

STOP THE RAHM- RAUNER ATTACKS



DESTROYING OUR SCHOOLS

■ Illinois Governor Bruce Rauner has been a top advisor to Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel on **school closings** and other **harmful education policies**. Juan Rangel, the disgraced former CEO of charter-school giant UNO, has also been a close advisor to Rahm. Rangel stepped down as UNO's CEO after a series of **corporate scandals** and federal investigations into UNO's misuse of public funds.

■ Both Rahm and Rauner back **budget cuts** for public schools and **sending school money to private organizations** beyond the democratic control of our communities.

HARMING OUR COMMUNITIES

■ As Mayor, Rahm has **laid off 7,000 teachers** and severely cut retirement income for thousands of seniors who live and spend money in our communities. His friend Rauner wants to **cut even more** from the limited income of the elderly.

■ Both Rahm and Rauner **oppose a minimum wage hike** of \$15 an hour for working families in Chicago despite the need in our communities. An early 2014 poll found that nearly two-thirds of Illinois voters support a minimum wage of \$10 an hour.

SERVING THE RICH AND POWERFUL

■ Bruce Rauner owns **nine homes** worth a combined tens of millions of dollars. Rauner spent more than \$100,000 to join an exclusive wine club. Asked whether he's a member of the 1 percent, he responded, "Oh, I'm **probably .01 percent.**"

■ After leaving his White House job, Rahm made \$18 million working for two years in private equity—essential to his success was Rauner's support. How did he make so much so quickly? According to Ron Suskind, a Pulitzer Prize-winning former reporter for the Wall Street Journal: "Paying someone who will be a future government official a lot of money for doing very little? On Wall Street, **we call that an investment.**"

A RAHM-RAUNER AGENDA THREATENS ALL OF US.

We must build our capacity to fight misguided politicians, well-financed corporate school reformers, and people who want to turn back the clock on workers' rights. Visit CTU.net/PAC, and make a monthly donation of \$5, \$10, or \$20.

Contribute to the CTU PAC.



ChicagoUnionTeacher

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Sisters and Brothers,

The tide is rising. It is time for us to batten down the hatches and prepare for the incoming storm.

A ship known as Chicago Public Schools (CPS) is broke on purpose, and our district continues to reel from the recent SUPES scandal that will ultimately send former schools CEO Barbara Byrd-Bennett to prison. We believe her malfeasance is the tip of the iceberg. Therefore, we support the call for an extensive investigation of all Board-approved contracts under Byrd-Bennett's tenure, and that the district reverses her decision to lay off thousands of educators and close 50 neighborhood schools.

We who dare to teach must never cease to learn. That is why we are pleased to discover that more than 97 percent of our members believe they will vote "yes" to authorize a strike when the time comes. Our November 5 "mock poll" revealed that teachers, paraprofessionals and clinicians remain unified, organized and ready to engage the mayor's hand-picked Board of Education and CEO Forest Claypool on what's important to us—protecting our profession and ensuring our students have the schools they deserve.

We still have much work to do. Since August, we have added more than 1,000 new members to our bargaining unit. Our paraprofessionals, to whom this issue is dedicated, remain the backbone of our schools. Their insight, skill and commitment make them everyday superheroes to parents and students across the city. Many of our brothers and sisters remain encouraged, focused and concerned about the

future of collective bargaining in our state.

The Board continues to fight us on the most important elements of our contract demands. Not only are we fighting for bread-and-butter issues but also a reduction in paper work.

On the political front, our Political Action and Legislative Committee released its early endorsement list in advance of the upcoming statewide electoral cycle. General Assembly candidates participated in an extensive screening process with rank-and-file members that included the completion of a mandatory questionnaire, addressing a myriad of issues impacting the lives of educators. The Illinois primary will be held March 15, 2016.

We are focused on getting an elected, representative school board in Chicago, progressive revenue solutions that will fund our school district and halt the attacks on our pensions, and the full restoration of our collective bargaining rights. Therefore, our first priority is to get champions in the statehouse. This means that we need political leaders who are grounded in our mission to strengthen our schools; and, they must be able to win.

We believe early endorsements buoy the hopes of challenging candidates by infusing their campaigns with much-needed resources. As we fight for the LaSalle Street Tax on financial transactions at the Chicago Board of Trade, a commuter tax and a millionaire's tax, we are also pushing for an Elected Representative School Board. Strong and focused legislative leaders will pave the way. The CTU's endorsees



include: State Sen. William Delgado (District 2), State Rep. Elgie Sims (District 34), State Rep. LaShawn Ford (District 8), State Rep. Ann Williams (District 11), State Rep. Cynthia Soto (District 4), State Rep. Robert Martwick (District 19) and community leader Jay Travis (District 26).

Let's continue to rally and build our solidarity and power. That's why I look forward to seeing every CTU member at our November 23 Winter Rally and Tailgate Celebration. We'll rally, encourage one another, cheer on our issues, and celebrate the upcoming holiday season with hot food and beverages. If you missed May 23, you won't want to miss November 23. Bring your grills, food, noisemakers and signs. Dress for the occasion. Let's show the city the full beauty and power of the CTU.

In solidarity,

Karen GJ Lewis, NBCT

Easy Come... Easy Go!

Our school delegates are awesome folk.

Not only are they incredible educators. They are incredible leaders and activists for what is best for public education and our future investments—our students! I want to take this time to thank and acknowledge David Tournoux, the delegate at Cassell Elementary School.

I received an email from David about information that he had received from his administrator on the hiring of Dr. Kelvin Griffin from the Atlanta School System.

It appears that Griffin resigned after allegations of unprofessional behavior that included drugs and illicit sexual activity at Young Middle School. (Read more at <http://on.11alive.com/1N4U-aqV>.) I brought this information to the attention of 19th Ward alderman Matt O'Shea and questioned how this hiring could happen—and even more so, why did it happen?

Within three days, I received an

email from Alderman O'Shea indicating that he had obtained information from Dr. Janice Jackson that the Dr. Griffin will not be joining Chicago Public Schools in any capacity.

Way to go, David!

Patty Mitchell,

CTU teacher field representative

Thankful and Thoughtful

I would like to acknowledge the support and guidance that I have received from the CTU, especially from Lynn Cherkasky-Davis, during these trying times at CPS. I have been laid off and rehired twice in the past two months, and her determination and deftness at utilizing her vast network of CTU members has been crucial in connecting me with administrators who value my skill set as a high school English teacher. Thankfully, I am still employed, but it is not due to any action from CPS.

My layoffs were never due to any performance-related concern. To the contrary, principals have always expressed remorse in my dismissal, and

have written sincere letters of recommendation. Additionally, I have worked tirelessly and dedicated countless hours to the improvement of my practice, and I am more than halfway through the process for National Board Certification (NBC). Unfortunately, because most of my teaching experience is in Texas and I am relatively new to the district, I was placed on probationary status upon coming to CPS.

The Chicago Teachers Union values qualified teachers, and if not for its diligent efforts, I would be looking for work outside of teaching right now. In contrast, CPS has never hesitated in laying me off, even though the district has invested in my National Board Certification professional development. After expressing my dismay at being laid off the second time, I reached out to CPS' Talent Office to address what was happening to their "investment." Only when I wrote to CPS, reminding them of their lost NBC investment, did they respond, assuring me that they would do everything in their power to assist me in finding employment within CPS. That was the last I heard from them. If it weren't for the CTU, I would still be out of a job.

If CPS wants to continue employing dedicated, qualified teachers like myself, it should take a cue from the CTU and value its teachers as individuals.

Samuel L. Rasch,

Foreman High School

Missing My Union

I am a sign language interpreter. I have signed all my life and had been working for the Board of Education for several years. A new mandate came,

roughly 10 years ago, that required all of us non-certified interpreters to take an exam and register as an

American Sign Language Interpreter. The test cost \$250. We were promised by the Board that we would be reimbursed when we passed the exam. I never saw a dime from that. We were also told that we were getting a pay increase instead, while the certified interpreters received both a reimbursement and an increase in pay. That really stuck in my craw. This tiny piece of my journey is just an example of how some of us are treated as a sub-category of educators. This was also the beginning of the end to the title "Sign Language Interpreter."

After 21 years in the Chicago Teacher's Union, my position was cut. I was not exactly fired, however, as I showed up to school every day rehired as a Special Education Classroom Assistant. My title would no longer include "Sign Language Interpreter," and overnight, I became a Service Employees International Union (SEIU) member. Immediately after I was rehired, my first scheduled duties were to support the very same hearing impaired students I had just been supporting all this time! Nothing had changed and yet everything changed—my pay was cut almost in half, my duties almost doubled and I had a larger case load, which included changing diapers and chasing pre-schoolers who are hearing impaired.

I continue to be a dedicated member of the school staff. I ask my delegate friends all the time, "When will us



▲ **Loretta McCauley**

Photo: Gabriel Sheridan

SECAs and PSRPs who were stolen from CTU and given to SEIU be able to return to our powerful union?" While I was going through this incredibly unjust cut in pay, my family expanded to include the care of my four grandchildren, who I believe deserve the very best from me, just as I believe my students deserve the very best from me. My work is so important to me, yet it seems like I am often my only advocate when it comes to fair pay and fair treatment. It troubles me so much that I had no choice in the changes to my union representation. I have nothing against SEIU, but the CTU's power seemed to protect my interests in a more substantial manner. I now feel so limited in the fight for quality resources for my students, no longer alongside my longtime CTU colleagues.

Loretta McCauley,
sign language interpreter

Charter Win is Everyone's Loss

Before the Chicago Teachers Union strike in 2012, the executive board of Chicago Alliance of Charter Teachers and Staff voted unanimously to send a resolution to the American Federation of Teachers annual convention for a moratorium on new charters, school closings and turnarounds. So, it was my pleasure to advocate for a brighter future for Chicago's youth by speaking against charter expansion at the last Chicago Board of Education meeting. Unfortunately, the board followed their privatization script and green-lighted another KIPP and another Noble campus.

There were many reasons to oppose these charter proposals:

With a \$500 million shortfall and thousands of teacher layoffs looming, handing out extra start-up funds for new charters is robbing current Chicago Public School students at a time of their greatest need.

The community and even one Neighborhood Action Council were overwhelmingly opposed to the proposals.

Opening more charters will result in more district schools closing.

Charter schools do not have any meaningful way for communities to participate in school governance, such as a Local School Council or elected school board.

Teachers in these schools do not have a union voice and can be fired for speaking up for themselves or students.

There are more reasons, but I wanted to make a case to the Board that they may not have considered—that adding charters is hurting all schools, including charter schools. The new Noble campus will decrease enrollment at the 11 high schools within 1.5 miles of it. That includes two charter high schools. The density of charter schools in Chicago is so high that new ones don't just prey upon district schools, but they are cannibalizing other charter schools and harming their own networks in the process. Chains like Noble Street fund their expansion through bond issues that accumulate debt obligations which divert an increasing number of dollars—our tax dollars—away from the classroom and into debt service. Noble and KIPP should focus on serving the schools that they have, instead of disserving them through their efforts to expand.

Chris Baehrend, Latino Youth High School, ChiACTS Vice President



▲ **Tournoux (far right), with teachers and staff at Cassell Elementary.**

CPS Breaks Caseload Law...and Now It Has to Pay

BY JOHN KUGLER, PH.D.

In a clear case of Chicago Public Schools' mendacity and malfeasance, the Chicago Teachers Union has won a case in arbitration that never should have taken three years to resolve. The Union filed the grievance on December 18, 2012, that CPS was breaking Illinois State Law 105 ILCS 5/14 (Sec. 14-6.03):

Speech-language pathology assistants.

(b) ... A full-time speech-language pathologist's caseload limit may not exceed 80 students (60 students on or after September 1, 2003) at any time....

On October 13, 2015, arbitrator Edwin Benn sustained grievance #6127/12-12-060(jk) that

enforced Speech-language pathologists' (SLP) caseloads not to exceed 60 students. We won this case by organizing through the Union's delegate structure. CTU delegates Jennifer O'Connell, Huma Ahmad and Susan Hickey are the heroes in this case. They pulled together data from all parts of the district that refuted the claims of CPS administrators in all steps of the grievance process to win this case.

In the beginning of the case, CPS made two arguments. The first was a lie that it was not in violation of the 60 caseloads per speech pathologist limit. The way we proved that CPS was lying was to gather school data from individual speech pathologists. Our delegates organized witnesses and gathered caseload statistics that refuted the claims of CPS administrators that SLP caseloads were not more than 60 students.

RETIREE CORNER

Roberta Cares, and We Thank Her For Her Dedication

BY KATHY MURRAY

Retired members have always provided such a wealth of knowledge and support to our union. When thinking about this month's column and connecting retired members and PSRPs, I thought immediately of such amazing members as Portia Ball, Charlotte Brent, Bernice Roberts and Cecilia Scott—women who toil tirelessly for our union through phone banking, political action, organizing, House of Delegates set-up and community work.

