

THE Leader


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AFSA Plays Greater Role at AFL-CIO Convention

At the AFL-CIO's quadrennial convention in Los Angeles from Sept. 8–11, AFSA's members and leadership joined fellow attendees in making their voices heard. Topics of discussion included the changing labor movement, creating a voice for all in the global economy and building genuine, durable community partnerships through a grassroots movement. Speakers included Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.), AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka, Secretary of Labor Thomas Perez and AFSA President Diann Woodard, among others.

Standing Up to Improve Equality for Women

Woodard, a member of the AFL-CIO Executive Council, presented Resolution 18, "AFL-CIO Women's Initiative: Shared Values, Shared Leadership, Shared Prosperity." The resolution calls for equality in pay and opportunity for all; respect for work, family and community, including respect for women's choices; joining allies in a shared agenda; and building a movement to revitalize democracy,

respond to the global economic crisis and have durable community partnerships. "Women may hold up half the sky, as the resolution states," Woodard said, "but we don't have half the pie. And that's a fact despite more than a century of struggle and significant gains."

Improving Education

Ernest Logan, president of the Council of School Supervisors & Administrators, AFSA Local 1, and AFSA national treasurer, stood and spoke on Resolution 35, "Reclaiming the Promise of Public Education."

"...It was because of public education that I was allowed to move from a child living in the projects in Brooklyn on public assistance and rise to the highest level in my union. It's because of public education. Public education; there are thousands—in the millions—of children who need to have that same opportunity. I stand before you today

continued on page 19

2013: A Year in Review

With 2014 fast approaching, it's useful to reflect on the highlights of this year's events and accomplishments.

See page 4

Looking Forward After Sandy Hook

Last year as the holiday season approached its peak, the unthinkable happened in Newtown, Conn., on Dec. 14. A gunman entered Sandy Hook Elementary School and opened fire on innocent school community members. The story shook the world; how could this happen at an elementary school?

See page 8

Breaking Down the Affordable Care Act

Despite the government's 16-day shutdown and a shaky start with online registration failures across the country, the Affordable Care Act, also known as Obamacare, moved into full swing Oct. 1. With accusations and claims being asserted by both sides, understanding what the updates actually mean for Americans can seem overwhelming.

See page 12

Unattainable Goals

In September, the Economic Policy Institute and the Broader, Bolder Approach to Education group released "Mismatches in Race to the Top Limit Educational Improvement," a study showing that the funding goals Race to the Top (RTTT) required of states are out of reach and mismatched with the policy's aims.

See page 14

Credit: AFL-CIO



At left, Diann Woodard, president of AFSA, introduces Resolution 18, "AFL-CIO Women's Initiative: Shared Values, Shared Leadership, Shared Prosperity," on the first day of the AFL-CIO's quadrennial convention. At right, Ernest Logan, president of the Council of School Supervisors & Administrators, AFSA Local 1, speaks on Resolution 35, "Reclaiming the Promise of Public Education."

The Time is Right for Community Leadership

In towns and cities across America you can hear the faint wisp of a collective sigh of relief—an exhale, if you will. In these communities, Americans have taken back their rights to govern themselves.

In New York, after 12 years of Mayor Michael Bloomberg, voters said, “No more.” They voted for someone who ran on the notion that we all might be important. Mayor-elect Bill de Blasio believes in public education and the idea that everyone should benefit from it, and he believes we know how to fix it. He believes this so much that his children attend public schools.

“The election of Bill de Blasio,” Diane Ravitch wrote the day after the election, “represents a major national setback for the agenda shared not only by Mayor Bloomberg, but by George W. Bush, Michelle Rhee, Arne Duncan, Jeb Bush, Scott Walker, Bobby Jindal, ALEC (the American Legislative Exchange Council), the Koch brothers and many others. What they had in common was that they had the gall to call themselves ‘reformers’ as they determined to replace public education with a choice system that gave preference to privatized management over democratic governance.”

In the town of Bridgeport, Conn., a simple school board election became the pushback soon to be heard around the country. Bridgeport citizens said no to the mayor and School Superintendent Paul Vallas. The town was fighting to remove Vallas because he had not fulfilled the requirements needed to receive a waiver to lead the district. To ensure they rid themselves of Vallas, they supported and elected candidates in the school board elections who surely will vote Vallas out.

Vallas, the king of reform and the former school superintendent in Chicago, Philadelphia and New Orleans, came to Bridgeport and began to dismantle its public school system and privatize it. Connecticut citizens saw what was happening, reviewed the results in the other cities and wanted none of it. They beat back big business and won!

In cash-strapped Michigan, small towns (Benton Harbor, Grand Rapids, Ann Arbor) voted to approve millages to keep their community schools. These towns know what happens if they lose their public schools: neighborhoods abandoned, schools closed, families moving.

Our knowledge of the children's needs and the policy and political challenges that must be met in order to improve our schools is an invaluable resource for parents and voters...

Meanwhile, the political establishment in Colorado promoted a statewide referendum that attempted to advance privatization through a tax that would be dedicated to increasing funding for both charter schools and the public system, a measure that was soundly defeated—clear evidence the public isn't buying politicians talking out of both sides of their mouths on education issues.

While these election results offer evidence of voters' growing disdain for their taxes being used to finance private interests, they also show that the forces



AFSA President Diann Woodard

backing privatization are relentless in their pursuits. Paul Vallas will not disappear from the scene, no matter the final outcome of his status in Bridgeport; indeed, he has been selected as Illinois Gov. Pat Quinn's choice for lieutenant governor for the 2014 campaign.

Nor are the private interests reaping profits from operating school facilities financed with our taxes likely to relent in their pursuits. If we sit on our hands, the rising tide of public opposition to their so-called reforms will as likely subside as gain momentum. So it is incumbent upon us as school leaders to ensure the public's belief in public education gains steam.

As school leaders, we are ideally positioned to help galvanize and advance the growing movement to resist the business model of school reform. Our knowledge of the children's needs and the policy and political challenges that must be met in order to improve our schools is an invaluable resource for parents and voters who share our understanding of the value of education for all and the need for change to improve our schools.

