

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

Union Messenger

“A Union of Professionals”

WSTU April

4/5—Deadline for reservations for 571 TRS seminar
 4/10—TRS Seminar—Westmont - 5:00 p.m.
 4/17—571 EB Mtg.—Westmont - 5:30 p.m.
 4/17—571 HOR Mtg.—Westmont - 6:45 p.m.
 4/17—571 Officers’ election ballots ready for pickup
 4/17—571 proposed budget presented to HOR
 4/22-23—IFT ULI - Westmont

Union Messenger

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In Times of Uncertainty by Jane Russell

What direction will the state of Illinois take with public education through its decisions on the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)?



Because of the disruption federally, what decisions will the Illinois State Board of Education take on behalf of our schools? ESSA’s promise is to focus on equity, support and resources to our public schools. Will that be the case?

Since the process of writing the State ESSA report began last spring, there have been well over 80 meetings of many statewide committees, focus groups and a legislative task force.

The final report is to be submitted to the U.S. Department of Education on or before April 3, 2017. The third draft is available briefly for public comment and then goes to the ISBE and governor who must sign off on the plan.

Through all the draft plans, the Illinois Federation of Teachers along with the Chicago Teachers Union has expressed concern, in their written comments, that the failed NCLB approach of testing and punishment was not an appropriate accountability system. Instead, the ESSA plan could have a framework with a focus on providing state inputs and resources for our public schools that support all students.

The IFT and CTU have worked with other stakeholders in development of the ESSA plan including state education agencies in K-12, Higher Education and Early Learning, the PTA, Superintendents and Principals, the Regional Offices of Education, and other groups like the Latino Policy Forum which has a vested interest in the education of all children, but particularly Hispanic children. English Language Learners continue to be a subgroup of state testing and accountability. The IFT and CTU have offered several suggested ESSA plan updates, grounded in research, for EL students in development of their English language proficiency.

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Paraprofessional Empowerment by Bonnie Saracco

Grocery shopping, ironing, cleaning. These are some of the domestic chores that paraprofessionals regularly did for principals in the 1960's. Paraprofessionals also suffered the exploitative practices of low pay, lack of a career ladder, and lay-offs every June. They clearly needed empowerment.

Ironically, it took the divisive crisis of Ocean Hill – Brownsville to finally give them a voice. In 1967, an experimental, community-controlled school district was established in this mostly minority Brooklyn neighborhood. Soon after the district's inception, its leaders fired 83 teachers and other workers without any evidence of wrongdoing. This situation pitted the community against the United Federation of Teachers (UFT), whose members saw the firings as the final straw in a long history of injustices for New York City teachers.

After the teachers were reinstated, UFT and AFT both saw the need for a path to reunification. They knew that paraprofessionals had been working in the schools for years without rights or dignity, and that they needed a voice, but who would represent them? Although the wounds of Ocean Hill-Brownsville were still fresh, the UFT had just shown its strength. Its organizers visited the homes of paraprofessionals throughout New York City, making the union's case for the chance to organize them. Because of what they had just seen the UFT do for teachers, it was the Ocean Hill-Brownsville paraprofessionals whose votes put the UFT bid over the top.

The negotiations for paraprofessionals' rights went on for months. The New York City Board of Education believed that teachers would never fight hard for paraprofessionals. The Board was wrong. UFT ran a program which educated teachers about the injustices against paraprofessionals. Also, many paraprofessionals took public speaking courses and presented their case in the churches. These efforts brought about classroom-driven support from teachers, and minister-driven support from the community.

The results for paraprofessionals included yearly raises, employment security, pensions, and a career ladder. Paraprofessionals could now advance through the steps of teacher aide, educational assistant, educational associate, and auxiliary trainer. They lined up for blocks to register for the classes they needed to take for these advancements. Many also went on to become teachers, guidance counselors, principals, and politicians. In addition, bus drivers, school secretaries, administrative assistants, custodians, and cafeteria workers were among the essential school staff who, seeing these results, began to organize.

Unfortunately, today these advances face substantial challenges. There are still districts where paraprofessionals and other staff work under unacceptable employment practices. And contracting out is a formidable threat to their jobs. AFT continues to fight these battles, placing a major emphasis on ensuring the implementation of the protections contained in federal legislation.



The Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) was reincarnated in 2001 as the disastrous No Child Left Behind (NCLB). Largely due to AFT efforts, the latest federal education legislation, the Every Child Succeeds Act (ESSA) keeps important guarantees for paraprofessionals in place. ESSA preserves their certification requirements, which stops districts from hiring paraprofessionals with insufficient education and training. It also includes paraprofessionals among the stakeholders who must participate in decisions about the use of Title I and Title II funds. ESSA also provides funding for block grants to expand paraprofessional advanced training opportunities. Most importantly, the bargaining rights of paraprofessionals are ensured by the collective Title I and Title II protections.