And, thinking of retired PSRPs, I thought of Roberta Wilson, who has dedicated her life to the children in Chicago Public Schools and continues to do so through her church, the century-old Third Unitarian Church on the city's West Side.


Born in Georgia in 1927, Wilson came to Chicago at the age of 19 by herself with a young son. She began working at Austin High School as a teacher's assistant and would work for 35 years in the CPS system, retiring at age 84 in 2011 from Shubert Elementary School. During her career, Roberta received honors from Chicago and Springfield—in 2002 for her community work on the West Side by the Chicago City Council, and in 2011, when she received an Excellent Educator Award from the Illinois General Assembly.

With all of her accomplishments, Wilson says what's most important to her are her son, her family, her community work and her union activism. As she enters her 89th year, we'd like to thank her for all of her hard work and dedication to the Chicago

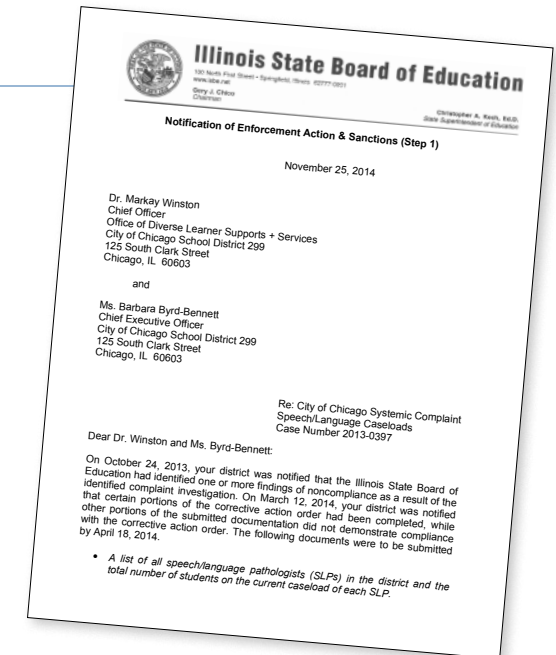


◀ Roberta Wilson

Photo: Kathy Murray

Teachers Union, our members and the children of Chicago. 

Kathy Murray is a CTU organizer and staff liaison to the Retiree Functional Group.



Byrd-Bennett is now a convicted felon who pled guilty to federal bribery charges in a \$23 million no-bid contract scheme with SUPES Academy. Winston abruptly resigned her position on or about October 23, 2015, for unknown reasons.

The second CPS argument was that state law did not apply to Chicago Public Schools and was not enforceable through the grievance process. CPS first made the argument that the law does not apply to them. They changed their argument after the Union filed a claim with the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE), using CPS' responses that it did not have to follow the law and that they did not violate the law.

CPS responded officially to the grievance with:

Chicago Public Schools was in compliance with the caseload regulations of 23 Illinois Administrative Code 226.735 (Work Load for Special Educators) for the named grievant during the grievance filing period. Therefore, the grievance is deemed to be without merit and denied. [February 27, 2013]

To which the CTU responded in a March 1, 2013, letter:

It is a shame that CPS administrators and the Office of Labor Relations have taken the position, in a February 27, 2013, response, that it is the responsibility of the victims of law-breaking to be responsible to prove they have been hurt. Yet more egregious is that this specific law is meant to protect the most vulnerable people in our state—special education students who have speech and language disabilities.

In ISBE Case Number 2013-0397 Notification of Enforcement Action & Sanctions dated November 25, 2014, the state Board of Ed was clear in correspondence with CPS that it had not been in compliance with state law, nor was CPS providing information requested by the State to resolve the caseload complaint. ISBE was clear in its frustration over the matter with this threat of sanctions against CPS:

Please submit the information explained in the preceding paragraph no later than December 19, 2014. If the materials are not submitted by this date, additional enforcement actions will be taken. These actions may include a conference with administrators of this agency, notification to your local board of education of the continued noncompliance, suspension of your school recognition or an order withholding some or all of your Part B funds under P.L. 108-446.

Ironically, the 2014 ISBE letter was addressed to Barbara Byrd-Bennett and Markay Winston, both of whom have since left the system. Byrd-Bennett is now a convicted felon who pled guilty to federal bribery charges in a \$23 million no-bid contract scheme with SUPES Academy. Winston abruptly resigned her position on or about October 23, 2015, for unknown reasons. Both worked together in Ohio school districts before coming to work in the Chicago Public Schools.

Arbitrator Benn was clear that CPS' argument that the law could not be enforced by the grievance process was not valid:

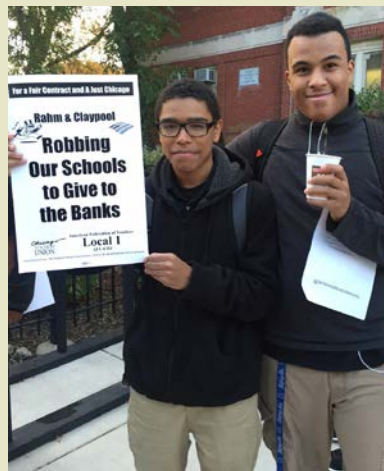
This case is different because the parties agreed to specifically incorporate external law concerning SLP caseloads into the Agreement. In Section 21-13.1 of the 2012-2015 Agreement, the parties specifically agreed that “[i]n accordance with Section ... 226.735 of the Illinois State Board of Education Rules and Regulations, the BOARD shall develop, in cooperation with the UNION, a plan specifying limits on the work load of its special education teachers....” The parties again incorporated external law concerning SLP caseloads into the 2012-2015 Agreement in Section 21-13.2 with the language “[b]argaining unit employees who work with students with disabilities shall not be required to exceed caseloads, class sizes, limits on ratios of students with disabilities to general education students and limits on ratios of students with disabilities to teachers and PSRPs as required under law.”

In the end, the result was a hands-down victory to make the all grievants whole. That included three years’ back pay for each student over the 60-limit caseload. The Union is now working out how much should be paid to each SLP going back three years.

The union was the winner in this case, but the real story here is the brash disregard for the law—and resources that should be going toward the special needs of the students of Chicago Public Schools. If you know of any cases where special education law or resources are being violated and/or misused, contact your CTU field representative immediately.

An injury to one is an injury to all! **CTU**

John Kugler, Ph.D., is a CTU teacher field representative.



Photos by Matthew Luskin, Rebecca Martinez, Debby Pope and Martin Ritter



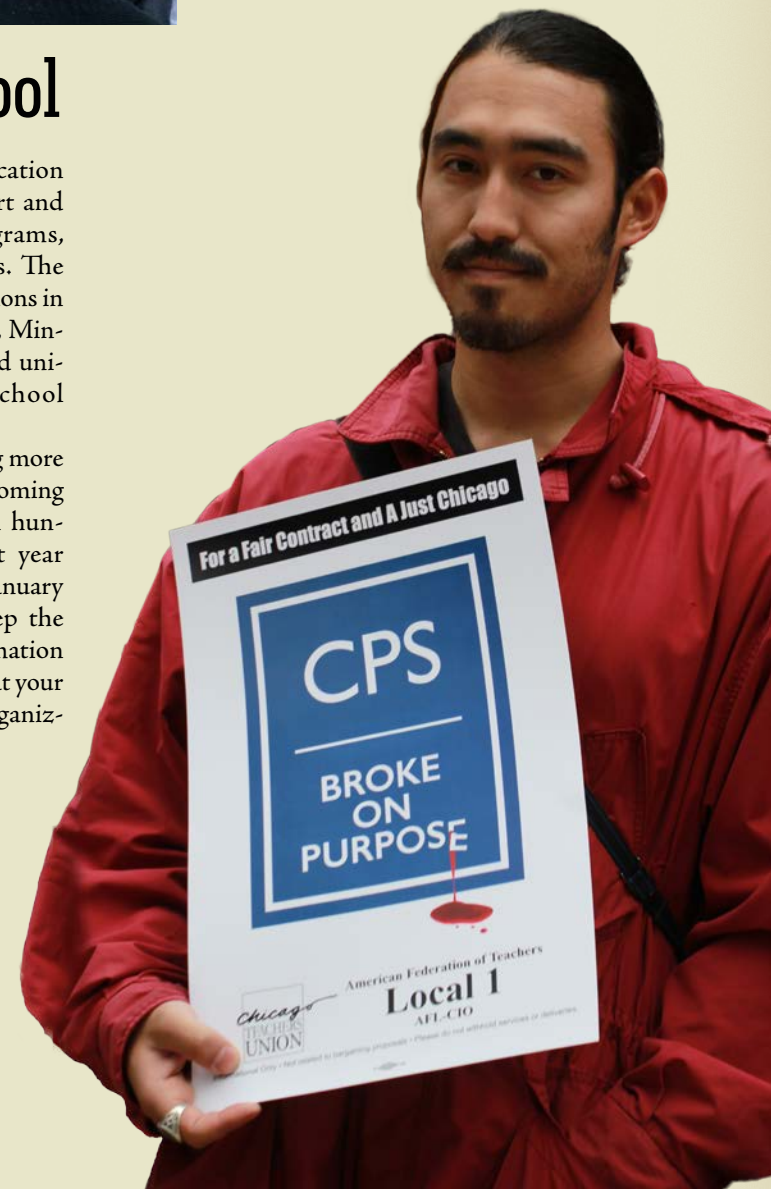
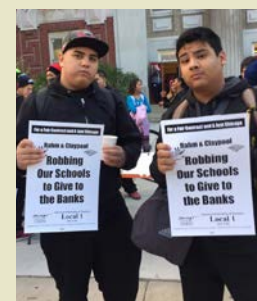
Walk-Ins at Your School

BY **CTU ORGANIZING**

On October 15, 2015, parents, students and community members, in a show of solidarity with the Chicago Teachers Union, sent a message to the hand-picked Chicago Board of Education: “Support our schools! Stop cuts that affect the children in public schools!” Rallying outside of two high schools (Kelvyn Park, Uplift), two elementary schools (Ray and Hanson Park) and Madero Middle School, the participants spoke about harm caused by budget cuts which have resulted in layoffs

(including special education staff) and the loss of art and foreign language programs, counseling and libraries. The walk-ins, inspired by actions in Milwaukee and St. Paul, Minnesota, were spirited and unifying for each school community.

The CTU is planning more of these actions in the coming months, culminating in hundreds of walk-ins next year during the months of January and February. Let’s keep the train rolling! For information on organizing a walk-in at your school, contact us at organizing@ctulocal1.com. **CTU**





ZOMBIE BOARD OF DEAD-UCATION

BY **STEPHANIE GADLIN**

Just days before Halloween, zombies went on the attack in voicing their desire to continue to kill neighborhood schools and ensure that the very heart of public education winds up in their graveyards. On their way to feasting on the brains of the mayor's hand-picked Chicago Board of Education, the Zombie Board of Dead halted traffic, disrupted a Chicago Teachers Union press conference where Vice President Jesse Sharkey spoke and then proceeded to march, I mean, slow-drag themselves to City Hall in search of more brains upon which to feast. Finding none, they waved to one of their zombie-like supporters, Mayor Rahm Emanuel, who smirked, rolled his eyes and disappeared back into his own cavern to continue with his evil plans.

From there, the Zombie Board of Dead joined Chicago Public Schools students at the Thompson Center to protest budget cuts crippling students and their families, and then made an appearance in the lobby of a building owned and operated by one of the walking dead's closest friends, billionaire Ken Griffin. Unfortunately, Griffin's henchmen didn't see the zombies listed on his meeting schedule, and the police were soon called. **ctu**

Stephanie Gadlin is the Director of Communications for the CTU.



Photos by Stephanie Gadlin, Nathan Goldbaum and Ronnie Reese



The Truth about Barbara Byrd-Bennett and CPS Fruit from a Rotten Tree

BY JITU BROWN

As a Chicago Public Schools parent and long-time community organizer, I am appalled by the actions of Barbara Byrd-Bennett in stealing from Chicago's children to feather her already robust nest. What is more appalling, however, is Mayor Rahm Emanuel's effort to isolate her actions as the corruption of an individual—and the public's acceptance of such nonsense. Corruption and discriminatory actions that disregard the voices of Black and brown parents are central to the culture of the school privatization movement. While millions of dollars are pumped into selling the public on "school choice," nationwide corporate education interventions have failed to improve the academic outcomes in minority communities, while a laundry list of "reformers" have been caught violating the public trust.

Barbara Byrd-Bennett: A Spoke in a Wheel

Barbara Byrd-Bennett was lauded as an accomplished educator who had the ability to relate to the everyday parent and the skills to lead the nation's third-largest school district. The spin from the Emanuel administration highlights improved graduation rates as proof of her competency. What is not



Jitu Brown

Photo: Phil Cantor

mentioned are the schemes used to give the illusion of growth: the rapid increase of alternative schools, programs such as Credit Recovery and CPS outright falsifying the data on graduation rates. This is "smoke and mirrors," not improved education. This is the true legacy of Barbara Byrd-Bennett in Chicago.

