Our solidarity is international

Massive teacher strikes in Argentina, Brazil and Puerto Rico are a direct response to governments that have embraced neoliberalism and right-wing, conservative political movements. Sound familiar? PAGES 8 AND 9

Also in this issue...

The contractual right for counselors and clinicians to refuse case management is having a positive impact on CPS students and school communities PAGE 4

A state bill allowing our union to bargain over filthy schools and overcrowded classrooms is one step closer to passage in Springfield PAGE 7

Similarities between managed health care and corporate-driven public school reform means disinvestment in every direction PAGE 11
The PPLC as our elected school board

Activating an effective Professional Personnel Leadership Committee will empower your school and CTU members

BY LES PLEWA AND ELIOT VELAZQUEZ

A s educators, we know the importance of student ownership as it concerns the learning process and involvement in the classroom. Yet for decades, teachers have struggled with having their professional voices heard in the implementation of curriculum, best practices and budgetary issues in our schools. This is troubling, because research shows that the entire school benefits and academic achievement is increased when teachers take an active role in the decision-making process.

In 1995, the Illinois State Legislature passed a law requiring a Professional Personnel Leadership Committee (PPLC) in every school. The PPLC was given power by the state legislature to serve in an advisory role to the Local School Council (LSC). The law expanded and protected the state legislature to serve in an advisory role to the Local School Council (LSC). The law expanded and protected the

meetings are governed by the Open Meetings Act, which requires minutes to be recorded and open to the public. Included in our collective bargaining agreement is a description of the power of the PPLC. To help organize, the Chicago Teachers Union has created a PPLC/Professional Problems Committee (PPC) school kit that members can access on the CTU website under the ‘Rights at Work’ tab.

In many Chicago Public Schools buildings today, however, PPLCs have not functioned in their de facto advisory role for school administration and the LSC. Over the last couple years, the CTU and other elected officials have been advocating for an elected, representative school board. As members, at a local level, should also be working to establish effective PPLCs to assist in governing schools.

This year at Taft High School, the PPLC has been working to provide timely evidence-based recommendations to the principal and LCS regarding a variety of school policy issues such as grading, Advanced Placement (AP) and professional development. At a recent LSC meeting, the feedback from the LSC on our recommendations. The LSC seems receptive to our recommendations and will be receiving from the PPLC. We will be developing a range of recommendations for the principal and LSC in the upcoming months for the 2018-2019 school year.

Activating an effective PPLC will empower your school and CTU members. Always remember that as teachers, we have the knowledge, expertise and experience to make recommendations to the principal and LSC. You can start by examining your own PPLC, find like-minded colleagues or contact the CTU to help organize a PPLC.

Here are some strategies that we have found helpful to guide our discussions and recommendations in order to be an effective and impactful PPLC for our school:

• Focus on the shared mission. If we are to be an effective PPLC that impacts the academic and social-emotional growth of our students, we must have a shared mission not just with other PPLC members, but also with school leadership. This ensures that our students’ success is at the forefront of our efforts.

• Collect various forms of data. It is helpful to gather data from a variety of sources in order to understand issues and concerns that need to be addressed by the PPLC. We have utilized school report card data as well as gathered teacher input using school-wide surveys to elicit feedback. Using surveys ensures that the voices of many are involved in the PPLC process—not just the elected members.

• Use a problem-solving process to facilitate discussions. It is helpful to have a process to help create quality decisions to help create quality decisions. Here is an example of a process used to inform AP recommendations at our school:

Detect the problem (Evidence gathered reflecting potential increase in passing scores on AP exams; student and teacher surveys on perceived exam confidence and preparedness)
Attend LSC meetings. If we are to be an important part of the school decision-making process to help create quality schools, we should be involved in LSC meetings. This helps both the LSC to see us as a vital part of the school, and allows us an opportunity to provide feedback and insight on our recommendations.

The PPLC is the committee in our schools to provide teachers a voice in curriculum and budgetary decisions. The law and collective bargaining agreement can be used to ensure that PPLC’s are being implemented in schools. As union members, we have a responsibility to use our knowledge and expertise to create superb learning and work environments.

CTU members honored at Coalition of Labor Union Women event

BY HELEN RAMIREZ-O’DELL

Two CTU members received awards at the Chicago Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW) International Women’s Day Celebration in March. Eliot Velazquez was given the Olga Madar Award for her leadership and contribution to the labor movement and among working families. Garza is a Chicago Public Schools counselor who was elected alderman of the 10th Ward on the Southeast Side of Chicago in 2016. Olga Madar was the first president of the CLUW, which was founded in 1975 in Chicago. Leandres White is a retired teacher who received the Florence Criley Award in recognition of her work as a trade unionist to promote the cause of labor and enhance the role of women. Florence Criley was a founding member of CLUW and the first treasurer of its Chicago chapter.

In addition to their awards, Garza and White were presented with bread and roses by Chicago CLUW President Katie Jordan to show that working women want more than the bare necessities. “She’s a woman worker who must have bread,” said international labor leader Rose Schneiderman in 1911. “But she must have roses, too.”

Helen Ramirez-Orell is a CTU retiree. To learn more about the Coalition of Labor Union Women, visit cluw.org.
The promise of teacher rebellion

Sisters and Brothers,
Happy spring! This is the time of year for growth and new beginnings, the seeds of which we are seeing through uprisings around the globe. What if organized labor could only win a raise by waging a general strike? That would be considered a tough task. Regardless of the difficulty of such a feat, however, West Virginia educators proved that it is possible, if not essential to the future of public education. Their historic and inspiring action won a 2 percent raise and stabilized health care costs for all public employees across the state. Though universally recognized as a successful strike, what West Virginia educators also demonstrated was the gargantuan effort needed to break through the restrictions placed upon their right to collectively bargain. Any action that shuts down the school system in order to win significant gains creates an extremely high standard. However, thousands of educators and public employees in West Virginia, Kentucky, Oklahoma, and Arizona are showing unions how to wield the power of militant collective action again. Globally, this militancy is the norm. As you will read in this issue of Chicago Union Teacher, more than a million teachers in the past year have gone on strike in Sao Paulo, Brazil, joining nearly half a million educators who have taken action in Argentina and Puerto Rico. Our union has garnered a reputation for being a national leader and for our brand of militant unionism—unionism that gets results—but our sisters and brothers abroad are also setting the tone for international labor movements. In Latin America and other countries, educators and their unions are fighting fierce battles and face much harsher conditions than we do in solidarity, that will require a radical rewrite of labor laws and harmful restrictions on workers’ rights. We can spend the 15-year bipartisan attack on public education here in the U.S., and stand shoulder-to-shoulder with our sisters and brothers in other countries. 

Bargaining rights and classroom conditions can only be improved to the extent that we move to build stronger unions. Ultimately, that will require a radical rewrite of labor laws at both the state and national levels to provoke an expansion of workers’ rights, union membership and political power. Brave educators in Argentina, Arizona, Brazil, Colorado, Kentucky, Oklahoma, Puerto Rico, West Virginia and beyond are resonating with the strike as a powerful tactic that can return teacher unions to the forefront of burgeoning social movement and set the stage for the labor movement’s resurgence.

In solidarity,
Karen GJ Lewis, NBCT

When we take concerted action with public support, and are in solidarity with others in similar situations, there is not much that can stand in our way.
School cleanliness and climate

Every member deserves decent work conditions, and every child deserves a healthy learning environment

**CTU COMMUNICATIONS**

Chicago Public Schools has recently been exposed for a sweeping failure to address cleanliness issues in our schools—issues that create health hazards for our members and their students. Teachers are routinely forced to purchase their own cleaning supplies and clean their own classrooms. We know, however, this is not the fault of janitors. The responsibility lies with private corporations who short-staff schools, fail to provide janitors with adequate supplies and ignore critical needs while lining their executives’ pockets with our tax dollars.

