



AMERICAN Teacher

THE NATIONAL PUBLICATION OF THE AMERICAN FEDERATION OF TEACHERS

Developing good digital citizens	4
The income achievement gap	7
A clear choice in November	9
Empowering a rural community	11
The footsteps of history	22



COMMUNITY SCHOOLS A PATHWAY TO STUDENT SUCCESS

Wraparound services benefit students and teachers alike

PAGE 12

Annie Bogenschutz works with outside agencies to give students at Taylor Academy in Cincinnati access to a range of services.



Healthcare Reform
Why it matters

PAGE 16

'Right-to-work'
laws are wrong

PAGE 5

"Bully"

A must-see movie

PAGE 2



EVERY DAY, AFT MEMBERS

SHOPPING

KEEP IT FRESH

Flowers



Save 20 percent on flowers, gifts and plants through Teleflora. Members can order discounted flowers online or by phone and have them hand-delivered by local florists anywhere in the world—100 percent satisfaction guaranteed.

MORE **VALUE** FOR YOUR MEMBERSHIP



A Union of Professionals

AFT +
Member Benefits

+ For more information about this and other savings, go to:

aft.org/members

AFT + is your advocate. For information on all **AFT +** programs, call 800/238-1133, ext. 8643, or e-mail aftplus@aft.org. The AFT has an expense reimbursement and/or endorsement arrangement for marketing this program. For more information, please contact AFT Financial Services at 800/238-1133, ext. 4493; send an e-mail to disclosureinfo@aft.org; or visit **www.aft.org/benefits/disclosure**.



By teachers, for teachers

RANDI WEINGARTEN, AFT President

AS THE SCHOOL YEAR ENDS, you're probably reflecting on what went well and what you want to work on over the summer. Even with all the challenges this year—including budget cuts, testing fixation, and pressure to do more with less—no doubt you still managed to develop lots of terrific lesson plans, and think about what you might do differently next year.

Wouldn't it be great if there were a trusted place where you could share your best lessons, resources and activities with colleagues across the country—and to find their best work?

With your help, there soon will be.

The AFT is partnering with TSL Education—host of the world's largest online network of teachers—to provide such a platform. This won't be an online warehouse but a real network for teachers to share ideas and assume responsibility for the quality and usefulness of those materials. This is a need expressed repeatedly by our members. We are asking teachers like you to provide the content so it becomes a vital resource.

I have talked with educators from coast to coast and seen firsthand the successful education practices in Finland; Japan; Ontario, Canada; Shanghai, China; and Singapore as well as in the United States. A stark difference between our educational practices and theirs is that U.S. teachers are commonly assigned a classroom and told to figure things out: sink or swim. There's little, if any, time built in for teachers to confer or collaborate, to share resources, to problem-solve or to brainstorm.

This new online network will provide teachers a way to connect with colleagues across the country and an easy, trusted, no-cost way to share ideas.

I would have loved to have had a resource

like this when I was teaching. Like most new teachers, I struggled to develop lesson plans and find great materials. And, like most experienced teachers, once I had taught for several years, I had carefully honed lessons that I would have been happy to share with colleagues. Experienced teachers helping their newer colleagues is important, but master teachers have told me that they too will benefit: They are always seeking the growth—the spark of fresh ideas—that only comes from connect-

result has been a disjointed, test-driven education “system” in which, all too often, teachers are left both scrambling to supplement their inadequate textbooks and to meet standardized test-driven requirements.

Teachers have a crucial role to play in making sure history doesn't repeat itself.

The CCSS create a new urgency, and a new window of opportunity—and they will be an important part of this new platform. But even without the CCSS, this online network would

A profession is measured by how **standards are upheld**, by how **quality is advanced**, by how **knowledge is spread**—not by outsiders, but by the members of the profession.

ing with fellow teachers.

Too much of teachers' work is shaped and controlled by people far from the classroom. A profession is measured by how standards are upheld, by how quality is advanced, by how knowledge is spread—not by outsiders, but by the members of the profession itself.

It's that de-professionalization, the continuing budget cuts, and being left high and dry that are causing a lot of consternation around implementation of the new Common Core State Standards (CCSS). Let's recall the last big push for common academic standards, in the 1990s. Numerous states developed standards and assessments (of varying quality), but nothing in between. Teachers were left to fill in the void. Some were fortunate enough to work in schools and districts that saw the importance of developing an aligned curriculum. Few were so lucky as to work in districts where standards, assessments, curriculum and professional development were systematically integrated. The

be crucial. It's designed to do something that's missing from most so-called reformers' ideas: support teaching. Just think about what teachers could accomplish if they had teacher-developed instructional materials at their fingertips. As a teacher, instead of piecing a unit together from scratch, I would have been thrilled to begin with or build on an idea or resource or lesson that another teacher developed, and then spend time customizing an engaging lesson for my own students.

This platform will be yours. It's an opportunity for you to share your expertise with colleagues, or just to get new ideas—for free. Teachers will rate these resources and ensure their quality. It's about peers helping peers—not materials from on high. This network truly is by teachers, for teachers.

We want to hear from you—even before the site is launched. Go to www.aft.org/share to share your ideas, and look for the site to launch this summer.



RANDI WEINGARTEN
President
LORRETTA JOHNSON
Secretary-Treasurer
FRANCINE LAWRENCE
Executive Vice President

KRIS HAVENS
Communications Director

© 2012 AMERICAN FEDERATION
OF TEACHERS, AFL-CIO

Cover photo:
BRUCE CRIPPEN

ROGER S. GLASS
Editor

MIKE ROSE
Senior Editor

ADRIENNE COLES
DANIEL GURSKY
ANNETTE LICITRA
BARBARA MCKENNA
VIRGINIA MYERS
KATHY NICHOLSON
Contributing Editors

JENNIFER CHANG
Production Manager

LAURA BAKER
JANE FELLER
Copy Editors

MICHELLE FURMAN
PAMELA WOLFE
Graphic Designers

SHARON WRIGHT
Production Specialist

SHARON FRANCOUR
Production Coordinator

SHAWNITRA HAWKINS
ALICIA NICK
Production Staff

AMERICAN TEACHER (ISSN 0003-1380) is published five times a year: Sept./Oct., Nov./Dec., Jan./Feb., March/April, May/June by the American Federation of Teachers, 555 New Jersey Ave. N.W., Washington, DC 20001-2079. Phone: 202-879-4400 www.aft.org

Periodicals postage paid at Washington, D.C., and additional mailing offices.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to American Teacher, 555 New Jersey Ave. N.W., Washington, DC 20001-2079.

MEMBERS: To change your address or subscription, notify your local union treasurer or visit www.aft.org/members.

Letters to the editor may be sent to the address above or to online@aft.org.

AMERICAN TEACHER is mailed to all AFT teacher members as a benefit of membership. Subscriptions represent \$2.50 of annual dues. Nonmember subscription price is \$12/year.

Although advertisements are screened as carefully as possible, acceptance of an advertisement does not imply AFT endorsement of the product or service.

A documentary that 'needs to be seen'

Movie illustrates the painful consequences of bullying



THE MOVIE "BULLY," which *Time* magazine calls "as vivid as any horror film," opened in theaters nationwide in April. Directed by Lee Hirsch, himself a victim of childhood bullying, the documentary follows five young people who were bullied; two of them committed suicide.

The cruelty, often hidden from adults and often denied even when children report it, is so wrenching that the movie begs to be discussed and acted upon in local communities. It features students from high schools in Georgia, Iowa, Mississippi and Oklahoma during the 2009-10 school year, tracing their lives in real time and in their own words, from school buses to suburban streets.

"This movie is devastating and compelling," AFT president Randi Weingarten says, "and it needs to be seen."

The AFT and the NEA co-sponsored an advance screening of the movie in Washington, D.C., which drew an overflow crowd of about 450 educators, policymakers, students and parents. Following the showing, AFT president Randi Weingarten and NEA presi-

dent Dennis Van Roekel led a panel discussion about how to put an end to student bullying.

The panel focused on practical solutions. Weingarten suggested that people no longer dismiss bullying by saying things like "boys will be boys, kids will be kids." Schools and their environments, she said, need to be safe havens for all children.

The conversation included a discussion about whether parents and teachers have the tools they need to advocate for children. Hirsch said that educators sometimes try to report bullying but are ignored or silenced. One of the parents in the movie, Jackie Libby, added that it is wrong to remove victims, but not the bullies, from buses, classes or schools where the bullying is taking place.

The film originally was unrated, but after a public outcry and an agreement to pare down the number of swear words, the movie was granted a PG-13 rating. Michigan high school student Katy Butler, who came out as a lesbian in middle school and had her finger broken by a bully, led the fight for the lower rating so that younger students and their parents could watch the film together. Butler started a petition on Change.org. Within a week, she had 100,000 signatures, and within a month the movie had its PG-13 rating.

AFT local affiliates nationwide, including

the Chicago Teachers Union, the United Federation of Teachers in New York City and the United Teachers of Dade in Florida, are holding screenings of "Bully."

AFT activists already have begun advocating for federal measures to curb bullying. Dozens of paraprofessionals and school-related personnel, often the first to witness shunning and other kinds of harassment, went to Washington, D.C., in March to attend the American Association of Classified School Employees' annual legislative conference.

The school employees spent an afternoon urging federal lawmakers to support the Safe Schools Improvement Act (S. 506 and H.R. 1648), which would require school codes of conduct that prohibit bullying and harassment as well as provide training for school employees.

Right: "Bully" director Lee Hirsch. AFT president Randi Weingarten, center below, says bullying should not be treated as a case of "kids will be kids."



take action

The AFT has been a strong supporter of "Bully" (www.facebook.com/bullymovie) and its social action group, the Bully Project, along with other initiatives to help stop bullying. Visit <http://go.aft.org/032112/bullying>.



PHOTOS BY ALFREDO FLORES

Should teachers friend their students on Facebook?


YES

Teachers can be 'friends,' with boundaries

BY LAUREN ISAACS SCHIMKO

OUR STUDENTS LIVE in a world where being connected is their reality. They actively seek to network, share and communicate daily. As educators, I feel we must embrace their need to regularly interact. We can use this as a tool to enhance our students' learning experiences, and also to help parents easily connect with teachers.

As Facebook becomes a more accepted public forum, there are some queries we may want to consider: Why should we use social media with our students (and parents), and how do we keep the personal-professional line from being blurred?

As our society becomes more dependent electronically, I would ask educators to rethink the student-parent-teacher relationship. Facebook can become an avenue toward creating a broader and more interactive learning community. The students and many of their parents are already there—let's take advantage of it. Creating deliberate classroom and course Facebook pages that allow students (and their parents) to have access to information, contribute to content, ask questions, and stay up to date on classroom activities can be a great educational and communication instrument.

Facebook allows interaction beyond the school day, and all parties can easily manage communications from home or on the go with a cell phone or tablet.

At issue are the many concerns over friending your students on Facebook. I do not friend students on my personal Facebook page, and I am careful about what I place on my wall. I do request that students and parents "like" my class page ("Mrs. Schimko's Algebra Corner"), for use with the integrated algebra course. We are "friends" in that sense, but with appropriate limits.

I strongly believe that the use of social media in our classroom has merit and value but, a well-defined balance between personal vs. professional use of Facebook must be consciously preserved.

Lauren Isaacs Schimko is a math teacher in the North Rockland (N.Y.) Central School District and secretary of her AFT local, the North Rockland Teachers' Association.


NO

It can raise significant concerns

BY NANCY WILLARD

FACEBOOK AND OTHER social media, including Google+ and Twitter, are digital environments where students socialize. So I will take the liberty to rephrase the question: Should teachers hang out with students at the mall or jump into the car with them at lunch to go grab a hamburger? Most teachers would shy away from this kind of socialization—thinking that it is important to maintain distinctions of status. While one hopes that teachers are friendly, most teachers do not strive to become "friends" with their students.

When teachers socialize with students through Facebook, it can raise significant concerns. Do all students want teachers hanging out in their digital friendship communities? Likely not. Many would think this is creepy—an invasion of their personal lives. But students may feel

pressure to do so, because if a teacher friends some students, but not others, this could mean that the students who agree to friend will get better grades.

