

THE Leader


**American Federation of
School Administrators**
AFSA, AFL-CIO

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A NEWSLETTER OF THE AMERICAN FEDERATION OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

'I Thanked God We Were Still Alive'

On Sept. 27, Mark Brodsky, the director of the retiree chapter of AFSA Local 1, Council of School Supervisors & Administrators, sent an email to members in Puerto Rico urging them to get in touch if there was any way the local could be of assistance. On Oct. 6, María de los A. Barreto, a retired middle school principal from Brooklyn, sent the following to Brodsky:

"This is the 15th day after Hurricane Maria. I was in Puerto Rico when Hurricane Maria entered the northeast of the island and in 22 hours destroyed the island, leaving the island [without] all communicat[ion].

The night of [the] hurricane, I heard the heavy rains and fierce winds pounding on my cement, beautiful and strong, well-built home. At midnight, the howling, strong winds haunted me to

sleep besides my mother's bed. At 5 a.m., the hurricane winds were stronger than ever, beating upon my security windows and doors. I felt my windows and doors shudder, but they did not give in. The heavy winds were making more noise than the night before.



María de los A. Barreto

We were locked in the family room located in the center of the home on the first level, away from windows and doors. I thanked God we were still alive. And, I prayed for Him to calm the hurricane, keep us safe, and keep the people of Puerto Rico safe as well.

When the hurricane finally ceased, I looked outside my home and I could not believe my eyes when I saw the surroundings of my home bare, with no trees and nothing green. All trees were on the ground. Then, I checked my home and found no damage to my home, just minor water on the top level. The Lord blessed us and our home.

Since Hurricane Maria, we have no power, no water, no cable, no internet and no phone service. But we feel blessed to be safe and alive. Every day we spent the day safe at home waiting

continued on page 6

Education Underfunding Spurs Oklahoma City Schools to Consider Suing State

The Oklahoma City Public Schools Board of Education announced its decision to pursue litigation against the Oklahoma Legislature on Aug. 21, in response to significant cuts to the district's annual budget.

See page 5

Support in the Aftermath of Natural Disasters

In communities impacted by natural disasters such as Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, Jose and Maria, educators should consider the special needs of children whose families may have suffered significant losses.

See page 11

Members Learn to Prepare for Challenges at National Summer Training Session

While we face many challenges in education and labor, AFSA hosted a free professional development training opportunity, Empowering Our Union: Organizing for Public Education, in July.

See page 12

DONATE NOW HELP REOPEN SCHOOLS

Our brothers and sisters in the path of this year's hurricanes need our help. Hundreds of AFSA members have been affected, especially in Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands.

You can help make a difference by donating to the AFSA 2017 Hurricane Relief Fund; all proceeds will go to fulfill requests from our members for necessary supplies to support them and to help reopen their schools.

Visit www.AFSAadmin.org/2017-hurricane-relief-fund/ to make a donation today.

The True Leaders of Public Education

By Diann Woodard



AFSA President Diann Woodard

This October we honor and celebrate school leaders all month long during National Principals Month. I thank all principals and administrators for their dedication to education. Let this month also be a reminder to reflect on the impact you have in your community.

Being a school principal is no easy job. Administrators work day in and day out all year long to make sure students have successful learning environments. From making sure breakfasts are served to overseeing after-school activities, administrators do it all. Often, school leaders are not given enough recognition.

Specifically, our members in urban city schools—who struggle with oversized classrooms and insufficient funding—make magic but go unrecognized. Principals in major cities try their hardest to effectively lead and improve their schools despite the levels of poverty and social dysfunction.

In order to ensure that all our students receive high-quality education and that teachers are providing efficient learning environments, principals need the necessary tools and resources to lead schools to their full potential. Good leaders lead good schools. This is why funding for school leaders and their training is so crucial—and an advantage to our nation's schools.

We have come a long way with the passage of the Elementary and Secondary School Act (ESSA) two years ago, which provided schools with opportunities to invest and support principal leadership. As a result of our combined tireless efforts of advocacy with the National Association of Elementary School Principals and the National Association of Secondary School Principals, our voice is reflected in the new legislation. Most importantly, we succeeded in implementing language in the law that lets states set aside 3 percent of their Title II, Part A allocations to provide support for school leadership-specific activities.

