



# AMERICAN Teacher

THE NATIONAL PUBLICATION OF THE AMERICAN FEDERATION OF TEACHERS

Celebrating a historic march	2
ABCs of early education	6
Nurses find a home in the AFT	9
Going green	14
Newtown delivers a message	16

## A UNITED FRONT

Educators, parents, students and the community are coming together to fight school closings and the disinvestment in public education

PAGE 10



Common Core rollout: Is there enough support?

PAGE 4

Moving beyond finger-pointing

PAGE 11

A road map to citizenship

PAGE 15





# CUT YOUR PET CARE COSTS!

Check out the **head-to-tail pet savings and services** available to union families.

- **INSURANCE DEALS**  
Save up to 15% on comprehensive accident and illness pet insurance plans with flexible coverage options and low co-pays.
- **VET DISCOUNTS**  
Save 25% on office visits, exams, shots, x-rays and other on-site procedures from more than 2,500 participating vets nationwide.

- **EVERYDAY SAVINGS**  
Get 10% discounts on pet food, toys and supplies, plus an additional \$1.00 off pet medications and flea or tick products.
- **SPECIAL SERVICES**  
Save up to 30% on pet sitting, boarding, training, grooming, daycare and more.
- **HEALTH and SAFETY TIPS**  
Get FREE advice on diet, poisoning, dental care, and other preventive care tips on our website.

To learn more visit:

[UnionPlus.org/AFTpets](http://UnionPlus.org/AFTpets)



A Union of Professionals

AFT +  
Member Benefits





## Taking ownership of our profession

RANDI WEINGARTEN, AFT President

LONGER DAYS, warmer weather, antsy (even more than usual!) students, final exams, Alice Cooper's "School's Out" on the radio—all familiar signs that the school year is drawing to a close. For students, summer vacation may bring hours at the swimming pool, road trips with the family and, hopefully, finding a new favorite book on the summer reading list. For teachers, though, "summer vacation" is a bit of a misnomer. We know that the work may let up, but it doesn't stop.

In many ways, that's just part of the job. But the nonstop nature of our work is also a result of ever-increasing expectations for teachers; at the same time, many teachers report, too little is offered in the way of resources, support and professional development.

The AFT and our affiliates work in many ways to help fill this deficit of support. One of the most revolutionary ways we have done this is by partnering to create Share My Lesson, a digital platform where educators can upload their best resources, review and rate materials to provide quality control, and download these resources free of charge. Since we launched [www.sharemylesson.com](http://www.sharemylesson.com) nearly one year ago, more than 200,000 educators have registered to utilize over 260,000 resources and 2 million lesson plans available online.

Share My Lesson is by teachers, for teachers. Any educator, from preschool to college, can register and start using the site

immediately. And by any educator, I mean you! If you haven't already checked out Share My Lesson, I urge you to—and your summer "break" is a great time to do so.

Whether you're interested in exploring your fellow teachers' tried-and-true ideas and resources, or you've got a treasure trove of your own to pass along, Share My Lesson is the place to go. You could box up your cache of lesson plans, videos, primary resources, parent letters and syllabi. Or you

preparation they need to meet these instructional challenges because of budget cuts or inadequate implementation. AFT issue experts and others regularly add resources aligned to the Common Core State Standards to Share My Lesson.

Teachers too often are left to navigate the complexities and demands of this challenging profession on their own. Share My Lesson is a reminder that you are not alone. There is a wealth of knowledge and support



Teachers too often are left to navigate the complexities and demands of this challenging profession on their own.

**Share My Lesson** is a reminder that you are not alone.

could share your knowledge and expertise, not only with your students but also with your colleagues across the country and the globe, by posting your materials on Share My Lesson.

Share My Lesson also has numerous resources aligned to the Common Core State Standards. These standards, if implemented right, have the potential to help students acquire the subject knowledge, deep understanding and skills to apply concepts that will prepare them for college, career and life. But many teachers report that they have not received the tools and

in our ranks. Educators not only want their students to learn and grow—they, too, want to learn throughout their careers. And, given the opportunity, teachers will gladly share their best ideas and most effective lessons. Share My Lesson is a place where teachers' needs and their colleagues' solutions intersect, helping to provide all students with the great education they deserve.

I hope you will take time this summer and throughout the school year to check out Share My Lesson, and to be a part of a community of educators taking ownership of our profession.



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

**KRIS HAVENS**  
Communications Director

**ROGER S. GLASS**  
Editor

**MIKE ROSE**  
Senior Editor

**ADRIENNE COLES**  
**DANIEL GURSKY**  
**ANNETTE LICITRA**  
**BARBARA McKENNA**  
Contributing Editors

**LAURA BAKER**  
**JANE FELLER**  
Copy Editors

**JENNIFER CHANG**  
Production Manager

**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, USPS 007-705) 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](http://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](http://www.aft.org/members).

Letters to the editor may be sent to the address above or to [online@aft.org](mailto: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.

## Celebrating a historic occasion

### Scholarship program to recognize the 50th anniversary of the March on Washington

THIS AUGUST marks the 50th Anniversary of the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, and, in recognition of that momentous event, the AFL-CIO has partnered with the Union Privilege program to offer scholarships to high school seniors. The \$5,000 scholarships will help talented students from families

backgrounds turned out for the Aug. 28, 1963, march. The event is credited with accelerating the nation's progress toward achieving social and economic justice, including passage of the Civil Rights Act.

While the march is most often associated with the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech, it is worth noting that the march was the brainchild of A. Philip Randolph, president of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, the first predominantly black labor union, and that its chief organizer was Bayard Rustin, a close ally of the AFT and its New York City affiliate.

A statement adopted by the AFL-CIO executive council in February points out that 50 years after the March on Washington "working people of all hues" still need decent jobs with salaries that will allow them to support themselves and their families, as well as ac-



AFT PHOTO

In August, the nation will celebrate the 50th anniversary of the March on Washington. The 1963 march was the brainchild of labor leader A. Philip Randolph.

"The AFT is honored to support a **scholarship program** that will help offset the cost of college **for students** in schools and classrooms **where our members work.**"

—LORRETTA JOHNSON, AFT secretary-treasurer

in need—including union families—pay for the cost of a higher education.

More than 250,000 people of all races and

cess to a quality education for their children.

The scholarship is intended to honor the legacy of the march by helping young people turn their dream of attaining higher education into a reality. "The AFT is honored to support a scholarship program that will help offset the cost of college for students in schools and classrooms where our members work," AFT secretary-treasurer Lorretta Johnson says.

The scholarship application is available at [www.aflcio.org/scholarship](http://www.aflcio.org/scholarship). The deadline for submission is July 1.

## Marching with the civil rights movement

### Members help students connect their experiences with the cause

TEACHING SOCIAL STUDIES in the impoverished neighborhoods in the boroughs of New York City, Matt Foglino and Michael Freydin wanted to create curriculum that would resonate with their students.

For Freydin, a teacher at Halsey Junior

High School in Queens, and Foglino, a teacher at Wings Academy High School

in the Bronx, the civil rights movement offered one of the best ways for students to relate their experiences.

Freydin and Foglino, both members of the United Federation of Teachers, met at a conference in 2008. Two years later, they began collaborating on a curriculum, "Marching with the Civil Rights Movement." It is a two-week unit each teacher presents to his classes that incorporates the music, video and imagery of the times. The unit culminates in a classroom re-creation of the 1963 March on Washington.

"The civil rights movement is an important topic for our students to understand," says Foglino. "Our goal is to get students to express themselves."

It's not enough to simply present students with the information, the teachers say. They take the lesson a step further, igniting the passions of the time by guiding students to make the same difficult decisions people in the movement had to make. "Instead of responding with the 'strike back if struck' attitude that

some students have, the hope is the students will appreciate and practice the ideas of non-violence and passive resistance espoused by Dr. King," says Freydin.

Many of Freydin's students are immigrants, which makes teaching about the civil rights movement even more important to him. "Most of these students don't know anything about the struggle for civil rights in America. But when the kids start relating their experiences to the movement, then the rubber meets the road," he says.

Both teachers use the lessons to break down barriers. "The students not only respond, they discuss what they are feeling" and take it back to their personal lives, says Foglino.

The work of both men has been recognized by their colleagues, and the two have presented their curriculum to teachers and administrators at numerous conferences. Freydin and Foglino also have shared their materials with the Smithsonian and the National Museum of African American History and Culture.

Teacher Michael Freydin uses the civil rights movement to encourage students to express themselves.



DAVID GROSSMAN

# Would you encourage your child to play youth football?


**YES**
**Injury prevention is the key**

BY JON McCLEMENT

I WOULD NOT HESITATE to allow my 10-year-old to play football. The skills and concepts produced by participation in football will benefit children throughout their lives. Safety is the overriding concern when considering whether to allow children to play the game. This is wise and welcome—but the emphasis should be on precaution, not preclusion from a sport that benefits young people in so many ways.

All types of play are important to a child's development. Football presents a unique play format to expose children and adolescents to lifelong skills and concepts. The potential for the growth and development of children who participate in football still outweighs the risk of injuries (a risk, it should be pointed out, that exists in many aspects of life, often with no redeeming value).

Through sports, children learn about competition, fair play, problem-solving, and social interaction. Football potentially brings all of these desirable behaviors and skills together.

Many detractors of youth football try to correlate the current discussion of concussions at the professional level with injuries at the youth level. Parents' major concern is the risk of injury, particularly the risk of traumatic brain injury (TBI) commonly referred to as a concussion. It's important to keep this risk in context: TBI in children happens not only during participation in sports-related activities but also while walking, during free play, or riding a bike or in a car, to name just a few. And comparing youth and professional football doesn't account for the physical, financial, rules and technical differences between the two. The key remains a plan for preventing injuries in general, and TBI specifically, in youth football. That goal points to excellent instruction and officiating for youth participants. The way the game is taught and officiated will determine the level of safety and help limit injuries. This can be done, and in a way that preserves what many youths will long remember as one of the richest and most rewarding chapters of their young lives.

*Jon McClement, a physical education teacher, coaches basketball and football and is a member of the Albany Public School Teachers Association.*


**NO**
**Too many questions surround the sport**

BY JOAN BAKER

FOOTBALL IS A ROUGH and aggressive sport, one that is not well-suited to children, who have so much going on with brain development and growing bodies.

Recent reports in the media make it clear that there is simply not enough information or definitive scientific studies about serious injury at young ages. If a bad knee injury occurs with an 8-year-old, could it cause problems later in life? Particularly alarming is the inability of medical researchers to draw a clear conclusion about the risk of long-term damage from concussions. What were thought to be minor injuries may, in fact, be brain injuries that last a lifetime, many credible scientists warn. Without definitive guidance, there is just not enough information for me to let my child play.

Many parents argue that football teaches self-esteem, sportsmanship and athleticism. I agree that all of these things are good for children to learn, but many other sports also offer these benefits. Soccer, for example, offers tons of opportunities for learning endurance through running, building coordination, and understanding the value of teamwork. Golf teaches patience, precision, and allows the individual to shine. The menu of sports is large, and there is not one benefit from tackle football that a young child cannot get from another sport.

As a parent, and as a teacher of very young children, I also am concerned about the nature of football as a sport; it is designed to be violent and aggressive. With violence becoming more of a problem in school and beyond, parents have every right to ask if football is a sport that helps or hinders our ability to deal with this epidemic.