Voters have shown us their disdain for the push to privatize public education. It is up to us as school leaders now to help parents understand how improvements to their children's education can be achieved without sacrificing the principle of education for all. The time is right for school leaders to become community leaders. ■

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NY Local 10 Testifies on Regents Reform Agenda

The Buffalo Council of Supervisors and Administrators (BCSA), AFSA Local 10, recently testified at a New York State Senate Committee on Education hearing on the Regents Reform Agenda, which addresses the implementation of New York's Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS), Teacher and Leader Effectiveness (TLE) and Data-Driven Instruction (DDI).

While the Regents Reform Agenda seeks to increase standards and measures for accountability, members of Local 10 were there advocating for doing so in a way that most effectively improves education for students. In its Oct. 16 testimony, BCSA emphasized the detrimental outcome of a fast-paced implementation for the new Common Core Standards, which require educators to teach standards they are not sufficiently trained in. Additionally, BCSA members called for a review system for New York's newly developed teacher evaluations, and for more research on the link between teacher evaluation scores and student performance.

Concern for English language learners was another major topic of testimony. Acknowledging Engage NY as a powerful online resource for the Common Core, BCSA expressed concern for ESL students, their families and educators. Principal

Naomi Cerre of Buffalo's Lafayette High School testified thusly:

"Students are not tested in their own native language as a true baseline before entering the school system. Some arrive speaking in their native language, but cannot read or write in their native language. The question raised again is, without native language supports, how can students move to levels of fluency and proficiency in English as well as meet commencement levels? Tailored supports must be in place!"

Those testifying also called for increasing preschool services for both bilingual and ESL students, as well as more overall training for educators.

In conclusion, the BCSA's testimony stated:

"School reform has to cease being a blame game, but instead [must be] a real conversation about student success. We need a different conversation, and we need your help. We must begin a dialogue as to how to support our school leaders as we implement reforms with limited funding. We have to talk about recruiting talented people into the profession. Great schools begin with great leaders. It is our mission to equip them with the tools they need to succeed." ■



Woody Brandy, vice president of the Buffalo Council of Supervisors and Administrators, listens to testimony Oct. 16 against the Regents Reform Agenda.

A Full Year: AFSA

With 2014 fast approaching, it's useful to reflect on the highlights of this year's events and accomplishments:

The General Executive Board holds its inaugural meeting of the year, discussing the issue and solutions of school and student safety with David Esquith, director of the Office of Safe and Healthy Students, Department of Education.



Credit iStock

As a member of the National Safe Schools Partnership, AFSA urges members of Congress to co-sponsor the "Safe Schools Improvement Act of 2013" (H.R. 1199). SSIA would require schools to have bullying prevention policies that protect every student in schools, including the most vulnerable.

AFSA endorses the "School and Campus Safety Enhancements Act of 2013" (S. 146), sponsored by Sen. Barbara Boxer (D-Calif.), which would provide increased resources to schools to improve their security.

JANUARY

FEBRUARY

MARCH

A letter is submitted to Congress highlighting AFSA's priorities for education policy, including principal preparation and training; achieving school safety; reauthorizing NCLB and improving principal evaluations; investing in education funding; and providing adequate support for early education.

Local 28 in Detroit bargains an arrangement to avoid the state's newly adopted "right to work" laws. Reaching an agreement within three days provides it with a temporary extension to the current contract until its renewal in 2016.



Credit iStock

As a member of the National Coalition for Public Education (NCPE), AFSA urges members of the Senate to oppose any potential amendments that would create a private school voucher program in the Fiscal 2014 Senate budget resolution.

in Action 2013

The Coalition for Effective Newark Public Schools (NPS) writes a letter that is sent by 10 organizations within the coalition to more than 120



legislators and local elected officials, calling for a moratorium on all NPS initiatives until they are reviewed for effectiveness. AFSA Regional Vice President Dr. Len Pugliese plays a major role in both writing and converting the letter into a resolution that is adopted and passed unanimously by the NPS Board of Education, the Newark Municipal Council and Essex County's Board of Chosen Freeholders.

AFSA President Diann Woodward addresses critical issues facing education at Wayne State University's forum for educators.

AFSA sponsors and attends the International Labor Hall of Fame's induction of Viola Liuzzo, Annie Clemenc and Evelyn Dubrow.

APRIL

MAY

Six children of AFSA members are awarded \$2,500 each by the 2012–2013 AFSA Scholarship Program.

The General Executive Board meets in Washington, D.C., to review the agenda for improving member services. The GEB also begins developing a strategic, three-year plan for helping AFSA meet its newly adopted mission to be "the exclusive union for administrators, professionals and supervisors advocating for excellence and equity in all of our schools, workplaces and communities."



2013

President Diann Woodard meets with fellow AFL-CIO Executive Council members in Washington, D.C., to prepare recommendations, propose resolutions and set the stage for the AFL-CIO's quadrennial convention. As vice chair of the Executive Council Committee on Women Workers, Woodard also takes part in discussions at the national, state and local levels about empowering working women.

Executive Vice President Jim Dierke attends the inaugural meeting for the Coalition to Support Grieving Students Initiative at the AFT office in Washington, D.C., representing AFSA as an official member of the coalition. Made up of 10 groups along with the National Center for School Crisis and Bereavement and New York Life, the coalition will work to create "industry-endorsed" resources to help students work through tragedy.

AFSA provides Local 1 member Joe Ponzo with financial help during a court case. Although 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 to assist in paying his attorney fees.

Council of School Supervisors & Administrators, Local 1, in New York City partners with the Children's Health Fund to address health issues, such as asthma, that affect New York City schoolchildren.



JUNE

JULY

AUGUST

As a member of the National Coalition for Public Education (NCPE), AFSA urges members of the Senate to oppose an amendment by Sens. Rand Paul (R-Ky.) and Tim Scott (R-S.C.) that would create a voucher program in S. 1094, the "Strengthening America's Schools Act of 2013" (Senate ESEA bill). The amendment was defeated.

AFSA provides negotiation training for members in Hartford, Conn. The two-day workshop provides training sessions for negotiators and potential future negotiators.



AFSA and the Council of School Supervisors & Administrators, Local 1, send \$3,000 to President Debra Thomas of Oklahoma City Administrators, Local 79, to help members in their time of need after a horrific May 20 Oklahoma tornado.



AFSA partners with the Department of Education to provide a webinar on school safety for both AFSA members and the general public on how to develop high-quality emergency operations plans for schools across the nation.

President Diann Woodard introduces Resolution 18 at the AFL-CIO Convention in Los Angeles, which supports equality in pay and opportunity for all; respect for work, family and community, including respect for women's choices; joining allies in a shared agenda; and building a movement to revitalize democracy, respond to the global economic crisis and have durable community partnerships.



