

## Cyberbullying: Bullying in the 21st Century

### Experts at AFSA's Conference Provide Research and Solutions to the Problem

Bullying is not new to schools. The difference between bullying now and how it was just a few years ago can be attributed to the increase of accessibility to the Internet and the affordability of new technology.

With the advent and subsequent boom of social media sites and electronic communications, bullies now have multiple ways to harass their victims. As Namita S. Brown, a partner at Fagen Friedman & Fulfroast law firm in Oakland who spoke at AFSA's West Coast Regional Leadership Conference in October, said, "The walls of the school house have been extended."

An *Education Week* article recently defined cyberbullying as, "the use of digital media tools, such as the Internet and cell phones, to deliberately and repeatedly hurt, harass or embarrass someone else." Although cyberbullying takes place in the digital and online world, there still exists some form of public humiliation. Venues for cyberbullying can include phones (calling people, texting and sharing photos), email accounts, instant messaging and social networking sites.

According to a 2010 study by the Cyberbullying Research Center in Wisconsin, 83 percent of teens use a cell phone, 77 percent send text messages, 50 percent use Facebook, 46 percent use email and 40 percent take pictures with their cell phone. And if



Image courtesy of Common Sense Media.

this weren't enough, a 2010 study by the Kaiser Family Foundation found the average American child spends 53 hours a week on media technology. What this indicates is that students, including bullies, utilize technology often, only exacerbating the problem of cyberbullying.

Cyberbullying can be difficult for parents and school leaders to identify because the victims aren't telling anyone about it and the bullying does not take place in plain sight. The victims, usually grade school or high school students, don't show obvious warning signs that parents and educators can pick up on. Several examples of cyberbullying include:

- Taking humiliating pictures of another student and then sharing the pictures with others;
- Verbally abusing another student through texting;

### AFSA Hosts Leadership Conference in San Francisco

School leaders from across the United States convened in San Francisco for AFSA's West Coast Regional Leadership Conference. AFSA members and guests attended a variety of workshops, including presentations on contract negotiation, cyberbullying, leadership building and membership outreach.

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### Healthy School Lunches, Healthy Students?

The battle against childhood obesity made strides last year as some of the nation's schools adopted healthy vending machines. But, the decrease in physical education programs and the lack of funding threatens to hinder any progress made.

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### Unions Win Victories in Ohio and Michigan

Senate Bill 5 threatened workers' rights to organize and the livelihoods of police officers, firefighters and teachers throughout the state of Ohio. The labor movement pushed back, and through a massive display of solidarity, Ohio voters came out in full force to repeal the bill.

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### The 2012 AFSA scholarship application is now available!

Five high school seniors will receive a \$2,500 college scholarship based on academic achievement, personal growth and community involvement. The application is due Feb. 29, 2012. For more information and to apply, visit [www.AFSAadmin.org](http://www.AFSAadmin.org).

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# Under One Umbrella

Our union's third regional leadership conference of the year, held in San Francisco, proved highly successful for a number of reasons, not least of all that we were joined by administrator organizations from Los Angeles and Milwaukee that are not currently AFSA Locals.

We were grateful for their joining us to grow professionally side by side with our membership from the training programs and presentations that highlighted the conference.

The conference featured a wide range of workshops, from hands-on training in negotiating and enforcing a contract to presentations on cyberbullying, as well as problem solving and leadership through teamwork.

In the course of the conference all those who participated gained a growing awareness that, no matter what school district we work in and no matter whether participants were members or not, we are all walking through a hailstorm of criticism these days under one umbrella.

We all share a deep belief in helping every child reach his or her full potential and we all face similar challenges in achieving that goal.

We all face adversaries who all too often seek profit from education at the expense of the children most in need of our leadership.

Despite these stormy circumstances, AFSA is emerging as a stronger advocate for school leaders having a voice in decisions about the need for school improvement.

Our new School Leaders United program engages our members, as well as allies who may choose to join our efforts, in making our voices heard when Congress is faced with critical decisions affecting our profession and the children.

And while we are rightfully outraged for being treated unfairly, as we have been increasingly in recent years, we take comfort in the fact that this adversity has gathered us under one umbrella, building a growing capacity to challenge the injustices being showered upon us.

One of those injustices is the indifference to the role of school leaders in turnarounds and the trend among policy makers to judge principal performance on unfounded standards and ill-informed evaluations.

AFSA is taking action to challenge these injustices by investing in world-class research on the role of school leaders. We have engaged the internationally renowned American Institutes of Research (AIR) to review the available academic studies on the subject.

AIR offered conferees in San Francisco a presentation on its initial findings, which are strikingly at odds with current views being voiced by policy makers who have ignored the significant role of principals and administrators and have judged our performance without credible standards for evaluating the magnitude of our roles as school leaders.

While the so-called business model reformers are urging that principals be fired for "failing" to turn around a school in one year, AIR's preliminary findings reveal it takes three to five years for a principal's strategies to yield demonstrable change in student achievement.

The AIR study also reveals that principal quality has an impact well beyond the 25 percent of the total school-level student achievement that education scholars have documented. The multiple managerial roles school leaders perform radiate beyond measurable student achievement and have a clear impact on overall school performance, such as teacher quality, that cannot be measured with data alone.



AFSA President Diann Woodard

While this is hardly news to those of us in the field, the significance of the AIR research being commissioned by AFSA is that it will provide our members with credible evidence for challenging supervisors and school boards that judge our work unfairly. These tools will prove invaluable in negotiations where they exist, but will prove equally valuable in challenging districts where attempts are made in the absence of a contract to evaluate school leaders' performance unjustly on the basis of misinformed "standards" that often are designed for teachers and randomly applied to administrators.

We look forward to final publication of the AIR report and will be sharing its findings with our members to equip each of you with the tools necessary for defending yourselves against unjust evaluations, and ultimately for establishing standards for evaluations that reflect the full scope and significance of the vital work that we do.

And we will be investing in further research that seeks to define appropriate measures of school leaders' performance that can be used in challenging the ill-founded presumptions of policy makers at the state and federal level.