What is also conveniently left out of the conversation is that in Detroit, she was an active participant in stripping the publicly elected school board of its authority while dismantling an African-centered curriculum and focus that was dramatically improving student performance. In Cleveland, her expense account—provided by privatizers—was nearly as large as her annual salary, while the math performance of Black males plummeted on her watch. But it is important to understand that Barbara Byrd-Bennett is not the issue.

Privatization produces the Barbara Byrd-Bennett's of the world, setting the tone for this type of behavior. She is a symptom, not the disease. Unfortunately, she has a lot of company. In Chicago, the former president of the Chicago Board of Education, David Vitale, approved 27 turnaround schools for the Academy of Urban School Leadership, for which he used to be the board president. In Washington, D.C., Michelle Rhee was hailed as an "education warrior" who would lead the charge against bad teachers and failing schools until it was revealed that she inflated her students' scores and taped their mouths shut as a discipline measure. Geoffrey Canada from the Harlem Children's Zone was celebrated as a visionary for connecting social services to his charter schools,



▲ Corporate education reform Hall of Shame, from left to right: Michael Bloomberg, Michelle Rhee, and Geoffrey Canada

creating a "cradle to career" system in Harlem that was promoted as a national model. Then we learned that he pushed out students from his first three classes to make the school look better.

In New Orleans, they "cooked the books" to make the charter system look like a success, but, according to 2014 data, more than 56 percent of the Recovery School District schools received a grade of D or F from the Louisiana Department of Education. Similar stories are told in Newark with the now-deposed Cami Anderson; in Detroit under the emergency manager system; in Philadelphia where there were efforts to build two new prisons while closing 24 schools; and in Ohio, where there are efforts to advance privatization despite the fact that one of America's greatest public education success stories is right around the corner.

In Cincinnati, since 2003, the model of Community Learning Centers has raised the graduation rate from 50 percent to more than 80 percent, while the opportunity gap between Black and white students, which has shrunk to 4 percent, is being ignored. Elsewhere, failed corporate education interventions are promoted as "the new civil rights movement."

School Colonialism and the Loss of Voting Rights

This "new civil rights movement" is colonialism, plain and simple. Author Alice Walker once said, "No one is your friend who demands your silence and denies your right to grow." In Chicago, New Orleans, Camden, Philadelphia, Newark, D.C., Detroit and scores of other cities where the schools serve primarily children of color, a common denominator is that we

Privatization produces the Barbara Byrd-Bennett's of the world, setting the tone for this type of behavior.

don't have representative voting rights on the school board. Our silence is demanded, while school boards in more than 94 percent of America's cities are elected. In CPS, we have no direct way to hold officials accountable for the policies they set. Here is what we do know: Nationally, only one out of 5 charters outperform traditional public schools, but we see across this country the starving of neighborhood schools while charters and contract schools are expanded. We know that in Chicago since 2002, only 18 percent of the schools that replaced closed schools perform well. In New York under Mayor Michael Bloomberg, after closing nearly 160 schools, only 13 percent of minority children graduated from college are career ready.

Manufactured Misery

After the creation of Local School Councils in the Chicago School Reform Act of 1988, there were five straight years of improved test scores on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills. Despite this, Mayor Richard M. Daley declared "an education crisis" and the state legislature passed the 1995 Chicago School Reform Amendatory Act, which gave the mayor absolute authority in selecting the school board and appointing the Chief Executive Officer. Paul Vallas, the first CPS CEO, initiated "school probation" to impose punitive measures for schools that did not achieve acceptable annual improvement in their standardized test scores.

In 2012, nearly 300 CPS schools were on academic probation, setting them up to be closed and "turned over" to private operators who run public schools to make a profit. These schools exist in communities like Brighton Park, Kenwood Oakland, Auburn Gresham,

In Chicago, New Orleans, Camden, Philadelphia, Newark, D.C., Detroit and scores of other cities where the schools serve primarily children of color, a common denominator is that we don't have representative voting rights on the school board.

Humboldt Park, Englewood and Austin, while in Lincoln Park, Edgewater and Rogers Park, the families enjoy effective K-12 systems of education and world-class neighborhood schools. Why don't those of us who live in Humboldt Park, Englewood and Austin? Until Chicago and other urban cities deal courageously and honestly with the question of systemic inequity, we will always have a country where the education of minority children is sabotaged, on purpose.

We have given the Chicago Board of Education viable solutions to the aforementioned problems. The Coalition to Revitalize Dyett High School engaged in a deliberate, respectful process of engaging parents, educators, students and Bronzeville neighborhood residents, and developed a world-class plan for the Dyett Global Leadership and Green Technology High School as the hub for a sustainable community school village. Education experts from across the country and in CPS itself acknowledged that it was the best plan for Bronzeville's children. The mayor of this city and his education chair, Alderman Will Burns, blocked this plan because of politics.

I was one of 12 people who recently launched a 34-day hunger strike not

to run a charter school, or land contracts, but for CPS to finally value Black children in Bronzeville the way it does children in Lincoln Park. What was burned on the collective memory of our action was that on the 25th day of the hunger strike, Rahm Emanuel and CPS CEO Forrest Claypool awarded Lincoln Elementary, a well-resourced school in Lincoln Park, a \$21 million dollar annex. They held a ribbon cutting ceremony while we starved in Washington Park. This lack of respect for our legitimate voices is the problem, and Barbara Byrd-Bennett is merely the fruit from a rotten tree.

This is why the Journey for Justice Alliance is even more committed to winning an elected, representative school board and transforming Chicago to a sustainable community school district. To paraphrase the late, great organizer Ella Baker, "Until the education of Black and brown boys and girls and Black and brown mother's sons is as important as the education of white boys and girls and white mother's sons, we who believe in freedom will not rest until it comes." **CTU**

Jitu Brown is National Director of the Journey for Justice Alliance and one of the Dyett hunger strikers.



▲ #FightForDyett Victory Rally
Photo: Sarah Jane Rhee



▶ Photo: Sarah Jane Rhee

From A to Z on the Plight of Public Schools Board of Ed Alliteration

BY MAHPARA KHAN

Appel to administrative authorities to address and allocate additional and appropriate funding as an alternative to austerity and African-Americans in apartheid schools.

Bring the billion dollars back for the betterment of our schools, to balance our budget brutally bulldozed to barebones by billionaire bullies and bandit banks. Boycott Bank of America because the Board of Ed is #BrokeOnPurpose.

Chicago's corrupt corporate elite and the charter-collaborated compact clearly colluded with banks and put the constraints on Chicago's children; consolidation and colossal closure of classes and care clinics in centers crucial to kids continue to create catastrophic conditions for children concentrated in communities of color.

Down with drowning in downgraded debt; decreased and disproportionate funding for diverse learners;

dismissal of teachers; decisive discrimination; and deprivation and disparities that have led to the devastation of dozens of districts that definitely deserve better deals and direction.

Equitable education emphasizing exploratory experiences, and real emotional and economic development to eradicate poverty instead of freedoms being eroded, erased and eliminated under "education reform."

Fund for a free and fair education for all!

Gross negligence from governor grows with the glaring gaps in housing, while Gates Foundation goals make gigantic gains.

Have a heart and help the hundreds of hungry and homeless with healthy food, housing and health care.

Insistence ends for increased inequities and injustice in Illinois; implementation of education reform; inconsistent and inadequate resources; income inequality; and inequitable arrests and incarceration rates.



Photo: Sarah Jane Rhee

Jobs and justice for our unions is just what we need.

Kids in kindergarten today are the carriers of the key to knowledge tomorrow.

Limiting and lessening the opportunity gap is up to our politicians' will.

Misplaced priorities, marginalization and misuse of millions messed with the masses' class mobility.

No to apartheid, bare bones budget, cuts and closures, discrimination, elimination of arts, freeze on funds, glaring gaps, homelessness, incarcerations, judicial inequities, layoffs, marginalization, neglect, overcrowding, pension cuts, questionable quizzing, reforms, segregation, turnovers, underfunding, violence, wasteful spending, expansion of charters and years of disproportionate funding.

Oppose opportunistic objectives: outsourcing, over-testing and options that overhaul and overcrowd our old schools.

Profiterring politicians: Please pull privatization policies, pay your taxes, and promote policies to protect public schools and pupils from prison pipelines. Push for primarily Pre-K and progressive programs for people predominantly plagued by poverty.

Qualified teachers, quality programs and quality teaching equals quality education.

Rally relentlessly to reject Rahm and Rauner's ridiculous and radical reforms.

Segregation, serious revenue shortfalls and spending

away from schools have left students with skeletal schools starved of staff and services to support special needs students.

Terminate toxic swaps, termination and transaction fees, and transfer taxes and TIF funds toward total transformation of our "torn" town to "tinsel" town.

Unfortunately, usurious interest rates paid unfailingly, and the underfunding of undermining of pensions have resulted ultimately in unemployment, underpaid workers, unaffordable rents and undeniably uprooting many urban families. Undoubtedly, as a union, we stand united in an uproar for an urgency to upgrade our schools.

Vocalize vociferously how vicious cuts have left the very vulnerable to fall victim to violence.

While the whole world watches, woe to the word and will of a few in our "world class" city who are waging a war widely with weapons of "withholding and withdrawing" of the wealth warranted for the worthy, weak and the weary working class, turning it to a "worst class" city.

EXit the expansion of experimental schooling and expanded staff at CPS Central Office, which is an expensive and exorbitant expense to taxpayers.

Year after year, our youth yearn for "a just Chicago."

Zero bankers, bureaucrats and businessmen on our Board with zero budget cuts. **CTU**

Mahpara Khan is a bilingual teacher at Walt Disney Magnet School.



Ald. Sue Sadlowski Garza



Jonathan Jackson



State Rep. Will Guzzardi



State Rep. Mary Flowers



CTU Vice President Jesse Sharkey and CTU President Karen Lewis



CTU President Karen Lewis and Illinois House Speaker Michael Madigan



Honoring the Dyett hunger strikers



Rank-and-file CTU members

LEGISLATORS EDUCATORS APPRECIATION DINNER 2015



Photos: Jamie Link

Changing What We Cannot Accept

BY CTU COMMUNICATIONS

The 2015 Legislators Educators Appreciation Dinner was a powerful showing of educators and legislative leaders discussing issues involving collective bargaining, sustainable school communities and fighting the austerity agenda. The dinner also highlighted school and neighborhood leaders who have taken a bold stance to defend public education. **CTU**



Parent Advocacy: Taking Action!!!

January 13, 2016

5:00 - 8:30 PM

3.5 ISBE PD Hours

This workshop is designed to assist teachers with strategies for empowering parents to advocate for their children, including children with special needs, and to enrich their collaboration with parents. Teachers will analyze parent advocacy research and its implications. Participants will learn how to connect parents to decision making bodies at the school, district, and community level, as well as independent advocacy groups that lobby and work for school improvement. The workshop will enable teachers to educate and support parents in attending LSC meetings in order to advocate for necessary allocation of school resources, appropriate hiring processes, and holding their schools accountable for the conditions in which all students learn. They will discover techniques to join families with each other to enact needed change. Workshop participants will learn how to actively engage parents in decision-making structures and processes, and how to provide parents with knowledge, skills, and opportunities to navigate and negotiate the school system, in order to effectively advocate for the education their children deserve. The attendees will learn about services and resources that support family empowerment, advocacy guidance options for parents of children with Special Needs, and how their students individually and as a class can benefit from parent voice and advocacy. Attendees will brainstorm ways to strategically partner with parents and parent organizations to advocate for systemic improvements. **This workshop is aligned to the CPS Framework for Teaching - Components 2a, 2b, 4c, 4d and 4e.**
Instructor: Walter Taylor, NBCT

Workshop Date: January 13, 2016	Tuition: \$30	Location: Chicago Teachers Union 222 Merchandise Mart Plaza, Suite 400 Chicago, IL 60654	Parking/Transportation: The CTA Brown Line stops on the second floor of the Merchandise Mart. Parking at MartParc Orleans on the NE corner of Orleans and Hubbard is \$11 after 3 PM. Parking is not validated.
Workshop Time: 5:00 - 8:30 PM*	<i>*In order to receive any credit, participants must be in attendance for the entire session.</i>		

Register at www.ctunet.com/pd

If you have any questions about this workshop, contact:
Walter Taylor at 312-329-6273 | WalterTaylor@ctulocal1.com

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Chicago Teachers Union
Retired Chapter

ANNUAL HOLIDAY LUNCHEON

Tuesday, December 8, 2015

Harry Caray's Restaurant

Water Tower Place - 835 N. Michigan Ave., 7th Fl. (take the Harry Caray's Express Elevator on the street level to the 7th floor. The entrance is between Macy's and the Ritz Carlton.)

The social hour will begin at 11:30 a.m.; family style lunch will be served at 12:30 p.m.

