



Hundreds protest against Lincoln Park 'oppression'... Principal challenged on teacher termination

By George N. Schmidt

More than 200 teachers, students and parents attended the October 12 meeting of the Lincoln Park High School Local School Council (LSC) to speak out and protest against the principal's ouster of one of the school's most popular teachers, Chicago Teachers Union delegate and Lincoln Park librarian Bernice ("Bernie" Eshoo).

The previous week, Eshoo had

More than 800 students signed petitions opposing Principal Karvelas's removal of librarian Bernice Eshoo from one of Chicago's top schools

been told by Lincoln Park Principal Bessie Karvelas that her position had been closed. By the end of the first week of October, Eshoo was a "reserve teacher" and looking for a job in another Chicago public high school. She had 16

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The Lincoln Park High School administration forced students and teachers to cram into the school's small social room on the night of October 12 for the Local School Council meeting. The auditorium was available on the night of the meeting. Above: More than 150 of the 200 people at the meeting rose and cheered for teacher Bernice Eshoo after more than 20 people spoke against the attempt by Lincoln Park Principal Bessie Karvelas to get rid of Eshoo because of Eshoo's outspoken advocacy for teachers' rights at the school. Eshoo, the school librarian, serves as Chicago Teachers Union delegate, teacher delegate to the Local School Council, and in other positions. After threatening her for a number of weeks because of Eshoo's opposition to class overcrowding and other administrative policies, the principal closed out Eshoo's position on October 4, removing Eshoo and seriously undermining the school library. Photo by George N. Schmidt, Substance.

Teachers to elect pension trustees October 27

More than 30,000 Chicago teachers and substitute teachers are eligible to vote on October 27 in all Chicago public schools and at various central and area office locations in the election of two trustees to the Public School Teachers Pension and Retirement Fund of Chicago.

The election, which is being contested among five candidates for the two seats, pits two former trustees (Rosemary Finnegan and Earnestine Murphy) against two candidates endorsed by the Chicago Teachers Union's United Progressive Caucus (UPC) and an independent candidate (Whitney Young High School teacher Jay Rehak).

All of the candidates in the race agree that the trustees of the fund have to protect it from raids by politicians and attacks from those who want to eliminate defined-benefit pension plans.

Unlike last year, when a special edition of Substance featured the pension election, this year Substance has only been able to run ads for Rehak (September issue) and the Finnegan Murphy slate (see Page Eleven). 🍏

Next action October 25 at Board meeting... Activists to continue protesting CPS special education cuts

By George N. Schmidt

Despite a dramatic and puzzling setback in the courtroom of U.S. District Judge Robert Gettleman on October 4, disability rights activists and service workers who have been cut by the Chicago Board of Education's elimination of \$26 million in special education positions are planning to continue protests against the cuts at the Board's October 25 meeting.

In an October 18 announcement, Amber Smock, who organizes for the Advanced Youth Leadership Program (AYLP), said that members of the group will return to the school board with further examples of the impact of the cuts at the October 25 meeting. They expect to be joined by special education aides and others who will speak again about the negative impact of the cuts on the city's most vulnerable students.

The planned protest comes three weeks after attorneys for the Chicago Board of Education and the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) left a federal courtroom celebrating the refusal of U.S. District Judge Robert Gettleman to grant a motion made by representatives of disabled school children asking that the cuts be rescinded. In what many observers regarded as a sleight of hand, Judge Gettleman began



Continuing the protests they made on June 20 (above, at Lincoln Park High School) during the Chicago Board of Education's budget hearings, human rights activists from Advanced Youth Leadership Program (above from right: Veronica Martinez, Amber Smock, Jose Ocampo) will return to the Chicago Board of Education on October 25 to dramatize the impact of the Board's cuts on special education programs. Substance photo by George N. Schmidt.

a lengthy hearing on October 4 by stating that lawyers for the disabled students were asking for a contempt citation against CPS. Then Gettleman allowed the school board's attorney's to

claim that they had received no complaints about the impact of the cuts. Despite testimony at every Board budget hearing and meeting, Gettleman allowed the Board's position to win. 🍏