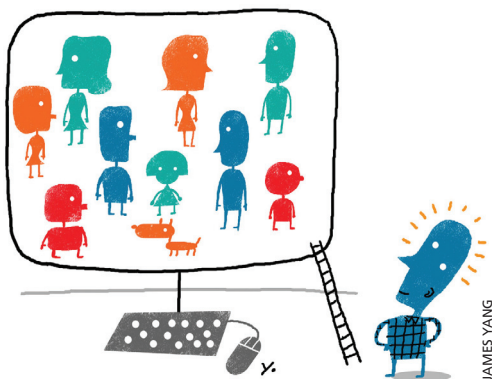
What responsibilities will this lead to related to a teacher's duty as a mandatory reporter? What would happen if a teacher could have forecast a problem by reading a posting, but simply did not read everything and missed the clues?

Facebook is an environment where teens flirt and try to establish personal relationships. Sometimes students get crushes on teachers. Emotionally at-risk students could mistake an expression of caring as something more.

How will teachers handle these kinds of situations without ending up in serious trouble?

Trying to prepare students for their future schools designed for the 21st century is like trying to teach a child to swim without a swimming pool. It is imperative that schools establish vibrant interactive digital learning environments, which use social media technologies for instructional activities, so that teachers and students can interact digitally in an environment designed for instruction, not for socializing.

Nancy Willard is director of Embracing Digital Youth (from the Center for Safe and Responsible Internet Use) and author of Cyber Savvy: Embracing Digital Safety and Civility.



WEIGH IN!

We want to hear your thoughts on the current "Speak Out" question. Go to www.aft.org/speakout to cast your vote.



In the last issue of *American Teacher*, our "Speak Out" question was:

Should students be required to take the SAT or ACT, and apply to college before graduating?

ONLINE POLL RESULTS

42% YES

58% NO

"My knee-jerk response is 'No.' That would just continue pigeonholing kids into the same old cookie-cutter mold of requirements in our educational system, which are not appropriate for all students."

KEVIN STOCKMAN
Minerva (N.Y.) Teachers Association

"College is not an appropriate choice for every individual. It would make more sense to require that students attend all classes on time with few absences. Developing this habit should help them after graduation whether they go on to college or join the workforce."

K. CROWLEY
United Federation of Teachers
(New York City)

"Too much emphasis is placed on college. Think of the people who keep our lives going, our cars running, build and repair our houses. Not everyone needs a college education."

CARLYNNE ALLBEE
AFT Guild (Calif.)

Empower your students and yourself as digital citizens

THE INTERNET LETS US connect in new and exciting ways, and social media tools offer immeasurable benefits, professional as well as social. But as the Internet comes to play a larger role in our lives, it's essential to maintain a positive digital footprint. And as more students use social media and other Web tools at younger ages, it becomes increasingly important to educate them on the effects of their online behavior.

In the education world, two growing and interwoven topics are digital citizenship and maintaining a positive professional presence online. Many students do not think about the consequences of what they post or tweet. They fail to appreciate that their actions could become visible to college admissions counselors, potential employers and even law enforcement officers.

So the question becomes: How can educators help students manage their own behavior and create a positive online presence?

When we use the terms "digital footprint" and "digital presence," what are we talking about? Well, as an example, consider what would appear if someone typed your name into Google and then did a search. Would the results be positive or negative? This is a question students and professionals alike must consider—in fact, college admissions counselors and hiring managers conduct such searches every day.

■ **Lead by example.** First, explain to your students that everything on the Internet is public and everything lasts forever. Hitting a delete button doesn't mean the deleted material is gone. As long as people can print out, forward or cut and paste, the illusion of privacy is just that: an illusion.

Second, educators are

responsible for serving as positive role models for students, not only in the physical classroom but also in the digital world.

This can be especially tough for educators who use social media for both personal and professional reasons. Educators expect a certain level of respect from their students, which can be compromised by a negative online presence, such as a snarky Twitter feed. In fact, there have been cases in which educators' actions on Facebook and Twitter have resulted in dismissal. Learn how to protect yourself on <http://go.aft.org/techrights>.



■ **Google your own name every so often.** It's a simple way to make sure your online presence is good. Educators maintain a professional online presence in a variety of ways. Some contribute to collaborative websites on which lesson plans, classroom techniques and professional advice are posted. Others have their own blogs or Facebook pages focusing on topics relevant to the classroom. Whatever social media you use, follow your school and district guidelines.

■ **Separate personal and professional accounts.** This is a simple step to keep a barrier

between the personal and the professional. It is especially important if you're using Web tools in class. Check that your privacy settings are set so you can choose who views your personal accounts.



■ **Use sites designed for educational use.** These offer some protection from the wild, unpoliced Web. Many sites allow educators a place to collaborate, give and receive advice, and share lesson plans. There also are sites that allow students and parents to join, where they can get updates on homework, projects or resources you post. This also keeps students focused on the academic task at hand, limiting distractions.

These sites are designed with educators in mind: Edmodo, Wikispaces for Educators, Twiducate and School Tube.

■ **Tell kids to "think before you tweet."** Help teens create a positive online portfolio that will serve them well for years. Getting students to think more about the long term could prompt them to use their social media skills more carefully. The site <http://onguardonline.gov> is a practical place offering tips for educators and parents to protect children's online presence. The section specifically for educators offers ways to interact with students to sharpen



their awareness of the digital real world.

■ **Consider online portfolios.** Getting students actively engaged in using social media for their schoolwork can be done through demonstration and practice. Some educators have created Web pages or blogs. Projects and other academic accomplishments collected online can serve as an assessable portfolio. Again, be sure to follow school and district procedures, which may include parental permission.

■ **Involve parents.** Ensuring that students are creating a positive presence online means not just in the classroom, but everywhere. OnGuardOnline provides a pamphlet, "Net Cetera," that helps parents address Web safety with their children. The link is <http://go.aft.org/parentsonguard>.



ILLUSTRATIONS BY JAMES YANG

'Right to work' is wrong for everyone

Measures' biggest impact is to reduce wages and workers' voice



WILLIAM DUKE

IN TODAY'S ECONOMY, with high unemployment and even higher underemployment, who wouldn't want the "right to work"? Put another way, the right to work at good jobs is really what the country needs to continue down the path to economic recovery. So what does that necessity—more good jobs—have to do with so-called right-to-work laws that are popping up in state legislatures around the country? Almost nothing, although you wouldn't know it from all the fantastic claims made by the well-funded backers of this legislation.

"Right to work" has a nice feel-good ring, but that obscures what it means in practice. The basic thing to realize is that right to work is not about worker freedom, competitive business climates, fairness or any other lofty claims. It is really about limiting workers' collective voices and driving down wages; in other words, it ultimately hurts the middle class.

Right-to-work laws date back to the 1947 Taft-Hartley amendments to the National Labor Relations Act. Taft-Hartley allowed states to make it illegal for unions and employers to bargain agreements that required all workers represented by a union to pay dues. Since then, 23 states (including Indiana last year) have passed such laws. However, that doesn't release the union from its legal requirement to represent all workers, whether they pay dues or not.

There is plenty of disagreement on the impact of right-to-work legislation on a state's economy. (More on that shortly.) But one clear result is that such laws lead to lower rates

of unionization. With a weaker collective voice, it becomes that much harder for workers to bargain effectively and bring more balance to labor-management relations that are already stacked against them.

One Minnesota union used the analogy of a "right-to-work-out" law to explain how ridiculous this is: Such a law, it noted, would prevent health clubs from forcing people to pay dues or membership fees to use the equipment, services and facilities. Gyms and health clubs would have to admit everybody, even those who never paid a cent. In other words, "right-to-work-out" laws would allow everybody to get all the benefits of health club membership absolutely free! How cool is that?

No evidence for 'right to work'

Aside from the inherent unfairness of right-to-work laws, there's ample research on how bad they are for workers and the broader economy. To cite just a few examples: Workers in right-to-work states earn about \$1,500 less per year than workers in other states; they are less likely to be covered by employer-sponsored health insurance or pensions; and their workplaces have higher rates of death and injury. For every \$1 million decline in workers' wages, six jobs are lost, according to research from the Economic Policy Institute.

In a report done for EPI, economist Gordon Lafer wrote: "In Indiana and elsewhere, large sums of money have been devoted to backing RTW bills, with lobbyists claiming that RTW significantly improves both the

number of jobs in a state and the wages people earn because companies that had avoided the state will flock there. The evidence shows that these claims are completely without scientific foundation." Other recent studies reach the same conclusion.

Research by Lafer and Sylvia Allegretto about Oklahoma, which in 2001 became the first state in 25 years to adopt a right-to-work law, found "no significant positive impact whatsoever on employment." In fact, they found, both the number of companies relocating to Oklahoma and the total number of manufacturing jobs in the state fell by about a third after the law was passed.

The idea that right-to-work laws are needed to protect workers' rights is also misguided. Our opponents don't like to acknowledge it, but unions are democratic organizations. If the members don't like the way things are going, they can elect new leaders, vote down contracts and even opt to decertify. No one can be required to join a union or pay dues to support causes they disagree with. Yet, unions still provide free representation, even for

Oklahoma's 2001 right-to-work law has had "no significant positive impact whatsoever on employment."

— GORDON LAFER AND SYLVIA ALLEGRETTO, Economic Policy Institute

members who haven't paid dues.

The same can't be said of the Chamber of Commerce, one of the most aggressive backers of the right-to-work notion. The chamber would, and has, refused to serve the interests of companies that don't pay membership dues.

When an employer in Kentucky asked if it could maintain its membership without paying dues, the Owensboro chamber replied: "It would be against chamber by-laws and policy to consider any organization or business a member without dues being paid. The vast majority of the chamber's annual revenues come from member dues, and it would be unfair to the other members to allow an organization not paying dues to be included in member benefits." That's probably not something you'll hear them say when they are pushing Republican-controlled legislatures to jump on the right-to-work bandwagon.

Employer-sponsored health clinics help hold the line on premiums

Unions work with districts to establish free services, prescriptions as a benefit for workers



AFT member Carlynn Malone with nurse practitioner Susan Bray at the Anderson Community Schools Employee Health Center.

TOM STRATTMAN

THE AFFORDABLE CARE Act of 2010 requires health plans to cover recommended preventive services for free. Experts devoted to best practices in healthcare policy, financing and organizational productivity say free access to preventive services is a giant step toward holding the line on insurance costs—and keeping people healthy.

Long before healthcare reform, however, some employers and unions were listening to the experts and doing what many public employees might think unimaginable—opening employer-sponsored clinics where services are free, as are patients' prescriptions.

Employer-sponsored clinics generally have been more prevalent in the private sec-

tor, but now they're popping up in public sector settings, too, as a supplement to health insurance plans.

For some public employees, the idea of this kind of clinic—where there is no wait time if you have made an appointment—might sound like a lavish perk that's out of reach. But it is very doable, as two AFT leaders who negotiated such clinics with management explained at the AFT Collective Bargaining Conference last December.

Tom Forkner, president of the Anderson (Ind.) Federation of Teachers, says the Anderson Community Schools Employee Health Center was the result of the work of the insurance committee, a joint labor-management group established in 2005 to tackle the tough issue of rising health insurance premiums. The consultants working with the committee presented the clinic as a way to save on premium costs, says Forkner.

The health center, which opened in October 2009, is strictly for employees and their dependents who are enrolled in one of the district's two health plans. About 900 Anderson Community Schools employees plus their

dependents are eligible to use the facility.

"I think the clinic is great," says Carlynn Malone, who teaches second grade at Valley Grove Elementary School. "I have used it when I've been sick and for my annual physical—and to get my medicine refilled."

Thanks to the health center, Malone, who is treasurer of the Anderson local, has saved money on prescriptions and doctor visit copays.

In 2010, The Charlotte County (Fla.) Public Schools, working in conjunction with the union, also opened a clinic to provide health services exclusively to employees who receive their healthcare through the district and their eligible family members.

The clinic has already helped to reduce the rate of premium increases, says John Klenovic, recent past president of the Charlotte Florida Education Association. The clinic has been so successful that a second location will be opened in August.

To encourage clinic use, the district offers a \$50-a-month wellness credit toward the employees' major medical plan premiums. To get the credit, people have to undergo a health risk assessment, says Klenovic, noting that about 80 percent of eligible workers participate in the wellness credit program.

