

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

Union Messenger

"A Union of Professionals"

WSTU November

11/2—SB100 Workshop - 4:30 p.m. - Westmont
 11/4-5 —IFT ULI - Westmont
 11/9 —Registration deadline for Social Media & Technology Workshop
 11/13—Wisely Using Social Media & Technology Workshop - (4:30 pm. to 6 pm. - Westmont)
 11/13—ExBd Meeting (6:30 pm. - Westmont)
 11/15—Deadline for filing IRS forms for Councils that closed their books in June

Union Messenger

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Public School Parents Value Public Education

We can be heartened. Demonizing teachers should not continue. Public school parents heartily agree.



A national survey conducted by Hart Research for the American Federation of Teachers released the findings in September from a national survey of public school parents. Over 1200 public school parents were interviewed between July 24 and August 3, 2017. Parents were from ten major U.S. cities including Chicago. Five central themes emerged.

1. Parents believe that public schools are doing a good job in helping their children achieve their full potential. The opportunities are expanded especially for low-income and minority children.

2. Parents want good neighborhood schools that are easily accessible more than they desire increased school choice. The schools must have a safe and secure environment, ensuring equal opportunity for all students.

3. Some education trends today worry parents. These include inadequate funding, over testing, larger class

sizes, removing non-academic subjects from the curriculum, high teacher turnover and the shifting of dollars away from the public schools to charters and vouchers.

4. Parents do not like the performance of the U. S. Secretary of Education, Betsy DeVos, rejecting her "choice" agenda. DeVos and Trump are not considered education leaders. Parents would rather hear from teachers, principals and parent organizations to learn about public education.

5. Parents have an education agenda too. They want investment in traditional public schools, expand programs to include CTE, reduce class size, support of struggling neighborhood schools, provide a curriculum that includes the arts, and to provide health and nutrition services.

Parents' highest priorities were for schools providing a safe and secure environment, making sure students graduate with the skills needed to move onto college and/or career, that all students, regardless of background, have an equal opportunity to succeed, to help students develop critical thinking skills and reasoning abilities and improve students' knowledge in science and mathematics, English and history.

(continued on page 6)

Looking Beyond International Comparisons

By Bonnie Saracco

We've all heard endlessly about how students in other countries, such as Finland and Singapore, out-score students from the United States on the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA). And the PISA report has often been distorted to push the misguided "school reform" agenda. But how can we use the valuable PISA research to actually make positive changes to our schools here? The presentation "Beyond International Comparisons: Using Research to Influence Policy" addressed this question last summer at the AFT TEACH 2017 Conference in Washington, D.C.

Rob Weil, Director of Field Programs and Educational Issues at AFT, led the panel. He began by stating that "Research is on our side, it's not on the 'reformers' side." These so-called reformers focus on the international score comparisons in the first ten pages of the PISA report and ignore the following lengthy and comprehensive research report about what the results actually reflect.

One faulty conclusion based on PISA is that we simply need to weed out and fire bad teachers. But, as Diane Ravitch has pointed out, we cannot simply "fire our way to Finland." **TALIS, the Teaching and Learning International Survey, reported that the United States dismisses many more teachers based on poor evaluations than any other country.** In fact, teachers in the United States have less tenure protection than teachers in other countries, and far less protection than those in high-performing countries.

The truth is that to compete globally we need to improve teacher support and development to the level of that of the rest of the industrialized world. **We have an increasing problem with teacher turnover due to poor working conditions. Half of our teachers leave the classroom within their first five years of teaching.** This is a serious, expensive problem for our country, resulting in many wasted years of teacher training. Michigan State conducted a study looking at the causes of this problem by categorizing teacher resignation letters. The overwhelming majority of teachers report resigning due to inappropriate and excessive standardized tests,

mandated regimented methods, and punitive teacher assessment methods.

The PISA report also pointed out that teaching is treated as an actual profession in the higher achieving countries, but it is treated as a "semi-profession" here. The difference is in the amount of outside administrative control. In a true profession, such as medicine or law, the hurdles to entry and the standards of practice are controlled by members of the profession itself. In the United States, teachers have almost no control over these factors. Also, in the highest-performing countries, the entrance barriers to teaching are very high, the training is very rigorous, the respect is great, and the working conditions are excellent.

