

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

# Union Messenger

## "A Union of Professionals"

### Labor 2014 Shows How it is Done

#### Union Messenger

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From late August until 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, November 4, 2014, many Local 571 members as well as other union members participated in the Labor 2014 campaign. In Westmont, 12-15 persons (members and their family members) participated in the phone bank filling the phone lines nearly every evening. In the early calls, member information updates were requested. Following that, members were called on to vote for IFT endorsed candidates. Finally, during the last week, calls were made to "Get Out the Vote."



Local 571 members as well as those from other unions, made union member-to-member calls in Westmont every Monday-Thursday evenings beginning in late August through the general election.

Beginning mid-September and through the weekend prior to the general election, other 571 members participated in walks, talking labor-to-labor about voting for Governor Quinn. Members participated in weekend walks in the areas of Schaumburg, Elgin and Hillside. This campaign effort brought labor union members together. When labor works together, labor wins. And that was true in many of the local races.

For a complete list of election results, go to the following link:

<http://www.ift-aft.org/legislative/endorsements>



Following a township Labor Breakfast, IFT and Local 571 members rallied at Local 1211 Northwest Suburban Teachers Union along with Congresswoman Tammy Duckworth, 8th CD. Surrounding the Congresswoman are (l->r): Jane Russell (571 President,) Arnavaz Mistry-Mujthaba (IFT Field Staff for 571) Cynthia Riseman (IFT Political Activities Dept.) and Julie McShane (Lyons Council)

## New (and Better?) Beginnings

by Jane Russell



Tuesday, November 4, 2014--seems like it was months ago, when in reality it was only weeks. The upcoming holiday season may help some of us to work out our differences and move on. For others, those disturbed by the outcome of the Illinois governor's race, it may seem the next four YEARS are going to be long ones.

So, what can we expect from Governor-elect Rauner and his "Bring Back Blueprint" on education reform? His Education Transition Policy Committee is composed of a foundation executive director (provides grants for early childhood in large cities), a Chicago charter school CEO, a president of a mid-state community college, president emeritus of a state university, a second grade teacher from a south suburban K-8 school district and an associate superintendent from a large suburban high school district. The Rauner blueprint includes investing in children, supporting great teachers, enhancing education opportunity, improving higher education and expanding job training. Let's look at the first two education reform proposals.

### Investing in our children means

- significantly increasing education funding, the top priority for state investment. Assuming a pro-growth environment can be created to provide additional funds for education as well a rewrite of the education funding formulas, homeowner property taxes will not have to be increased.
- supporting early childhood education by investing in early childhood programs and improving the coordination of state preschool and child care funds including federal programs.
- by boosting and improving vocational and technology training, every student in Illinois should be properly trained for the workforce. This can be done by significantly expanding public-private partnerships between high schools, community colleges, 4-year universities and employers.
- reforming education bureaucracy to reduce administrative costs and free up more funding for teachers and students requiring school district consolidation.
- allowing school boards to opt out of unfunded mandates if innovation and improved education outcomes can be shown.

### Supporting great teachers means

- changing the way educators are paid by rewarding high-performing teachers with merit pay. The current contractual

pay schedules honor teachers with more experience and education. The claim is that these type of salary schedules show little improvement in student performance. Therefore, only those teachers who make a positive impact in the classroom should be paid more.

- providing a \$250 tax credit/year on qualified classroom expenditures
- reforming teacher tenure like the state of Florida which offers annual contracts for all new teachers, purportedly keeping the best teachers in the classroom and removing low-performing teachers.
- Adopting a *Success Schools* statute which would allow schools in the top 10% of academic growth to obtain a lump-sum per pupil budget to be spent at the discretion of the schools in a manner which best serves its students. The governance structure would be determined by the teachers who could make decisions within the context of a collective bargaining agreement. Teachers would be empowered to run their own school.

Recall that Rauner's commitment to education reform includes his key financial support of six new charter high schools in Chicago, a turnaround campus, scholarship programs for disadvantaged students and merit pay plans for teachers and principals in Chicago Public Schools. He has also served on the boards of Chicago charter schools, the education committee of the Civic Committee of the Commercial Club of Chicago and is chairman of a charter school and a Chicago Public Education Fund.