TEACHERS' LOUNGE

POETRY POWER As part of her school's effort to be "green," fourth-grade teacher **Carol Theisen of East Moriches, N.Y.**, gave her students pieces of scrap paper after a poetry lesson and told them they had five minutes to write an original poem. The results: "Amazing!" The next day, "I gave them scraps of orange paper and told them their poem topic had to relate to something in nature that was orange," but not a pumpkin or an orange, she says. Again, amazing poems. "We did this during snack time (instead of talking) and the kids ask to do it now." Theisen says it's a great way to encourage creative writing, writing on demand, use of figurative language and self-confidence as students read their poems aloud. And, "we do a 'snap, snap' with our fingers instead of clapping" because one of the kids told her that's what they do on a poetry jam on TV, she adds. "The entire class loves this fun writing exercise, and their poems are beautiful."

TEST PREP FOR ALL High school teacher **Torii Bottomley of Cambridge, Mass.**, writes, "Before state standardized testing, we begin a unit of test preparation strategies; [but] 50 percent of my students have already passed these tests." Noting that her frustration was as great as her students', she renamed the unit "Test Preparation" instead of "MCAS Prep," in hopes that this



HAVE A TIP TO SHARE?

Submissions to "Teachers' Lounge" can be made online at www.aft.org/teacherslounge or sent in care of *American Teacher*. We will pay \$40 for each idea published.



could address the issue of respecting each student's time and needs. Some are focused on passing the state (MCAS) exams; others on doing well on the SAT. When preparing for the long composition, those who'd passed wrote a college essay, she says. "I wish I had figured that out sooner!"

THE EYES HAVE IT First-grade teacher **Rebecca Pacuch of Kissimmee, Fla.**, provides her students with a vocabulary "sneak peek" by posting upcoming vocabulary words at eye level on the wall near a popular area, like the front door. While standing in line, students can see and practice the words that are coming soon, "so they're already informally introduced," Pacuch says.

Income inequality producing a new kind of achievement gap

Study looks at the data and possible explanations for troubling trend

FOR DECADES, ONE of the big concerns in public education was reducing the achievement gap between white and minority students, and especially African-American students. Those efforts have paid off with a steady narrowing of the gap. During the same period, however, income inequality has been steadily increasing; the result has been gaps between students from high-income and low-income families that are far wider than those between ethnic groups.

New research is delving deeper into the reasons behind the income achievement gap, which shows few signs of narrowing at a time when income inequality continues to grow. One piece of research comes from Sean Reardon at Stanford University in his paper titled “The Widening Academic Achievement Gap Between the Rich and the Poor: New Evidence and Possible Explanations.”

While some of the research might be new, Reardon notes that the income achievement gap has been growing for at least 50 years. Looking at a shorter time period, he writes that the gap between children from high- and low-income families is about 40 percent higher for children born in 2001 than it was for those born 25 years earlier. That gap—which he analyzes

based on a family at the 90th percentile of annual family income (about \$160,000) and one at the 10th percentile (about \$17,500)—is now nearly twice as large as the black-white achievement gap. Fifty years ago, the reverse was true.

Perhaps more troubling is that Reardon’s

“As the children of the rich do better in school, and those who do better are more likely to become rich, we risk producing an even more unequal and economically polarized society.”

—SEAN REARDON, professor, Stanford University

data are based on test scores only up until 2008; the deep recession and lingering economic problems since then have almost certainly resulted in even bigger disparities.

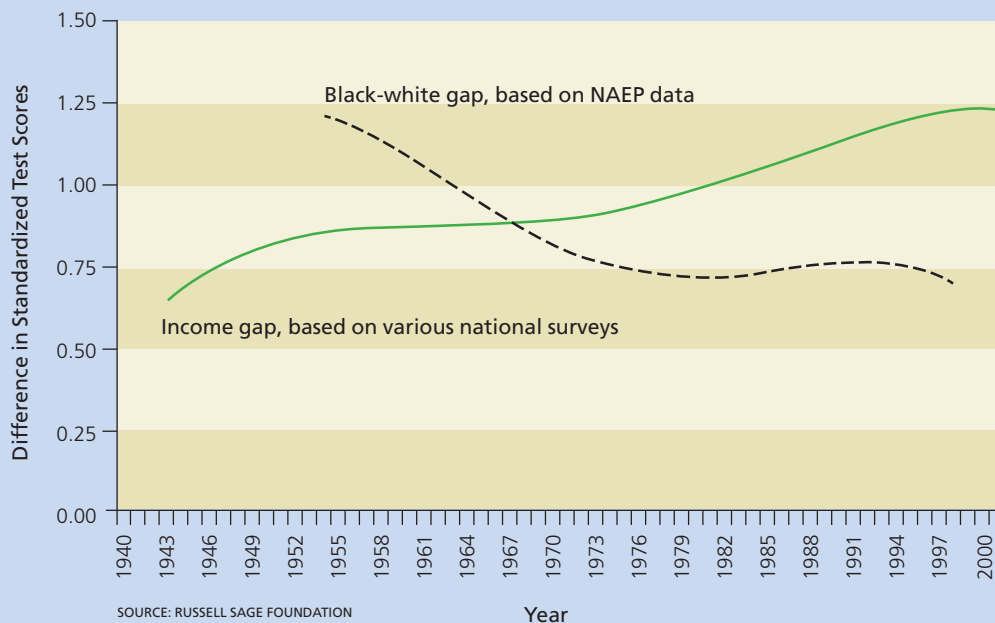
So what’s behind the growing income achievement gap? Reardon offers a few possible explanations. One is the simple fact that the income differences between those at the top and those at the bottom have grown in the last four decades. Second, what he calls family in-

vestment patterns have changed. Basically, this means that higher-income parents are investing more than ever in resources that benefit their children, such as sports, music, dance and tutors, as well as spending more time involved in their children’s schools. According to one estimate, by the time high-income children start elementary school, they will have spent about 400 more hours than low-income children in literacy activities.

Another possible cause is that schools have become increasingly segregated by income; the result is that lower-income students are concentrated in schools with fewer resources that have a more difficult time attracting top teachers.

Reardon offers a caution at the end of his paper: “At the same time that family income has become more predictive of children’s academic achievement, so have educational attainment and cognitive skills become more predictive of adults’ earnings. The combination of these trends creates a feedback mechanism that may decrease intergenerational mobility. As the children of the rich do better in school, and those who do better are more likely to become rich, we risk producing an even more unequal and economically polarized society.”

Estimated Gaps in Reading Achievement Between High- and Low-Income and Black and White Students by Birth Year



Read more about the research at <http://go.aft.org/cepa>.

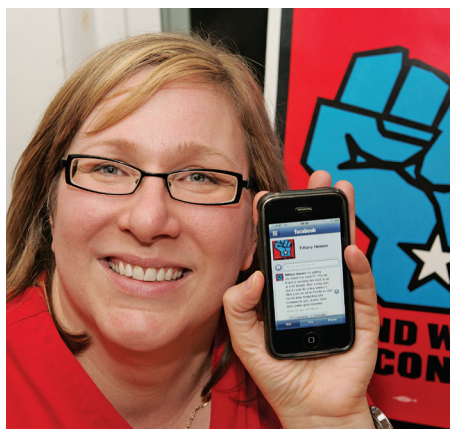
Making connections

Social media is being used to organize, mobilize and educate

HOW DO YOU GET tens of thousands of people to show up for a rally at the state Capitol with less than a day's notice? What do you do when you need to reach members and supporters quickly to ask them to contact their legislators?

For many AFT leaders and activists today, the answer is: Use social media. In Wisconsin and Ohio last year, labor and allied groups used Facebook and Twitter to provide updates on important legislation and get members to attend meetings and other events.

In Ohio, social media was instrumental in turning out the vote last November in the successful effort to overturn Senate Bill 5, which would have stripped the state's teachers, fire-



JOHN SALLER

fighters and other public employees of their bargaining rights.

In Wisconsin last year, AFT affiliates found social media to be an invaluable networking tool during their fight to preserve the rights of public employees. "Social media was the heart and soul of our efforts," says Tiffany Heinen, president of the Wisconsin Federation of Nurses and Health Professionals local at the VA Medical Center in Milwaukee. "So many people have access to Facebook. And



Left: Wisconsin union activist Tiffany Heinen used social media to mobilize members and others against the state's anti-bargaining law. Above: The We Are Ohio Facebook page helped get voters to the polls to defeat S.B. 5.

you in turn have access to them."

Laura Hainey, president of AFT New Hampshire, decided her state federation needed a Facebook page after seeing how unions in Wisconsin used social media to mobilize members. The New Hampshire union has since used Facebook, as well as Twitter, to get people out to town hall meetings where union contracts were being voted on. "We were able to tell people when to vote and where to vote," says Hainey.

Wisconsin local proves unions thrive on challenge

Anti-bargaining law doesn't stop AFT affiliate from working with district, community

"PEOPLE ASK ME: 'How will our union change now?' My answer is that it doesn't change at all. Our union is as strong as we want it to be. Our union is about people showing up and making their voices heard."

That's how Superior (Wis.) Federation of Teachers president Kim Kohlhaas has seen her union's role since the passage of Act 10 in March 2011. Introduced by Gov. Scott Walker, the act imposed sweeping restrictions on the collective bargaining rights of Wisconsin's public employees.

The SFT is working with its school district to create a handbook addressing many of the same areas covered by the union's contract, which expires June 30. One reason for this cooperative relationship, she says, is that Gov. Walker's attacks on working families don't play well in a small community like Superior, where the local union plays a vital role. "It's hard to demonize us when our neighbors know who we are," Kohlhaas points out.

For this local, community outreach is business as usual. Last fall, the SFT purchased 82 back-to-school backpacks for students, partnering with the school district, local businesses

and faith groups. This winter, the federation sponsored a clothing drive for kids in need.

But the spirit of cooperation between the local and the district doesn't mean that the union steps back from tough issues. When district officials proposed adding an extra hour to the school day, the SFT swung into action.

"We put together a survey and asked members to talk about the real-life effects of these proposed changes," says Kohlhaas;

members responded, offering specifics such as the cost of day care for teachers' and students' families under the proposed changes. The union mailed the results to every school board member.

In March, a U.S. District Court judge struck down key provisions of the anti-bargaining law, including prohibition of automatic payroll deduction of union dues.



MARIA LOCKWOOD/SUPERIOR TELEGRAM

The Superior, Wis., local purchased backpacks for kids.

A CLEAR CHOICE

AS THE ELECTION landscape unfolds, the choice we face in November becomes

clearer: Re-elect President Obama, who has focused on rebuilding the middle class and fighting for economic fairness and opportunity for all Americans, or elect a candidate who is out of touch with the concerns of working families.

The vast differences between the presidential candidates, their proposals and their track records on jobs, the economy, healthcare, retirement and education speak for themselves.

"I believe that this country succeeds when everyone gets a fair shot, when everyone does their fair share, when everyone plays by the same rules," President Obama said during a speech given in Osawatimie, Kan., on Dec. 6, 2011.

"I believe that this country succeeds when everyone gets a fair shot, when everyone does their fair share, when everyone plays by the same rules."

—President Barack Obama

ECONOMY, JOBS AND BUDGET

Nowhere are the candidates' differences more evident than in their budget proposals. Despite inheriting the worst economic downturn since the Great Depression, President Obama's proposals underscore his track record of fighting for the middle class.

The president:

- Championed and signed into law the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, which saved or created approximately 300,000 education and public service jobs.
- Worked with labor and management to provide critical rescue loans to save the U.S. auto industry and 1.4 million jobs. Since then, the U.S. auto industry has created more than 160,000 jobs.
- Fought for economic fairness via the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act.
- Is fighting for the American Jobs Act, which would prevent layoffs of educators, police officers and firefighters; provide resources to modernize infrastructure, including public schools, roads and bridges; and provide fund-

ing to community colleges and job training programs.

Meanwhile, the leading Republican presidential candidate, Mitt Romney, is supporting out-of-touch policies that hurt working families. He seems most interested in attacking President Obama and espousing rhetoric about the economic recovery.

Mitt Romney criticized the bold steps taken to save the auto industry.

"Let Detroit go bankrupt," he wrote in an op-ed in the *New York Times*. In another op-ed he wrote for the *Detroit News*, Romney called the auto bailout "crony capitalism on a grand scale."