However, we now are facing a major crisis, as the entire program supporting principals is at risk. President Trump has proposed and the House Appropriations Committee has agreed to eliminate all funding for Title II-A. That would be a \$2 billion cut! Just recently, however, we had some good news: the Senate Appropriations Committee passed a funding bill that would provide Title II-A with all of its money. While we won this battle, the war is not over. We must

fight for a final funding bill that agrees with the Senate's funding level.

I think you would agree that, given the unique role that principals play in providing a pathway to success for our students, it is necessary we receive fair funding for professional development opportunities.

Our lawmakers need to understand that a principal is the first person you see at a school and the last one to leave. They need to grasp just how much work a principal puts into his or her school, with little recognition and, too often, little support. This is your month to speak up and to tell your members of Congress all the wonderful and important things you do for your schools. Remember to ask them for the funding you need and deserve for professional development.

Although principals deserve to be honored all year long, let this month serve as a reminder of all the endless work and effort we as school leaders put toward helping our children, the future of our country. ■

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Run Your Union! *Submit Your Resolutions* *to*

The AFSA 15th Triennial Constitutional Convention

Washington, D.C., Area • July 26–29, 2018

There will be a focus on the many challenges we are facing in both education and labor. One of the most important missions of the convention is the discussion and adoption of resolutions. The resolutions will provide direction for AFSA moving forward.

As a school leader and a valued member of AFSA, it is your voice that is most important in this process. Don't miss this opportunity to make your voice heard and tell us what matters to you by submitting your own resolution(s). All resolutions will be considered by the AFSA Resolutions Committee, which will submit the official resolutions to the AFSA convention.

Please send your resolutions to
resolutions@AFSAadmin.org by Jan. 1, 2018.

You can review the resolutions adopted at the 14th Triennial Constitutional Convention by visiting
www.AFSAadmin.org/events/the-2015-afsa-fourteenth-triennial-constitutional-convention/.

Baltimore Local Helps Laid-Off Administrators Secure Jobs

As many as 115 Baltimore City Public Schools staff members, including teachers and administrators, were laid off over the summer as part of a new plan to balance a \$1.31 billion budget next year. The staff members involved were notified of the layoffs as early as June 1.

The district was able to give a 30-day warning before the announcement to the Public School Administrators and Supervisors Association of Baltimore City, AFSA Local 25. The union quickly stepped in to help. Initially, 63 members anticipated losing their positions at their schools—46 administrators and 17 central office staff. Throughout the summer, the organization worked very closely with Baltimore City Public Schools CEO

Dr. Sonja Brookins Santelises and her staff to ensure as many union members affected by this reduction in force as possible had assignments for the 2017–2018 school year. The district let the association know of vacant positions available due to routine retirements and promotions. PSASA worked endlessly to assist and notify each member of open positions they were qualified for and encouraged them to apply.

The association was able to help 43 members secure a position before the start of the new school year.

“We are working diligently with the district to take care of the remaining staff and have them assigned to comparable positions in the district,” said PSASA President Jimmy Gittings. “As an organization, this is what we do for our community. We are here to support our members in every way we can.” ■

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—PSASA President
Jimmy Gittings



Education Underfunding Spurs Oklahoma City Schools to Consider Suing State

The Oklahoma City Public Schools Board of Education announced its decision to pursue litigation against the Oklahoma Legislature on Aug. 21, in response to significant cuts to the district's annual budget.

"First, it needs to be made clear that this action against the state legislature and specific legislators is currently in the exploration stages," said Gregory Frederick, president of the Oklahoma City Administrators, AFSA Local 79. "The Oklahoma City Public Schools legal team is looking into the possibility of legal action and has gained the approval of the school board to do so. I am saddened that our district would even need to explore an option to take legal action against our state legislature and its leadership over properly funding education."

In 2015, state lawmakers slashed \$30 million from the Oklahoma City Schools' budget as part of statewide budget cuts. District Superintendent Aurora Lora thought lawmakers subsequently would find the revenue to increase funding for schools; however, the budget was cut another \$10 million this past year.

Lora says the district has been trying to implement a new math curriculum but could not due to a lack of funds to buy new textbooks. Budget cuts also have forced educator and administrator

layoffs, as well as had an impact on athletics and arts programs.

Article 13, Section 6 of the Oklahoma constitution states that "the Legislature shall provide for a system of textbooks for the common schools of the State, and the State through appropriate legislation shall furnish such textbooks free of cost for use by all pupils therein."

"Our state's lack of funding, and continued cuts to education, have become a national embarrassment for our state," Frederick said. "Since 2008, Oklahoma has cut per pupil funding by more than 20 percent while the state's enrollment has increased. Oklahoma's devaluing of our public education institution has created an economic liability for the state.