Editorials

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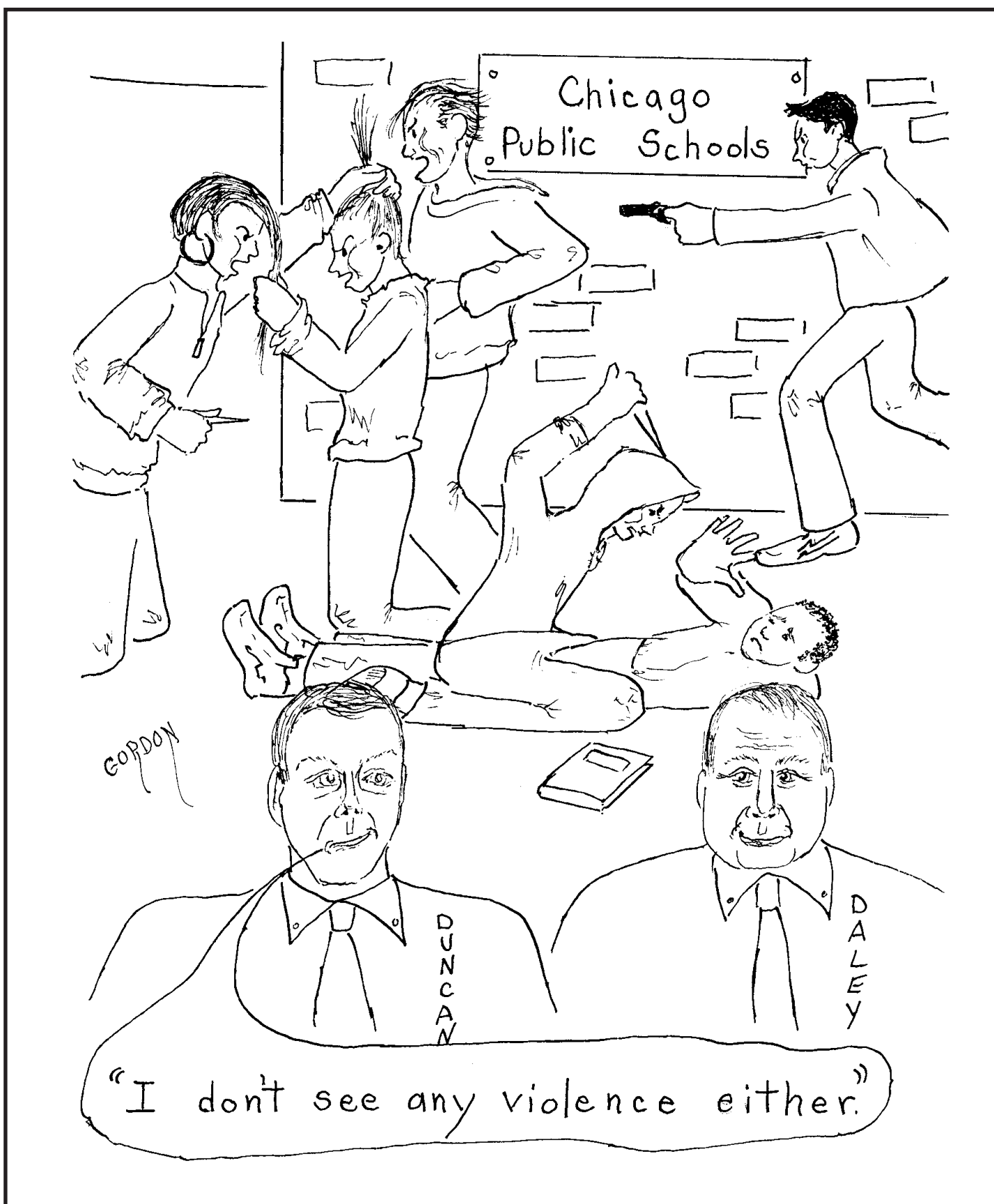
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Large increase in Chicago school crime, violence

On Friday, October 6, an adult identifying himself as a "parent" entered Melody Elementary School on Chicago's west side. After stealing a number of purses from teachers, he went to the parking lot, used the keys from one of those purses, and stole a teacher's car. From Melody, the perpetrator drove to two other west side elementary schools that day, robbing staff in those schools as well. Eventually, the car was found abandoned on the street.