The Chicago Teachers Union has blasted CPS and Mayor Rahm Emanuel for these deplorable conditions, and at the April House of Delegates meeting, launched a new campaign to fight for a better climate and culture in our schools. Our contract gives us rights—including respectful treatment by administrators and schools that are clean, safe and healthy—and the district violates these rights when it can get away with doing so. In addition to dirty schools, CTU members at times face disrespectful, hostile or unprofessional behavior by administrators. Behaviors such as workplace bullying, poor collaboration with staff, dismissal of our concerns and unnecessary micromanagement have negatively impacted the climate at numerous schools. The low morale and high turnover among staff can result from a poor school climate undermines student learning.

We’ve developed tools on the CTU website to address cleanliness issues in your school, as well as recommended protocol to address climate and culture issues. The climate and culture plan encourages you to bring together a majority of staff to raise issues directly with the administration; survey members to develop a Climate Action Plan (or CAP); with concrete solutions; give the administration an opportunity to work collaboratively to improve the school’s climate; return to staff to evaluate the success of the CAP; and modify the CAP for continued work if needed.

This plan can help unite staff and allow administrators to work collaboratively. CTU members to identify and positively respond to school climate issues. We also believe this strategy will help put union members in a good position to pressure administrations that refuse to collaborate.

For cleanliness issues, remember the contract provisions that allow us to fight against these dangerous conditions. Article 14 of the CTU contract, “Safe and Healthy Work Environments,” stipulates that all school staff shall work in safe and healthful conditions (14-1) and that any situation that is likely to cause harm will be assessed with an on-site inspection within three days. Article 44, “General Provisions,” stipulates that teachers should not have to clean their own classrooms (44-3), that bathrooms need to be clean (44-5) and that every area in the school building will be cleaned each day (44-5).

The contract is a start, but members also need to know what they can do.

- Document everything. Take many photos and videos, and email them to the CTU at leadership@ctulocal1.com.
- Raise this issue at your monthly Professional Problems Committee meetings.
- Call your field representative to file a grievance.
- Talk to the Local School Council and parents, and encourage them to speak out.
- Involve your local politicians.
- Organize a group from your school to testify at monthly Chicago Board of Education meetings, and request a meeting with one of the Board members.

**BY AMANDA SZARAZ**

My first nine years in Chicago Public Schools, I was the sole counselor in my school but I spent 80 percent of my time doing case management. The remaining time was spent triaging one student crisis after another while doing other tasks assigned by school administration—test coordination, records management and distributing buses to students in Temporary Living Situation (TLS) families.

All of that has changed this year, thanks to the tireless work of the Chicago Teachers Union Big Bargaining Team and Counselors Committee in securing language that allows for the refusal of case management duties. While it is my tenth year as a school counselor with CPS, it is the first year that I am “just” a school counselor. And as “just” the counselor, my days are filled to the brim with supporting nearly 750 students in their social, emotional, academic and post-secondary development.

In conjunction with the school counseling intern that I am supervising, so far this year we have taught more than 200 classroom lessons, providing essential Tier 1 social and emotional learning support across all grade levels. Additionally, students identified as academically off-track are participating in Tier 2 small group interventions focused on improving their grades and attendance. While the groups are ongoing, at the 25-week mark, we have seen a steady increase in the interventions’ attendance rates and improvement in core subject grades. Additionally, these students are learning skills that will help them throughout their academic and post-secondary lives, such as how to monitor their own grades, organize their school work, set deadlines and advocate for themselves should they need to talk to a teacher about a class. We have also provided individual support to students more than 400 times. As my school shifts to using a restorative approach to discipline, we assist students in having restorative conversations and facilitating peace circles.

Although I knew the good I could do when freed up to focus on school counseling, I was nervous about making the declaration to refuse case management—culture plan encourages you to bring together a majority of staff to raise issues directly with the administration; survey members to develop a Climate Action Plan (or CAP); with concrete solutions; give the administration an opportunity to work collaboratively to improve the school’s climate; return to staff to evaluate the success of the CAP; and modify the CAP for continued work if needed.

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Amanda Szaraz is the counselor at A.E. Frgitzer School, where she serves 741 students. The recommend-
ed ratio is 250:1 per the American School Counselor Association.
Special education caseloads are exceeding recommended levels, putting social workers at a disadvantage and causing students to miss out on much-needed services

By Bessie Tsitopoulos

The following is testimonial from CTU member Bessie Tsitopoulos at a March 21 Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) open hearing for the public inquiry examining special education services and teachers in Chicago Public Schools.

Good afternoon. My name is Bessie Tsitopoulos and I am a licensed school social worker. I have worked with Chicago Public Schools in that capacity since 2011. As a school social worker, I have worked in many schools, mainly in K-8 buildings. This year, however, I am at Amundsen and DeVry Academy high schools.

I have chosen to file two affidavits with ISBE in order to have an opportunity to discuss concerns and experiences in providing services to special education students in CPS. One of my affidavits is a continuation of one filed by a parent of a student I serviced SY 2016-17, where his transportation services were approved SY 2016-17, where his transportation services were removed in his Individual Education Plan by the district, as it determined that he did not qualify. I filed a dissenting opinion in that IEP, but also in a few more that parents chose not pursue further through the legal system, as they did not have the resources and the means to do so. In that particular school year, new policies and procedures were introduced by the district in regards to transportation, paraprofessional support, extended school year, therapeutic day schools, and other issues. These policies and procedures basically required much more advanced documentation in order for special education students to qualify for those services, and it required approval by administrative district personnel and principals for students to be approved for the services.

In November, which also includes parents and guardians, and has the most intimate knowledge of the student, no longer had the approval authority for these services. In addition, in the last three years, class sizes in the general education classroom have increased by an average of five students. This has made it very difficult for special education students that are in co-taught/inclusion classes to receive the support they require in the least restrictive environment, and many are getting pulled back to a separate classroom in order to be more successful.

Many teachers and clinicians like myself found ourselves swamped with additional paperwork as we tried to complete all the additional justification documents. At times, we found ourselves in adversarial roles with the district as many of the services were denied, as in the case of the aforementioned student. Some of us lost our jobs due to our activism, while others like myself had their hand slapped and moved on to another school. Some chose not to advocate for their students, or bother with the extra paperwork. Regardless of how staff reacted, the most important part was that many vulnerable special education students, primarily minorities, had their services reduced or taken away completely. Few parents had the necessary skills and resources to advocate and appeal the decisions. As my student’s mother stated to her advocate, ‘They beat us down.’

According to the Standards for School Social Work Services published by the National Association of Social Workers, the following is recommended:

School social work services should be provided at a ratio of one school social worker to each school building serving up to 250 general education students, or a ratio of 1:250 students. When a school social worker is providing services to students with intensive needs, a lower ratio, such as 1:50, is suggested.

All disciplines have much lower ratios recommended than what CPS assigns to clinicians, and clinicians with extreme caseloads—what national organizations recommend—found themselves having to choose between providing services to students, completing documents or responding to crises concerning their students and their families. As you will see by some of my exhibits, many clinicians, including myself, have not been able to provide all the special education services minutes for their disciplines for the last few years, and special education students lose out on much-needed services once again.

All of the concerns that I have mentioned to you, as we staff members have tried to address through various ways with CPS such as Professional Problems Committees, joint committees, union contract negotiations and parent advocacy groups, without any success. These concerns continue to exist. For example, I have two schools with approximately 1,400 students between them. My caseload is 96 special education students and growing. Thirty two of them require full re-evaluations, and all of them require new IEPs, in addition to weekly minutes of service. I also provide for the socio-emotional needs of general education students.