"The real impact in the schools and the classrooms across the state," he said, "is increased class sizes, the cutting of programs like foreign languages and arts; schools have cut sports programs or shifted the costs of these programs to parents. Textbook adoptions have been delayed or canceled due to a lack of funding."

Frederick also said schools are having difficulty recruiting and retaining quality teachers for their classrooms, resulting in a record number of emergency certified teachers in the schools.

"Urban schools, like OKCPS, have been particularly hard hit. When affluent suburban schools have difficulties filling teacher vacancies, those efforts

are magnified for our urban schools. There simply aren't enough qualified applicants to fill the void of teachers leaving the state or sometimes the profession altogether," Frederick noted. "This is a direct result of low teacher pay and the devaluation of the education profession by our state leadership."

According to NewsOK.com, many parents in the district are supportive of the actions taken by the board. "If we don't do something now, I don't feel like we'll ever get the change that's owed to our children," said parent Jennifer Bowman in a story on the website. "Our teachers are spending their time and resources making copies of textbooks because we don't have enough for every child in a classroom."

Parents also have made sacrifices in order to deal with massive budget cuts, says Sarah Jordan. She and other parents have been forced to "spread our own mulch, hand weed the playground and paint the cafeteria and hallways," according to NewsOK.com.

School board member Mark Mann hopes the legislature will find a solution soon; Democrats are calling for a special session to do just that.

"They can fix the ill-conceived revenue measures that have been struck down or will be struck down by the Oklahoma Supreme Court," he said. "They can raise revenue. They can make our children a priority and fund education properly. Then and only then will our efforts cease," he said in the NewsOK.com story. ■





for services to be restored. My mother is doing fine, and she's in good spirit. It is not easy knowing that the island was left with many people without homes and some lost everything, and this is similar to the story of Job.

The beautiful landscaping [that] holds our island's beauty is all gone. The island's vegetation is now destroyed. There are fallen trees and light poles on the ground with hanging power cables everywhere. The devastation on the island of Puerto Rico—it's huge. It is totally desolated, and to describe it better, it looks as [though] you're standing on a place where you have never been before. It is a completely ruined place.



This catastrophic atmospheric act has affected the island's people in many ways. The gasoline lines are long. People wait miles away from the gasoline pumps. People [are] waiting there all day on line to get \$15 worth of gas. For some, when they are almost at the pump, they learn that gas [is] finished and they have to return on the next day to wait at the end of the line again.

(Before the hurricane, I let my Master Guide training kick in, and I prepared my car with a full tank of gas, which I am not moving unless of an emergency, carried enough gasoline to power my generator for a few days, stored enough drinking and cooking water, and bought enough food [and] batteries, and I picked up 15 gallons of Clorox to clean my home and clean the pool water in order to use it to clean the toilets.)



People here have to get [their] water supply on long lines, too. Supermarket shelves are almost empty. There are no flights in or out of the island. The next flights on JetBlue, Delta and American Airlines are scheduled on October 14, and they are booked. My son Anthony used his tech skills to purchase two tickets through United Airlines arriving at LaGuardia Airport. We're planning

to spend a couple of days in NY until services are restored on the island.

The National Guard are here assisting on the main roads with traffic, the gasoline lines, banks, post offices, main stores, Sam's, Walmart, Kmart, Mr. Special [and] Econo, and they are assisting with water and food distribution. Puerto Rico began to receive help—goods and supplies. The public school students and university students are not attending schools. Businesses are closed since they have no power or water to run their businesses. ATM machines are not working. Hospitals are crowded and they are asking for help.

Architects are already on the ground from the United States and they began working to restore services. Doctors and trauma specialists are all working treating the people. Generators have been placed in locations where we have the sick and the less fortunate. The generators are kept running all night because they are caring for the sick and loved ones. It is impossible to get a good night's rest when you have generators going on all night.

The government is taking care of its people and they are doing everything they can to restore quickly and they are trying to keep everyone alive. The good values and the resiliency of the Puerto Rican people [are] to be admired. Puerto Ricans are people of faith and with great courage. The hardworking people of this island will work diligently to make a new Puerto Rico and make it stronger.

Puerto Rico needs the basic necessities. We need Congress to help Puerto Rico with the reconstruction on the island. In addition, we need aid and grants, not loans, to move the reconstruction projects forward. The debt and the fiscal board should be eliminated.

