CHICAGO UNION TEACHER

November-December 2017 / Volume 81 / Number 3

Also in this issue...

CTU rank-and-file members debate access to quality education for Palestinian children in Israel and Palestinian-controlled territories

There are several ways in which we must keep the pressure on as concern grows over failed CPS initiatives and unscrupulous activities

PAGE 4

PAGE 5

PAGE 2

PAGE 11

PAGE 15

PSRPs:
The backbone of our union

We’re asking tough questions about using tax dollars to support middle income families’ use of private schools

PAGE 13

Teachers and school administrators know that their jobs would impossible if not for the hard work of our PSRPs, who are educators providing non-instructional services that are essential to our school communities. PAGES 8 AND 9
Fight corporate attacks on our jobs and our students

The CTU is calling on all teachers, PSRPs, clinicians and others covered by our contract to reaffirm your membership and support for the union

By CAROL CAREF, PH.D.

R

aid anti-union groups like the National Right to Work Foundation and Gov. Bruce Rauner’s bul-
dies at the Illinois Policy Insti-
tute are seeking to restrict the rights of public sector unions, including the elimination of agency fees. Agency or “fair share” fees are the amount that non-members must pay to the union. Our union is legally required to represent even non-members in most situations. Agency fee payers work under the union contract and benefit from the union’s collective bargaining, contract administration and grievance handling so they are required to contribute to those costs. If these non-members don’t have to pay their fair share, they get a “free ride.”

Privatizers want to elim-
inate agency fee because unions stand in the way of powerful corporations that refuse to pay their share of taxes and seek instead to profit from public institutions. These elites want to destroy unions and drive down our pay and benefits.

An anti-union ruling is expected in a U.S. Supreme Court case (Janus v. AFSCME) to be heard this term, likely stripping away the right to collect agency fees from public worker unions nation-
wide. This ruling and other anti-worker policies coming from the Trump administra-
tion will only embolden efforts by Rauner and Mayor Rahm Emanuel to weaken Illinois unions and privatize public education.

When Wisconsin public sector workers lost their union rights in 2011 under Act 10, which stripped them of both agency fee and collective bar-
gaining rights, union mem-
bership fell 38 percent and workers suffered significant losses. Milwaukee teachers, for example, were forced to take an immediate $10,000 cut in pay and benefits.

CTU members may not be able to stop the Supreme Court from ruling against union, but we can lessen the decision’s negative impact. To proactive-
ly fight this expected decision, the CTU is calling on all teach-
ers, PSRPs, clinicians and oth-
ers covered by our contract to reaffirm your membership and support for the union. We need to demonstrate our solidari-
ty and our determination to

Meetings. Nightingale union mem-
bers also conducted a staff survey which showed persistent levels of abuse and harassment by principal Margaret Kouretsos.

Teachers filed a series of griev-
ances documenting the principal’s chronic mistreatment of teachers and school community members. Teachers also joined parents and neighborhood residents at monthly Board of Education meetings, where they laid out evidence of Kouretsos’ appalling pattern of bullying and abuse. The teachers’ online petition, which was signed by more than 1,000 people, became a vital public tool to air complaints and make the case for why Kouretsos had to be removed.

At the Oct. 25 Board meeting, teachers and parents once again organized to testify to the Board about Kouretsos’ disturbing unpro-
essionalism.

Nightingale parent Rebecca Lopez delivered searing testimony of how Kouretsos had sought to under-
mine education for special needs stu-
dents at the school. “This behavior shouldn’t be tolerated, especially for someone who’s in power as a princi-
pal,” Lopez said. Former Nightingale art teacher Christina Jennings also spoke, testifying for many former and current teachers and students.

“This principal has been allowed to verbally and psychologically abuse teachers, parents and students for far too long,” Jennings said, document-
ing Kouretsos’ shocking treatment of staff and parents. This was not an easy nor short fight, as Mayor Rahm Emanuel con-
tinues to thwart accountability and undermine democratic governance in Chicago Public Schools. Top CPS management had chronically refused to hold Kouretsos accountable for her bullying and abuse, instead reward-
ing her in 2016 with less paperwork responsibility and more “flexibility” as a participant in CPS Independent School Principals program.

Yet teachers ultimately pre-
vailed—a powerful testament to what CTU members can achieve with strong organizing, and solidarity and support from the community.

CTU teachers at Nightingale is-
sued the following statement after learning that Kouretsos had at last been ousted:

When union teachers, parents and students stand together to protect our schools, we can move mountains and make the impossible real. That’s what we’ve done together with this victory—moved the moun-
tain that is CPS bureaucracy and forced the removal of a bully principal favored by top management but opposed by all who care about the qual-
ity of education at this beloved neighborhood public school. — Maria Moreno is the CTU Financial Secretary and a former teacher at Night-
ingale Elementary.

Teachers and community force out abusive principal

CPS officials chronically refused to deal with her bullying and abuse

By MARIA MORENO

S
nidad is powerful, and at
Gage Park’s Florence Night-
ingale Elementary School, it’s
won the struggle against an abusive principal.

Teachers came together to or-
ganize parents and the school com-
unity and win this battle. They collec-
tively held union meetings, reached out to parents, met with the network chief, set up an online petition and spoke out at Local School Council meetings. Nightingale union mem-
bers also conducted a staff survey which showed persistent levels of abuse and harassment by principal Margaret Kouretsos.

Teachers filed a series of griev-
ances documenting the principal’s chronic mistreatment of teachers and school community members. Teachers also joined parents and neighborhood residents at monthly Board of Education meetings, where they laid out evidence of Kouretsos’ appalling pattern of bullying and abuse. The teachers’ online petition, which was signed by more than 1,000 people, became a vital public tool to air complaints and make the case for why Kouretsos had to be removed.

At the Oct. 25 Board meeting, teachers and parents once again organized to testify to the Board about Kouretsos’ disturbing unpro-
essionalism.

Nightingale parent Rebecca Lopez delivered searing testimony of how Kouretsos had sought to under-
mine education for special needs stu-
dents at the school. “This behavior shouldn’t be tolerated, especially for someone who’s in power as a princi-
pal,” Lopez said. Former Nightingale art teacher Christina Jennings also spoke, testifying for many former and current teachers and students.

“This principal has been allowed to verbally and psychologically abuse teachers, parents and students for far too long,” Jennings said, document-
ing Kouretsos’ shocking treatment of staff and parents. This was not an easy nor short fight, as Mayor Rahm Emanuel con-
tinues to thwart accountability and undermine democratic governance in Chicago Public Schools. Top CPS management had chronically refused to hold Kouretsos accountable for her bullying and abuse, instead reward-
ing her in 2016 with less paperwork responsibility and more “flexibility” as a participant in CPS Independent School Principals program.

Yet teachers ultimately pre-
vailed—a powerful testament to what CTU members can achieve with strong organizing, and solidarity and support from the community.

CTU teachers at Nightingale is-
sued the following statement after learning that Kouretsos had at last been ousted:

When union teachers, parents and students stand together to protect our schools, we can move mountains and make the impossible real. That’s what we’ve done together with this victory—moved the moun-
tain that is CPS bureaucracy and forced the removal of a bully principal favored by top management but opposed by all who care about the qual-
ity of education at this beloved neighborhood public school. — Maria Moreno is the CTU Financial Secretary and a former teacher at Night-
ingale Elementary.
Sisters and Brothers,

I’m honored to be able to talk to you in this space normally reserved for President Lewis, who is doing well. She thanks everyone for their thoughts and prayers as she recuperates.

