

THE Leader


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Negotiation Workshop Prepares AFSA Members

On July 25 and 26, several AFSA presidents and members met in Hartford, Conn., to work on their negotiating skills. About 27 AFSA members attended, including members from several Connecticut locals, Puerto Rico, Buffalo and Yonkers, N.Y., Calvert County, Md., and the U.S. Virgin Islands. President Woodard attended, as did General Executive Board members Gary Maynard, Elaine Papas, Carver Farrow, Domingo Madera, Aona Jefferson, Crystal Boling-Barton and Charles Whelan.

The two-day workshop involved training sessions for negotiators and potential future negotiators. Attendees were divided into two groups—management teams and union teams—that enabled them to prepare for and practice negotiating an administrator contract.

“Many current issues for AFSA locals can be addressed at the bargaining table,” said AFSA General Counsel Bruce Bryant, who led the training sessions. “At the workshop, two of the issues that we discussed were the role of collective bargaining in increasing issues of accountability and the use of student performance in evaluating administrators.”

Attendees at the workshop also discussed budgetary problems, salary issues, employee benefit costs and reductions in force and layoffs.

Highly Productive Training

“This was absolutely one of the most productive learning experiences in contract negotiations that AFSA has

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(L to R): Anthony Salvatore, Local 113, Newtown, Conn.; Lucy Diaz Claudio, Local 105, San Juan, P.R.; GEB member Crystal Boling-Barton; W. Charles Brandy, Local 10, Buffalo, N.Y.; Carver Farrow, Local 101, St. Thomas, V.I.; and Jacqueline Mann, Local 22, Hartford, Conn.

Breaking Down Common Core

This year as students, teachers and administrators head back to school, many will face the first official year of implementing the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). With the standards already adopted by 45 states and the District of Columbia (D.C.), CCSS has become a topic of dispute for educators, parents and politicians, with some state legislatures across the country already proposing opt-out bills.

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Making Progress: The Oakland Bullying Prevention Initiative

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AFSA Partners with DOE on School Safety

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Listen to Mama on School Reform

A recent national poll conducted by Peter D. Hart Research Associates revealed that parents overwhelmingly think public schools are the single most important institution for the future of their community and our nation, and that they choose strong neighborhood public schools over expanding choice, charters and vouchers.

News of the poll's findings put me in mind of my mother's admonitions when I was growing up and being disciplined for doing something she did not approve of. Like any kid, I would give her a lengthy razzle-dazzle excuse about why I should be let off the hook, and would end by rationalizing that everyone else is doing it.

Mother wouldn't flinch. She would simply say, "Do as I say, because I said so." No more rationalizing, no more examples, because behind her words was the greater wisdom of experience and the wit to know that sometimes you don't argue or explain. You just do what you're supposed to do.

In the Hart poll, conducted for AFT, that sort of mother-wit clearly carried through, making clear that parents know neighborhood schools are good for their communities and good for their children.

"Seventy-seven percent [of respondents] said the focus should be on ensuring that every child has access to a good public school in his or her community; just 20 percent said there should be more public charters or vouchers," the AFT said in a release about the results. The poll also makes it astoundingly clear that parents think schools should focus on offering a variety of subjects.

In fact, fully 74 percent of respondents said it was important for schools to

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offer a well-rounded curriculum that includes art, music and physical education, judgments clearly at odds with policy makers' obsessive focus on math and science to the exclusion of arts and the humanities.

Parents clearly want schools to focus on the "whole child," including his or her emotional and social development. The poll reveals they think testing is a barometer, but that too much is a deterrent—a result once again patently at odds with the data-driven obsessions of policy makers and privatization advocates.

Parents also understand the impact of poverty on education and know how under-resourced schools leave their children unable to compete. The AFT poll makes it clear that what parents want is high-quality preschool, better resourced schools, improved support and training for teachers, and more health and community services.

They are not interested in boutique experiments, nor have they fallen for misguided reforms; instead, they are interested in restoring schools as the hub of their communities.

But who's listening? Surely not the people in Washington, nor the hyper-wealthy philanthropists who profess to have the answers for change, despite



AFSA President Diann Woodard

the fact that 81 percent of parents surveyed in the Hart poll said educators had the answers and that policy makers should be listening to us.

Surely this listening, if our activism can succeed in bringing it about, will require a great deal of thought and introspection about the way we manage schools. The poll clearly states parents are our partners—so how do we capitalize on the sage wit AFT President Randi Weingarten offered in saying that policy makers are currently akin to the emperor who has no clothes?

We must integrate innovation without sacrificing content. We must understand that before children can be educated, their basic needs for food, clothing and shelter must be met. And we must police our ranks through educating, training and mentoring our colleagues and, where necessary, counseling some out of the profession.

We must know that to create safe schools, we must make them places of trust. We must stand with parents and protect our schools through coalition building and networking.

But above all, as leaders in our communities, we must agitate, agitate, agitate for changes that reflect our experience and the wisdom of caring parents.

Can the key to the success of reforming public education be as simple as listening to what parents and experienced practitioners know children need?

Well, let me be the first to say, "That's what mama told us." ■

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1101 17th St., N.W., Suite 408
Washington, DC 20036
Telephone: (202) 986-4209
Fax: (202) 986-4211
e-mail: afsa@AFSAadmin.org
Website: www.AFSAadmin.org

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Ready for the Year IUPAT Provides Supplies for St. Louis Schoolchildren

To kick off the school year, Principal Peggy Starks of Hickey Elementary and Principal Lisa Brown of Ashland Elementary, both members of AFSA Local 44 in St. Louis, received more than 600 book bags for their students from the International Union of Painters and Allied Trades (IUPAT). Assembled by nearly 100 local members of IUPAT and community volunteers, the bags were hand-delivered to the principals Aug. 9, filled with pencils, pens, crayons, notebooks, folders and many other supplies.

"We greatly appreciate the support that the Painters and Allied Trades members showed our St. Louis students," said Cynthia Warren, president of retirees, AFSA Local 44. "We thank them for having our children's best interest at heart."

The gifts were funded through IUPAT's Painters and Allied Trades for Children's Hope Foundation (PATCH), which provides members with a way to "give back to our local communities," said Kenneth E. Rigmaiden, IUPAT general president. The foundation is supported through local fundraising efforts by union members and has received more than \$1 million in gifts since its inception in 2001.

"We feel very strongly about being a good neighbor in St. Louis, and we hope that it makes a positive impact for these



children not only this year, but many years down the road," said Rigmaiden.