A telling quote from the document is "In the *Bring Back Blueprint: Education Reform*, specific policy proposals are outlined that will return real value to Illinois parents, students and teachers." The entire document can be found at:

<http://brucerauner.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/Bring-Back-Blueprint-Education-Reform.pdf>

In order to continue to work in the public schools as we know them, take some time to inform yourself about the governor elect's outline of school reform. Let's work together to ensure public education is about the students and their achievement, not someone's grandiose plan. Otherwise, it will be an excruciatingly lengthy four years.

In unity,

*Jane A. Russell*

Local 571 President

## Common Core Roadshow

by Bonnie Saracco

This October I participated in a new professional development model for the Common Core State Standards. Jane Russell and I had been trained in Washington by AFT to be Common Core trainers. Last summer we presented a day of Common Core training. I taught English Language Arts in the morning, and Jane taught Math Common Core in the afternoon.

The day was very successful, but there is an additional need for curriculum directors and administrators to join teachers to learn and plan together for the best implementation of Common Core.

A unique partnership between AFT/IFT and the Illinois Association of School Administrators (IASA) is addressing this need, starting by training over 100 people throughout Illinois on the English Language Arts Common Core State Standards.

The project was created and implemented by Lisa Dickinson, AFT Assistant Director of Educational Issues, and Sharon Teefey and Amy Alsop, IFT Professional Issues Directors. Dr. Brent Clark, Executive Director of IASA, provided leadership from Illinois administrators.

Because Common Core implementation is a complex and challenging task requiring collaboration, AFT/IFT piloted this model of Common Core training to bring educators with various roles together. By the end of the day, each team had developed a practical plan to bring ELA Common Core strategies back to its own school... a "train the trainers" model.

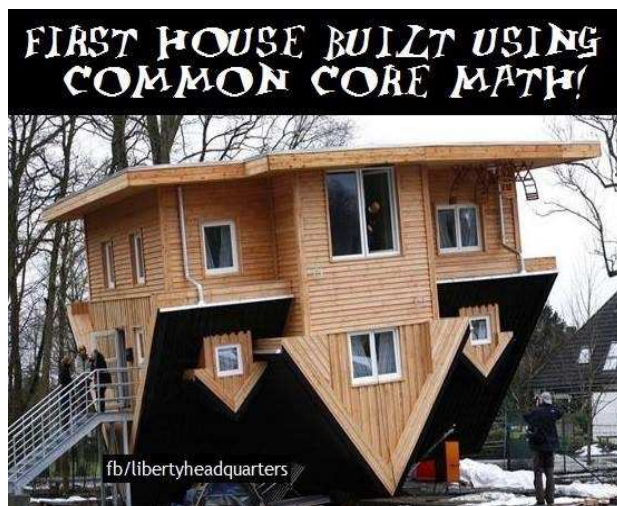
The training was done by AFT national trainers. Robin Kapser, Tina Stevens, and I presented it in Westmont and Peoria, and the "road show" moved on to Quincy and Fairview Heights with Robin and Tina being joined by Judi Herzog.

Teams from each school or district included both teachers and administrators. We began each day with a discussion of where they were on the continuum of ELA Common

Core implementation. This gave everyone the chance to share questions, concerns, and effective strategies already being used to meet the standards.

Next we covered close analytic reading and text-dependent questions. We examined how these strategies support the instructional shifts required by Common Core. Participants learned the characteristics of high-quality text-dependent questions. They wrote and evaluated text-dependent questions of their own. We also shared online resources where these questions are available.

Also, the training in Quincy was enriched by the participation of a librarian from the public library there. She focused on ways to help students and parents meet the standards.



The training was very well received. Participants throughout the state expressed appreciation for the opportunity for educators with various roles to work together to bring this information back to their schools.

A similar Common Core "road show" for Math Common Core is planned for spring. Jane Russell will be one of the trainers for the spring class. Our hope is that AFT will replicate this project in other states as we all work together for student success with Common Core.



## AFT LEAD Morton by Arnavaz Mistry-Mujthaba

The Morton Teachers Council was selected in late 2013 to participate in a year-long endeavor of community engagement as part of AFT's Leadership Education and Development (LEAD) Program. The purpose of the LEAD program is to prepare leaders and leadership teams to put in place innovative, solution-driven ideas with the impetus to "Reclaim the Promise" for our members and our communities. Guiding the LEAD program this year on behalf of Morton were: Tony LaCivita, Karen Klafeta, Adrian Gannon, Angela Barerra and Rob Bartlett.

Morton's culminating two activities for the 2014 calendar year were participation in the 2014 Homecoming Parade on October 3 as well as assisting with the planning of the "Day of the Dead" festivities on October 30 held at the Morton Freshman Center.