AFSA is making these investments in research to empower our members with the resources necessary for raising the voices of school leaders in the debate over school reform.

In Solidarity,

*Diann Woodard*

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# Art, Music Classes Fall Victim to Budget Cuts

## Principal Says Schools Must Find Unique Ways to Keep Art and Music Classes

Children of all ages, races and social statuses across the nation find inspiration and stimulation in the art and music programs their public schools offer. Despite the influence these powerful programs can have on students' lives, they have been at the top of the chopping block when schools are looking to make budget cuts; some schools even have lost their art programs altogether.

"Art, music or dance is the reason some students come to school every morning," said Robert Daniels, supervisor for the Visual and Performing Arts Department of San Francisco Unified School District, United Administrators of San Francisco, AFSA Local 3.

Education should go beyond teaching STEM and Common Core Standards. It is well documented that going to school teaches students valuable social lessons and lessons about responsibility that resonate with them throughout their lives. When students have no interest in learning, they cannot absorb these critical lessons. Daniels said students who may not take a particular interest in a core academic subject have the opportunity to learn useful lessons in their art classes.

Daniels sees art and music programs as being similar to physical education classes, since they are implemented with the goal of providing students with alternative ways to learn. As the arts supervisor, Daniels has seen how art classes of all types can have a monumental impact on students' lives.

"Art allows them to find joy in learning," Daniels said. "With access to arts, you have various avenues to make kids want to learn and to learn better."

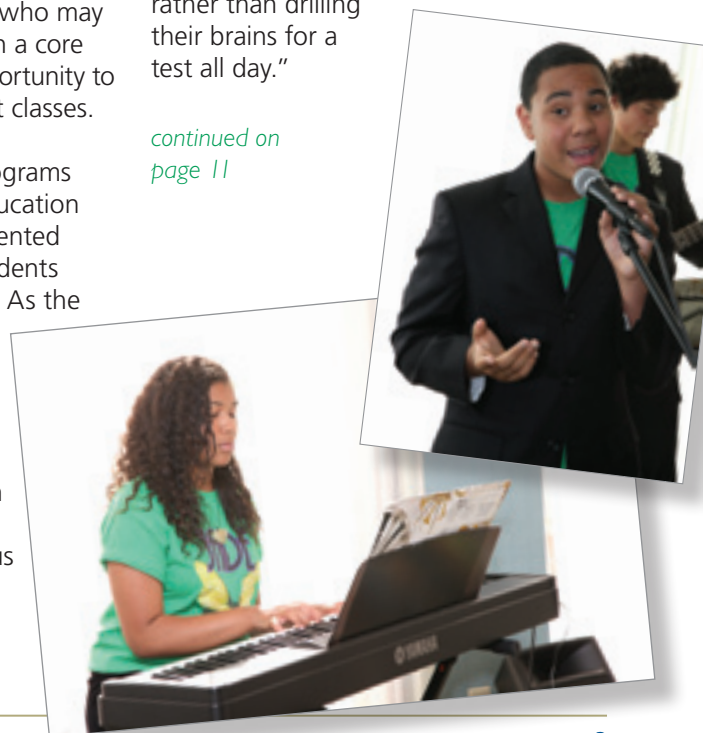
**"Voters need to become aware that if their representatives don't start to make decisions about the way school is funded, there will soon be nothing available to students other than the core subjects."**

—Robert Daniels, Supervisor,  
Visual and Performing Arts  
Department of San Francisco USD

All students learn differently, and every student has different strengths and interests. By eradicating art and music programs, districts are putting a roadblock in the way of the students whose passions and strengths are manifested through these outlets.

"Students look forward to arts or sports classes because there, the brain is learning, socializing and creating," Daniels says. "They are using their brain in the way it is supposed to be used, rather than drilling their brains for a test all day."

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# AFSA Conference Energizes School Leaders

## Contract Maintenance and Cyberbullying Workshops Give Members Insight on Latest Education and Labor Issues

AFSA members and guests convened in San Francisco in October for the third and final AFSA Leadership Conference in the series: "Leaders in the Mirror: Embracing the Implementation of Reform."

Similar to the first two leadership conferences in Mashantucket and New Orleans, the West Coast Regional Leadership Conference had a variety of speakers and workshops designed to engage and inform school leaders on issues they face both as educators and union members.

Attendees heard from experienced contract negotiators and attorneys on how to form, uphold and maintain a contract. Salvatore Sedita, the grievance director at the Buffalo Council of Supervisors and Administrators (BCSA), AFSA Local 10, told attendees that a union could have the best collective bargaining agreement in the world, but if it's not enforced, it's worthless.

"If you had to say what two things are the most important things to do as a union, they are defining the relationship with the employer, called negotiations, and enforcing that collective

bargaining agreement, called grievance," said Sedita.

Play-Well TEKnologies, a company whose unique teaching techniques engage both students and adults in leadership building and management exercises, passed out LEGO®s to help demonstrate the building blocks of teamwork. Attendees enjoyed building bridges with LEGO®s while learning leadership concepts they could bring back to the classroom and work environment.

Conference attendees also heard from Dr. Matthew Clifford about the latest research on principal effectiveness. Clifford, a senior research scientist at the American Institutes for Research (AIR), is co-authoring a report on principal effectiveness that AFSA commissioned AIR to produce. More information about the report can be found at [www.AFSAadmin.org](http://www.AFSAadmin.org).

With intermittent performances by Oakland student musicians and San Francisco student dancers, the conference wrapped up with a presentation on social media and cyberbullying. Attendees received an introduction to

social media from Molly Fuhs, a social media and communications consultant at Tricom Associates, and heard the latest research and tips on how to handle cyberbullying from Rebecca Randall, vice president of education programs at Common Sense Media, and Namita S. Brown, a partner at Fagen Friedman & Fulfroost law firm.