I hope these hearings will be helpful in assisting our special education students to finally have their much-needed services restored, and to create a system of services that is equitable for them.

Bessie Tsitopoulos is a social worker at Amundsen at DeVry Academy high schools.

In memory of Moey

M ark “Moey” Dworkin-Cantor, daughter of Chicago Teachers Union member and activist Phil Cantor and his wife Nique, passed away March 17 from cancer. Phil worked with the CTU throughout his daughter’s illness to ensure that he could take time off work as needed and that his health insurance coverage was maximized for her benefit. Their story was filed in the June 2017 issue of Chicago Union Teacher magazine. Says Phil:

I have such gratitude for all the support my family and I have received from my CTU brothers and sisters. The teachers, staff, administrators and students at my school made it possible for me to do what I have had to do for our family throughout Moey’s illness and her passing. As a union, we have fought hard for benefits like sick days and good health insurance, which made a huge difference for my family. I will always be thankful for that.

Teachers for Social Justice has set up a scholarship fund in Moey’s name to help Chicago Public Schools Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) recipients attend college. The scholarship, named after Moey, will go towards the college tuition of two graduating CPS DACA high school students. Please consider a donation in memory of a sweet girl and to support her father, an amazing leader in our union.

Jackson Potter is the CTU staff coordinator. Please visit gofundme.com/moeydreamerfund to contribute to the Moey Dworkin-Cantor Dreamer Fund.
Teachers across the state of West Virginia recently went on a nine-day strike after proposed increases to the state health care system would have effectively cut their pay. The proposed 1 percent salary increase to the 45th-lowest paid teachers in the country was not enough to offset increases to health insurance costs.

On day four of the strike, union leaders were ready to accept a deal from the governor for a raise with leaders were ready to accept a deal to health insurance costs. The lowest paid teachers in the country cent salary increase to the 48th-cut their pay. The proposed 1 percent salary increase to health insurance costs would have effectively cut their pay. West Virginia educators were able to win more than what was offered to them, and weren't willing to accept less than what was possible. We are living in an exciting time full of possibilities. Decades of tax cuts for the rich and corporations, and decades of cuts to schools and social programs will not stand any more. Decades of organizing and resisting are coming to fruition across our nation.

How will we respond in Chicago a few years ago. Sure enough, the West Virginia Senate blocked the bill from being passed and tried to weaken the deal the governor cut with teachers.

Educators, joined by students, parents and other activists, stayed on strike until a bill was passed that guaranteed a 5 percent raise and no rise in health care costs for all state employees. It was an incredible show of solidarity that teachers were able to leverage their power to win—not just for themselves, their schools and their students, but for thousands of their fellow West Virginians. What makes this strike all the more important is that West Virginia is a right-to-work state. Teachers cannot collectively bargain and striking is illegal. Teachers, bus drivers, school cooks and other school staff in West Virginia, however, were fed up enough trying to make ends meet and trying to get their basic health care needs met, that they didn't care. What was the state going to do—fire 13,000 employees during a teacher shortage? Union members and non-union members alike knew they had nothing to lose and plenty to gain.

In an era of union-busting from the right wing in our country, unions will not survive if they just look out for their own members, and only focus on protecting rights in the workplace. West Virginia educators were able to win more than what was offered to them, and weren't willing to accept less than what was possible. We are living in an exciting time full of possibilities. Decades of tax cuts for the rich and corporations, and decades of cuts to schools and social programs will not stand any more. Decades of organizing and resisting are coming to fruition across our nation.

How will we respond in Chicago the rest of Illinois? I'm proud to be a member of a union that understands we absolutely cannot solely focus on members' rights in the workplace. We need to continue examining how issues like housing, unemployment and underemployment, costly health care, gun violence and racial/social oppression play a part in the lives of educators, parents and students in and outside of school buildings. We have to think big and bold, and come together against the forces trying to exploit us.

When we joined forces with community organizations in 2015, we got Chicago Public Schools counselor Susan Sadlowski Garza elected to the Chicago City Council and forced Mayor Rahm Emanuel to a runoff. We’ve collectively shifted the dial on conversations about charter school expansion, an elected, representative school board, and school funding. We need to continue organizing school staff, joining forces with workers in other unions and other locations, and deciding on non-negotiable demands. We need to come together as people of different ages, experience and backgrounds to support one another. How can we learn from past actions and be even more imaginative moving forward? How can we be most inclusive and win the most for the most people? We cannot simply rely on union leaders to do all of the heavy lifting of protecting our rights and gaining more. We all need to get involved as if our lives depend on it, because they do.

Unless we do something together, our jobs will continue to get harder and our lives outside of school will continue to get harder for us and the families we serve. One strike chant in West Virginia was “Remember November,” to send the message that legislators who don’t support educators will be voted out of office. They showed us that pressure on elected officials and withholding our labor works, and they were able to accomplish their mission outside of the electoral process.

In an era of union-busting from the right wing in our country, unions will not survive if they just look out for their own members, and only focus on protecting rights in the workplace.

We can’t wait to get better people in office, just as we can’t wait until our contract is up to consider using walkouts to fight for our schools. It’s time to think about your willingness to strike and what would motivate you to walk out. Small class sizes? Full-time librarians and clinicians in every building? Fully funded school budgets? An adequate number of substitute teachers? A way to improve teacher practice without punitive evaluations? Proper service levels for special education? A reimagined school calendar and work day schedules? No more school closings?

What about deeper, root causes impacting our communities, even as the need for an elected, representative school board? Funding schools from sources other than property taxes and doing away with tax increment financing (TIF) that steals money from our schools? Ending the school-to-prison pipeline? Closing immigration detention centers and keeping families together? Reopening mental health centers? Electing a new mayor?

Think big, and think solidarity! There are more than 26,000 of us, and more when we include our allies. We can’t let CPS tell us which issues are “strikeable” and which aren’t. We know what is best for ourselves, our students, our families and our city. We should only limit ourselves by what we’re willing or not willing to do collectively.

Though in 2016 we won the release of some TIF money and funding for classroom assistants in overcrowded primary classrooms, many Chicago Teachers Union members were ready to go on strike for more. Our 2012 strike put us on the map as heroes in the labor movement, but we can do more. The January case may take away some of our members, but it will not take away our collective power. Educators in the right-to-work state of West Virginia proved this.

Our union is one of the only organizations in the city that has both the will and the means to improve the lives of millions of Chicagoans and Illinoisans. We have a moral duty to the greater good to leverage our knowledge and power, and there is no time like the present.

Not sure where to start? Open a strike savings account. Join the Professional Problems Committee or contract action team at your school. Join a CTU committee. We need you. We need each other. Let’s get out there.

Jackie Charles is a first grade teacher at Darwin Elementary and AUSL West District Organizer.

Lessons from West Virginia: An open call to action

Special Ed Need
Need Special
Ed
Corporate Greed
End Delay
and
Deny

State education board CPS
has shortchanged special
education

Bombshell findings back up charges that the district wrongly denied
services and undermined parents and educators seeking help for students

By CTU COMMUNICATIONS

C

It is high time we ended the mayor's disastrous control
over CPS. The elections of 2019, and the school board
in 2021, offered a hopeful sign that Chicagoans
want a democratic and transparent public school
system. But with Mayor Lightfoot's support, the
school board is still run by the mayor, who
controls the schedule for board meetings and
the agenda for agenda items. This lack of
transparency and accountability is
hurting our students and their families,
and it needs to change.