We are approaching a Dec. 13 House of Delegates vote on constitutional amendments in which the main issue—though certainly not the only issue—is allowing unionized teachers and PSRPs at charter schools to join the CTU. It’s not surprising that this has been a hot topic of conversation for our union. As President Lewis wrote last month, our hope is that the merger is approved by our delegates.

But we shouldn’t lose sight of the fact that we are facing deep-rooted challenges that our union will have to fight regardless of the outcome of this vote, including the threat to veteran teachers, with the number of experienced Black teachers in particular seeing rapid decline. We are also dealing with persistent threats from budget cuts, public sector austerity and divestment from the communities that we serve. Not only does this result in cuts to school staff, but it also leads to a decline in student enrollment.

Many people see charter schools as a major reason why the teaching force is getting younger, which is true. Charter networks find it easier to exploit younger teachers through low pay and authoritarian conditions. This is a major reason why we need a strong union in these schools—to improve wages and conditions. Let’s be clear, charter operators are not the only people pushing out veteran teachers. With student-based budgeting, virtually every principal has a built-in incentive to push out more experienced teachers. Add to that CPS’ opposition to racial integration and the end of the desegregation consent decree between the Chicago Board of Education and the U.S. Department of Justice, and many school principals have virtually stopped hiring teachers of color. CPS has also pursued a racist school turnaround policy, in which schools with 60-80 percent Black faculties have consistently been the target of turnaround. We currently have many CPS principals who risked their jobs to form a union, battle the expansion of their own charter networks and fight for their students.

We are in the midst of an important union-wide debate. The CTU’s culture of democracy is extremely important at moments like this. It’s disingenuous to accuse our members of being responsible for the train wreck that is CPS. Every day we make a distinction between ourselves and district bosses like Emanuel, imprisoned former CPS CEO Barbara Byrd-Bennett and inept current CPS CEO Forrest Claypool. Let’s make the same distinction between our union’s ability to fight for better pay and working conditions, and reveals the intentions of the anti-union forces in our country. Our best defense is to get all of our co-workers to re-card and resist. (See previous page.)

Regardless of the merger vote, our union is going to get hit by attacks from the anti-labor U.S. Supreme Court. With the addition of President Donald Trump appointee Neil Gorsuch, we expect right-to-work schemes to come to CPS. This means that employees will be able to receive protection and benefits from the CTU without paying union dues. This blatantly unfair strategy is designed to destroy public unions’ ability to fight for better pay and working conditions, and reveals the intentions of the anti-union forces in our country. Our best defense is to stop hiring teachers of color. CPS has also pursued a racist school turnaround policy, in which schools with 60-80 percent Black faculties have consistently been the target of turnaround. We currently have many CPS principals who risked their jobs to form a union, battle the expansion of their own charter networks and fight for their students.

We don’t have to like Walmart in order to support Walmart workers forming a union. We hope that bringing new workers into our union will increase our power, but it’s not a silver bullet. Many challenges remain, and we’re going to need a strong, unified CTU more than ever.

In solidarity,

Jesse Sharkey
A response to “Behind the Wall”

Two members discuss an article from the May 2017 CUT regarding issues of access to a quality education for Palestinian children in Israel and the Palestinian-controlled territories

BY TARA LEVITT AND WENDY WEINGARTEN

Last May, President Karen Lewis wrote on these pages of Chicago Union Teacher (CUT) that, “by thinking in local terms, we risk losing sight of the more fundamental issues that are at the core of our struggle as public educators—all children deserve access to a quality education.” We couldn’t agree more.

But in the same issue, CTU staff members published an article (“Behind the Wall: Childhood and human rights deferred and denied in the Holy Land”) that not only loses sight, but seems to intentionally blur issues of access to a quality education for Arab children in Israel and the Palestinian-controlled territories.

We feel that it is our job—as teachers and as a union of teachers—to present sensitive, conflicted topics with diligence and insight, both inside our classrooms, and when engaging in conversations with our peers and colleagues. When we saw the May CUT headline, we hoped that “Behind the Wall” would acknowledge the full realities of the situation, including the Israelis living in a state of war. Instead, we found a one-sided article with misrepresentations, omission and errors.

If the CUT wants to devote Union resources to this issue halfway around the globe, it should at least do so in a balanced manner. The article disrespected and damaged the very claim to “our struggle as public educators.” The article manipulated emotions rather than marshaled facts. We provide here some counterpoints to the article, and offer some additional data that follow educators might find illuminating.

Let’s first consider the angles of the article. The authors, both CTU staff members, were on a paid trip organized by a British union, the National Union of Teachers (NUT). The NUT for a number of years has been actively promoting the campaign to boycott, sanction and divest against Israel, known as “BDS.” That means the trip was already slanted toward conclusions about a conflict that has fostered for more than 70 years.

For our part, we sought basic information to understand the struggles and challenges confronting public school teachers and children in Palestinian territories regarding access to quality education. For example, respected Palestinian-supported organizations report that the Palestinian K-10 educational system exceeds the testing and academic outcomes of most countries in the Middle East. Current rates of Palestinian teacher hiring and professional achievement are high. A West Bank Palestinian teacher received the global “Nobel Prize” of teaching in 2016. Her notable excellence was in teaching peace and negotiation amid violence, an approach that revolutionizes curricula that once taught outright anti-Semitism (and, alas, in some locations, still does).

In terms of educational opportunity, facts are available for Arab students in Israel, as well as lands run by the Palestinian Authority (PA), here are some facts we’ve found:

**Educational data and evidence**

- Palestinian students in the territories lead all Arab countries in literacy rates, much higher, for example, than Egypt.
- The Palestinian territories (with the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan) lead the Arab world in equality of educational opportunity between men and women.
- The Palestinian territories’ educational index for expected total years of education is at or near the top of the Arab world—matching even Qatar.
- Palestinian enrollment rates in grades K-9 in the territories are the highest in the Arab world at 96 percent.
- The number of Palestinian schools in the territories increase five percent per year, with employees increasing 16 percent per year and the percentage of teachers who hold at least Bachelor of Arts degrees rising from 40 percent to nearly 75 percent.
- Within Israel, computer science teachers in the Arab sector during the decade from 2000 to 2010 rose by 50 percent. The Arab sector also saw a rise of 165 percent in instructors teaching technology classes and a 171 percent increase in the number teaching mathematics. The number of physics teachers in Arab schools grew by 25 percent, those teaching chemistry by 44 percent and in biology by 81.7 percent in 2010.

**Correcting “Behind the Wall” myths and facts**

The “myths” section of the original CTU article makes a number of lurid, little statements. To begin with, the “naming” of the article is about the West Bank, not Hamas-dominated Gaza. Governance and policies between Hamas and the PA, as well as relations between Israel and these organizations, must be differentiated. Hamas, an entity declared to be a terrorist group by the United States, European Union and many Arab nations, has repeatedly instigated conflict with Israel by shoot- ing rockets targeting Israeli schools and homes. The Hamas terrorists compounded these acts by placing rocket launchers in schools, hospitals and mosques, placing innocent Palestinian lives at grave risk.

Furthermore, the article talks about extreme Israeli punishment regarding “minor” incidents such as throwing stones, disregarding the lethal effect of such weapons. Children as well as adults have been killed by stones, including those thrown through windows of moving cars. The PA publicly supports such violence, going so far as to offer monetary rewards which increase based on how many people were killed following the terrorist acts.

Various Palestinian groups (Hamas, Fatah, Islamic Jihad, Popular Front for the liberation of Palestine) recruit children as young as 13 as suicide bombers, couriers or fighters (as rock and Molotov cocktail throwers). These organizations have even stooped so low as to recruit a mentally disabled child as a suicide bomber.