In addition to the workshops, conference attendees heard addresses from California elected and labor officials, including Fiona Ma, the speaker pro tempore for the California State Assembly, Tim Paulson, the executive director of the San Francisco Labor Council, and a video address from U.S. Rep. Jackie Speier. Art Pulaski, the executive secretary-treasurer of the California Labor Federation, addressed attendees during the PAC luncheon.

AFSA's 13th Triennial Constitutional Convention is being held in San Juan, Puerto Rico, July 26–28, 2012. Check the website and your mailbox for more information on the convention. ■

*For more photos, see "More Highlights from the Conference" on Page 11.*



*Fiona Ma, Speaker Pro Tempore for the California State Assembly, spoke at AFSA's conference and presented AFSA with a certificate of recognition for their work in education.*



*Play-Well TEKnologies engaged attendees in hands-on leadership building.*

# The Growing Pains of a Healthy Future

## Schools Work to Fix Programs in the Battle Against Child Obesity

"Good food is essential to good learning." This was a statement made by former President Lyndon B. Johnson during the signing of The Child Nutrition Act (CNA) in 1966. The CNA, which is still in effect today, is a federally funded program helping to provide students nationwide with healthy meals.

In recent years, "healthy" has not often been a word used to describe our nation's youth. Many schools are cutting physical education classes, and high prices on nutritious school lunches are pushing students to buy cheap junk food. The education system cannot be held fully accountable for the obesity of our youth, but many of these issues fall under its control.

In 2010, President Obama signed the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act, which brought fresher produce and other healthy options to cafeterias around the United States. Like in the grocery store, nutritional foods come at a higher price, leaving parents to dig a little deeper into their pockets.

With the current economy, families are running into issues, especially those who use food stamps. A point often overlooked regarding the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act is that half of the \$4.5 billion bill was financed from cuts in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), which, as AFSA President Diann Woodard said, "is like robbing Peter to pay Paul."

Families that reach certain qualifications are eligible for free meals or reduced-price meals, lessening the impact of the increase. The ones truly affected by the rise in prices are those who lie right above the cutoff line. Their family income may be only slightly more than someone who receives reduced-price

meals, and yet they are asked to pay full price. It is a tough pill to swallow for any family, let alone those affected by the struggling economy.

While money will always be a lingering problem, so is the type of food provided. Healthier items are not a popular choice for most kids, but that hasn't stopped schools across the nation from going to war with junk food in the battle against child obesity.

**Healthy habits that are typically formed during gym and health classes now are being replaced by the technology boom, in which kids are searching for the newest video game instead of a new baseball glove.**

No longer are all vending machines full of potato chips and sugary snacks; some now contain yogurt, fruits and vegetables. A recent study in New York shows these machines may not be getting as much activity as the ones that contain junk food items. Parents and nutrition experts aren't surprised, since it is still early in the process. Their theory is that if healthy food is put in front of kids, they will be more likely to eat it over time.

Schools in Philadelphia and Florence, Ariz., prove this theory to be true. Philadelphia will be adding 16 healthy vending machines to its schools, while Florence high schools have shown great progress with the few healthy vending machines they added in 2010.

Companies also have given some vending machines a technological twist. New machines contain a digital LCD screen that streams video messages to students, giving them the nutritional facts of the item and encouraging them to make the

healthier purchase. In some areas, the granola bar has become a more prevalent item than the candy bar, an accomplishment for which schools take credit.

Our nation's schools have neglected physical education, and the rising obesity rate shows that. In a 2010 article, the Institute of Medicine discussed that 17 percent of high school students are meeting the goal of 60 minutes of exercise a day. Why has this happened? Some schools dropped their programs due to budget cuts. Others substituted it for classes focusing on standardized test preparation. The result has been a generation of unhealthy students as the obesity rates have almost tripled in the last 30 years.

In 2007, only 6 percent of our nation's schools had mandatory physical education programs. Healthy habits that typically formed during gym and health classes now are being replaced by the technology boom, in which kids are



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# Outreach Program Provides Benefits, Assistance for Retirees

## Retirees in New York are Encouraged to Lobby

Contrary to popular belief, not all retired union members bumble around their Florida homes in their fuzzy slippers reading the Sunday comics.

"Many of our retirees are concerned about what's going on in our public schools even though they aren't there," said Ernest Logan, president of New York's Council of School Supervisors and Administrators (CSA), AFSA Local 1. "It's because they built them!"

CSA's retiree chapter, CSARC, is an active group of administrators and supervisors who have been kept in the loop in part because of the outreach program that was established for the chapter.

"You've got to know where your folks are; number one. And you've got to know where they retire. It's really about getting them involved," said Logan.

Felice Hannah, the central outreach coordinator for CSARC, said their program has been very successful since its inception.

"I'm hopeful that the program we built in NYC will be established all over the United States," said Hannah at AFSA's West Coast Regional Leadership Conference in San Francisco. "All kinds of changes are coming out in terms of our needs for services, and I hope programs like the one we have established will be adopted everywhere."

Among other services, Hannah provides ongoing training for regional outreach coordinators in Medicare, members' benefits and Social Security. She also

provides one-on-one confidential counseling to members and holds informational workshops during the year on varied topics, including paratransit services, hospital discharge assessments, care-givers'/respite services and home care services.

"Just because I may not be in the office when someone calls doesn't mean I'm not working," Hannah said. "When someone calls, I know they need help immediately, and I return phone calls within 24 hours after receiving them. People need help right then and there, and that's what we do."

Another person who has firsthand experience engaging retired administrators is Dee-Dee Goidel. When CSA established the Retiree Chapter, she was elected first vice president and expanded the number of regional units around the country, bringing scores of retirees into active participation as political advocates for the union. Presently, she serves as the Retiree Chapter's legislative liaison and focuses on protecting retirees' health benefits and advocating for laws that help retirees. She also serves as a retiree representative to the NYS Federation of School Administrators.

"Retirees have a powerful voice," Goidel said during AFSA's conference. "They have the experience, they can represent the union and they have the



Dee-Dee Goidel provides Pat Aramendia, executive director of the United Administrators of San Francisco, AFSA local 3, retiree-outreach information.

time to go out and lobby while others are working."