"Being a good union member is about far more than our lives in the workplace," he said. "It's the duty of every single one of us to do our part to build a better community for our neighbors and our families. We're thrilled to have this opportunity to make a difference for the proud students of Ashland and Hickey schools." ■



Members of the Painters and Allied Trades for Children's Hope Foundation and volunteers from IUPAT District Council 2 in St. Louis filled nearly 600 school bags with supplies for the students of two local elementary schools—just in time for the first day of school, Aug. 12.

BASAS Recovers Members' Losses

Dominic Sacchetti, president of AFSA Local 6 in Boston, is very passionate about the local's recent recovery of \$260,000 in damages to compensate members affected by the reorganization of special education services by Boston Public Schools (BPS) in June 2010.

"I'm ecstatic that we were able to help people who were harmed, and we will continue to do so," said Sacchetti.

On May 20, 2013, the Boston Association of School Administrators and Supervisors (BASAS) and the school department came to an agreement requiring the Boston Public School system to compensate BASAS members financially harmed as a result of the school department's unapproved reorganization plan.

"BPS was under obligation to bargain with the union when they wanted to change working conditions," Sacchetti explains.

While reorganization of the special education program had been raised with BASAS during contract negotiations, BPS presented its plan but never met with BASAS again. BPS then moved forward with implementing the plan in June 2010 without confirmation or final negotiations.

BASAS filed charges at the Massachusetts Division of Labor Relations and, as a result, a complaint was filed against the BPS. After a yearlong lawsuit, BPS presented BASAS with a settlement offer.

While many of the members were able to secure employment elsewhere, some experienced a harmful decrease in salary as a result of the reorganization. BPS compensated 14 BASAS members in amounts ranging from approximately \$1,000 to \$65,000, depending on their needs and individual circumstances.

"The BASAS members who were affected were happy with the results," Sacchetti said.

Members who were able to retain their positions within the union under new titles were not compensated. However, language included in the settlement recognized any job titles that had been changed for those members.

Although the affected members technically were no longer a part of the union, BASAS leaders thought it was right to compensate them for their lost jobs.

"It was the right thing to do," Sacchetti says. "We do not just turn our backs on those who need security, whether they're members or not. Or whether they're former members or not. These people were no longer dues-paying members, but on their behalf the union filed charges and extended the resources necessary to get a successful outcome." ■

Breaking Down Common Core: What Do the Standards Mean for Our Education System?

This year as students, teachers and administrators head back to school, many will face the first official year of implementing the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). With the standards already adopted by 45 states and the District of Columbia (D.C.), CCSS has become a topic of dispute for educators, parents and politicians, with some state legislatures across the country already proposing opt-out bills.

Created by Gates-funded consultants for the National Governors Association (NGA) and directed by a consulting firm known as Achieve Inc., which is led by David Coleman, the president of the College Board (the group responsible for administering the SAT), some remain concerned about putting the education of America's children into the hands of consultants who created the standards with little input from

educators or parents. The standards also are untested, causing some to question whether implementing CCSS is a potentially devastating and expensive mistake.

Supporters argue that CCSS is a step in the right direction for successfully preparing the nation's children for a college-level curriculum and for closing the opportunity gap by requiring all districts and schools to share one unified set of standards.

There is need for change in our education system, and while there is great potential in the Common Core State Standards, the underlying questions remain: Are our educators sufficiently supported for this change? And at what point do we deem the influence of corporations in our public education system too high and the influence of our educators and parents shockingly low?

The Big Picture: A Productive or Detrimental Change?

CCSS curriculum is focused on a smaller range of topics, but requires students to demonstrate greater critical thinking skills through an increased level of required reading across all fields, including math and science. These standards also provide more opportunities for real-world applications of class material. While educators receive an outline of required standards for their students, they are free to create their own curriculum.

Advocates argue these changes improve college preparation and will decrease the opportunity gap by making it more difficult for states to hide failing schools with unified curriculum and tests. They see an opportunity to raise state standards that were

greatly lowered from 2005–2007, when states wanted to decrease their student failure rates in order to meet the No Child Left Behind standards.

These are exciting possibilities, but it is crucial for students and educators to receive the tools, preparation and funding they need to reach the new standards successfully. With little control over how money is dispersed within state districts, there is concern the inequalities that currently plague our education system may increase, leaving the poorest districts at a severe disadvantage. These issues need to be acknowledged and addressed at the local and national level.

It is also no secret that the potential profit margin for standardized test-making companies is extremely high in the United States. Many of the creators of CCSS are connected to major testing companies, presenting potential conflicts of interest. While advocates argue the standards were created with input from teachers, out of the 135 members on the review panels for the Common Core, no parents were brought in and most of the educators who had input were brought in at the very end to make minor adjustments.

The recurring tradition of excluding parents and educators who best understand the needs, capability and potential of students from the process of creating educational assessments must end. Supporters of CCSS emphasize the freedom the standards provide for educators to create their own curriculum; by the same token, educators should be trusted to have a voice in how their students are measured.

Price Tag Shock

At a time when education budgets continue to be cut, implementing the Common Core State Standards could cost more than \$30 billion nationally, with individual state costs varying by district size.

While advocates acknowledge the high price of CCSS, they assert that not only is it worth the high price, but it is crucial for ensuring students are ready for the demands of a college curriculum.

Opponents argue that because the curriculum is untested, there is no proof of its effectiveness, making it an exorbitant waste of federal and state funding. Some state legislatures even are refusing to allocate funds for CCSS, creating a potentially troubling

and unstable environment for educators and students in these areas.

For some schools and districts, the cost factor will not be a pressing issue. For others, most of which already are facing severe poverty, the standards will be virtually impossible to meet without increased support. Outside of meeting the challenge to prepare students for heightened standards, assessments are being designed as computer-based, adding costs to an already expensive process for schools without sufficient resources.

While CCSS provides an exciting opportunity, it needs infrastructure and planning for national success. Local accountability among the state legislatures that adopted CCSS must be enforced to ensure schools receive the funding they need to move forward. Only then can CCSS benefit students of all backgrounds and provide a step toward reducing the opportunity gap.

Moving Forward

The nation's schools are not on an equal playing field. These standards will cause little disruption for some schools, because they already have the support in place to prepare classrooms for new material. In fact, some states already have begun implementing CCSS to provide all students and educators with the necessary time to prepare for the first round of assessments, scheduled for 2015.