There undoubtedly need to be better studies done on the sport at the pediatric level, by physicians and psychologists, to determine the long-term effects of football when played at this vulnerable age level. Until questions are answered, discretion is the better path for parents. Children should be encouraged to engage in other types of athletics that deliver the same benefits with less risk.

*Joan Baker is owner and director of a preschool and child care center in Edgewood, N.M., and a co-chair in Early Educators United in New Mexico.*



WARREN GEBERT

## WEIGH IN!

We want to hear your thoughts on the current "Speak Out" question. Go to [www.aft.org/speakout](http://www.aft.org/speakout) to cast your vote.



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

**Do timed tests hurt deep math learning?**

ONLINE POLL RESULTS

**79% YES**
**21% NO**

"As a math learner, timed tests had a negative effect on my attitude and my belief that I could be successful at math. I now teach middle school mathematics, and I refuse to give my students timed tests. I would rather encourage them to think."

**MEGHAN SEITZ**

Syracuse (N.Y.)

Teachers Association

"I use timed tests for my ninth-graders, who track their own progress and are graded on improvement. The anxiety level isn't as big of a deal when they are simply trying to improve from their own previous scores and not racing every other student."

**BEN NAKAGAKI**

White Bear Lake (Minn.)

Teachers Association

"It is my experience, not only in the daily classroom but in my years in college, that timed tests cause anxiety. The student is more worried about the clock than what is being tested."

**DARLENE BROWN**

Toledo Federation of Teachers

# THE CORE OF THE MATTER

Common Core standards are rolling out in 46 states, but is support keeping up?

TOLEDO TEACHER Sandy Orth hesitates a bit as she tries to explain how the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) will change the classroom. Finally, it all boils down to one verb, “groping,” a word used prominently in the opening of Jack London’s *The Call of the Wild*.

In past years, teachers might have asked for a show of hands to discover if students knew the meaning of the verb when London opens

on “Dirty Monkeys Smell Bad” drills, a mnemonic device that addresses the order of operations in long division (divide, multiply, subtract, and bring down). Under the Common Core standards, students are allowed to “come up with their own alternative methods” for solving problems as they make sense along the way. It’s a path to understanding that sometimes leads to things like partial quotients, things “that teachers are usually pretty uncomfortable with” in the classroom.

“We’ve never talked this deeply in the past,” says Orth, a literacy coach and one of the building level specialists that Toledo is placing in every school to prepare for the new stan-

dards in math and literacy now being implemented in 46 states, with tests to follow in the next school year. “It’s not something that kids will get right away,” she says.

And neither will teachers unless implementation is done right—a point made not just by teachers and principals but by the writers of the standards themselves.

“Implementation is everything,” says William McCallum of the University of Arizona, who co-wrote Common Core math standards and related materials. “The standards are a platform for large-scale improvement in mathematics education, but nothing will happen if everybody

just stands around on the platform. Preparation of teachers, the people who will be responsible for translating the standards into classroom practice, is crucial.”

## More than an afterthought

What McCallum deems as “crucial” is still being treated as “optional” in too many systems. And that, AFT president Randi Weingarten recently told leaders of the AFT teachers division, is not an oversight—it’s a choice, extending to every policy level, impossible to ignore or excuse.

“The work that’s been done is not consistent” when it comes to preparing the nation’s classrooms for implementing the Common Core standards, Weingarten warned. The federal government is spending \$350 million on new high-stakes tests aligned to the CCSS but nothing specifically targeted to prepare teachers. “It’s an abdication of responsibility that the infrastructure was not put in place.”

Divisional leaders showed unanimous support when Weingarten suggested that the AFT take a public and aggressive stand in favor of sound, supported implementation—time and resources that give educators a chance to work with colleagues who are well-versed in the new standards, and embedded professional development to give schools their best shot at success. It’s work that must be done, Weingarten said, before students and educators are targeted with sanctions.

“This is as much an equity issue as a standards issue,” the AFT president said. “The intention here is to save the Common Core. If it is not implemented with integrity, it is going in the dustbin” of failed reforms.

These are frontline concerns as well.

Among teachers and administrators alike, “there seems to be a misunderstanding about the depth and complexity of Common Core,” says Spies, a teacher at Cypress Creek Elementary in Volusia, Fla., and a trainer in the AFT’s Thinking Mathematics and Lesson Study project. “There needs to be time to really collaborate and look at the standards, to see their purposeful cohesions and more opportunities to talk with each other and visit other classrooms.”

“People are in different places,” says Audra McPhillips, who is a Thinking Mathematics trainer in West Warwick, R.I. “Most people are being asked to learn new content and new teaching strategies. Everyone feels like a first-year teacher.”

Toledo, Volusia and West Warwick are some of the districts that have been very aggressive in providing the embedded, ongoing professional support targeted to the new standards. This is not the case in most other districts, however. And without that support, “teachers are left grasping at straws” and “given the impression that the new standards aren’t much of a change,” Spies warns.

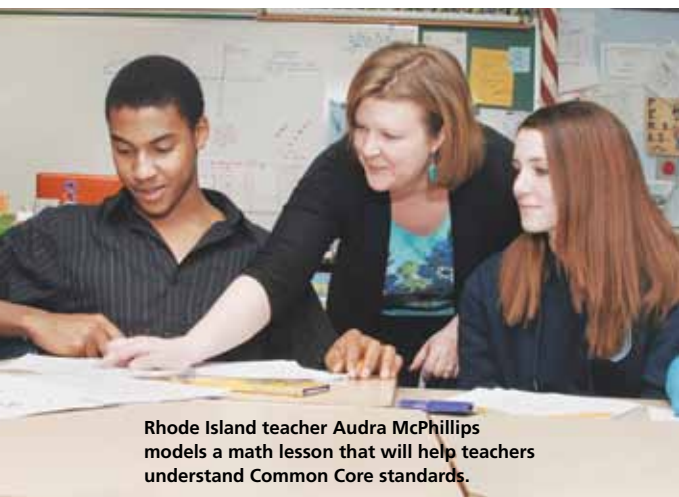
## The missing link that’s not a link

The potential for shoddy implementation that would undermine worthy policy dominated much of the discussion when the AFT teachers division met this spring, and teacher leaders

**“Everyone feels like a first-year teacher.”**

—AUDRA McPHILLIPS

West Warwick (R.I.) Teachers Alliance



Rhode Island teacher Audra McPhillips models a math lesson that will help teachers understand Common Core standards.

CONSTANCE BROWN

a tale of how “men, groping in the Arctic darkness, had found a yellow metal.” Not under CCSS. Today, Orth says, a teacher might try to engage the class in a closer reading to look at word choice and rhetorical devices: Why “groping” and not “traveling,” “exploring” or other words at the author’s disposal? How does London’s choice set up the next paragraph, filled with descriptions of a nice, ordered universe in California coastal towns?

Math will change, too. Amy Spies, a math teacher in Volusia, Fla., says CCSS will number the days of teaching long division by focusing

voiced those concerns to a key White House adviser on education and domestic policy.

It's important for Washington to recognize "how the vision and the reality are at times colliding," AFT vice president and program and policy council chair Maria Neira stressed.

From Florida to Massachusetts, AFT locals have done exceptional work in trying to prepare educators and the public to navigate the CCSS sea change, but the union and its members cannot do this alone, and the work typically goes farther and faster when unions and districts work together.

Too many teachers are still not getting the help they need to find success in their classrooms with the Common Core standards—in many cases they are not even getting the standards themselves, just a link to them online. "This needs to be in the hands of teachers, in a form they can actually mark up and use," says Darion Griffin, one of the AFT specialists who works with affiliates on helping educators prepare for the CCSS rollout.

Nowhere are these concerns more pressing than in New York, where the state education department this spring began high-stakes testing based on Common Core Standards in grades 3-8—before educators had a full op-

portunity to delve into the new standards, to expose their students to the curriculum, or to make parents and communities aware of the changes.

The New York State United Teachers recently surveyed more than 1,600 teachers and found that almost two-thirds say their district has provided professional development that ranges from "a low degree" to "none at all." Fewer than one in three say they have additional planning time dedicated to the new standards.

NYSUT is working to raise awareness—before new exams prompt what state and federal officials say could be a drop of 30 percent or more in scores, a shock baked into the process by poor planning and inadequate resources.

"For a child, it could be devastating," NYSUT president and AFT vice president Richard Ianuzzi said of the anticipated drops in scores. "It's the wrong message to send to



Toledo teachers, from left, Susan Obee, Jennifer Ragland and Cindy Kregel discuss reading strategies tied to CCSS.

children who you're trying to get to love education."

NYSUT supports the shift to Common Core instruction, but "the scores of these new assessments should not be used for high-stakes decisions about students," Neira says. "These tests should not be considered a definitive summation of a student's ability or, for that matter, a teacher's effectiveness. Instead, they should be used as a benchmark for gauging progress in implementing the Common Core."

—MIKE ROSE



SHARE MY LESSON IS AN ONLINE RESOURCE, DEVELOPED BY THE AFT AND TES CONNECT, THAT PROVIDES EDUCATORS A PLACE TO COLLABORATE AND SHARE THEIR BEST PRACTICES.

### Elementary Students

**EGYPTIAN MEASURING** This activity, contributed by the **Children's Museum of Houston**, gets students moving and thinking. The children measure various objects to compare the ancient Egyptian system of measurement, which was based on body lengths, with the customary and metric systems used today.

<http://tinyurl.com/EgyptianMeasuring>

**VOCABULARY CONTEXT CLUES** Help your students learn to use context clues to derive the meaning of unfamiliar words. This detailed and thoughtful resource includes lots of guided and independent practice as students gain proficiency.

<http://tinyurl.com/SMLcontextClues>

**www.ShareMyLesson.com**  
Register today for free access to more than 260,000 classroom resources.

**COMPLIMENT RELAY** In this activity, contributed by **Peace First**, students learn the power of a compliment. They practice giving each other compliments, then reflect on how the activity made them feel—a lovely way to help build a caring community of students.

<http://tinyurl.com/ComplimentRelay>

### Middle School Students

**THE ORDER OF OPERATIONS** This wonderful Common Core lesson, contributed by **21st Century Lessons (A Boston Teachers Union Initiative)** is the first in a series on evaluating expressions in math. This lesson introduces students to the order of operations.

<http://tinyurl.com/SMLooo>

**SHORT STORY ANALYSIS** Help move students from summary writing to analytical paragraphs with these graphic organizers that help students break down plot, point of view, characterization, figurative language and theme.

<http://tinyurl.com/SMLgraphicOrganizers>

### High School Students

#### GETTYSBURG ADDRESS—A CLOSE

**READING** This Common Core exemplar, contributed by **Student Achievement Partners**, has students examine word usage and author's intent within a historically noteworthy text. Chunked sections provide opportunities to scaffold or increase rigor as needed. This resource includes text-dependent questions, instructional strategies, a writing task and extension activities for both ELA and history. <http://tinyurl.com/SMLGettysburgAddress>

**DIFFUSION/OSMOSIS LAB** A quick and easy lab for demonstrating to students, using potatoes, how osmosis affects mass. Students will come to understand the terms hypertonic, hypotonic and isotonic while answering the question: What will happen to the mass of potato cubes exposed to different concentrations of salt in water?