Credit AFL-CIO

AFSA sends a letter to the House expressing concern with the government shutdown, sequestration and their negative impact on education.

AFSA officially endorses the bipartisan Strong Start for America's Children Act. The act would make early education a reality for nearly 20 million, low and moderate income children who desperately need access to early learning services.

The General Executive Board meets in Washington, D.C., to review opportunities for improving services for members and to welcome new GEB members Sandra Inga, president of the Hartford (Conn.) Principals' and Supervisors' Association, and Dwayne Jones, president of the Association of Supervisory and Administrative School Personnel of Prince George's County, Md. Inga and Jones will be filling the vacancies of Elaine Papas and James Smallwood.

AFSA visits more than 20 Hill offices to express concern with sequestration and to deliver Committee for Education Funding materials detailing the specific impact and harm of sequestration on education programs.

SEPTEMBER

OCTOBER

NOVEMBER

AFSA sends a letter to the House opposing H.R. 3102, the "Nutrition Reform and Work Opportunity Act of 2013," which would cut the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), also commonly known as food stamps.

AFSA endorses the "Strengthening Social Security Act of 2013" (H.R. 3118) by Rep. Linda Sanchez (D-Calif.), which would increase benefits for all Social Security beneficiaries.



AFSA member Anthony Salvatore speaks at a panel discussion sponsored by the TLC Institute in Michigan about how to face the aftermath of school violence.



AFSA attends an event at the U.S. Capitol, joining advocates and more than 20 members of Congress to protest chained CPI and any proposed cuts to Social Security and Medicare.

The Council of School Supervisors & Administrators, Local 1, releases a joint study with the Children's Health Fund linking children's poor health to poor performance in school.

AFSA attends The Committee for Education Funding Legislative Conference and Gala, where Sen. Tom Harkin (D-Iowa) is presented with the Edward M. Kennedy Lifetime Advocacy Award for his dedication to education during his many years in the Senate.

Looking Forward After Sandy Hook

AFSA Joins Bereavement Coalition

Last year as the holiday season approached its peak, the unthinkable happened in Newtown, Conn., on Dec. 14. A gunman entered Sandy Hook Elementary School and opened fire on innocent school community members, killing 20 students—all ages 6 and 7—and six adults, including Sandy Hook Principal Dawn Hochsprung, an AFSA member. The story shook the world; how could this happen at an elementary school?

One year later, as violence in schools across the country continues, little has been done in Congress. Action was discussed after the shooting, but on April 17—despite overwhelmingly strong support from the public and the emotional advocacy efforts by the families of the Newtown victims—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 failed measures included S. 146, the “School and Campus Safety Enhancements Act,” sponsored by Sen. Barbara Boxer (D-Calif.), which would have authorized federal funding to implement safety measures at elementary and secondary schools.

While Congress failed to pass necessary legislation to improve our schools’ safety, AFSA continued to take action. On Aug. 7, AFSA partnered with the Department of Education (DOE) to present a school safety webinar for both AFSA members and the general public.

Taking another step forward, AFSA is partnering with educators across the nation to find solutions for supporting grieving students by forming the Coalition to Support Grieving Students, which represents educators, school leaders and school mental health providers.

The New Coalition

Led by pediatrician and childhood bereavement expert Dr. David Schonfeld and sponsored by the New York Life Foundation, working with the National Center for School Crisis and Bereavement, the coalition is working to create “industry-endorsed” resources to help students work through tragedy.

Representing AFSA on the committee is Executive Vice President Jim Dierke.

“This coalition is extremely exciting. It is an opportunity for educators to come together and unite on a common front on an extremely important issue,” said Dierke. “We need to assist our principals with how to be resilient around the continued pressures and stress surrounding their jobs when confronted with tragedy and violence.”

While the role of educators in helping students through a tragedy is crucial, the majority of educators report feeling unequipped to handle such situations. In a 2012 survey in grief at school conducted by the New York Life Foundation with AFT, seven in 10 teachers reported having at least one grieving student in their classroom, while only 7 percent reported any background in bereavement training.

“The lack of grief and bereavement training among educators is troubling,” said Diann Woodard, president of AFSA. “We are facing a time where school violence is a reality and we need to take steps forward in coming together as educators to support our students. This coalition offers us that unified opportunity.”



The organizations joining AFSA in this coalition include:

- AFT
- American Association of School Administrators (AASA)
- National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP)
- National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP)
- National Association of School Psychologists (NASP)
- National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE)
- National Education Association (NEA)
- School Social Workers Association of America (SSWAA)
- United Federation of Teachers (UFT)

Moving Forward

The coalition will work together to create unified and standardized resources, including a website, webinars and printed materials among other outlets, to provide educators and school community members with the tools they need to support grieving students.

While the creation of materials will be an ongoing process, the coalition aims to have a “practitioner-oriented” website ready for the 2014–2015 school year to “provide practical, accessible information for teachers, administrators, school mental health professionals and other school personnel.” AFSA will provide members with ongoing updates as resources become available.

“The heartbreaking events of Sandy Hook changed all of our lives forever, but the best thing we can do in response is to be proactive,” Woodard said. “We owe it to the victims of Sandy Hook to take away what we can from that horrible day and look forward with open eyes.” ■

Local 113’s Anthony Salvatore Speaks on “After the Violence” Panel

Anthony Salvatore, president of the Newtown Association of School Administrators, Local 113, assistant principal of Newtown Middle School, participated in a Nov. 14 panel discussion in Clinton Township, Mich., titled “After the Violence: Lessons Learned from Sandy Hook Elementary.” The panel sought to provide an opportunity for educators and professionals from communities that have experienced major tragedies to share their stories.

“A friend of mine reminded me that recovery is a marathon and not a race,” said Salvatore in a Nov. 1 email about the event. “So, being a part of this panel is like stopping for a drink of water to quench my thirst, to help others and to refresh my spirit for the journey that lies ahead.”

The presenters also included:

- Susan Connelly, school counselor at Newtown Middle School
- Gerard Lawson, counselor at Virginia Tech
- Laura Serazin, bereavement and grief counselor at Ohio’s Cornerstone of Hope
- Misty Ramos, bereavement and grief counselor at Cornerstone of Hope

Discussing his process for working through last December’s horrific events, Salvatore commented, “As much as I had no control over what happened on December 14, I do have control over how I choose to use that experience to help myself and others appreciate and become mindful of life around us every day.”