Price: \$45.00 (No refunds after a reservation has been processed)

Parking: Water Tower Place (entrance on Chestnut) - \$12.00
Valet Parking - \$17.00

✂-----
Please Print

RESERVATION FORM

Return by Monday, November 23, 2015

Chicago Teachers Union, 222 Merchandise Mart Plaza, Suite 400, Chicago, IL 60654

Member's Name _____

Guest's Name(s) _____

Telephone _____

Make check payable to Chicago Teachers Union. A reservation will be made after payment has been received in the Union office.

Enclosed find payment of _____ for _____ reservation(s).
(Tickets will be held at the door)

oteg-743-djl

Chicago Urgently Needs a Moratorium on Charter School Expansion

BY SARAH HAINDS

The Illinois Network of Charter Schools (INCS) runs a lot of opinion pieces in Chicago papers. Recently, it ran one speaking out against the Chicago City Council resolution for a charter expansion moratorium and another to claim, once again, that the INCS believes that charter schools get short-changed in the Chicago Public Schools budget. This is coming at a time when former U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan awarded the state of Illinois more than \$42 million to expand charter schools over the next five years.

The INCS is once again claiming that families are “languishing” on the mythical charter waiting list and that the people of Chicago are choosing charters for their “innovative curriculum.” Once again, the INCS spin machine is hiding the most obvious “innovations” of charter schools: They pick and choose who can attend; force non-union teachers to go door-to-door to recruit families; require families to participate in school in ways public schools cannot; teach to the test; spend a lot of money on marketing; have huge philanthropic—and now federal—financial support; and need more students because they’re building themselves into severe debt.

Charter schools were never intended to become a district unto themselves, as they are currently attempting to do. They were supposed to be innovative labs in which school staff would be free from some of the district bureaucracy in order to find new and innovative ways to successfully teach students at risk for academic failure. Then, when they figured out which new methods were successful, they were supposed to share them with the district so district schools could replicate these models.

Did Chicago Public Schools learn anything from the charter school sector over the last 20 years? The

depth of the bureaucracy is much deeper for traditional neighborhood schools; CPS has eliminated nearly all of the important supports for our most struggling students and schools, which is pushing these students into nefarious for-profit alternative schools; and CPS implemented student-based budgeting—and now its evil stepson, “All Means All”—which has annihilated school budgets. In short, in the 20 years since charter schools have proliferated, CPS has made it nearly impossible to provide excellent educational services to Chicago’s children.

We have lost libraries, counselors, social workers, custodians, teacher aides, special education bus aides, foreign languages, electives, career and technical education classes, and our buildings are crumbling. Meanwhile charter school support continues to increase every year, despite the fact that 10 charter schools had to close for poor performance, and scandals abound.

What we have now is a very expensive, private district, separate from the rest of the city public schools. We’re not allowed to know about what they’re doing that’s so supposedly innovative. We’re not allowed to impose CPS policies on them. We’re not allowed to have full accountability of their funding.

The Chicago City Council isn’t being short-sighted at all. The 42 aldermen who signed the ordinance calling for a moratorium on charter school expansion know that privately owned charter schools are destroying our neighborhood public schools. Charter schools

Charter schools were never intended to become a district unto themselves, as they are currently attempting to do.



▲
Photo:
Braden Nesin
3from Flickr

exclude families who are struggling to survive and who can’t comply with their discipline policies. Despite their claims to the contrary, charters still exclude students with disabilities. Researchers at the University of Illinois at Chicago proved last year that charter schools only serve the special education students with the cheapest and easiest Individualized Education Programs.

These aldermen also know that this ordinance, while not law, is an important step toward changing CPS policy and state law. Charters are unfairly supported by CPS at the expense of our neighborhood schools. For a sector that claims so vociferously that it needs autonomy, this autonomy actually depends tremendously on the district for finances, facilities, professional development, custodians, nurses, social workers, marketing, and of course, for students.

Over the years, charters have lobbied very hard for additional funding. In 2012, CPS signed the “Gates Compact” which, among other things, was a commitment to equally fund traditional public schools and charter schools within the district (several other districts across the nation also signed onto this contract). While CPS did not end up pursuing the “Gates Compact” and thus did not receive the promised funding from the Gates Foundation, it did go ahead and change the charter funding formula. The next year, student-based budgeting went into effect, which

drastically changed how the rest of district schools are funded, mainly by eliminating the automatic allocation of various staff positions at schools.

For the last few years, as the Chicago Teachers Union, the media and advocacy groups have pointed out, charter schools have been seeing great increases in their budgets while neighborhood schools have been losing tremendously—to the point that some high schools are operating on “bare bones” budgets and offering students a very limited range of courses, programs and activities.

Despite what INCS claims, it is not true that the increase in charter funding is simply due to the “equitable” student-based budgeting reflecting enrollment increases. CPS gives extra money to charter schools based on an unfair formula in which CPS calculates all of the services that it provides to other schools in the district, calculates the per-pupil amount of that calculation and distributes it to the charters. This is not fair because CPS does not, in fact, provide services equitably to all schools in the district. Magnet, gifted, selective enrollment and specialty schools all receive extra funding for their programs. This results in charters getting a bigger piece of the small pie while in turn not providing extra services to their students.

Every year, the district sponsors the “New Schools Expo,” offering free shuttle service to take parents to Soldier Field to register for charter schools. When

The 42 aldermen who signed the ordinance calling for a moratorium on charter school expansion know that privately owned charter schools are destroying our neighborhood public schools.

was the last time CPS had a city school fair? CPS has an entire Central Office department dedicated to supporting charter schools, and incurs an inordinate amount of legal expenses managing all of the renewal and lease contracts. CPS also shares district-wide services such as social workers, nurses, professional development and intensive instructional supports in math and reading with charter schools. On top of this, charters get their own special additional cash in an effort to be “fair.”

The INCS is complaining about the unfair advantage CPS schools have regarding facilities. This is ridiculous. First, it is entirely the fault of charter schools that they are getting themselves in serious debt by building extravagant school facilities. Secondly, charters are taking over our schools through co-sharing and outright land grabs, for which CPS is paying millions of dollars for in renovations. Charters like KIPP and Urban Prep keep playing hot potato with our district school buildings, moving to a new one every couple of years. The district pays for those moves and all of the required renovations. On top of this, CPS promotes charter schools more vigorously than it does its neighborhood schools.

In its op-eds, the INCS says it “urges the district to keep cuts as far away from the classroom as possible,” yet there are so many layers of expensive bureaucracy in charter schools that take money from the classroom every single day. Charter CEOs and operators are paid a ridiculously high salary. Charters pay management and franchise fees to for-profit companies across the country, and pay teachers unsustainably low wages (and thus have high teacher turnover and an over-reliance on Teach for America interns). In short, it is the charter model that cuts funding from the classroom, not the CPS distribution of funds.

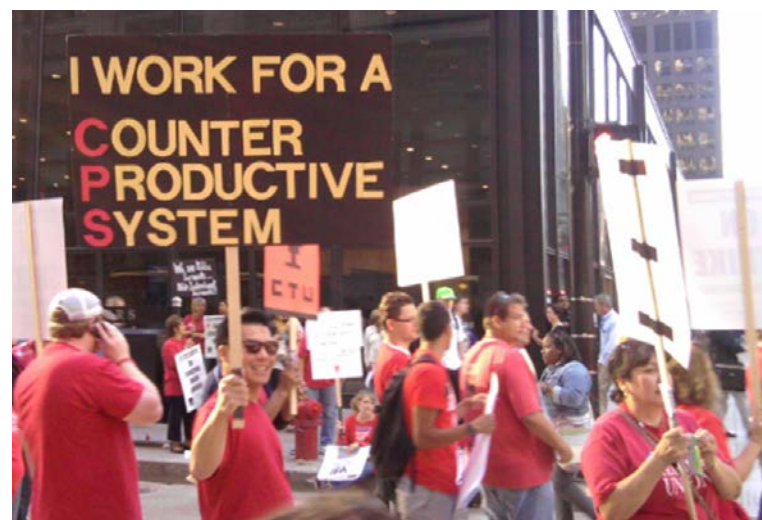
This is why the CTU calls for a moratorium on charter school expansion. CPS is claiming it is not only broke, but will face a huge deficit this year without

state funding. District schools have been threatened with massive layoffs in January, on top of the positions lost to date. If your alderman is not one of the 42 signatories to the charter moratorium ordinance*, it’s time to pay him or her a visit and convince them to do what’s right.

*BE IT RESOLVED, that we, the undersigned members of the Chicago City Council do hereby express our desire for the Illinois State Board of Education and Chicago Board of Education to jointly impose a moratorium on charter school expansion for the 2015-2016 school year, and conduct a comprehensive study of long term facility and school programming needs as required by state law (IL P.A. 97-0474-as amended) through the mandated revision of the Chicago Public Schools’ Educational Facilities Master Plan, a draft of which must be made public by CPS by January 2016; and provides the City Council and the public with a plan to bring CPS’ financial balance sheet to long term stability. [CTU](#)

Sarah Hains is a CTU researcher.

Photo: Israyfield from Flickr



HELLO

I'm **NEW** here

Were you hired by CPS as a **teacher**, **clinician** or **PSRP** in the *last few years*? We bet you've got some questions about the union...

What exactly is the union?

What is the contract?

Does the union benefit students?

Will I have to go on strike?

Meet union officers, get your questions answered, and meet other new educators at the CTU's

Hors d'Oeuvres ·
Cash Bar · Get Pinned
· Raffle · MORE!

Get info and RSVP at
ctunet.com/newbies

NEW MEMBERS WELCOME EVENT

Friday, Nov. 20

5:00 – 7:00 p.m.

at the

PARK TAVERN

- CRAFT BEER -

- GENUINE FOOD -

1645 W Jackson

Created in-house by union staff



Partners in Increasing Student Learning

Family and Community Involvement

14 ISBE PD Hours



This professional development offering, for currently practicing K – 12th grade teachers, examines the research that addresses the importance of family and community involvement in teaching and its impact on student learning. The four sessions focus on the effect family/community/teacher collaboration has on dropout rates, motivation, and students seeking higher education. Participants will learn about the framework for 6 Types of Family/Community Involvement (Parenting, Communicating, Volunteering, Learning at Home, Decision-Making, and Collaboration) and how to utilize it in their practice. Attendees will learn how and why to involve family members (and guardians and caregivers) as partners with both school and home-based activities (i.e. interactive homework, dialogue journaling, etc.); how to break the barriers that hinder family and community involvement in school; strategies for 2-way communication with families to advance student learning; and why and how to be responsive to families and their cultures and needs. Teachers also learn to effectively engage more community stakeholders in their instruction, how and where to seek community resources, and best make use of them. This offering is aligned with the **CPS Framework for Teaching Components 4c and 4d**.

Instructor: Walter Taylor, NBCT

Dates:
Fridays - 1/8, 1/15, 1/22, 1/29*

Time:
5:00 PM - 8:30 PM*

**In order to receive any credit, participants must be in attendance for the entire series.*

Tuition - \$85

Location:
Chicago Teachers Union
222 Merchandise Mart Plaza, Suite 400
Chicago, IL 60654

Parking/Transportation:
The CTA Brown Line stops on the second floor of the Merchandise Mart. Parking at MartParc Orleans on the NE corner of Orleans and Hubbard. Parking is not validated.

Register at www.ctunet.com/pd

If you have any questions about this course, contact:
Walter Taylor at 312-329-6273 | WalterTaylor@ctulocal1.com

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Making Math Relevant

How to incorporate relevant “real world” application to math instruction

A Learning Series for Elementary and Secondary Math Teachers

3.5 ISBE PD hours for each session
14 ISBE PD Hours for the entire Learning Series



The ‘Making Math Relevant’ Learning Series provides currently practicing teachers of mathematics with lesson design strategies that engage students in mathematical reasoning and integrate STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) practices into their instruction. Each session topic is differentiated for K - 6th grade teachers and 6th - 12th grade teachers. **The Learning Series is aligned to the CPS Framework for Teaching Components 1a, 1c, 1d, 3c, and 4d.**
Instructor: Michael P. Moriarty, NBCT

Session Time:
5:00 PM - 8:30 PM*

**In order to receive any credit, participants must be in attendance for each entire registered class session(s).*

Location:
Chicago Teachers Union
222 Merchandise Mart Plaza,
Suite 400
Chicago, IL 60654

Tuition:
\$30 for each session
\$100 for entire Learning Series

Pre-registration is required

Parking/Transportation:
The CTA Brown Line stops on the second floor of the Merchandise Mart. Parking at MartParc Orleans on the NE corner of Orleans and Hubbard is \$11 after 3 PM. Parking is not validated.