We must look at the CCSS as an opportunity to move forward rather than backward; at the same time, if our nation is looking for common standards, there must be common support and funding opportunities in place for all districts and states. We must hold our local representatives accountable for providing support to all schools, especially those already facing the most severe disadvantages. As administrators, we also must demand a voice on how our students' academic success is measured and not allow those who know our children best to be marginalized by the corporate influences that currently dominate our public education system. ■



Making Progress

The Oakland Bullying Prevention Initiative

A little over a year ago, Lee Hirsch's "Bully" was released in theaters across the country. Documenting the effects of bullying on the lives of five students, the AFSA-endorsed BULLY Project hoped to reach 1 million students—as of this writing, the film has reached nearly 2 million kids. Acting as a driving force for the movement is AFSA member and Secretary Wendi Caporicci.

"I worked for the Oakland schools for 40 years, in a variety of economic areas. In all schools, bullying was evident," she says. So, when Caporicci learned of an opportunity to help kick-start a renewed focus on bullying prevention in Oakland, she took it—and 21,000 students and educators from Bay Area schools went in droves to local theaters to see the documentary.

"I first learned about 'Bully' when I went with other officers of AFSA to a screening in Washington, D.C. We watched the film and right away I felt it was great," she says. "Then, we met Lee Hirsch, the director of 'Bully,' and learned that '1 Million Kids San Francisco' was already planned, and we wanted it in Oakland, too!"

"1 Million Kids" was a social action movement inspired by the "Bully" film, providing an opportunity for entire schools and even whole districts to see the film together in theaters free of cost, in conjunction with professional development for educators and a wraparound curriculum for students. Caporicci and her AFSA colleagues seized the day.

"We met with Tony Smith, who was superintendent in Oakland at the time," she says. "Right off, Tony was very excited. He said the timing was perfect, and really bought into the plan. So he worked with us, and he and his team got things set up."

In total, 14,000 middle and high school students in Oakland got to participate in the initiative. Caporicci recalls the screening she attended with the students from McClymonds High School, located in a predominantly African American and low-income community.

"I remember them walking in. They seemed very contained and self-assured," Caporicci remembers. "Lee Hirsch, the director of 'Bully,' was there. He said he made the film because he was badly bullied as a child. I felt that they had empathy for him—you could feel it in the audience. Before the film began, Lee said to them, 'As you watch this movie, think about the ways in which you can make a difference.' Afterward, someone from the district led a discussion and you could tell the students were really engaged—they asked questions, they even shared some of their own stories. If I had been their principal, I would have been proud."

The Role of School Administrators and Educators

A study by the National Education Association reveals that 98 percent of educators think it is their job to intervene when they see bullying, but only half of educators say they have received training on their district's bullying policy.

Today, the BULLY Project's campaign aims to reach 10 million kids and educators through distribution of the DVD and toolkit that comes with a broad public screening license, as well as tools and resources specially designed to help develop a safe and caring school climate.

"First, it's really crucial for the principal and teachers to recognize that it's a problem," Caporicci explains, "and then work together on a collaborative team with parents and students to say 'This is the issue, what are we going to do about it?'"

"At one of my schools we had a group that worked on school climate environment," she says. "At another school, we had a special day when the children with autism participated in a math contest, and it resulted in a new respect for the kids in the special ed programs. None of these strategies works overnight, but with time, things do improve." ■

Courtesy of the BULLY campaign



Students from Taylor Middle School in Millbrae, Calif., took part in the "1 Million Kids" campaign over several months in 2012.



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AFSA Partners with DOE on School Safety

On April 17, the U.S. Senate failed to approve legislation that would have made it harder for criminals and those with severe mental illnesses to purchase firearms. The 54–46 vote was well short of the 60-vote threshold needed for passage under Senate rules, leading President Obama to call it a “pretty shameful day for Washington.”

The measure’s failure, despite overwhelmingly strong support from the public and the emotional advocacy efforts by the families of the Newtown, Conn., victims, was shocking.

The failed Senate measure also included provisions of Sen. Barbara Boxer (D-Calif.)’s School and Campus Safety Enhancements Act that would have helped make schools safer by authorizing federal funding for the installation of metal detectors and surveillance equipment, training for school personnel and students, and the implementation of other safety measures at elementary and secondary schools.

Despite the Senate’s failure to support crucial school safety legislation, AFSA took steps forward, partnering with the Department of Education (DOE) to present a school safety webinar for both AFSA members and the general public on Aug. 7.

“School administrators across the nation opened their school doors immediately following the Sandy Hook shooting, and continue to do so every day. Yet, too many districts do not have comprehensive plans in place to deal with such emergency situations,” said President Diann Woodard in her opening webinar remarks.

Providing an overview of the recently released *Guide for Developing High-Quality School Emergency Operations Plans (EOP)*, the 90-minute presentation covered the importance of organizing a designated emergency planning team and creating a tailored EOP that fits a school’s specific needs. The webinar also stressed the importance of sharing EOPs with local first responders and officials, practicing EOPs regularly and of having a plan in place for reuniting students with their families after an emergency. To download a full version of the presentation, visit AFSAadmin.org/afsa-doe-school-safety.

There remains a long road ahead of all of us on school safety; the partnership between the DOE and AFSA represents a step in the right direction, not only for providing educators with the tools they need to fully prepare for an emergency, but for meaningful and effective changes in school safety policy. ■

Take Action in Your Community

School safety is just one example of an issue with many opportunities for you to get involved and make a difference in your community. Whether you are an active or retired member of AFSA, it is important to:

- Continually write letters to your local representatives discussing your support for further action on school safety. As an active or retired administrator, you hold important and key insight that is crucial for effective school safety policy. Find your local representatives at www.usa.gov/Contact/Elected.shtml.
- Become, or continue to be, an active and engaged reader of your local newspaper. When stories discuss issues of school safety, submit a response voicing your opinion as a dedicated, active or retired administrator.
- Organize a coalition in your community focusing on the school safety issues that concern you most. Having the support of a group will strengthen your voice and increase your impact (refer to AFSAadmin.org/build-a-coalition for more details).

Schools to Pilot New Principal Evaluation Tools

Oakland principals have taken developing evaluation tools into their own hands. For the 2013–2014 school year, several Oakland schools will pilot a “by-principals, for-principals” model of evaluations.

Over the last few years, a leadership task force made up of principals determined what constituted a quality principal. Through the Critical Friends program, principals across the district were paired together to visit and evaluate each other while maintaining transparency. Once initial evaluations were completed, the principals selected goals for each other based on what they had seen. The goals and evaluations grew from previous principals’ rubrics.