Disgraced former CPS CEO Forrest Claypool paid
politicalconnected contractors $1.4 million—roughly
equivalent to what he made in his previous position at
Chicago Public Schools during the same period—to
do work that included rewriting policies and
retooling the process by which parents and educators
seek special education services for students in need.
Claypool's special education cuts dovetailed with
hundreds of millions of dollars in budget cuts in the last six
years that have driven staff
shortfalls, including the loss
of social workers, teaching
assistants, clinicians and
school nurses who play central
roles in the provision of
special education services.

Mayor Rahm Emanuel,
whose support for Claypool
is well documented,
allowed this situation to
continue for years. The
legislature failed to hold
him accountable for the
damaging effects of these
policies virtually until the
day that he, too, was forced
to follow the lead of the Committee,
in this case the Committee on
Education Labor Relations.

The Illinois State Board of
Education (ISBE), which
announced its findings at an
April 18 public hearing after
months of testimony and evi-
dence-gathering from teach-
ers, parents, clinicians and
advocates,

ISBE's bombshell find-
ings confirm what our rank and
file members have been doc-
umenting about this disaster
for two years. Chicago Teach-
ers Union Vice President Jes-
se Sharkey said, "Thanks to
the excellent investigative
work of local reporters, we
know that the motivation be-
hind CPS's changes to special
education policy was based on
one overarching goal: to cut
costs, no matter how cata-
throphic the consequences for
our students."

"In 1995, Chicago's mayor and the
Illinois State Board of Education
gathered represents only the
tip of the iceberg. Some ed-
cucators and parents couldn't
make the hearings, and oth-
ers were, quite frankly, intim-
ated about testifying out of
fear of retaliation on the job
or against their children. ISBE's
recommendations move us in
the right direction, but we will
have to keep fighting to win
all of the improvements that
parents and students deserve."

Teachers, school nurses, clinicians and parents
joined the hearing, including Access Living, Equip
for Equality, the Ounce of Prevention Fund, Parents
& Teachers, Raise Your Hand
and the Shriver Center on
Poverty Law, as well as dis-
ability rights attorney Matt
Cohen, to expose failings in
CPS special education pol-
icies. Now advocates will
need to keep the pressure
on the district to ensure that
students get the services
the justice they deserve. The
CTU charges that next steps
must include removing may-
oral control over CPS and the
Chicago Board of Education.

"We need accountability,
transparency and respon-
sible oversight of our public
schools, and that only comes
with democratic control of
the school board," Sharkey
said. "It's high time we ended
the mayor's disastrous control
of our schools and his willful
criminal indifference to the
well-being of our students by
giving Chicagoans what our
residents have demanded for
years: an elected, representa-
tive school board."

State bill allowing CTU to bargain over filthy schools
and overcrowded classes one step closer to passage

By CTU COMMUNICATIONS

A

key legislative committee has passed a bill, HB 4776, that
would once again give Chicago Teachers Union members the right
to bargain over non-salary condi-
tions, from crowded classes to filthy
halls. CTU Vice President Jesse
Sharkey joined public school allies in
Springfield on April 30 to testify in
support of the bill.

In 1995, Chicago's mayor and
the state legislature robbed the CTU
of the right to stand up for our students," Sharkey
said. "The results have been
disastrous for students and
school staff, with overcrowded
classrooms; 10 years of failure to pay into teachers' pensions; an
explosion of costly and
failed privatization; filthy schools;
departed budgets; the shortchanging
of special education; excessive
testing and a host of other management
policies that undermine students
and teachers. Today, the legislature made
the error of trying to stop
the CTU from challenging these
conditions through new bargaining.

"Section 4.5's restrictions on col-
collective bargaining have meant that,
for decades, we've been hamstrung
from challenging these condi-
tions, first with the school
board, then with the superintendent,
then with Mayor Rahm Emanuel privatized
maintenance services in 2012. Yet
Section 4.7. effectively banned the
CTU from challenging those condi-
tions through collective bargaining.

"It's high time we ended the
mayor's disastrous control
over our schools and his willful
criminal indifference to the
well-being of our students by
pass this bill, and return to our mem-
bers the power to directly challenge
this dangerous failure of leadership."

Legislators are currently consid-
ERING four other CTU-supported bills
that directly impact conditions in
public schools: HB 5481, which
requires school districts to report
data on special needs and
demographics in K-12
schools, including charters, that must
consider the school's
enrollment, student
needs, and
instructional
services.

HB 3786, which requires fully empow-
ered Local School Councils in public
schools and students hit with school
closure threats to be notified
of the plan at least 60 days in
advance of the closure,
including charters, that must
vote by a super-majority to approve
school closures and
reorganizations;

HB 4830, which would provide
funds to increase
special education services
for students with
I

Special Ed

End

Delay

Deny

Stop

CPS special education services.
From Puerto Rico to Argentina to Brazil: Latin American teachers fight back

The latest wave of teacher strikes in Latin America has re-ignited the fire to defend and fight for a dignified salary

By ERVIN LOPEZ

“The educator has the duty of not being neutral.”
—Paulo Freire

From Puerto Rico to Argentina to Brazil, Latin American teachers are fighting back against neoliberalism. More than one million teachers strike in Brazil. More than 400,000 teachers strike in Argentina. More than 20,000 teachers strike in Puerto Rico.

The latest wave of teacher strikes in Latin America has re-ignited the fire in teachers to defend and fight for a dignified salary. While teachers in the United States recently have uplifted the union spirit to fight against budget cuts and for dignified salaries, the usual perpetrators that seek to demoralize teachers and privatize education in the States are the same perpetrators seeking to destroy teachers and public education in Latin America. The perpetrators have one common goal, and that is to implement the neoliberal agenda.

Neoliberalism implements economic liberalization policies through austerity measures that reduce government spending and increase privatization. Implementing austerity measures in public education results in closing schools, salary cuts, pension cuts and teacher layoffs. Services are thereafter replaced by market-based structures such as “school choice” charter schools, non-union teachers, low wages, privatized facility services and standardized test-based teaching methodologies. The attack on education is rapidly expanding now in some countries in Latin America because their governments have shifted to right-wing, conservative policies that have aligned themselves with the neoliberal agenda.

Who are these perpetrators? They are financial institutions, hedge funds, local, national, and international governments, think tanks, private education enterprises and politicians. It is the latter, politicians, who are the corporate servants that have the power to pass laws permitting the takeover of public education. Governor Ricardo Rosselló of Puerto Rico, un-elected President Michel Temer of Brazil and Argentinian President Mauricio Macri are some of the Latin American leaders aligned with conservative, right-wing parties in their respective governments, and who have openly advocated for implementing austerity measures into their education systems.

Six months after Puerto Rico was hit by Hurricane Maria, and where, to date, many residents still don’t have power, Governor Rossello announced budget cuts that would close 300 schools and lay off 7,000 teachers. The governor wasted no time in following the steps of New Orleans, using a crisis to implement the neoliberal agenda by taking over public schools to eventually privatize them into “school choice” charter schools. Teachers from the Teachers Federation of Puerto Rico and the Teachers Association of Puerto Rico immediately condemned the governor’s plans and vowed to push back on policies that will privatize education. On March 19, thousands of teachers went on a one-day political movement that made a significant contribution to social movements, it is students.