<http://tinyurl.com/SMLpotatoLab>

# The ABCs of early education: listening, asking, sharing, engaging

EARLY LEARNING MATTERS. It can't be put more simply than that. Anyone who has ever visited a child care center, a Head Start Program or a pre-K classroom—or any of the other myriad settings where infants, toddlers and preschoolers are cared for and educated by dedicated and engaged adults—knows that what happens in those settings, as well as in kindergarten and the early elementary grades, will have a lifelong effect.

Both research and common sense tell us that the best way to improve educational and economic opportunity for children—particularly disadvantaged children—is to provide high-quality early education as part of a seamless progression throughout the formative years. That transition is vital to learning, and requires the deliberate intention of educators, parents, administrators and policymakers.

In her work at the Harvard Graduate School of Education and the University of Washington, P-3 expert Kristie Kauerz has identified components that ensure attention to the pre-school-grade 3 continuum. Among these best practices are:

**Creating collaborative mechanisms.** If preschool teachers never talk to kindergarten teachers, the preschool teachers may never have a full understanding of the skills and knowledge children should have when they enter kindergarten. And the kindergarten teachers may have unrealistic expectations for their new students. All of these teachers—from early childhood settings on through third grade—should have opportunities to share experiences and practices so that the changes children experience from year to year are less abrupt.

## Empowering teachers to



**focus on instruction and teamwork.** Vertical alignment allows teachers not only to discuss details of lining up the curriculum from year to year but also to tackle challenges regarding specific kids, from a child having trouble focusing during certain times of the day to one soaring ahead and in danger of becoming bored.

**Aligning standards, curricula and assessments.** Alignment refers to the progression of expectations, developmentally appropriate practices and assessment. As preschool draws to an end, the children should be working on tasks and concepts they will see in kindergarten. And the kindergarten environment should include things the kids are familiar with from preschool.

There are ways educators can ensure that transitions build on each other rather than set children behind. Educators across the P-3 spectrum should:

- Ask questions about formal and informal learning experiences, and what children need to accomplish before they go to the next level.
- Look for chances to work in teams with those who teach

both younger and older students, as well as build collaboration with educators of students at the same level.

- Ask parents for as much information as possible about their children's backgrounds.
- Work with families to ensure that all the adults in a child's life are helping with transition from pre-K to kindergarten or from a nonschool setting to the classroom.

## Topic A: Language

Here's a fun fact: By the time children arrive in kindergarten, they'll know an average of 3,000 to 5,000 words. That means it's critical to incorporate a variety of teaching practices that support language learning.

Some thoughts on creating a language-rich classroom: Make every effort to ensure that children are engaged in meaningful expression. Engage children in extended conversations. Encourage them to tell and retell stories and to describe events. Discuss a wide range of topics. Model new and unusual words, sharing their meanings and offering explicit guidance on vocabulary, syntax and pronunciation. Ask open-ended

questions. Challenge children to justify their thinking. Help them express ideas.

Engage children in reading challenging books together. Reading aloud is one of the best ways to accelerate oral language development. Books expose children to several types of language needed for academic success.

Also provide intentional instruction in phonological awareness, which is developed as children learn new words and differentiate between similar-sounding words. Types of phonological awareness for preschoolers include rhyming, alliteration, sentence segmenting (the ability to sense individual words in the stream of spoken language) and the ability to hear separate syllables, put syllables together into a word or break a word into syllables.

Make sure you're using high-quality curricula. Integrate language learning with everything small children are interested in, such as the stars and planets, pets, or how plants become food. A strong curriculum teaches the vocabulary of interesting content. By providing repeated exposure to new words, children learn the words they need to represent the concepts they are learning.

Don't forget to include explicit instruction. To encourage this, use challenging read-alouds as well as daily discussions of books, new concepts and vocabulary. Make it fun by incorporating games and songs.

Finally, let kids play! Early childhood educators know better than anyone how important play is to a child's development. A strong curriculum provides time and opportunities for both free and structured play, letting children experiment with new ideas.

# A little food goes a long way

## New report shows powerful benefits of expanding school breakfast program

IT SEEMS LIKE common sense to say that children who are hungry in school won't be able to perform their best. A new report from No Kid Hungry and Deloitte pulls together more specific data to show just how dramatic an impact the simple act of feeding kids a healthy breakfast every day can have.

So how serious is the problem of childhood hunger? It affects millions of American children—about one of every five, the report shows. And the authors note that food insecurity in early childhood is associated with impaired brain development, lower academic achievement and more frequent hospitalization.

As one elementary school teacher quoted in the study said: "One of my students this year came up to me during a test and said she was having trouble. When I asked her which question she needed help with, she answered, 'I don't need help with the questions. I need help because I'm hungry and I can't think.'"

One challenge is the huge number of eligible children who don't eat school breakfast. While 21 million low-income students receive a free lunch, only 11 million of them eat school breakfast.

The study quantifies just how much school breakfast can change kids' lives. On average, it says, students who eat school breakfast have been shown to score 17.5 percent higher on standardized math tests, attend school 1.5 more days per year, be 20 percent more likely to graduate from high school, and typically earn \$10,090 more per year and have a 4 percent higher employment rate. If 70 percent of elementary and middle school students who eat free or reduced-price lunch also ate school breakfasts, that would add up to 3.2 million more students doing better on math tests, 4.8 million fewer school absences and 807,000

more students graduating from high school each year.

"Just when everyone thinks that we can't afford to invest in programs like these, the report shows that we can't afford not to," says Billy Shore, the CEO of Share Our Strength, which sponsors the No Kid Hungry campaign. "Because the long-term benefits are

schools are about 12 percent more likely to reach the proficient level on standardized math tests than low-income students with traditional breakfast programs.

"Both Democrats and Republicans want to do the right thing when they hear of the problem, the solution and that the resources are there to implement the solution," says



"Just when everyone thinks that we can't afford to invest in programs like these, the report shows that **we can't afford not to.**"

—BILLY SHORE, CEO of Share Our Strength

so strong, so compelling, so good for kids, and so good for the economy and schools, it enables us to look at this issue through a different lens."

The AFT is a partner in the No Kid Hungry effort, which is working to ensure that more low-income children start the day with a healthy breakfast. One strategy is to move the breakfast program out of the cafeteria and into the classroom. A statewide effort in Maryland by No Kid Hungry and the Partnership to End Childhood Hunger has increased participation in the school breakfast program by about 10 percent, which has meant serving an additional 30,000 students. The new report shows that Maryland schools with high levels of student poverty that serve breakfast in their classrooms have reduced chronic absenteeism by about 7 percent, and students in those

Shore. Most of the funding for school meals programs comes from the federal government, so it's a matter of making the most intelligent use of those funds.



## Timely matters

### One elementary school gets a morning makeover with help from the AFT Innovation Fund

YOU WILL SEE more smiles than yawns when students file in for first period at Casimir Pulaski Elementary, a public school serving a low-income neighborhood in Meriden, Conn.

At 7:15 a.m., buses roll up to the school, almost two hours before the first bell for class. The early start allows 600 students in grades 1-5 to start their day with breakfast, fitness and learning that touches on literacy and STEM-related studies, all delivered in a fun and relaxed 90-minute block. It's a chance for teachers to get to know their students a little better. And it's a chance for students to enrich their vocabulary, their background knowledge—and burn off a little of that morning energy any parent who's ever yelled “pipe down till the alarm goes off” knows so well.

By the regular start of the school day, “they’re ready to learn and ready to go,” says Christine Laferriere, an instructional specialist at the school. It didn’t happen by accident. The staff recognized that these early morning hours are anything but dead time—not when it comes to very young minds and bodies—and Pulaski is putting that time to good use, with an extended-day program that launched in August, supported through the AFT Innovation Fund.

Since its introduction, “the school feels much more like a community; there’s more of a sense of family,” says teacher Anita Gennaro, who works in the program, staffed by 20 teachers and PSRPs who receive stipends for volunteering for early morning duties. Along with the AFT Innovation grant, their work is supported by the community, including volunteers from the local YMCA, and by the National Center on Time & Learning. Now, as the extended-learning program looks to close out its first year, the results have been positive and even a little surprising:

- The school anticipated that the early start might cause a short-term drop in attendance, but the opposite has happened; attendance rose from 88 to 96 percent after the school introduced morning enrichment.

- Teachers are seeing dividends in the classroom, thanks to the background knowledge and vocabulary building that the morning program offers. One teacher remembers how a first-grader, asked to name a word with a short “e” in it, responded with “pelvis” and went on to offer additional details on bones



CONSTANCE BROWN

and the skeletal system—things he had learned in the morning program.

- School staff report that they get to know more students through their work in the program, particularly children in different grade levels. The school has become a tighter-knit community as a result.

As the year closes out, Pulaski was working on ways to make next year’s program even stronger, reports Laferriere, the project director for the Innovation Fund. The school will offer flex scheduling to balance the benefits and time demands of an early-start program. The program ultimately will grow to other schools and eventually the district, expanding time for students and teachers, with an emphasis on teacher collaboration.

**Young bodies and minds can stretch a little more, thanks to Casimir Pulaski’s new early morning block.**

## Freedom of choice for charter school educators

### Agreement with charter organization sets the stage for unionization

SOME CHARTER SCHOOL teachers in Chicago may soon be experiencing the benefits of union representation. In March, the Chicago Alliance of Charter Teachers and Staff (Chicago ACTS) and the UNO charter organization announced an agreement that guarantees educators and staff at 13 UNO schools in Chicago the free choice to form a union.

The agreement guarantees more than 300 educators the right to choose to unionize without fear of retaliation. More than 5,000 children attend UNO schools in Chicago.

“With this agreement, UNO teachers have the freedom to join with hundreds of other charter school teachers across Chicago who are using their collective voice to speak out for their profession and their students,” says Chicago ACTS president Brian Harris. “Almost four years ago, my co-workers and I formed the first charter school teachers union in Chi-

cago. We are united in the relentless pursuit of quality for our schools, and we are encouraged that UNO teachers now have the freedom to join with us to advocate on behalf of teachers, our students and our schools.”

Chicago ACTS currently represents more than 350 teachers at charter schools across the city.

“I became a teacher because I believe in the power of education to transform lives and improve communities,” says Jessica Hanzlik, a teacher at UNO Soccer Academy and a Teach for America corps member. “Having the freedom to form a union with other UNO teachers means we’ll be able to advocate more strongly for our students, and we will have a greater ability to speak out for what we know works to improve teaching and learning.”

Chicago ACTS is an affiliate of the AFT and the Illinois Federation of Teachers. This

latest announcement continues the national momentum for charter school teachers to strengthen their voice through a union. In February, more than 200 charter school teachers in California, Michigan and New York won their efforts to form unions affiliated with the AFT.

“We are glad that UNO recognized the fundamental right of educators and all workers to have the free choice to form a union and have a voice in the decisions that impact their classrooms, their students and their profession,” says AFT president Randi Weingarten. “Teachers know best what students and schools need to succeed and thrive. Enabling and empowering the voice of educators is essential to guaranteeing every child a high-quality public education that allows them not only to dream their dreams but to achieve them.”

# Forging 'a new kind of nurses organization'

## Affiliation brings 34,000 nurses into the AFT

IT'S OFFICIAL: Members of the National Federation of Nurses have voted to affiliate with the American Federation of Teachers. An affiliation agreement was approved in separate and unanimous votes by the NFN national executive board and the AFT executive council in February, and each of the NFN state labor organizations—in Montana, Ohio, Oregon and Washington—has since conducted its own formal ratification process, bringing 34,000 registered nurses into the AFT.