Wendi Caporicci, former president of the United Administrators of Oakland Schools, AFSA Local 83 and current AFSA secretary, thinks “it is just truly amazing” that these principals were working collaboratively to determine the best ways to evaluate themselves. Caporicci was

an original member of the task force, and says the whole team “hoped for a much better evaluation plan.”



The rubric for principals’ evaluations follows eight guidelines called “design principles”: equity, vision, relationships, resilience, partnerships, management, instruction and accountability. There are three elements for each principle, with detailed descriptions agreed on by principals in the task force.

The other 40 percent of the evaluation will be based on measures of student learning. Half of this portion will come from standardized test score data; the other half will come from performance and growth on exams of the bottom one-third of students. The specific exams will be determined

The rubric for principals’ evaluations follows eight guidelines called “design principles”: equity, vision, relationships, resilience, partnerships, management, instruction and accountability.

Once the pilot testing year is over, the task force will assess the process, look at possible changes and ultimately ask the union to ratify the evaluation tools.

New evaluation tools also are being used in New York, where the Council of School Supervisors and Administrators (CSA), AFSA Local 1 settled on a new Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) for principals.

By New York state law, 60 percent of the evaluation will be based on supervisor evaluations using a rubric familiar to many CSA principals. The majority of the evaluation is based on two supervisor visits, one announced and one unannounced. The supervisor then scores the principal within a range from ineffective to highly effective.

after negotiations between the school principal and teachers, supervisors and state officials.

CSA Executive Vice President Mark Cannizzaro was the chief negotiator. “Our principals are used to this type of evaluation. It’s like a progress report,” he says. While some of the percentages have changed, no new evaluation measures were added to the APPR.

The APPR for the 2013–2014 school year can be read here: <http://bit.ly/APPRNYC>.

Giving principals a voice in the way they are evaluated is a step in the right direction and provides an avenue for evaluations to represent the whole principal accurately, not just based on test scores. ■

Congress Makes a Deal on Student Loans

After Congress' failure to act led to a sharp rise in student loan rates on July 1, lawmakers finally reached a deal July 31, which then was signed into law by President Obama Aug. 9. Instead of requiring undergraduate students to pay the doubled rate of 6.8 percent on federal student loans, they now will pay the much lower rate of 3.86 percent. Graduate students will pay for loans at the increased rate of 5.41 percent, while parents of students also can expect to pay more starting this school year, as new interest rates for PLUS loans currently stand at 6.41 percent.

Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.), known for her efforts to reform the student loan system, said in a recent Q&A with The Herald News: "We should be investing in students who are working hard to get an education. Instead, our students are drowning in debt.... Instead of helping to ease this burden, the government has been making billions of dollars each year in profit off the backs of our students. This is fundamentally wrong."

While the legislation lowers interest rates for students, none of the rates is locked in, as was the case previously, because they are tied to the 10-year Treasury note and can freely move with the market. If the economy improves as expected, rates will continue to rise.

When asked about the deal, AFSA President Diann Woodard said, "We do not accept this as a long-term solution, because the new law has room for extensive improvement. We urge Congress to find a better solution to this very temporary fix, one that includes a low, fixed rate to protect students from high interest rate environments."

Student loan debt in the United States topped an astounding \$1 trillion dollars this year alone. The projected increase will have an enormously negative impact in the coming years on more than 7 million college students. Considering the enormity of the student debt problem, and the significant number of students and borrowers impacted, it is clear a comprehensive overhaul of federal student loan policy is needed, as indicated in a June letter to Sens. Harry Reid (D-Nev.) and Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) that AFSA signed on to along with 19 other AFL-CIO affiliates. The letter urges Congress to

"avoid negotiating a deal for the sake of a deal, rather than truly considering the long-term policy impacts of the various comprehensive plans that are being considered."

We must invest in our nation's students and work toward closing the opportunity gap that is induced by the severe burden of high student loan interest rates. Long-term policy must be put into place to ensure higher education is affordable and accessible to all students.

Make sure your lawmakers are striving for a long-term solution. Visit www.house.gov/representatives/find/ to contact your representatives. ■



AFL-CIO Executive Council Sets Convention Agenda

As a member of the AFL-CIO Executive Council, President Diann Woodard met with fellow council members July 24–26 in Washington, D.C., with the primary goal to prepare recommendations, propose resolutions and set the stage for action at September’s quadrennial AFL-CIO Convention.

Selected to serve on several key committees for the convention, including serving as chair of the Rules Committee, President Woodard was in meetings throughout the week focusing on critical issues for the future of the AFL-CIO, such as how to build a diverse movement that is inclusive of all workers and how to engage young workers.

As vice chair of the Executive Council Committee on Women Workers, Woodard took part in discussions led by AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Liz Shuler



AFL-CIO President Diann Woodard and International Union of Painters and Allied Trades President Kenneth E. Rigmaiden at the AFL-CIO Executive Council meeting, which took place in Washington, D.C., July 24–26.

and AFL-CIO Executive Vice President Arlene Holt Baker, which focused on solutions for empowering women and looking at what efforts have been most effective to help working women at the national, state and local levels. Following the meeting on July 31, Rep. Donna Edwards (D-Md.) and Rep. Linda Sánchez (D-Calif.) joined these women to lead a continued discussion online.

The meeting included a visit from newly confirmed U.S. Secretary of Labor Tom Perez, then on his second day in office. Perez declared that the mission and role of the Department of Labor has never been greater, and that partnerships will be key to protecting workers’ rights.

Additionally, Holt Baker announced her plans to retire at September’s convention, while AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka announced that Tefere Gebre will run as a candidate for Holt Baker’s seat in the convention’s elections. Gebre currently serves as executive director of the Orange County (Calif.) Labor Federation, representing more than 90 local unions with a membership of more than 200,000 working men and women.

Calling for social and economic justice for communities of color, the Executive Council declared its intent to lead the way and initiate conversations about

race to ensure a tragedy such as the Trayvon Martin killing will not happen again. In an official statement, the Executive Council said:

“We shall encourage our national affiliates and our state and local bodies to participate fully in a dialogue with our partners and allies and work diligently to support policies at the federal, state and local level that eliminate discrimination, profiling and violence and to denounce Stand Your Ground laws that are advanced by the anti-worker, pro-voter suppression American Legislative Exchange Council.”