It took the Chicago Board of Education's officials nearly a day to issue alerts about the problem. By the time the perpetrator (not the smartest thief in Chicago history) tried the same ploy at Ericson Elementary School the following Tuesday (October 10), he was arrested. Whether he will ever be prosecuted for more than trespassing is another question. Teachers who were involved in the earlier burglaries had not, at Substance press time, been asked to come forward as witnesses.

This is part of Chicago's cover up of school violence. On January 5, 2005, the Chicago Tribune proclaimed, in a story that ran on the front page of its Metro section, "Schools report good gun news." According to that story, Chicago had only taken one gun in a school since school opened in September 2004.

On September 27, 2006, the Chi-

ago Board of Education approved a resolution paying \$4 million to the City of Chicago for police services in the city's high schools. Why? Not discussed. Buried in the resolution, which appeared at the very end of the agenda for that Board meeting, was the following:

"During the period from January 1, 2006 -- June 30, 2006, there were 5,508 physical arrests in and around

schools made, 27,899 student school absentees found, and 20 guns recovered." [Emphasis ours].

Not only did the Chicago Tribune fail to report the shocking increase in guns in Chicago schools, but both of the city's daily newspapers chose to cover the September 27 Board of Education meeting *before it happened*. That's right. The Tribune and Sun-Times both reported, on September 25 (!), that the Board was going to approve a resolution to hire a New York consultant to help Chicago principals hire better teachers. How long will the media cover up of Chicago's problems continue?

On June 28, 2006, the Chicago Board of Education voted, without public debate, to approve a budget which expanded certain central office programs (example: the office of "New Schools Development", which does the dirty work of "Renaissance 2010") while Arne Duncan claimed he was "cutting" central office (he was, but selectively, and only in essential services).

The most dramatic school cuts were in special education. Those cuts have drawn protests before and after the vote. But equally important were cuts in security services. As Chicago schools get more dangerous, how long will the latest cover up continue? Given Chicago's media — a long time. 🍏

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CHICAGO

Schools report good gun news

Just 1 student found with one this year

Maybe it's the threat of a prison sentence or expulsion. Perhaps it's the certainty that a classmate or a teacher is going to rat them out. Whatever the reason, one thing is sure—fewer guns are showing up in Chicago schools. So far this year, only one student has been caught bringing a gun to a school—a weapon discovered during a routine metal-detector screening at Phillips Academy High on the South Side.

Security officers seized three other guns on high school campuses this fall: one found in an animal barn at the High School for Agricultural Sciences; one in a bush outside Hancock High School; and one seized from a security guard who was not authorized to carry weapons at school.

Compare this to 1994, when Chicago school officials seized 67 guns on school property during that school year. The number of guns seized dropped to 26 in 2002-03 and 13 last school year.

"If we come in under 10 this year, I'll jump up and down and click my heels," said Andres Durbak, safety and security director for Chicago Public Schools.

Durbak said the motivation behind these gun possession cases also has shifted over the years. In the early to mid-1990s, some cases involved gang violence. Now, most of the gun seizures involve students who have no intention of using them—elementary school students who find guns at home and bring them in to show classmates, or scared teens who bring them for protection.

"The message is getting out: Don't bring guns to school or you're going to get caught," Durbak said. "Kids know it's a danger now and they are very apt to report it. That's extremely positive because it means kids are taking ownership of their own safety."

Resistance News

Detroit: Militancy and reaction...

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habit of unionism and voting is powerful, but note that parents and kids do not come to DFT meetings, do not partake in discussions, do not vote — of course because they do not pay dues; capital's false bottom line which serves elites, and divides players with common interests.

The Democratic Party has ruled Detroit for time immemorial, oversaw its shipwreck. Yet the DFT, the UAW, and all the city unions still pour money and organizational skill down the bottomless well. It's a dishonest diversion, of course. The labor mis-leaders know they feed at the trough of imperialism, that their six figure salaries are based on their Judas-goat role in the workers' ranks. Electoral action creates at least an appearance of action, while it merely deepens oppression, convincing people that the main thing to do is to rely on someone else to solve problems. Clearly, no one will save us but us.