Session 1 – Science and Engineering Practices
In this session, participants learn how Science and Engineering Practices found in the Next Generation Science Standards can be used to develop “math-centric” project-based instruction.
Dates: K - 6th grade teachers - **January 19, 2016**
6th - 12th grade teachers - **January 26, 2016**

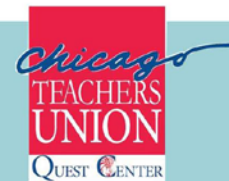
Session 2 – The Language of Technology
In this session, participants learn how to incorporate the basics of coding in their instruction. K - 6th teachers will learn how to instruct binary coding and 6th - 12th grade teachers will learn how to instruct hexagonal coding.
Dates: K - 6th grade teachers - **February 2, 2016**
6th - 12th grade teachers - **February 9, 2016**

Session 3 – Engineering Real-Life Solutions
In this session, participants learn how to develop lessons that require their students to research, design, build, test, and improve upon a model to engineer solutions to “real life” problems.
Dates: K - 6th grade teachers - **February 16, 2016**
6th - 12th grade teachers - **February 23, 2016**

Session 4 – Shifts in Mathematical Instruction
In this session, participants ‘unpack’ the CCSS-M instructional shifts that address conceptual understanding, procedural fluency, and application in their math instruction.
Dates: K - 6th grade teachers - **March 1, 2016**
6th - 12th grade teachers - **March 8, 2016**

Each session meets 3.5 STEM credit hours required for CPS STEM teachers

6th grade teachers have the option to choose each session’s date that best meets their needs.



Register at www.ctunet.com/pd

If you have any questions about this learning series, contact:
Michael Moriarty 312-329-6275 MichaelMoriarty@ctulocal1.com

Created In House by CTU Staff



PSRP

APPRECIATION

BY JUNE DAVIS

Paraprofessionals and School-Related Personnel (PSRPs) are essential educators. Their non-instructional services are a vital cog in the education machine. In Chicago Public Schools, all PSRPs are members of the Chicago Teachers Union. Some may be in the same school—or even the same classroom—every day, while others only visit each school a few times per year.

Teachers and clinicians know that their jobs would simply be impossible if not for the hard work of their fellow educators, and in recognition of that, the State of Illinois since 2006 has designated the third Wednesday in November as PSRP Day. Below are a few ways for every CTU member to show appreciation for PSRPs especially on this day—and every day!

- ▀ Highlight solidarity with PSRPs by wearing red on Wednesday, November 18.
- ▀ Organize an appreciation breakfast or lunch.
- ▀ Offer a card or buy a small gift.
- ▀ Send a letter to the editor (leadership@ctulocal1.com), write a blog post or share your thoughts in another forum on the important work that PSRPs do for students.
- ▀ If you are a teacher or parent, have your students write letters to the PSRPs who help them. If any students would like to write to Vision & Hearing Screeners or other citywide PSRPs, email us (again, at leadership@ctulocal1.com) and we will gladly deliver letters or gifts. **CTU**

June Davis is the CTU PSRP field staff coordinator.



Top row (left to right): Tennielle Evans, Jose Jimenez, LeNedra Vaughn, Christel Williams-Hayes
Second row: Myra Johnson, Lucille Thompson, Lisa Catledge, Sabrina Woods, Denise Fells, Gloria Higgins
Third row: Arttice Gaither, Georga Maberry, Julieta Riesco, Sherri Dabney-Parker, Yvonne Heard
Bottom row: Charman Dortch, Porsche Ball, Roberta Wilson, LaShawn Wallace

YOU, ME, AND PSRP



BY LASHAWN WALLACE

Paraprofessionals and School-Related Personnel (PSRPs) are vital parts of the foundation of our schools. Starting at 5 a.m. and going until the last teacher and student have left the building, your helpful PSRP is the one who locks the doors and turns off the lights at the end of a long day. In the morning those smiling faces behind the desk are the PSRP clerks who take calls, communicate with parents, and provide staff and students support to make the day less stressful. We try and fix our students' problems, polish relationships with parents and preparing beautiful schools for our principals. Whether it's outside on the playground

or assisting teachers in classrooms, we have our busy hands working all day. It's a busy but rewarding day as we smile and lend a helping hand to ensure the day runs smoothly.

The past three years have been very challenging for PSRPs with the loss of jobs and school closings, which is why we fight tirelessly each day to ensure that Chicago Public Schools does not forget about us being a vital part of the school system. Because of the closings and layoffs, we felt the need to make our members aware of their pension benefits, so the Chicago Teachers Union allowed its Pension Committee to put together a training that informed PSRPs of their pension rights. Many of our members attended this meeting and now feel very

confident about their retirement benefits. Situations like this are why every PSRP needs to be involved with the CTU—a union that fights for all of its members—and encourage even more to get involved. Remember, this union is not “those people”—it's you and I.

Being a PSRP working in the school, I see and know first-hand what we face as employees in CPS. “Broke in purpose,” is a reality. There are a lot of things that have changed over the years in our buildings, but in spite of that PSRPs continue to stand strong. **CTU**

LaShawn Wallace is a teacher assistant at Taft High School and 20-year veteran of CPS. She serves as a CTU delegate and is vice president of the teacher assistants on the CTU Executive Board.



What Teacher Evaluation Should Do for You

BY JENNIFER JOHNSON

The October 20, 2015, release of high-stakes teacher evaluation ratings from the 2014-15 school year to nearly 17,000 Chicago Public Schools (CPS) educators—nearly two months into the 2015-16 school year—demonstrates CPS' misplaced priorities and double standards.

» Educators must meet demands of timeliness and accuracy, but not CPS. While educators must fulfill myriad duties asked of them by administrators and the district in a timely manner and risk punishment if they do not comply, educators are not afforded the same respect and must wait anxiously for a final, accurate rating from the previous year (even as layoff and shuffling has already begun). The use of standardized test scores in teacher evaluation continues to contribute to the untimeliness of ratings. In order to be usable and actionable, teachers need feedback to inform their planning and adjust their instruction. Waiting for final rating feedback well into the next school year, largely due to opaque and junk science Value-Added Measures (VAM) scores which feel largely unusable to teachers, is disrespectful to educators. High school VAM scores had

to be thrown out teacher evaluation data this year due to another testing debacle. Educators are expected to provide students and parents with accurate and timely data, but CPS did not, while having to correct thousands of errors in rating calculations last year, causing educators to have even less faith that their evaluation results are fair and accurate.

» Evaluation is not the same as professional learning. Teacher evaluation should be used to improve teaching quality. The CTU knows that professional educators work hard every day to ensure the students of CPS receive a rich and high-quality education, even as the district starves schools and students of the necessary resources to achieve that goal by paying bankers and private contractors before funding schools. Instead of punitive evaluation processes, new educators, educators struggling without needed resources and educators in a new teaching assignment need support and not punishment when their ratings are “Developing” or below. Identifying struggling educators and providing them much-needed support does not warrant the massive amount of time and resources currently involved in evaluating CPS educators. The CTU's Quest Center is dedicated to providing diverse and relevant professional

CTU Member PSRPs Are:

- Audiometric and Vision Screening Technicians
- Audio-Visual Technicians
- Community Relations Representatives
- Computer Technicians
- Educational Sign Language Interpreters
- Guidance Counselor Assistants
- Head Start Educational Resource Assistants
- Head Start Health Resource Assistants
- Head Start Parent Resource Assistants
- Head Start Social Service Resource Assistants
- Health Service Nurses
- Hospital Licensed Practical Nurses
- Instructor Assistants
- Interpreter Clerks
- Occupational Therapist Assistants
- Parent Advocates
- School Assistants
- School Clerks
- School Clerk Assistants
- School Community Representatives
- School Library Assistants
- School Social Service Assistants
- Special Education
- Support Clerks
- Speech/Language Pathology Paraeducators
- Student Special Needs Program Assistants
- Student Special Services Advocates
- Teacher Assistants
- Technology Coordinators

learning activities aligned to the CPS Framework for Teaching demonstrating the CTU's commitment to educator growth.

» Money for evaluation, but not for schools. The CTU believes that CPS ought to devote the resources currently spent on complicated and time-consuming teacher evaluation schemes and “junk science” student growth measures to fully staffing and resourcing our schools and providing opportunities for professional learning and growth to all educators. Several millions of dollars is spent paying private vendors and CPS central office staff (for software, VAM calculations, evaluator training, roster verification and assessment development) which could be otherwise spent to benefit students and schools. The University of Chicago's Consortium on Chicago School Research has found that for every year of the new CPS REACH teacher evaluation system, educators do not feel that the investment in evaluation reaps rewards large enough to merit the levels of stress associated with it.

Despite the massive time and resources CPS has devoted to its new, complicated REACH teacher evaluation system, only a small fraction of CPS educators are identified as “Unsatisfactory” (2 percent this year) and nearly the

same percent (more than 80 percent) of educators received the top two highest ratings in the new system they received under the old and supposedly arbitrary teacher evaluation checklist. Why not use the time and resources currently devoted to teacher evaluation to expand professional learning opportunities, increase staffing and resources in schools, or on appropriate and targeted efforts to identify and support the small fraction of educators who are really struggling? In this time when CPS has a “bare bones” budget, the data does not point to the need for a complicated, stressful and expensive teacher evaluation system. CPS ought to seek relief from the expensive and undue burden of the state's evaluation mandates and negotiate changes with the CTU in the next contract.

We applaud our members, teachers, librarians, counselors, clinicians and others who endure the REACH teacher evaluation system, demand fairness in the process, ask for high-quality professional development, question faulty assessment and student growth measures, and still demonstrate their teaching excellence and professionalism in the face of CPS chaos and budget mismanagement. **CTU**

Jennifer Johnson is the CTU Special Projects Facilitator for Teacher Evaluation.



The states that do well by the students most in need of educational resources ensure that students with the highest learning needs receive higher proportions of education funding.

How Should We Fund Schools in Illinois?

BY KURT HILGENDORF

Contrary to the claims of some economic reformer types, money matters in schools. The ongoing state budget cuts and the Chicago Public Schools budget that's “balanced” with \$480 million of mystery money on top of deep cuts to traditional public schools point to the real negative impact that insufficient revenue to schools has on our students' opportunities to learn. Contrary to some media outlets (cough *Chicago Tribune* cough...), Illinois is not broke. Illinois has the fifth-largest economy in the country and, indeed, one of the largest in the world. The Chicago area alone accounts for almost \$550 billion in annual economic activity and, of that, CPS' budget is about 1 percent. Add another 0.3 percent and we're not having a conversation about our students losing out. Instead, we should be discussing how everyone could have a full and robust curriculum. And this isn't some fantasy. Chicago is subject to the same forces that districts in all parts of the state are subject to, namely

inequitable and insufficient funding. But our plight does not have to be. Other states' approaches to funding schools point the way toward viable fuller and fairer alternatives. This article points to three great options for addressing Chicago's and Illinois' school funding challenges.

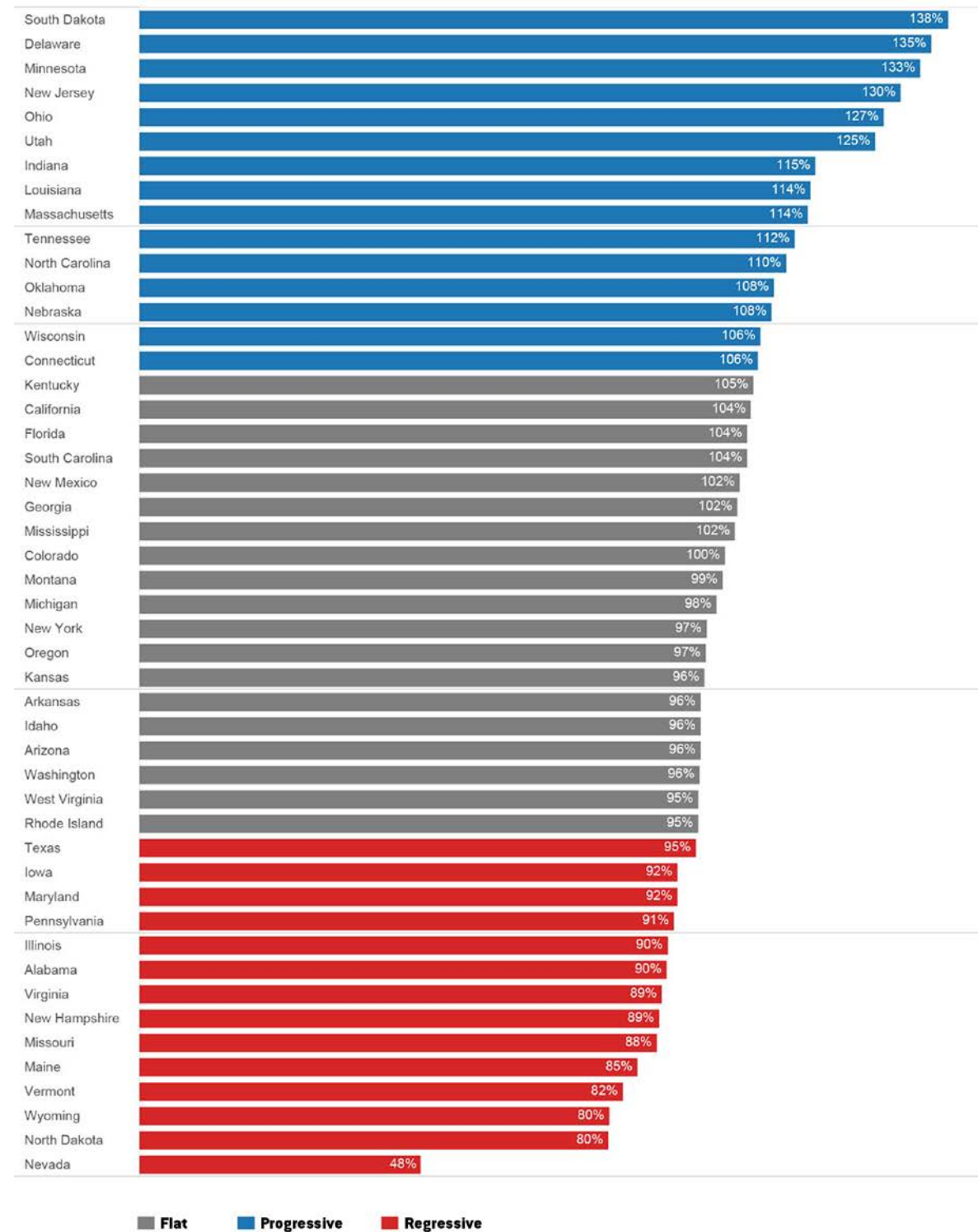
School funding comes from three primary sources: state funding, federal funding, and local funding (usually property taxes). Chicago's challenges come from worst-in-the-nation funding from the State of Illinois, combined with a relatively low local property tax rate that is “capped” by state law and corporate giveaways like the TIF program, property tax abatements, toxic interest rate swaps and an aversion on the part of guys like Mayor Rahm Emanuel and CPS CEO Forrest Claypool to force wealthy people to pay anything close to their fair share.