We believe it is possible to invite a range of views and corrective visions into the assessment of education in the Palestinian territories. We know of several groups that include both Palestinian and Israeli voices very much concerned about educational improvement. We invite all interested CTU members to work with us and join a future study trip that is thoughtful, inclusive and useful, emphasizing teachers and their methodology, and meeting with Palestinian and Israeli teachers, politicians, and educational experts.

Tara Levitt is a CTU clinician and Wendy Weingarten is a teacher at LaSalle II Magnet School.
Strike back while the iron is hot

There is a spotlight on failed CPS initiatives and unscrupulous activities, so we must keep the pressure on

By JOSEPH MCDERMOTT

The driving force behind many Chicago Public Schools reform and policy initiatives is not efficiency, local school control or access to better services. The usual motivation is cost reduction and plausible deniability. Instead of fully staffing human resource specialists who can manage hiring processes, CPS defers to principals in the name of autonomy. Instead of providing fully resourced schools that offer an education that parents and students desire, CPS holds principals accountable for the number of students who enroll in their schools. Instead of fulfilling services for special needs students, CPS systematically imposes budget cuts in the name of “inclusion.”

Principals who act as one-person HR teams

The summer of 2017 saw the departure of a notorious Southeast Side high school principal, who promptly took her talent to the Side high school principal, who

the district’s CEO a.k.a. ethical crusader Forrest Claypool and his band of merry auditors should consider real change and balance the power of the principal. Clout and corruption must have a procedural safeguard to prevent principals from subverting and perverting the law.

Educators never learned recruitment in college

It’s no secret that the district is losing students— at the rate of 10,000 students per year for the past two years. The district also expanded student seats through charters and contract schools in the same neighborhoods that are suffering an overall decline in population. All the while, the district systematically disinvests in neighborhood schools and plays a game of social Darwinism where all schools fight for the same crumbs of resources.

The fight for resources is directly linked to the “recruitment” of students. Thanks to student-based budgeting and school choice, funding is more closely tied to student enrollment. This leads to cuts to librarians and counselors for struggling schools, making it even more difficult to promote a positive learning climate and meet students’ needs.

Many school leaders respond by saying, “We just need to recruit better,” as recruiting has become an essential part of being an effective school leader. Principals and educators were trained, however, to be curriculum and instruction experts. We all should understand child development and instruction; we don’t know about marketing and advertising. On top of all that, we are all recruiting for the same kids and there aren’t enough of them. The principles of market-driven choice don’t fit with the commitment to serve the needs of all children.

Dissenting opinions

The district has been called out by both the Sun-Times and WBEZ for its practices that hurt special education students. The district calls this a “full inclusion model” that seeks to “fully integrate” students with special needs. But what media is reporting, and what many CTU members have known for more than the past year, is that the district’s reforms are really about reducing services in order to save money.

The result, on an individual level, is damage done to children who don’t get the services they need. The damage, on a school-wide level, is when dozens of special education students overwhelm a general education teacher who has 30 kids living with disabilities in a classroom without the training or resources to meet all of their needs.

The problem comes when the Individual Education Plan (IEP) team creates the IEP with input of all stakeholders. Imagine the impact when a school has 30 percent students with IEPs and all of them just had their minutes reduced in half. It appears as though the entire team came to a consensus. The student just lost half the minutes of services that they need to succeed and learn, and the IEP seems to show that the entire team agreed to this reduction.

But this is where a collective response must happen through teachers writing dissenting opinions. This is where any teacher can articulate the reasons they believe the minutes should not be reduced. This will make it more apparent that the district is systematically pushing an agenda that is not sound educational policy. More dissenting opinions on record will force the district to take a second look at its destructive practices.

This is the time to increase the pressure and protect the resources for our most vulnerable children. 

Joseph McDermott is a CTU teacher field representative.
By Sarah Rothschild

In the United States judicial system, the terms de facto and de jure segregation have been similarly debated since the Civil War. De facto segregation is unintentional, even though the consequences can be far-reaching and very damaging. De jure segregation, on the other hand, is outright intentional and racist segregationist policy, and unconstitutional, but at the same time difficult to prove.

Proving that the U.S. continues to suffer from the devastating effects of de jure segregation—that the government intentionally promoted and enforced racial segregation across the country for the last 150 years—is precisely what is meticulously documented in The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America. The author, Richard Rothstein, is a research associate at the Economic Policy Institute in Washington, D.C. The Union is hosting Rothstein for the Chicago stop on his national book tour at the Chicago Teachers Union Center on Dec. 6 (see the flyer below).

Today’s persistent residential housing segregation originated at the end of Reconstruction and the beginning of Jim Crow in the late 1800s, when federal troops were ordered out of the South and massive violence against Black residents ensued. This led to the Great Migration, as people fled to safety in the North. Official racial zoning ordinances began in Baltimore in 1910 and spread across the country. Even though the U.S. Supreme Court ruled this type of zoning unconstitutional, urban planners and realtors pushed it as a way to maintain “peace and prosperity,” and municipalities did everything they could to circumvent the law.

During WWI and WWII, the U.S. government needed workers to build ships, planes, ammunition and other supplies for the wars. As workers flocked to these jobs, they needed housing. Both the housing and the factories were strictly segregated by the government. After the wars, workers moved into their own housing, but developers were able to push for racial segregation, and Black workers were forced to live in overcrowded, low-quality housing. Both the housing and the factories were segregated as well. After WWII, there was a critical housing shortage and the government issued Federal Housing Administration (FHA) and Veterans Administration (VA) loans to help expand the growing suburbs. Most Black buyers were unqualified for these loans because their communities were deemed “bad investments” and racially restrictive housing covenants prevented them from purchasing homes in white communities. Loans were also deemed risky in integrated communities, and the FHA discouraged banks from lending. Without the mortgages, many people could not keep up with maintenance and many communities deteriorated into slums that people could not move out of because they did not have the capital to do so, or were prohibited by racial zoning ordinances.

Thus began the government-funded economic wealth gap that continues today. As few low-to-moderate-income white families were beginning to accumulate wealth, which would also be passed on to their children to provide a head start on their own wealth accumulation. Black families were stuck in overcrowded communities bereft of resources or opportunities. These communities were often zoned for industrial use, toxic waste or to allow illicit businesses, which also further suppressed any potential economic value, not to mention negatively affecting residents’ quality of life.

At the same time, there was also widespread racism and economic segregation in employment. Many trade unions refused to allow Black workers to join, and many government departments would not hire Black workers for any positions other than as janitors. The Internal Revenue Service was even complicit in de jure segregation as it granted tax-exempt status to churches, hospitals, universities and neighborhood associations that promoted segregation.

Laws were finally enacted in the 1960s to officially end this practice, but implementation and enforcement continue to prove difficult even today.

Countless lawsuits and civil rights organizations have been working tirelessly to prove de jure segregation for more than 150 years. The CTU is in the midst of such a lawsuit right now against the Chicago Board of Education regarding school turnarounds. The proof of the government’s complicity in promoting and enforcing segregation is clear. Armed with this knowledge, we need to fight for racial and economic justice. Join us on Dec. 8 to continue the discussion.

Sarah Rothschild is a CTU education policy analyst.

Richard Rothstein is a National Book Award, Non-Fiction finalist. Research Associate of the Economic Policy Institute, Fellow at the Thurgood Marshall Institute of the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, and Fellow of the Haas Institute at the University of California, Berkeley.

Natalie Moore is a WBEZ South Side Reporter covering segregation and inequality and author of The South Side: A Portrait of Chicago and American Segregation.