Thank you for your prayers, and for supporting the island of Puerto Rico." ■

AFSA Has Your Back

Hurricanes Harvey, Irma and Maria all packed a tremendous punch across a swath of our nation, from the Texas Gulf Coast through the lower Southeast and the territories of the U.S. Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico.

Harvey left Houston underwater, nearly wiped out several Texas towns and displaced thousands of people. On its heels, Irma blew through Florida, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. Maria added its own punch, leaving utter destruction in its wake on the two U.S. territories. Authorities say it will be months before electricity is restored to these islands and years before a new normal is attained.

AFSA is stepping in to help our members affected by the hurricanes and who are hard at work to try to get schools up and running amid the ruins. Among those affected are AFSA Local 100, St. Croix Educational Administrators' Association; AFSA Local 101, St. Thomas/St. John Educational Administrators' Association; and AFSA Local 105, Educadores Puertorriqueños en Acción, Inc.

AFSA is standing by and supporting our members, and to help get the affected schools reopened. Already, each member in Puerto Rico has received cash supplements. Our members in St. Thomas have received 8,000- and 20,000-watt generators. Emergency supplies such as radios, batteries, first aid supplies, cleaning supplies, flashlights and lanterns have been sent to our local in St. Croix.

The AFSA 2017 Hurricane Relief Fund has been created in an effort to collect money to send the necessary supplies. You can donate to the fund at www.AFSAadmin.org/2017-hurricane-relief-fund/.

Domingo Madera, president of AFSA Local 105 in Puerto Rico, attended the General Executive Board meeting on Oct. 13, some three weeks after the storm hit. "The day of Hurricane Maria was the worst day of my 69 years. All day was constant wind and rain. I saw trees fall

and roofs blow off homes," said Madera. "Only 10 percent of the island has power, as of yesterday. Sometimes the power will go on for an hour or two, and then is lost again. There are major problems with food, gas, banks and water. Many homes and families are still without water. The schools are still closed. The goal is to reopen them on October 23."

Madera visited one school in Guayanilla, Puerto Rico, where the river ran so high that the school was flooded with eight feet of water. He described how there are many schools that are flooded and hundreds of students are leaving to go to school in the United States because they do not have food or water. "We live. We have faith. We will pray to God and continue living," said Madera.

All of labor is united behind efforts to aid those in the storm-stricken areas. After coming together to help those affected on the Gulf Coast and in the

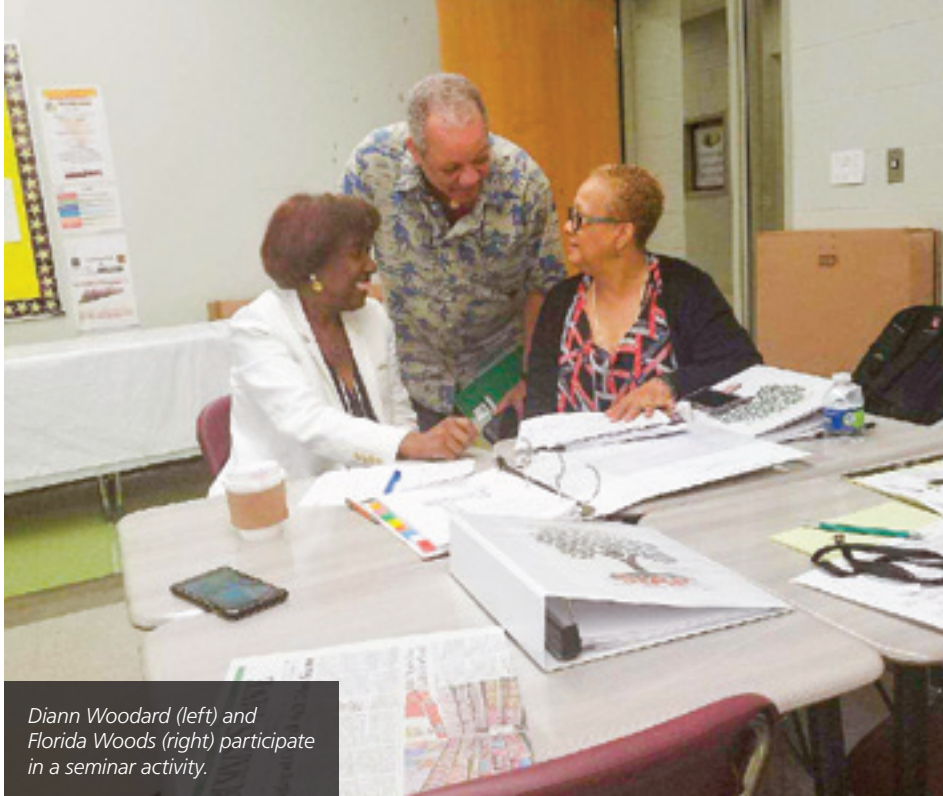
southeastern United States, union brothers and sisters from around the nation gathered in Newark, New Jersey, on Oct. 4 for a two-week relief work trip to Puerto Rico. Under the auspices of the AFL-CIO, the Air Line Pilots Association, the Association of Flight Attendants-CWA and the Machinists, some 300 labor union first responders and union volunteers flew to Puerto Rico to put "boots on the ground" to help with relief and rebuilding efforts.