To understand why Illinois and Chicago don't have to be like they are, we must survey the national picture of school funding. The annual publication “Is School Funding Fair?” by some of the foremost

national experts on school funding (and the source of the graph on page 30) lays out the grim reality in several parts. The report rates Illinois 16th nationwide in available funding for schools, but that number masks two major and related problems. First, the State of Illinois is worst in the nation in the proportion of school funding that comes from the state government—about 30 percent statewide, compared to more than 50 percent in many states. Low state funding means that school districts have to obtain operating money elsewhere, almost always through property taxes. Illinois' property taxes are high precisely because the state provides so little school operating revenue.

Illinois' low share of funding for education also results in the second problem. The overall amount of school funding hides the grossly unfair and unequal distribution of that money between low-income and high-income districts. Data available from the Illinois Report Card allows us to clearly see how unfair Illinois school funding really is. New Trier High School in Winnetka,

State Funding Distribution



for instance, has only 4 percent low-income students and spends more than \$21,000 per student. John Hope High School in Chicago’s Englewood neighborhood, has 97 percent low-income students, spends \$8,000 less per student, and was subject to huge budget cuts this school year. Given the amount of poverty in Englewood, at a minimum those per-pupil expenditures need to be equalized if students at those schools are to have anywhere close to similar opportunities that New Trier students have during and after high school. Some places fare even worse than Chicago. Marion High School, in far southern Illinois, has 41 percent low-income students and spends only \$8,000 total per student, less than 40 percent of what students at New Trier receive. The disparities occur because of property wealth—Winnetka has a lot of it, Marion does not, and Chicago is trapped by a tax cap and politics.

Given these numbers, the report, which grades states, gives Illinois an “F” in funding distribution. This rating is based on the wide disparities between districts and the empirical reality that students from low-income homes, students with disabilities, English learners and other harder-to-educate students require more funds. Illinois’ school funding formula means that students who are already ahead of their peers receive larger proportions of funding than students with more challenges.

To contrast, the states that do well by the students most in need of educational resources ensure that students with the highest learning needs receive higher proportions of education funding. Of the states with “A” grades, we will focus on three as possible models for a new Illinois school funding formula.

Massachusetts

Massachusetts is held as a national model for school outcomes, as the state’s students regularly lead the nation in scores on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) and international assessments. Massachusetts rates high for school funding fairness and, importantly for Illinois to know, has a flat state income tax (MA at 5.15 percent; IL at 3.75% that was formerly 5%). Massachusetts has a weighted student formula so that students from low-income households, students with disabilities, English learners and other higher-need categories receive additional funds. The Massachusetts formula also takes into consideration differences in costs between districts, similar to one proposed now in the Illinois General Assembly. Importantly, in Massachusetts, local contributions to school funding are determined both by property wealth and by income. This component is important because property values (and therefore taxes) have increased more quickly in recent years than incomes have grown. By taking income into account, too, the formula is more responsive to changes in the economy. Furthermore, Massachusetts provides a much larger portion of funding, so school districts with lower property values can still have access to sufficient funds for schools. Finally, when Massachusetts shifted to this formula, the state added additional money into it, thereby avoiding the situation of winners and losers that proposed changes to Illinois’ school funding formula created.

New Jersey

New Jersey is a school funding model for two main reasons. First, New Jersey directs some of the highest

amounts of money toward funding schools. Second, because of a 30-year legal effort to equalize school funding, school funding in NJ is subject to the Abbott court decisions. The Abbott decisions include two crucial components regarding school funding: First, schools in low-income urban areas must receive parity funding compared to wealthy suburban districts; and second, additional money must be targeted toward instructional and curricular measures that work, like early literacy programs (as opposed to, say, gambling on interest rate swaps). The legal battle resulted in the School Funding Reform Act of 2008, which created a single, weighted formula to ensure that more dollars go to students who are most in need of the money. When New Jersey made the change to this statewide formula, the state legislature injected an additional \$500 million into the funding formula, again avoiding the conversation of winners vs. losers.

Part of the reason that New Jersey is able to fund this approach is its graduated state income tax system, which includes higher rates on filers who make more than \$500,000. Perhaps because of this system of taxing those most able to pay, Republican governor Chris Christie has pushed for big cuts to the money available for the state's public schools. The New Jersey State Supreme Court found the first round of cuts was unconstitutional and required half of the \$1 billion in cuts restored. That said, the funding formula in New Jersey continues to be underfunded and its cuts have harmed traditional public schools in a couple of ways that are familiar to Chicagoans—by cutting funding to the formula while simultaneously sending an influx of cash to charter schools. Even still, New Jersey continues to have one of the highest average per-pupil expenditures in the country, and its state funding formula remains one of the most fairly distributed.

Minnesota

Minnesota serves as a model for Illinois in many ways—the biggest being the state's push for progressive revenue. Rather than follow the status-quo, trickle-down theory that tax breaks for the rich will result in a better economy for everyone, Minnesota followed the opposite path: It raised taxes on the highest earners and used the additional money for public services.



▲ **Even N.J. Gov. Chris Christie hasn't been able to make New Jersey's education funding as unequal as it is in Illinois.**

Minnesota's school funding approach differs a bit from Massachusetts and New Jersey in that there are multiple strands to the formula (as Illinois has now), but the way in which the funds are distributed ensures that students with higher needs receive more funds from the state and that the funding distribution is fairer. In fact, in Minnesota, students with higher needs receive 33 percent more funding to their schools. That money can go toward wrap-around services, additional instructional supports and full and rich curricula that research shows are crucial to improving student outcomes.

Minnesota points the way toward a solution to Illinois' revenue problem. Students in Chicago and students in Marion deserve the equitable educational opportunities and supports students at New Trier receive. If Illinois were to adopt Minnesota's tax rates, the state would have billions of dollars in additional revenue, with the vast majority generated from those most able to pay. Those additional billions could go into a school funding formula that is truly adequate and equitable, as the examples of Massachusetts, Minnesota and New Jersey show. The Chicago Teachers Union supports, and will continue to support, a legislative approach that recognizes the need for revenue and for funding fairness. **CTU**

Kurt Hilgendorf is the CTU policy researcher and lobbyist. This article was originally written for the CTU companion website, www.ajustchicago.org.

Union Reading for the Whole Family

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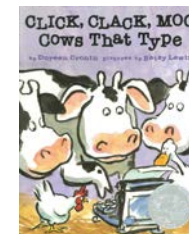
Sidney Lens, *Labor Wars*
(Haymarket Books, 1973)

Celebrated historian Sidney Lens chronicles the great battles of the early American labor movement—from the Pennsylvania coalfields to the crucial workers' victory of the 1930s in the sit-down strikes against General Motors.



Doreen Cronin, *Click Clack Moo: Cows That Type* (Simon and Schuster, 1999)

Farmer Brown has a problem. His cows like to type. All day long he hears "Click, clack, MOO. Click, clack, MOO. Clickety, clack, MOO." But Farmer Brown's problems REALLY begin when his cows start leaving him notes....



Doreen Cronin's understated text and Betsy Lewin's expressive illustrations make the most of this hilarious situation. Come join the fun as a bunch of literate cows turn Farmer Brown's farm upside down.

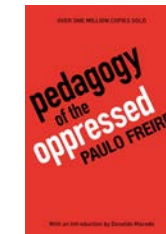
Drew Daywalt, Oliver Jeffers, *The Day the Crayons Quit*
(Philomel Books, 2013)

Poor Duncan just wants to color. But when he opens his box of crayons, he finds only letters, all saying the same thing: His crayons have had enough! They quit! Beige Crayon is tired of playing second fiddle to Brown Crayon. Black wants to be used for more than just outlining. Blue needs a break from coloring all those bodies of water. And Orange and Yellow are no longer speaking—each believes he is the true color of the sun. What can Duncan possibly do to appease all of the crayons and get them back to doing what they do best?



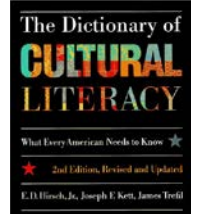
Paolo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (Herder and Herder, 1970)

xFirst published in Portuguese in 1968, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* was translated and published in English in 1970. The methodology of the late Paulo Freire has helped to empower countless impoverished and illiterate people throughout the world. Freire's work has taken on especial urgency in the United States and Western Europe, where the creation of a permanent underclass among the underprivileged and minorities in cities and urban centers is increasingly accepted as the norm.



E.D. Hirsch, Joseph F. Kett and James Trefil, *Dictionary of Cultural Literacy* (Houghton Mifflin, 1993)

A national bestseller, *The Dictionary of Cultural Literacy* has been widely acclaimed for identifying and defining the core body of knowledge that no literate American should be without. Now in this newly revised and updated edition, the authors provide a comprehensive look at cultural literacy for the nineties. New entries reflect suggestions from hundreds of readers. The dictionary takes into account the growing consensus over the specifics of multiculturalism, the political and geographic changes in the world, and the new ideas and terms that flow constantly from scientific research and technological development. *The Dictionary of Cultural Literacy* challenges us to find out more about what we know and helps us make sense of what we read, hear, and learn. It is a "must have" book for every home. **CTU**



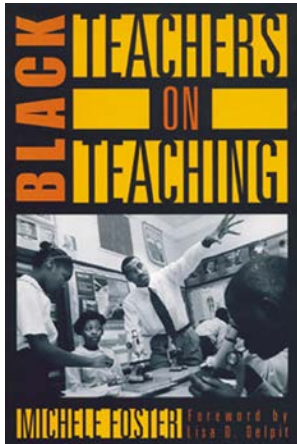
Black Teachers on Teaching

BY **KIMBERLY GOLDBAUM**

Michele Foster, *Black Teachers on Teaching* (The New Press, 1998)

Shouldn't I be ashamed to say I bought this book when it first came out, never read it, then recently rediscovered it and purchased it again? However, in the context of belonging to the Chicago Teachers Union chapter of the American Federation of Teachers' Black Caucus, Chicago Teachers Union chapter, and having witnessed the devastation of Chicago Public Schools mass school closings and layoffs, the experience of the black educator in his or her own words is important to read. In *Black Teachers on Teaching*, author Michele Foster speaks to those educators, who have a long history in America of having to fight to get jobs within public school systems and public sector unions.

After Lisa Delpit's comprehensive introduction, the book is divided into three parts: "The Elders," "The Veterans," and "The Novices." The book chronicles past and (what were then) conditions of employment. The author notes little having changed almost two decades after this book was published. The teachers featured in the book discussed racism in both its conservative and liberal forms with explicit terms that could help today's teachers frame their fight for social justice.



Pedagogy, community involvement, integration, the role of unions and teacher autonomy were subjects important to all the teachers featured.

The recurrent theme of the book is how racism affected both the teachers and the students, and how the system's aims didn't necessarily coordinate with the best interests of either. This book is a treasure trove of history. It illustrates the ways in which Blacks had to be inventive fighters, because when the fortunes of Black teachers rise, Black students—weighted with so much deprivation by a system that didn't know what to do with them—also rise. Foster captures the particular grit of Black teachers' predecessors, and every reader could benefit from the testimony of these rank-and-file models. **CTU**

Kimberly Goldbaum is a teacher at Seward Elementary.

The district is setting up students to fail by labeling them as not meeting the benchmark, and then requiring a grade to accompany that so-called failure.