When asked what he hoped for people to take away from the panel, Salvatore focused on the importance of nurturing strong relationships within a community.

“Building healthful, enduring relationships with each other in our communities is a critical element in fostering a positive and safe environment that is resilient to withstand the impact of a traumatic event,” he said. “Teaching, demonstrating and nurturing the skills to build positive relationships with each other is everyone’s responsibility in the community.”

Salvatore hopes that telling his story can help make a difference and lead to a path forward. “There isn’t a day that goes by that I don’t think of the children and adults whose lives were abruptly ended that day, or their families. Sharing our stories is such a healing gift.” ■



Poor Health, Poor Academic Performance Linked

Student health has a major impact on learning outcomes, according to a recent survey conducted by the Council of School Supervisors & Administrators, AFSA Local 1, in New York City, and the Children's Health Fund (CHF).

Children in poor health or with health disadvantages tend to perform more poorly than others. To find out which health issues affect learning the most, CHF and CSA partnered to survey elementary and middle school principals in New York City in May 2013.

The study found many of the health issues affecting learning outcomes are preventable, treatable or manageable. Topping the list, asthma was cited as a barrier to learning by 63 percent of school principals who responded to the survey. Principals also noted vision (57 percent) and hearing (28 percent) problems, and 17 percent cited dental pain. Other issues identified included mental health issues, disruptive behaviors and learning disabilities.

These results are more staggering once filtered by income disparity. High-poverty schools reported a significantly

higher prevalence of these barriers compared with other schools. Principals of these high-poverty schools also cited student fatigue, hunger and health care accessibility for students as learning barriers at higher rates than schools with less than 70 percent of students on a free or reduced-price lunch program.

"When I was a middle school principal in an economically disadvantaged district, we were forced to call an ambulance at least weekly because a child had an uncontrollable asthma attack," said Ernest Logan, president of CSA, in a press release from the Children's Health Fund and CSA.

"In many of our schools, we continue to see how undiagnosed and untreated health problems, particularly asthma, affect students and learning in dramatic ways. We all have an obligation to work on solutions for problems such as asthma in the classroom and collaborate to obtain additional health care resources and promote better family education."

Closing the achievement and opportunity gaps for all

students, regardless of background, location or race, must be a top priority. The results of this survey demonstrate concern among administrators that unmet health care needs are affecting learning. For administrators, working toward closing this health care gap is a step in the right direction for closing the achievement gap. Administrators have an obligation to work on solutions and collaborations to help improve learning outcomes.

The full results of the study can be read here: <http://bit.ly/CSAStudy>. ■



Detroit Public Schools Weathering City's Bankruptcy

In July, the city of Detroit filed for Chapter 9 bankruptcy with an estimated \$18 to \$20 billion in debt. While cuts already have threatened benefits in Detroit, such as pensions for firefighters and pay cuts for police officers, the question remains—what does this mean for Detroit public schools?

"I suspect we will [feel an impact]," said Debbie Ake, president of the Organization of School Administrators and Supervisors (OSAS), AFSA Local 28, in Detroit. "This is the largest municipal bankruptcy in [U.S.] history. We have nothing to compare [it] to."

Ake is most concerned about keeping the community alive and maintaining relationships with local businesses. "The biggest challenge administrators face," she says, "is how to run with less money and fewer volunteers." As the threat of unpaid bills continues to spread throughout the community, Ake fears local businesses will shy away from contributing to and partnering with district schools. "We don't even know if some of these businesses will weather the bankruptcy."

Lacking resources to bolster security in the face of Detroit's growing number of empty houses that attract criminals and

squatters, safety is another major concern. Even while parked on school property, Ake had the unfortunate experience of having the tires stolen off of her vehicle.

For now, Detroit's public schools are weathering the storm and doing what they can with what they have. The timeline of Detroit's financial future may be unclear; however, that won't stop educators from fighting to keep their doors open and their hallways filled with students. ■

New Study Finds Preschool Benefits All Students

The Society for Research in Child Development and the Foundation for Child Development recently undertook an initiative to review decades of prekindergarten research. Their results offer strong support for the benefits of investing in quality, universal early childhood education for all students.

The study, “Investing in Our Future: The Evidence Base on Preschool Education,” focused on 84 preschool programs across the country and found that children benefit in many areas, including skills-based and emotional learning. While standardized test scores often fail to provide an immediate reflection of preschool’s importance, students who attend preschool tend to have higher graduation rates, earn higher salaries later in life and complete more years of school overall.

Students in preschool gain about a third of a year of additional learning across math, reading and language skills. A year or two of early childhood education will improve their language, literacy and mathematics skills when measured at the end of the program or soon after the child completes the program. The study found these results replicated across the country in Head Start and pre-K programs, spanning the years from 1965 to 2007.

The study also found that most successful preschool curricula are characterized by intensive professional

development that often involves coaching or mentoring from expert teachers twice a month. Combined with developmentally focused curricula, as opposed to “global curricula,” this method of preschool teaching is thought to provide the strongest hope for improving outcomes before kindergarten. However, few studies have focused on this hypothesis, though it looks to be a solid extrapolation from the data collected, according to the authors of the study.

Developmentally focused curricula, as defined by the study, involves pairing wide-ranging learning with intense exposure to a given content area, based on the assumption that skills can develop better with a more focused approach.

The study also found that high-quality preschool education is a profitable investment; the return on investment for these kinds of preschool programs is three to seven dollars per dollar invested.

The entire study can be found at <http://bit.ly/PreschoolStudy>.

With these results, it is more important than ever for policymakers to support early childhood education. Investing in our future will pay dividends, not only in dollars earned, but also in closing the achievement gap that affects so many students today. ■

Breaking Down the Affordable Care Act

Despite the government's 16-day shutdown and a shaky start with online registration failures across the country, the Affordable Care Act, also known as Obamacare, moved into full swing Oct. 1. With accusations and claims being asserted by both sides, understanding what the updates actually mean for Americans can seem overwhelming.

There are three major ways that Americans now will be provided with health care: through their employers, through Medicaid or Medicare, or by selecting their own plan through online health care marketplaces across the nation. Despite all of the recent updates to health care coverage, approximately 30 million people will remain uninsured. Below is a summary of the changes and updates resulting from the Affordable Care Act.