The last thing a labor leader in the US wants is a mass of truly class conscious workers who are ready to take direct action in order to control their work places on a daily basis. On one hand, if that was the case, the labor leaders would have nothing to sell the bosses, i.e., labor peace would not be theirs to peddle, but democratically controlled by the members and, on the other hand, such a conscious mass of people would never tolerate labor leaders who make four and five times the wages of average rank and filers, live completely different lives, more in common with employers.

In the past twenty years, the once militant DFT, which led some of the nation's first teacher strikes, made concession upon concession, until the Detroit educators fell into the bottom quartile of pay for Michigan teachers. DFT bureaucrats organized the disintegration of the school system, took hostile positions against parents and kids (supporting unjust taxation and the Michigan lottery scam — you can't lose if you don't play — which was promised for schools, but never went there). DFT mis-leaders like bumbling President John Elliot and, later, DFT President Janna Garrison, supported the NCLB and served on national AFT governance boards rubbing elbows with the easily spotted corruption of Miami's Tornillo and others.

Detroit teachers have made concessions after concessions, not only to save jobs, but on the promise that their sacrifices would save the school system, help kids. Between 2003 and now, Detroit teachers gave up \$63 million in concessions and "loaned" the district a week's pay. The school system turned about and gave administrators raises at 10%, often \$10,000. The DFT leadership, which had witnessed the concessions spiral of the last 30 years, feigned shock.

On Strike! Shut it Down!

It was easy to see the 2006 strike coming and on Sunday, August 27, 2006, the assembled DFT member voted in Cobo Hall (the same venue where the 1999 wildcat was triggered) to shut down the schools against management demands for \$90 million in concessions, about \$10,000 per school worker. DPS threatened to lay off 2000 employees if the demands were not met.

The strike, however, initially targeted a dead week of schooling, a

week without kids. I wrote in Counterpunch at the time, "after a week, it might be easy for the union leadership, in collusion with the board, to cut back on falsely monstrous concession demands (say \$60 million rather than \$90 million), split the work force by making entry-level school workers take most of the burden, and declare a victory.

"Or, the strike could spin out of control. It may be that the school worker force really does have the DFT leadership cornered between impossible concession demands, and the fear of their well-paid staff jobs. However, that kind of resistance would require serious organizing, a rank and file opposition well-prepared with a sensible plan for resistance, and none of that is on the horizon as yet."

Sadly, I was not far off base in the opening sentences. DFT bureaucrats, after a 16 day strike in which heroic educators defied state laws, countered an incessant drumbeat of bad press attacking them for being responsible for the destruction of schooling, organized their own pickets, and began to set up their own lines of communications, agreed to a package with, on their statements, is about \$68 million in concessions. But DFT lied about even that, calling it a "non-wage concessions package."

It was easy to see the strike coming, even in the spring. DFT could have done many things:

*Prepared for Freedom Schooling for kids, demonstrating why things are as they are within an economic system that requires inequality, exploitation, racism, nationalism and irrationalism—and countering the real need many parents have for baby-sitting.

*Demanded, in real terms, Books! Supplies! True Caps for Lower Class Size!

*Demanded academic freedom and the right to teach each child well, not teach to a test, and the freedom to opt out of the racist testing which programs Detroit kids to lose,

*Supported a just tax system, tax the rich, the corporate, the sports spectacles, the casinos, and remove the unjust taxes from poor and working people,

*No wage or benefit cuts, but increases to make up for past losses, and against projected inflation.

*Planned to unleash the creativity of 9000 school workers, urging them to design their own banners, create their own songs, hold coffee klatches in neighborhoods, do plays and guerrilla theater for kids, make the picket lines a joyful celebration of rebels,

*Repeatedly demonstrated the direct connections between capitalism, imperialism, war, curricula regimentation, high-stakes tests, racism, and the destruction of civil life in the city.