Grades and Grading Series—November 2015

BY **KURT HILGENDORF**

In the September 2015 issue of *Chicago Union Teacher*, I wrote an article about grading to open a conversation about how we can change and adapt our think about how grades should be used to improve our instruction. Several of you provided nuanced and thoughtful responses (thanks to those who shared!). One response struck a particular chord, asking, "What's the purpose of grading and developing readers in early grades, especially if a large percentage of a classroom includes students who are learning English? Also, how does the district's mandatory grade policy for primary grades impact how these young students learn?"

This teacher's response is useful for several reasons. First, it called into question the use of grades as motivation, or, in this case, de-motivation. Grades for young

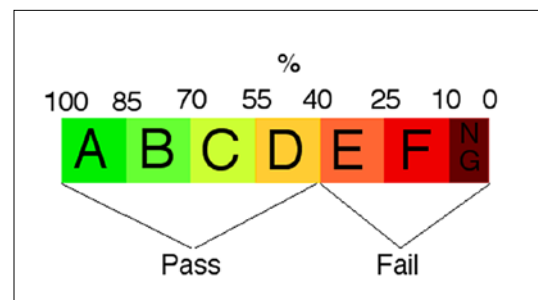


▲ Photo: amboo who? from Flickr

children are powerful indicators of self-worth, and low grades can signal to primary age children that their value is extremely low, despite the fact that they're being assessed on a very complex and challenging task. Gaining early childhood literacy requires developing multiple skills simultaneously on a comparatively small base of knowledge. Penalties in the form of low grades for children, especially those who are learning more than one language simultaneously, are destructive to young students learning something new.

That leads to another point: The district, not the teacher, mandates this system. The district is setting up students to fail by labeling them as not meeting the benchmark, and then requiring a grade to accompany that so-called failure. One major problem with the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) is its developmentally inappropriate approach to early

grades literacy. The standards are too stringent and lockstep for students who are developing at different rates. Early readers frequently do not begin to read independently until the third grade. Yet, the Common Core pushes that skill development earlier and earlier, as if standards can be applied to human beings in the same way as standards are applied to uniform manufactured products. Furthermore, the Common Core does not differentiate for English learners (ELs); instead, the Common Core issues guidance that puts the onus on the teachers and staff to make the standards work for ELs. The district could choose to assess differently and more appropriately to develop students' self-worth, curiosity and a love for reading instead of a fear or dread about reading. Instead, the district has taken a one-size-fits-all approach that mandates ranking and sorting students as young as six.



The teacher's response also points to a major flaw of grades: the lack of specific, targeted feedback and support. Under a typical grading framework, letter grades average a body of assessed work. The problem is that this average tells us very little, as a single letter has practically no descriptive power on its own. People assume that "A" work is excellent, but what if much of that grade came as the result of extra credit and compliance? This teacher's response pointed to the importance of a more holistic approach to communicating and nurturing student growth: assessing what students have learned; providing support to help them grow; providing support to help them help their children grow, and planning future learning experiences for the unique blend of children in a particular classroom. These activities are tied to collaboration and learning instead of labeling and sorting, which is a major role of grades for decades.

So what could the district do differently for primary age literacy practices? How could the district best adapt grades for English learners? Do we even need grades in early childhood, or is there a richer, more descriptive approach to feedback that moves learning? And if the district still chooses to require grades, what can teachers do to support developing readers within this flawed framework? What are some powerful ways to adapt grades to support students' growth rather than just ranking and sorting? Send your ideas on these and other grading issues to kurthilgendorf@ctulocal1.com. Thanks again to those who responded, and I heartily encourage and welcome others to share your thoughts. [CTU](#)

Kurt Hilgendorf is the CTU policy researcher and lobbyist.

THE Spectators Revolt

BY JACKSON POTTER

There is a rebellion brewing among American voters. With outsiders Donald Trump and Bernie Sanders surging in the polls against their anointed establishment opponents, unusual and unpredictable shifts have emerged in the lead-up to the 2016 presidential election.

Listening to the pundits, one would think the instability in the polls is a function of anger over the gridlock in Congress and the search for a scapegoat to blame for rising inequality, whether those are immigrants in the case of Trump or the super-rich in the case of Sanders. What if something else entirely is at work—perhaps an electorate that is sick of the tried-and-true formula of the political class and more accustomed to being engaged through the shock and awe of a media spectacle?

We all spend countless hours on social media and downloadable content, devouring Hollywood and absorbing provocative

programming. Americans love to consume blockbuster movies and hyperbolic newscasts on Comedy Central or Fox that easily outweigh our interest in newspapers, heady books or public television.

Part of our obsession with mind-numbing, eye-popping 24/7 stimulation is the dynamism of a market-based economy predicated on consumerism. To get our attention and purchasing power, producers must find new and innovative ways to repackage news content, "reality" television and edgier shows on cable stations to maintain a strong following.

As our television habits are being revolutionized, we can now watch pretty much whatever we want whenever we want to, and the growth of slickly produced cable television series like *The Wire*, *Game of Thrones* and *House of Cards* has coincided with the emergence of a political system fueled by "money power." Citizens United effectively unleashed unregulated campaign cash into U.S. politics

at precisely the same time that the entertainment industry has undergone its own "extreme makeover."

The average voter is more interested in candidates that aren't afraid to be controversial or buck the established lines and practices of their traditional party. While mainstream leaders of the Republican and Democratic parties revel in heaping abuse upon the clown-like buffoonery and "narcissism" of Trump, or the outlandish Vermont-style "socialism" and class warfare themes from the Sanders camp, the influence of both is unavoidable. In fact, as writer Matt Taibbi of *Rolling Stone* recently mentioned, the chagrin of the traditional pundits may be helping the unlikely candidates surge in the polls by reaffirming their underdog and outsider status.

A common perception is that our democracy has been hijacked by special interests and Super PACs. Could it be that Americans have tired of the pablum spewing out of talking heads that clamor for their favor and simply chosen the most outrageous, flamboyant and strident options available?

Perhaps we are on the verge of another Jacksonian moment in the evolution of American Democracy. The nation's fifth president was ridiculed by mainstream party leaders for allowing uncouth and uneducated voters into the newly established Democratic Party, and yet those voters went on to deliver one of the most enduring voting blocks in our nation's history.

Trump's ability to maintain and build

Part of our obsession with mind-numbing, eye-popping 24/7 stimulation is the dynamism of a market-based economy predicated on consumerism.

▼ Donald Trump ▼ Bernie Sanders Illustrations: DonkeyHotey from Flickr



upon his lead among virtually all demographics within the Republican Party has been nothing short of remarkable. It is also of great concern that he has built his candidacy upon a celebration of extreme nativism and his inordinate wealth. Trump, however, has fortified his burgeoning coalition by bucking all the Masters of the Universe and their corporate backers who have tried to preside over a staged coronation for the preferred candidates, before a single voter has the chance to weigh in.

This is by no means the first time an entertainer or gadfly has catapulted into the political limelight. Ronald Reagan and Bill Bradley were both entertainers, but they were also given the blessing of their respective political parties to run as legitimate party candidates. In this case, neither Sanders nor Trump are considered acceptable options to their respective party, yet they are surging ahead because of their outsider and entertainment status.

Perhaps our political system is finally catching up to our television preferences. Whereas the folksy personas of Reagan, Bill Clinton and George W. Bush might have filled our entertainment fix in the past, Americans now thirst for brash, straight-talking and decidedly unorthodox candidates. It just might be that the spirit of Game of Thrones' Ned Stark is coursing through the lifeblood of the body politic at just the right time to advantage democracy over dynasty and lead to the downfall of hereditary political power. If the two-party system continues to flout the evolution of public opinion, the houses of both Bush and Clinton could meet their doom and the new media empire of the country just might become the new kingmaker. **CTU**

Jackson Potter is the CTU staff coordinator.



▼
Amy Winehouse
Photo: Wikipedia

Amy Winehouse, Allen Iverson, and the Importance of Seeing Our Students

BY GREG MICHIE

Two documentaries I saw recently got me thinking a lot about teaching, even though neither focuses on education: “Amy,” about acclaimed British singer/songwriter Amy Winehouse, who died in 2011, and “Iverson,” about 11-time NBA all-star and 2000-2001 Most Valuable Player Allen Iverson.

At their respective peaks, both Winehouse and Iverson were incredible, unique talents. But personal struggles, which played out under the full glare of the media spotlight, eventually overshadowed their gifts in the eyes of many, and over time morphed into shorthand labels: Winehouse as a self-destructive addict, Iverson as a self-centered “thug.”

The documentaries push beyond these simplistic depictions to allow audiences to see their subjects as three-dimensional and to better understand the troubles that gripped them. Neither film is a hagiography: Both Winehouse and Iverson are portrayed as flawed individuals who made questionable decisions along the way. But we are also witness to their vulnerability, their eagerness to please, and—perhaps most striking to me—how young both seem when initially thrust into the whirlwind of non-stop attention.

There’s a sequence in “Amy,” after her drug and alcohol addictions had become widely known, with a clip of former “Tonight Show” host Jay Leno tossing out a joke about her in a monologue. “Amy Winehouse’s new album will feature songs about cooking,” Leno says. Then, after a couple beats: “Cooking crystal meth, black tar heroin...” The audience howls and erupts in applause.

As I watched the scene, I wondered if I would’ve laughed at the joke if I had heard it at the time. I’d like to think not, but I might’ve. Either way, it wouldn’t have fazed me much. Back then, all I knew about

Amy Winehouse was that she could sing and that she looked increasingly gaunt and bleary-eyed every time I saw videos or photos of her. At most, Leno’s jab might’ve caused me to shake my head and wonder what the singer’s problem was, why she couldn’t just get herself together. But as the film unfolded, I began to understand more about Winehouse’s childhood, her insecurities, her path to that point. Seeing her in that new light, the joke not only wasn’t funny, it seemed cruel and unfair. As Leno’s audience roared its approval, I hurt for her.

So, what does all this have to do with teaching?

For me, both films serve as potent reminders of how important it is for teachers to “see” our students. I don’t mean just noting their physical presence. I mean seeing each kid who walks through our classroom door as fully as we can. I mean asking ourselves questions: Who is this young person? Where is he or she coming from? What animates or silences or worries him? What passions does she have? What wounds? What parts of him or her might I not be seeing in the classroom?

Just as some white basketball fans looked at Allen Iverson’s black skin, tattooed body, and embrace of

When we fail to see students fully, it not only hampers our ability to teach them well. It prevents us from envisioning what they are capable of doing and being, what they might become.

Viewing the students' videos gave me glimpses of their experiences that I never would've seen otherwise...

hip-hop style and labeled him a “thug,” teachers sometimes fall back on shorthand—seeing a student as simply “slow” or “unmotivated” or “gang-involved”—and fail to look more deeply at what lies underneath. Or, having not examined their own biases or prejudices, teachers use part of a student's identity—African American or poor or immigrant, for example—to make limiting assumptions about the child, to not see him or her fairly.

Other times, we fail to see a student almost entirely. This past spring, a 7th grader in one of my social studies classes came to my room after school to check out the next book in a manga series. As she was leaving, she looked up at a couple drawings she'd done that I'd posted on a wall. “That's the only place in this school that I feel visible,” she said.

I didn't interpret her statement to mean that she felt more visible in my classroom than in others. I took it literally: that the meager rectangle of wall space that held her artwork was the only place in school where she truly felt seen. Sure, her comment could be disregarded as teenage hyperbole, but it left me thinking for days afterward—not just about her, but about all the other students I needed to make efforts to see more fully.

One way I tried to do that was through a project inspired by a series of short videos by Justin Harenchar, a Chicago-based filmmaker. Harenchar recorded footage of his everyday experiences over the course of a year, then edited together 3-second clips from each day into monthly visual collages. For my spin on the idea, each 8th grader in my homeroom checked out a video camera for a day and taped whatever they chose—inside their apartments and out in their south side

Chicago neighborhood. Once they'd all finished recording, I pieced together short clips from each student's footage to create a montage of their lives outside school.

Viewing the students' videos gave me glimpses of their experiences that I never would've seen otherwise: taking care of a younger sibling at night while mom worked the late shift; helping cook enchiladas for a family dinner; marveling at the lights of downtown Chicago at night (“We should come here every weekend!”); tensing up at the sight of a passing police van; listening to a father extol the virtues of hard work.

It was a fascinating project, and it helped me see a number of my students in ways I hadn't before. But here's the truth: At the end of the year, I still didn't know all of my 32 homeroom students well. Some remained barely etched outlines or half-drawn portraits.

How does that happen? I had two years with these kids—360 school days. How could any of them leave my classroom not being fully seen?

Some students try hard not to be, of course. They throw invisibility cloaks over their heads at every opportunity. But a teacher can't—or at least shouldn't—just accept that and let a kid disappear into the crowd.