The ill-informed and dangerous education policy intentions of President Trump and Secretary of Education DeVos make it more important than ever for us to watch the ESSA implementation every step of the way.

In Times of Uncertainty *(cont'd from page 1)*

There are five overarching components of the Consolidated State Plan Under the Every Student Succeeds Act. These sections include:

- Long Term Goals
- Consultation and Performance Management
- Academic Assessments
- Accountability, Support and Improvement of Schools
- Supporting Excellent Educators
- Supporting All Students

Members of the IFT and CTU have participated in all of the meetings held to discuss the writing of the state ESSA plan and provided valuable input based upon our members' expertise and research that supports the cause. The third draft letter to the ISBE from the IFT and CTU states:

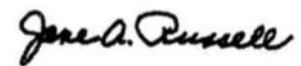
We have maintained that the focus of the ESSA State plan should be to “address funding inequities and insufficiencies, ensuring safe and healthy learning environments, fixing the Performance Evaluation Reform Act, avoiding overreliance on accountability as the driver of improvement, and providing schools with resources to comprehensively address stability and security.”

The final discussion/adoption of the ESSA State plan by the ISBE will be at its next meeting on March 15, 2017. The third and all other drafts can be viewed on <https://www.isbe.net/essa>.

The IFT and CTU comments to the draft plans can be viewed on the IFT website, <https://www.ift-aft.org/essa>.

For a while, there will be uncertainty in not only implementation, but also funding of ESSA. No matter the outcome, we will forge ahead knowing that we will continue to fight for and provide the best education that we can for all our students.

In unity,



Local 571 President

Retiree Corner

Renewal for Retired Educators: An educator must complete Professional Development on a prorated basis depending on the number of years the educator held an active license. When educators retire, they change their status to “retired” in ELIS. Through **December 31, 2017:** If an educator failed to change his/her status to “retired” in ELIS and lapsed due to failure to renew, the educator may reinstate the license and maintain it in retired status upon providing proof to ISBE using ELIS that the licensee is retired and not working in a position that requires a Professional Educator License (PEL).



March Equinox Equal Day and Night



There are two equinoxes every year – in March and September – when the Sun shines directly on the equator and the length of night and day are nearly equal.

The March Equinox in Chicago, is on Monday, March 20, 2017 at 5:29 am.

Three Ways to Save

CAR RENTAL

Up to 25% discount on car rental deals with Avis, Budget, Hertz, Dollar, Thrifty & Payless.

CREDIT CARD

Several credit card choices, all with competitive rates and U.S.-based customer service, designed to meet the needs of union members.

MORTGAGE

The Union Plus mortgage program makes buying or refinancing a home easy for you and your children.

*Certain restrictions, limitations, and qualifications apply to these grants. Additional information and eligibility criteria can be obtained at UnionPlus.org/Assistance. Credit approval required. Terms and conditions apply. The Union Plus Credit Cards are issued by Capital One, N.A., pursuant to a license from MasterCard International Incorporated. Capital One N.A. is not responsible for the contents of this message and/or any of the other third party products/services mentioned. The MasterCard Brand Mark is a registered trademark of MasterCard International Incorporated.

UnionPlus.org/aftbenefits



Did You Know?

March is Women's History Month



1837 Oberlin College is the first college or university to admit female students. Women students are required to do laundry and cooking for the male students.

1849 Elizabeth Blackwell graduates from medical school and becomes the first woman physician in the U.S.

1866 Lucy Hobbs is the first woman to graduate from dental school.

1869 Arabella Mansfield is granted a law license in Iowa, making her the first woman lawyer in the U.S.

1885 Sarah E. Goode is the first African American woman to earn a patent for her bed that folds into a cabinet.

1896 Alice Guy Blache is the first American woman filmmaker.

1916 Jeanette Rankin of Montana is the first woman elected to the U.S. House of Representatives.

1946 Edith Houghton is the first woman hired as a major league baseball scout.

1970 Diane Crump is the first woman jockey to ride in the Kentucky Derby.

1983 Sally Ride is the first American woman astronaut to travel into space.

1985 Wilma Mankiller is the first woman chief of the Cherokee Nation.

1993 Sheila Widnall becomes Secretary of the Air Force, the first woman to lead any branch of the military.

To learn more about Women's History Month visit:

<http://www.nwhp.org/womens-history-month/2017-honoree-nominations/>

<https://sharemylesson.com/content/womens-history-month-0>

What's Missing from the Messenger?



Submit Your News

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



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