If there is one group that makes a significant contribution to social movements, it is students.
Solidarity across borders

We can and should be inspired by the militant unionism that is more prominent in the rest of the world

BY NATASHA CARLSEN
AND ELIJAH EILER

On the morning of Saturday, March 3, the two of us were driving to O’Hare for an exciting weekend in Mexico City. Neither of us had been there before, and we were eager to explore. But the trip wasn’t just a vacation, or for our own enjoyment—we were flying to Mexico City to represent the Chicago Teachers Union at the 18th Congress of Federation Internationale Syndicale de l’Enseignement (FISE), the World Federation of Teachers Unions. We were meeting two members of AFSCME Local 3800, the University of Minnesota and the World Federation of Teachers Unions. The rest of these differences in the world in preparation for our trip, but the two-day conference made these differences clear. By listening to speakers and talking with delegates, we learned about the differences between American unions and unions from the rest of the world in preparation for our trip, but the two-day conference made these differences clear. By listening to speakers and talking with delegates, we learned about the differences between American unions and unions from around the world, includingMexico, Brazil, Basque Country, Senegal and Vietnam. Those of us from the States were there as guests, as none of the unions from our country are associated with FISE or the World Federation of Trade Unions, of which the World Federation of Teachers Unions is a part.

We had been learning about the differences between American unions and unions from around the world, including the importance of labor movements around the world. The Chicago Teachers Union has made a name for itself as being a leader for the rest of the U.S. in this kind of militant unionism, and that reputation preceded us. Many of the delegates at the conference had heard of and followed the work of CTU, and their interest made us even more honored to be part of such a strong union.

There are many reasons why the labor movement looks different here than it does elsewhere. Sometimes, other unions fight more because they have had more to fight for. Many workers around the world face much harsher conditions than we do in the U.S., largely due to the destabilizing effect of American foreign policy. But many unions abroad also fight more than unions here because they have not been victimized by America’s particularly strong history of union busting.

One interaction that highlighted both shared and differing struggles hit especially close to home. The two of us originally met through working with the CTU’s Special Education Task Force, and at the Congress, we met others who were fighting for equitable learning conditions for students with disabilities, and equitable working conditions for their teachers. After learning that we teach special education, a teacher from Morocco only half-jokingly asked if we could come teach special education in his country. “We don’t have teachers who are paid to work with students with disabilities,” he said. “Those teachers have to volunteer.”

In all of our conversations, it became apparent that educators and students around the world are battling different manifestations of the same forces. There were reports of privatization, increasing class sizes with decreasing resources, slashing education budgets, and firing teachers from almost every union represented. Our enemies may have local faces, but they are global in nature. In this new age, the nature of education is being questioned and the essence of education is being attacked.

While we were at the conference, these battles were raging more strongly in the U.S. than they have in a long time. The U.S. Supreme Court had heard oral arguments for Janus v. AFSCME Council 31 a few days before we left for our trip, and the statewide teacher strike in West Virginia was entering its second week. Congress delegates gave their solidarity and support to these struggles, just as we gave our support to theirs.

Primarily, the Congress was about solidarity across borders. The speakers spoke repeatedly of continent-wide and worldwide struggles, and the reason for this is clear: Our enemies are global, so our camaraderie must also be global. The message was that these are all of our siblings in the struggle, and we are all better off when we embrace that.

What does this expansive solidarity look like here in Chicago? First, it is imperative to realize that we are working with students, families and communities who have ties around the world. Especially with President Donald Trump in the White House, we must show our communities that we as a union are in solidarity with fights worldwide because those fights affect students in Chicago, no matter how few. Second, we must let this spirt of solidarity reach across all borders within the U.S. as well as beyond it—borders between departments, schools, neighborhoods, cities and states. Illinois will hopefully elect a new governor and a new mayor who will work for the good of public education instead of working for its destruction, but our fight will continue to be weakened if we do not unite with the rest of our union siblings throughout the state.

Finally, we need to let ourselves be inspired by the militant unionism that is more prominent in the rest of the world. This breed of unionism is seeing a resurgence in the face of the impending Janus decision, but we must ensure that this moment is taken advantage of so it is not quickly forgotten. What will we do to fight for our charter siblings when their contract is up next year? What tactics will we employ in our fight for equitable education in the city when the CTU contract is up in 2019? The Chicago Teachers Union is known for fighting for its members and for Chicago’s students. May we be inspired by the unions around the world who give us their support to continue to fight and take part in an era of revitalized militant unionism in America.

Natasha Carlsen is a special education teacher at Otis Elementary School and Elijah Eiler is a special education teacher at Otis Elementary School. Both are members of the CTU Special Education Task Force.
I won a settlement from Chicago Public Schools after filing an unfair labor practice complaint (ULP) after I was wrongfully terminated for my union activity. I’m sharing my experience with other Chicago Teachers Union delegates because it shows that we can win, even when the odds seem stacked against us.

I taught music and band at Phoenix Military Academy from 2009 to 2016, and I was the CTU delegate for the school from 2012 until my position was cut. I became the Phoenix delegate after serving as picket captain during the 2012 strike. I quickly came up against many of the challenges that CTU delegates typically face—organizing regular union meetings, trying to set up a working Professional Problems Committee (PPC) to negotiate with the principal regarding implementation of the CTU-Chicago Board of Education contract, attempting to create channels of communication for union issues and working to build mutual trust among co-workers. These are not easy things to do. Co-workers would frequently come to me with stories of abuse by the administration. They needed someone to talk to, and that in itself can help. But whenever I suggested that something could be done to improve our work climate, people became afraid. There is no easy solution to this kind of fear, but modest steps can lead to bigger outcomes when we find ways to take small actions together that build confidence without exposing members to risks they are not yet prepared to take. In the middle of the 2014-15 school year, our administration announced an abrupt policy change they called the “mid-year correction.” No teacher was allowed to have a failure rate exceeding 5 percent for any of their classes. Teachers who did not comply with this mandate were threatened with unsatisfactory REACH ratings and termination. I felt this was wrong, so I put the issue on the agenda for a PPC meeting. My principal demanded that I take it off the agenda, but I refused. The meeting was contentious, and we did not come to a satisfactory resolution.

Two days after the PPC meeting, I had a formal REACH observation. I had no information going into my post-observation meeting, and found out later that I had been rated Basic or Unsatisfactory in almost every category. During the previous school year—the first year of REACH implementation—my ratings had been overall Proficient, and I had always been rated Excellent under the old system. I was convinced the administration was using REACH to retaliate against me for union activities. A similar thing happened with my informal observation later that year. I bizarrely received nothing but positive feedback in the post-meeting, but found out later that a majority of my ratings were Basic or Unsatisfactory.

I requested to redo my formal observation. The administration denied my request, so I filed a grievance to get my ratings overturned.

Retaliation is not easy to prove. In my case, there were other contractual violations that were easier to document in my grievance. My administration was using “local criteria”—made-up criteria which are not part of the REACH rubric. They required me to do ACT test prep in my music class while I was being observed, and they failed to share any information with me prior to the post-observations. Going into a post-observation with no information is like being on trial with secret evidence that is used against you.

The pattern of retaliation continued through the next school year. For my first observation of that year—before the administration became aware of the grievance—my ratings were overall Proficient. After the administration learned about my grievance, they once again dropped my ratings and made an announcement to the entire staff about my grievance at a faculty meeting in February of 2016. At the end of the meeting, the principal left the room and the assistant principal (AP) addressed us, saying that because one teacher had filed a grievance, she would be changing the way she conducts REACH observations in the future. (The AP was doing all the observations at that time.) In the past, teachers were given a two-day window during which an observer might come to one of their classes. In the wake of my grievance, the administration changed the observation window to a five-day span. This change made observations less predictable, creating greater stress for teachers, and was widely interpreted as a punishment.

I followed my CTU field representative’s advice to create a “statement of facts” about what happened at that meeting, brought the statement to colleagues who I felt I could trust, and asked them to sign if they agreed that the statement was accurate. I explained that Phoenix administrators would not see the names of those who had signed, and nearly half the staff signed the statement, which later became the centerpiece of my ULP complaint against the Board.