The Executive Council also deliberated on and passed a statement in support of the Large Retailer Accountability Act (LRAA), which requires large retailers in Washington, D.C., to pay workers a living wage of \$12.50 an hour including benefits, and also a statement in support of Detroit’s workers and retirees, warning against using Detroit’s bankruptcy filing as a tool to “impoverish city of Detroit workers or retirees.”

“There was a tremendous amount of valuable conversation on issues we cannot afford to turn our backs on at this point in time,” said Woodard. ■



AFL-CIO President Woodard, far right, sits with (L-R) AFL-CIO staff member Jane McDonald; Office and Professional Employees President Michael Goodwin, vice chair of the Executive Council Committee on Civil and Human Rights; AFL-CIO Executive Vice President Arlene Holt Baker; and AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Liz Shuler. They were attending a joint meeting of the AFL-CIO Executive Council Committee on Civil and Human Rights and the AFL-CIO Executive Council Committee on Women Workers.

Untested Parent Trigger Laws Lead to Misguided Solutions

Last September, educators across the country cringed and fumed as Hollywood's depiction of the public education system hit theaters nationally through the film "Won't Back Down," placing all the blame for the failings within the public school system on the shoulders of educators.

Relying on inaccurate and oversimplified stereotypes of workers within the system, the movie missed the mark completely; a misrepresentation of reality that several states across the country are employing in pursuing reform through parent trigger laws.

California was the first state to accept the parent trigger legislation in 2010, with the help of Parent Revolution, a nonprofit formed by a charter company and funded by the Walton Family Foundation and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

Created by a group of parents in Los Angeles who were unhappy with their children's school, trigger laws allow them to change the administration of a school deemed "poorly performing," which means receiving an Academic Performance Index score below 800. The Academic Performance Index is determined by test scores, attendance rates and graduation rates for all students. The race, English Learner Status, disabilities and socioeconomic disadvantages of students also are considered when assigning a score to a school.

When 51 percent or more of parents sign a petition to change the administration of a California school, trigger laws are enacted, and those who signed the petition can vote whether to:

1. convert the public school into a charter school;
2. replace the staff of the school and make budget decisions;
3. excuse the principal from the school; or
4. close the school and relocate students to a new school.

California, Connecticut, Indiana, Louisiana, Mississippi, Ohio and Texas currently are the only states to have passed parent trigger laws; each state has adopted the law differently. More than 20 states are considering passing such laws.

"Some schools have laptops in each classroom, while others can't afford paper. How do you evaluate schools not on the same playing field?"

—Gary Maynard, president of the Connecticut Federation of School Administrators

While these trigger laws are portrayed as an instant solution for frustrated parents, there is no proof they are effective. A 2012 memo from the National Education Policy Center called the trigger laws "too new to evaluate," and stated the laws are "not likely to yield any benefits." Their tunnel vision approach to education reform also tends to overlook key issues, such as funding.

"Not all schools are funded the same; they do not have the same opportunities. Some schools have laptops in each classroom, while others can't afford paper. How do you evaluate schools not on the same playing field?" says Gary Maynard, president of the Connecticut Federation of School Administrators. "Some people want to remove a principal for political reasons. They want to run for office and do not agree with the same philosophies as the principal. Principals are criticized for not being able to disclose information due to HIPAA laws, because parents

can't see everything that they are doing for the school."

Connecticut was able to alter the parent trigger law introduced in 2012 by creating a parent advisory committee that meets with the school board to discuss potential ways to turn the school around. The school board then is given the final say of whether parent suggestions are implemented.

In addition to the absence of proven results, trigger laws recently have been criticized for serving as a tool for increasing charter schools and promoting the privatization of education.

Parents of students at Desert Trails Elementary School in Adelanto, Calif., the first school to implement the parent trigger laws in 2013, believe they were tricked by Parent Revolution into signing a petition that led to the enactment of the parent trigger and allowed the Walton Family Foundation to fund a charter school this fall. Desert Trails parents say they were told the petition would improve school conditions and bring in new computers and better lunches, but the petition failed to mention Desert Trails would become a charter school. Parents are upset the elementary school now will be a charter.

"Our community was misled. Parents didn't know they were signing for a charter school," said Lori Yuan, a mother of two children at Desert Trails Elementary, as quoted on the Frying Pan News blog.

Addressing the issue of education reform requires the voice and insight of parents, but parental insight must be incorporated in a way that is open, balanced and that takes all aspects of needed change into consideration, including the views of experienced practitioners. ■

"Our community was misled. Parents didn't know they were signing for a charter school."

—Lori Yuan, a mother of two children at Desert Trails Elementary

'Crisis Upon Crisis' for Chicago Public Schools

Chicago Public Schools (CPS) claims tens of thousands of children every year are trapped in underutilized and under-resourced schools, the rationale the administration uses for pushing to consolidate schools. But how can closing schools be the answer?

The Chicago Board of Education's final decision to close 48 schools and lay off 2,113 teachers and staffers may be only the beginning of even wider unemployment in the district.

"This has been a crisis upon crisis," said Clarice Berry, president of AFSA Chicago Local 2. "It is just one shattering implementation of bad news and policy after another."

Some 1,036 teachers are among those laid off. The remaining 1,077 are support staff, which consists of teacher assistants, food service employees and janitorial staff, according to a July 24 *Final Call* article.

"It's an oxymoron," Berry said. "You're told to do more with less and it is an impossible task. How can we maintain a longer school year and a longer school day and still maintain a quality

education for our students? It is hard to have quality without quantity."

Those with tenure and high enough performance ratings will be able to follow their students to the remaining schools. Chicago's designated "turnaround" schools will replace everyone, regardless of job performance. All of those who lost their jobs throughout the district may apply to open positions within the district; an average of 60 percent of teachers who reapply end up hired.

Berry also commented on the grief created by student-based budgeting known as the weighted student formula, which moves away from funding institutions to funding students and is set to be enforced for the 2013–2014 school year.

"You get a lump sum and you're told to buy everything you need from that," Berry said. "You're supposed to make the best of it."

This budgeting policy has only added stress for principals in the Chicago area as they attempt to keep the final goal of maintaining a quality education for their students in sight.

"The staff loss is continuing because of the budget process," said Berry.

Those opposed to the mass school closings have not gone down without a fight. A hearing on July 16–19 got the ball rolling as the Chicago Teacher's Union and parents pushed for an injunction on the school closures, claiming inordinate harm to Hispanic and African American children and those with special needs, and requesting that at least 10 of the 50 schools scheduled for closure remain open. Parents in support of the injunction said that while African American students make up only 42 percent of the students in Chicago's districts, 88 percent of the students being moved from closed schools are African American.

