



# Union Messenger

August-September 2009

## State Board Proposes New Certification/Recertification Rules

The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) has proposed Rule changes that will affect certification and recertification for education workers. Recommendations for Part 25 (Certification) of the *Illinois School Code* include amendments addressing the push for “teacher quality.” Changes include:

- Requiring a minimum C grade in all courses used for certification or endorsement in specific subject areas in the undergraduate and graduate levels of teacher preparation programs
- Limiting to five, the number of times a candidate can take any certification or endorsement test. There is no current limit.
- All endorsements are to require a minimum of 24 semester hours.

*(Continued on page 5)*

## WSTU Members Attend Summer Seminars Courses, Workshops, and Events



*Jon Pazol on board the U.S. Coast Guard ice breaker/research ship Healy in early August. Pazol returns to Leyden after a six-week arctic assignment September 21, ice permitting.*

took part in the AFTCN workshops and conference, and nine Local 571 members completed various courses at the Great Lakes Union Leadership Institute (ULI). A number of these experiences are reflected in this issue’s articles and images.

West Leyden science teacher and Local 571 financial secretary Jon Pazol is doing research in the Arctic Ocean as a member of an ARMADA Project team funded by the National Science Foundation and run by the University of Rhode Island Graduate School of Oceanography.

*(Continued on page 3)*

Summer for West Suburban Teachers Union members is always a busy time. Among many notable activities, Local 571 president Jane Russell attended a national meeting for local presidents. Cathleen Pope, Bonnie Saracco, and Jane Russell attended the Quality Educational Standards in Teaching (QuEST) conference. Patricia Gill participated in the AFT’s New Leadership School. Andrew Bendelow and Mike Dale



*Riverside Council president Patricia Gill pictured in Washington D.C. at the New Leadership School in July*

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### NCLB Morphs into ARRA and RttT

by Jane Russell

Prior to the AFT QuEST conference, the AFT held a local presidents’ workshop. One of the topics presented was “How the Stimulus Affects You, Your School and Your Students.” Although this may sound like a sleeper, I did not nod off once during the presentation and here’s why.

While much of the \$3 billion from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) has already been

*(Continued on page 4)*

### Coming in October:

- School Funding, Part 2
- H1N1 Update
- New-Teacher Resources
- Negotiations/Contract Update
- 2009-10 Scholarship Update
- ER&D Course Announcements
- Chicago Museums: “Free” Days

The professional accomplishments of WSTU members and their students are always of interest. Your Council president or representative can forward details, or you may email information to the WSTU office manager Judy Jennings at [jjennings@ift-aft.org](mailto:jjennings@ift-aft.org), subject: *Union Messenger*

# Lobbying on the Hill for Healthcare Reform

*from your president*

The AFT's "Fight for America's Future—It's Dollars and Sense" effort continues with a push to secure health care for all. During the Quality Educational Standards in Teaching (QuEST) conference in Washington, DC this past July, union members were sent to rally on AFT lobby day and then meet with Congressmen and Senators in their offices. Teams of 3 or 4 local leaders fanned out over Capitol Hill to deliver the message that effective reform will:

- Reduce healthcare costs and save money.
- Establish a public plan option providing more choices for families and hold private insurers accountable.
- Ensure that employer-provided healthcare benefits are not taxed.
- Require quality staffing standards to improve healthcare.



Team Illinois included Sharon Crockett (President of East St. Louis Federation of Teachers), Michelle Eberlin (President of Quincy Federation of Teachers) and me. Senator Dick Durbin's office is in the Hart Senate Building where we met his Legislative Assistant, Mayra Alvarez. Senator Durbin was with the Senate Judiciary committee interviewing Justice Sonia Sotomayor, so he was unavailable, but Mayra was very knowledgeable about the senate proposal for healthcare reform and suggested that as many as six Republican senators may join Democrats to approve a bill. Mayra also explained the proposed timeline with hopes of passage in November, 2009.

Mayra agreed on the senator's behalf with most of the AFT reform points listed above. She explained that the larger issue was to adopt a public plan whereby all citizens could opt in even if they had a pre-existing condition. Other "pocket" issues would have to be worked out or set aside for the greater good of the plan.