Margaret Haley, a founder of the AFT and the NEA in the early 1900s, fought for similar actions nearly a century ago, but her militant history has been largely eradicated. And, DFT could hardly fight for academic freedom. The AFT opposes that, via its support for high-stakes testing. DFT couldn't fight for a just tax system. AFT opposes that. And DFT couldn't fight for real caps on class size as the union has traditionally traded that for money, making one professor ask: How much does it take to bribe a teacher to demolish her own teaching?

In fact, the daily processes of school life are rarely bargained in teacher contracts, just as the industrial unions ceased to bargain about the processes of production, and thus gave up the struggle for control over the key moments of work life to the employers—and hence weakened the unions.

To prepare for the strike, it would have been important to carry a door-to-door, person to person, campaign, a plan to establish freedom schools for people who not only are desperate for the free baby-sitting service provide to corporations which refuse to offer it to employees, but people who truly want their kids to learn something of significant, something that will help them learn how to understand and change the world — something that is offered in nearly no schools now.

The DFT could have easily set up an online bulletin board, for educators and perhaps others to discuss events of the strike, to make suggestions, to see the commonality of their problems and to plan action. But no union runs such a bulletin board. Members talking to each other can be critical, and thus dangerous.

The DFT could have prepared for solidarity actions but as in other recent labor battles in Detroit and around the US, the call for "Solidarity Forever!" with the school workers' struggle rings hollow. The Michigan Education Association (NEA) has historically had only distant relations with Detroit teachers, choosing instead to represent the suburbs and leave the problems of the inner city to the DFT. Recently, however, the NEA has been organizing Detroit charter schools (which threaten the per-student income of DPS), in effect raiding the DFT, contradicting a loud declaration of mutual support by the NEA and AFL-CIO just months ago. The overwhelmingly white members of the MEA have not learned that an injury to one only goes before an injury to all; if Detroit salaries are collapsed, and schools closed for bogus test scores, suburban school workers are not far behind.

Local 6000, the largest local of the UAW representing, not auto workers, but state employees, thousands of them in and near Detroit, born from the militant snake-throwing SWOC, said nothing about the strike.

John Sweeney, AFL-CIO boss, marched in the Detroit Labor Day parade. Rather than walk, rode in one of the autos donated by Ford and General Motors, behind banners declaring "Partners in Production!" reflecting the line of the AFL-CIO: the unity of labor, management, and government, in the national interest: a corporate state vision. Ford, GM, and the union leaders are partners—partners in exploiting the work of the union members. He took little notice of the DFT marchers, then on strike, and made a "Vote Democratic!" stump speech.

So, for the first week of the strike, DFT members picketed empty buildings, rather than walking door to door in communities with, say, flyers they themselves prepared from their knowledge of the particular blocks (though for some educators, that's arguably slim, about 60% of them live outside Detroit, or send their own kids out) and with a plan for day care for people with special needs. There was, really, little for the rank and file to do, as leaders prefer it, choosing to win the members to the notion that the union is a vending machine: give us your money and we protect you. There's a name for that.

Only about 500 of the DFT members turned out for the Labor Day celebration. A mass city-wide demonstration to specifically support the strike could have been called, but the DFT didn't call it.

On the first day of school that was scheduled for kids to attend, William Coleman III opened the schools, as a probe to test the strength of the educators. He had to know that few would scab, that at most 500 adults would be attempting to supervise what could be 100,000 kids. As it turned out, only about 40,000 kids showed up, but the cynical maneuver was a dangerous disaster. One small child wandered off, unsupervised, from school, to be found by a picket captain, blocks away. That did not play well for Coleman III.

On September 2, the DFT announced that, on their request, three Detroit preachers had been invited to the negotiation sessions (which are closed to DFT members — a gag order has been issued to bargainers) and the talks moved from the usual site, the Michigan Employment Relations Commission offices, to the Fellowship Chapel of one of the ministers who is also president of the Detroit NAACP — and a man who spoke out openly against the strike before it began. He's also a consultant with Holt-Rinehart Winston, the textbook company which is deeply invested in high-stakes testing. Each of the preachers serves with Michigan Governor Granholm on a state commission for faith-based initiatives, presumably with an interest in opening faith-based schools.

What Should the Rank and File Have Known?