Romney also supports the Republican congressional budget (also called the Ryan budget), which calls for dramatic cuts to programs that provide security and economic opportunity for all Americans. The budget Romney supports will slash so-called discretionary spending, including assistance and education programs. These cuts disproportionately affect women, children and older Americans. While cutting aid to people who need it most, the budget would provide millionaires with an average tax cut of \$150,000.

As President Obama said recently in a speech at an Associated Press event, "In this country, broad-based prosperity has never trickled down from the success of a wealthy

few. It has always come from the success of a strong and growing middle class."

HEALTHCARE AND RETIREMENT

President Obama has long understood the link between access to high-quality healthcare and economic security for all Americans, which is why he championed and signed into law the Affordable Care Act. Through this healthcare reform legislation, 33 million more people have access to affordable health insurance. Children can stay on their parents health insurance until age 26 and, when the law is fully implemented, insurance companies will not be able to cancel coverage when a person is ill or has a pre-existing condition.

Conversely, **the Republican budget would turn back the clock and:**

- Slash healthcare benefits for our seniors, forcing them to pay more for less.
- Re-open the prescription drug doughnut hole, which would result in Medicare beneficiaries paying nearly \$11,400 more on needed medication.
- Affect the most vulnerable Americans through devastating cuts to Medicaid that are

Continued on page 18



Countries share best practices, educators discuss wide range of topics

AFT shines at international summit, annual celebration of teaching and learning



AFT president Randi Weingarten was on a general session panel while author Wes Moore, center at right, moderated a student discussion.



PHOTOS BY BRUCE GILBERT

THE AFT HAD A MAJOR presence at two mid-March events in New York City—the second annual International Summit on the Teaching Profession and the 2012 Celebration of Teaching & Learning (CTL) conference.

The union was one of the hosts of the two-day summit, which brought together education ministers, union leaders and teachers from 23 high-performing countries to share

their professional judgment, and are given the opportunity to teach students how to analyze and problem-solve—and not just how to take tests.

“There is a real disconnect between what we see successful countries doing to lift every child compared with what we see school districts in the U.S. doing,” Weingarten would later tell a CTL general session on the summit.

“We need to move beyond the bureaucratic type of leadership that we’ve had in the past and involve teachers, parents and other stakeholders in improving education and attracting new teachers into the profession,” Gene Wilhoit, executive director of the Council of Chief State School Officers, told a summit press conference.

Convened by the U.S. Department of Education in partnership with Education International and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, the summit provided “thoughtful insight on effective ways to prepare and develop skilled teachers and schools leaders, reaffirming the critical role they play in successfully implementing systematic reform,” U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan said.

Kudos for Singapore

The international summit was followed by CTL. Attended by nearly 10,000 educators, the

conference featured presentations on a wide range of topics, including teacher evaluation, integrating arts education into the curriculum, Common Core State Standards, and the use of new technology in the classroom.

Recently back from a visit to Singapore, Weingarten helped lead a discussion of the Asian country’s education and teacher preparation systems. The AFT president, who visited schools there as well as the country’s National Institute of Education (NIE), said she was impressed by Singapore’s collaborative, shared-responsibility approach to educating its children.

“The importance of education and respect for teachers,” Weingarten noted, is deeply embedded in the country’s culture.

Weingarten was joined on the panel by NIE director Lee Sing Kong, who hosted the AFT president and delegation during their February visit to Singapore.

In 2009, Singapore undertook a comprehensive review of its teacher education and preparation system with the goal of ensuring that teachers were being trained to equip students with 21st-century skills, Kong explained. “The mission of teachers is to nurture and mold the future of our nation.” He said the sharing of best practices and the mentoring of new teachers are a priority in Singapore.

Community partnerships and the landmark Reconnecting McDowell initiative the AFT is spearheading in McDowell County, W.Va., were the focus of a panel discussion featuring Weingarten, West Virginia Board of Education vice president Gayle Manchin, McDowell County high school senior Trey Lockhart, and Annie Bogenschutz, the resource coordinator at a community school in Cincinnati.

Reconnecting McDowell brings more than 60 partners together on an ambitious plan to address the educational and economic problems affecting students and families in the southern West Virginia county.

This is the third year the AFT has been a major sponsor of the CTL conference. The New York State United Teachers and the United Federation of Teachers are also major sponsors.



“The mission of teachers is to nurture and mold the future of our nation,” Singapore’s Lee Sing Kong said.

best practices for training and supporting teachers and school leaders.

In most high-performing countries, AFT president Randi Weingarten said, teachers are well-trained and well-supported, are allowed to exercise

Reinvigorating and empowering a community

AFT-led initiative in rural West Virginia making significant progress

RECONNECTING MCDOWELL continues to gain momentum. With a growing number of partners and new state legislation giving schools in McDowell County, W.Va., the flexibility to develop and implement innovative programs, the public-private partnership has made significant strides in its efforts to reinvigorate and strengthen the community.

Reconnecting McDowell

Reconnecting McDowell, a partnership launched in December, seeks to turn around the county's struggling education system and its severe economic and social problems. The AFT is a lead partner in the venture.

While improving education is a major piece of the Reconnecting McDowell initiative, the country's residents need much more than that, including better housing, access to technology, improvements in the transportation system and good jobs.

"It's about the classroom, but it's also about what happens outside of the classroom," Trey Lockhart, a McDowell County high school senior, says.

The partnership is moving forward on several fronts. In January, the West Virginia AFL-CIO stepped up to provide the funding to

begin digging water lines for several new homes. The residences will help address

the housing shortage in the county, which has made teacher recruitment difficult.

Bringing online programs into classrooms and expanding the county's broadband capability to provide students, school staff and the community increased access to the Internet are among the initiative's core priorities. The Cisco Foundation, a McDowell partner, is assisting with the broadband project, and Frontier Communications has contributed \$100,000 to Globaloria for online learning projects for McDowell students.

West Virginia Gov. Earl Ray Tomblin announced in January that the state is giving \$1 million to Save the Children for its staff to work with three McDowell schools to implement early childhood and literacy programs.

But Reconnecting McDowell may have received its biggest boost in March when the state Legislature passed a bill making the county an "innovation zone," giving the schools flexibility to develop and implement innovative programs.

"The schools, teachers, staff and community can now work collaboratively on outside-the-box programs to meet the unique needs of McDowell students and their families," AFT president Randi Weingarten said following passage of the legislation.

The bill could result in alternative certification programs to help teacher recruitment efforts; provide integrated health and wellness programs; and allow schools to develop solutions based on local needs.



Top: West Virginia Gov. Earl Ray Tomblin signs the partnership pledge as state board of education vice president Gayle Manchin looks on. Above: Students from McDowell County practice for an upcoming game.



Program will help county recruit teachers

A TEACHER-IN-RESIDENCE bill adopted by the West Virginia Legislature promises to help fill vacant teacher slots in McDowell County where schools have had difficulty recruiting and retaining teachers. The law will help strengthen a teacher-in-residence program in conjunction with Concord University that is currently supporting a handful of teachers.

The bill describes the program as an "intensively supervised and mentored residency program for prospective teachers during their senior year" that "helps them gain the teaching experience needed to demonstrate" the competence needed to become a certified teacher.

Prospective educators in the Concord residency program are expected to fill some of the open teaching positions in McDowell, thus helping ease the county's teacher shortage. "Those in the program will have considerable support, including access to high-quality professional development," says AFT staffer Kathy Buzad, who is working closely with the Reconnecting McDowell initiative.

A primary goal of the teacher-in-residence program is to help West Virginia grow its own teachers and to address the teacher shortage in high-needs areas such as math and science.



BRUCE GILBERT



Stay connected with McDowell and watch a video at www.reconnectingmcdowell.org.

COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

A PATHWAY TO STUDENT SUCCESS

Community schools give teachers the support they need to help students excel

BY VIRGINIA MYERS



PHOTOS BY BRUCE CRIPPEN



Math teacher Rita Seifert, top, visits with student Marland Lattimore at Western Hills University High School. At Ethel M. Taylor Academy, student Jason Stewart, above, learns the meaning of community service, firsthand, as he carries bags of donated food to the gymnasium for distribution.

VIRGINIA APPLGATE can tell you how well community schools work.

When one of her math students lost a sister four years ago, he was so distraught she worried he would drop out of school. Instead, counselors at her community school, Western Hills University High School in Cincinnati, kicked in to support him. That student now attends Miami University in Ohio.

Another student, “One little girl,” math teacher Rita Seifert calls her, “really wanted to go to college”—but she had a baby. The school helped her find child care, and she is on her way. “It really gave her hope,” Seifert says.

Wraparound services like these can make the difference between dropping out and earning scholarships, between lives of narrowed possibility and lives full of promise. Having access to healthcare, counseling, free meals, day care, academic support, mentoring and a host of other services right on campus can make all the difference, and telling these stories, at the heart of community schools, brings Applgate to tears.

She’s not the only one.

Jordan Harris, a mentor at Western, was so moved he had to excuse himself from the room after listening to his students describe their experience with MORE (Men Organized, Respected and Educated), an after-school support program he manages for African-American boys. Sitting up straight—as they’d been instructed—and carefully choosing their words, this is what the boys were saying:

“My grades are up.”

“It’s helped me strategize with math work.”

“My decision-making is better.”

“It sounds cheesy, but you join MORE, you really become organized, respected and educated.”

It works in elementary school, too. At Ethel M. Taylor Academy, students get free breakfast, lunch and, if they are enrolled in after-school care, dinner. Many also participate in Food Solutions, which provides groceries on holidays; but long weekends can be a challenge.

Math teacher Julie Warmack describes a student who came in crying before one such weekend, because there was no food in her house. “I’m not supposed to tell!” she said, so torn between loyalty to her family and real hunger that she was afraid to ask for help. Staff at the food pantry—right at the school—were able to discreetly set aside extra grocery bags for the girl’s family, telling her they were surplus; she got the food she needed, and maintained her family’s dignity.

Then there’s the first-grader who came to school out of uniform, with holes in his shoes. His teacher sent him to the office where instead of a scolding, he got a new uniform, shoes, socks and help enrolling in on-site day care after school, where he got dinner and his mother got time to look for a job. “Look at my new shoes, Miss Annie!” he chirped happily next day, when he passed the school’s community resource coordinator, Annie Bogenschutz.

The community school concept is simple: Give kids what they need to be healthy and feel supported, and they will be ready to learn. The issue may be as simple as helping a student figure out which public bus to take to get to school, or as complex as finding a place for a high school senior to stay when his father has kicked him out of his home.

As teachers, our members always focus on academic success, but it’s hard to get there if the student is hungry, worried over conflict at home, or otherwise preoccupied with personal issues. At community schools, where



Resource coordinator Angela Campbell Harris works with Key Club members.

outside agencies provide counseling, healthcare and tutors right on site, they have support for the whole child.

"We're all expected to be the teacher, the social worker, the psychologist, and you can't do it all," says Jean Jencks, a special ed inclusion specialist at Western. "It makes a huge difference knowing that there's someone I can turn to."

reading benchmarks have risen as well.

■ In Redwood City, Calif., English language learners show higher language development scores in direct proportion to their participation in community school programs, such as family engagement and extended learning, according to recent research from the John W.

"We are *all* wearing a lot of hats, but we're all wearing a lot of hats *together*. I don't ever feel alone. Ever."

—JULIE WARMACK, Taylor Academy math teacher

"We are all wearing a lot of hats," agrees Warmack, "but we're all wearing a lot of hats together. ... I don't ever feel alone. Ever."

Quantifying success

As affective as these stories are, "Education development in this country by anecdote is no longer a way to move forward," says Cynthia Brown, vice president for education policy at the Center for American Progress. The center, which supports research on community schools, notes a dearth of statistics on their success. But there are some:

- At Oyler Community Learning Center in Cincinnati, more students have graduated in the past three years than in the previous 85, and student achievement has improved every year.
- In Tulsa, Okla., community school students outperform those at noncommunity schools by 32 points in math and 19 points in reading, and graduate at a higher rate.
- Multnomah County, Ore. students have shown strong progress in academics, attendance and behavior since their schools adapted a community approach, and their math and

Gardner Center for Youth and Their Communities, based at Stanford University.

And the trend is spreading: It is a central focus of the AFT's groundbreaking work in poverty-stricken McDowell County, W.Va. (see story on page 11), and members of the United Federation of Teachers recently toured Cincinnati's schools for ideas on how they can implement similar services in New York.

