

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

# Union Messenger

## “A Union of Professionals”

### WSTU April Calendar

4/16-19—AFT PSRP Conf. - Washington, DC  
 4/20—571 EB Mtg.— Westmont - 5:30 p.m.  
 4/20—571 HOR Mtg. –Westmont - 6:45 p.m.  
 4/20—571 Officers election ballots ready for pickup  
 4/23—Deadline for reservations for 571 TRS Seminar  
 4/25-26—IFT ULI -Westmont  
 4/29—TRS Seminar –Westmont

### Union Messenger

Jane Russell, President  
 Alice Kautsky, Vice President  
 Sandra Erickson, Treasurer  
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 IFT Field Service Director  
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 IFT Field Service Director  
 Judy Jennings, Office Manager  
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 Andrew Bendelow,  
 571 Web Administrator  
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 571 Union Messenger Editor



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### Student Learning Objectives: Making SLOs Work for You

by Jane Russell

With the implementation of student growth as part of a teacher’s summative evaluation, there is now a greater need to consider creating SLOs to measure student growth. Participants left the workshop as titled above with a better knowledge of the implementation requirements of IL School Code Administrative Rule Part 50 requirements for student growth. WSTU sponsored the workshop attended by over 80 participants from four area IFT locals including Local 571 members. Additionally, several Local 571 council leaders were accompanied by school/district administrative staff members who were also seeking additional information about the process. The workshop concentrated on Student Learning Objectives (SLOs) and the connection to the IL Performance Evaluation Reform Act (PERA) incorporating student growth measures through assessments.

Amy Alsop, IFT Professional Development Director, discussed the State Default Model Plan for Measuring Student Growth. PERA Joint Committees are encouraged to make decisions best suited to local needs, timing and contexts. Alsop presented a process detailing joint committee considerations based on Part 50. These considerations include assessment types, growth expectations, a midpoint process, student characteristics, measurement models, rating scale for student growth and the significant factor for student growth to be included in a portion of the teacher’s summative rating.

The Performance Evaluation Advisory Council (PEAC) made recommendations to the ISBE regarding assessment types, measurement models, and the Student Learning Objective (SLO) process. Alsop warned that there is much misinformation about the state require-

ments for student growth. There are state minimums as well as the state model plan to which a district may default for those aspects upon which the PERA joint committee cannot reach agreement. The State Default Model Plan for Measuring Student Growth based on the SLO process can be found at <http://www.isbe.net/rules/archive/pdfs/50ARK.pdf>.

Having presented at the 2014 workshop, three Texas educators, Ken Zarifis, President of Education Austin, Joann Taylor, Director of Leadership Pathways and Ryan O’Donnell, Senior Associate for Student Learning and Assessment for Austin Independent School District (AISD), discussed the implementation of the Austin Model and its SLO design to help improve their students’ educational growth. Throughout eight years, working with the SLO process, there have been successes as well as challenges. The Austin model has adapted over time.



Austin presenter Ryan O’Donnell discussed the process of creating and using SLOs while IFT Professional Issues Director Amy Alsop recorded valuable ideas and information.

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## Student Learning Objectives: Making SLOs Work for You (cont. d)



Education Austin President Ken Zarifis (right) raffled a special Texas t-shirt. AISD administrators Ryan O'Donnell and Joann Taylor (left) congratulated the t-shirt winner, Debi Wright, Coordinator of Humanities Director for Elmhurst Unit District 205.

Ken Zarifis provided the background and collaborative work being done in the AISD to improve student growth through use of SLOs. Joann Taylor described the Austin context and overview of the newest program of Professional Pathways for Teachers. The Austin model for teacher "appraisal" uses the following components with percentages for arriving at a teacher's summative rating:

- 50% Instructional Practice
- 25% Professional Growth and Responsibilities
- 15% Student Learning Objectives
- 10% School-wide Value-Added

The AISD SLO process was explained in detail by Ryan O'Donnell who was a junior high mathematics teacher. The Learning Objective is aligned with an area of high need to the content standards. Then a learning objective statement is written that focuses on the area of high need. A pre-assessment and post-assessment as well as growth targets are chosen to meet the requirements for the SLO. Although at times the process appeared cumbersome, the AISD provided excellent software programs for teachers to track student scores and data. Now in its 8th year of using the SLO process, the district has built up a database of SLOs that teachers can use. There is also a considerable system of supports built in for helping teachers through the SLO process. Ryan outlined successes as well as challenges and things to consider for use of SLOs.