Despite parent and union efforts, on July 31 the court declined all requests to stop the proposed school closings.

As the closures move forward this fall, students and educators will take their place as figures in line-item budgets for CPS officials. As Berry noted, "This is as close to a disaster as it can get." ■

CSA Partners with Children's Health Fund in Asthma Initiative

At least 70,000 schoolchildren in New York City have asthma, according to the NYC Department of Education's Office of Student Health. Only half of these children have medication forms on file, which means many children with asthma are not treated by a school nurse in the event of an emergency. CSA President Ernest Logan explains why the Council of School Administrators (CSA) is tackling this issue with the Children's Health Fund (CHF).

The onset of an asthma attack is terrifying to the sick child, upsetting to classmates and stressful for teachers and administrators. Of course, asthma is just one medical problem that causes so many problems at schools, especially among children of low-income families. Some children don't have the eyeglasses they need to see the blackboard. Others have never been to a dentist. Chronic headaches and stomach aches can be symptoms of overwhelmed children struggling to cope with trauma in their lives or distress from having basic needs unmet.

When I was a middle school principal, my heart sank weekly when we were forced to call an ambulance for a child with asthma. In many of our classrooms, particularly in schools serving children from very-low-income families, educators and health practitioners have seen how undiagnosed and untreated health problems affect students and the learning environment in dramatic ways.

How extensive are these problems and what can we, as school leaders, do to tackle them? CSA decided to do some diagnostics of our own, teaming up with the Children's Health Fund (CHF) to explore the pervasiveness of these health problems and potential solutions to help ensure that most kids are healthy and ready to learn.

CHF is the ideal partner for this work. It was started 25 years ago in New York City by singer/songwriter Paul Simon and pediatrician/child advocate Dr. Irwin Redlener to bring health care to children in homeless shelters. Today,



Courtesy CSA

A New York City pre-K student turns the tables on Dr. Delaney Gracy, chief medical officer of the Children's Health Fund, which CSA has selected as a partner in its campaign to reduce the effects of asthma as a barrier to learning in NYC public schools.

Health Care a Struggle for Low-Income Families

CSA sat down with Children's Health Fund President and Co-Founder Dr. Irwin Redlener and Chief Medical Officer Dr. Delaney Gracy to talk about health barriers to learning.

What are some of today's biggest health challenges facing children, particularly those from low-income families?

Dr. Redlener: Parents in low-income families often do shift work, and taking time off to take a sick child to a clinic can mean losing wages. Getting to a doctor for routine, preventative care becomes a lower priority. Many families simply don't have access to health care, even though the child has insurance. There is a significant shortage of doctors who accept Medicaid patients. Many, many health problems are simply overlooked.

Dr. Gracy: Prior to becoming chief medical officer at Children's Health Fund, I spent five years treating children in mobile clinics. One of the biggest issues we saw was uncontrolled asthma. Parents would tell us that the child was awake all night coughing. Or if an attack was bad, they'd spend the night at the ER, waiting for urgent care. That takes a real toll on kids.

Dr. Redlener: And it takes a toll on learning. My niece is an elementary teacher in Brooklyn. She's told me stories of kids who are literally unable to stay awake in the classroom. They put their heads on the desk. When a controllable illness is not allowing a child to learn in school, we are robbing that kid of his or her potential to live a fulfilling life and to contribute to society. It's bad for the child, and ultimately it's bad for the country.

What are you doing to address this problem?

Dr. Redlener: Solutions often depend on education and resources. Children's Health Fund has been an active advocate for kids throughout its history, and we are working continuously to educate policy makers and advocate aggressively for more resources. Facts help us make a compelling case, and that's one reason we are so excited to partner with CSA to learn more about what school principals and administrators see. Educating the public—parents in particular—is also key. We need to build public support for policy and make sure that parents know what they could—and should—be doing to ensure their kids are healthy and ready to learn.

its national network of mobile medical clinics provides primary pediatric care at scores of schools in disadvantaged communities across the country. Like many of our administrators, supervisors and teachers, CHF's health care professionals are on the front lines, working to support kids who face the serious day-to-day challenges of poverty.

CSA is very excited about the collaboration with CHF in the year ahead. Together we will work on solutions for critical problems in the classroom, such as children with asthma, and will collaborate to promote better parent education. ■



Two New York City school students join Children's Health Fund (CHF) co-founder Dr. Irwin Redlener in front of one of CHF's mobile medical vans. CSA and CHF have launched an initiative to raise awareness in schools of asthma control.

Courtesy CSA



AFSA Aids Member in Need

AFSA Local 1 member Joe Ponzo recently found himself the defendant in a court case. Although he was acquitted by the court, Ponzo spent his own money to pay for his attorney. Thankfully, as a member of AFSA, Ponzo qualified for the AFSA Legal Benefit, and was awarded \$10,000 from AFSA to cover the cost of his attorney's fees.

"I received the check today," Ponzo said in an e-mail

to the AFSA office. "Your professionalism is greatly appreciated. This amount will take some pressure off my family over the next couple of months. Thank you again."

This aid is available to any AFSA member who is found not guilty in a legal matter. For details of this and more AFSA benefits, please visit AFSAadmin.org/members/benefits. ■

Local 28 Clear of 'Right to Work'—for Now

As of March, Michigan is the 24th state to adopt a so-called "right to work" bill, meaning any new contracts negotiated after March 28 are affected by such union-busting legislation.

"It affects any union and gives members the right to not pay [dues] and enables the employer to not deduct. They are trying to financially drain you."