Goidel said that being a part of a union means not just worrying about yourself. You worry about those who came before you and you worry about those coming after you, she said.

Goidel also said retirees are some of the best lobbyists for the union, since they have been involved for a long time and understand the union and its members. They also are more likely to not be working during the day, giving them an opportunity that active members don't have.

"When it comes to lobbying techniques from retirees, you don't want to crowd someone's office," Goidel said. "And when you walk in there, you want to look like you're still working—dress the part."

Goidel said AFSA has ways for members and retirees to stay involved in education and union issues, including signing up for AFSA Action Alerts by clicking on the "Take Action" icon on AFSA's webpage ([www.AFSAadmin.org](http://www.AFSAadmin.org)).

"I got involved because we had a union leader who didn't care," said Goidel. "My husband said to me, 'When did you become Norma Rae?' " ■

*"Retirees have a powerful voice. They have the experience, they can represent the union and they have the time to go out and lobby while others are working."*

— Dee-Dee Goidel

# Educators Handed the Role of Parent and Instructor

## Principals Say for Some, Educators May Be the Only Stable Person in Student's Life

School has always been a place of learning. It is where educators take young minds and mold them, preparing them for future careers and success. But for some students, school is more than just a place to learn. It is a place of refuge and comfort—a home away from home.

Life outside of school influences students greatly. The Michigan Department of Education conducted a study in 2001 that showed the more a student's parents are involved, the better the motivation and self-esteem the student has. The home life acts as an anchor, somewhere they can call their own. It stabilizes the student if things are rough at school, socially or academically. It gives them a feeling of safety and confidence, but what happens when that safety net ceases to exist?

Too many students leave school to go home to less than optimal family lives. Some have parents going through a divorce. Others only see their parents once a week during prison visits. Some students just have a single parent who may not have time to invest in their child's life. Then there are those students who don't have parents at all. These kids may live in foster care with their grandparents, alone with their siblings or wander the streets at night homeless.

"They're walking around in pain and they are traumatized," said Richard Curci, the principal at Everett Middle School in San Francisco and member of the United Administrators of San Francisco, AFSA Local 3. "The child becomes a foster child if the parent is incarcerated and their surroundings are not their own."

Without proper guidance and love at home, students can suffer socially and academically. The effect that home life has on a student's education has been well documented, and studies suggest that teachers and principals only account for 25 percent to 35 percent of a student's educational experience.

**With so many students dealing with high stress levels and difficult home lives, how can the nation's education system invest so much into standardized tests knowing the tests merely scrape the surface of everything that plays into a child's education?**

"If the student is missing a lot of school, they can be detached from their friends and classmates," said Philip Piazza, principal of North Haven Middle School in North Haven, Conn., and member of North Haven Administrators Association, AFSA Local 122. "The stress level of some of these kids just blows me away."

With so many students dealing with high stress levels and difficult home lives, how can the nation's education system invest so much into standardized tests knowing the tests merely scrape the surface of everything that plays into a child's education? Unlike the business-model reformers, school administrators and educators realize a child's level of achievement is not always the product of the student's level of knowledge, the educator's teaching ability or the school's amount of resources.

Piazza and Curci agree the best way to handle a student's home life issues is to create a place of safety and stability for these students. At Everett Middle School, this includes a fully staffed Wellness Center, which monitors the students' progress and everyday activities.

"The staff asks questions like, 'Have you eaten today?' or, 'Did you do your homework last night?'" Curci said. "This gives them a little more sense of security."

Piazza explained this task falls on the shoulders of the entire staff at North Haven Middle School, from himself to the teachers to the school psychologist and counselors.

"We create a good environment here, but it is also on us to reach out to the parents and stress the importance of their role in their children's lives," he said.

Extracurricular activities like academic clubs and sports teams also serve as an opportunity for students to feel united with a group and make friends. It allows them to burn some energy and to interact with instructors and tutors.

"To have success in sports or even an academic club is somewhere they can feel like they belong," Piazza said.

"They look forward to it," Curci said. "It is like a pseudo-family for them."

Without good role models at home, school employees are quickly taking on these responsibilities. Curci and Piazza explained they see this very often, especially with those students in the most difficult circumstances.

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# New Report on Principal Effectiveness in the Works

## AFSA Commissioned Study to Address Dearth of Research on School Leaders' Roles

In August, AFSA commissioned the American Institutes for Research (AIR), an internationally renowned firm specializing in social science and behavioral research, to conduct a study on principal effectiveness. Specifically, the report will focus on the best methods of principal evaluation, the shared qualities that effective principals demonstrate and the need for principals to have a say in reform.

A brief of the report, titled "Effective Principals, Effective Schools: A Synthesis of Research Evidence," was presented at AFSA's West Coast Regional Leadership Conference in San Francisco. A complete report will be published shortly.

One of the more important findings in the report is that it takes three to five years for a principal's strategies to yield demonstrable change in student achievement. The finding makes clear that a school cannot be turned around overnight, as is commonly demanded by business-model advocates of reform. The AIR briefing also revealed that principal quality is the second most important school-level factor influencing student achievement, after teacher quality. Indeed, the report made clear that principals account for 25 percent of the total school-level impact on student achievement.

"Policy is out in front of the research in regard to principal evaluations," said Dr. Matthew Clifford, a senior research scientist at AIR and co-author of the report who presented its initial findings to attendees of the San Francisco conference.

AIR's preliminary findings aren't new to academic researchers, but have been largely ignored by politicians, policy makers and business-model neophytes calling for rapid school turnarounds. In this atmosphere of ill-informed demands, principals in many cases are being fired if they fail to turn a school around in just one year, raising serious concerns about gross injustice in the current evaluation process.

In contrast, Clifford said AIR's research showed that, "We need to take a developmental approach when dealing with principals, as we do with teachers."