Team Illinois moved to the Cannon Office Building to visit with Congressman Phil Hare's (D-17th, Decatur) staff. As we entered the building, elevator lights were going off to warn legislators to proceed to the Capitol to vote on a bill. Although Congressman Hare was not available, his Legislative Director, Janna Bergquist and Legislative Assistant, Kemi Jemilohun, talked with us about the healthcare legislation in the House. During our discussion, both women thanked us for being knowledgeable about the details of the debate. Congressman Hare, who is also a union member, was in full agreement with the AFT reform tenets.

Because it was important to return to an AFT briefing session, we dropped off literature and a note to Congressman Peter Roskam's (R-6<sup>th</sup>, Bloomington) aide, Kevin Kuhlman, in the Cannon Office building.

We returned to AFT debriefing to discuss our "findings" with the AFT legislative staff. All things considered, we felt our time was productive and well spent.

As the debate continues, we now have contacts in each of the Congressional and Senate offices we visited, where we can continue to let our voices be heard about healthcare reform. AFT leaders and its Legislative Department understand the importance of these issues not only for AFT members, but for all U.S. citizens, and particularly for the children we teach. We look forward to a continued dialogue.

To get the facts straight, learn about the AFT's position on health insurance reform, and to be part of the discussion, visit: <http://www.aft.org/fight4america>.

At the QuEST plenary session AFT President Randi Weingarten presented Education Secretary Arne Duncan an AFT button which read, "With us not to us." This slogan should be the mantra for all education workers. Work with us to provide our students the best education system in the world and don't tell us what to do, ignoring our professional judgment and expertise.

We at WSTU are here to provide assistance and keep you up to date on broad state and national educational issues. Despite all the proposed changes, a new school year provides a new and fresh beginning. We hope that the 2009-10 school year is successful for you and your students.

In unity,

Local 571 President

## Contact Congress about healthcare reform

The congressional recess is over, and representatives and senators are back in Washington, D.C. Now is the time to tell your elected officials to craft healthcare reform proposals that guarantee high-quality and affordable healthcare for all, establish a comprehensive public plan option, and ensure safe-staffing standards in healthcare facilities.

Urge them to reject proposals to tax employer-provided benefits. An [online campaign](#) with a sample letter that you can send is available at:

<http://www.unionvoice.org/campaign/HCreform060809>

# AFT QuEST Conference Advocates Community Schools

by Bonnie Saracco

**AFT** President Randi Weingarten led a plenary session on community schools at last summer's QuEST Conference in Washington D.C., at which Weingarten and community school leaders strongly advocated for expanding this school model.

They pointed out the frustrating reality that nonschool factors can have significant negative impact on academic achievement, and that one of our greatest challenges is to improve the learning of students who face the tremendous obstacles of generational poverty. Community schools partner with resources such as businesses, health clinics, social service agencies, and higher education institutions to provide needed supports and solve community problems.

There is no one defining model of a community school. Exemplary community schools take a variety of forms because they address the needs of their individual communities. But they all are based on systematic analysis of the services needed, and they focus on student success within a rigorous curriculum.

After-school tutoring programs are often part of the mix, but it takes far more to provide an effective community school. Community schools also offer medical services such as primary health, vision, and dental care, as well as mental health, nutritional, and social services. Community schools also offer educational and enrichment opportunities beyond the school day and the school year for both children and adults.

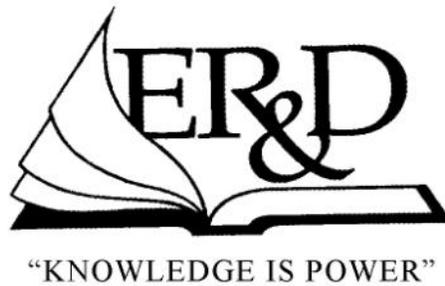
A question and answer session followed the presentation. Some of the questions raised potential roadblocks, including job security issues and problems with sharing classrooms for after-school activities. The panelists suggested effective ways to deal with these issues, including recommendations for specific systems and contract language. They also pointed out from experience that these problems are largely avoidable with appropriate planning.

Effective community schools need to be based on comprehensive written plans with buy-in from all stakeholders. The plans should include memoranda of agreement and understanding between the school and the partner organizations to minimize potential conflicts.