Book sale and signing by Richard Rothstein and Natalie Moore.
A tale of two school systems

Jonathan Kozol’s *Savage Inequalities* discusses the differences in quality of education among students of differing classes and races.

**By Jesus ‘Azteca’ Sanchez**

Chicago has systematically created schools that are underfunded and desperate for resources. Some neighborhood schools are provided resources while others are starved. This creates an abundance of opportunities for some and less for others. Education has been used as an equalizer for opportunity, fairness and social justice in our society, yet the quality of education can also influence what opportunity is available to those individuals being educated. In Jonathan Kozol’s book, *Savage Inequalities*, he travels around the United States and discusses how broken and dilapidated the educational system has become. Kozol talks about the difference between affluent schools and schools in poor neighborhoods. He writes about the difference in the quality of education that each community is receiving, and also mentions how segregation in Chicago leads to unequal school funding. These factors are leads to a difference in the type of quality education that is provided in Chicago neighborhoods, which limits the opportunities provided, fairness found and the prevalence or lack of social justice.

Segregation in Chicago has historically been used as a tool to divide the way resources are allocated and is one of the leading causes of a lack of equity in school funding. Public school funding is directly correlated to the housing market, and the housing market is the leading factor in Chicago’s segregation, according to Kozol. “Most public schools in the United States depend for their initial funding on a tax on local property,” he writes, and the ways property values are determined create this systemic deficiency in school funding.

Different ethnicities and races will vary the price points of property and cause property prices and taxes to fluctuate. In Chicago, the property of people of color is worth less than whites because of segregation, which creates neighborhood schools that have an abundance of resources while others go without. A school in an area with more white residents is more likely to have better funding because the property values are higher. This segregation creates quality public school systems for some and leaves the poor in underfunded schools.

Another way that the Chicago public school system is unjust comes by way of selective enrollment and program funding. Kozol notes that there are schools in the Chicago Public Schools district that do not lack for funding because of their categorization as magnet schools. “The city (Chicago) runs a parallel system of selective schools, some of which are known as ‘magnet’ schools, and these schools, the principal tells me, do not have the staffing problems that he faces,” he writes. “They can select their teachers and their pupils.” Selective enrollment schools are able to draw students from across the Chicago metropolitan area, creating diverse and well-funded school communities. Neighborhood schools, on the other hand, must take students from a pre-selected geographical area no matter their skill level. This creates schools that are ethnically homogenous and segregated from diversity, and another example of how public school funding in Chicago is impacted by systemic inequalities.

The accountability movement has created a lack of resources for neighborhood schools because of the problems of charter schools. Charter schools are in direct competition with neighborhood school systems for school funding, and public school systems now have to grapple with the little public funds they do receive being taken by private charter schools. “What began as a movement for testing and accountability has turned into a privatization movement,” according to former Assistant U.S. Secretary of Education Diane Ravitch. This widens the gap between students from affluent and low-income areas because the public schools in affluent areas typically have no charter schools as competition.

Critics argue that every student is on an even playing field, and determination and drive dictate how much a student can achieve. They point out the success story of students who have gone through the neighborhood public school system and have become successful. Other critics will say that this inequality cannot be solved by giving these starved neighborhood schools money. “Many suburban legislators representing affluent school districts use terms such as ‘sinkhole’ when opposing funding for Chicago’s children,” Kozol writes. “We can’t keep throwing money at them,” said Governor James Thompson in 1988.” Yet government officials would surely condemn and challenge these unjust policies if their children attended a school that had some of the same problems Chicago public neighborhood schools have.

If this problem were to be seen as a structural problem that promotes underfunding of schools in poor areas in Chicago, however, critics would see that this system takes opportunities away from students who are not in affluent areas of the city. There must be recognition that there are two types of schools in Chicago—one for poor children and one for more affluent children—and also recognition that the educational system in our city lacks in fairness, social justice and in playing a role in securing equality of opportunity. This unjust and immoral way of seeing public education is the reason some students have advantages over others, and can systematically eliminate a student’s opportunities for equality.

**Jesus ‘Azteca’ Sanchez is a teacher at Social Justice High School. He blogs at www.jesusazteca300snanchez.com.**
Together we are strong

**TENNILLE EVANS**

More than half of the 34 Head Start Program Resource Assistants (PRAs) who were laid off in June have won their jobs back in a powerful victory for them and our union.

Without warning and without reason, Mayor Rahm Emanuel and his handpicked Chicago Public Schools CEO Forrest Claypool terminated 34 PRAs on June 20. PRAs are 99 percent women of color who serve and support both parents and students in important Head Start programs throughout the city. These experienced pre-school assistants were to be replaced by just 12 new staff members, yet many of them are responsible for 200 families each.

Without them, children facing homelessness, hunger and poverty will not benefit from the networks of resources developed by these PRAs throughout their careers. Head Start is federally funded and does not depend on state or city government, so these cuts made absolutely no sense.

The PRAs and the Chicago Teachers Union sprang into action following the layoffs, and worked to restore the laid off 34. "Rahm and Forrest have simply decided to throw away a wealth of resources in a vicious attack on Black and brown CPS workers and the families they serve," CTU President Karen Lewis said.

CTU organizers mobilized Pre-K teachers, parents and community organizations to rally around the fight to win the PRAs their jobs back. There were rallies and protests at the monthly Board of Education meetings, where PRAs gave passionate testimony as to why their jobs are important and why they have for their students and communities. PRAs also sent emails to Head Start supervisors and CPS Talent Office officials, and launched a social media campaign.

CTU Summer Organizing Institute officials, and launched a social media campaign.

"Unionizing Pre-K schools, and community organizations joined in solidarity to restore laid off PRAs. By the time the courts heard our case, we won a retrial in Judge Hayden's court, and the CPS law department, which was unable to provide documentation of a legitimate basis for the demand to switch job categories. In the end, our members retained their jobs and seniority."

Keep your PSRP identity

**BY ANITA BURKS, JOSE JIMENEZ AND DEBBY POPE**

Over the last decade, Chicago Public Schools has forced many teacher assistants (TAs) to convert to Special Education Classroom Assistants (SECA), telling them that their choice is SECA or unemployment. This has happened in many situations where their job description does not warrant a change. So what is the difference in job duties? It’s actually quite straightforward: SECA perform diapering and feeding, and TAs do not. Also, TAs are represented by the Chicago Teachers Union and SECA’s are in Service Employees International Union Local 73. For many PSRPs, this is a critical difference.

Burbank Elementary delegate Erin Young was recently able to step in and help a group of PSRPs Working in the special education program sign waivers and switch to SECA positions. All three are long-term employees with more than 15 years in their positions. All would have lost their seniority by making the switch. Young reached out to CTU where she was referred to PSRP field representative Jose Jimenez, who directed the members to not sign the waivers as advised by the Union. The principal then contacted the CPS law department, which was unable to provide documentation of a legitimate basis for the demand to switch job categories.

In the end, our members retained their jobs and seniority.

Know your rights for PSRPs

As PSRP members of the CTU have been placed in SECA positions and shuffled out of our bargaining unit, some have been given job titles that don’t describe their actual duties, but which exclude them from our union.

If you are asked to sign off on a position change, please read the documentation and contact your field representative before signing anything!

Your position may officially change if you are asked by your principal to take on any of the following job duties:

- Changing diapers
- Riding buses with students
- Other duties not previously in your job description

If you used to be a TA and were changed to a SECA, but are not diapering and feeding any students currently, contact your field representative immediately and we will advocate for a return to your original position. We have won these cases and contract language prohibits these types of changes.