They will join the more than 48,000 nurses and healthcare professionals who are already members of the AFT.

"Nurses who work on the frontlines of patient care need to have their voices heard," AFT president Randi Weingarten says. "These affiliations by organizations that are respected leaders in their states represent a vote of confidence in the AFT as a union with a proven track record of standing up for professionals."

Bruce Humphreys, a registered nurse at St. Charles Medical Center in Bend, Ore., and a member of the Oregon Nurses Association, believes the agreement between the

AFT and NFN will be beneficial for everyone involved. "I feel positive about the affiliation and the fact that we are now part of the AFT and AFL-CIO."

AFT's reputation for organizing was one of the main reasons Humphreys supported the partnership. He's excited about the prospect of having a real voice in the implementation of the Affordable Care Act. "We will have a bigger platform to keep ACA in the forefront, so it will not be diluted," says Humphreys.

The changes brought about by the ACA will require some redesign of the healthcare system to eliminate restrictions on nursing practice, as well as changes in coverage and payment rules to recognize this expanding role for nurses.

It's critical that nurses have a strong union in this time of transition for America's healthcare system. "Nurses are the most trusted healthcare providers, and this new partnership with the AFT will enable us to continue to be the voice for the patients we serve," says Barbara Crane, president of the NFN and a registered nurse.

Affiliation with the AFT will augment the



NFN PHOTO

NFN's advocacy in the workplace, and with state and national policymakers, because nurses will play an even larger role in maintaining high-quality care in a changing health system.

"This affiliation is an unprecedented opportunity for staff nurses across the country to enhance their professional influence through collective bargaining," says Crane.

**Washington nurses will swell the union—and their voices—under the new affiliation agreement.**



LORI PETERSON

## Members help out at First Book distribution

IN MARCH, members from the Newark Teachers Union, Perth Amboy (N.J.) Federation/AFT and AFT New Jersey volunteered at the First Book National Book Bank Distribution in Pennsauken. They helped to sort and distribute more than 400,000 free books for children from low-income families, as well as pick up books for their own students.

AFT New Jersey president Donna Chiera, left, helps load books from First Book. Students, below, also helped out.



"The most important reason why I wanted my members to participate in the book bank is because some of our students will be receiving their very own books for the first time that they can take home and read with their parents, says Michael Dixon, vice president of NTU, who helped organize the pickup of more than 14,000 free books for Newark students. "I wanted our union and our members to be a part of that."

First Book holds several "book banks" each year where millions of free books are distributed. Many AFT members have taken advantage of book distributions in Buffalo, N.Y.; Detroit; Minneapolis; and New Orleans to give thousands of free books to their students. Since the AFT and First Book began working together almost two years ago, our members have helped distribute more than 450,000 books. To register with First Book, go to [www.firstbook.org/AFT](http://www.firstbook.org/AFT).



CTU president Karen Lewis speaks out against the Chicago school closings, while PFT president Jerry Jordan, right, does the same in Philadelphia.



# A UNITED FRONT

Educators, parents, students and the community are coming together to fight school closings and the disinvestment in public education

WHEN SCHOOLS ARE CLOSED, the ramifications run deep. Students are disconnected from the productive, caring relationships they had with teachers and other school staff.

In March, the Philadelphia's School Reform Commission voted to shutter 26 schools and, that same month, the Chicago Public Schools announced it was closing more than 50 schools. Both decisions led to massive communitywide protests. The crisis in Philadelphia was prompted by a recommendation from the Boston Consulting Group to close 64 neighborhood schools, almost one-third of the city's schools. BCG is notorious for its privatization schemes.

Philadelphia Federation of Teachers president Jerry Jordan, who is also an AFT vice president, says the consultant's proposal was the most recent and most visible example of what happens when a state and city disinvest in

their public schools. "For the past year, every major education action taken by the school district, the SRC and Harrisburg [the state capital] has involved taking resources and people away from our neighborhood schools," Jordan says. "And when the schools are sufficiently starved, they shut them down."

The Chicago Public Schools' decision to close schools and relocate thousands of

schoolchildren "will have a devastating impact on many of the city's low-income neighborhoods and minority families, Chicago Teachers Union president and AFT vice president Karen Lewis wrote in an op-ed published in the *Chicago Tribune*.

The usual argument for closing schools is that they are "underutilized" and a drain on district coffers. But many people close to the situation believe the real goal is to privatize school systems and expand charter schools—without regard to the needs of the students or the community served by the school. And there is a particular concern that the closings target schools attended by children of color.

PFT member Wendy Coleman has been on the frontlines of the effort to prevent the closings in Philadelphia. While quick to point out that she's not opposed to charter schools, Coleman believes that many of the school closings in Philadelphia are directly tied to competition from charters. The parents who decided that the traditional public school was the best option for their kids, "are now being punished for that decision," she says.

In Philadelphia, AFT president Randi Weingarten and 18 other protesters were arrested at the headquarters of the Philadelphia school district when they blocked the doors to prevent the School Reform Commission from voting on the school-closing plan.

"We made it clear that the people of Philadelphia want to fix, not close, schools and want to maintain, not destabilize, neighborhoods," Weingarten told the *Washington Post*. "And we sent a powerful message to those who want to dismantle or starve public schools out of existence—that students, parents, teachers and community stand united



Philadelphia teacher Wendy Coleman is fighting to keep neighborhood schools open.

LORI PETERSON

Kids accustomed to walking to a nearby school are forced to travel many blocks—often through dangerous areas—to get to school. And neighborhoods often lose an institution that had served as an important and reliable community hub.

Is it any wonder that school closings usually spark outrage and distrust on the part of parents, students, educators and the community?

and that we will continue to fight for what our children need—a high-quality public school in their neighborhood.”

Joshua Marburger, a teacher at one of the Chicago elementary schools on the school-closing hit list, was among the thousands of parents, students, educators, elected officials and community activists who rallied and marched this spring in downtown Chicago. “The board of education and the mayor’s office are making these unilateral decisions without really coming to the people who are on the ground level,” Marburger says. “It’s the teachers, the teacher’s assistants and clerks who really know our buildings—who really know our schools and the needs of our kids.”

More than 130 members of the protesting Chicago grass-roots organizations and unions staged a sit-in, which resulted in being led away by police and issued citations.

### **‘We had to have a plan of our own’**

The groups opposed to the school closings know that protests, rallies and arrests are not enough. There has to be a plan, an alternative to the closings. And it must be developed with input from a cross section of the community

and widely embraced by that community—the kind of plan that was put together by the Philadelphia Coalition Advocating for Public Schools.

Made up of students, parents, teachers and other community members, PCAPS was created in response to the flawed and radical reform plan put forth by the Boston Consulting Group. The coalition is led by some of Philadelphia’s most influential community organizations, including Action United and Youth United for Change. The Philadelphia Federation of Teachers, along with several other unions, are members of the coalition.

“We had to have an alternative to the [BCG] proposal,” says Action United executive director Craig Robbins. “It was important that we had a plan of our own. We couldn’t just say ‘no.’”

To ensure that its plan, “Excellent Schools for All Children,” was based on community-driven solutions, the coalition surveyed parents and other community members, held listening sessions with 750 students, hosted town hall meetings and, last September, sponsored a major conference with more than 300 participants. These activities re-

vealed overwhelming opposition to the BCG plan with many believing that its recommendations to close buildings and outsource management of the city’s schools would result in inferior educational opportunities for students of color, students from low-income families, students with disabilities and English language learners. The community also felt it would compromise student safety.

Students have been among the most vocal critics of the school closings. In Philadelphia, Youth United for Change and the Philadelphia Student Union mobilized thousands of students to protest the reform commission’s vote to close schools.

One of the Philadelphia schools slated to be closed is Anna Howard Shaw Middle School. Kia Hinton lives in the neighborhood served by the middle school. Hinton’s children attend the school that many of the students displaced by the closing of Shaw will now be attending, and she’s worried that the number of kids in the already overcrowded classrooms will increase.

Hinton sees Action United as a vehicle through which she and other Philadelphia parents can address issues such as the clos-

## **In good faith**

Collaboration and mutual respect help unions, school districts and the community tackle some of the tough issues facing public education

AGAINST THE STORMY backdrop of cuts in education funding, an overemphasis on testing, and school closures, it’s easy to forget there are places where unions, districts and the community have moved beyond posturing and finger-pointing and instead are working together—hard and constructively—to tackle some of the toughest issues facing public education.

Earlier this year, a delegation of teachers and administrators gathered at the Center for School Improvement in New York City, an event co-sponsored by the AFT and the Teachers Center at the United Federation of Teachers. The in-depth training brings together teachers, administrators and other key stakeholders to build collegiality and trust, and the team from Providence, R.I., was determined to make that the foundation of a groundbreaking school improvement plan: a new way to assist schools identified under federal law as needing improvement, work

that would be done through union-district cooperation rather than closings and other steps that disrupt schools and neighborhoods.

It set the stage for the February launch of United Providence (UP!), a union-district collaboration supporting three schools in the system, which will be operated by a nonprofit education management organization in which teachers, school leaders, community leaders and national education experts will select the best and most appropriate programs and services to lift students’ academic performance.

AFT president Randi Weingarten joined Steven Smith, president of the Providence Teachers Union, and other school and local political leaders for the February kickoff of the initiative, and later met with staff and



AFT president Randi Weingarten looks over class work at Woodland Hills Academy in Los Angeles.

ARMANDO AFORIZO

students at two of three schools involved.

The initiative embodies the conviction that school improvement is not about laying blame and “game playing,” Weingarten told the Providence crowd at the UP! launch. “Providence has decided that we’re all in this together” when it comes to fixing, rather than closing, schools.

“Ultimately this is not just about three schools,” Smith reminded the crowd gath-

*Continued on page 12*

ings and the underfunding of schools.

The PCAPS plan urged the School Reform Commission and mayor to give every student access to schools with the appropriate facilities, learning materials and staffing; turn schools buildings into community hubs designed to meet the diverse needs of students;



LORI PETERSON

provide a rigorous, well-rounded, culturally relevant curriculum; enhance the professional development opportunities for teachers and other school staff; and provide additional supports for struggling schools.

The coalition sent a clear message that the Philadelphia community was unified, Coleman says. "There has been a push to separate those of us who work in the school from the community when in fact parents and teachers have the same goals."

Rather than starving and closing schools, PCAPS wants the city and state to invest in its communities. So, even as the coalition continues to fight locally for a fair shake for Philadelphia schools and students, PCAPS is taking its battle to Harrisburg where the governor and Legislature have made deep cuts in the state education budget in recent years. The coalition is also advocating for an expansion of community schools throughout Philadelphia, schools that would bring together educators, social services providers, small businesses and others with the shared goal of turning schools into thriving hubs with wraparound services for both students and for the community.

"If there's a silver lining to the school closing battle, it's that it has mobilized a ton of people who don't always work together," says Action United's Robbins.

Hinton is excited about the coalition's

potential to be a game-changer for communities throughout the City of Brotherly Love. "We need to build on the relationships" that PCAPS has spawned, she says. "We need to continue to address the misconceptions we previously had about each other."

### Building bridges to the community

Months before it went on strike last September, the Chicago Teachers Union reached out to educate parents, faith leaders and others in the community about the pressing issues facing the city's public schools and soliciting their input on a range of education reforms. Building this bridge with the broader community paid off when hundreds of allies and supporters stood shoulder to shoulder with the striking teachers and their union.