Still, it's not easy, and institutional factors and counter-productive policies make it even more daunting. Large class sizes bring with them a greater likelihood of student anonymity. The narrow focus on raising test scores obscures the crucial relational component of good teaching. And the prizing of “text-based evidence” in Common Core standards can make it seem as if students' own perspectives—based on their lived experiences and cultural backgrounds—are little more than distractions to the educational process.

These aren't excuses—just realities. Another reality, perhaps more important but even less discussed, is that many school districts give little attention to building their teachers' cultural competence: the ability to better understand, validate, and build upon students' racial and cultural backgrounds in the classroom. In Chicago, only 9 percent of students are white, but 50 percent of teachers are, which means a lot of white teachers are teaching African American and Latino kids. For these teachers—myself included—part of “seeing the stu-



▲
Allen Iverson
Photo: Wikipedia

dent” is seeing them racially and culturally.

But increasing one's cultural proficiency isn't something that can happen in a couple PD sessions. It's an ongoing commitment. I've spent 25 years working in Chicago schools, and I'm still doing the work and feeling like I still have a lot to learn. For the most part, though, it's been undertaken on my own or by collaborating with thoughtful colleagues—not through efforts the district itself has initiated. Perhaps district leaders are of the mistaken belief that a teacher's race is of little significance. It sometimes seems so. After

all, Chicago has seen a drastic decline in the number of Black teachers over the past 15 years—from 40 percent to 23 percent—and I've heard little about strategies to address it.

When we fail to see students fully, it not only hampers our ability to teach them well. It prevents us from envisioning what they are capable of doing and being, what they might become. In his recently released best-seller “Between the World and Me,” Ta-Nehisi Coates recounts his years as a student in Baltimore's public schools, where the curriculum seemed hopelessly disconnected from the life he then knew. “I was a curious boy,” Coates writes, “but the schools were not concerned with curiosity. They were concerned with compliance.”

Similarly, in their book “To Teach: The Journey, In Comics,” William Ayers and Ryan Alexander-Tanner tell of a retired teacher's recollection of one of her former students, jazz great Ella Fitzgerald, upon the iconic singer's death. “I've thought about it all these years,” the woman says. “I had the great Ella Fitzgerald in my class and didn't even know it.” The tragedy, Ayers and Alexander-Tanner say, is that all the kids in the class were Ellas—or Amys, or Allens, or Ta-Nehisis—each with unique gifts, a singular story, something of value to offer.

As a new school year gets closer by the day, I plan to hold that thought close, to re-commit to seeing each student I teach as fully as I can. Amid the myopic focus on test-based “achievement” in our schools, it may be one of the most overlooked aspects of a teacher's work. It's also one of the most vital. **CTU**

Greg Michie is a teacher at Seward Elementary and Senior Research Associate at the Center for Policy Studies and Social Justice at Concordia University Chicago. This article was originally published in the Huffington Post Education online at <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/education/>.

Procedure for Filling Vacancies for Functional Groups

There is one Area Vice President vacancy and one School Community Representative vacancy.

All voting members of the functional groups of the House of Delegates may vote for one (1) candidate for Area Vice President, no matter how many are nominated. Only PSRP delegates may vote for one (1) candidate to fill the School Community Representative vacancy.

The procedure is as follows:

1. Nominations for vacancies shall be advertised in the Chicago Union Teacher preceding nomination meeting, on the CTU website and in the meeting notice bulletin for the month of the election.
2. Only those members of the House of Delegates, who represent the functional group to be voted on, may nominate,

second the nomination and vote. Only persons in the functional group may be nominated. Associate delegates may vote.

3. Nominations will be taken from the floor and seconded from the floor during the December 2015 House of Delegates meeting.

4. Voting shall take place at the January House of Delegates meeting.

5. Pre-printed ballots will be provided by the Rules-Elections Committee. To prioritize the order, the Rules-Elections Committee will put names in a hat and list them in order of selection. Elected members of the Executive Board may vote within their functional group. Non-voting members of Executive Board may not vote, unless they are a delegate.

6. At the meeting where the voting is to take place, each nominee shall have the opportunity to speak for one minute in the order in which they appear on the ballot, if they so desire.

7. Delegates will be called to the voting area to pick up the ballots and to have their badges checked for voter eligibility.

8. Voters will place cast ballots in boxes at the designated locations.

9. When voting is complete, Rules-Elections Committee members will count the ballots.

10. Up to two representatives per candidate may be present during the counting. The candidate may be one of the representatives.

11. The results will be given to the President for announcement at the end of

the meeting.

12. The candidate with the highest number of votes will be declared the winner. In the case of a runoff election it will occur at the next House of Delegates Meeting.

In the case of a runoff, each remaining nominee will be given one minute to speak in the order in which they appear on the ballot, at the meeting where the runoff voting is taking place.

13. Prior to the House of Delegates meeting where voting will take place, all eligible candidate names will be posted on the CTU website in alphabetical order by functional groups.

The Rules-Elections committee requests that the voting take place at the meeting as early as possible. **CTU**

AL1 AUSTIN-NORTH LAWNSDALE ELEMENTARY Anderson, Grace A.; Pesce, Jennifer / **AL2 AUSTIN-NORTH LAWNSDALE ELEMENTARY** Egwuekwe Maxey, Kelechi S.; Humphreys, Timothy A. / **BP1 BURNHAM PARK ELEMENTARY** All Present / **BP2 BURNHAM PARK ELEMENTARY** Berger, Michael S. / **EG1 ENGLEWOOD-GRESHAM ELEMENTARY** Sharp, Daisy L.; Smith, Vera I. / **EG2 ENGLEWOOD-GRESHAM ELEMENTARY** All Present / **FR1 FULLERTON ELEMENTARY** Chavez, Lisa B.; Poellinetz, Andre D.; Vacco, Angela L. / **FR2 FULLERTON ELEMENTARY** All Present / **FL1 FULTON ELEMENTARY** Arzuaga, Carlos A.; Maurello, Rosemary S. / **FL2 FULTON ELEMENTARY** All Present / **FSS FAR SOUTH SIDE HIGH SCHOOL** Rountree, Eric F.; Styler, Kenneth D. / **GH1 GARFIELD-HUMBOLDT ELEMENTARY** Boatwright, Lowery E.; Metzger, Suzanne M.; Moreno, Claudia I. / **GH2 GARFIELD-HUMBOLDT ELEMENTARY** All Present / **LC1 LAKE CALUMET ELEMENTARY** Coleman, Angela K. / **LC2 LAKE CALUMET ELEMENTARY** McKinney, LaConya / **ME1 MIDWAY ELEMENTARY** Hester, Kamau L.; O'Malley, Margaret M. / **ME2 MIDWAY ELEMENTARY** Anderson, Eric E.; Jennings, Christina / **NW1 NORTH-NORTHWEST SIDE H.S.** Archambault, Kelly A.; Goodman, Michael A.; Gryglak, Emma E.; Kimbrue, Hayley A.; Walsh, Matthew J. / **NW2 NORTH-NORTHWEST SIDE H.S.** Hinz, Jennifer; King, Elizabeth M.; O'Shea, Mary Rose; Yonan, Joanne S. / **OH1 O'HARE ELEMENTARY** Kasai, Meleia F. / **OH2 O'HARE ELEMENTARY** Davidson, Susan K.; Klenetsky, Jody; Lord, Amanda M. / **PE1 PERSHING ELEMENTARY** Cordova, Nancy / **PE2 PERSHING ELEMENTARY** Melero, Juanita / **PL1 PILSEN-LITTLE VILLAGE ELEMENTARY** Toman, John A. / **PL2 PILSEN-**

LITTLE VILLAGE ELEMENTARY All Present / **RR1 RAVENSWOOD-RIDGE ELEMENTARY** Goff, Linda S.; Mountz, David B. / **RR2 RAVENSWOOD-RIDGE ELEMENTARY** Wiltse, Nora S. / **RI1 ROCK ISLAND ELEMENTARY** Foy, Brandon J.; Gagner, Louis T.; Menefee, Jeremy R. / **RI2 ROCK ISLAND ELEMENTARY** Himes, Lewis / **SK1 SKYWAY ELEMENTARY** Boose, Robin Blake; Evans, Karen / **SK2 SKYWAY ELEMENTARY** Brown, Marlene; Phillips, Jala L.; Turner Burkes, Constance / **SSH SOUTH SIDE H.S.** Cameron, Alisia L.; Reed, Darryl L. / **SW1 SOUTHWEST SIDE H.S.** Moten, Latonya; Penuelas, Homero L. / **SW2 SOUTHWEST SIDE H.S.** Skalinder, Eric / **WS1 WEST SIDE H.S.** Colsant, Tricia D.; Harris, Stephanie J. / **WS2 WEST SIDE H.S.** Butler, Tonya L.; Miller, Cynthia L.; Renteria, Rita / **CITY-WIDE CAREER SERVICE** Aguirre, Emma N.; Cruz, Griselda; Gaither, Arttice S.; Gonzalez, Maria A.; Guerrero, Genoveva; Hampton, Vermie L.; Hill, Delphine; Riesco, Julieta; Sanders, Vickie; Scott, Ella M. / **CITY-WIDE** Ahmad, Huma A.; Christensen, William E.; Daniels, Theresa D.; Evans-Douglas, Tonya; Freed, Jeanne M.; Knudstrup, Karen A.; Lofton, Saria C.; Margotte, Glory A.; McCormick, Mary T.; Milkowski, Lawrence E.; Nevels, Leigh M.; Nyberg, Angelica M.; O'Connell, Jennifer L.; Ong, Jantra; Saffro, Scott J.; Socoloff, Miriam A.; Thompson, Theodore; Whitfield, Benita A.

Delegates Not Present

HOUSE OF DELEGATES MEETING

Wednesday,
November 4, 2015

In memory of...

2015

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| February 3 | Rubimar Monet , Otis Elementary | October 8 | Albert M. Freedman , Roosevelt HS |
| September 14 | Elaine X. Pro , Burroughs | October 9 | Janice G. Horn , Farnsworth |
| September 14 | Antoinette Wrobell , Taft | October 9 | Warren R. Link , Taft |
| September 17 | Andrew G. McCann , Wells | October 10 | Jesus C. Abalos , Lindbloom |
| September 19 | Eileen Peterson , Altgeld | October 11 | Evelyn C. Lash , Harte |
| September 21 | Cornelia Ann Davis , Substitute Teacher | October 11 | Eldevon Malcolm , Roosevelt HS |
| September 22 | Vernon Vanderah , Turner | October 11 | Marie C. McGuckin , Surs |
| September 23 | Edith R. Burford , Hurley | October 11 | Bettye J. Redmond , Earle |
| September 23 | Michael E. Sailes , Central Office | October 12 | Johnnie Shannon , South Shore Comm Acad |
| September 26 | James G. Porter , Pickard | October 12 | Robert W. Tisdale , Julian HS |
| September 27 | Shirley A. Benson , Powell | October 14 | Coletta A. Hahn , Alexander |
| September 29 | Elena S. O'Connell , Corkery | October 15 | Dorothy M. McCann , Black Br |
| September 29 | Ramona D. Roberts , Esmond | October 16 | Corinne P. Kornmann , Substitute Teacher |
| September 29 | Jean Walderon , Alcott | October 17 | John R. Fitzgibbon , Whitney Young |
| September 30 | Peggy A. Reddick , Tesla | October 17 | Raymond R. Randolph , Curie |
| October 1 | Pearl B. Ellis , Kozminski | October 19 | John G. Delin , Trumbull |
| October 1 | Fern Kohn , Alcott | October 20 | Daniel T. Kelly , Reilly |
| October 2 | Girtlee Booze , Robinson | October 20 | Anne M. Zimmerman , Substitute Teacher |
| October 2 | Aurelia E. Husnik , Eli Whitney | October 21 | Bettie J. Battiest , Luella |
| October 5 | Arey Desadier , Charles Deneen | October 21 | June F. Drnavich , Cameron |
| October 6 | Mildred P. Arburtha , Truth | October 22 | Linda D. Lewis , Bogan Tech HS |
| October 6 | Stephen Fredrick Eggerding , Hearst | October 22 | Marion H. Rice , Kennedy HS |
| October 6 | Geraldine B. Hletko , Gary | October 23 | John F. Daly Jr. , Greene |
| October 7 | Ava Marie Blocker , Morgan Park HS | October 26 | Stephanie N. Panek , Stevenson |
| October 7 | Louis R. Docimo , Prosser | October 29 | Jake Carter , Bennett |
| October 7 | Lottie M. Garfield , Perry | October 29 | Doris Shamby , Roosevelt HS |
| October 8 | Milton Collen , Nettlehorst | | |

Lists of deceased members of the Chicago Teachers Union (CTU) are provided to the *Chicago Union Teacher* by the office of the Chicago Teachers Pension Fund (CTPF) and are printed as received. If you notice an error or omission, please first contact the CTPF at 312.641.4464 or via email at memberservices@ctpf.org to report the information. Please contact the CTU Financial Dept. as well by phoning 312.329.9100. Both the CTPF and CTU disburse death benefits to a member's designated beneficiaries.