On the day after the incident at the faculty meeting, I made copies of the anti-bullying clause from the Contract, which explicitly prohibits retaliation for filing grievances, and put them in everyone’s mailbox. The AP responded by trying to write...
In cases of bullying and retaliation, it’s crucial to show that there is a pattern which can be corroborated by many people. I had to go immediately to the administration to file a grievance. I called a series of meetings with the school’s principal. I also wrote a letter to the principal, and I provided evidence of the incidents. I also spoke to the school’s board of directors. This helped me show that there is a pattern of bullying and retaliation.

As a result, I was able to file a complaint with the Illinois Educational Labor Relations Board. That complaint included a statement of facts, a grievance letter, and evidence of the incidents. This helped me show that there is a pattern of bullying and retaliation.

The Illinois Educational Labor Relations Board ultimately ruled in my favor, and the school was required to take corrective action. This was an important victory, as it helped me show that there is a pattern of bullying and retaliation.

In conclusion, it’s crucial to show that there is a pattern which can be corroborated by many people. This helps to build a case and to demonstrate the pattern of bullying and retaliation.

Kyle Gilbertson is a former CTU delegate who taught music and band at Phoenix Military Academy from 2009 to 2016.
Students protests are the first step

Teachers can help their students take the next ones

BY GINA CANEVA

I n March, I watched my students walk out of school in protest of gun violence. They joined many others across our nation who walked out against violence and even against backlash from adults who believed that students should remain in class. This protest, however, was definitely theirs to own.

Contrary to opponents of the student protests, kids did not walk out simply to get out of class. For my students at Lindblom Math and Science Academy, the march acted as a disturbance of their status quo and students whom they’ve never met, but who they fully identify with because of their age, tragedy, and presence in the media.

At my school, a student group called Kindness over Ignorance (KOI) took the lead. Students formed KOI at the beginning of the year shortly after white supremacy showed its ugly face in Charlottesville, Virginia. They had many questions and terrible feelings about their place in this world. KOI began by having tough conversations about what it means to stand as a black student in a school that has historically shifted to include more issues that they believed teens should have a voice in, including gun control.

KOI’s peer leaders recognized that students might be afraid as they walked around in Englewood, a neighborhood often in the news for gun violence. Peer leaders gave them the choice to stand outside in solidarity or walk around our school for seventeen minutes.

Students chose to walk around the block for seventeen minutes, and during those seventeen minutes, perhaps an even tougher feat for teen-agers, they remained silent. At the end of the protest, student leaders read the names of the fallen Parkland students. They used the hashtag #thiscouldhavebeenus to show they understood that their country’s lack of gun control could very well make them the next victims. After this, they walked back into the school and went to class.

I spoke with one of my students, 17-year-old Nia Khan who took part in the protest, about what should be done now. She offered me more information about what students can do. “The protests have shown that we have a voice, but we just don’t know how to get it to people in charge,” she said.

Although Khan felt like the protest wasn’t enough, I told her that the student protests were a sign of change in and of themselves. After all, I was a senior in a suburban Illinois high school when the Columbine school shooting happened. There were many controversies around time-worn protestives or even local ones in Colorado that I can recall. Nearly 20 years later, school shootings have become the norm and our children are standing up against them.

As educators, we must help our students take the next step. Groups like KOI can form in every school. Teachers can invite local lawmakers from both parties into their schools so they can listen to students and understand their thoughts and needs. Last year, Illinois State Representative Theresa Mah visited my students to hear why Illinois needs gun laws that are safer for our schools.

I had met Mah at a librarian ad- vocacy honcho and asked her to come. A swift handshake, a couple of words exchanged and a follow-up email was all it took for my students to get support from her to make legislative change. Teachers can also help organize letter writing or op-ed writing cam- paigns for students to share their voices with community leaders, influencers, and the general public.

PBS NewsHour recently gave stu-dents the opportunity to write about their thoughts on school shootings, and I brought that opportunity to students in my writing center. Three students penned their opinions, and they were published on the site. I also asked students to come up with ways to solve gun violence that are similar to campaigns in our country that once seemed impossible—such as securing equal voting rights for all Americans over the age of 18, or taking down Big Tobac-

Learning to play with tough texts

Chicago Shakespeare Theater accepting applications for its popular professional development seminar’s 15th year

BY CHICAGO SHAKESPEARE THEATER

“Have you made me a better teacher.”

“heard it was the best and would be useful for my entire practice. It was.”

Shakespeare remains a looming presence in urban classrooms—challenging both to students and teachers alike. His language is some of the most difficult that a high school student will encounter.

Supporting English teachers in non-se- lective Chicago Public Schools high schools across our city, Bard Core Curriculum Read- ing into Shakespeare is a free, 30-hour course offered by Chicago Shakespeare Theater at its Navy Pier campus. Bard Core introduces dra- ma-based strategies for authentically and ac- tively engaging all students—including strugg- liers and reluctant readers, diverse learners and English language learners—with Shake- speare and other challenging texts.

Why should we take up the challenge? Per- haps because, as stated by Cambridge School Shake- speare founder Rex Gibson once said, “Every student is entitled to make the acquaintance of genius.” Shakespeare’s unforgettable characters have the power to build bridg- es across cultures and generations. Shake- speare because, “the power to illuminate students’ experience in their own world. And studying Shakespeare can be accessible, achievable—and fun.

The course of eight morning sessions (August 6-10, followed by three Saturdays throughout the course of the school year), teachers will practice a range of skills used in the theater’s rehearsal room to success- fully break open Shakespeare’s text, combin- ing theater practices with best practices in reading—in Shakespeare and beyond. With instruction by curriculum and reading ex- perts, as well as educator artists and struc- tural experts, teachers work toward mastery of these skills through “on-your-feet” instruction, as they actively explore the impli- cations of these strategies for their own stu- dents and teaching environment. As a teach- er from John Hancock College Prep looking back at her experiences in Bard Core said, “In love with the tone of these PD [professional development] sessions. We are encouraged, supported, respected as educators.”

“I have tried a bit of drama-based strate- gies, but did not have enough or know what I was doing,” said a teacher from George Wash- ington High School said. “I feel so much better equipped… I plan to try to use much of what I’ve learned this week in many texts beyond just Shakespeare.” A teacher from Collins Academy said, “FIrst where I felt I was respected as a DL [diverse learning] teacher and my students’ needs were considered!”

These are some of the reasons why the Bard Core class each year is recruited almost entirely by word-of-mouth from colleagues who have graduated from this uniquely em- powerment, dynamic seminar. Each Bard Core session is aligned with Common Core and sup- ports teachers’ development in several domains of the CPS Framework for Teach- ing. Bard Core “creates an environment that allows students to take ownership of their learning and become more critical thinkers — to make a way out of no way.”

Participants who complete the seminar receive 24-person class each year. Now launching its 15th cohort, Bard Core has served more than 250 CPS teachers from high schools across the city. A Common Core is a National Board Certi- fied high school teacher and librarian. This article was originally published on the Teach Plus blog, “What’s the Plus?” Reprinted articles do not constitute any CTU affiliation or endorsement.

Teachers are encouraged to participate in Bard Core with a colleague from their school—often invaluable in extending the program’s peer learning to the participants’ day-to-day environment. To foster service to schools across the city, a maximum of two teachers per school will be accepted into the 24-person class each year. Now launching its 15th cohort, Bard Core has served more than 250 CPS teachers from high schools across the city. A Common Core is a National Board Certi- fied high school teacher and librarian. This article was originally published on the Teach Plus blog, “What’s the Plus?” Reprinted articles do not constitute any CTU affiliation or endorsement.

Chicago Shakespeare Theater accepting applications for its popular professional development seminar’s 15th year

By Gina Caneva is a National Board Certi- fied high school teacher and librarian. This article was originally published on the Teach Plus blog, “What’s the Plus?” Reprinted articles do not constitute any CTU affiliation or endorsement.