They made an immediate difference. An Oct. 7 tweet from the AFL-CIO's Damon Silvers noted that IBEW Local 3 electricians had restored the juice at a San Juan hospital that had gone several weeks without air conditioning, leaving patients and staff sweltering in tropical heat. San Juan Mayor Carmen Yulín Cruz, who has been battling the Trump administration seeking proper assistance and relief, told the union group, "I put out the call for help, and who listened? The unions."

There is one other option potentially available for our members in the storm-affected areas. AFSA members may be eligible for Union Plus benefits, such as \$500 Disaster Relief Grants. For more information on this and other possible benefits, and to see whether you qualify, visit www.unionplus.org/hardship-help/disaster-relief-grants. ■

Hurricane Maria makes landfall in Puerto Rico in September 2017.





Diann Woodard (left) and Florida Woods (right) participate in a seminar activity.

SIAP and AFSA have agreed to work together to address math literacy and the challenges facing students and parents across the country.

AFSA Joins With Educators to Promote Math Literacy

The Southern Initiative of the Algebra Project (SIAP) has been working for the last two decades on redefining how math is taught to children in public schools. This summer, AFSA had the opportunity to learn more about the innovative SIAP model to promote math literacy.

President Diann Woodard and Florida Woods, AFSA Southern regional vice president and executive director of the Professional Administrators of New Orleans Public Schools, Inc. (PANOPSI), AFSA Local 17, were among those who attended a professional development seminar focusing on how the program can be used in the classroom.

SIAP's program seeks to create a sense of significance for students and encourage them to become more engaged with math, which would lead to a greater desire to attempt higher-level math courses. It is focused

most intently on distressed school districts, particularly those with a large population of low-income students from underserved populations, including African Americans and Hispanics.

SIAP has target sites in Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi and South Carolina, and is working with Dillard University, Lincoln University, Virginia State University, the University of the District of Columbia and Xavier University of Louisiana, five historically black colleges and universities, in establishing a strategically planned and focused Pre-K-16 model.

Additionally, the program seeks to create partnerships between middle schools and high schools with colleges and universities. Through these partnerships, students at all levels would receive training to support their peers and to provide peer tutoring in an effort to increase math proficiency.

SIAP and AFSA have agreed to work together to address math literacy and the challenges facing students and parents across the country. ■

Dr. Deneen Washington

The role of a principal has changed immensely over time. Principals not only play a role in student discipline in their schools, but also are responsible for serving as a teacher evaluator and mentor.

Over the last 20 years Dr. Deneen Washington, a member of City Association of Supervisors and Administrators, AFSA Local 20, has transformed what the traditional role of a principal is. With experience in a public school setting and now as a mentor to teachers, Washington is an example of how this leadership role can evolve over time.

Although she was an accounting/finance major, Washington always knew she wanted to teach. She entered the Newark (New Jersey) Public School system in 1998 as an alternate route elementary school teacher.

Early on in her career she entered an administrative track and served as a vice principal for three years prior to being appointed as principal of Maple Avenue School in Newark. She served as principal of the school for 11 years.

In 2014 Washington was assigned to a nontraditional role at The Virtual Learning Institute. She maintains the title of principal, though she does not

physically have a school building with children. This role has allowed her to provide services to teachers who have been pulled from their classrooms for a variety of reasons.

"Deneen's current role is an important one," said Leonard Pugliese, AFSA secretary-treasurer. "Indeed, it may be the prelude to an expanded and critical role for future principals, where successful school principals are identified and utilized to assist groups of teachers as teachers amplify their skills."