Insurance Through Employers

For Americans covered by their employers, not much will change outside of new caps on how much individuals can be required to spend out of pocket for health services and coverage for additional, free preventive services. The biggest difference will come for those working for companies with 50 or more employees, which will be required to cover all full-time workers or choose to pay a penalty starting in 2015.

Small companies will not be required to provide health care for all full-time employees, but the government will create online marketplaces to simplify the process of providing health care and offer a two-year tax break to encourage companies with 25 or fewer employees to purchase employee health care.

Medicaid and Medicare

While Medicare will not change for most individuals, the Affordable Care Act will improve some of its preventive care services, as it adds coverage for colon, prostate and breast cancer screenings. Additionally, seniors who enter the Part D coverage gap in Medicare now will receive \$250 to help

pay for medication; by 2020, that coverage gap will be eliminated, meaning that seniors who currently are required to pay 100 percent of their medication fees then will be responsible only for 25 percent.

Starting in 2014, Medicaid will expand in some states to cover households making the equivalent of around \$23,550 for a family of four. However, because the Supreme Court ruled that state legislatures may decide whether to take part in Medicaid's expansion, 21 states are opting out, which will leave millions uninsured.

While health plans will range in scope and cost, all will be required to cover hospital visits, doctor visits, maternity care, mental health care and prescription drugs.



Credit istock

Health Care Marketplaces

Americans not covered through their employers, Medicare or Medicaid will purchase health care on their own through new, regulated, online health insurance marketplaces, where private insurance companies will compete for business by providing plans with a range of coverage, costs and deductibles.

While health plans will range in scope and cost, all will be required to cover hospital visits, doctor visits, maternity care, mental health care and prescription drugs.

As insurance companies now will be required to cover everyone, including those with pre-existing conditions, health care marketplaces have set enrollment periods to ensure people do not wait to buy insurance until they are sick or injured. The first enrollment period started Oct. 1 and will end March 31, 2014. People will not be able to purchase insurance through the marketplaces outside of these set time periods.

The government will step in and provide marketplaces in states that voted to opt out of providing the marketplace option. Those who cannot receive health care anywhere outside of the marketplaces and some low-income families will be eligible for tax credits—which means the majority of people purchasing insurance through the marketplace will not be responsible for the full premium.

The government will step in and provide marketplaces in states that voted to opt out of providing the marketplace option.

Overall Changes

- All health plans will be required to provide preventive services without a co-pay and insurers no longer will be able to turn people away or charge them more because of pre-existing conditions, which affects up to 129 million nonelderly Americans.
- Starting Jan. 1, 2014, men and women will pay the same amount for insurance. Currently, women can be charged between 10 and 81 percent more than men on the same plan depending on the plan and their state. Additionally, insurance companies will be required to charge all people the same amount for a plan, regardless of their health history.
- Health insurance prices will decrease for most elderly consumers, while prices generally will increase for younger people. However, people who are 26 and younger can remain on their parent's health insurance, or choose to buy cheap, catastrophic insurance until the age of 30.
- Starting in 2014, if you can afford to, you will be required to have health insurance. The penalty for not having health insurance in 2014 will be \$95 per adult and \$47.50 per child, or 1 percent of a family's total income,

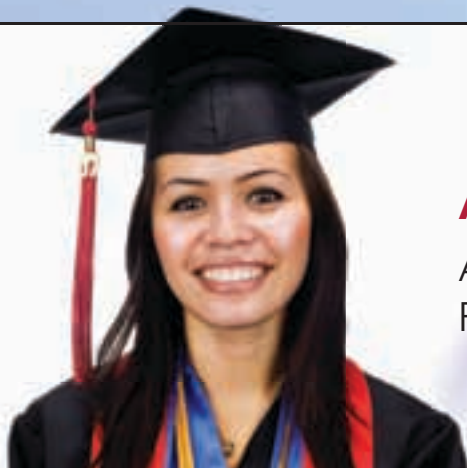
depending on which is greater. This amount will rise to \$695 per adult and \$347.50 per child, or 2.5 percent of a family's total income, by 2016. However, some will be exempt from this fee, including undocumented immigrants, Native Americans who have health care through other means, those who are incarcerated and those who do not make enough money to file a tax return. Additionally, if the premium costs are more than 8 percent of a household's total income, the members of that household are exempt, as are those who would have qualified for Medicaid under the new guidelines living in one of the 21 states not expanding Medicaid. Those who do not fit into any of these specific categories also may apply for a hardship or a religious exemption. ■

Check out these websites for more detailed information:

www.kaiserhealthnews.org/What-Obamacare-Means-For-You.aspx

<http://thechatterpost.com/?p=593>

www.youtube.com/watch?v=JZkk6ueZt-U



ATTENTION AFSA MEMBERS

AFSA Scholarship applications are due **March 3, 2014**. For details, visit **AFSAadmin.org/scholarship2014**.

Unattainable Goals

Study Shows Missteps of Race to the Top

In September, the Economic Policy Institute and the Broader, Bolder Approach to Education group released “Mismatches in Race to the Top Limit Educational Improvement,” a study showing that the funding goals Race to the Top (RTTT) required of states are out of reach and mismatched with the policy’s aims.

RTTT is a competitive grant program intended to encourage and reward states that create conditions for education reform. These conditions include expanding charter schools, creating standard curricula across all districts and developing extensive teacher and principal evaluation systems. Announced in 2009, RTTT was supposed to guide states in creating positive and reformed educational environments, and to serve as a better reform plan than George Bush’s No Child Left Behind.

However, many of the 11 states and the District of Columbia that received RTTT funding are experiencing setbacks due to unrealistic promises and unexpected challenges.

For example, RTTT pushed states to implement their reform strategies within a compressed, four-year timeline, making it extremely difficult to implement an effective teacher or principal evaluation system. Additionally, states receiving RTTT funding reported that the provided federal funds were too small to make substantial changes in their schools. Educators have made requests for additional funding, but due to the current federal education spending levels, these funds are not available.

Despite funding issues, resource restrictions, inadequate piloting and revision time periods, many districts pushed forward with implementing their reform programs. In the first two years alone, grantee states changed their plans 25 times, resulting in many teachers and principals being evaluated on data largely unrelated to their efforts.