The strike dragged on. The DFT rank and file had been through a lot. They initiated their own strike, the wildcat of 1999, and ran it themselves. Then, they quickly moved to win community support, parents were invited to pickets lines. This bargaining unit once knew its stuff. But it appears they forgot.

What should have the rank and file of the DFT known before they went on this strike?

They should have known that this would be a bitter fight. Their employers would pull out all the stops. The social forces colliding each had a lot at stake. It would require significant commitment from every striker, as an active player in the action.

They should have known their leaders would likely betray them, as had the labor leaders of every major struggle of the last 30 years, from Hormel to the Detroit Newspaper strike and all in between. They should have known their labor mis-leaders shared one key thing in common with the DPS administration and local elites: neither party wanted a mass, class conscious group of workers on their hands.

This history of betrayal would mean that the workers should have known that they would need their own

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Susan Ohanian's Resistance reports will return next issue. If you want to learn more about the widespread national resistance to high-stakes testing and inhuman 'education reform' policies, visit Susan's website: www.susanohanian.org

Students to take complaints, petition to October 25 Chicago Board of Education meeting

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years at Lincoln Park and a total of 23 years teaching when the principal cut her.

When word of the principal's ouster of Eshoo swept through the building during the first week of October, students and faculty began protesting. Students circulated a petition (which was eventually signed by more than 850 students) asking that Ms. Eshoo be returned to Lincoln Park. Students also produced two tee shirts expressing their views. Faculty and alumni joined their voices in the protest, despite widely reported incidents of what they considered intimidation by the school's principal. (For example, student leaflets and posters supporting the teacher and announcing the LSC meeting were torn down by administrative and security staff.)

When the Local School Council meeting began at 5:30 p.m., the LSC president, Susan Keegan, announced that principal Karvelas would not be staying for the entire meeting, but would give a statement and then leave for another engagement. Despite the fact that the room in which the LSC meeting was held was too small for the crowd, Keegan refused to move the meeting to the school's auditorium. As a result, dozens of students were forced to sit on the floor, while others were forced to stand in the halls outside the meeting, which was overcrowded in

No one could understand how a teacher who had spent 16 years at the school could suddenly be dumped by the principal

terms of fire safety regulations.

Before the meeting began, LSC officials told those who wanted to speak that they would be limited to two minutes each. As students taped a long banner saying "Bring Back Mrs. Eshoo" behind the meeting table, dozens signed up to speak.

Before anyone got to speak on behalf of Mrs. Eshoo and in opposition to the principal's action, however, the principal was recognized to read a prepared, written statement.

According to Karvelas, on September 13, she received a phone call from the Office of High School Programs and was told to close "nine positions." Karvelas said that she protested vigorously. "We are the gem of the city," she said she said, "and should not be treated like this." According to Karvelas, over the next several days she talked people into reducing the cuts demanded to five "positions," then to "three positions." She concluded by saying that she told them that "two would be challenging but reasonable."

Karvelas did not present the Local School Council with any memos or other written documentation regarding the unusual demand for "position" cuts, nor was she asked why the cuts were communicated by telephone, beginning two weeks after the school year began. Nor was Karvelas's statement distributed to the members of the LSC



Junior Student Torrence Nelson, above, spoke about Mrs. Eshoo's support for the school's award winning music program. Nelson is standing under a banner place on the wall prior to the LSC meeting. All photos with this article by George N. Schmidt, Substance.



At the end of the October 12 public participation part of the Lincoln Park Local School Council meeting, the vast majority of those present gave Bernice Eshoo (lower right) a standing ovation despite the fact that members of the Lincoln Park administration had been taking notes in a manner that many considered a threat to their rights to free speech.



Student Thomas Barczyk, president of the Lincoln Park student council, challenged the claims of the school administration that the termination of Bernice Eshoo was forced on the school by "budget cuts." Many of the students wore tee shirts that read "Bring Back Mrs. Eshoo" (above left). Students turned in petitions signed by more than 800 of them asking that Mrs. Eshoo be returned to the school and the full library program restored.