In the two years of the program, Washington has assisted more than 60 teachers.

"When teachers enter the Virtual Learning Institute they complete various self-assessments and needs-assessment surveys to identify their learning and leadership styles, and gain an understanding of the strengths and skill areas that need improvement," Washington said.

"I developed a thematic approach that starts with the individual, moves to innovative learning and collaboration, and ends with project-based research projects. When teachers exit the Virtual Learning Institute they have improved pedagogy and personal leadership skills."

Washington says the most rewarding part of leading the program is having teachers go back to their schools or new assignments and perform at a higher rate than when they first entered the program.

"The district's teacher evaluation framework is the major component of our program. By incorporating it in our daily activities, teachers better understand the scoring criteria and what it takes to execute at effective and highly effectively rates."

Another component of the program is team building. Within the Virtual Learning Institute teachers learn practical skills that will enable them to work effectively with their peers, and they are taught how to transform these skills within their classrooms in order to build better relationships with their students.

"Teachers often operate independently and don't always embrace the power of professional collaboration," Washington said. "My professional development simulations ensure they talk, partner and see the value of working as a group."

"I plan lessons that get teachers to think about themselves and their skills," Washington explained. "They need to identify their strengths and weaknesses in and out of the classroom and develop goals. Taking a closer look at themselves, having that reflection piece, has been a positive force in getting them to work cohesively as a unit."

Looking back, Washington said building the program from scratch has been a rewarding experience.

"I feel fortunate I can be a catalyst for my teachers. As principals, we should invest as much time improving our veteran teachers as we do our new teachers. With the proper coaching and feedback, teachers can take ownership in their own learning and, as a result, student learning is enhanced," said Washington. ■

To nominate an AFSA member for the next Member Spotlight, please email nspina@AFSAadmin.org.



National Principals Month



AFSA Secretary-Treasurer Dr. Leonard P. Pugliese (left) receives a New Jersey state resolution recognizing October 2017 as National Principals Month from State Assemblyman Ralph R. Caputo (right).

In communities across the United States, October 2017 has been designated National Principals Month by congressional resolution, whose co-sponsors included Reps. Susan Davis (D-Calif.) and Raul Grijalva (D-Ariz.).

National Principals Month is an opportunity to thank principals everywhere and to share with the community all the great things that principals do. Visit principalsmonth.org to learn more.

Chicago Federation of Labor and Investment Group Acquires Chicago Sun-Times Stake

The Chicago Sun-Times and Chicago Reader have been sold for \$1 to ST Acquisition Holdings LLC, a group organized by the Chicago Federation of Labor and Windy City politician and businessman Edwin Eisendrath.

According to a recent press release, the newly formed group also purchased Answers Media, a full-service digital communications company.

In submitting their bid for the purchase, Chicago Federation of Labor President Jorge Ramirez and Eisendrath said they thought "the news business, although in transition, has tremendous potential."

"A great newspaper in a great democracy needs to matter to the 99 percent, not just the elites."

"The Sun-Times is the oldest, continuously published newspaper in our city, and we strongly believe its independent voice must continue," they said in a joint statement. "A great newspaper in a great democracy needs to matter to the 99 percent, not just the elites."

Both parties will have a role in transforming the nearly bankrupt newspaper.

"With labor owning a newspaper, it will give us an opportunity to report honest and unbiased news not controlled by the wealthy. AFSA has a local in Chicago, so we will have a better chance to get coverage on our education issues," said AFSA President Diann Woodard.

It's not the labor body's first foray into media ownership; the CFL owned and operated WCFL-AM from 1926 to 1978. ■

Support in the Aftermath of Natural Disasters

In communities impacted by natural disasters such as Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, Jose and Maria, educators should consider the special needs of children whose families may have suffered significant losses. This may include the loss of precious human life or personal property, as well some less tangible effects, such as the loss of community or peers (if relocation is required), or the loss of family routines.

School professionals can play a critical role in supporting children, both in the immediate aftermath of such a crisis or throughout the recovery period as they cope with their losses. The circumstances of each individual child and their family will be different, but all children will share the common experience of the disruption caused by these disasters. School professionals should offer students ongoing understanding and support that can help them make sense of their experiences, and stay productive and positive in their lives.

This can be accomplished by:

1. **Decreasing their sense of isolation** by encouraging discussion among students.
2. **Re-establishing routines** (with adequate accommodations to help children who are not yet ready to resume the academic demands they met before the storm), which help children feel more secure.
3. **Making appropriate adjustments** to their class work to help them stay

on course academically, so children have a sense they still are building toward their futures.