"It was heartening to see the level of support for CTU members from parents and community members who share the simple yet powerful belief that education is more than tests and test prep, and that the people who educate our children should be respected and involved in decisions affecting what goes on in our schools," Weingarten said during the walkout.

*Continued from page 11*

ered for the event. "It's about empowering each one of those schools and replicating it throughout the district."

The PTU president stressed that the union would remain involved in UP! for the long haul because the heart of the approach is



PTU president Steven Smith: "Keep the voice of teachers at the center."

CONSTANCE BROWN

about improving schools in ways that "keep the voice of teachers at the center."

Teacher-led collaboration also lies at the heart of efforts to improve education through an expanded school-based management model. Pioneered by the United Teachers Los Angeles, a joint affiliate of the AFT and the NEA, the approach offers

schools flexibility and moves key decisions to the building level.

Woodland Hills Academy was the city's first school of choice using expanded school-based management. Teacher and parent collaboration on the school's reform efforts has resulted in improved student achievement and increased enrollment.

Weingarten visited the school earlier this year and pledged AFT support to help make the successful model available to other interested schools. At a time when so-called reformers opt for counterproductive measures like closing schools or turning them over to private entities, "I passionately believe that we should fix, not close or ignore, public schools that need improvement," the AFT president told reporters during the visit.

Also speaking at the news conference were UTLA president Warren Fletcher, Los Angeles Unified School District school board member Steven Zimmer and two parents, who explained that they chose to send their children to Woodland Hills because parental engagement is embedded in the school's operations, and because of the various interventions and other efforts to help individualize education for the students.

The strategic, structured, collaborative education reform plan in place at Woodland Hills shows this approach produces results and binds neighborhoods in common purpose. "Parents were at the front end of reform and continue to be part of the educational process, which is absolutely essential," Weingarten said.

And it stands in stark contrast to the so-called parent-trigger model under consideration at nearby schools, which splinters the bond between teachers and parents at a time when the schools can least afford it.

The school district is implementing a "practitioner center" at Woodland Hills Academy, allowing teachers throughout the system to visit and observe this approach to autonomy. "It is just another example of how well the model is working at Woodland Hills Academy," said Betty Forrester, a vice president at UTLA.

### A touchstone in tight budgets

The Saint Paul Federation of Teachers in Minnesota has worked hard with the district and community to tackle one of the thorniest issues in education today: preserving seniority rights in a time of tight budgets, while

Many of the community organizations and parents who backed CTU during its walk-out have joined with the union in the battle to oppose the school closings being pushed by the mayor and other city officials.

Jitu Brown is the education organizer for the Kenwood Oakland Community Organi-



Chicago community leader Jitu Brown addresses the rally opposing the closings.

LEE BALGEMANN

tivated parents, students, union members and the community; and we're launching an offensive," Brown says. "It has to be about more than just marching and rallying."

GEM is pivotal to coalescing the often divided Chicago communities around an effort to keep neighborhood schools open

**"The opportunity to win is there. I think Chicago can be an example for the rest of the country."**

—JITU BROWN

Kenwood Oakland Community Organization

zation in Chicago and a leader in the Grassroots Education Movement coalition; CTU is a member of the coalition. He expects a protracted fight and points out that GEM already is backing state legislation that would place a moratorium on the school closings as well as a bill calling for the re-establishment of an elected school board in Chicago. "We've ac-

and increase funding, says Juan Soto, executive director of Gamaliel of Metro Chicago, which is also a coalition member. "GEM has provided us with a forum through which we can have dialogue and collaborate across races and communities."

Reaching out and connecting with churches and faith leaders is critical if

GEM's efforts are to be successful, Soto says. "Many of the families in the schools that are targeted for closing go to churches in those communities, so it's important that we have pastors speaking out for keeping schools open."

Last December, CTU sponsored a summit that drew more than 500 teachers, parents, students, neighborhood activists and policy-makers. "It's about talking and listening and, in some instances, taking the lead from parents and the community," says CTU organizing department coordinator Norine Gutekanst. It's the community, she adds, "that is in the best position to tell us how their schools can meet the needs of students."

In early May, the CTU and its community partners are staging a weeklong march during which participants will stop and meet with parents and others in every Chicago neighborhood where a school is targeted for closing.

In addition to being motivated, Brown is optimistic. "The opportunity to win is there," he asserts. "I think Chicago can be an example for the rest of the country."

—ROGER GLASS

keeping the door open to talented new educators beginning careers in the system.

This year, the AFT local negotiated a memorandum of understanding with the district that allows schools to offer early retirement incentives to experienced educators in an effort to retain outstanding teachers who may not be renewed in a lay-off. If the district wants to keep a newer teacher in a particular area of licensure where layoffs are anticipated, it must offer a more senior colleague a retirement incentive and seven days to consider it. These incentives can be as much as 75 percent of annual salary for all but the highest compensated educators. If that senior teacher declines the offer, a new incentive is made to the next most senior colleague, and continues down the seniority list if necessary.

It's not a perfect fit for every district, says Mary Cathryn Ricker, SPFT president and an AFT vice president, "but it does keep the dialogue where it belongs—on issues of funding rather than some way to get at the mythical bad teacher out there." The local pursues these goals through the contract, which is at the heart of every union activity, in ways that keep confidence in the educa-



Providence, R.I., teacher Rachael Salvatore leads fourth-graders through a book discussion.

CONSTANCE BROWN

tion workforce among parents and the community, which can be undercut when reductions driven exclusively by seniority take a disproportionate toll on specialists in Montessori schools in the public system, for example, or in the language-immersion buildings. Such was the case in 2010, when state aid dropped and the district was committed to lowering class size and boosting the teaching force in science instruction.

"Retirement incentives, in and of themselves, are not revolutionary," Ricker under-

scores. "Targeting those incentives by license area is one interesting way to address layoffs in hard-to-staff or otherwise critical license areas, but the long term goal of our local is to make use of our contract in ways that allow us to constantly support quality in our professional work so if layoffs have to occur we know that all of our teachers have the talent to stay—which highlights the real problem of precarious funding. Layoffs don't have to be inevitable," she says.

—MIKE ROSE

## White House budget gets mixed marks

### AFT urges Congress to strengthen blueprint

THE AFT GAVE mixed marks to President Obama's budget proposal, which boasts necessary investments in America's future but also imposes harsh cuts on groups that can least afford them.

Released in April, the White House budget gives priority treatment to several areas that lay the groundwork for educational opportunity and national prosperity. The budget includes a proposal to provide free public preschool to every 4-year-old. It broadens opportunities to expand high school pro-

grams that use real-world, hands-on activities. The proposal would help public schools rehire classroom teachers. To make college affordable and accessible for more Americans, the budget invests in Pell Grants and increases their maximum value. And it boosts funding for mental health services to give children extra support and to keep communities safe. It also would retroactively eliminate across-the-board cuts triggered earlier this year and in remaining years of the sequester.

Proposals to create jobs by upgrading the nation's infrastructure, as well as adding and rehiring teachers, are featured in the plan. It also preserves funding for community health centers, strengthens primary care and reproductive health services for low-income women, expands training for healthcare workers and boosts funding for healthcare professionals employed in underserved areas.

The president deserves praise for setting these priorities, which AFT president Randi

Weingarten calls "critical investments that will put Americans back to work, rebuild the middle class, and strengthen our communities and public schools."

Unfortunately that spirit does not carry throughout the plan, particularly when it comes to deficit reduction. Although the plan generates revenues by closing tax loopholes and asking the wealthiest Americans to do their part, it also includes imprudent, unjustified cuts aimed at vulnerable families and individuals.

"We have serious concerns about any proposal that jeopardizes the Social Security and Medicare benefits seniors, veterans and disabled Americans rely on to get by," the AFT president warns. "Such cuts are irresponsible and untimely, and put our economic recovery at risk."

The focus now shifts to Congress, which must build on the proposal's strengths and shore up its weaknesses, Weingarten stresses. "Congress should take immediate action on these critical investments in our children, our schools and our nation while rejecting any cuts to Social Security and Medicare."



### GOING GREEN

## A gift for Mother Earth

### Science teacher, kids build solar tricycle for students with disabilities

IT'S HARD TO IMAGINE how many more ways Pat Lockhart could teach her students to be good stewards of the earth, but she'll probably dream up a few. The paraprofessional-turned-teacher has a passion for environmental science, which has led her students at Hubert Humphrey Public School 57 on Staten Island in New York to build a solar-powered tricycle for kids with disabilities.

Here's how they did it. Lockhart started out having her elementary students make models of renewable energy vehicles. Then, inspired by an online college course, the children built a tricycle and entered it in a robotics competition. The resulting trike features detachable solar panels that gather energy to fuel a motor, called a "magic pie," in the front wheel.

The trike's purpose goes beyond mobility. Students use it to haul tools and wood chips as they care for pathways along 17 acres of wetlands and a wildlife area near their school. They use it to help them clear debris from a

pond. And the community has noticed. "In the past, there was illegal dumping," says Lockhart, a chapter leader in the United Federation of Teachers. "Now, nobody touches that pond." Her students also built a greenhouse using recycled soda bottles, PVC and lumber. Through conservation, they reduced the school's energy consumption by 28 percent in 2012.

No wonder, then, that they were awarded second place in the 2013 New York State Green Ribbon Schools program, qualifying them as contenders for awards sponsored by the U.S. Education Department. They also demonstrated their trike at last year's Good Jobs, Green Jobs conference in Philadelphia.

Lockhart's work doesn't end with science knowledge and skills, important as they are. It makes her students pioneers in outdoor



BRUCE GILBERT

education. "The takeaway here is that there are many wonderful models of green learning for children," says AFT health and safety director Darryl Alexander. "We need to get kids outdoors and in touch with their environment."

The school and pond were lucky to have been spared by Superstorm Sandy, which devastated nearby parts of Staten Island last fall. Members of the green team have been helping their neighbors with storm recovery—another lesson in stewardship of the earth.

# Out of the shadows

AFT works to ensure a road map to citizenship for 11 million undocumented immigrants

ON AN UNSEASONABLY hot spring day in Washington, D.C., tens of thousands of immigration rights supporters filled half of the National Mall on the west side of the U.S. Capitol building to join the Rally for Citizenship. The date, April 10, had significance for the immigration reform movement because on that day seven years ago, immigration rights advocates in 70 cities showed their muscle by rising up to successfully oppose anti-immigrant legislation in Congress.

This year, the stakes are even higher because an immigration reform bill was introduced in the U.S. Senate as *American Teacher* went to press.

For the first time in more than 20 years, immigration rights supporters gathered not to oppose a draconian anti-immigrant or anti-labor law but to call for construction of a new path forward. The rally attracted supporters from across the country advocating for a road map to citizenship for millions of aspiring Americans, and the crowd could sense that a victory—"la victoria!"—was within sight.

The goal: to bring 11 million undocumented workers and their families—including 2.5 million DREAMers, the hopeful, young face of the movement—who have been living in the shadows of an underground economy and in fear of arrest and deportation, into the light. This will fix what long has been acknowledged as a broken system that does not reflect the basic American values of freedom, equality and opportunity nor serve the country's labor and economic needs.

AFT members have been working with student and immigration rights groups for more than a decade to pass the Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act. This would give students who came to this country at a young age an opportunity to pursue a college degree or serve in the military to qualify for citizenship.