AFSA will announce to members when the report is finalized and the key findings that come of AIR's research. AIR is a nonpartisan, not-for-profit organization that conducts behavioral and social science research. More information about AIR's research can be found at [www.air.org](http://www.air.org). ■



Dr. Matthew Clifford, Senior Research Scientist at the American Institutes for Research (AIR), presents the initial findings of the research report AFSA commissioned AIR to conduct on principal effectiveness.

*One of the more important findings in the report is that it takes three to five years for a principal's strategies to yield demonstrable change in student achievement. The finding makes clear that a school cannot be turned around overnight, as is commonly demanded by business-model advocates of reform.*



# A Victory for Public Workers in Ohio and Michigan

## Voters Show Support for Workers' Rights

Tuesday, Nov. 8, was a momentous night for the labor movement. Legislative victories in Ohio and Michigan showed that voters care about workers' rights and the need for jobs, and the elections confirmed that Americans still have a say in their governments.

In a special election in Ohio, voters repealed Senate Bill 5, which would have rewritten Ohio's 1983 collective bargaining law and removed many of the rights of public service workers, including those of firefighters, police officers and teachers. Republican Gov. John Kasich championed the bill as a way for the state to cut costs, but clearly voters did not approve.

SB 5 would have reduced the collective bargaining power of roughly 350,000 public workers, who no longer would have the right to negotiate changes to previous contracts or health care benefits. Under the measure, promotion rules and employee qualifications only could have been bargained with management's approval, and public worker strikes would have been banned.

Labor unions came out in force to support their members during the Ohio vote. The International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF) launched a full-scale bus tour and political advertising campaign across the state, while We Are Ohio raised an estimated \$30 million in donations, many coming from Ohio public workers.

**"...those who spend their time scapegoating workers and pushing a partisan agenda will only strengthen the resolve of working people."**

—Richard Trumka, AFL-CIO President

"One message rang loud and clear tonight in Ohio and across the country: those who spend their time scapegoating workers and pushing a partisan agenda will only strengthen the resolve of working people," said AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka in a statement released the night of the vote. "From the very beginning, it's been clear that

Gov. Kasich, and indeed many politicians, were pushing an agenda that was about politics, not about solving our nation's problems or creating jobs."

Some see the victory as an early predictor of voter sentiment for the 2012 elections. More importantly, the vote ensures that public workers across Ohio remain able to have a say in their jobs.

"Ohio proves that we can win when we unify and fight back," said AFSA President Diann Woodard. "We must continue to push back when these Draconian laws are introduced in state legislatures across the country."

In Michigan, voters recalled State Rep. Paul Scott (R-Grand Blanc), the chairman of the House Education Committee, whose policies such as backing state school aid cuts, weakening teacher tenure and taxing pension incomes did not sit well with voters. The campaign to successfully recall Rep. Scott was led by the Michigan Education Association, and it is the first time a state representative has been recalled in 28 years. A special election will be held on Feb. 28 to fill the vacant seat. ■

## Are Digital Devices the Future of Education?

### New Technology Provides Benefits Along with Inequalities

As technology becomes more popular and affordable, states and schools districts have the choice to adopt the use of technology in the classroom to enhance traditional education.

The demand for online textbooks and interactive classroom components is high among students and parents, according to a survey conducted in the

fall of 2010 by Project Tomorrow. The survey, called Speak Up, examines the ways technology has been mixed into traditional education and the opinions that students, parents and educators hold about it. A key finding of the survey describes parents' heightened support for the infusion of technology in education as their desire to be involved in their children's education increases.

Results of the survey reveal that parents and students alike support the integration of online resources in the classroom. One-third of high school students report they regularly use an online textbook, and two-thirds of parents think the use of online textbooks would be a helpful investment and

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would purchase a mobile device for their children if permitted in school.

According to an Associated Press article, more than 600 public high schools have launched experimental programs in which at least one classroom will provide each student with an iPad to use during the day. In the article, Patrick Larkin, principal of Burlington High School in Boston, says he thinks iPads are a good long-term investment for education because they are constantly being updated with current events, and online access provides students with relevant resources and real-time feedback.

Online textbooks presently account for about 10 percent of the textbook market. According to a recent *Washington Post* article, however, a new Florida law will require schools to spend half of their budgets on digital resources by 2015.

The current generation of students grew up during the birth of the technological boom, so many students have a basic understanding of how gadgets like the iPad work. Textbooks must be replaced every few years so that updated versions are available for students, while digital devices can be easily updated virtually. Schools may end up saving money if they convert to online textbooks.

Digital devices would surely make students' lives easier, too. Carrying a backpack full of many pounds worth of textbooks can be tiresome. Digital devices weigh far less than a pile of textbooks and their batteries can last the full day, so student loads are lighter. Replacing traditional textbooks with online alternatives would make it easier for students to keep everything they need on hand.

According to a study by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology called "Using the Technology of Today in the Classroom Today," teachers can use free online tools to boost student involvement. Some high school courses require students to maintain Facebook accounts and follow a class page to keep up with classmates after hours. This is an easier method than exchanging contact

**Carrying a backpack full of many pounds worth of textbooks can be tiresome. Digital devices weigh far less than a pile of textbooks and their batteries can last the full day.**



information with other students. Groups of students can have an online conversation about a project or test and benefit from each other.

The study also highlights the value of blogs. Like Facebook, students can communicate outside the classroom and bounce ideas off each other. Teachers can provide additional resources for students to use no matter the time of day.

For Internet usage to be successfully integrated with teaching, educators would need to create boundaries between social and academic uses. Although Internet resources and digital tools could provide students with distractions and temptations, when used correctly, they have the potential to be successful education tools.

"If digital devices and online sites are to be incorporated into today's classrooms, the prevailing notion that these devices and sites are only for social use will have to be re-examined," said Julie Evans, CEO of Project Tomorrow. "Our survey showed that digital devices and online content have a place in the classroom when used in tandem with traditional instruction."

