proposed that new state employees go into a 401k pension plan instead of the current defined benefit plan. Unfortunately, no one asked how the current pension systems would continue to be funded if new employees were not contributing.

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Can We Lose it All?

by Jane Russell

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Would the state then pay a larger share making up for lost employee contributions? This does not seem remotely possible. Would school districts be forced to make up the difference? That could increase property taxes. There are so many questions left unanswered with Rauner's agenda for the state. An election should not be about one issue. We need to look at the bigger picture.

Between the radio and television ads, talk shows, mailed literature, and newspaper columns, we are being inundated. Take time to listen, to review, to ask questions about the candidates for governor. Talk to colleagues, family, relatives and neighbors too. Vote like your job depends on it. Vote by mail, vote early at sites in your community, or go to your local polling place on election day.

On November 5, 2014, please don't comment either to yourself or others, "I should have voted." Instead say, "I voted for the governor who is best for public education, my job, my family and Illinois."

In unity,

Jane A. Russell

Local 571 President

Apps for Kids and Classroom

As someone in education or as a parent/grandparent, you can impress (maybe a little) students to use their phones or tablet devices for schoolwork that doesn't necessarily seem like work. iTunes and Google both have free and inexpensive apps.

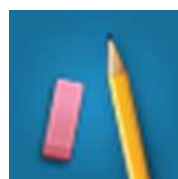


Start with *Math Bingo* to help your student who is working on multiplication.

Learn Algebra is free from Google Play. This course starts at the beginning and breaks down the concepts.



President's vs. Aliens helps students to learn facts and information about U.S. presidents and the presidency while flinging presidents' heads at invading aliens.



Turning in homework on time and being prepared for tests is sometimes a monumental task. Use *My Homework* to stay on top. Teachers can use the companion tool. There is a *My Homework* account required. This is free from iTunes, Google Play and Windows Store.

ULI

Union Leadership Institute (ULI) courses are held at the IFT Robert M. Healey Center in Westmont, Illinois. Most courses are held over three weekend-long sessions, and participants must attend all three sessions in order to complete the course. This year, in addition to core ULI courses, they are also offering one-weekend sessions on "Getting Started with IFTWeb" and "Messaging and Social Media." *Complete 2014-15 ULI Course Descriptions will be available soon on the IFT website (www.ift-aft.org).*

The 2014-15 ULI North training sessions will be held on the following dates:

- Fall: November 15-16, 2014
- Winter: February 7-8, 2015
- Spring: April 25-26, 2015

In order to register, Local 571 members must have their Council President's signature on the registration form.

Designing Units for the Common Core English Language Arts

by Bonnie Saracco

The Common Core State Standards require new ways of teaching and learning. Maria Bailey, AFT National Trainer, presented “Designing Units of Study Aligned to the CCSS for ELA/Literacy” at the AFT Pre-Convention Professional Development Conference in Los Angeles last summer. Effective unit planning is essential for the Common Core because several standards can often be developed in one rich task.

Bailey explained backwards design, also called backmapping. Backwards design, based on enduring understandings of essential questions rather than on materials and teachers’ favorite topics, goes against ingrained habits. Common Core does not eliminate time-honored activities, but gives them a less prominent place in the curriculum. A widely suggested proportion is 85 percent Common Core instruction to 15 percent other teacher-chosen activities.

Backmapping is a three-step process. Teachers identify the desired results, determine acceptable evidence of learning, and, finally, design learning experiences.

Common Core instruction should be based on enduring understandings, which are the concepts that lead to “big ideas.” Big ideas are layered, yield deep and broad

understandings, and call for digging deeply into subjects. Each domain has its own big ideas. For social studies, examples are culture, immigration, justice, and democracy. In language arts, examples are genre, theme, evidence, and perspective. In science, examples are matter, weather, force, and ecosystem. Understanding of these big ideas is necessary to comprehend the complex texts that are required by the Anchor Standards in Common Core.



Theme is a big idea, and is found in many of the Common Core English Language Arts standards. An example is Standard RL.8.2: “Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to the characters, setting, and plot.” This skill can be efficiently developed through close reading and text-dependent questions that help students find the author’s specific words, which

develop the relationships to theme. These questions need to be backmapped, that is, designed with the standard in mind.