Pay close attention to your pay stub to see if your position number has been changed or if you notice any change in your rate of pay. Even a small raise in pay could wind up costing you rights on the job.

Anita Burks and Jose Jimenez are CTU PSRP field representatives. Debbi Pope is a CTU retirees and part-time grievance writer.

PSRP wins retroactive step salary grievance

**BY JOSE JIMENEZ**

Daphne Hill is a teacher assistant at Bouchee Elementary Math and Vocational Academy with 26 years of service. She had a few questions regarding salary and step increases, and was unsure if her appropriate step and lane placement reflected her years of service. The Chicago Teachers Union filed a grievance on her behalf and won. Hill was then placed on step 10—the highest step for a teacher assistant under the Chicago Board of Education/Union agreement—and received three years of retroactive salary.

Jose Jimenez is a CTU PSRP field representative.

Springfield conference brings together CTU PSRPs

**BY CHRISTEL WILLIAMS-HAYES**

CTU PSRP delegates recently attended the Illinois Federation of Teachers 2017 PSRP/Public Employee Conference that was held in Springfield, Illinois. The theme of this year’s conference was “Fighting for the Future We All Deserve!” As the backbone of our schools, PSRPs are integral to the fight for the future of our students and school communities.

This year’s conference provided a host of workshops central to our work in Chicago’s public schools, including “Immigrant’s Rights in Education and the Community,” “Member Engagement During a Politically Charged Time,” “The Union Response to Student Street Trauma,” “Transforming Our Approach to School Discipline Practices” and “Workplace Bullying and Managing Stress.” The conference was also an opportunity to work with other PSRPs throughout the state and discuss the importance of recognizing the fact that every PSRP position matters.

“I became a unionist because I realized how important it is to be a member of the Chicago Teachers Union, and as a CTU PSRP, I also value the importance of preparing other PSRPs for leading roles in our Union,” said Lashawn Wallace, a PSRP at Taft High School who attended the conference.

Christel Williams-Hayes is a CTU organizer.
CTU wins commitment to hire more than 100 additional teachers, teacher assistants

Thanks to our battle to enforce new contract language on K-2 classrooms, CPS has added positions to lower class sizes throughout the district

CTU Communications

After a multi-year battle with the Chicago Board of Education, the Chicago Teachers Union has pushed the district to hire 91 teacher assistants (TAs) and 11 teachers for schools struggling with lack of resources and overcrowding. Rank-and-file members joined CTU field staff in successfully organizing around the issue, and forced Chicago Public Schools to enforce our contract—specifically around K-2 class size issues.

The agreement means more living wage employment opportunities for CTU PSRPs, which are positions that have been under attack by Mayor Rahm Emanuel and his handpicked Board of Education for years. In June, the district fired 38 aides—predominantly women of color—serving CPS kindergarten parents and students in Head Start programs throughout the city. Their organizing efforts in the wake of the layoffs, as well as Union advocacy, led to the reinstatement of a number of these positions.

“We know that classrooms in dozens of schools are overcrowded, and that teacher assistants play a critical role in supporting classroom conditions that allow students to learn and teachers to educate,” said CTU Vice President Jesse Sharkey. “This victory is a powerful rejection of management’s endless nickel and diming of our members and our students, and an opportunity to put our PSRPs back to work.”

CTU PSRPs also want CPS CEO Forrest Claypool to be mindful of a central demand from the neighborhoods they serve—that CPS hire from within their communities, and that job placement focuses on Black and brown workers who reflect and have a real connection to neighborhoods in need.


This hiring initiative is an important win in a larger fight. Many other schools need—but have not yet received—staffing support, so it’s critical that members reach out to your field representative and organizer if you need relief with school staffing needs.

PSRP WINTER INFORMATIONAL MEETING SERIES

Choose one of the two dates

Wednesday, December 6, 2017 ☑ 4:30 p.m.
Tuesday, December 12, 2017 ☑ 4:30 p.m.

Meetings will be held at:
Chicago Teachers Union Center
1901 W. Carroll Ave.
Chicago, IL 60612

Meet with your PSRP Representatives and Leadership!

RSVP TO ROMEL FERGUSON AT organizing@ctulocal1.com
Day of the Dead vigil honors schools closed by Emanuel

CTU COMMUNICATIONS

The Day of the Dead vigil honours the neighborhoods our communities have lost, and mourns the neighborhood schools that educators and families have created, and gather in solidarity for resistance to any further CPS attacks on our communities.

Day of the Dead vigil honors schools closed by Emanuel

CTU COMMUNICATIONS

CTU, community partners gather to celebrate classroom, legislative leaders in fight for education justice

CTU, community partners gather to celebrate classroom, legislative leaders in fight for education justice

Procedure to fill a trustee vacancy on the CTU Executive Board

MARIA MORENO

The Trustee position on the CTU Executive Board was recently vacated.

In accordance with Article VIII, Section 5 of the Chicago Teachers Union Constitution and By-Laws, the Executive Board shall fill all vacancies in the offices of President, Vice President, Recording Secretary, Financial Secretary, Treasurer, Trustees and Area Vice Presidents until the next regular election, subject to the approval of the House of Delegates.

The Executive Board will recommend a candidate for the Trustee vacancy at the Dec. 4, 2017, Executive Board meeting. Delegates will vote to approve the Executive Board’s recommendation for Trustee at the Dec. 13, 2017, House of Delegates meeting. If the delegates do not approve the candidate, the procedure shall be repeated until the vacancy is filled.

Disregard the announcement of candidate nominations for the position of Trustee made at the Nov. 1, 2017, House of Delegates meeting.
**Stronger together!**

The CTU & ChiACTS Local 4343

Union educators at charter schools—like CTU members—challenge charter bosses, oppose charter expansion and fight for better classroom conditions in all public schools. ChiACTS Local 4343 has unionized 25 percent of teachers at charters, with a goal of 100 percent, to stop the district’s divide-and-rule schemes.

**We’re in the same fight to defend the same kids. Let’s welcome them.**

---

**WHY MERGE?**

Some facts for CTU members on merging with the union educators of Chicago ACTS Local 4343

- **STOP CHARTER PROLIFERATION.** The companies that operate charter schools hate the idea of a merger. They know that a merger between union charter teachers and the CTU will undercut their ability to underpay educators and take public dollars out of our classrooms. As more Chicago charter teachers have unionized, charter expansion has fallen dramatically, from more than a dozen charter applications a year to almost none. Today, it’s controversial for CPS to open even a single new charter. About 25 percent of charter educators have unionized, with big union drives underway at other non-union charter operators, including Noble, the largest operator in Chicago. Merger will help us organize all Chicago charter schools and stop new charters from opening.

- **SOLIDARITY FOR EDUCATORS.** Merger brings educators together to fight for better school conditions and against the bosses in both CPS and charter schools. Union charter teachers oppose charter expansion, merit pay and other attempts to undercut teachers’ pay and benefits. By adding 1,000 new members from unionized charter schools, we strengthen our numbers and our fight against budget cuts, school privatization and vouchers, and attacks on our pay, rights and school communities.

- **SPEAK WITH ONE VOICE.** By forging deeper ties with union charter teachers, we can bring our dialog and debate in-house instead of letting politicians and district leadership divide us and weaken our union. We’ll have more success winning the fights to protect our jobs, strengthen our contracts and improve conditions for students by joining together in the same union and same struggle.