—Debbie Ake,
president of
OSAS

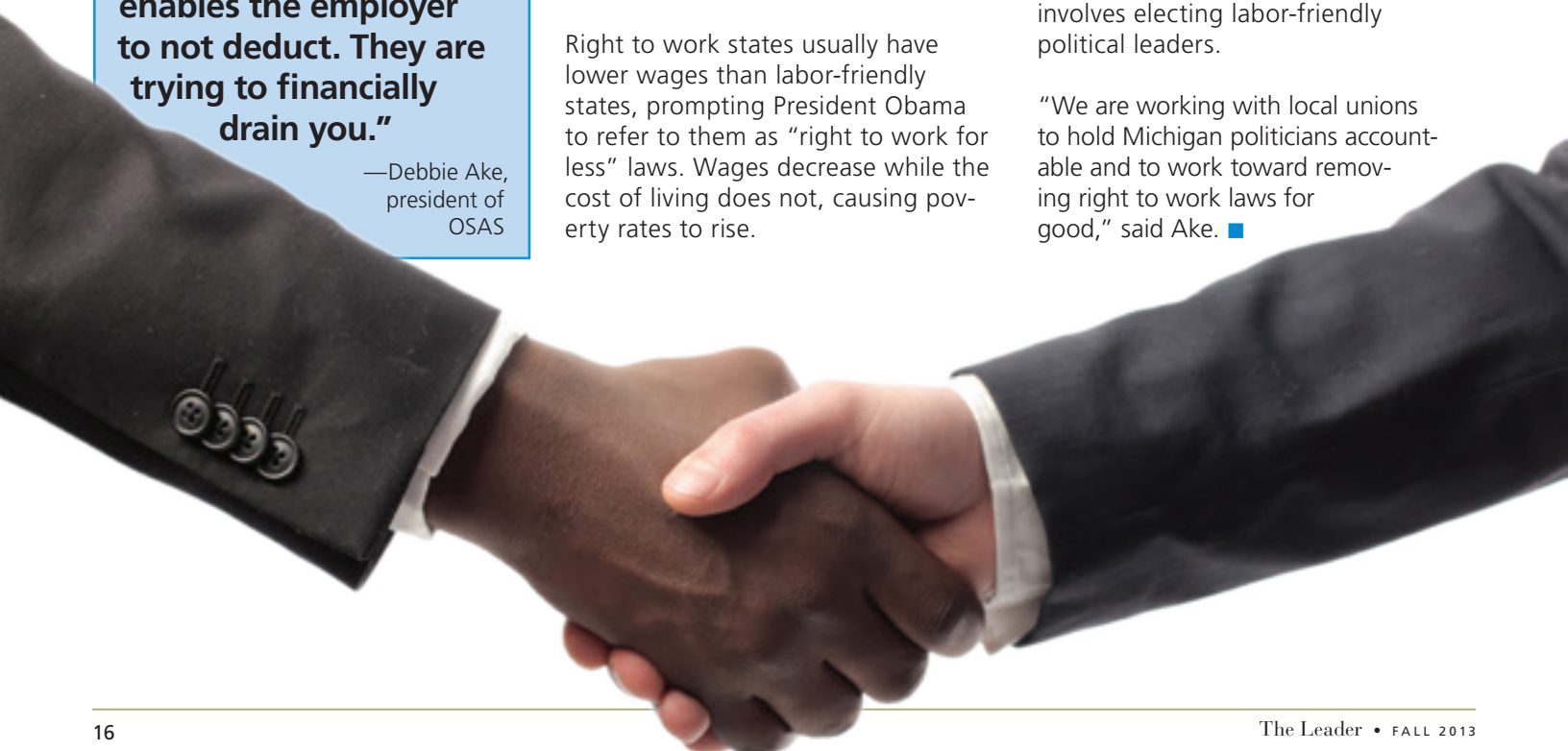
The Organization of School Administrators and Supervisors in Detroit (OSAS), AFSA Local 28, was threatened by this legislation, but was able to bargain an arrangement before the March deadline that added a union security clause to the contract. Reaching agreement within three days also provided it with a temporary extension to the current contract until its renewal in 2016.

Right to work states usually have lower wages than labor-friendly states, prompting President Obama to refer to them as "right to work for less" laws. Wages decrease while the cost of living does not, causing poverty rates to rise.

"It affects any union and gives members the right to not pay [dues] and enables the employer to not deduct," said Debbie Ake, president of OSAS. "They are trying to financially drain you."

Unions in Michigan are hoping that the right to work law will be overturned in the next few years. Part of overturning these laws involves electing labor-friendly political leaders.

"We are working with local unions to hold Michigan politicians accountable and to work toward removing right to work laws for good," said Ake. ■



Reauthorizing the Elementary and Secondary Education Act

Both the House and Senate recently introduced legislation to make changes to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). While the ESEA bill is long overdue for reauthorization, neither measure has received bipartisan support, which means it could prove difficult to reauthorize the bill this year.

On June 12, after two days of debate, the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee completed consideration of a proposed bill, the Strengthening America's Schools Act (SASA) of 2013, introduced by Sen. Tom Harkin (D-Iowa). The bill, passed out of committee on a 12–10 partisan vote, targets several of the issues in the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). There is no date set yet for when SASA might be brought to the full Senate for a vote, although there is some indication it may happen in early fall. Chairman Harkin and Ranking Member Sen. Lamar Alexander (R-Tenn.) have agreed on an open amendment process that, despite the legislation's partisan foundation, likely will improve its odds of reaching the floor for action, if and when the crowded legislative calendar clears.

The Student Success Act... completely misses the mark, with legislation focused more on efforts to cut funding than to support education.

The Strengthening America's Schools Act would:

- require districts and states to develop teacher and principal evaluation systems based in part on student outcomes, including achievement and growth;
- authorize a competitive grant program to recruit, support and prepare principals and assistant principals to improve student academic

achievement in high-need schools through research-based programs;

- eliminate Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), and the punitive sanctions that schools face when AYP is not met;
- require schools labeled "low-performing," to maintain the four improvement models included under the School Improvement Grant program;
- add a "whole-school reform" option, which allows schools to use a turnaround option that is supported by evidence;
- make the Title I funding formula for school districts serving low-income students more equitable, by requiring local and state resources per pupil in those schools to be equal or greater than the average combined local and state funds per pupil in non-Title I schools;
- require each school district receiving Title I funds to complete an Equity Report Card on several factors impacting students;
- allow states with NCLB waivers to continue using accountability systems that have been approved by the Department of Education;
- write into law the Obama administration's Race to the Top program; and
- require states to expand early childhood education initiatives and incentives for states to provide full-day kindergarten.

In the House, Reps. John Kline (R-Minn.) and Todd Rokita (R-Ind.) introduced a very different vision for the reauthorization of ESEA, The Student Success Act (H.R. 5), which passed the House July 19.

The Student Success Act would:

- Consolidate almost all federal funding, including Title I, into one large block grant and eliminate 70 existing K–12 programs;
- Eliminate federally mandated interventions in "low-performing" schools. States and districts would be given flexibility to develop appropriate improvement strategies;

- Explicitly prohibit the secretary of education from encouraging states to adopt a particular set of standards;
- Allow states to design their own accountability systems with few parameters set by the federal government;
- Remove "maintenance of effort," which requires districts to maintain spending at a certain level in order to receive federal funds;
- Require school districts and/or states to base teacher and principal evaluations on student outcomes, and to use the results to make personnel decisions as defined by the district, which would include promotions and firings; and
- Repeal the federal "highly qualified teacher" requirements.