The technological revolution is still young and many are concerned that the nation's education system is diving in too quickly. The iPad and other devices have only been on the market for about 18 months, and many administrators and educators think all possible glitches must be worked out before incorporating their use in the classroom. Introducing these

expensive tools into classrooms would be quite an investment—one that schools should be sure of.

Another major issue present in the nation's classrooms is the distribution of wealth within districts. Studies show that students in wealthy districts are exposed to a better, more comprehensive education. With more opportunities to excel, these students already are ahead of students in lower-income districts.

Paying for technological advancements is out of the question for many of these lower-income districts. Even if a lower-income school received funding for technology, many children in these districts may not have access to a computer or the Internet once they leave school. To compensate for this divide, schools still would need to provide textbook equivalents for students in need.

While states and school districts that strive to provide students with the newest technologies may have good intentions, equality in education should still be a leading priority. Creating a divide between the nation's students by using or not using technology in the classroom does not level the educational playing field. Although new technologies in the classroom can enhance students' learning experiences, states and school districts need to take into account the whole picture before unintentionally putting certain schools, and thus, students, at a technological disadvantage. ■

## More Highlights from the Conference



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### TOP TO BOTTOM

**1** - Members from the United Administrators of San Francisco, AFSA Local 3, pose for a shot with their president, Jim Dierke (center left).

**2** - San Francisco Mayor Edwin M. Lee issued a proclamation making Oct. 28 American Federation of School Administrators Day in San Francisco. AFSA officers pictured left to right: Executive Vice President Jim Dierke, President Diann Woodard, Secretary Wendi Caporicci and Treasurer Ernest Logan.

**3** - AFSA members pose with the lion dancers from San Francisco and Oakland school districts.

**4** - Conference attendees raised money at the PAC luncheon, where they heard an address from California Rep. Jackie Speier and Art Pulaski, the secretary treasurer of the California Labor Federation.

**5** - Members from around the U.S. attended the conference. From left to right: Paulette White, Detroit Organization of School Administrators & Supervisors, AFSA Local 28; Crystal Boling-Barton, President, Buffalo Council of School Supervisors & Administrators, AFSA Local 10; Deborah Louis-Ake, President, AFSA Local 28.

## ART, MUSIC CLASSES

*continued from page 3*

Even students who are not particularly driven toward art, music or dance programs miss out if not offered the opportunity to participate in such classes. Generally, volunteers, parents and fundraisers support art programs in low-income areas.

"The success of these programs varies," Daniels says. "If you have a group of people who really love art, they will raise money, but that still doesn't make up for the lack of budget."

Daniels suggests that schools with a loss in funding should cultivate relationships with local artistic resources. Historical societies and local art

programs often offer field trips and hands-on activities. In San Francisco, Daniels takes advantage of the local symphony, ballet, opera and museums.

Daniels' district has yet to see vast budget cuts in the arts due to the Public Education Enrichment Fund, which provides funds to local elementary, middle and high schools. A master arts plan was organized in 2005 to allocate funding for the most necessary components of the arts for 10 years. This funding allowed 42 new local arts programs to flourish in the San Francisco area.

Funding for public education comes straight from the government, an issue, Daniels thinks, that should have people concerned.

"Voters need to become aware that if their representatives don't start to make decisions about the way school is funded, there will soon be nothing available to students other than the core subjects," he said. "That would be a tragedy."

The San Francisco area is fortunate to have lively art and music programs. However, many districts, such as Haywood School District near San Francisco, are completely eradicating art programs, putting the more creative students at a total loss.

"If that would have happened to me in high school, I don't know what I would have done," Daniels said. ■



# ESEA Reauthorization Plows Forward

## HELP Committee Finally Introduces and Approves Bill to Reauthorize the Overdue Education Legislation

Since the summer edition of *The Leader*, there have been several developments relating to the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). After months of speculation and a number of hearings, the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee finally introduced and approved a bill to reauthorize ESEA.

In the original draft of the bill, states would have been required to implement teacher and principal evaluation systems, but the most recent version makes it optional. However, those states that do accept federal funds to build an educator evaluation system will receive monies based “...In significant part on evidence of improved student achievement and student outcomes.”

“...Will provide incentives for comprehensive reforms and innovative teaching and learning strategies that are designed to improve academic achievement for all students.” It also would increase the federal charter school program and award competitive grants to those who help support the creation, expansion and replication of high-performing charter schools.

The bill also requires states to offer “not less than 2 percent but not more than 5 percent” of Title II funds through grants to improve the performance and distribution of highly rated principals and other school leaders. This would include incentives to recruit and prepare principals in high-needs and low-performing schools.

staff at that school will have to reapply for their positions. Finally, other schools served by the same LEA are not forced to accept teachers displaced from the school utilizing the transformation strategy.

- 2. Strategic Staffing Strategy:** The LEA implementing this strategy shall fire the principal if he or she has served in that role for more than two years, and replace him or her with a new principal who has a record of success in increasing student achievement. The new principal has the opportunity to staff the school with a team of his or her choosing.
- 3. Turnaround Strategy:** The LEA implementing this strategy shall fire the principal if the principal has been there for more than two years and screen all current teachers in the school, and retain no more than 65 percent of them.
- 4. Whole School Reform Strategy:** The LEA implementing this strategy shall invest in an evidence-based strategy to ensure whole school reform. This entails a partnership with a strategic developer that offers the school a reform program that will have a statistically significant effect on student outcomes.
- 5. Restart Strategy:** The LEA implementing this strategy shall convert the school into a public charter school, or close and reopen the school as a public charter school in partnership with a nonprofit that has a record of improving school achievement. Conversely, the LEA has the option to convert the school into a magnet school or create a new, innovative school, as defined by the state. The new school will have to serve the same grade levels as the old school,

*AFSA repeatedly has made the case that there is no evidence to suggest removing principals and staff and closing schools is good for children.*

The new draft eliminates No Child Left Behind's (NCLB) Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), and removes the requirement that all students be proficient in math and reading by 2014. Instead of AYP, states would be required to set “College and Career Ready” standards for schools to meet. States then would design a system that measures student “continuous growth” toward achieving the “College and Career Ready” standard.