Four years ago, the AFL-CIO and the AFT worked with community- and faith-based groups to create a broader framework for immigration reform that reflects the shared

values of dignity, fairness, opportunity, voice and justice.

The framework advocates for keeping families together, creating a road map to citizenship and halting the race to the bottom in wages and worker protection standards by employers who are taking advantage of our nation's failures in immigration policy. It calls for a data-driven approach to immigration that would determine future visas based on labor market needs, as well as the improvement—not expansion—of worker visa programs that too often deny basic civil rights to immigrant workers. The framework also recognizes that a new immigration system must include rational operational control of our borders, supplemented by effective work authorization mechanisms that hold employers accountable.

Not only is this a social justice imperative, it's also bound to be good for the economy. A recent Center for American Progress study finds that enacting reform could add \$1.1 trillion to the GDP, as well as create 159,000 new jobs and generate millions in federal, state and local taxes. Today, seven out of 10 Americans agree that undocumented immigrants should be eligible for permanent residency or citizenship.

## Commonsense reform now

This spring, the AFL-CIO launched the Campaign for Citizenship, a national grass-roots lobbying and community awareness initiative, with rallies in 14 cities. AFT president Randi Weingarten led the kickoff in Houston on March 22, at a town hall event and news conference where 70 groups representing community, faith and labor, parents and students turned out en masse.



DAVID SACHS/SEIU

Immigration reform advocates filled the U.S. Capitol grounds on April 10.

Executive vice president Francine Lawrence, right, represented the AFT at the rally.



BILL BURKE/PAGE ONE

"Commonsense, comprehensive and compassionate immigration reform is long overdue," said Weingarten. She laid out the AFT's priorities for an immigration policy that:

- Ensures children who are immigrants or whose parents are immigrants can go to school without fear;
- Provides a clear road map to citizenship for undocumented immigrants now living in the United States;
- Promotes better (and better-paying) jobs for all workers;
- Supports family unification, halting the tragic separation of families; and
- Passes the DREAM Act.

AFT members have seen firsthand the toll an unfair immigration policy takes on their students and families as well as on the communities where they live, work and teach. They've seen DREAMers like 23-year-old Samantha Vázquez, a student at Evergreen Valley College in San Jose, Calif., who is hoping to make education her ticket to U.S. citizenship. AFT members have comforted elementary school children afraid to go to school in Birmingham after Alabama passed House Bill 56, the most nativist, anti-immigration legislation in the country.

*Continued on page 22*



# Newtown teaches Washington what real loss looks like

## Delegation from grief-stricken community urges Congress to act

FIVE TEACHERS from Newtown, Conn., traveled to Capitol Hill earlier this year with dozens of neighbors to share painful personal stories tied to the December massacre of 26 children and adults at Sandy Hook Elementary School—stories they hope will prod Congress to enact commonsense gun safety laws.

The educators, all members of the Newtown Federation of Teachers, were part of what was a cross section of the Newtown community: parents, students, faith leaders, first responders, doctors and other residents. The visit was supported by the AFT and our affiliates, along with several other groups, including the Newtown Action Alliance, an ad hoc citizens group formed following the Dec. 14 killings; the Coalition to Stop Gun Violence; and the Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence.

The Newtown shootings “have ripped the sense of safety and security from the community,” said Valerie LeBlanc, treasurer for the Newtown Federation of Teachers, at a Capitol Hill news conference. “We are here to give educators a voice” in this fundamental public safety issue. “Some good must come from Dec. 14. That must begin here in Washington.”



Flanked by state lawmakers and parents of victims, Newtown teacher Valerie LeBlanc speaks to the Washington press corps.

and poignantly than Neil Heslin, the father of Jesse, a 6-year-old boy who died in a Sandy Hook classroom. “I’m not here for the sympathy,” he said, “I’m here to speak up for my son. ... I’m his voice.”

The Newtown coalition was a driving force behind the push for new gun safety laws in Connecticut, where Gov. Dannel P. Malloy signed what is being called the most far-reaching package of gun safety legislation in the country. The law, which

cleared the Legislature with strong bipartisan majorities, adds more than 100 firearms to the state’s assault weapons ban, creates what officials believe is the nation’s first offender registry for dangerous weapons, and bans the sale and purchase of ammunition magazines holding more than 10 rounds.

Gov. Malloy took the opportunity when he signed the bill to urge policymakers at all levels to follow that example, beginning with Washington, D.C., where “there is no excuse” for Congress to remain deeply divided over commonsense gun safety laws that more than nine out of 10 Americans demand.

Joining LeBlanc at the press event were Newtown teachers Mary Connolly, Jon Hull, Lil Martenson and Carla Tischio. They and other members of the delegation met with members of the House and Senate and their staffs, and they offered compelling testimony at the Senate Judiciary Committee in support of laws that could spare other American communities from the devastation Newtown suffered—tragedies that families and neighborhoods across America continue to endure because weapons designed for the battlefield find their way into the hands of violent and disturbed individuals.

No one made the case more compellingly

assault-style firearms designed for the battlefield but still sold to the public. On April 12, the investment committee gave full approval to divestment in accordance with the fund’s “human health” risk factor, one of 21 guidelines that CalSTRS uses to ensure that their invest-

“As a teacher and a fiduciary, I’m **very proud** of the decision.”

—SHARON HENDRICKS  
Los Angeles City College, Local 1521

ments produce yields in ventures that do not harm the public good. Also moving to divest from gun companies are the New York City teachers’ pension fund and the California Public Employees’ Retirement System, the nation’s biggest public pension fund.

The Newtown killings were “shocking and horrifying” and “hit very close to home” for teachers who sit on the CalSTRS board, says

community college instructor Sharon Hendricks, who is AFT chapter president for the Los Angeles City College and vice chair of the fund’s investment committee.

“We want to make money [and] reflect the values of our members,” adds Hendricks, a speech professor. “As a teacher and a fiduciary, I am very proud of the decision we’ve made to initiate this process.”

The investments on the CalSTRS books were small, Hendricks says, and removing them will have a minimal effect on return. “The hope is that it will embolden other institutions” to follow the lead, she explains, and it is in keeping with the fund’s history of making investments which reflect members’ belief that holdings should promote the public good on health, environmental and social fronts.

“CalSTRS’ action targets ammunition clips that turn ordinary guns into killing machines, assault weapons and other firearms that pose extreme dangers to public health and safety,” says California State Treasurer Bill Lockyer.

## A better return

### Public pensions say no to assault weapons

THE APPETITE to protect Americans from indiscriminate gun violence is finding its way into the largest public pension funds.

Three of the largest funds moved in recent weeks to sell investments in firearms manufacturers, actions taken in the wake of the Newtown, Conn., killings and reflecting what one investment manager for the California State Teachers’ Retirement System (CalSTRS) calls a “tipping point” in the dialogue on gun safety.

In January, the investment committee for CalSTRS, the largest educator-only pension fund in the world, voted to begin divestment in firearms companies that manufacture weapons deemed illegal in the state—an action that targets manufacturers of large capacity, as-

## Mission accomplished

A lifelong dream comes true for retired teacher

GROWING UP in the 1960s, Pat Berlandi was fascinated by weather and space. “I wanted to be a meteorologist for NASA,” says Berlandi, but her career choice was “soundly and roundly discouraged because I was a girl.”

It was different for women then, she says.

So instead of taking up meteorology, Berlandi became a music and geography teacher in the Boston Public Schools, where she taught for 35 years.

Berlandi never forgot her childhood dream, however, and a chance meeting in 2006 opened the door for her to pursue that dream. She was attending her college reunion at Framingham State University when she ran into Mary Liscombe, the director of the Christa McAuliffe Challenger Learning Center at the university. “I told her that I was retiring, and she said I might have a mission for you,” Berlandi recalls. The retired Boston Teachers Union member accepted without hesitation.

The “mission” allows Berlandi to indulge her love of space, science and teaching. She

spends two days a week as a “flight director” leading groups of middle school students on simulated space flights to Mars at the McAuliffe Center. The students are assigned to Mars Control, which is a mockup of NASA’s Mission Control Center, or to a replica of a space station interior.

“I get to dress up in a real blue NASA jumpsuit,” says Berlandi, who acts as a facilitator for the missions. “The students get the feel of going into space, and it gives them a chance to use skills like decision-making, problem-solving, communications and teamwork. Halfway through the exercise, the students trade missions.”

“Seeing the students get so excited about learning and science is a real pleasure,” says Berlandi. And she feels especially encouraged for the girls who take part in the program. “Things are so much different for girls today. No one would ever say to a girl, ‘you can’t do that.’”

Working at the McAuliffe Center has reconnected Berlandi to the world of teaching.



ILENE PERLMAN

“I always loved being with the kids. This is just like another teaching job, and I love it.”

Her work at the space center is made all the more special because Berlandi graduated from Framingham State with Christa McAuliffe in 1970. McAuliffe, who was also a teacher in Concord, N.H., traveled aboard the space shuttle Challenger in 1986 as a part of the Teacher in Space Project. She died along with six other crew members when the shuttle exploded just after takeoff.

The connection makes Berlandi feel as if she’s come full circle. “This is what I’ve always wanted to do, and it allows me to continue to bring Christa’s mission forward.”

**Pat Berlandi, a retired teacher, indulges her love of space and teaching as flight director for the Christa McAuliffe Challenger Learning Center.**

# Inspire Students

## Register online

[nysut.org/elt](http://nysut.org/elt)

**Earn 3 graduate credits**  
**For Only \$645**  
 in classroom  
 \$665 for online.

# Students

The NYSUT Education & Learning Trust offers professional courses created with you in mind. We provide an extensive online inventory, with studies to fit your busy schedule. Learn best practices, current research-based strategies and real-life applications to further your development.



Advance your career. Refresh your mind.



Be a fan.

[nysut.org/elt](http://nysut.org/elt) • 800.528.6208

## Random thoughts

BY DON KUEHN

AS THE ACADEMIC YEAR begins to wind down, I thought I'd offer a few random thoughts that might have an impact on your financial plans. In no particular order, my musings:

- Have you had "The Talk" with your parents? You know, the one where you make yourself available to help handle their finances to be sure all bills are paid and no one takes advantage of them as they age? If you haven't, get it done. Healthcare planning, powers of attorney, budgeting, wills, trusts and what to do with the family home are all fair topics. If you need help, enlist an elder-care attorney.
- Think that once you have a will you're all set? Wrong. There are beneficiary designations on every insurance policy and retirement account you have. And they supersede your will or what's in a trust document. Especially if there have been births or children by earlier marriages, getting it right is crucial. See a lawyer.

For an expanded version of this article, go to: [www.aft.org/publications/your\\_money](http://www.aft.org/publications/your_money).




- As a general rule, none of us saves enough. The savings gap is wide and the consequences are treacherous, particularly for baby boomers. According to a recent survey, the typical boomer is about half a million dollars short of a comfortable retirement.
- You can go conservative without abandoning stock mutual funds all together. There are choices like balanced funds and dividend growth funds that are a bit less risky than aggressive growth choices.
- Ben Franklin was right: A penny saved is a penny earned. Vanguard did a study that compared the three main variables in creating wealth: portfolio risk, savings time horizon and savings rate to see which was the more dependable predictor of long-term growth. The answer was (drum roll, please) saving and letting compounding interest work its magic. By starting 10 years sooner, a hypothetical portfolio grew 51 percent more than one dependent on aggressive asset allocation or increased savings. What was a \$475,000 balance in the model portfolio became a balance of \$720,000 at retirement.