"Community schools that align schools and community services are a promising strategy for improving student outcomes," the Gardner Center reports. "The community school strategy is central to efforts to improve America's public schools," agrees the Coalition for Community Schools.

Leading the way

In Cincinnati, where all public school teachers belong to the Cincinnati Federation of Teachers, every school is a "community school." Most have full-time resource coordinators, which observers credit heavily for the success of these programs. Services range from psy-

Continued on page 14

Community schools give students and families access to healthcare, after-school tutoring, adult education and other services on site. What are your thoughts on schools offering these kinds of wraparound services?

"I believe wraparound services are imperative for the success of the student and the family. Students do not live in isolation but within the family structure, which is frequently dysfunctional. A coordination of services is required to enable the student to be successful and the family to provide and give support to the child."

BEVERLY KELLEY
Chicago Teachers Union

"What does it say about our society when the school is feeding breakfast, lunch and, now, the evening meal to the students? It appears a lack of parenting is taking place. However, having said that, I think we need to do whatever is necessary to place the students in an environment that is conducive to learning."

BILL NEWTON
Jefferson County (Ala.) AFT

"Wraparound services are needed to support children whose families are unable to provide for their needs. That said, I think we are on a slippery slope. More and more is expected of public education, and there are too many in our society who now expect schools to teach children what once was the responsibility of the family. With increased expectations and growing class sizes, combined with high-stakes testing, where does our responsibility end?"

L. HINTZSCHE
DeKalb (Ill.) Classroom Teachers Association

"Community schools should be utilized during evening hours and on weekends. Adult education, health screenings and GED/citizenship classes are all examples of the various uses of these schools. The fact that school facilities owe their very existence to the community should also propel this argument forward. School buildings truly are an underused, oft-neglected resource."

KARL REGER
Assabet Valley (Mass.) Federation of Teachers

Continued from page 13

chiatry to dental care, healthcare, food assistance, tutoring, nutrition, mentoring, peer mediation and vocational guidance for older students. They are provided by outside organizations that are mostly self-sustaining; other funding comes from donors like United Way, the Greater Cincinnati Foundation and local businesses that “adopt a class.” The Cincinnati school district pays for the resource coordinators and has been supportive of the community school approach from the start.

As a result of these efforts, Cincinnati is rated the highest-performing urban school district in the state. Graduation rates rose from 50 to 83 percent between 2000 and 2009, and middle-class families have begun to move back to the city.

At Taylor, academic performance went up 15 points from 2009 to 2011; eighth-grade reading scores jumped nearly 20 points in 2010-11, and parent engagement went from 40 to 80 percent.

“It’s remarkable what Cincinnati has done with wraparound services in their schools,” AFT president Randi Weingarten said during a panel discussion at the 2011 Celebration of Teaching & Learning conference in March (see story on page 10). “If we had wraparound services everywhere,” she added, all our students would be better prepared to excel.

Teacher Lezlie Christian leads a line dancing class in the after-school program.

Getting there

It’s been a long road to success. In 2001, Cincinnati schools were con-



Psychiatrist Brady Metz spends time with Taylor Academy student Kajuan Maribelle, where the two can get comfy talking about the school day.

sidered the worst school buildings in the country, according to Bogenschutz. Structurally, they were falling apart; technology was so dated that at least one library book referred to space travel as a dream for the future. The city passed a tax to help fund a radical renovation to the system and began building new schools.

At the same time, committees of parents, staff, teachers and community members came together to determine the needs of each community and how those needs could be addressed in the schools. These local school decision-making committees continue to guide policy at individual schools.

Best practices

Warmack says the community school approach has not made problems go away—this population of students continues to be challenged with poverty, drug addiction, crime and dysfunction—but having resources right on campus makes it easier to deal with crises when they do come along. For example, the grandmother of one of Warmack’s students died recently, and because the girl was quite close to her, Warmack was worried. She called the Children’s Home, which provides psychological counseling at the school, and was relieved when she was told, “No problem, we’ve got this covered.”

Marsha Marcus, a math teacher at Taylor, rests easier knowing that lunch isn’t the last meal her students will get (the school offers free dinner as part of the after-school program), and she doesn’t hesitate to make assignments that require paper and pencils, because the school supplies them. With the

after-school program, “I know that my students have a safe place to go for three hours,” so Marcus no longer feels compelled to offer free popcorn and a movie in her classroom once a week, at her own expense and on her own time, as she did before the community school paradigm was established.

Administrators feel the difference, too. At noncommunity schools, recalls Taylor principal Sean McCauley, he was the one applying head lice shampoo and calling the eye doctor for the child who couldn’t see the board. In the community school, he says, he has support staff just down the hall, and the difference is “like night and day.”

The many services available are all designed to prepare students for academic excellence. At Western, where the entire high school gets free breakfast and lunch, students are required to go to “study table” for homework help before they go to the Kids Café for a free afternoon snack. After that, they can go to extracurricular activities like step team, robotics, Key Club and chess. Teacher Deon Edwards says he no longer worries that he’ll be pushed out of the building at the end of the day; he can work with students on homework, or help them tinker with the robots they’re making for science competitions.

That sort of continuing support teaches students to trust that school is a safe place for them to live and learn. Nikela Owens, who runs a girls’ empowerment club after school, says her girls “can take off the whole ‘I’m big



PHOTOS BY BRUCE CRIPPEN



and bad' image" when they are with her. Similarly, a writing group, Women Writing for a Change, has given voice to girls who normally would not share the challenges they face at home—challenges that can include homelessness and abuse. "It brings me out of my shell," says Karissa Mitchell, an 11th-grader at Western.

Story after story shows teachers connecting students to the services they need to ex-

cel, prompting Angela Campbell Harris, the resource coordinator who helps pull it all together at Western, to praise the commitment of the school's faculty. "I am so proud to work with people who care so deeply about these kids," she says. Teachers like Lezlie Christian, who teaches drama and

Taylor Academy teacher Julie Warmack, left, with students, from left, Jabria Evans, Faith Jackson, La'Kiya Williams, and Teonnie Bennett.

Learn more about community schools

If you're interested in implementing community school policy in your district, the Coalition for Community Schools is a central resource that can help you explore the possibilities. Its website offers supporting statistics, tool kits, resources, policy and more, from educators who already have established community schools, and those who are still building them. See www.communityschools.org.

English, takes time out to carefully suggest anger-management sessions to a student she knows is struggling at home. And, at Taylor, Marsha Marcus, who rewards seventh- and eighth-graders in the honors society by taking them to a restaurant, teaching them first to dress well and pull out the chairs for the girls.

Students flourish with this sort of attention. One boy, who was on the verge of expulsion, experienced such a turnaround. When his teacher asked him what had happened, he told her: "I'm doing so well because y'all care about me."

"This is why we teach," says Applegate. "It's to make a difference." Community schools help make that possible.

Remembering the real Norma Rae during Labor History Month

Union organizer made a difference in the lives of working people

CRYSTAL LEE SUTTON, born and reared in North Carolina, was a young mother of three who worked at a J.P. Stevens cotton mill for \$2.65 an hour. The roar of the machines was bad and the cotton dust was worse.

Sutton went to her first union meeting in 1973. Then and there, she decided she wanted a better life. She started talking union and ended up making labor history, which is celebrated every May.

You may remember this about her. One day, a union organizer asked Sutton to copy an anti-union letter posted on the company bulletin board. Three supervisors told her to stop. When she didn't, they fired her and called the cops. Back on the shop floor, Sutton grabbed a black marker and a piece of stiff cardboard. In big letters, she wrote the word "UNION." Then she climbed on a table, raised the sign high with both hands and slowly turned for everyone to see. Her co-workers turned off their machines.

It took the union a year to win the right to represent those workers, and another seven years before J.P. Stevens signed a contract. By then, Sally Field had won an Oscar for portraying Sutton in the 1979 movie "Norma Rae."

When Sutton died in 2009, AFL-CIO president Richard Trumka called her "a great hero for working people."

The story of Crystal Lee Sutton and workers' rights is not exclusively the realm of the history teacher, says Paul Cole, founder of the American Labor Studies Center and a former AFT vice president. While it's true that films like "Norma Rae" can be used to explore the history of the labor movement, students also can develop research and writing skills by comparing U.S. workers to those in China, Mexico or Sri Lanka. Teachers can tap into books like *Crystal Lee* by Henry Leifermann.

"The basic concept is not adding something to an already stuffed curriculum," says Cole, a retired social studies teacher, "but to



KAREN TAM/THE NEWS AND OBSERVER

CRYSTAL LEE SUTTON

find an entry point and integrate this story into social studies or language arts."

Aside from her contribution to history—the Library of Congress added "Norma Rae" to its National Film Registry last year because of its "enduring significance to American culture"—Sutton also contributed to character education. "Stand up for what you believe in, no matter how hard it makes life for you," she told the Burlington, N.C., *Times-News* in 2008. "Do not give up."



For a wealth of material on labor history available at the American Labor Studies Center, visit <http://labor-studies.org>.



Healthcare Reform

What it means, why it matters

Free preventive care, coverage for pre-existing conditions among improvements

THE AFFORDABLE CARE ACT has made headlines ever since President Obama signed the law in 2010. The act brings significant changes to the healthcare landscape—some are in effect now, while others will be phased in over the next several years. Probably most important, the law seeks to increase the number of people with health insurance, make coverage more affordable, establish health insurance marketplaces and protect consumers from insurance industry abuses.

These changes also are expected to improve the nation's economic health. The United States now spends a larger percentage of its gross domestic product on health care compared with many other peer countries, according to the Organization for

An ounce of prevention ...

Many Americans are benefiting from the act's emphasis on prevention, particularly the new no-cost preventive services. The services are available to people in non-grandfathered insurance plans (grandfathered plans are those that existed before March 23, 2010, and have not since reduced benefits, significantly increased cost sharing or significantly lowered the employer's contribution to the premium) or in plans that have been issued or changed in certain ways since September 2010.

Preventive care now available to many adults without a copay, coinsurance or deductible includes colonoscopies, cholesterol screening, mammograms and blood pressure screening. Starting this August, additional

ing. Exchanges are marketplaces where people can shop for health insurance.

Exchanges will initially sell insurance only to individuals and businesses with fewer than 100 employees, although states may choose to allow large employers to insure their employees through the exchanges starting in 2017. Many low- and moderate-income individuals purchasing insurance through the exchanges will receive subsidies, or "premium tax credits," to help them pay for coverage. In general, subsidies are not available to people with access to employer-sponsored insurance unless the employee's share of the self-only premium is greater than 9.5 percent of the employee's income. Large employers that do not offer insurance or that have employees receiving subsidies in the exchange will pay a penalty.

The advent of exchanges is significant even for those with employer-sponsored coverage. State exchanges could use their bargaining power to offer high-quality plans at low cost, which could help control the price of insurance outside the exchanges.

The availability of subsidies in the exchanges is expected to help reduce the number of uninsured Americans, as will the 2014 requirement that most people have health insurance or else pay a penalty that starts at \$95. The government explains that this requirement, called the "individual mandate," will "help offset the costs of caring for uninsured Americans."

In addition to providing consumer protections and reducing the ranks of the uninsured, the act envisions changes in health-care delivery. It encourages a shift away from the fee-for-service model in which providers are paid for every test and procedure, whether the patient needs them or not. Instead, the Affordable Care Act rewards high-quality efficient care that puts the patient's needs—not the bottom line—at the center of health-care decision-making.

The U.S. Supreme Court is currently deliberating on the constitutionality of some of the key provisions of the Affordable Care Act, most notably the "individual mandate." A ruling is expected later this spring.



Economic Cooperation and Development. The act contains a number of provisions designed to get these high healthcare costs under control, relieving some of the financial strain on communities and families. Reining in healthcare costs will also allow employers to invest in staff, infrastructure and other much-needed improvements, instead of scrambling to keep up with rising insurance premiums.

Several of the act's consumer protections are already in place. For example, young people are allowed to stay on their parents' health insurance until age 26; lifetime limits on the dollar value of essential health benefits have been eliminated; and insurance companies are not allowed to deny children coverage due to pre-existing conditions.

women's preventive services will be covered without cost sharing.

The law also holds insurance companies accountable for how they use our premium dollars. The companies are required to spend 85 percent of fully insured large group plan premiums on medical care and quality improvement, or else pay rebates to consumers.