---

**CTU COMMUNICATIONS**
Answering the call for more Black teachers

The Grow Your Own program has created new possibilities for educators that would never have existed before

BY LINDA WILSON

As a lifelong resident of Peoria, Illinois, and a teacher in Peoria’s District 150 public schools, I care deeply about our community and the 14,000 students we serve. About 55 percent of our students are African-American, but less than 7 percent of our teachers are. The district also has a growing number of Latino students, yet Latino teachers are significantly underrepresented on staff, and male teachers are in short supply, too. That’s why I’m committed to bringing the Grow Your Own (GYO) program back to Peoria schools.

Grow Your Own is an Illinois program designed to recruit and retain diverse candidates to become teachers in their own communities. Despite the increased awareness of the positive impact of, and the need for, more teachers of color, many school districts are like Peoria and suffer from a lack of teacher diversity.

For underrepresented children and those with few resources, it is important for them to have role models they can relate to. And research suggests that white children benefit from having teachers of other races to dispel negative stereotypes they may be exposed to. I’m a Black woman. I am educated. I have a career. I have a family. I am from this community. And as a proud graduate of Grow Your Own, I know how beneficial it is—for participants and their students.

For me, the program was a godsend. I entered in 2008 when GYO was first launched in Peoria. I had been attending classes sporadically at Illinois Central College and was working as a teacher’s aide at that time. Before entering the program, I had no idea how I was going to complete my teaching degree. I was juggling school, family, work and financial challenges. But the amazing support I received from peers and mentors in GYO helped to see me through and encouraged me to keep going to reach my goal.

There were so many helpful components to the program. I traveled to Chicago for the statewide networking meeting and heard Stanford University professor Linda Darling-Hammond speak. I networked with other teachers across the state. I received training and leadership development. I received a stipend to help defray the costs of my education and, with forgivable loans, I was able to go full time to Bradley University, where I earned my bachelor’s degree in early childhood education.

I’m now entering my seventh year as a teacher at Trewyn K-8 School in Peoria. Many of our teachers live in surrounding communities. While there is certainly nothing wrong with that, you do see things through a different lens when you live and work here. My school is three blocks away from my house. I see students and parents on my block and at the grocery store. I’m really invested in my community and my students. My students know I care about them, and I hope my success is inspirational to them. I want them to know they can overcome their challenges and go on to bright futures too.

I’m fortunate that my union, the Peoria Federation of Teachers Local 780, understands the importance of teacher diversity in our district and is supporting my efforts to bring GYO back to Peoria. I’ve been named the local’s Grow Your Own advocate, a role I take very seriously. Our community wants great teachers, and we know that GYO produces high-quality educators. GYO graduates have high GPAs, continue our education by pursuing master’s degrees, and are invested in our communities. We aim to teach children that they can be successful, inside and outside the classroom.

Grow Your Own created new possibilities for me that would never have existed without the program. I know there are others who want to become teachers but who, just like me, need a few doors opened and some encouraging words. With the support of my union, I’m committed to helping them do that in my community and others.

Linda Wilson is a middle school teacher and the Political/Diversity Director for Peoria Federation of Teachers Local 780. This story originally appeared on the Illinois Federation of Teachers website.

---

CPS teacher diversity: Behind the numbers

BY PAULYN JANKOV

Since 2001, Black teachers have gone from 40 percent to 21 percent of Chicago Public Schools teachers. CPS has lost more than 5,000 Black teachers in this time due to school closings; turnarounds; layoffs; budget cuts; accountability based on standardized testing, which has estranged local school autonomy and the teaching profession; and the dual failure of the district to hire and the state to support a development pipeline for teachers of color.

The number of Black teachers in CPS has declined by 1,000 in just the last five years alone, and as the number of Black teachers plummeted, segregation in our schools has remained steady, and in some ways, grown far worse. In 2004, there were just nine schools with no Black teachers, and back in 1989, there was just one. This year, there are 62 schools without a single Black teacher. As one CPS teacher stated in a recent interview with the CTU Education Policy Department:

We are producing citizens comfortable [with] being segregated—and that should be enough of a reason to do something about it. I would really like to walk into a public school in Lincoln Park or Lakeview and not be stared at or second-guessed because you’re not accustomed to dealing with people who look like me.

Stay tuned for future articles in Chicago Union Teacher on segregation and diversity in our schools.

Paulyn Jankov is a CTU education policy analyst.
Do voucher programs initiate an academic slide?

Repackaging vouchers as scholarship programs doesn’t change the fact that we need to ask some tough questions in Illinois

BY GINA CANEVA

Recently, the negatively-charged term “voucher” has been morphing into the more positive term “scholarship program.” In the case of my home state of Illinois, before the public could get used to the switch, “scholarship programs” stealthily swept through our state legislature. Designed to distribute large amounts of public funds for students to attend private schools, these programs were packaged tightly with the long-debated and publicly-vetted equitable education legislation that Illinois schoolchildren have desperately needed for decades. According to WTTW’s Chicago Tonight, a voucher system is where a portion of tax dollars goes into a general fund that the state controls and uses to issue vouchers to qualifying families for tuition payments to private or parochial schools. In a tax credit scholarship program, a taxpayer or business can donate up to $1 million a year to a nonprofit organization that then distributes the money as a scholarship for families to use as tuition. The donor can pick the school to which this money goes, and 75 percent of the donation is issued to the donor as tax credits.

In many areas of the country, such programs serve students in poverty. In Florida, the nation’s leader in this, the programs serve around 100,000, and the average salary of families whose children are on scholarship is around $24,000. But in Illinois, students can be on scholarships even if they aren’t in poverty. According to the new law, students are eligible for scholarships if their family earns less than 300 percent of the federal poverty level—equating to around $73,000 for a family of four. This means that poor, working class and middle-class families will have access to the scholarship program.

It raises the question: Who is this program meant to serve, and should tax dollars be used to support middle-income families’ use of private schools? Recent research is conflicting at best on whether student achievement improves for scholarship recipients.

In July, the Brookings Institute reported that in Ohio, Louisiana, Indiana, and Washington, D.C., student achievement for scholarship recipients declined significantly in math and slightly in reading for students who transferred from public schools to private schools within the first three years of attending private schools.

However, according to NPR, the achievement decline disappears if the student stayed in the school for longer than four years. The problem with this information is that many students in the study did not remain in the private school system for more than four years. And in Illinois, there is a clause that can potentially end scholarship programs after five years. Several Illinois democratic governor hopefuls including J.B. Pritzker, Chris Kennedy and Daniel Biss have all said they are against vouchers, and hope to act against this pro-voucher position. However, with the right word choice, legislators did on the equity portion of the bill and looking at educational research to help make decisions as legislators did on the equity portion of the bill, the scholarship program was part of the compromise rammed through at the last second.

And although it stands to initially affect just 6,000 students, it is one small step in authorizing the use of public funds for private education—a step that President Donald Trump and Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos hope to expand throughout our nation.

For now, the scholarship programs are here to stay. But one question that should be on the minds of private and religious school leaders is how to deal with readiness. Students on the scholarship programs are required to take the same standardized assessments as their public school peers such as the PARCC and SAT exams.

Are private and religious schools ready to offer more services to ensure this research-proven backslide for transfer students doesn’t happen? What is their plan to counteract the student achievement decline that has become the norm for students transferring from public to private schools?

As private and religious school leaders take incoming students on scholarship vouchers, we need to be thoughtful about helping all students achieve.

As leaders both nationally and locally decide whether or not to pass legislation in favor of expanding school choice through scholarship programs, I urge them to take the time that Illinois legislators didn’t to vet the program publicly and take a hard look at the research on existing programs.

Families interested in the program should research their school choices well and ask the hard questions about the school’s preparedness to support students knowing that an academic achievement slide has been proven to occur.