4. **Increasing the likelihood that children will talk with their families** by initiating conversations within the school, where school professionals can serve as role models and share positive coping strategies.
5. **Facilitating support among peers** through classroom discussions and availability for one-on-one conversations.
6. **Attentively listening to each child** so that challenges facing children and their families can be identified early and referrals, as appropriate, made for additional support.
7. **Working with students** so they can identify ways they can be personally involved in helping others, which may decrease their sense of helplessness and powerlessness.
8. **Remaining sensitive** to situations that may trigger distress, such as future severe weather.

Teachers and other school staff in these communities are likely to be at least as impacted as many of the students. It is therefore important that the adults practice professional self-care and provide support to their peers. While it may be especially difficult to provide such support when the staff is impacted as well, it also can

be deeply gratifying and rewarding to be able to help children at a time of great need.

Resources:

- The American Academy of Pediatrics has more detailed information on how to provide psychosocial support to children after a disaster; it can be found at schoolcrisiscenter.org/resources/aap-guidelines-support-disaster/. Although written for pediatricians, it is applicable for other professionals, including those in school settings.
- Additional free educational resources can be viewed or downloaded from the center's website, including a psychological first aid booklet for natural disasters at schoolcrisiscenter.org/resources/psychological-first-aid-natural-disaster/; and a psychological first aid booklet for teachers at schoolcrisiscenter.org/resources/psychological-first-aid-students-teachers/.
- Other material can be found on the website for the National Center for School Crisis and Bereavement: Get Help Now: schoolcrisiscenter.org.
- For those children who are grieving the death of a family member or friend, extensive free video and print materials developed by the Coalition to Support Grieving Students, of which AFSA is a member, are available at www.grievingstudents.org. ■

Members Learn to Prepare for Challenges at National Summer Training Session

While we face many challenges in education and labor, AFSA hosted a free professional development training opportunity, *Empowering Our Union: Organizing for Public Education*, in July.

Members came together from across the country for two days of workshops, guest speakers and hands-on activities in Baltimore. Attendees learned how to prepare for anti-union and anti-public education legislation, and extreme budget cuts.

The first session began with a presentation from Bruce Bryant, AFSA general counsel, on *Janus v.*

AFSCME and the impact on locals and getting prepared. The case argues whether public-sector unions should be prohibited from collecting dues from nonmembers for the cost of negotiating contracts. Since all workers benefit from the union's gains, it's only fair that everyone contributes toward the cost. If unions lose this case, current nonmember agency fee payers will become free riders, and current

dues-paying members can opt out. Such a ruling would leave unions with the same obligations, without the same income.

"This case could be a disaster for unions," said Bryant. "We're here today to begin work on a plan and to commit to the hard work we all must do to survive the damage *Janus* can do."



Participants learn to use smartphones and laptops to advocate directly with their lawmakers.

Jon Bernstein, AFSA's lobbyist and president of the Bernstein Strategy Group, talked to attendees about the coming federal crisis in education funding and union political action. Although AFSA helped to implement language in Title IIA for the optional 3 percent state set-aside for principal and school leader professional development, he emphasized the need to continue to fight for a fair final funding bill.

"We need to make an argument for the need for more funding for professional development that school principals deserve," said Bernstein. He also led an activity on learning how to participate in the action alerts regularly sent by AFSA to members so that they contact senators and urge them to support principal funding. Attendees individually wrote to their senators using a prewritten or personalized letter asking them to fully fund the Title II, Part A program. This showed members how easily and quickly they could advocate to lawmakers at the touch of their smartphone or laptop.

The second session consisted of workshops on how to engage members and effective ways to communicate with them. Ken Green, CEO and founder of UnionTrack, spoke about how his software is made specifically for unifying union operations and facilitating member communication. UnionTrack software provides a single system for managing member data, reporting and all aspects of operations, allowing

unions to focus on activities that improve the labor movement. Attendees learned that by using the software for their local, they can easily maintain member statistics, facilitate dues collection with automatic payments, contact members and give members full disclosure of where dues are going. Learn more about this software by visiting www.uniontrack.com.

Scott Treibitz, longtime union activist and president of the public relations firm Tricom Associates, which has long ties to AFSA, gave presentations on lack of member involvement and creating a vision for membership.