There's more to come

Other consumer protections are on the horizon. Beginning in 2014, no one will be denied insurance coverage due to a pre-existing condition, and annual dollar limits on essential health benefits will be abolished.

The arrival of healthcare exchanges in 2014 will usher in a new era of healthcare purchas-



Seizing opportunity at the Library of Congress

Teacher in residence embraces rich bank of resources

WHEN FIFTH-GRADE TEACHER Earnestine Sweeting first learned about the resources available at the Library of Congress, she embraced them with characteristic enthusiasm. She took a summer workshop sponsored by her local, the United Federation of Teachers, in New York City, to learn more. When she returned to P.S. 153 (The Helen Keller School) in the Bronx she used primary resources from the Library, like maps, photographs, historical newspapers and manuscripts, to teach about the New York City Draft Riots of 1863.

Then she agreed to have the Library film her teaching the material with colleagues.

Now Sweeting, who has been a teacher for 10 years, is the teacher in residence at the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C., where she serves as the teacher's voice in the educational division of the Library, collaborating with staff to help serve educators with the best learning tools for their students.

Standing in the grand halls of the Library surrounded by colorful frescoes and mosaics, her enthusiasm is palpable. "I'm so excited to

share this story," Sweeting says, comparing her yearlong experience in D.C. to other moments when she sees or hears something inspirational, something that gives her "that extra fire" to take back to the classroom.

Sweeting was first attracted to the Library through the myriad resources available there—all easily accessible online, organized by subject or grade level, and ranging from sheet music and recordings from the early 1900s to vintage Civil War maps and oral histories from the Depression. Now she is in a position not only to share those resources with her students, but also with her colleagues, at conferences and through a Library of Congress blog, <http://go.aft.org/blogsloc>.

Just as important, Sweeting is giving voice to teachers, providing a reality check to librarians so that the resources are usable for teachers juggling the nitty-gritty demands of the classroom. "I'm the one to look at it and say: 'Is this something that teachers do? Is this something that teachers need?'" she says. "I



MICHAEL CAMPBELL

never thought I would be a person who would add value to what the Library of Congress offers."

In addition to her work assignments, Sweeting has attended Library lectures about everything from Jim Crow-era schools for Southern blacks, to teaching children to play the gamba (similar to a cello).

It's certainly enough to fire her up for teaching next year, when she returns to the Bronx. "I can't wait to bring my D.C. experience to my students," she says.

Earnestine Sweeting is teacher in residence at the Library of Congress.

'Jeopardy!'—from a fan to a contestant

Coached by her students, New York City teacher plays the classic game show



COURTESY OF JEOPARDY

Pian Wong with show host Alex Trebek.

WHEN HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER Pian Wong told her students she'd qualified to be a contestant on the TV game show, 'Jeopardy!,' they jumped right in to help her study. And when she came home from California in February after playing one round, she says, "The kids were so nice, they were so proud to see me. They're still talking about it."

Wong has been a fan of the show since age 6, but never considered trying to become a contestant until one of her students prompted her by pointing out that Wong is always

"spouting facts from other subject areas." So she applied and won a spot on the popular game show.

It's a testament to Wong's good teaching that her kids could help her prepare. A member of the United Federation of Teachers in New York City, Wong teaches English at the High School of American Studies in the Bronx. Several times, she let her students stray from the class subject for mock "Jeopardy!" sessions, when they would grill her with history questions. The school and its students specialize in history and the subject, she admits, is one of her weakest.

Despite losing in the end, Wong enjoyed the "Jeopardy!" experience. Among the highlights: meeting the other contestants in the teachers-only tournament. "There was a lot of shop talk," she says. "You can't get 16 teachers in a room and not talk about teaching." Although they were from vastly different places—Minnesota; Nashville, Tenn.; and rural Texas—Wong was surprised to learn how similar their experiences were.

As a pre-med student at Columbia Univer-

sity, Wong never dreamed she'd become a teacher. She took and passed the MCAT exam as preparation for med school, but first wanted to take a break from academia and do some good in the world. So she enrolled in the New York City Teaching Fellows program.

She was surprised to find out she was good at teaching, and it was the most rewarding work she could imagine. Wong dropped her plans for med school and, a decade later, she's never looked back.

"I absolutely love my job," she says. Drawn to teaching by the education disparity she saw in the Bronx, Wong stayed because the work is so dynamic and ever changing.

"For 10 years in a row, I've taught *Song of Solomon* by Toni Morrison," she says. "Every year, it's so different. I don't know any other job that's like that. Every day is fresh and new and exciting."

This year's experience with "Jeopardy!" was an unexpected twist, and in typical teacher fashion, she brings it back to the kids. This show lifts up learning and knowledge, Wong says, a value she is proud to embrace.



The ups and downs of cheerleading

Several students from Elmhurst, Ill., wrote to us wanting to weigh in on the American Teacher (January/February 2012) Speak Out question: "Will mats make cheerleading safe?" Here are some of their responses.

MATS DO NOT make cheerleading safe. First of all, cheer requires lots of stunting as well as tumbling. Both stunting and tumbling can be very risky. However, there are possible ways to make cheerleading safer. Making rules for tumbling and stunting is a great way to prevent injuries. Also, giving cheerleaders more time to practice and improve can help them work as a team to avoid accidents.

—JULIANA SONENBERG

ADDING MATS TO cheerleading lures parents and cheerleaders to false safety. Just because mats are there doesn't mean a kid won't fall head first into the ground.

Mats are better than the hard gym floor, but the gym floor is still hard. Falling from up high can break a neck or bone. Rules can be made or changed to protect chances of injury. Rules can be made with how high someone can be in the air and/or how high pyramids can be.

—CAMILLE PETERSON

I WENT TO cheerleading practice like I do every day not realizing how unsafe it is. Doing my normal fly in the air and not being experienced, they dropped me and I broke my arm. It's unfortunate that some girls go into this sport not knowing how dangerous this can be. If they tell the girls how unsafe it can be and the risks involved, it will be the first step toward getting them to enforce safety regulations.

—GIA DEZONNO

There's nothing wrong with asking voters for photo IDs

I AM VERY troubled by the article, "Voter suppression efforts—a

troubling trend" (March/April 2012). Apparently, new legislation in five states requires potential voters to show photo ID before casting their ballots. The article states that "11 percent of adult citizens, or 21 million people, don't have a valid government-issued photo ID," and that these laws are a "rollback" in voting rights. In America, we need photo identification for lots of other things besides voting—to board an airplane, to operate a vehicle, to enter a court building, to obtain a U.S. passport, to check if one is old enough to drink legally. Why should photo identification not be needed to vote and take part in our great democracy?

—JOANNE BESSICH

South Huntington (N.Y.) Teachers Association

Use cash, not debit and credit cards

THE "YOUR MONEY" column in the March/April 2012 issue stated: "The best way to protect your money is to use credit, and use it wisely. Find a no-annual fee credit

card, pay off your balances each month and avoid interest charges or late fees. That way you build your credit history and boost your credit score." However, if people cannot manage a debit card that uses their own money for expenses and end up incurring extra charges, why on earth would they be able to use credit, which is *not* their own money, wisely? Credit card companies are out to make money just like the banks, probably more so. The problem is not solved by using credit, but by spending cash. If people buy with cash, research shows they spend less and don't rack up any extra charges. Debit cards, while not perfect, are not the problem. People believing they should have whatever they want without first checking to see if they can afford it is.

—STEFANIE AYRES

Editor's note: Many of this reader's concerns are addressed in the longer version of the "Your Money" article at <http://go.aft.org/yourmoney>.



A Union of Professionals

AFT+
Member Benefits

Answer Key to:

THE DISABILITY INCOME INSURANCE TEST:

Q#1: "What will happen to my income if I am disabled during my working years?"		
True	False	
	✓	"I'm covered by my employer."
	✓	"I have enough sick days to see me through."
	✓	"Social Security will take care of me."
	✓	"My pension will take care of me."
	✓	"My family can go a long time without my paycheck."

Q#2: Which statements about the AFT Disability Income Insurance Program are correct?

True	False	
✓		"Protects up to 60% of my income for just a few dollars a week."
✓		"Provides coverage on and off the job."
✓		"The plan may cover pre-existing conditions after 12 months."
✓		"Five different plans to choose from."

For a FREE Disability Income Analysis
Call: **888-423-8700** today.

Protecting your income is easy ...when you have the right answers.

A CLEAR CHOICE



Continued from page 9

estimated to result in 19 million people losing coverage, and an additional 33 million losing access to health insurance they could have received under the Affordable Care Act.

PUBLIC EDUCATION

Although the AFT has not always agreed with some of the Obama administration's education policies, we firmly agree that the health of our economy and the quality of our public education system are intertwined, and that all children deserve a strong, well-funded public education and an equal opportunity to succeed.

Mitt Romney, on the other hand, supports No Child Left Behind and other failed policies implemented by the Bush administration. He believes standardized testing is an adequate way to gauge student learning and teacher performance, and he takes every opportunity to attack teachers and their unions. At the GOP debate in Mesa, Ariz., Romney said, "All the talk about we need smaller classroom size, look that's promoted by the teachers unions to hire more teachers."

The track record for supporting investments in public schools and teachers lies with President Obama. He has made early learning programs a priority, consistently opposed private school vouchers, and made higher education more accessible and affordable by increasing the number of Pell Grants and making student loans more affordable.

When you listen to what the candidates are saying, it becomes clear which one will be fighting for us in the Oval Office.

A strong voice for her constituents at the Statehouse

Retired teacher and former local union president is the new kid on the block

WHEN MEMBERS of the Missouri House of Representatives gathered in Jefferson City for the start of the 2012 legislative session in January, AFT retiree Judy Morgan was among them. Morgan, the new kid on the legislative block, was ready to begin.

Morgan, who always had passion about legislation, hadn't planned on running for political office. But she was encouraged to run for a seat vacated by state lawmaker Jean Peters Baker who was appointed the Jackson County prosecutor in late 2011.

Morgan grew up in Kansas City and built a career around teaching. As a teacher and later a guidance counselor, she was active in her union, AFT Local 691. In 1999 she ran for president of the local and won. She held that position for 10 years before retiring in 2009.

Although Morgan only had seven weeks to campaign, she says all of the election work she had done with the AFT really came in handy. "My experiences and involvement prepared me well." Morgan also had help from her fellow teachers (active and retired),



Judy Morgan's union background served her well during her campaign for the Missouri Legislature.

and her husband also worked tirelessly. "We had a short window of time, but it was a good grass-roots campaign, and the volunteers who turned out to work on the campaign really made the victory possible."

At the end of the campaign, Morgan and her volunteers knocked on about 3,000 doors

throughout Kansas City. "Talking to constituents was the best part. I've lived in the area for 40 years, and I had a chance to go places I'd never been before."

Now she has moved to the next phase of her life as a Missouri state representative. "I'm ready to be a strong voice for my constituents," says Morgan.

Morgan says jobs, the state budget and public education will be her major priorities. She is especially interested in any legislation regarding the fate of the Kansas City Public Schools; the district lost accreditation Jan. 1. State law currently requires the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to wait at least two years to take any action once a district has become unaccredited. State lawmakers in the House passed a bill that would authorize the department "to establish an alternative governing structure for a failing school district." The bill does not detail what the new governing structure would be, but allows for quicker state intervention in troubled districts.

A Smarter Way
to Become
a School Principal...

Online.



Become a school principal with
the M.S. in Educational Leadership
from Western Governors University:

What you can expect:

- **Focused on Learning, Not Time**
Competency-based education focused on skills and knowledge, not class time.
- **A Relevant, Rigorous Education**
Based on the principles of the Baldrige National Quality Program's Education Criteria for Performance Excellence.
- **An Affordable, Flexible Education**
One of the best values in higher education, providing a convenient, cost-effective way to earn a degree.

NCATE @neaacademy
Partner

www.WGU.edu/time5 1.877.638.6668



WESTERN GOVERNORS UNIVERSITY

ONLINE. ACCELERATED. AFFORDABLE. ACCREDITED.

AFT members swap strategies for green schools

Students tap power of the earth, bringing their studies to life

DESPITE RECENT REPORTS that today's young Americans may be less interested in the environment than their elders, AFT members and students are leading green programs, from recycling to vertical vegetable gardening and wind power. In each story here, AFT members initiated programs that became wildly popular among students and the community.