RTTT also presented schools with the task of closing opportunity and achievement gaps that rarely begin in or can be controlled by schools, such as race- and income-based gaps. Grantee schools set lofty goals to address these

issues; however, reaching these goals would be virtually impossible even with longer timelines and more funding.

The mismatches in Race to the Top ideology and practice have led to delays and counterproductive implementation of key components of the plan. One of the largest outcomes of Race to the Top is the Common Core State Standards, a widely criticized plan to standardize learning outcomes for all 50 states. While many educators see the potential benefit in producing a set of common standards, the accelerated rollout of the Common Core in all but a handful of states runs the risk of not providing adequate time for piloting and revision.

AFSA fully supports efforts to allocate funds toward the betterment of our nation’s schools; however, when creating reform, attainable goals and timelines must be established with room for change and input from our educators. Only then will we truly provide our public schools with the support and tools they need for effective and meaningful change. ■



Credit: iStock

GEB Meets in D.C.

The AFSA General Executive Board met in Washington, D.C., on Oct. 18–19 to review the agenda for improving services to AFSA members, deliberate on key issues and welcome new members to the board.

Strategic Plan

The GEB reviewed and discussed an updated draft of a strategic plan to help guide AFSA moving forward. Included in the draft are targeted approaches to communications and organizing, along with educational and leadership goals for AFSA. New this year are goals to establish a retiree fact-finding committee, plans for an annual labor seminar or webinar, and plans to build coalitions among administrators and other education and community groups.

New Members Sworn In

To fill the vacancies left by outgoing GEB members James Smallwood and Elaine Papas, the GEB added Sandra Inga, president of the Hartford Principals' and Supervisors' Association, and Dwayne Jones, president of the Association of Supervisory and Administrative School Personnel of Prince George's County, Md., ASASP, AFSA Local 109.

Program Committee

The GEB approved New Orleans as the location for the 14th AFSA Triennial Constitutional Convention, scheduled for July 23–27, 2015.

The board also made a commitment to develop more webinars and trainings. Potential topics discussed were bullying and providing crisis and bereavement services.

Political Action Committees

To increase the visibility of school administrators, gain access to policy-makers and have an impact on public policy on a national level, the GEB discussed the importance of members contributing to the AFSA Political

Action Committee (PAC). Of equal importance is forming a local PAC to provide members with full access to local legislators.

By forming a local PAC, members can:

- elect and retain legislators who are friends to public education and labor;
- build strong alliances with key state government legislators;
- cultivate and maintain an ongoing relationship with key representatives;
- invite representatives to PAC fundraisers and introduce them to AFSA members;
- gain access to legislators at their receptions and fundraisers;
- enhance legislative and lobbying efforts; and
- provide legislators with unique knowledge on important legislative issues.

Establishing local PACs and contributing to the AFSA national PAC also will be important for the 2014 midterm elections, allowing AFSA to contribute to and potentially boost favorable candidates.

Legislative Committee

Upon the GEB's final review, the AFSA Legislative Committee will send a response to the full Senate outlining AFSA's general positions on the major aspects of Sen. Tom Harkin's (D-Iowa) ESEA bill, the "Strengthening America's Schools Act." In addition to detailed recommendations on principal evaluation and training, the response will call for less focus on testing and more focus on evidence-based assessments that are truly designed to improve instruction and student learning. The recommendations also will call for increased investment and resources for all public schools, and meaningful input from organized groups representing principals in all major policy areas.



Sandra Inga, president of the Hartford Principals' and Supervisors' Association, AFSA Local 22, is sworn in as a new member of the General Executive Board during the GEB's October meeting in Washington, D.C.

The GEB also approved a community campaign designed to increase support for a set of key principles to improve public education, and support principals, assistant principals and other school leaders.

Scholarship Committee

The Scholarship Committee approved the announcement of the AFSA 2013–2014 scholarship program, which provides \$2,500 scholarships for children of AFSA members. Students are selected based on their academic achievements, personal growth and level of community involvement. The application deadline is March 3, 2014. More details can be found at AFSAadmin.org/scholarship2014.

The committee also outlined details for an annual scholarship in honor of Dawn Hochsprung, the AFSA member who gave her life protecting students during the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting. The \$5,000 in scholarship funds will be administered by the Connecticut Federation of School Administrators (CFSA) and is funded by one of AFSA's insurance providers, M&M Group Benefits. The GEB chose to halve the scholarship in order to offer \$2,500 to one male student and one female student each year. More details about the selection process for this scholarship will be coming soon. ■

Noted Educator Inspires Optimism

By Maria Smith

Nearly 300 members attending the Council of School Supervisors & Administrators (CSA), Local 1's Executive Leadership Institute (ELI) fall conference on Sept. 25 rose to honor Dr. Freeman A. Hrabowski III, president of the University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC), with a standing ovation as he finished his presentation, "Academic Leadership: Creating a Climate of Success for All Students."

"It's the power of stories. We all have them. It's important to know one another's, to understand where and what an individual is coming from."

—Dr. Hrabowski

During his lecture, Dr. Hrabowski spoke about motivating students, especially in the areas of math and science.

Quoting from Maya Angelou's poem "On the Pulse of Morning," Dr. Hrabowski set a tone of optimism and determination. "It's the power of stories," he said. "We all have them. It's important to know one another's, to understand where and what an individual is coming from."

Dr. Hrabowski told his own story of growing up in the segregated South. He described how his mother discovered the joy of reading when the woman for whom she worked lent her books. Reading opened up new worlds and helped her to pursue her dream of becoming a teacher. "My mother told me: 'You are special but you can be better.' We need to believe this and tell our young educators and children," he said.

As an academic with advanced degrees in mathematics, Dr. Hrabowski gave his thoughts about why Americans have a problem with math and the sciences.

"We believe that science and math are not for everyone. We compare ourselves to China with a population of 1.3 billion. Our population of 310 million is not even close. Yet, we have to look at the analytics. What are the trends? Why are we behind? Why are we failing in this area?" he asked.

Dr. Hrabowski also addressed best practices for educational leaders to support the success of all students.

"As leaders we must create a culture that allows trust and is not politically correct. We have got to talk to families about what is going on at home. Schools are part of a community and we have gotten away from this," he said.

He recalled at UMBC that at one time no African American student had ever received more than a "C" grade in the sciences, and that was acceptable to staff, faculty and students alike. He challenged this status quo and met with resistance. However, he persisted, emphasizing there was something wrong with accepting this level of failure.