Harkin's bill is a step in the right direction on many fronts, such as its efforts to eliminate AYP, which unfairly labels schools as failing. His bill also recognizes the importance of principal training, and attempts to make funding more equitable. However, improvement models under the School Improvement Grant program, especially the required dismissal of the principal and staff, remain a concern. Basing the fifth improvement model on evidence is a step in the right direction. Additionally, Congress should increase the federal investment in education for all children, not continue a system such as Race to the Top that inherently creates winners and losers.

The Student Success Act recently passed by the House completely misses the mark, with legislation focused more on efforts to cut funding than to support education. The Student Success Act would lock in funding for programs authorized under ESEA at sequestration levels until the 2019–2020 school year, which would slash education funding by approximately \$1.3 billion in FY 2014 alone.

While reauthorization is crucial, Congress clearly has a long way to go before it provides a feasible, bipartisan solution that is truly in the best interest of students and educators. ■

NEGOTIATION WORKSHOP PREPARES AFSA MEMBERS

continued from page 1

provided to its members," said Florida Woods, program assistant and coordinator between the Connecticut Federation of School Administrators (CFSA) and AFSA. CFSA was the host for the workshop. "Participants left empowered and ready to perform the tasks of bargaining for their respective locals."

In addition to the simulated negotiations, there was an emotional discussion about the aftermath of the shootings at Sandy Hook Elementary School, which took place last December. Dr. Anthony Salvatore, president of the Newtown, Conn., AFSA Local 113, spoke to the group about his personal experiences, the school and the community.

"One of the most important things during the aftermath of a tragedy like 12/14 is relationships," said Salvatore. "We have had the Newtown Prevention Council for over 25 years. It has provided a network of community, business and school leaders toward a common goal of providing awareness, education and resources to address the physical, emotional and intellectual needs of our youth and community. This type of network establishes positive relationships within the community that can be called upon immediately to support each other during such tragic events as 12/14. Not all communities have this kind of support system in place, though."

"The negotiation training sessions were very helpful and successful, partly because there was the opportunity to come together. You begin to share stories and realize that you are not alone," Salvatore added. "A lot of people are unsung heroes of their schools. At the training session, you felt a sense of community as you built new relationships, reinforced old friendships and networked professionally."

The workshop will have a carry-back effect to the membership. It will help

AFSA local leaders determine who should be at a negotiation, decide how to maximize the value of any money available, communicate with the membership of the union, decide which issues are important and sell the agreement once it is reached.

The negotiation training workshop in Connecticut was one of several that AFSA has held for its members over the last few years. Bryant says the union expects to hold more, depending on the need and demand for training in negotiating tactics. ■



(L to R): Migdalia Cruz Arthurton, Local 101, St. Thomas, V.I. (and her sister, enjoying a quick visit!); GEB member Domingo Madera; and Lucy Díaz Claudio, Local 105, San Juan, P.R.



AFSA General Counsel Bruce Bryant leads negotiation training in Cromwell, Conn.



(L to R): Fran DiFiore, Cromwell Administrators Association, AFSA Local 42F, Cromwell, Conn.; Jody Covington, Local 10, Buffalo, N.Y.; Migdalia Cruz Arthurton, Local 101, St. Thomas, V.I.; Fabio Ayal, Local 22, Hartford, Conn.; and Gary Highsmith, Association of Hamden Public School Administrators, Local 121, Hamden, Conn.

Improvements in American Education Noted

As the struggle to improve our education system continues, the latest results from a four-decade study show that despite the current conflicts and disputes, education is steadily improving over time.

The report, released June 27, is known as the Nation's Report Card and conveys the findings of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), which has looked at student progress in the United States since the early 1970s in reading and mathematics for students ages 9, 13 and 17.

Results of the Nation's Report Card involving more than 50,000 students across the nation showed improved performance in reading and mathematics for students ages 9 and 13 with, according to the report's summary, "scores 8 to 25 points higher in 2012 than in the first assessment year."

In reading there was a decrease in the gender gap for 9-year-old students since the initial 1971 report; for 17-year-old students, the gender gap in mathematics has fallen below the numbers reported in 1973. There also has been an overall decrease in the achievement gap between white, black and Hispanic students since 1973.

Additionally, the study elaborated on the changing face of American students, showing that between 1978 and 2012, the population of 13-year-old Hispanic students tripled, while the population of white students in that age group decreased from 80 percent to 56 percent.

There was an overall lack of improvement seen for the oldest students tracked, the 17-year-olds, which Alliance for Excellent Education President Bob Wise said might be due to the No Child Left Behind Act.

"The No Child Left Behind Act largely ignored high schools and the consequences are clear," Wise said in an article posted June 28 at LakeExpo.com. "The average performance of the nation's high school students has remained flat for 40 years, while the economy's demands have ramped up tremendously."

While the fight for the promise of public education continues as we battle for improved policy and against school closures, budget cuts and privatization, these results provide an important reminder of the strides that have been made to provide equal education for all. ■



From the Mailbox

June 30, 2013

Dear President Woodard,

Thank you for the excellent, thought provoking issue of *The Leader*.

I am particularly drawn to part of your editorial: "Principal preparation programs simply are no substitute for on-the-job experience. In addition to coursework, the training of a principal should involve working with a qualified, seasoned professional who can mentor and work with the principal for the first two or three years."

It was after being inspired by the UFT Teacher Center that I conceived the idea of a SUPER CENTER. Our local CSA wrote this up as a proposal for the federal government. It was accepted and I had the privilege of being one of the mentors. My job was to visit newly appointed principals at their schools and help them in whatever it was they needed. It was a very satisfying undertaking for me as well as for them.

Perhaps some such idea could be pursued by AFSA and/or its member organizations.

Sincerely Yours,

Dr. Gloria Cohen
New York, N.Y.



1101 17th St. N.W., Suite 408
Washington, DC 20036

UPCOMING EVENTS

- Oct. 18–19 **AFSA General Executive Board Meeting, Washington, D.C.**
- Nov. 12–15 **Oklahoma AFL-CIO Biennial Convention, Tulsa, Okla.**
- Jan. 15–20 **AFL-CIO Martin Luther King Jr. Observance, San Antonio**
- Feb. 18–19 **AFL-CIO Executive Council Meeting, Houston**

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