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The Chicago Way: closing schools, increasing policing

Instead of policing and incarceration, we could try fully funding education

**By DAVE STEIBER, NBCT**

Chicago spends 40 percent of its entire operating budget on policing. In addition, the city has paid out more than $600 million on police brutality cases. On top of that, Mayor Rahm Emanuel thinks it is a wise choice to spend $95 million more on a new police academy.

Further, the mayor wants what Chicago Public Schools—appointed by the mayor, mind you—voted to close five predominantly Black public schools. Add that to the 50+ Black schools the mayor and his handpicked Chicago Board of Education closed in 2013.

It is not a conspiracy to say that Chicago wants to incarcerate, not educate, its Black youth. It is policy. Many in the city see the connection. If you underfund and then close schools, while continually increasing funding for policing, it becomes apparent what the goals are.

A budget is a political document—not just a financial one. It shows what the city prioritizes. Chicago prioritizes criminalizing our youth—not educating them.

The mayor says he cares about kids, but he does not send his own kids to public schools in Chicago. So he can say whatever he wants, but unless his own kids are in the CPS system, his words mean nothing.

Never forget that he once said “25 percent of CPS students won’t amount to anything.” Chicago is filled with harmful policies—past and present—such as redlining, blockbusting and gentrification. These are actual policies, created and implemented by city leaders and institutions, which targeted and harmed Black communities.

School closings, turnarounds and phase outs are just the new or continued version of these policies that target and harm Black communities. And while these policies continue to destroy education for the children of our city, the mayor and his allies make sure to always fund policing.

The Chicago Police Department is responsible for torturing and killing Black Chicagoans. The CPD has been proven to cover up its own crimes and illegally deprive people in secret sites.

In Rahm Emanuel’s Chicago, if a school is deemed unsuccessful, then that school is punished under his new school rating system. Charter schools will be built in the area, and the school will be closed or phased out after having its funding systematically cut.

The police do not receive this same treatment. In fact, it seems as if the police are rewarded for the more flawed that they are. Students who go to schools are punished while police are rewarded with promotions, raises and the academy on the West Side.

More for incarceration and less for education. Our children in CPS are treated like they are in a police state with metal detectors, police with guns in the school, limited resources and terrible food.

Yet students are told, if you work really hard you can overcome all of this. You can make it.

There is no doubt the amazing kids in Chicago do overcome, but kids should not have to overcome. Kids should just have what they need. So instead of building a new police academy, invest that money into our schools. Instead of policing and incarceration, we could try fully funding education.

But the mayor says no. He closes schools.

Closing more than 50 elementary schools in 2013 was not enough. He wants more. His rubric is it’s TRAM Englewood, Robeson, Hope and Harper high schools. The mayor is eliminating all of the public, neighborhood high schools in Englewood.

But even that is not enough, so he takes out National Teachers Academy, a high-performing elementary school in the South Loop. This closure is done to appease white parents afraid of sending their children to school with a majority of Black students.

The mayor says screw the Black community, because if he truly cared about the Black residents of Chicago, he would be upset by the fact that Black families are leaving the city in large numbers. But he is not. Not Rahm Emanuel.

He would rather close a school than fix a neighborhood, put policing over education, blame the victims and value incarceration over improving communities.

This is policy, and these are calculated choices.

Today is Chicago.

Dave Stieber, NBCT is a teacher at Chicago Vocational Career Academy.

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**Where are the Black and Brown teachers?**

Chicago’s students of color need teachers who look like them

**By LA’TIA TAYLOR**

In the current state of education, there is a major concern about teacher diversity. Over the years, there has been a growing gap between the percentage of teachers of color and the percentage of students of color. It is more troubling to know that there is a decline of minority teachers being recruited and retained in large districts, such as Chicago Public Schools.

According to CPS Stats and Facts (March 2018), 21.6 percent of teachers identified as African-American, and 20.6 percent identified as Hispanic. With a student population of 372,382 for the 2017-2018 school year (on the 25th day), 37 percent of the student body is African-American and 46.6 percent is Hispanic.

As a young, African-American teacher, I am concerned about the racial disparity in education. As I seek to help prepare my kindergarten students for life, I face the cruel reality that I am part of a dwindling teaching demographic. Our Black and Brown students in disfavored neighborhoods experience daily trauma in their young lives. Our students should enter schools that have the opportunity to be able to connect with individuals who understand what it is like to be Black or Brown in an urban education system, and who understand the connection of race in a global community.

There is a huge value for students to have teachers that look like them. Not only can it help boost academic confidence, it can help support students’ self-confidence.

I recall a day when a 5-year-old student shared that another classroom was being a “bucket dipper” because he said mean things about her hair. I asked her, “How did you problem solve with him?” With the biggest smile, she informed me, “My hair is beautiful. It is natural, like Miss Taylor. I can wear it anyway.”

The understanding of being a minority in an urban school is not something that is taught in teacher education programs. Therefore, efforts should be streamlined in helping to implement equity hiring practices of minority teachers. The increase in hiring and retaining Black and Brown teachers doesn’t solely benefit minority students; it is beneficial and important for all students in our district. Despite students’ racial backgrounds, a diverse teaching staff can demonstrate the overall demographics in our nation’s population. A diverse teaching workforce provides all students the opportunity to interact with adults of various racial backgrounds.

In closing, it is my hope that more minority teachers enter and stay in the teaching profession. Therefore, efforts should be streamlined in helping to implement equity hiring practices of minority teachers. The increase in hiring and retaining Black and Brown teachers doesn’t solely benefit minority students; it is beneficial and important for all students in our district. Despite students’ racial backgrounds, a diverse teaching staff can demonstrate the overall demographics in our nation’s population. A diverse teaching workforce provides all students the opportunity to interact with adults of various racial backgrounds.

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Filthy schools signal a deeper problem for CPS

What is lost in Chicago Public Schools’ custodial privatization scheme?

GINA CANEVA

In 2014, CPS decided to privatize janitorial services to two companies—SodexoMAGIC, led by former basketball star Magic Johnson, and Aramark, the company predominantly in charge of Chicago Public Schools’ custodial service. Before the privatization, most of our janitorial staff at Lindblom Math and Science Academy wore school sweatshirts and polos. After the switch, they were required to wear Aramark shirts, symbolic of a switch in our custodians’ allegiance—from a school community to a private company.

At the time, CPS claimed that the change would save the district money, provide cleaner schools and lessen the district money, provide that the change would save.

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At Lindblom, which includes 1,350 students and nearly one hundred staff members, we have only two Aramark janitors working at the school during the day. What used to be a norm for cleaning has now become a form we have to fill out about our needs for cleaning. We also now have to pay extra money, from our school budgets, for services that used to fall under our custodial staff’s standard responsibility, such as setting up for standardized testing, school dances and graduations. We lost several CPS janitors who were dedicated to Lindblom, including one whose son attended school here; they were sent to other school sites when the privatization took place.

Relinquishing control of the custodians also meant relinquishing accountabil-

ity, as schools no longer are in charge of hiring, firing or even assessing them. Even though the media has reported on and parents citywide have massive complaints about the lack of quality that privatization produces, CPS continues to push this practice forward without trans-
parency in cost savings or in quality control.

In my 14-year career at CPS, nearly all of the members of the custodial staff in the three schools I have worked for have been people of color. They are poorly paid to begin with, and they are now facing poor working conditions which have turned into poor school conditions. All the while, the two private companies are not punished for their lousy performance except in empty threats from Mayor Rahm Emanuel.

What is lost in Chicago Public Schools’ custodial privatization scheme?

Shelli Shadday is a CTU Quest Center professional development facilitator.