Gina Caneva is a 14-year CPS veteran who works as a teacher-librarian and Writing Center Director at Lindblom Math and Science Academy. This article was originally published in Education Post.

Facts about school vouchers

BY ILLINOIS RAISE YOUR HAND

The pro-voucher position believes that schools should compete for students or risk going out of business. This may work for markets, but it has no place in education as those that support it do not factor in that it is highly disruptive to formative education to regularly switch (choose) a new school.

This is the basis for CPS “choice system.” The problem is that choice systems also require added levels of bureaucracy to run them. The research on vouchers has shown that academic gains are microscopic to non-existent, and not worth the financial demands of completely overhauling a school system to add an additional sector to oversee vouchers.

Vouchers do not improve student achievement

Certain studies have shown slight gains for voucher students and others show negative or little to no difference. What is clear is that there is no evidence that voucher programs have made any substantial impact on student achievement.

Costs and oversight

A major change to a public school system will create costs that are necessary to finance, regulate, and provide services. These funds have historically come from the monies allocated for traditional public schools.

In a system with mayoral control, it’s possible that if the mayor is in support of vouchers they will be less stringent in the accountability of them as seen with charters in Chicago, which has led to problems for students with special needs.

Loss of rights and federal protections

Public schools are accountable to federal protections of the First Amendment, Title IV of the 1964 Civil Rights Act (desegregation of schools), Title IX of the 1972 Education Amendments (protections from gender discrimination). Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). Private schools are not.

Church and state issues

In a voucher system, public dollars are used to fund religious or private education with little to no accountability for tax dollars. In a choice system, parents are expected to vote with their feet, but who wants to continually switch schools if their needs aren’t met?

Schools need to be funded adequately so they are robust in their offerings and can meet the needs of all of their students. We don’t have libraries, firehouses or police stations that cater to personal choice. All services are offered to everyone. Why should schools be different?

Illinois Raise Your Hand is a coalition of parents and concerned citizens who advocate for quality public education for all children in Chicago and Illinois.
House of Delegates Meeting / Wednesday, November 1, 2017

Delegates not present: NETWORK 1A Clarke, Deborah L.; Irwin, Melanie A.; Kim, Gina Y.; Plencner, Scott M.; Sogolof, Patricia A.; Teas, Mary G.; Walsh, Matthew J.; / NETWORK 1B Conspaul, Helena; Eisenhauer, Judy; Gould, Derek J.; Grygal, Emma B.; Kazan, Melina F.; Kurzado, Vicki L.; Marks, Ann T.; Marks, Nick G.; Smith, Laura R.; Weiss, Margaret A.; Weinfield, Michael F.; / NETWORK 1C Dillon, Barbara K.; O'Donnell, James M. Pf, Pinh, Kirsh M.; / NETWORK 2A Bach, Barbara A.; Berenson, Amy L.; Lazzaroni, Elizabeth R.; Meenaghan, Lisa C.; Pulliam, Darnia M.; Thomas, Katherine G.; / NETWORK 2B Demeures, Augusta A.; Hernandez, Wilson; Hopkins, Anne; Mathew, John C.; O'Shea, Mary Rose; Pedersen, Christian E.; Pinson, Theo W.; Tonsmeier, Kimberly A.; Tournas-Andriopoulos, Pamela C.; Yaffe, Joanne S.; / NETWORK 3A Barrientos, Tracy M.; Milano, Desa M.; Mulberger, Moriya; Smilkoski, Gina; Whitney, Michel M.; / NETWORK 3B Anderson, Grace A.; Collins, John T.; Credmore, Sharon D.; Hara, Stephanie J.; Montanez, Rene R.; Rivad, Mariol; Roberson, Roberl; / NETWORK 4A Bennett-Stanley, Marlene K.; Brasch, Steven C.; Cass, Rosa M.; Ebel, Judy; Hungerford, Robert; James; Ramos; D.; Zoldan, Sara R.; / NETWORK 4B Arnold, Aris J.; Benavides, Angela M.; Edmonds, Kathryn C.; Jacobsen, Johanna T.; Meneghian, Christopher J.; / NETWORK 4C Gaudiobbe, Nicholas S.; McNafl; Nancy C.; Murphy, Patricia W.; / NETWORK 5A Barendt, Stephen A.; Mazzoni, Rosemary S.; Nguyen, Trong M.; Potts, Vera; Rohrroever, Isaac W.; / NETWORK 5B Clasenho, Khu; Clark, Clennett M.; Smith, Ebe M.; Smith, Verma L.; Threlk Roshada M.; Williams, Luisa M.; / NETWORK 5C Gero-Serva, Sandra M.; / NETWORK 6A Cowling, Alex B.; Doss, Sara R.; Komet; Rita; Rodriguez, Gaynor; Schoff, Michael A.; Zuniga, Laura B.; / NETWORK 6B Borge, Michael A.; Brouss, Michael D.; Freeman, Ray; Puddle, Joe G.; Polak, Alexander M.; Pulaski, James; Reid, Kimberly M.; / NETWORK 6C Abram, Carl A.; Bokar, Carl; Michael; Capsoni, Daniel P.; Cole, James A.; Knibbe, Susan M.; / NETWORK 7A Dombro, Michelle P.; Fragoso, Miguel; Guerreiro, Jesse A.; Hedda, Mary B.; Levin; Gregory, Amy L.; Lin; Rebekeb A.; / Networks, Jacob; / NETWORK 7B Cardenas, Gisela; Cuadra, Luz M.; Kowalski, Megan / NETWORK 8A Caparog, Yazmin B.; Doherty, Kenneth G.; / NETWORK 8B Dukas, Katherine P.; Harris, Chalonn N.; Shaw, Janice D.; Turner, Deborah A.; Tyler, Terence P.; / Washington, Monisha B.; / NETWORK 8C Diamond, Katherine P.; Hernandez, Karen A.; Poplawski, Nicole A.; Reed, Darryl L.; Roberson; Tracy, Y.; Huang; / NETWORK 9A Ferguson, Heather C.; Fisher-Gary, Tanya; Miller, Chalonn; N.; Shaw, Janice D.; Turner, Deborah A.; Tyler, Terence P.; / Washington, Monisha B.; / NETWORK 9B Dawkins, Katherine P.; Herren, Karen A.; Tavas; Poplawski, Nicole A.; Reed, Darryl L.; Roberson, Tracy Y.; Huang; / NETWORK 10A McLurin, Makosha D.; Muir, Jeanine E.; O'Malley, Margaret M.; Weir; Krista L.; Zaruk, Steven A.; / NETWORK 10B Alba, Marya; Lantham, Joseph A.; McGarath, Patrick W.; McKay, Megan J.; Murray, Valerie L.; D.; Llanado, Sara J.; Stringer, Jerral ∕; Fuller, Nicole; McGowan, Mary F.; Murphy, Erin A.; Ronneman, Eric F.; Sparks, Jen L.; / NETWORK 11A Charman-Walla, Carolyn D.; Cheary, Anne T.; Raeder, Candice K.; / NETWORK 11B Clay-Camilia K.; Holmes, Davina; Kimberly, Philip C.; Taylor, Devona T.; Wendes, Natalie L.; / NETWORK 11C Brown, Manyaza Y.; Davis, Vivian M.; McKinney, Amanda G.; Smith, Ves L.; Spring, Jerrod; / NETWORK 12A Carter, Lavender F.; Crockett, Nicole M.; Gordon, Telata; Hunter, April M.; Isom, Charles B.; Kimberagh, Ruth T.; Mack, Meredith L.; Pluznowski, Anna M.; Simpson, Lynette G.; Simpson, Andrea; / NETWORK 12B Goodar, Yasminia F.; Harris, Jaqueline; Moore, Arnie J.; Sanchez, Lora; / NETWORK 12C Andera G.; Bosue, Robin; Cameron, Alissa L.; Janice, Louelle A.; Johnson, Tepnika S.; Quinn, Jennifer R.; Robinson, Chantay E.; / NETWORK 13A Waldron, Jennifer R.; Andersen, Bob; Bab Jones Jennifer L.; Bright, Janine M.; Dixson, Ruth L.; Miller, Tanika S.; Spreaman, Nicole N.; Whinecek, Seryl F.; / NETWORK 13B Collins, Jason E.; Fattore, Markel B.; Kasdan-Soso, Lorie M.; Lee, Tyrone T.; Osorio, Juan M.; Silva, Sola R.; Vargas, Maria A.; / NETWORK 13C Calandriello, Joanne D.; Joyce R.; Grant, Lorrie A.; Kern, Allen; Robenain, Danielle B.; Saunders-Wolfie, Tanya L.; / AUSL SOUTH Clarke, Ernestine; Ferrin, Nicole M.; Harley, Christine J.; Jacobson, Sara J.; Jarrell, Ashley N.; Laidler, Autumn M.; McMurray, Tara A.; McPherson, Lydia M.; Mohrad, Mariahka N.; Normente, Sonya C.; / AUSL WEST Alexander, Melanie; Ewokewa, Mary; Kaleesi S.; Feldman, Susan A.; Johnson, Rebecca J.; McMillen, Laquesa; Pocheska, Taylor C.; CITY-WIDE CAREER SERVICE Bowes, Barbara J.; Bullis, LaTrawn, Latonya N.; Butler, Mary S.; Caldwell, Miranda; Vannoy, Cathy; Charnes, Gomez, Melanie J.; Gonzalez, Maria A.; Guerreiro, Gisela; Hill, Delphine; Johnson, Kimberly Y.; Johnson-Harper, Laudra; Kipiak, Belle; Kellogg, Phyliss-Everett, Clarisse; Robinson, Patricia; Watson, Kimberly A.; Wright, Yalene A.; CITY-WIDE BR Lloyd, Rena L.; Burns, Robert F.; Christiansen, William E.; Douglas Johnson, Cheryl D.; Ford-Kendrick, Oonta L.; Grassidas, Paul J.; Knudaup, Karen A.; Lewis, John; Lipchutz, Jean E.; Miller, Wilsey, Molea, Bryan P.; O'Connell, Jennifer L.; Saffour, Scoll J.; Silver, Jack; Sculley, Miriam A.; Tier, Therese L.;
This is the sufferers’ side of the story at last