"For 50 years, unions have been on a path of declining membership while the public sector is increasing because we're not out there educating," he said. He explained how the biggest issues with members were that their union doesn't ask them what they want and how members are underpaid and overworked. Attendees said members wanted "support, someone who listens to them, job security and more benefits."

Treibitz emphasized that great leaders are great communicators, and that creating dialogue is key. Effective communications tools include social media, an email system and social events, and each should have a call to action. In order to create a vision for membership, he said, locals need to have one-on-one sessions with their members to motivate them to

***"Don't be afraid
to empower and
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Build trust in your
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—David Dzidzienyo***

take action, have a written plan for obtaining goals and ensure members understand the value of their union.

Attendees ended the training with a final session on community engagement. David Dzidzienyo, political coordinator of the Metropolitan Washington Council, AFL-CIO, spoke on how to positively engage a community. He asked members to attend more meetings in their community and to get involved in at least one issue. "Don't be afraid to empower and educate individuals. Build trust in your community," Dzidzienyo advised.

Attendees participated in a final activity, where each local came up with plans to engage membership. Plans included sending out member surveys, improving social media presence, holding a new member orientation, starting one-on-one programs, giving greater attention to member liaison, visiting members at their schools and holding field staff retreats. ■

Senate Committee Spares Professional Development Funds—For Now


Though it has tabled a few items for now—like the threat of a government shutdown—Congress still has a few more subjects to tackle before year's end, including the border wall, the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, trade, health care (which keeps coming up) and tax reform.

While these topics have been at the forefront for the major news outlets, AFSA members have been tirelessly fighting their own battle to keep Title II-A, the Every Student Succeeds Act's professional development block grant, alive and well funded in fiscal year 2018. After sustaining a cut of \$249 million in FY17, Title II-A came under more serious threat when President Trump called for its complete elimination in his FY18 budget proposal and, even more gravely, when the House of Representatives followed suit and eliminated it in its FY18 education funding bill.

Responding to this funding crisis, AFSA and other organizations, including AFT, AFSCME and the National Education Association, rallied their members to advocate for the program. AFSA, along with other prominent principals' and educator groups, such as the National Association of Elementary School Principals, the National Association of Secondary School Principals and the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, issued a statement that decried the House's short-sighted decision to completely defund an entire section of ESSA in its first year of implementation—especially a program that is meant to train

teachers and principals as states take innovative approaches to education under the new law.

With both the president and the House calling for elimination, the fate of the program remained in the Senate's hands. In the months leading up to the Senate's introduction of its education funding bills, several prominent groups banded together in support of Title II-A and held multiple grassroots advocacy days where thousands



of constituents reached out to Congress through phone calls, tweets and letters about the importance of adequately training school leaders.

Hearing the overwhelming support for Title II-A loud and clear from the field, the Senate Appropriations Committee's education funding bill proposed no cuts to the program, electing to maintain funding at \$2.05 billion for FY18. It also included very important report language that may further convince states to use their ESSA-granted authority to set aside 3 percent of their funds for principal and school leader professional development: "The Committee continues to strongly encourage the Department to issue clear guidance specifically on the importance of strong school

We urge AFSA's members to continue to let their lawmakers know how critical this program is to the success of their professions, and ultimately, the success of our nation's students.

leadership, and how States can use existing Title II-A resources, including through the optional 3 percent State set-aside, to support principals and school leadership, including examples of best practices."

In light of this positive news, AFSA issued a joint statement with its colleagues in arms in support of the Senate's decision:

"Congress raised the bar on the use of Title II funds, and states responded with thoughtful and focused plans for continually improving their educator workforce. Those plans recognize that developing teachers' and leaders' skills is essential to student success. Eliminating this program, as the House and Administration propose, would not just devastate state and district budgets, but impede student progress toward college and career readiness. We thank the Senate for the necessary restoration

of funds to bring coherence and support for states and districts as they tackle ESSA implementation next year."

Unfortunately, Title II-A is not out of the woods just yet. Although Congress has given itself until Dec. 8 to make final decisions on federal education funding for next year, the Senate still will have to convince the House—and President Trump—that Title II-A not only merits saving, but that it should not be cut at all. Given that the two chambers are so far apart on their FY18 allocations for this program, AFSA and its members must continue advocacy efforts and stave off what could be a nasty cut if Congress decides to meet in the middle on Title II-A—meaning the program would be sliced in half. We urge AFSA's members to continue to let their lawmakers know how critical this program is to the success of their professions, and ultimately, the success of our nation's students. ■



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