Dr. Hrabowski implemented a plan involving students, parents, professors and faculty that addressed the academic and social deficiencies of the African American student body. It took three years, but when the first student of color received an A in genetics, her classmates burst into applause.

"We cannot plan to fail," he said. "We must plan to succeed. Success brings more success. Let your story inspire someone else. Lead with optimism." ■



Brooklyn Tech Principal Randy Asher (right) speaks with prominent American educator Dr. Freeman A. Hrabowski III (left), president of the University of Maryland, Baltimore County, before the start of Hrabowski's lecture at the Executive Leadership Institute's fall conference at the New York high school.

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Scholarship amounts:

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Deadline to apply:

January 31, 12 p.m. (noon), Eastern Time

Recipients announced:

May 31

UnionPlus.org/Scholarships



Challenges in Collective Bargaining

Recently, misinformation about changes to Michigan's Public Employment Relations Act (PERA) have added complications to collective bargaining, with unwarranted and illegal restrictions being applied to labor organizations representing school administrators.

Enacted in 1965, PERA governs Michigan's public-sector collective bargaining. In 2011, the legislature added eight prohibited subjects for bargaining, including among other items:

- placement;
- standards for layoff and recall; and
- standards for discipline.

While the amendments apply to some educators, the statute clearly states the "bargaining restrictions apply only to teachers who are eligible for tenure," which school administrators cannot acquire.

Typically, administrator groups are able to navigate bargaining through shared interest bargaining, building rather than destroying relationships. Unfortunately, the lack of good information and a plethora of bad advice have caused some school superintendents to distort the new statutes, creating unnecessary and unlawful barriers that delay action and move some parties toward impasse.

Whether you live in or outside of Michigan, remembering the following tips when confronting a hostile or uninformed employer will work to your advantage:

- It is lawful for parties to discuss prohibited subjects for bargaining and for you to engage your employer regarding why they want to apply inapplicable provisions of the law, in this case PERA, to administrators.

- Presenting the law's full text to your employer is crucial. Often a superintendent relies on a summary presented at a conference or circulated to an email list. Some employers have realized the extent of their mistake after reading the law.
- Do not bend easily, as some employers—assuming they are better informed—will attempt to bully labor organizations. Be prepared to back up your refusal to agree to an improper demand with explanations about the law.

While changes like those to PERA in Michigan create obstacles for public school employees, collective bargaining is a crucial and valuable right that labor organizations must defend and support through well-informed persistency. ■

Expanded Broadband Access Set for School Districts

Thanks to a new plan to reform the federal E-rate program, which connects schools and public libraries to the Internet, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) could add Internet access to another 6 percent of schools in the United States as early as the fall of 2014. This marks a step forward for President Obama's ConnectED initiative to bring high-speed Internet access to 99 percent of U.S. students within five years. Access was at 94 percent as of 2005.

The Universal Service Program for Schools and Libraries program, also known as the E-rate program, was created in 1997 as part of the Telecommunications Act to connect schools and libraries to the Internet at a discount. At the time, only 14 percent of schools had Internet access.

The FCC plans to increase high-speed Wi-Fi networks in classrooms and libraries, create consortiums of school districts that will purchase technological needs in bulk and streamline the

application process. The current system requires much paperwork and schools sometimes wait many years for funding.

The FCC also plans to modernize the E-rate program by redirecting funds from outdated services, such as long-distance calls and paging, to broadband Internet.

Under the current E-rate format, schools can receive substantial discounts on Internet access and digital devices. Discounts range from 20 to 90 percent, with the average discount close to 73 percent. Currently the percentage is calculated on eligibility numbers for free- or reduced-price lunch programs, allowing the most disadvantaged communities to receive the highest discounts.

The FCC proposes allocating funding on a simpler, per-student basis to ensure more schools are served. Currently, E-rate funding is not helping low-income and rural students in the way the program is designed. In fact, rural and low-income

schools are receiving less funding than their wealthier and more urban counterparts. The proposal suggests allocating E-rate funds on a per-student basis as well as devoting additional funds for low-income and rural schools to make sure the E-rate program helps the students it was designed to help. ■



The FCC's proposal now is open for public comment. More information can be found at <http://bit.ly/FCCplan>.

The Continuing Fight Against Sequestration

On Oct. 16, 2013, President Obama signed legislation approved by Congress to end a 16-day government shutdown. The deal funded the government through Jan. 15, 2014, and raised the \$16.7 trillion debt ceiling until Feb. 7, 2014, thus avoiding a potentially disastrous default in late October 2013.

The end of the shutdown sent hundreds of thousands of furloughed federal workers back to their jobs, allowed Head Start centers to once again serve children in need, reopened national parks and museums, reinstated flu surveillance and restored critical government functions.

However, the agreement did nothing to address the ill-advised policy of sequestration, which continues to slash billions from essential discretionary programs, including education.

Sequestration already cut \$2.9 billion from education in 2013—the largest cut to education in our nation's history. This is in addition to deep cuts already instituted as part of the Budget Control Act of 2011. Neither party intended for sequestration to become law, yet if Congress does not act to repeal it, sequestration will be triggered for the second year in 2014, enacting another round of devastating cuts.

Part of the agreement to end the shutdown included a Budget Committee composed of 29 members of the House and Senate, which is tasked with ending the budget impasse and coming up with a long-term, bipartisan budget solution. AFSA will be weighing in with members of the committee, urging them to replace sequestration with a balanced and responsible approach to:

- reduce the deficit;
- invest in education; and
- reject cuts to essential programs and services for our most vulnerable populations, as well as Medicare, Social Security and Medicaid.

The budget conferees are:

SENATE

Democrats: Chairwoman Patty Murray (Wash.), Tammy Baldwin (Wis.), Chris Coons (Del.), Tim Kaine (Va.), Jeff Merkley (Ore.), Bill Nelson (Fla.), Debbie Stabenow (Mich.), Mark Warner (Va.), Sheldon Whitehouse (R.I.) and Ron Wyden (Ore.). Sens. Angus King (I-Maine) and Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) typically caucus with the Democrats and are included with them as conferees.

Republicans: Ranking Member Jeff Sessions (Ala.), Kelly Ayotte (N.H.), Mike Crapo (Idaho), Mike Enzi (Wyo.), Lindsey Graham (S.C.), Chuck Grassley (Iowa), Ron JoUson (Wis.), Pat Toomey (Pa.) and Roger Wicker (Miss.).

