

SOLUTION-DRIVEN UNIONISM

A consortium of New York City public schools that has achieved outstanding results by stressing in-depth teaching over high-stakes testing, and a coalition of state workers that saved Connecticut \$1.6



MICHAEL CAMPBELL

AFT officers honored winners of the union's award for Solution-Driven Unionism at a ceremony in Washington, D.C.

billion through a new preventive healthcare plan, are the two winners of the AFT's inaugural Prize for Solution-Driven Unionism. The New York Performance Standards Consortium and AFT Connecticut each received a \$25,000 award on Oct. 17 during a national AFT ceremony in Washington, D.C. A third AFT affiliate, the Charlotte County Support Personnel Association in Florida, earned an honorable mention and received a \$5,000 prize. For more on the awards, visit <http://bit.ly/1cIs04r>.

FINDING COMMON GROUND

Speakers at the AFT Civil, Human, and Women's Rights Conference called the fall gathering a historic moment: parents, students, community activists, faith leaders, elected officials, educators, and labor leaders came together to forge a partnership based on a core set of principles. Attendees embraced "The Principles That Unite Us," a common vision for public education that ensures all school districts commit to providing all children with the opportunity to attend a high-quality public school. This vision also ensures that those closest to the education process—school staff, students, parents, and community members—have a voice in policy and practice. Coverage of the event is available at <http://bit.ly/160Hfxe>.

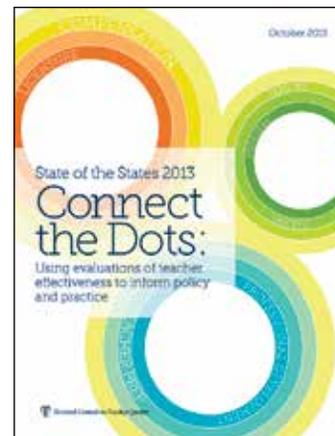
THE PROMISE OF PUBLIC EDUCATION RECLAIMED

The AFT executive council has adopted a resolution to reclaim the promise of public education, which commits the union to this critical work. This vision is about fighting for neighborhood public schools that are safe, welcoming places for teaching and learning. It is about ensuring that teachers and school staff are well-prepared and well-supported, have manageable class sizes, and have time to collaborate so they can meet the individual needs of every child. It is about ensuring that our children have an engaging curriculum that includes art, music, and the sciences. And it is about ensuring that children and their families have access to wraparound services to meet their social, emotional, and health needs. "This is a vision of what parents want for their kids. And by joining with them and the community, we can create a movement," said AFT President Randi Weingarten. The resolution is available at <http://bit.ly/1gwjaXY>.



CONNECTING THE DOTS ON TEACHER EVALUATION

The National Council on Teacher Quality's report *State of the States 2013—Connect the Dots: Using Evaluations of Teacher Effectiveness to Inform Policy and Practice* highlights what AFT President Randi Weingarten calls a "surreal dissonance" when it comes to testing and evaluation of teachers. The report shows that teacher evaluation systems in 35 states and the District of Columbia are driven by tests, requiring that student achievement results be a significant, or even the most significant, factor in teacher evaluations. Yet only 20 states and D.C. require teacher evaluation results to be used to inform and shape professional development for all teachers. "We have to stop test-centric evaluations and build systems that will actually improve teaching and learning," says the AFT president, who observes that both the union and the NCTQ report argue that, for the Common Core State Standards to succeed, they need to be implemented properly—with alignment throughout the system, including teacher evaluations. The report is available at <http://bit.ly/195chUP>.



IMMIGRATION: "PART OF AMERICA'S DNA"

The AFT is standing behind the renewed push to get the U.S. House of Representatives to pass comprehensive immigration reform before the end of the year. "Immigration is a part of America's DNA," AFT President Randi Weingarten said at an event this fall in Washington, D.C., where thousands of passionate supporters of immigration reform turned out for a rally, concert, and march to the Capitol. The event culminated in the arrest of nearly 200 people. Among them: Weingarten, AFT Vice President Maria Neira, eight members of Congress, and other allies. Weingarten and Neira were released the next morning after spending the night in jail. Read more at <http://bit.ly/1959NWA>.

COMMON CORE CAVEAT

The Common Core State Standards are a laudable and welcome development in public education, but they demand a clear road map in the form of rich, common curriculum content, along with resources to support teaching all students to mastery. That is the thrust of an online statement from a diverse group of education leaders, including AFT President Randi Weingarten and Chester E. Finn Jr., former assistant education secretary under President Ronald Reagan. Among the major recommendations in the policy statement: developing one or more sets of curriculum guides that map out the core content students need to master the CCSS, and involving teachers, content experts, and cognitive scientists—not just curriculum designers by trade—in the development of the guides. The statement is available to view and sign at the Albert Shanker Institute's website at <http://bit.ly/1avJadR>.