The bill also would authorize a new Race To The Top grant program that

### More School Reform Models

Although the bill largely shifts away from NCLB's punitive sanctions on schools, it focuses accountability on the bottom 5 percent of schools in states. In these lowest-performing schools, states would be required to implement one of six turnaround models. Here is a quick summary of those six models.

- 1. Transformation Strategy:** The local educational agency (LEA) implementing this strategy in a school shall replace the principal if the principal has served in that role at the school for more than two years. The existing



*Although action is not impossible, all signs seem to point to the reauthorization being delayed until 2012. If Congress fails to act by the end of this year, then the Department of Education will begin granting waivers to states that adhere to certain policy requirements.*

and enroll any former student of the original school who requests to attend the new school, and after that, admit additional students using a random lottery system.

**6. School Closure Strategy:** The LEA implementing this strategy shall close the school and enroll the students in other schools, including charter schools, that still are served by the same LEA, are in close proximity to the closed school and are higher performing than the school that is being closed. The LEA will provide transportation for each student to the new school, and may use school improvement funds to pay for the transitioning of students from the closed school to the new school. During the committee markup, Sen. Lamar Alexander (R-Tenn.) introduced

Title I Amendment 5 that would allow school districts to submit their own turnaround plan to the education secretary for approval.

AFSA repeatedly has made the case that there is no evidence to suggest removing principals and staff and closing schools is good for children. In fact, research shows that turning around a school can take up to five years. A principal with deep ties within the community and a unique understanding of the school's culture is integral to that process. Often, the existing principal is not given the time, tools, training or resources to fully succeed in turning around a school. AFSA thinks there should be a full-scale analysis of school and community conditions before any rash personnel decisions are enacted.

## **ESEA in the House**

The House of Representatives continues to approach the reauthorization in a piecemeal fashion. Thus far, the House Education and the Workforce Committee has passed three bills. One would eliminate more than 40 education programs and another would grant districts increased flexibility in how they spend their federal dollars, including Title I grants for disadvantaged students. The third bill, which passed on a bipartisan vote, essentially would incentivize states to expand the number of charter schools.

Although action is not impossible, all signs seem to point to the reauthorization being delayed until 2012. If Congress fails to act by the end of this year, then the Department of Education will begin granting waivers to states that adhere to certain policy requirements. Currently, 40 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico have signaled their intent to apply for these waivers. ■

## **EDUCATORS HANDED THE ROLE OF PARENT AND INSTRUCTOR**

*continued from page 7*

"From the custodian to the cafeteria workers to the teachers, you don't know where that connection may be," Curci said.

Piazza went on to explain that he stresses the act of school role models with his staff everyday. He makes sure they know how influential they are to the students and how important it is for the students to build good relationships at school.

"Educators may be the only stable people in their lives," he said. "We may be the only positive role models they have."

Children experiencing these situations can be found in every corner of our nation. Spreading awareness and

emphasizing the need for parental involvement can help these children, but much more needs to be done. While it is hard to change the students' current situations, schools can take this challenge head on, much like Principal Piazza and Principal Curci. Each step adds stability to our nation and its future.

While these two principals and many others across the nation were never asked to create a home away from home for students, it is something that educators and administrators work to create because they know education is more than just classes, homework assignments and tests. The leaders who serve our schools are the unsung heroes of our nation's future and

**"From the custodian to the cafeteria workers to the teachers, you don't know where that connection may be."**

—Richard Curci, Principal, Everett Middle School, San Francisco

understand the impact they have in shaping the lives of the children who are trusted under their care everyday. It would serve our education system well for our nation's policy makers and reformers to follow in the example of those who work in our schools, for they intimately understand that education is more than just a learning experience; it is a life experience. ■

# CYBERBULLYING: BULLYING IN THE 21ST CENTURY

continued from page 1

- Spreading rumors about or harassing a student on Facebook, Twitter, MySpace or other forms of social media; and
- Sending nasty emails or instant messages (IMs) to their victims.

In a recent study, by the Cyberbullying Research Center, a third of 10- to 18-year-olds say they've been cyberbullied. According to Sammer Hinduja and Justin Patchin, the directors for the Cyberbullying Research Center, cyberbullying can lead to "school problems such as tardiness and truancy, eating disorders, chronic illness, self-esteem problems, aggression, depression, interpersonal violence, substance abuse and

**"Unlike adults, kids don't make the distinction between online and the real world. They don't realize they are creating these digital footprints online where everything can be traced back to them."**

—Rebecca Randall,  
Vice President of Education Programs,  
Common Sense Media

other forms of delinquency."

Among other things, the danger with cyberbullying is that it can spread exceptionally quickly. The nasty, humiliating texts, photos, comments, gossip and threats are shown and shared by a large audience through reposting online or through mass texts or emails.

In this way, the cyberbullying travels so quickly the bully is able to "share" what he or she did to other students almost instantly. When the victim comes to school the next day, it isn't just the bully who knows about the incident; it is everyone. The victim's humiliation is even worse as more people know the nasty gossip, the cruel picture or the "funny" Facebook post.

Danah Boyd, a senior researcher at Microsoft Research, and Alice Marwick, a postdoctoral researcher at Microsoft Research and research affiliate at Harvard University, argued in a recent *New York Times* article that the problem with cyberbullying is most students and victims don't see cyberbullying as a form of bullying. They describe it as "drama." Using the word "drama" becomes a protective mechanism for them to diminish the power that bullies have; drama is something petty, something students don't need to worry about. Boyd and Marwick say that students who admit they are being bullied, or worse, that they are bullies, are slotted into a narrative that's disempowering and makes them feel weak and childish. The underlying conclusion of their research is that students don't want to see cyberbullying as bullying. They prefer to see it as harmless drama when really it is anything but that.

Another problem with cyberbullying involves school leaders and parents. Too often, school leaders and parents don't understand the culture and power of social networking. They don't realize how hurtful comments and pictures can be when posted online and the impact they have on students. Parents and school leaders, for the most part, did not have this technology growing up and therefore never dealt with cyberbullying when they were younger. This digital divide is an unfortunate and real problem when trying to handle and prevent cyberbullying.