■ Parents and teachers will like the help provided at <http://moneyasyougrow.org>. It is a compilation of 20 age-appropriate financial lessons every kid should learn. It was developed by the President's Advisory Council on Financial Capability. Check it out.

■ There is a new phenomenon called "gray divorce." The number of divorces among people 50 and older doubled between 1990 and 2010, and for most, especially the women who may have been out of the workforce during their peak earnings years, the consequences are economically devastating. The money that was supposed to fund one joint retirement is now split in half. That means staying in the workforce longer to make up the difference.

Don't become overwhelmed if you haven't taken steps to improve your savings and investment patterns. It's *your money*, and there is no time like today—right now—to begin. Start small and expand your knowledge and your nest egg with steady attention to the small stuff. You'll get there.

*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](mailto:dkuehn60@yahoo.com).*




# GRADUATE

with **MORE**

A teaching degree from WGU can give you more—more knowledge, more teaching expertise, and more career advancement.

A nonprofit, online university, WGU was established to meet the needs of busy working adults like you. WGU offers online bachelor's and master's degree programs in education that are accredited, affordable, and respected by employers for their quality. Visit [www.wgu.edu/amteacher](http://www.wgu.edu/amteacher) to learn how you can graduate with more with an NCATE-accredited degree from WGU.



Western Governors University | 877.638.6668

*One hundred years from now, the world may be a better place because you were important in the life of a child*

## Heart of Teaching Crystal Bangle Bracelet



*Sparkling with a genuine  
Swarovski crystal*

*Expertly hand-crafted with  
18K gold-plated accents*

*Elegantly engraved with an  
inspiring message*

Those who choose to teach are not only skilled and dedicated, but mentors who inspire their students to achieve their dreams. Now, our exclusively designed "Heart of Teaching" Crystal Bracelet pays tribute to teachers.

### *Stunning Craftsmanship and a Genuine Swarovski Crystal*

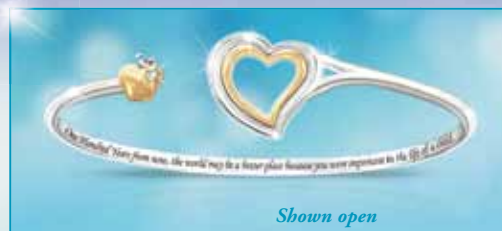
Exquisitely hand-crafted, our bracelet unites fashion appeal with a heartfelt expression of the gift teachers bring to the lives of their students. The design features an open heart and shimmering apple plated in sterling silver with rich 18K gold-plated accents. A genuine Swarovski crystal is set in the apple to capture the radiance of a teacher's heart. The apple and heart also serve as a lovely way to open and close this stylish bracelet that is sized to fit most wrists comfortably. As a final touch, the inside of the bracelet is engraved with an inspiring message: *One Hundred Years from now, the world may be a better place because you were important in the life of a child.*

### *An Exceptional Value... Satisfaction Guaranteed*

With all it has to offer, our bracelet is a remarkable value at just \$89\*. It is payable in 4 installments of just \$22.25 and backed by our 120-day guarantee. It arrives in a velvet jewelry pouch and gift box case that includes a Certificate of Authenticity. Send no money now; just mail the Reservation Application. But don't miss out—order today!

©2012 BGE 01-16000-001-BI

[www.bradfordexchange.com](http://www.bradfordexchange.com)



*Shown open*

A FINE JEWELRY EXCLUSIVE  
ONLY FROM THE BRADFORD EXCHANGE

### LIMITED-TIME OFFER

Reservations will be accepted on a  
**first-come, first-served basis.**  
Respond as soon as possible to  
reserve your bracelet.



**Shown actual size**

\*Plus \$9.98 shipping and service. Please allow 4-6 weeks for delivery of your jewelry after we receive your initial deposit. Sales subject to product availability and order acceptance.

### RESERVATION APPLICATION

**SEND NO MONEY NOW**



9345 Milwaukee Avenue · Niles, IL 60714-1393

**YES.** Please reserve the "Heart of Teaching" Crystal Bangle Bracelet for me as described in this announcement.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Mrs. Mr. Ms. \_\_\_\_\_

Name (Please Print Clearly)

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_

Zip \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail (Optional) \_\_\_\_\_

**01-16000-001-E51251**

## Labor solidarity knows no boundaries

### AFT trains early childhood teachers in Palestine

"WE WILL NOT be marginalized," says Reema Alhaj to a roomful of early childhood educators gathered at the union headquarters in Jenin, Palestine, in mid-March. Alhaj is a teacher and a board member of a new union of ECE teachers affiliated with the Palestine General Federation of Trade Unions (PGFTU). In just 18 months, 400 teachers have formed labor organizations in the villages surrounding the cities of Jenin, Nablus and Ramallah in Palestine's West Bank.

Frustration with low wages has drawn many teachers to organize. A lack of training in early childhood education, called "kindergarten" in Palestine, is another problem. Noting that training vacuum, Abba Masroujeh, director of local programs of the Palestinian office of the Solidarity Center, reached out for help. The Solidarity Center is a nonprofit international support organization launched in 1997 by the AFL-CIO that has partnered



Early childhood educators from Jenin, Palestine, get a good look at the AFT's Worthy Wage Day quilt.

with the AFT to implement development programs for education unions worldwide.

The program began in January when AFT trainers Deanna Woods and Esmie Grubbs traveled to Ramallah to lead 26 teachers through a three-day session of AFT's Strategies for Success program. The objective was that this cadre of teachers would absorb the curriculum in training-the-trainer sessions and pass it on to peers across Palestine.

Public education in Palestine starts in first grade. Early childhood education (for children from age 3 and a half to age 5 and a half) is offered in privately run, fee-based "kindergartens." Employers range from local government councils to charities to female

home-based providers and, more frequently, businesspeople in search of profit. As in the United States, early childhood teachers are woefully underpaid and often have no training.

Strong labor laws in Palestine allow workers one week a year for educational development and union work. Still, enforcement of these laws can be lax. It was risky for some of the teachers to take off time from their centers and travel to the training sessions. That's why the presence of Palestinian Ministry of Education officials at the Jenin training was so significant. A ministry official welcomed the women, and then said, "Our biggest investment must be our children, and we need everyone—teachers, unions—to help."

Bayer Sa'id Bayer, PGFTU president in Jenin, emphasized the union's commitment to Palestinian women. "We must help them become involved in all the activities of our union, and to be an effective part of decision-making."

## Learning is more than test score

**YES** **NO** Do you believe that our growing fixation on high-stakes testing is damaging our public education system?

**YES** **NO** Do you believe that teachers are being forced to spend too much time on test preparation and data collection, at the expense of more engaging instruction?

**YES** **NO** Do you believe learning is more than a test score?

**Join us. Sign the petition.** Help us put teaching and learning ahead of testing so we can give all children the rich, meaningful public education they deserve.

Visit [www.LearningIsMore.org](http://www.LearningIsMore.org).

## Have you got what it takes?



Looking for a way to excite students about STEM? Interested in an innovative approach to educating? Want to offer students more hands-on learning?

Check out **CyberPatriot - The National High School Cyber Defense Competition!**

Learn more at [www.uscyberpatriot.org](http://www.uscyberpatriot.org) or contact us at [info@uscyberpatriot.org](mailto:info@uscyberpatriot.org)

**REGISTRATION FOR CYBERPATRIOT VI IS NOW OPEN!**

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, Educational Leadership, and School Counseling. 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.\*

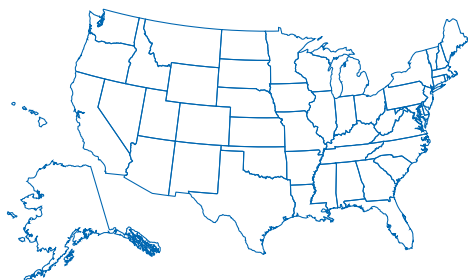
**When you're ready,  
visit [StudyatAPU.com/american-teacher](http://StudyatAPU.com/american-teacher)**



\*APUS Alumni Employer Survey, January 2011-December 2011

We want you to make an informed decision about the university that's right for you. For more information about the graduation rate and median debt of students who completed each program, as well as other important information-visit [www.APUS.edu/disclosure](http://www.APUS.edu/disclosure).





**AL** A bill that passed the state Legislature in February to provide parents with tax credits for private school vouchers was accomplished secretly and is a direct assault on all Alabama public schools, union leaders say.

This legislation was passed “under the cloak of darkness without any public hearings, public input or a copy of the bill available to anyone,” says Vi Parramore, president of the Jefferson County AFT.

The bill “sets up voucher schools as the silver bullet, but not one credible study has shown that students do better at voucher schools,” says Richard Franklin, president of the Birmingham Federation of Teachers.

The fallacy of voucher programs, Parramore says, is that they are basically a system to transfer money, not to improve education. “Parents want schools fixed, not closed. They want great neighborhood public schools that are safe, focus on high-quality instruction and curriculum,

and provide wraparound services to address kids’ unmet needs. You see none of that in the tax credit legislation, and that’s why it won’t move the needle at all.”

Parramore and Franklin say the tax credits would starve public schools and limit the kinds of programs, services and resources that schools, teachers and students need to excel.

**LA** Gov. Bobby Jindal has suffered another setback in his efforts to ram through an agenda of vouchers and anti-teacher reforms. In March, state District Judge R. Michael Caldwell ruled that Jindal’s education package changing teacher tenure and salary laws was unconstitutional because it bundled too many items that should have been separated out.

In November, state District Judge Timothy Kelley ruled the state’s voucher program was unconstitutional. Both decisions were the result of lawsuits filed by the Louisiana Federation of Teachers.

“Judge Caldwell’s decision upholds the rule of law in Louisiana and should be a wake-up call to so-called reformers determined to ram through top-down dictates that undermine the voice of educators and public schools at all costs,” AFT president Randi Weingarten says. “Breaking laws has consequences.”

LFT president Steve Monaghan is urging

state lawmakers to take up the issue of education reform—and do it right this time—during their session beginning in April. “Now it is time for the Legislature and Gov. Jindal to revisit education reform and talk to teachers.”

**MI** Just ahead of a deadline that threatened to eliminate their bargaining rights, three AFT affiliates that represent employees in the Detroit Public Schools have ratified new contract agreements. The Detroit Federation of Teachers, the Detroit Federation of Paraprofessionals and the Detroit Association of Educational Office Employees represent thousands of workers in the 52,000-student district.

The unions were facing a March 28 deadline, when new state right-to-work and Detroit emergency manager laws would take effect. As with other AFT affiliates in the state, the Detroit locals worked overtime to get new contracts in place that maintain union protections at least through 2016.

“When you look at the innovative and effective reforms designed to move our students forward,” says DFT president Keith Johnson, who is also an AFT vice president, “they are usually achieved through collaboration and the collective bargaining process, not through dictating and micro-managing.”

AFT affiliates that represent faculty and staff on college campuses in Michigan also beat the March deadline.

*Continued from page 15*

The AFT represents tens of thousands of highly skilled immigrants who work in our public schools, colleges and universities, and our hospitals, enriching the fabric of our communities and our union. Far too many of our visa-contingent members have faced serious violations of their basic rights, particu-

larly within the H-1B visa program. Three years ago, the AFT brought to light and helped end the abuse—including threats and extortion—of 350 Filipino teachers recruited to work in Louisiana. The AFT helped these teachers win a \$4.5 million settlement against the unscrupulous recruitment agency.