AFT’s website *Share My Lesson* has a wealth of Common Core lessons which have been vetted by teams of expert teachers. AFT also continues to advocate for teachers to get the planning time, collaboration time, and materials, which this challenging effort will require.

Retirees Corner

Preparing for Retirement? It should come as no surprise that the 2008 Great Recession pushed back the planned date of retirement for many. A recent online consumer research firm, GfK, collected data nearly a year ago from over 4,100 respondents. The survey finds many households ill-prepared for retirement. Of those responding to the survey, about 31 percent of non-retired individuals reported no pension or retirement savings! Those not even thinking about retirement planning or had done some planning was well over 50 percent.

Another 25 percent who did retirement planning were not sure how they would be able to pay their expenses in retirement.

Of the survey respondents, 15 percent who retired since 2008 did so earlier than they had originally planned. For those not yet retired between ages 55 to 64, the route to retirement differed significantly:

- Eighteen percent worked full time until the retirement date and no longer continued to work at all

- Twenty-four percent would continue to work indefinitely
- Eighteen percent would retire from their current job and then work a part-time job
- Nine percent expected to retire and become self-employed

Additional key research findings for the *Report on the Economic Well-Being of U.S. Households* can be found at www.federalreserve.gov.

Voting for the Ballot Referendum Items

When you exercise your right as a citizen to vote, you are telling Illinois lawmakers that you feel these are important issues. When you vote before or on November 4, 2014, be sure to cast your vote for the five ballot referenda.

Legislatively voted to be placed before the voters, these two ballot referenda are proposed constitutional amendments.

- **Illinois Right to Vote Amendment**

This measure proposes to amend the Suffrage and Elections article of the Constitution. It would provide that no person shall be denied the right to register to vote or cast a ballot in an election based on race, color, ethnicity, language, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, or income. This is considered to be about election discrimination. Proponents and opponents have suggested that the amendment is meant, in part, to discourage a voter identification card law.

- **Illinois Crime Victims' Bill of Rights Amendment**

This measure would strengthen the Crime Victims' Bill of Rights by guaranteeing additional legal protections to crime victims.

These three advisory questions will also appear on the ballot. These are measures which ask citizens to vote on a non-binding question to voice their opinion on a variety of issues.

- **Minimum Wage Increase Question**

This measure asks voters whether the minimum wage in Illinois should be increased for adults over the age of 18 to \$10 per hour by January 1, 2015. The state's minimum wage is currently \$8.25 per hour.

- **Birth Control in Prescription Drug Coverage Question**

This measure asks voters whether any health insurance plan in Illinois that provides prescription drug coverage should be required to include prescription birth control as a part of that coverage.

- **Millionaire Tax Increase for Education Question**

This statewide advisory question of public policy asks voters whether the Illinois Constitution should be amended to require that each school district receive additional revenue, based on the number of students from an additional three percent tax on income greater than \$1,000,000.

Local 571 Legal Limits Seminar—October 2

Members who are teachers' aides and non-tenured teachers are invited to attend the Legal Limits for New Teachers and Teachers' Aides Seminar sponsored by the West Suburban Teachers Union Local 571 on October 2, 2014, at our conference center in Westmont. An IFT attorney and a School Board attorney will present information focusing on professional conduct, DCFS obligations, adhering to district policies, confidentiality issues, internet and technology issues, student discipline, suspensions, certification, special education, tenure, free speech, leaves of absence, etc. The registration deadline is September 26. Please contact Judy Jennings by phone at 630-468-4098 or by e-mail at jjennings@ift-aft.org if you are interested in attending. Two professional development hours will be awarded to attendees.

PERA: Evaluating Teaching Practices



Workshop presenter and Local 571 Field Service Director Arnavaz Mistry-Mujthaba (standing) answers questions for Rosemont Council President Cathy Pope (center), Leyden Council President Steve Marten and Council Vice-president Chris Schulz.