In the United States we are now faced with a worsening teacher shortage, especially in certain geographic locations and subject areas. But instead of proposals to make teaching a more attractive career choice, the 'reformers' propose solving this by watering down requirements to the point of putting people with no education coursework or teacher training into classrooms. **There are even proposals to allow people without college degrees of any kind to teach. Surely this approach would not be proposed for any other profession.**

The PISA report makes other striking points. UNICEF reports that only Romania exceeds the United States in the rate of child poverty among developed nations. But PISA concludes that our schools are the worst in the world in mitigating its effects. **Our schools were also found to be incredibly weak in supporting new teachers, and in developing teachers throughout their careers. One bright spot is that, despite all of these weaknesses, our schools do rank fourth in the world in educational innovation.**

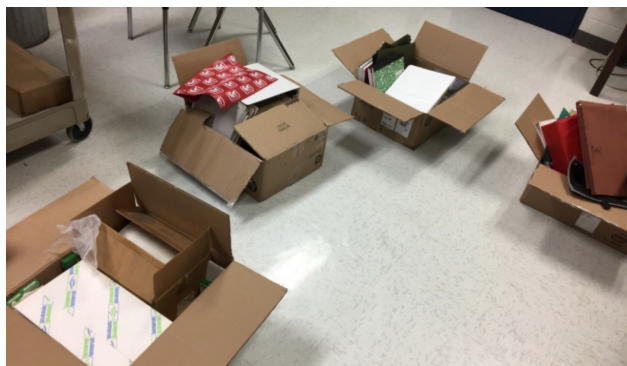
If our students are to compete globally, our schools need to institute the best practices reported in PISA. Sadly, as Randi Weingarten pointed out at the 2015 AFT TEACH, "There are lessons in PISA, but we do the opposite."

571 Members Engaged

571 members engaged with gubernatorial candidate J.B. Pritzker at the annual IL AFL-CIO Labor and Politics Reception on September 13, 2017.



Willowbrook High School donated supplies to a school that was severely impacted by the recent hurricanes. District 88 Teachers Council donated money to help ship the 700 pounds of supplies.



Proud to be PSRP—Elmhurst Support Staff members walked in unity in the Elmhurst St. Patrick's Day Parade.



Celebrate PSRP Day in Illinois on Wednesday, November 15

Every day in schools, colleges, and universities across Illinois, paraprofessionals and school-related personnel (PSRPs) make a difference for our kids and communities. They bus students safely to school, feed them healthy meals, clean buildings, provide security, run offices, and much, much more.



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 a light dinner will be served. Some of the workshops award professional development units. ***Members who register to attend a workshop, but do not attend and have not informed us of the absence at least 24 hours prior to the date of the workshop will be charged \$15 for the cost of the meal.*** Please contact Judy Jennings by phone at 630-468-4098 or e-mail at jjennings@ift-aft.org by the deadline dates listed in the table.

<i>Date of Workshop</i>	<i>Workshop</i>	<i>Deadline for Reservations</i>
11/13/2017	Wisely Using Social Media In and Out of the Classroom	11/9/2017
1/8/2018	Making the Best Choice in 403(b)s	1/4/2018
2/5/2018	Impact of Student Growth on Teacher Evaluation: A Sharing Session on What Your Council Has Learned	2/1/2018
3/12/2018	Student Debt Loan Forgiveness	3/8/2018

MORE WORKSHOPS FOR LOCAL 571 MEMBERS

If you wish to attend one or more of the following workshops which will be held at the Robert M. Healey Conference Center (500 Oakmont Lane, Westmont, IL 60559), please contact Judy Jennings by phone at 630-468-4098 or by e-mail at jjennings@ift-aft.org by the deadline listed for each one. Light dinners will be served. These workshops are free to all Union members.

SB100 (aka Public Act 99-456) Workshop for all Local 571 members, especially Building Representatives:

Gain a deeper understanding of the origins and requirements of SB100 (aka Public Act 99-456); recognize approaches to address school discipline policy and promote a positive school culture and climate, including restorative justice practices; learn from examining a case study; and identify strategies for ensuring district discipline policies to promote a safe, supportive school culture and climate for all staff and students.

Members who register but do not attend and have not notified Judy at least 24 hours in advance of this workshop may be charged \$15 for the cost of the meal.

Thursday, November 2, 2017

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

Reservation deadline: October 27

Worksite Leader Training - Module 1 Workshop for Building Representatives and other Union Leaders:

Union 101 provides an overview of the worksite leaders' responsibilities and their vital role in the labor movement.

Thursday, January 18, 2018

5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Reservation deadline: January 11



Worksite Leader Training - Module 2 Workshop for Building Representatives and other Union Leaders:

Communications and Information reviews the importance of communication in Union building. Participants will review tools and methods for maintaining worksite data and provide opportunities to improve communication skills.

Thursday, February 15, 2018

5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Reservation deadline: February 8

Worksite Leader Training - Module 3 Workshop for Building Representatives and other Union Leaders:

Worksite Advocacy will use individual and group activities to review four areas of member advocacy: gripes and grievances, member representation, contract enforcement, and member mobilization.