The Burge curriculum in Chicago Public Schools teaches some of the darker truths about those we trust to serve and protect

BY DAVE STIEBER

Over nearly a 20-year period, Chicago Police Commander Jon Burge and his officers tortured 130 black men by beating them, suffocating them and using electric shocks to force confessions to crimes they did not commit. As part of a lawsuit that was won by survivors of the Burge police torture era, Chicago Public Schools is mandated to implement a 3-5 week unit in the 8th and 10th grades that teaches students about these horrific events. The men who survived the acts of torture did not win substantial amounts of money from the city. What they wanted and won were their stories taught in schools in hopes of preventing more instances like this.

I am a social studies teacher in a CPS high school. I have heard some parents say, “Well, I don’t want my kid learning about that.” Or “I will pull them out of school when they learn about that.” A reminder that this curriculum is taught to 8th and 10th graders. If at this age your children are still sheltered from the systemic racism and horrible events of our past, it is long overdue that they learn.

Do you think Jewish parents won’t teach their kids about the Holocaust? That Black parents don’t teach their kids about slavery, Jim Crow, and the ongoing struggle for equality? That Latino parents don’t teach their children about colonization, the loss of culture and current examples of racism? Whether you talk to your kids or not, they know that there is injustice in the world. No one likes learning about slavery, the Holocaust, or any type of discrimination or horrific abuse, but that does not mean that it should not be taught.

This curriculum does not have a point—it educates students on what can happen if systems go unchecked. We don’t like bullies, right? Well, let’s children learn what can happen if a bully is allowed to bully well into adulthood.

Social Studies teachers love teaching multiple viewpoints, but there are certain topics, such as this one, when the offending side’s viewpoint isn’t valid. We don’t teach that Hitler or the Nazis were misunderstood and protecting their own interests. We don’t teach that slave owners were just interested in helping slaves find gainful employment. The Jon Burge side of this curriculum is the side that picks up 130 black men and forced them to confess to crimes they didn’t commit by beating and torturing them. There is no good side to the Burge side.

This Chicago Police torture curriculum only focuses on what Burge did. It does not address any instances of police abuse or murder, before or after him. Police have said things to me like, “I’m not a bad guy,” and I know some police are right when they say that. It is true that even within a corrupt system like the CPD or in policing on a whole, there are legitimately good police officers. But until I hear police willing to call out the FOP, take it over or the mayor’s cronies. I was told by a great teacher in college that no one alive where you teach, if you are going to be successful in this career, you need to advocate for your students and then teach them how to advocate for themselves. Since I began teaching in CPS (2007), I have heard stories from my students of police harassment and abuse. I think about students who have been killed by police. I realize that I must use my various forms of privilege to speak out. I hope that soon, enough police officers will do the same.

Jon Burge and his men did horrible things. The reason we teach about these things is to prevent them from happening again. If you want to learn more about this curriculum, I am currently going to be or a part of a group of educators putting together a professional development (PD) that will be offered at the Chicago Teachers Union in the near future on what this curriculum really is and how to teach it.

If you are interested in working to improve policing in Chicago, then check out the Alliance Against Racist & Political Repression (AARPR) and the Chicago Torture Justice Center, organizations that are working to get all the victims of the Jon Burge era freed from jail. The AARPR also has been working towards getting an elected Civilian Police Accountability Council, where they would make the police accountable to someone besides themselves or the mayor’s cronies. DAVE STIEBER is a teacher at Chicago Vocational Career Academy. His blog, I Teach, can be found at www.davestieber.com.
Cohort students pay only $1,080 for each course.

The 6 course hybrid format program meets:
• advance on the CPS salary scale
• fulfill your state re-licensure requirements
• earn financial incentives including an annual stipend of more than $1950
• receive contractual and other leadership opportunities including 1st consideration for Consulting Teacher & Framework Specialist roles
• qualify for a full scholarship
• earn an optional Master's Degree &/or graduate & CPS Placement salary credits
• attain the Illinois NBPTS Master Certification Endorsement in only 2 years

Benefits
• Weekly Professional Development & small group facilitation
• Collaboration with a cohort of other CPS teachers going through the NBC process
• Preparation for rigorous content knowledge Assessment Center exercises
• Individual coaching & mentoring by CPS National Board Certified Teachers
• Assistance with writing required for the National Board portfolio
• 7-day Summer Institute (to be held in August, 2018 & 2019)
• 27 Graduate Credits/Optional Master's degree
• 15 CPS Lane Placement Credits
• Annual Pensionable Stipend
• Membership in the most highly regarded professional learning community
• Paid coaching roles upon National Board Certification
• Joining the ranks of more than 2000 current CPS National Board Certified Teachers, including CTU President, Karen GJ Lewis
• Becoming a better teacher

For more information or to register for the 2018-20 cohort recruitment meeting on November 28, 2017, go to CTUF.org/NTL

GO TO THE QUEST CENTER WEBSITE FOR PRICING OPTIONS AND TO REGISTER.