### What’s next?

“This is the time, this is the moment we’ve been waiting for,” says Maria Elena Durazo, executive secretary-treasurer of the Los Angeles County AFL-CIO, who chairs the AFL-CIO’s immigration committee. Last November’s election, she adds, “woke up the whole country to the growth of the Latino and Asian vote,” and created an “enormous energy around passing real immigration reform.”

That energy was on display April

10 in Washington, D.C., at the rally sponsored by the Alliance for Citizenship and 11 organizations, including the AFT. The alliance sponsored parallel events in 20 states.

AFT executive vice president Francine Lawrence represented the AFT on a stage filled with leaders from civil and immigrant rights organizations who were saying, in every way and language possible: The time is now to fix the United States’ broken immigration system. “We’re in the fight with you until we get comprehensive immigration reform,” said Bob King, president of the United Auto Workers.

In the months ahead, there will be more events and opportunities for AFT members to talk with people in their communities and to contact their elected officials about the critical need to pass comprehensive immigration reform. To learn more about the AFT’s support for immigration reform, visit [go.aft.org/immigration](http://go.aft.org/immigration).



BILL BURKE/PAGE ONE



University of Phoenix®  
**College of Education**

---

## ***Every leader needs a lesson plan.***

The University of Phoenix College of Education has master's programs that can help further your career in education.

***Let's get to work.™***

Visit [phoenix.edu/mymaed](http://phoenix.edu/mymaed) to learn more.

While widely available, not all programs are available in all locations or in both online and on-campus formats. Please check with a University Enrollment Advisor.

University of Phoenix is accredited by The Higher Learning Commission and is a member of the North Central Association (ncahlc.org). The University's Central Administration is located at 1625 W. Fountainhead Parkway, Tempe, AZ 85282-2371. Online Campus: 3157 E. Elwood St., Phoenix, AZ 85034.

© 2013 University of Phoenix, Inc. All rights reserved. | EDU-01899

**WORTHY INDEED!** Circle **May 1** on your calendars: It's Worthy Wage Day, a time when the AFT calls attention to the importance of early childhood education and the dedication of this indispensable workforce. Details about the background, events and activities tied to Worthy Wage Day are available at [www.aft.org](http://www.aft.org). Click the "Early Childhood Educators" Section at the top of the home page.

#### NO WIRE REQUIRED

Through **May 3**, educators can win one of two wireless media labs valued at \$40,000 by entering the "Win a Wireless Lab" sweepstakes at Discovery Education online. Two labs are

featured as grand prizes, and educators can also win other tech gear by participating in the site's Pinterest social media tool. Visit [www.discoveryeducation.com](http://www.discoveryeducation.com) for details.



**TOUCHY TOPICS** Available in both English and Spanish, "Helping Your Overweight Child" is a free, downloadable

publication that can help educators talk with parents about a major health problem affecting millions of young people. The brochure includes guidance on exercise, healthy food alternatives and the right ways to support children—including positive role modeling. The publication is produced by the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases. Find it at <http://publications.usa.gov>.

**STUTTERING AWARENESS** May 6-12 is National Stuttering Awareness Week, and the nonprofit group The Stuttering Foundation has a number of online resources to help raise awareness about this sometimes baffling disorder and famous individuals who overcame it, from James Earl Jones to Winston Churchill. Visit [www.stutteringhelp.org](http://www.stutteringhelp.org) for brochures, videos, e-books and other materials, available in many languages.

**GLOBAL STUDIES** Educators have the option to earn graduate school credit and professional development credit while seeing the world through the nonprofit Global Exploration for Educators Organization program. The trips are eight to 24 days in length and are designed and discounted to be interesting and affordable for teachers. The trips are open to K-12 and

university educators, and participants are permitted to bring along a non-educator guest. Detailed information is available at [www.geeo.org](http://www.geeo.org).



**SAFE AT HOME** The nonprofit group Students Against Destructive Decisions (SADD) offers resources to help students stay safe during prom and graduation. Visit [www.sadd.org](http://www.sadd.org), click on the events calendar for May/June, and you'll find a number of materials that range from a full campaign tool kit to help for parents looking to make prom night fun and safe for their children.

**NEW DIGITAL TOOLS** PBS LearningMedia is a free digital portal for preK-12 teachers that offers teachers access to more than 20,000 videos, images and articles to enrich classroom instruction. Many of the materials are drawn from acclaimed PBS programs as well as such partners as the National Archives and NASA. More information is available online at PBS LearningMedia, a partnership of PBS and WGBH Educational Foundation. Visit [www.pbslearningmedia.org](http://www.pbslearningmedia.org).

## Making labor come alive in class

**MAY IS LABOR HISTORY** month, a chance for schools and communities around the nation to honor working America and its indispensable role in securing prosperity for millions. Teachers looking to bring this event to life in their classrooms have good online options, thanks to the Labor Studies Center and the AFT's Share My Lesson resource bank.

Visit the Labor Studies Center ([www.labor-studies.org](http://www.labor-studies.org)) for a rich collection of materials, organized by discipline, grade level and topic. The site includes links to primary sources, labor photos and songs, literature, film and other cultural resources. Also featured are materials and guidance for including this important topic in classrooms having only limited time to devote to it (pretty much every classroom, these days).

And, when it comes to labor studies, don't forget to visit the AFT's free Share My Lesson resource bank at [www.sharemylesson.com](http://www.sharemylesson.com). Labor-related lessons and materials are growing quickly, including units on U.S. farmworkers, child labor, and a union election simulation for students.



LEWIS WICKES HINE



# 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

1-800-774-9161

Purchase or renew **The Economist**, now at a low discounted rate of \$77.00 for 50 issues. That's **12 full months** for just \$1.54 an issue!



**Great Rate!**  
A Great Title at A Great Price!

Popular Photography	24.00	11.97
Popular Science	19.95	12.00
Prevention	21.97	16.94*
Reader's Digest	24.98	13.96
large print edition	29.96	21.95
Real Simple	28.95	24.00*
Redbook	17.97	12.00
Rolling Stone	1 yr 25.94	19.95
	2 yrs 39.90	29.90

Time	59.95	29.95*
Time Out - New York	39.94	19.97
Town & Country	28.00	15.00

Discounted Magazines **WWW.BUYMAGS.COM/AFT**

Road & Track	22.00	12.00
Runner's World	24.00	20.00*
Saveur	29.95	19.95
Travel & Leisure	45.00	19.00
TV Guide	58.14	39.00
Us Weekly	69.96	59.97

All You	21.24	19.95
Allure	16.00	12.00*
American Photo	21.00	10.50
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	14.97
	2 yrs 44.00	22.00
Bloomberg Businessweek	59.97	40.00
Bon Appetit	28.00	20.00*
Car & Driver	22.00	12.00
Cat Fancy	24.00	13.00
Clean Eating	25.97	24.97
Conde 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
Cooking Light	20.00	20.00
Cosmopolitan	29.97	18.00*
Country Living	24.00	12.00
Details	15.00	7.97
Discover	29.95	19.95
Disney Fairies (ages 6-9)	39.92	29.92
Disney Junior (ages 3-5)	39.92	29.92
Disney Princess (ages 3-6)	39.92	29.92
Dog Fancy	24.00	13.00

**The New Yorker**

NOW 47 iss  
for just \$49.99

Two yrs still  
an unbeatable  
\$99.98



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
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
Latina	17.97	9.97
Lucky	20.00	12.00
Macworld	35.00	19.97
Mad Magazine	24.00	19.99
Marie Claire	19.97	12.00
Martha Stewart Living	28.00	24.00
Men's Fitness	21.97	21.97
Men's Health	24.94	24.94*
Men's Journal	1 yr 19.97	11.88
	2 yrs 39.94	19.00
mental floss	22.00	22.00
Money	39.89	19.95*
More Magazine	18.00	14.97
Mother Earth News	19.95	14.95
Mother Jones	24.00	15.00
Motor Trend	18.00	10.00
The Nation [47 iss]	52.00	26.00
National Geographic	39.00	39.00
National Geographic Traveler	17.95	17.95
Natural Health	31.00	28.00
New York	1 yr 24.97	19.97
	2 yrs 55.02	37.97
The New Yorker	1 yr 69.95	49.99
	2 yrs 139.90	99.98
O Oprah	28.00	24.00
OK!	77.52	59.95

## AFTedsupply.com

From bulletin board sets, charts and posters to classroom decorations and furnishings, we make it easy and affordable to create the ideal learning environment!

GO ONLINE NOW  
for all of your  
CLASSROOM SUPPLIES  
WWW.AFTEDSUPPLY.COM

1-800-990-2312

Special Limited Time Offer

## \$5.00 OFF!

Plus FREE shipping on any order of \$75 or more

**AFTedsupply.com**

Just enter promo code  
**AT6SALE** at checkout!

exp. 9/1/13

Call to place an Order: Mon.-Thur. 9am-6pm & Fri. til 5 pm ET. **1-800-774-9161**

Ebony	20.00	11.97
The Economist	127.00	77.00*
Elle	28.00	14.00
Elle Decor	29.00	15.00
Entertainment Weekly	39.95	34.95*
Entrepreneur	19.97	11.97
ESPN	26.00	13.00
Esquire	15.94	8.00
Essence	22.00	18.96
Family Circle	19.98	15.00
Family Fun	16.95	9.97
Family Handyman	24.00	15.00
Field & Stream	19.97	10.00
Fitness	19.98	12.00
Food Network	30.00	24.00
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*

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
People 26 issues	56.94	56.94
Poder Hispanic	24.00	12.95
Popular Mechanics	24.00	24.00

Seventeen	19.95	12.00
Shape	24.00	14.97
Smithsonian	34.00	12.00
Smithsonian Air & Space	28.00	26.00
Southern Living	36.00	24.00
Sports Illustrated	89.04	39.95*
Teen Vogue	15.00	10.00
Tennis	18.00	12.00

Vegetarian Times	19.95	11.95
Vogue	29.95	17.97
W Magazine	29.90	14.95
The Week	59.50	59.50
Weight Watchers	17.70	14.95
Wired	24.00	12.00
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

**Hundreds of Other Titles!**  
**WWW.BUYMAGS.COM/AFT**

\*Rate for members and college students



AFT SUBSCRIPTION SERVICES, Box 258, Greenvale, NY 11548

Publication Name	Years	Price
Name _____		
Address _____		
City, State, Zip _____		
E-mail _____		
Your School _____		
Home Phone (____) _____		

☐ Please bill me  
☐ Check enclosed payable to: AFTSS  
Charge my ☐ Visa ☐ MC ☐ Disc ☐ Amex

Total

Exp.

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

A3305

FREE gift announcement! - CALL or send a separate note.



**There are 210,000 teachers supporting my classroom.**

**Share My Lesson** provides me with free classroom resources, curriculum insights from my peers, and teacher-created materials that really work.

Whether I'm preparing this week's lessons, looking for bulletin board ideas, or updating a file for a substitute teacher, **Share My Lesson** has over 260,000 resources to choose from.

To date, my colleagues and I have downloaded over 2 million files; most of them are aligned to the Common Core State Standards and every one of them supports student success.

**Sign up for  
Share My Lesson.  
And add a few hundred  
thousand minds to your  
classroom teaching.**

**[www.sharemylesson.com](http://www.sharemylesson.com)**