HOUSE

Republicans: Budget Committee Chairman Paul Ryan (Wis.), Diane Black (Tenn.), Tom Cole (Okla.), Tom Price (Ga.) and Rob Portman (Ohio).

Democrats: Budget Committee Ranking Member Chris Van Hollen (Md.), James Clyburn (S.C.) and Appropriation Committee Ranking Member Nita Lowey (N.Y.).

AFSA is a member of the Committee for Education Funding (CEF), which is a coalition of organizations advocating for increased federal financial support for our nation's educational system. During the shutdown, AFSA joined CEF in urging members of Congress to reopen the government, repeal sequestration and prevent further cuts to education funding. During this time, AFSA visited more than 20 House offices and provided them with detailed fact sheets and information about the harmful impact sequestration is having on our nation's schools.

AFSA also is a member of Nondefense Discretionary (NDD) United—an alliance of more than 3,200 national, state and local organizations working to protect investments in core government

functions. NDD United has been fighting over the past year to protect education funding, medical research, employment training, Head Start, food aid for low-income individuals and seniors, assistance to veterans and much more.

AFSA will continue working with NDD United and CEF to urge Congress to repeal sequestration and protect services that support all Americans. ■

Sequestration

This year:

59%

Making professional development cuts

48%

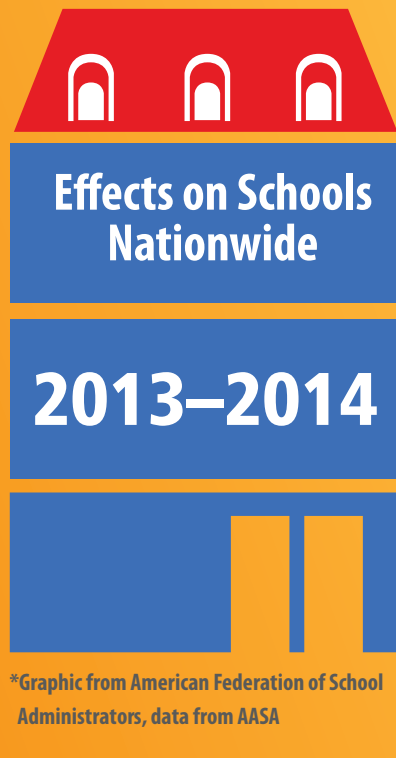
Increasing class size

53%

Making personnel cuts

46%

Deferring technology purchases



Schools nationwide are experiencing cuts to essential programming and tools due to sequestration.

AFSA PLAYS GREATER ROLE AT AFL-CIO CONVENTION

continued from page 1

because, brothers and sisters, it is about us ensuring public education. When we are not part of the solution, we are the problem," said Logan.

Fighting to ensure all children have the opportunity to attend great schools in a safe and welcoming environment, AFT has begun a campaign that:

- opposes privatization;
- backs initiatives to reduce gun violence and prevent bullying;
- raises awareness for the negative impact of high-stakes testing; and
- supports increasing Common Core preparation for educators and families.

Convention delegates also passed Resolution 36, "Addressing the Increasing Burden of Student Debt and Supporting High-Quality Public Higher Education."

"If the United States wants to remain a country of highly educated citizens, something must be done to assist college students in this day of rising tuitions across the country," commented AFSA General Vice President Aona Jefferson in an email on the resolution. "The middle class will continue to shrink if we don't increase our number of college graduates and post-graduate citizens!"

With passage of this resolution, the AFL-CIO will support legislation and policies to:

- help reduce the burden of student debt;
- demand that private student loan lenders increase flexibility in repayment options;
- support legislation and policies at the federal and state levels that increase funding and access to needs-based aid, including first-generation students, low-income students, students of color and undocumented students;

- support legislation and policies that curb and eliminate fraud and abuse by predatory lending institutions and unscrupulous for-profit colleges; and
- encourage expanding federal student loan forgiveness in exchange for public service.

Protecting the Future of Social Security

Introduced by SAG-AFTRA's Roberta Reardon, the co-chair for the Committee on Shared Prosperity in the Global Economy, Resolution 11, "Retirement Security for All," also was passed by convention delegates. The resolution calls for replacing the 2006 Pension Prevention Act (PPA) with new rules to help benefit plans grow and prosper.

The PPA requires companies with underfunded pension plans to pay higher premiums to the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation and demands extra funding to the pension systems from companies that terminate their pension plans.

Rob England of the Kern, Inyo and Mono Counties (Calif.) Central Labor Council said, "We live in a rich nation, and we don't believe the lie that we can't afford a decent and healthy retirement for America's workers anymore. The question before us is not how best to cut Social Security and Medicare, the question is how to create a retirement system that delivers adequate and secure retirement income for everyone, not just the lucky few."

Resolution 11 also supports:

- protecting state and local workers' pensions from political attack;
- advocating for practical accounting rules for both private and public plans; and
- fighting employers who manipulate bankruptcy law to escape their benefit obligations to workers and retirees.

The following resolutions also were passed at the convention:

- "A Broad, Inclusive and Effective Labor Movement"
- "Shared Prosperity"
- "Assisting Immigrant Workers to Become Citizens and Exercise Their Workplace Rights"
- "America and the World Need a New Approach to Trade and Globalization"
- "Prisons and Profits—The Big Business Behind Mass Incarceration"
- "AFL-CIO Convention Resolution on the Affordable Care Act"
- "Solidarity, Effectiveness and Accountability at the Grassroots: State Federations, Central Labor Councils and Affiliates"

Delegates left the convention buoyed by a sense of success and certain the labor movement was taking great steps forward.

"The AFL-CIO Convention was outstanding and much different from the old ways of doing things," said AFSA Executive Vice President Jim Dierke. "There was transparency in all the activities at the convention. We saw active participation from a much larger scope of union members, especially from AFSA." ■



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UPCOMING EVENTS

- | | |
|----------------|---|
| Jan. 15–20 | AFL-CIO Martin Luther King Jr. Observance, San Antonio |
| Jan. 17–19 | AFSA General Executive Board Meeting, Washington, D.C. |
| Feb. 6–8 | NASSP National Conference, Dallas |
| Feb. 18–19 | AFL-CIO Executive Council Meeting, Houston |
| April 28–May 1 | Alliance for Retired Americans National Membership Convention
Bally's Hotel, Las Vegas |

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