Workshop participants were grateful for the depth of knowledge of the presenters, their abilities to break down the process to a user friendly level, and for the support being offered to teachers who use the SLO process for student growth measurement. Plans are being made to provide further training to IFT members. For handouts and power point presentations from the February 26, 2015, workshop, which included several internet informational sites, contact your council officers.

Local 571 will continue to provide assistance to all councils as they work in their joint committees to create and successfully implement the IL Performance Evaluation Reform Act in their districts.

## Using Share My Lesson as a Parent Resource by Bonnie Saracco

**Share My Lesson** is a free teacher-developed resource that can help anyone working with students. *Share My Lesson* has resources for the new teacher looking for great lesson plans, for the experienced teacher with successful lessons to share, for the paraprofessional with great ideas for working with individuals and small groups, and for the professor of teacher education developing student teachers. *Share My Lesson* also has great resources for parents.

Positive partnerships between schools and families help students thrive. These good relationships foster student achievement, motivation, good behavior, and improved attendance. Some parents find this relationship challenging due to their own attitudes, school experiences, and language barriers. The link: <http://tinyurl.com/SMLparentpartnerships> has a parent-focused collection of ideas to help.

AFT professional development courses and materials also include strategies for developing respectful and productive relationships between home and school. When communicating with parents it is important that teachers focus on accomplishments and be very specific about how parents can support classroom learning. Teachers should practice active listening by giving parents undivided attention, paraphrasing to verify, acknowledging feelings, and asking questions to assure understanding. Respect for cultural differences, confidentiality, and positive nonverbal communication are all important.

An early phone call, letter, or email home sets a positive tone and establishes expectations. Consistent feedback on behavior and performance, timeliness, and follow-through are crucial. Communications should be clear and useful to the parent.

Phone calls are particularly effective when they share good news. The first call can be difficult, and jotting down a brief outline helps. An easy pattern for the call is to introduce yourself, tell the parent what the student is studying, comment on the child's progress and achievements, and share an anecdote as an example.

Many parents have heard of the Common Core State Standards and have questions about them. This topic can be overwhelming. It is challenging for the teacher to know what to convey. Here again, *Share My Lesson* can help. It has sample letters to introduce parents to the standards and has Common Core guides to help parents support their child's learning. Many of these materials are designed for parents of children who are English language learners or have special needs.

Finally, bullying is a huge concern for parents and students. *Share My Lesson* includes anti-bullying resources specifically intended for parents.

AFT continues to work tirelessly to give educators the tools we need.



## Right to Work in Illinois? by Jane Russell

*Yes, it could be coming to your neighborhood. This issue affects all workers, not just union workers. Please **review this bill** carefully and write to your legislators to **VOTE NO ON HOUSE BILL 4139**. Talk to your colleagues and your neighbors using the facts below. We do not want Illinois to follow in the path of Wisconsin, Michigan or Indiana. **We can stop this, TOGETHER.***

Thanks for your continuing efforts.

In unity,

*Jane A. Russell*

Local 571 President

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HB 4139  
Right to Work Act  
Sponsor: Reggie Phillips (R-110)

**Summary:** Provides that a person may not be required to join or contribute to a labor organization as a condition of employment. Provides that employees have the right not to become or remain a member of a labor organization, or to pay any dues, fees, assessments, or other similar charges to a labor organization, Eliminates provisions authorizing fair share agreements.