Making energy, not war

Members of the PeaceJam Club at Ponderosa High School in Douglas County, Colo., have developed an extraordinary program of recycling, energy management and renewable energy. Sponsored by school secretary and AFT member Debra Ruiz, the club is part of an international program bringing together students and Nobel Peace Prize laureates. As the students explain it, most wars are fought over natural resources, so their club aims to prevent war by protecting natural resources.

The PeaceJam energy management pro-

gram has saved \$320,000 at Ponderosa over the past four years. It spread to schools across the district, resulting in a 24 percent energy reduction that saved \$11 million. Ponderosa building engineer Carey Kalisch, also an AFT member, has spearheaded energy savings through room-by-room HVAC scheduling and by cutting down on lights. But it's not all on him. One student explains that it's "really important to be polite to teachers" when requesting fewer overhead lights. Teachers are persuaded when they see calmer kids and fewer headaches.

Beyond energy savings, the PeaceJammers have mounted an enormous recycling program, reversing their school's ratio of garbage to recycling. Ponderosa now recycles 81 percent of its trash. The club won a \$10,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Energy's Wind for Schools program to install a wind turbine.

"These kids get it," says Ruiz. "They're not interested in the usual teenage things or consumed by the usual teenage angst. They realize

the world is a bigger place, and they have a responsibility to make it a better place."

Green Bronx Machine

In New York City, special education teacher Steve Ritz teaches his students to install and cultivate green walls and roofs. Ritz's Green Bronx Machine has grown more than 25,000 pounds of vegetables while improving academic performance and work opportunities for students. His classroom features the first indoor edible wall in New York City's public schools; it routinely yields enough produce to feed 450 people.

Ritz has bumped up attendance from 40 to 93 percent and created 2,200 jobs for students who have installed green roofs from New Jersey to Long Island. He's now embarking on a curriculum he calls "Veggiecation."

Each young person Ritz has worked with is a special needs student or an English language learner; all are either in foster care or homeless. The food they've grown that isn't used by the school is sold at a farmer's market or to restaurants for a fraction of the retail cost, yet the program is still highly profitable. When people ask what his favorite crop is, Ritz replies: "My favorite crop is locally grown, organic, engaged and productive citizens. We're growing graduates, voters and the next generation of environmental and social stewards."

The worm patrol

At Scenic Hill Elementary School near Seattle, head custodian Ginger Ott started a recycling program a few years ago. Students began recycling at lunchtime, then moved on to conserving power and water, breeding worms for composting, and joining community groups on outings to plant trees and pick up litter.

At school, kids patrol the halls looking for lights to turn off. Older students teach younger ones how to recycle. The K-6 school's initiatives fall right in line with an AFT resolution promoting union involvement in green building maintenance and education.

"It's a lot more work the first year, but once you get it going, the kids take over. It's their project," says Ott, a member of AFT Kent (Wash.) Classified Employees. "The kindergartners really catch on. My first kindergartners are now third-graders, and they don't know any other way."



AFT member Debra Ruiz, cutting ribbon below, sponsors a recycling and energy management club at her school in Douglas County, Colo. The club has saved Ponderosa High School more than \$300,000 over the past four years, and last year received a federal grant to install a wind turbine.

ASHLEY RUIZ



ELLEN BANNER



COURTESY OF STEVE RITZ

Top: Head custodian Ginger Ott started an ambitious recycling program, complete with composting and worm bins, at an elementary school near Seattle.

Above: The Green Bronx Machine has created job opportunities for students and made locally grown produce available at schools, farmers markets and grocery stores in the inner city.

What went wrong with the 401(k)?

BY DON KUEHN

THE 401(K) WAS STARTED 30 years ago as a supplement to Social Security and private pension plans. In effect, 401(k)s would form the third leg of the proverbial "three-legged stool" for a safe retirement: Social Security, a pension and personal savings.

Once these 401(k) plans started gaining some traction in the workplace, employers saw them as a way to slash their pension costs. Today, 401(k)-style plans outnumber traditional plans by a staggering 12-1 ratio.

The fact that the stock market doubled and redoubled in 11 years after the inception of 401(k) plans helped convince employees, too, that this was something worth doing. It seemed the sky really was the limit. All you had to do was buy something, sit back and watch it grow; and since the boss was chipping in, why not buy?

A longer version of this column that includes an analysis of the all-out assault on public employee pensions is available online at www.aft.org/publications/your_money.

The average 401(k) balance (including employer contributions) of the 60 percent of workers nearing retirement is a measly \$64,000. If you want an income of \$30,000 a year after retirement, you need to have at least \$445,000!

Here are a few reasons these plans have failed to produce the secure retirement they promised:

- People started too late, and they haven't saved enough. Today, you'll find responsible advisers suggesting 10-20 percent of salary should be invested toward retirement—double what was accepted dogma 30 years ago.
- Most people are too busy living a challenging life to spend the time necessary to become skilled investors. They fail to diversify or rebalance their portfolios regularly, and panic when there's trouble.
- It's a given that the stock markets are more roller coaster than merry-go-round. There always will be ups and downs, winners and losers. If a market cycle swings up just as you are about to retire, you win. If the markets swoon,

you lose. Cruel as that may seem, with a 401(k) plan, the risk is all yours.

■ The number of people who live past 90 should grow to 9 million by 2050. It's called longevity risk: the chance you will outlive your savings. That can't happen in a traditional plan because your lifetime benefits come from a pool of the contributions of all workers; they're not determined by your investment skills alone.

I usually close by saying, "it's *your money*," but in this case, it's the money of almost everyone who's at risk if the trend away from traditional pensions continues unabated. Keep defined-contribution programs as a supplement to the traditional plan. If you have access to one, use it. Become a knowledgeable investor. And don't build your future on any one leg of that three-legged stool.

Don Kuehn is a retired AFT senior national representative. For specific advice relative to your personal situation, consult competent legal, tax or financial counsel. Comments and questions can be sent to dkuehn60@yahoo.com.

AFTedsupply.com



Discounted educational supplies for AFT Members

SAVE MONEY
at AFTedsupply.com

AFT members SAVE 15%
on every item and **FREE SHIPPING!**

Visit **AFTedsupply.com** NOW for details!



Special Introductory Discount

\$5.00 OFF!

Educational Gifts & Supplies

AFTedsupply.com

Just enter promo code
ATAD4 at checkout!
exp. 7/1/12



1-800-990-2312

Visit **www.aftedsupply.com** today!

PRODUCTS

- Arts and Crafts
- Books
- Bulletin Board Sets
- Furniture & Rugs
- Early Childhood
- Math Manipulatives
- Puzzles
- Stickers & Rewards
- Educational Toys

MUCH MORE!

Find everything you need for
the well-stocked classroom at
aftedsupply.com

Walking in the footsteps of history

Alabama marchers commemorate 1965 march, speak out against oppressive laws

FORTY-SEVEN YEARS—almost half a century—is an eternity when you're 18 years old. But for Alabama State University students in professor Shirley Jordan's class, the events that occurred on Bloody Sunday (March 7, 1965) in Selma, Ala., are not ancient history. They are prologue to a fight for civil, voting, immigrant and worker rights that continues to this day.

On that historic March day, Alabama state troopers and sheriff's deputies attacked a group of 600 activists who were peacefully assembling to advocate for voting rights for the state's black citizens. The assault sent 17 people to the hospital—and shocked a nation that watching it on the evening news. Two weeks later, protected by a federal court order and led by the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., activists set out again from Selma and marched the 50 miles to Montgomery. Before the year was out,

President Lyndon B. Johnson had signed the Voting Rights Act into law.

Those events, and the precious rights they secured, are commemorated annually in a 50-

mile march between Selma and Montgomery. This year, in response to a string of extreme voter suppression and anti-immigrant laws passed by Republicans in state legislatures and then signed into law by like-minded governors, a coalition of national labor, civil rights and faith leaders led the five-day re-enactment in early March, putting voter rights and social justice back on the national stage.

On the ASU campus, teachers and faculty participated in teach-ins that week. Students in professor Jordan's African-American humanities class did not need much prompting to deconstruct the dangerous provisions of Alabama's new voter ID and anti-immigrant laws—and their implications.

"I don't carry around my birth certificate or Social Security card," says Marcus Davis, a student from Georgia. "If they pull me over, I might end up sitting in a holding cell."

The students' discussion turned to the connection between who is in the state Legislature and the students' own educational opportunities. Tuition at ASU has gone up 47 percent in three years; and yet, the college's budget has been cut and course offerings are fewer.

Jordan, who is a member of the ASU Facul-

ty-Staff Alliance/AFT, urged students in her class to turn out for the last day of the march and the rally at the Statehouse. She invoked the fear marchers must have felt 47 years ago, and the courage they summoned to stand up for their rights. "Today, for many, our biggest concern is finding comfortable shoes to wear."

On the last day of the march, more than 750 students and faculty, led by AFT president Randi Weingarten, ASU Faculty-Staff Alliance co-president Derryn Moten, Jefferson County AFT president Vi Parramore and other AFT activists from the region, joined the marchers from Selma as they headed toward the Statehouse steps in Montgomery.

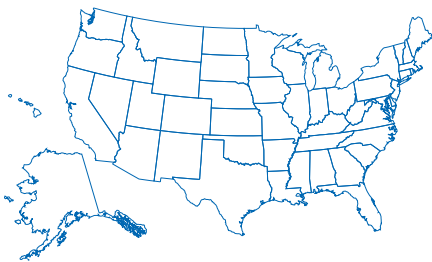
Weingarten was among those who addressed the rally there. She aimed particular rage at Alabama's anti-immigrant law. "The whites-only restrooms may be gone, but in 2012 we are fighting new lethal threats to civil rights and liberties. The law, H.B. 56, has done nothing but destroy households and put additional strain on already strained Alabama teachers."

"Those who are trying to take away immigrant rights, they are the same people who are taking away voting rights," the Rev. Al Sharpton said.

Hundreds of labor, civil rights and community activists marched from Selma, Ala., to Montgomery to commemorate the historic 1965 voting rights march. In Montgomery, they were joined by hundreds more for a rally at the Statehouse.



PHOTOS BY JULIE BENNETT AND DAVID BUNDY



CA The California Federation of Teachers and Gov. Jerry Brown have reached a compromise on dueling tax initiatives they have been trying to get placed on the November ballot.

The governor announced the agreement in mid-March after the conclusion of negotiations with the CFT and Restoring California, a coalition of educators and community leaders who have been pushing for the Millionaires Tax ballot initiative.

The CFT initiative, called the “Millionaires Tax to Restore Funding for Education and Essential Services Act of 2012,” would have increased tax rates on personal incomes in excess of \$1 million to provide an estimated \$6 billion annually to finance education and public services.

The governor had been pitching a ballot proposal to increase the sales tax by one-half cent per dollar and the income tax rate on those with personal incomes over \$250,000, to achieve a comparable revenue increase.

The compromise, hammered out among the CFT coalition, the governor, and leaders of the state Assembly and Senate, reflects a smaller sales tax increase than the governor wanted—one-quarter cent per dollar—and a three-tier income tax hike for joint filers with incomes over \$500,000, \$600,000 and \$1 million. It would increase revenue by an estimated \$9 billion in the first year, and \$6 billion annually for the next few years, with the sales tax increase ending in 2016 and the income tax hike ending in 2018.

MI AFT Michigan has joined with labor and community groups, and working men and women from around the state to launch the Protect Our Jobs campaign. Volunteers have started gathering signatures to place a constitutional amendment on the November ballot to protect collective bargaining rights and strengthen working families.

“Now more than ever, workers need the right to speak up to protect our wages, our benefits, and our voice—and that’s what this proposal is all about,” says John Armelagos,



CONSTANCE BROWN

Rhode Island Federation of Teachers and Health Professionals president Frank Flynn, far left, and Woonsocket union and school district officials join AFT president Randi Weingarten as she speaks out against budget cuts that “take teachers out of our kids’ classrooms.”

a registered nurse from Ann Arbor.

Over the past year, Lansing politicians have moved one anti-worker measure after another, doing nothing to help put Michigan back to work.

RI AFT president Randi Weingarten joined Rhode Island teacher union and school district leaders in March to discuss the impact of budget cuts on public education, and to call for more collaborative efforts between teachers and administrators.