## Looking for solutions

What can school leaders, principals and administrators do to combat cyberbullying? What are some solutions? The first step is for school leaders to take cyberbullying seriously and understand it is a very real and dangerous form of bullying. Some school leaders may already have experienced the results of cyberbullying; in states such as Connecticut, the school board has cracked down on cyberbullying and put extreme pressure on school leaders and principals to solve cyberbullying as fast as possible.

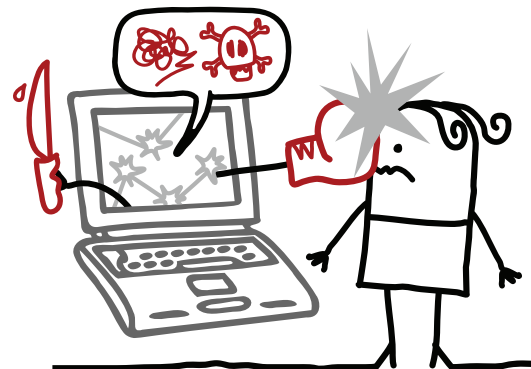
Rebecca Randall, the vice president of education programs at Common Sense Media, spoke on the topic of cyberbullying at AFSA's October leadership conference and said it is important to teach kids to "stand up, not stand by" and to encourage students to build a culture of kindness and respect. Randall also said it is crucial to teach digital literacy and citizenship to students.

"Unlike adults, kids don't make the distinction between online and the real world," Randall said. "They don't realize they are creating these digital footprints online where everything can be traced back to them."

Randall also said schools should provide a "go-to" adult whom students can trust and talk to about cyberbullying. Cyberbullying is especially difficult, Randall said, because it can last on the Internet or the victim's phone for long periods of time, which causes incessant embarrassment and harassment. And because the bullying happens online, often the bully is anonymous and the harassment is seemingly inescapable.

Finally, Randall said schools should provide professional development to educators and administrators and set and enforce clear and realistic policies for cyberbullying. She also said educating parents on cyberbullying can help prevent it.

For more resources on cyberbullying and to learn more about Common Sense Media, visit [www.commonsensemedia.org/cyberbullying-toolkit](http://www.commonsensemedia.org/cyberbullying-toolkit). ■



## GROWING PAINS

*continued from page 5*

searching for the newest video game instead of a new baseball glove.

Without the proper programs to keep students fit and aware, they are more susceptible to such illnesses as diabetes, heart disease and hypertension.

Recess also has found its way to the cutting block. With schools under intense pressure to meet standardized testing goals, recess has been cut back or eliminated to make more time for test preparations.

Since 2010, more states have begun to require physical education, but the specifications on its duration and regulations for teaching it are still lax. Nancy Brown, CEO of the American Heart Association, said the group was pleased that more states were requiring physical education, but remained concerned the requirements don't have more teeth.

As the nation continues to focus on education reform, there is hope that the health of students will be made a priority. First Lady Michelle Obama started her "Let's Move!" campaign to encourage kids to get outside and play. And, the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 was a step in the right direction, although the funding for the bill remains questionable. Even still, President Obama has continued to encourage the passing of the education portion of his American Jobs Act, which would provide \$60 billion for school infrastructure upgrades and education jobs. Finally, as the debate on the reauthorization of ESEA rages on, there is hope that the health of students will be considered when it finally comes to a vote.

However, if schools and policy makers continue to focus on test scores and extended classroom hours while cutting gym and recess, a truly unhealthy generation of adults may ensue. By creating good habits for these students at a young age, the seed will be planted for a healthy future. ■

## A Note of Thanks....

In response to a legal situation in which a member from AFSA Local 84 required guidance, AFSA received this letter:

August 25, 2011

Mr. Spina,

I had a great conversation with Mr. Bryant. He was patient and took time to listen to my member's issue and gave me good insight.

Thank you for your quick response and support.

Bruce Hutchison  
President  
Calvert Association of Supervisors  
and Administrators

## The Changing Face of AFSA

### *New Website and Social Media in 2012*

AFSA has been working hard to find and create better ways to communicate with members and supporters, beginning last spring with a project to rebuild the website.

In October, AFSA announced the launch of the new website, [www.AFSAadmin.org](http://www.AFSAadmin.org). This major step was the keystone to AFSA's communications overhaul during the past year. Other major improvements include:

- Creating and utilizing social media outlets (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn and Flickr);
- Restructuring the memberwide e-mail system (using the Salsa platform);
- Launching the School Leaders United Campaign and sending regular legislation updates and rally information through Action Alerts;
- Hosting three regional leadership conferences;
- Reconfiguring the look and enriching the content of the newsletter, *The Leader*; and
- Rebranding the AFSA logo to project a stronger and more scholarly image.

These changes were made to help AFSA communicate more effectively with members and to encourage the solidarity of school leaders across the country. AFSA encourages you to explore these changes and share them with those who help represent school leaders everywhere.





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## 2012 UPCOMING EVENTS

- Jan. 12–16: **AFL-CIO Martin Luther King, Jr. Observance; Detroit**
- Jan. 14–15: **AFSA General Executive Board Meeting; Las Vegas**
- Feb. 16–19: **AASA Annual Conference on Education; Houston**
- Feb. 29: **AFSA Scholarship Program Application Submission Deadline**
- March 5–6: **Louisiana AFL-CIO Annual Convention, Hilton Capitol Center Hotel, Baton Rouge, La.**
- March 8–10: **NAESP Annual Conference; Tampa, Fla.**
- March 13–15: **AFL-CIO Executive Council Committee Meeting; Lake Buena Vista, Fla.**
- March 19–20: **California Labor Federation Legislative Conference, Sheraton Grand Hotel, Sacramento, Calif.**
- April 7–10: **NAESP Annual Convention and Exposition; Tampa, Fla.**

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