Thursday, March 15, 2018

5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Reservation deadline: March 8

Worksite Leader Training - Modules 4 & 5 Workshop for Building Representatives and other Union Leaders:

Mobilization and Engagement (Module 4) will focus on the use of one-on-one conversations to recruit, engage, and mobilize co-workers.

Political, Legislative and Community Engagement (Module 5) will review the Union's policy making and endorsement process.

Thursday, April 12, 2018

5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Reservation deadline: April 4

Retirees' News

The annual Local 571 Retirees Council luncheon in Westmont on September 28, 2017, hosted over 80 attendees including 14 newly retired members. The business meeting was chaired by President Phyllis Meade and Secretary Treasurer Dee Pospishil. There was an opportunity to catch up with old friends and make new ones before the program which featured IFT State Affiliate Political Organizer, Bryen Johnson, who provided a legislative and political update.

Dr. Jessica Cook, the new DePaul Labor Education Center Director, described the adult and high school student programs available through the Center. Each year over 1,000 high school students from around the state participate in collective bargaining role play, learning about the work of unions. Adult coaches from many different AFL-CIO unions guide students through the role play. Francis Espedido, a May 2017 Morton West H.S. graduate, described the three DePaul Labor Education student programs where she had gained much knowledge and appreciation for how unions help all workers.

The next 571 Retirees Council meeting will be held in Spring 2018, where council officer elections will be conducted.



Bryen Johnson, IFT SAPO, described the "state of our state—better but still not great" as he presented to the engaged audience.



Newly retired members Christine Tapling and Nan Loerop shown introducing themselves at the luncheon.



Francis Espedido, DePaul Labor Education student graduate, gestures as she speaks about the programs' merits. Dr. Jessica Cook, DePaul Labor Education Center Director looks on.

Cathy's Corner

On Tyranny
Author: Timothy Snyder



Welcome back to a new school year of reading. The selection for this issue is a book by a Yale historian, Timothy Snyder called, *On Tyranny*. Snyder takes lessons from communist and fascist movements in the twentieth century and suggests their relevance in today's world. This book has been a best seller recently and was given to participants at this summer's TEACH conference. He describes twenty lessons on tyranny that appeal to many people's apprehensions. Communism, Fascism and Nazism, can it happen here in America? The reader is led to consider it can and he encourages us to not be taken by surprise.



For those who care about the protection of our liberties and democratic values, this book gives lessons to help recognize the signs of tyranny and ideas of how to fight against it. Snyder wants us to do as the founding fathers have, to take instruction from the history they knew. He wants us to, "Be as courageous as you can." He goes on to say, "If none of us is prepared to die for freedom, then all of us will die under tyranny." This pocket sized book is a short read, but packs a big punch.

This month's book review was submitted by Cathy Pope, Rosemont Council President and Local 571 Secretary. If you would like to submit a book review on an education or labor topic for Cathy's Corner, please send your review to: Jane Russell, jrussell@ift-aft.org or to 571editor@gmail.com.



Public School Parents Value Public Education (cont'd from page 1)

Support for community schools is also widespread even though the media may focus on groups of parents like African -American or lower income or major city parents, that are portrayed as wanting choice.

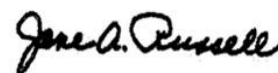
By a wide margin, parents would rather receive their information about public schools from the education professionals. Parents believe that getting the "right ideas for my public schools" did not come from state and federally elected officials, business owners including corporate executives, and hedge fund managers.

Parents desire a different way to approach teaching quality. Struggling teachers should be helped rather than dismissed, only to be hired by new and less experienced teachers. By 73%, parents want teachers to be treated as professionals, raising their hiring

standards and ensure that new and struggling teachers receive more support and training.

We at West Suburban Teachers Union, like the parents, also advocate for the same things for our kids. As education professionals, we know what is best for our students and how to be their voice. Members should take heart that you are being supported in what you do every day for all our students. Thank you and may your students continue to grow and mature in their learning.

In unity,



Local 571 President

Upcoming Events

Halloween is Tuesday October 31



Fall Back



Sunday, November 5

November is Native American Heritage Month, or as it is commonly referred to, American Indian and Alaska Native Heritage Month. The month is a time to celebrate rich and diverse cultures, traditions, and histories and to acknowledge the important contributions of Native people.



Veterans Day 2017 will be on Saturday, November 11th, 2017 and designated as a Federal Holiday on Friday, November 10th, 2017. Veterans Day was originally called "Armistice Day," and the date was chosen to commemorate the signing of the armistice with Germany that ended hostilities during World War I.

What's Missing from the Messenger?

Is there something innovative or exciting happening at your school? If so, we want to hear from you!

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



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

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