Weingarten was joined at Woonsocket High School by Woonsocket School Superintendent Giovanna Donoyan; Rhode Island Federation of Teachers and Health Professionals president Frank Flynn, who is also an AFT vice president; and Woonsocket Teachers’ Guild president Jeff Partington for a news conference held in response to layoff notices received by every teacher in the school district.

“Tough choices must be made in a struggling economy, but we cannot afford to slash education budgets and take teachers out of our kids’ classrooms. When we gamble on short-term fixes to our bottom line, we put our children’s future at risk,” said Weingarten.

The AFT president has seen positive signs of progress toward meaningful education reform in Rhode Island. Weingarten spoke with Rhode Island’s Innovation District Partners, a coalition of district superintendents and union leaders who are working together on school improvement issues such as teacher evaluation and turning around low-performing schools. These collaborative efforts are under way in places like Coventry, Cranston, Pawtucket, Providence and West Warwick.

**Adventures end,
but experiences
last a lifetime...**



**Get off the beaten
path with small group
travel in remote and
fascinating locales.**

**Book now
& Save 15%***

Ask about group trips.

800-970-7299

intrepidtravel.com



* Terms & Conditions Apply. Quote priority code 7970.

ROCK THE VOTE IN “DEMOCRACY CLASS” Civics education has never looked so hip, since Rock the Vote, an AFT partner, launched Democracy Class. Taught in more than 1,200 classrooms last year, guest teachers have included stars like pop sensation Jason Derulo, NFL All-Pro linebacker Shawne Merriman and Darren Criss from “Glee.” Check out the nonpartisan lesson plan, which uses music, pop culture, video, classroom discussion and a mock election to get young people involved. Visit www.democracyclass.com.



DIVERSIFY THE LIBRARY

Looking for a children's book that will appeal to the diverse students in your classroom? The Ezra Jack Keats New Writer and New Illustrator Book Award names two: *Tia Isa Wants a Car* written by Meg Medina, and *Same, Same but Different*, illustrated by Jenny Sue Kosetecki-Shaw. The awards are named for Ezra Jack Keats whose landmark book, *The Snowy Day*, broke the race barrier in mainstream children's literature with Peter, a character of color. For more ideas, see the honorable mentions and past winners at <http://bit.ly/w8aaXt>.



NATIONAL JUKEBOX HISTORY

Want to inspire students with pop culture circa 1910? Send them to ragtime recordings on the new National Jukebox (www.loc.gov/jukebox), where you can also stir them with President Taft's speech on prosperity, move them with Marian Anderson's rendition of “Go Down Moses” or wow them with George Gershwin playing “Rhapsody in Blue.” The new audio treasure chest provides free online access to 10,000 samples of historic sound—from jazz, blues and opera to patriotic speeches, yodeling and storytelling.



MOVING ON UP High school students are fascinated, and often worried, about what they'll do after graduation. The Department of Labor's new online career tool, “My Next Move” (<http://mynextmove.dol.gov>), can help them figure it all out. Would-be teachers learn they'll need bachelor's or master's degrees. Plumbers? High school, and maybe some college. A personality test helps direct those who are still deciding what field fits best.

HELP WITH OPEN RESOURCES

Open educational resources (OER), which are available for free online, can offer creative, inexpensive ways to engage students. From full lesson plans

to techniques and materials, there are thousands of these teacher tools available. But which really work—and which are duds? A new rating system at www.achieve.org/oer-rubrics evaluates common core alignment, materials, interactivity, practice exercises, accessibility and more. At www.oercommons.org, resources are bookmarked, tagged, rated and reviewed by other teachers. What better judges to tell you what works best?

TIMES FOR LEARNING If you thought the *New York Times* was a great resource, wait until you see the newspaper's Learning Network, www.learning.blogs.nytimes.com. Tying lesson plans, student comments, news quizzes and more to current events, the site offers an overwhelming number of ideas for creative, engaged learning. One recent post: how to teach “The Hunger Games,” the dystopian trilogy recently made into a movie. Another: a teenager's reaction to the Trayvon Martin case. And for history: analysis of a *Times* article written exactly 54 years earlier (on the same calendar

date), when Nikita Khrushchev became Soviet premier.



NANO TEACHERS Describing nanotechnology just got easier, with resources from the Center for Probing the Nanoscale at Stanford University. Its website, <http://teachers.stanford.edu>, offers a number of hands-on activities that help explain the tiny science to students as young as second-graders, right up through high school seniors. We especially like the idea of “invisible rays” to explore the electromagnetic spectrum with ultraviolet beads.



HISTORY BY THE BOOK If you want to reach beyond the names and dates that clog up so many history texts, the Zinn Education Project, www.zinnedproject.org, can help. A companion to *A People's History of the United States* by Howard Zinn, the project offers downloadable lessons and articles that emphasize the role of social movements, working people, women, and people of color, like Septima Clark and Rosa Parks, above. Material, organized by theme, time period and reading level, includes a wide range of topics like Chicano rights, the farm labor movement, the Vietnam war and climate change.

IDA BERMAN/HIGHLANDER RESEARCH & ED. CTR.

When you're ready to
make a greater impact

When you're ready to
advance your career

You are ready for
American Public University

American Public University is ready to help you move your career forward. We offer respected degrees in Online Teaching and Learning, Instructional Leadership, Administration & Supervision, and more — completely online. And people are taking notice. We've been nationally recognized by the Sloan Consortium for effective practices in online education, and 99% of employers surveyed would hire one of our graduates again.*

When you're ready,
visit StudyatAPU.com/american-teacher



*APUS Alumni Employer Survey, March 2006-September 2010

We want you to make a fully informed decision about the university that's right for you. For more about our graduation rates, the median debt of students who completed each program, and other important information, visit www.apus.edu/disclosure.



AFT



A Union of Professionals

AFT+
Member Benefits

Subscription Services

Serving AFT members for over 30 years!

Box 258, Greenvale, NY 11548
www.buymags.com/aft
aft@buymags.com

1-800-774-9161

No Gimmicks...
Just the Lowest Prices!

The New Yorker

The latest in
ideas, events
& issues.
Order NOW!1 year \$39.95
2 years \$75.00

2 YEAR RATE!

AFT SUBSCRIPTION SERVICES, Box 258, Greenvale, NY 11548

Years

Price

Simply choose your
titles, clip and send!

	Usual Price	Your Price
All You	21.24	19.95
Allure	16.00	12.00*
American Heritage	24.00	17.95
Architectural Digest	42.00	24.00*
Arthritis Today	30.00	9.95
The Atlantic	29.95	24.95
Autoweek	32.00	19.95
Better Homes & Gardens	1 yr 22.00 2 yrs 44.00	14.97 22.00
Bloomberg Businessweek	59.97	40.00
Bon Appetit	28.00	20.00*
Boys' Life (ages 6-17)	33.00	24.00
Budget Travel	14.95	11.97
Car & Driver	22.00	12.00
Cat Fancy	24.00	13.00
Columbia Journalism Review	20.00	11.99
Condé Nast Traveler	19.97	12.00
Consumer Reports	29.00	29.00
CR Money Adviser	29.00	29.00
CR On Health	24.00	24.00
Cosmopolitan	29.97	18.00*
Country Living	24.00	12.00
Details	15.00	7.97
Discover	29.95	19.95
Disney Cars	39.92	29.92
Disney Fairies	39.92	29.92
Disney Junior	39.92	29.92
Disney Phineas & Ferb	39.92	29.92
Disney Princess	39.92	29.92
Dog Fancy	24.00	13.00
Ebony	20.00	11.97

Essence	22.00	18.96
Every Day with Rachael Ray	34.00	24.00
Everyday Food	18.00	15.00
Family Circle	19.98	14.97
Family Fun	16.95	9.97
Family Handyman	24.00	15.00
Field & Stream	19.97	10.00

Road & Track	22.00	12.00
Rolling Stone	25.94	14.95
Runner's World	24.00	20.00*
Saveur	29.95	19.95
Science Illustrated	24.95	19.95
Scientific American	34.97	24.97

Discounted rates for AFT members www.buymags.com/aft

Fitness	19.98	12.00
Food Network	30.00	20.00
Food & Wine	39.00	19.00
Forbes	59.95	24.95
Fortune	59.95	29.98*
Girl's Life (ages 10-15)	19.95	14.95
Glamour	18.00	12.00*
Golf	19.95	15.00
Golf Digest	27.94	14.97
Golf World	53.97	29.97
Good Housekeeping	23.97	12.00
GQ	20.00	15.00*
Harper's Bazaar	18.00	15.00
Harper's Magazine	21.00	11.97
Highlights For Children (6-12)	34.95	34.95
Hispanic Magazine	24.00	12.95
House Beautiful	19.97	15.00
Instructor (K-8)	19.95	8.00
InStyle	24.00	19.50*
Jet	38.00	25.00
Kiplinger's Personal Finance	23.95	12.00
Ladies Home Journal	16.97	9.99
Lucky	20.00	12.00
Mad Magazine	24.00	19.99
Marie Claire	19.97	12.00
Martha Stewart Living	28.00	24.00
Men's Journal	19.97	9.97
Money	39.89	19.95*
More Magazine	18.00	14.97

Scientific American Mind	19.95	14.95
Self	17.97	14.97*
Seventeen	19.95	12.00
Shape	24.00	14.97
Slam [NBA]	19.97	12.97

Economist

Today's global
perspective &
news for the
well informed.
Unbeatable!
Just \$77.00

SPECIAL RATE!

Smart Money	24.00	15.00
Smithsonian	34.00	12.00
Smithsonian Air & Space	28.00	26.00
Southern Living	36.00	24.00
Sports Illustrated	89.04	39.95*
Stereophile	19.94	12.97
Teen Vogue	15.00	10.00
Tennis	18.00	12.00
Time	59.95	29.95*
Time Out - New York	39.94	19.97
Town & Country	28.00	15.00
Travel & Leisure	45.00	19.00

Publication Name _____

Years _____

Price _____

☐ Please bill me

☐ Check enclosed payable to: AFTSS

Charge my ☐ Visa ☐ MC ☐ Disc ☐ Amex

☐ Gift: Attach recipient's name, address and a message

E-mail _____

Exp. _____

Total _____

Call to place an Order: Mon.-Thur. 9am-6pm & Fri. til 5 pm ET.

1-800-774-9161

The Economist	127.00	77.00*
Elle	28.00	14.00
Elle Decor	29.00	15.00
Entertainment Weekly	42.25	34.95*
ESPN	26.00	13.00
Esquire	15.94	8.00

Mother Earth News	18.00	13.97
The Nation	52.00	26.00
National Geographic	34.00	34.00
National Geographic Traveler	17.95	14.95
New York Magazine	24.97	19.97
The New Yorker	1 yr 69.95 2 yrs 102.07	39.95 75.00

Newsweek	50.00	35.00
Organic Gardening	23.94	23.94*
Outdoor Life	19.97	10.00
Parenting	17.97	9.97
Parents	15.98	9.97
PC World	29.90	19.97
Popular Photography	24.00	11.97
Popular Science	19.95	12.00
Prevention	21.97	16.94*
Psychology Today	1 yr 21.00 2 yrs 42.00	15.97 20.97
Reader's Digest	24.98	13.96
large print edition	35.95	21.95
Real Simple	28.95	24.00*
Redbook	17.97	12.00

Scientific American MIND

Fascinating
insight into why
we do the things
we do.

1 year \$14.95



PRICE DROP!

TV Guide	58.14	39.96
Us Weekly	69.96	59.97
Vegetarian Times	19.95	11.95
Vogue	29.95	17.97
W Magazine	29.90	14.95
The Week	59.00	50.00
The Weekly Standard	79.96	47.96
Weight Watchers	17.70	14.95
Woman's Day	18.00	15.00
Women's Health	17.97	14.97*
Working Mother	12.97	9.97
Yoga Journal	21.95	15.95

Call us for Other Titles!
1-800-774-9161

*Rate for members and college students



TOP SELLERS!

The New Yorker	1 yr \$39.95 2 yrs \$75.00
The Economist	\$77.00
Newsweek	\$35.00
Smithsonian	\$12.00
New York Magazine	\$19.97
Reader's Digest	\$13.96
Time	\$29.95*
Us Weekly	\$59.97