Another QuEST presentation about community schools outlined the Early

Childhood Linkages Project, which analyzes links between community schools and other early childhood resources. The Linkages Project has found that early childhood services are typically unconnected to school systems, and that their coordination with curriculum has been achieved by very few states. This provides another important purpose for community schools.

Community schools have their roots in the settlement houses that provided critical help to previous generations, and they are particularly timely as we must educate all of our children, including those in poverty, to compete in the global economy.



*(Members attend events continued from page 1)*

Sea floor mapping, servicing ice buoys, and climate studies are among the science team's research assignments.

Pazol's classes, and science students across the nation are invited to follow the project through an online journal is one of Pazol's primary assignments. A link to the project can be found at [www.armadaproject.org](http://www.armadaproject.org). Click on "Journals."

Patricia Gill's reflection on the New Leaders School begins with an observation of the diversity repre-

sented in the AFT. Gill noted, "Participating in great workshops and discussions involved questions like, 'What is your vision for your union?' 'What are you about when you are not negotiating a contract?' and 'What are your goals?'"

Local 571 encouraged new Council presidents to attend the July 8-11 activity as a way of providing support for its new leaders.

Gill's complete account of the experience is posted on the WSTU website: [www.wstu571.org](http://www.wstu571.org).

from the person who brought you the weekend...

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- AFT Subscription Services has the lowest rates and best customer service on magazine subscriptions.

  
A Union of Professionals  
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Member Benefits

AFT has an expense reimbursement and/or endorsement arrangement for marketing this program. For more information, please contact AFT Financial Services at 800/238-1133, ext. 4493; send an e-mail to [disclosure@aft.org](mailto:disclosure@aft.org), or visit [www.aftplus.org/disclosure](http://www.aftplus.org/disclosure).

distributed in Illinois, there are additional funds available for the next fiscal year. The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) anticipates that the majority of the funding will be budgeted and used in 2009-10.

Known funding levels for Illinois, including Title I grants, IDEA grants, and State Fiscal Stabilization Funds, are listed on the ISBE website. The devil is in the details, or in this case, the application requirements. For example, Title I School Improvement Grants provide funds to chronically low performing schools for a range of interventions including restructuring. Under the draft requirements released by the Department of Education (DoE) for comment, four models for turning schools around are identified. These models are:

- **Turnarounds**—the principal and at least 50% of the staff is replaced; there is an adoption of new or revised instructional strategies; extending the school day and/or school year is considered
- **Re-starts**—close the school and reopen under the management of a charter organization
- **Closures**—close the school and transfer students to a higher-performing district school
- **Transformations**—at a minimum, replace school leadership and develop and reward teacher and leader effectiveness; adopt a comprehensive strategy which includes community-oriented services and provides for operating flexibility and intensive support

The DoE suggests “Districts should choose a strategy which works best for each school.” Which of the models sounds like it would turn around a school in your district?

In an August *Education Week* article, “Research Doesn’t Offer Much Guidance on Turnarounds,” John Balfanz, a Johns Hopkins University research scientist, and others are putting together a “strategy that builds on the Talent Development model for school improvement developed at Johns Hopkins. This model “adds an early-warning system so that educators can identify students at risk of dropping out early and recruits young people for a year of full-time service as mentors and tutors for the neediest students.” The article also reports, “A lack of scientific research notwithstanding, there’s no shortage of research-informed advice on how to transform chronically low-performing schools.”

ARRA funds are intended to save and create jobs as well as improve education. One of four key reform areas is “providing intensive support and effective interventions for the lowest-performing schools.” Is it possible that more research will help and a “one size fits all” (i.e. one of the four suggested above) model is not the right approach?

Next month’s *Union Messenger* will examine more closely other school funding being offered. Competitive funds available after July 1 through ARRA are called Race to the Top (RttT) funds. Over \$4.35 billion is available to states, so you can understand there is much to be gained for districts, teachers and students. Or, is there much to be lost? The AFT and IFT have provided comments regarding education funding to both state and federal agencies. What will be the outcome of the ongoing discussions?