### VOTE NO ON HOUSE BILL 4139

- *The term “right to work” is a misnomer that has little to do with the right of a person to seek and accept gainful employment. It does not give anyone an actual right-to-work. Instead it makes it harder for workers to have a union in their workplace.*
- *“Right to work” laws prohibit a labor union from negotiating union security clauses with an employer. Union security clauses and fair share fees ensure that everyone in a union-represented workplace contributes to the cost of the union’s activities from which they benefit.*
- *Unions help to raise the standard of living for all workers. When unions are weakened and their ranks reduce, all workers suffer. The quality of life is worse in right to work states. Wages are lower, poverty levels are higher, people are less likely to have health insurance, and resources for education are lower.*
  - \* *On average, workers in states with right to work laws make \$5,971 (12.2 percent) less annually than workers in other states. (Bureau of Labor Statistics)*
  - \* *Poverty rates are higher in states with “right to work” laws (14.8 percent overall and 20.2 percent for children), compared with poverty rates of 13.1 percent overall and 18.3 percent for children in states without these laws. (US Census Bureau)*
- *In a report from the University of Illinois on right to work – “Right to Work has an obvious negative impact on union membership. Additionally, for female, African-American, and Latino workers, right to work tends to have negative impacts on real hourly wages. It would remove structures that reduce racial and gender inequality.”*
- *Since laws that hurt unions shift the balance of power from employees to owners, they tend to erode wages and lead to a more uneven distribution of the gains of economic growth.”*
- *Passing Right-to-Work laws or banning Fair Share fees has one goal—shifting the balance of power away from workers and to employers. Laws are already in place allowing workers the freedom to choose whether to join a union.*
- *From the University of Illinois report: “When isolated and measured against other job creation variables, right to work has no proven record of stimulating meaningful economic growth. By comparison, Illinois would reap far greater economic benefits by increasing its investment in education and skilled-based training.”*
- *What’s at risk if a right to work law passed in Illinois?*
  - \* *Hourly wages of African-American workers would drop by 2-9 percent over time.*
  - \* *Hourly wages of Hispanic workers could drop by as much as 8 percent over time.*
  - \* *Hourly wages of women would fall by 2-7 percent over time.*
  - \* *Approximately 107 additional Illinois workers would lose their lives due to work-related injuries in the construction sector over 10 years. The rate of workplace deaths is 54.4 percent higher in states with right to work laws (BLS).*
  - \* *After the third year of adoption, the five-year reduction in state income tax revenues would be between \$1.4 billion and \$1.6 billion.*

# The Illinois Teachers Retirement System (TRS) Seminar

*Sponsored by the West Suburban Teachers Union Local 571*

**WHEN:** Wednesday, April 29, 2015  
5:00 p.m.—7:30 p.m.

**FOR:** Local 571 members (teachers) close to retirement

**WHAT:** Light dinner followed by a presentation by a representative of the Illinois Teachers Retirement System

**WHERE:** Robert M. Healey Conference Center  
500 Oakmont Lane, Oakmont, IL 60559

**R.S.V.P.:** If you plan to attend, contact Judy Jennings by *April 23* at 630-468-4098 or [jjennings@ift-aft.org](mailto:jjennings@ift-aft.org)



Here's one more thing  
Union families can share

**Save on family entertainment**, including theme parks, car rentals and movie tickets with Union Plus. Union Plus gets union families where the fun is, with special discounts on a long list of travel and amusement attractions—including Disney and Six Flags. Who knew your union membership could be so...entertaining?



A Union of Professionals  
AFT +  
Member Benefits

Save the Union Way at  
[UnionPlus.org/AFT](http://UnionPlus.org/AFT)



March is packed with teachable moments! Visit the following websites for resources on Women's History Month and Girls' Education.

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/letgirlslearn>

<http://www.internationalwomensday.com/>

<http://womenshistorymonth.gov/>

<http://www.history.com/topics/holidays/womens-history-month>

<http://www.sharemylesson.com/article.aspx?storyCode=50009863#.VP4RVqN0y72>

## What's Missing from the Messenger?



Email your news and thoughts to:  
**Robin Hancock at:**  
[571editor@gmail.com](mailto:571editor@gmail.com)



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