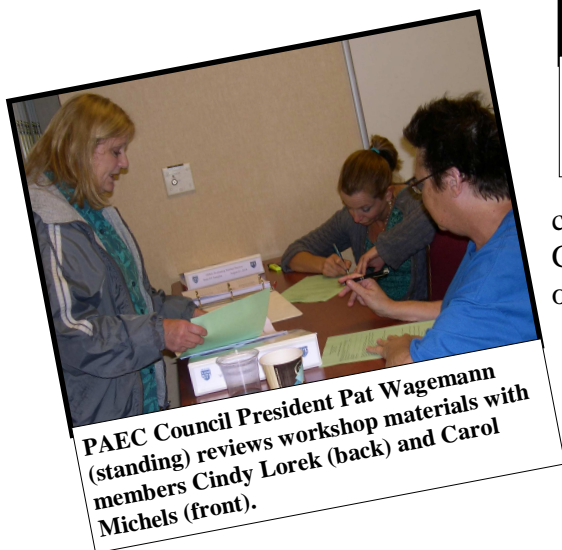


Lyons Council team members, (l->r) Sheila Stock, Mary Hendrix, President Toni Brandt and Jon Pavlik, work on a plan for their district.

Representatives from ten Councils within Local 571 attended a workshop on August 21, 2014, entitled PERA: Evaluating Teacher Practice conducted by Tom Smith and Arnavaz Mistry-Mujthaba. As part of continuing offerings by Local 571, the IFT, and the AFT organized through Local 571, this workshop was a continuation of training for licensed educators sitting on PERA Joint Committees on behalf of their



Riverside Council President Bill Howes (center) guides the discussion for PERA Committee members (l->r) Patty Gill, Claire LaForge, and Cristina Betancourt.



PAEC Council President Pat Wagemann (standing) reviews workshop materials with members Cindy Lorek (back) and Carol Michels (front).

colleagues in the Council. Union members serving on PERA Joint Committees have been involved in everything from revising current or developing new practice pieces for teacher evaluation as well as beginning discussions revolving around the incorporation of student growth as part of teachers' performance evaluations. This workshop provided resources and guidance as to the next steps that PERA Joint Committees should pursue in developing evaluation plans that truly gauge a teacher's performance.

West Suburban Teachers Union Pre-meeting Workshops

The following pre-meeting workshops were requested by our members and are open to all Local 571 members. Each one will begin at 4:30 p.m. and end at 6:00 p.m. There is no charge, and light refreshments will be served.

<i>Date</i>	<i>571 Meeting</i>	<i>Pre-meeting Workshop</i>	<i>Deadline for Reservations</i>
9/15/2014	Executive Board	Share My Lesson for Teachers & Teachers' Aides	9/11/2014
10/20/2014	House of Representatives	CCSS ELA/Math for Certified Staff	10/15/2014
11/17/2014	Executive Board	PARCC Testing	11/12/2014
12/8/2014	House of Representatives	Teacher Evaluation	12/3/2014
1/12/2015	Executive Board	Choosing Student Assessments	1/7/2015
2/9/2015	House of Representatives	PERA Joint Committees	2/4/2015
3/16/2015	Executive Board	Student Learning Objectives SLOs	3/11/2015

Informational flyers and registration forms will be e-mailed to Council leaders to share with all members as they become available. Professional development hours will be awarded to participants.

To register for one or more of these workshops, please contact Judy Jennings by phone at 630-468-4098 or by e-mail at jjennings@ift-aft.org.

Don't miss out on these valuable learning opportunities.



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Learn more at
UnionCardApply.com
or call 1-800-522-4000

Another card option is available. Credit approval required. Terms & Conditions apply. Union Plus Credit Cards issued by Capital One, N.A.

Paid Volunteers Wanted

Local 571 needs volunteers (members or family members) who are interested in walking for three-hour increments on Saturdays and/or Sundays on behalf of the gubernatorial election. These walks will be door to door to Union households only.

If you are interested in participating (pay is \$12/hour), please contact Tom Smith (630.468.4045) or Arnavaz Mistry-Mujthaba (630.468.4044) as soon as possible.

Dates, times and specific addresses will be provided to those who volunteer.

What's Missing from the Messenger?



E-mail your thoughts to
Kyra Lopez at
kyra_lopez@hotmail.com.

We're on the Web!!!
www.wstu571.org

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