## Retiree Seminars Address Retiree Needs



Chicago attorney Kerry Peck (left) of Peck Bloom, LLC answers retiree questions at a seminar on aspects of Elder Law held at the Healey Conference Center on August 25 for IFT retiree chapter.

### Coming Retiree Chapter Events

September 16	Cabaret - Drury Lane
October 7-8	Galena
November 12	Lincoln Museum
December 10	Thoroughly Modern Millie Drury Lane



### AFT Survey on Working Together

How can educators, unions and the community work together to ensure that all children receive a high-quality education?

We want to hear from you! Visit AFT Voices to share your opinions on the challenges you face in the workplace by answering the new survey question above.

[www.aft.org/voices](http://www.aft.org/voices)

Visit AFT Voices to see member comments on this and previous questions, and to participate in other surveys, polls, and activities.

## IFT PSRP Conference Nears

The annual IFT conference for Paraprofessionals and School-Related Personnel is less than four weeks away, October 9-10, 2009 at the DoubleTree Hotel in Oak Brook.

AFT executive vice president Loretta Johnson is to be keynote speaker. The WSTU will be represented by members from the Cicero Council.

PSRP members include teacher assistants, special education teacher assistants, clerical, custodial, maintenance, security, lunchroom, and transportation personnel.

## WSTU Website & Newsletter Recognized at AFT Conference



*Kris Kemmerer, AFT communications director, presents Andrew Bendelow and Mike Dale with two 2008 AFT Communications Network awards. The WSTU earned a first place in the Best News Story category and third place in the Best Web Site category. The WSTU news story earning recognition was Bonnie Saracco's account of "Fourth Annual Legislative Breakfast."*

## Proviso PSRP Members Set Volunteer Example

Proviso PSRP Council members Angela Higgins, George Smith, and Suzan Smith were involved in the summer's AFT volunteer organizing effort that extends help to teachers in mostly southern states such as Alabama, Louisiana, New Mexico and Texas. Higgins, a Proviso East special education teacher aide, travelled to Houston, Texas. George Smith, Proviso East security, and Proviso West teacher aide Suzan Smith, were sent to Mobile, Alabama.

Volunteers sign on to work hands-on with teachers on a variety of projects. The AFT pays for transportation and housing, provides a meal allowance, and covers incidental expenses. Training and coordination is provided by the AFT.

"Some of what we did was symbolic. Some was grunt work. Some was straight up solidarity." More information about this annual summer program can be found at: <http://www.aft.org/back2school2009/index.htm>. Participating in the program has become a Proviso tradition.

## Pension Modernization Task Force Work Underway

The Pension Modernization Task Force established by House Joint Resolution 65 has been meeting over the summer to study Illinois' public pension benefits, pension funding and other related issues in order to make legislative recommendations for the upcoming session. The task force will report to the General Assembly by November 1, 2009.

The labor and business communities are vigorously debating the level of benefits offered to public employees who participate in state-funded pension plans. But all task force participants agree that the systems have been systematically underfunded for decades.

IFT Legislative Director Nick Yelverton, appointed to the task force by Governor Pat Quinn, continues to stress that public pension benefits are not out of line with what is offered in other states, and Illinois' normal pension benefit costs are comparable to private sector retirement benefits because two out of three public employees do not participate in Social Security.

Yelverton and other labor representatives on the task force are aggressively advocating for the IFT position to maintain decent benefit levels and secure adequate long-term funding. IFT Update

*(Rule Changes continued from page 1)*

- Areas like Bilingual Education, ESL, ELL, and Driver's Education will require specific courses, identified within the 24 credit hour endorsement requirement, that are not now included.
- The CEU designation for required professional development is removed.
- All professional development will be recorded as hour-for-hour Continuing Professional Development Unit (CPDU) credits.
- The effective date for all changes is February 1, 2012. This timetable is similar to when rules for certification / recertification took place in 2000.

Other proposals to the Part 25 Rules set reasons the State Board may refuse to issue or renew, or may suspend, a certificate or endorsement for specific offenses. These stipulations have been in practice, but have not been in the Rules. Many educators are expected to seek recertification in 2010-11. Certificate non-issuance or nonrenewal may occur for persons:

- Delinquent in paying child support
- In noncompliance of Illinois state tax
- Named in founded reports of child abuse or neglect
- In default on student loans
- Convicted of a felony crime

In all cases, the person requesting certificate issuance or renewal must be informed of the consequences. There will be a process through the State Superintendent's office for applicants to prove compliance if they wish to seek certificate issuance or renewal.