A large group of teachers marched during the Homecoming Parade while carrying a banner provided by the AFT entitled "Reclaiming the Promise" as well as the Morton Council's own banner. During the "Day of the Dead" festivities, the Morton teachers hosted a table for young children to color a mask to which was affixed their favorite elementary teacher's name in honor of that teacher. The Morton teachers also prepared a memorial table in honor of teachers who had passed away in recent years and months.

The AFT LEAD year for Morton concluded with a final meeting in Peoria hosted by the IFT and AFT on December 5 and 6. **Congratulations** to the Morton LEAD team teachers who volunteered much time for travel, planning and execution of various activities throughout the 2014 calendar year!



Homecoming Parade—October 14  
Morton Teachers in their spirit wear marching in the Homecoming Parade from Morton East to Morton West.



Morton Council Day of the Dead Altar honoring those employees who have passed away in recent years.



Council President, Tony LaCivita, assisting young attendees with writing the name of their favorite elementary teachers on the mask after which time it is displayed on the bulletin board.



Teacher Kevin Krizizke, Peg Frigo, Mary Burke, Karen Klafeta and Tony LaCivita participating at the Day of the Dead festivities.



Do you want to earn 30 professional development units?

Do you want to earn two undergraduate or graduate credit hours?

Do you want to gain a better understanding of the ELA Common Core Standards and learn research-based activities to use in the classroom?

Do you want to gain valuable information about how these professional development courses are tied to the domains of the Danielson Model for teacher growth and evaluation?

IF YOU ANSWERED YES TO ANY OF THESE QUESTIONS, YOU WILL WANT TO SIGN UP FOR ONE OF THE.....

# Local 571 Professional Development Classes for Winter 2015

For course descriptions and a registration form, go to [www.wstu571.org](http://www.wstu571.org) or call Judy Jennings at 630-468-4098.

**Dates:** Feb. 5, 12, 19, 25; March 5, 12, 19, 26  
(8 Sessions) (All Thurs. except Feb. 25)  
4:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

**Registration Deadline:** Friday, Jan. 22, 2015

**Location:** 500 Oakmont Lane  
Westmont, IL 60559

**Two classes will be held:**

*Reading Comprehension  
Instruction  
and  
Foundations of Effective  
Teaching I: Organizing the  
Classroom Environment for Teaching  
and Learning*

**Cost:** \$50/course for members  
\$100/course for non-members

Cost includes materials and a light supper each day.

(For an additional cost, participants can earn two GSU graduate credit hours or two Prairie State Community College undergraduate credit hours.)

## 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>
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

### Job Opening in Local 571 for Union Messenger Editor

The West Suburban Teachers Union, Local 571, has a job opening for the position of editor of the *Union Messenger*. Excellent writing skills as well as communications skills are essential. Knowledge of Microsoft Office Publisher or similar desktop publishing program is preferred. The editor also chairs the WSTU Local 571 Communications Committee, works along with the WSTU Local 571 President and 571 web administrator, and attends regular local meetings and events. A Local 571 member will be given preference in hiring. Compensation is in the form of a yearly stipend.

A resume and writing sample(s)/layout(s) are due no later than January 5, 2015, to WSTU Local 571. Applicants may be interviewed the week of January 12, 2015.

For further information, contact Local 571 President, Jane Russell, 630-468-4043 or jrussell@ift-aft.org.



### Festive Savings

Make Union Plus your one-stop source for holiday gifts this year. Stretch your budget with all kinds of valuable discounts and rebates available to union members, including:

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- Discount tickets to movies, plays, museums, sporting events and theme parks.
- Savings on everything from flowers and clothing to gift certificates and presents for pets.

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\*Credit approval required. New two-year service agreement may be required. Offer cannot be combined with any other discounts. Only the shared minutes and data for AT&T Mobile Share plans are discounted. Offer available to union members and retired union members.



*At this time of the year, we wish you and your family the best holiday season and an opportunity to spend time together, to reflect on the past year and prepare for the next.*

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*West Suburban Teachers Union Officers and Staff*

West Suburban Teachers Union Local 571  
500 Oakmont Lane  
P.O. Box 390  
Westmont, IL 60559-0390  
Phone: 630-468-4098 Fax: 630-468-4088

We're on the  
Web!!!  
[www.wstu571.org](http://www.wstu571.org)