The classroom teaches teachers how to teach

Quest Center professional development draws on living, breathing experience in the classroom

SHELLI SHADDAY

When I first began the Master’s of Education program at the University of Illinois at Chicago, I immediately registered for an education policy class. After all, in my early twenties, I was sure affecting policy was the way to make change for students.

While not a surprise to any-

one working inside a classroom, I quickly realized that if I ever wanted to be a credible policy maker, I was going to have to spend some time teaching.

I feel the same way about pro-

fessional development (PD) pre-
senters. Without classroom ex-

perience, how can you truly be an effective teacher of teachers?

That’s why every PD facilita-
tor at the Chicago Teachers Union Foundation Quest Center is or was a classroom teacher in Chicago Public Schools. They know what we go through every day, the obstacles we must overcome in order to provide effective instruction.

I am honored to join this group of teachers as a PD facilitator at the Quest Center.

As an educator, I am continu-

ually working to improve my own practice and seek out professional development opportunities. In the upcoming months, I will be offering courses on teaching reading to improve outcomes for all students, writing across the disciplines, multi-tier system of supports and strategies for English Learners.

I look forward to sharing my love of reading, and passion for planning and implementing curriculum and instruction.

I currently teach sixth-grade English/Language Arts. Each day I enter the classroom with a re-

newed sense of purpose that our novel studies, literature circles or discussions will leave a lasting impression on one of my students. Through choice, scaffolding and differentiation, I work to ensure that text is accessible to all my stu-
dents, and that reading is mean-
gingful as well as enjoyable.

Setting and meeting high ex-

pectations for my students is not something I can do alone, and I continually seek out opportu-
nities to collaborate with other teachers in order to improve my own practice. I have participated in professional learning commu-
nities (PLCs), attended PD and even went back to school for a master’s degree in Reading. Thus, as a facilitator, I look forward to sharing ideas about teaching and learning to improve outcomes for your students and mine.

When presenting to teachers, I honor the time you have dedicat-
ed to the course by ensuring that teachers walk away with some-
thing they can implement right away. Whether it be a lesson plan completed, evidence written for Domains 4b–4e or a mentor text to teach writing, teachers will leave my class knowing that their time has been well spent.

Gina Caneva is a National Board Certified high school teacher and librarian. This article was originally published in South Side Weekly on April 24, 2018, and has been excerpted for length. Reprinted articles do not constitute any CTU affiliation or endorse-

ment.
National Board Certification – 2018-20 Cohort

Recruitment is nearing completion for 2018–20 Nurturing Teacher Leadership cohort.

Nurturing Teacher Leadership

The CPS/CTU’s 2-year FREE professional development & candidate support program, prepares CPS teachers, counselors, & librarians for National Board Certification (NBC). If you have completed at least 3 years of teaching in your certificate area by June, 2017, you qualify to participate in NBC & earn this advanced certification, the highest credential a teacher can achieve, as well as:

- advance on the CPS salary scale
- fulfill your state re-licensure requirements
- earn financial incentives including an annual stipend of more than $1,980
- 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 Lane Placement salary credit
- attain the Illinois NBPTS Master Certification Endorsement in only 2 years

Nurturing Teacher Leadership boasts a 94% achievement rate, twice the national average. It includes:

Benefits
- Weekly Professional Development and 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 and mentoring by CPS National Board Certified Teachers
- Assistance with writing required for the National Board portfolio
- 7-day Summer Institute (for two weeks in August, 2018 and 2019)
- 36 Graduate Credits (Optional Master’s degree)
- 15 CPS Lane Placement Credits

To learn more go to CTUF.org/NTL

Earn your M.Ed. in Reading beginning this June

Enroll now for June 27 start

WHY NLU?

This Master’s Degree in Reading program will help you build both theoretical and practical understanding of language and literacy education. Through this program you will build in-depth knowledge of the research, theory and practice related to reading and writing processes and instruction.

WHAT TO EXPECT:
- High-quality, career-focused curriculum designed and taught by expert faculty
- Convenient, affordable blended format – with both online and face-to-face classes – that provides the flexibility teachers need

Earn your Subsequent Endorsement from National Louis University beginning June 27th

Expand your career options to teach in multiple grade bands or subject areas by earning an additional teaching endorsement in any of the following:
- Early Childhood Education (birth–grade 2)
- Elementary Education (grades 1–6)
- Middle Grades Education (grade 5–8): math, science, social studies
- Language Arts
- Secondary Education (grades 9–12)
- Foreign Language (grades K–12)

To learn more about any of the above NLU offerings or to register, visit www.nlu.edu/ctuf or contact Claudine Clarks at clarkscl@nlu.edu or 800-443-5522 x3095

Earn your ESL – Bilingual Endorsement in only 2 Semesters!

The Quest Center is partnering with Roosevelt University to begin a Summer 2018 cohort working toward completing Bilingual and ESL endorsements in only 2 semesters.

- The 5-course program will be delivered as follows:
  - Summer 2018 | July 6 – July 27 | 2 Courses (face-to-face)
  - Fall 2018 | Sept. – Dec. | 2 Courses (online)
- The tuition for each course is $1,070. Total tuition for the 5-courses is only $8,400.
- Graduate credits earned can be applied toward CPS lane credit and Roosevelt MA degrees in Reading or Second Language Special Education.

For more information, visit https://www.roosevelt.edu/colleges/education/eps-endorsement or contact Ms. Laura Lag. | 312-495-4750 | llag@roosevelt.edu

MTSS: Tiered Instruction to Meet the Needs of ALL Learners 15 ISBE PD Hours and 1 Lane Placement Credit

This offering provides an overview of MTSS and the meaning of each tier for K – 12th grade teachers. Participants develop a deeper understanding of the implementation of Tiers 1, 2, and 3.5. This offering is aligned to the CPS Framework for Teaching components 1b, 1d, 3c, 3d, 4b, and 4d.

Burnout First Aid 3 ISBE PD Hours

Burnout First Aid examines warning signs and symptoms of burnout which undermines performance and satisfaction at work. Examining healthy habits and tips for individual and group self-care, this PD offers ways to foster health and well-being on and off the job. This session is aligned to the CPS Framework for Teaching components 4a, 4d, and 4e.

The STEM Workbench 15 ISBE PD Hours and 1 Lane Placement Credit

The STEM Workbench provides currently practicing 6th – 12th grade teachers in the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) content areas with a deep understanding of how science driven by mathematical, science, and engineering practices. This course provides STEm teachers a space to collaborate to design a model lesson that encourages students to answer complex questions, investigate global issues, and develop solutions for challenges and “real world” problems. This course is aligned to the CPS Framework for Teaching components 1a, 1c, 5c, 6e, and 7d.

Developing Minds Workshop 3.5 ISBE PD Hours

This offering, for currently practicing K – 12th grade teachers, addresses differences in students’ attention, memory, language, neuro-motor function, social cognition, temporal-sequential ordering, spatial ordering, and higher order cognition, and shows how strengths and challenges in these areas can affect a child’s success in writing, reading, math, communicating, understanding, organizing, feelings, and behavior. This session is aligned to the CPS Framework for Teaching components 1b, 1d, 1f, 3a, 3b, 3c, 3e, and 4d.

Restorative Practices 200 9 ISBE PD Hours

This offering is intended for those who have attended other PD in Restorative Justice, Peace Circles, or Restorative Practices and are willing to “take it to the next level.” Examining the attributes of an effective Circle Facilitator and benchmarks for a restorative school or classroom environment, this PD empowers teachers, counselors, staff, and administration to deepen their understanding of philosophy and techniques of Restorative Justice. This course is aligned to the CPS Framework for Teaching components 2e, 2d, 3a, and 4d.