The IFT participated during the ISBE public comment period that ended July 31 indicating support or non-support of specific changes, with a rationale. After reviewing comments, the ISBE may modify its Rules proposal. A final version is expected to go before the entire Illinois State Board of Education at one of its next scheduled meetings.

Jane Russell

## 2009-10 Union Leadership Institute Information Online

The IFT's successful and long-running Union Leadership Institute (ULI) program to train union leaders and activists resumes November 7-8, 2009. The specialized union and professional training courses continue February 6-7 and April 24-25, 2010.

This year's courses include Union Leadership Development, Introduction to Collective Bargaining, Grievance Administration, and Building a Political Powerhouse. Single day or weekend course titles include Teaching Labor History in Schools and TRS—Inside and Out for Leadership. Classes are held at the Robert M Healey Conference Center in Westmont.

Complete course descriptions are available on the IFT website: [www.ift-aft.org](http://www.ift-aft.org). Contact your Council president for information or to indicate interest.

**“Long ago we stated the reason for labor organizations. We said that they were organized out of the necessities of the situation: that a single employee was helpless in dealing with an employer; ...that union was essential to give the laborers opportunity to deal on equality with their employer.”**

Chief Justice Charles Evans Hughes (1862-1948) for the U.S. Supreme Court (1930-1941)

Discounted Marcus or AMC/Lowes movie tickets and certificates for See's Candies are available again from the WSTU office. Order forms can be downloaded and printed from [www.wstu571.org](http://www.wstu571.org) or requested from your Council president.

Unrestricted Marcus tickets are \$6.50 each. AMC/Loews tickets are \$6.00 and subject to limited restrictions. See the order form for additional details.

A See's candy certificate costs \$11.80 and buys up to \$15.26 in candies.

For additional information contact the WSTU office manager, Judy Jennings, [jjennings@ift-aft.org](mailto:jjennings@ift-aft.org), or phone the WSTU office at 630-468-4098.



## AFT+ Member Card/AFT Benefits



Access to AFT+ member benefits requires registering on the AFT Members Only website at: <http://www.aft.org/members>. The AFT member number printed on your membership card is needed to register. The AFT will issue new membership cards to all full, half, quarter and retiree members and mail them to each member's home address starting in November.

New members and those needing their member number should contact their Council president, or email WSTU office manager Judy Jennings, [jjennings@ift-aft.org](mailto:jjennings@ift-aft.org), or phone the WSTU office at 630-468-4098.

The *Union Messenger* will feature one of the many programs, resources, and opportunities available through AFT+ on this page each issue.

## WSTU Calendar

### September

- 9/14—571 EB Meeting - Westmont - 5:30 p.m.
- 9/14—571 HOR Meeting - Westmont - 6:45 p.m.
- 9/23—571 Building Representatives Workshop Westmont
- 9/26—571 ER&D classes conclude - Westmont

### October

- 10/9-10—IFT PSRP Conference - Oak Brook
- 10/19—571 EB Meeting - Westmont - 5:30 p.m.
- 10/19—571 HOR Meeting - Westmont - 6:45 p.m.
- 10/23-24—IFT Presidents' Conference Springfield

### November

- 11/7—571 Legislative Breakfast - DoubleTree Hotel Oak Brook
- 11/7-8—IFT/ULI—Westmont
- 11/16—571 EB Meeting - Westmont - 5:30 p.m.
- 11/16—571 HOR Meeting—Westmont - 6:45 p.m.

## WSTU OFFICE HOURS

MONDAY-FRIDAY 9:00 AM—5:00 PM  
THE LOCAL 571 OFFICE MAY BE CLOSED ON SCHOOL HOLIDAYS, PLEASE CALL AHEAD.

## Reminders...

**Local 571 Legislative Breakfast**  
Names due by October 1

**Legal Limits for New Educators**  
Names due by October 12

## Union Messenger

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