Lincoln Park senior Joanna Klekowicz (above center), vice president of the student council, told the meeting that a rambling 10-minute intercom announcement by the principal disrupted a major examination being taken by students in the school's famed International Baccalaureate (IB) program. Many of the speakers at the October 12 meeting noted that the school's office was refusing to return phone calls from angry parents and others asking about the controversial move and claims afterward.

or to the hundreds assembled for the meeting.

According to her narrative to the September Local School Council meeting, Karvelas then reviewed Lincoln Park staffing and decided to cut away from the classroom programs, which were into their third week, ac-

ording to Karvelas, when the "High School Program Office" made the demands telephonically.

"It makes no sense to close classroom teachers," Karvelas told the LSC. She said the purpose and goal of her administration was to support instruction, not disrupt it. "Let the record

show that positions were cut across the city," Karvelas declared as she finished reading her prepared, written remarks. She did not distribute copies of the remarks to the more than 200 people — at least half of them students — who by then were squeezed into the small meeting room the LSC had chosen for the

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Bureaucratic doubletalk was used to try to obscure the campaign to intimidate teachers

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meeting.

In what many then considered a bizarre turn of events, Karvelas leaned forward and praised the students who had turned out to protest her decision. Referring to the students as independent learners, she said she was proud of them. As she was preparing to leave, without taking any questions, she took one question.

After answering one question, Karvelas left, telling the group that she had another important event to attend. While students and teachers mumbled that nothing should have been more important than the meeting, Karvelas, accompanied by a body guard, exited. Then, teachers and students, joined by Eshoo's union supporters from other schools, spoke out for more than an hour on behalf of Mrs. Eshoo and against the cut. Although several of them were interrupted at first by an LSC timekeeper, as the meeting went on the obnoxious interruptions subsided.

After a year of trying to silence Lincoln Park High School Chicago Teachers Union delegate and school librarian Bernice Eshoo, LPHS principal Bessie Karvelas ousted Eshoo from the school by closing the librarian position on Friday, September 29 and ordering Eshoo out of the building.

At the time and subsequently, Karvelas stated that she had to do so, even though the move left the school with one librarian in violation of Board of Education guidelines for library staffing. Karvelas later stated that she had the power to leave the library understaffed because Lincoln Park High School has discretionary powers not afforded to all schools.

Despite the crowded conditions and the attempts by some members of the LSC to restrict the length of the speakers' time and the number of speakers, the evening turned into a series of tributes by students, former students, parents, teachers, and supporters from other schools.

Senior student Tomas Aguilar talked about how the school library was no longer sufficient for the work the students needed to do.

Senior student Jennifer Kovacs spoke emotionally about how Ms. Eshoo had supported the school's girls' softball team and had served as a mentor to her.

Senior Laura Saltzman added to the stories of how much Eshoo had contributed to the school.

Student Council President Thomas Barczyk reported how students had witnessed arguments between Karvelas

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Lincoln Park teachers, students and parents to hold protest at October 25 Board of Education meeting

At Substance press time, sources at Lincoln Park High School reported that a number of students and parents, joined by some teachers and former teachers, would defy the 'totalitarian conditions' at the school and protest the termination of Bernice Eshoo at the Chicago Board of Education meeting on October 25, 2006. The Board meeting is scheduled to begin at 10:30 with sign up for public participation scheduled between 8:00 and 9:00 at 125 S. Clark St., CPS headquarters. 🍏



Lincoln Park Senior Victoria Flynn told the meeting about the mistreatment of other teachers, including her mother, who was moved out of Lindblom high school by one of Arne Duncan's hand-picked principals. Sitting beside Flynn are Gage Park High School special education teachers (and former Chicago Teachers Union President) Deborah Lynch and Curie High School clerk Maureen Callaghan (former Chicago Teachers Union treasurer), both of whom joined dozens of teachers from across Chicago in support of Eshoo. No one from the current union leadership attended the meeting.



Former Lincoln Park LSC member Laura Daruger, now head of Friends of Lincoln Park, spoke forcefully on behalf of Mrs. Eshoo, outlining Eshoo's contributions to the school. Dozens of students and others were forced out into the hall (top left, above) because the principal and LSC president did not want the meeting moved to the school auditorium, which was available. Students were also forced by the dozens to sit on the floor during the meeting, which they did without complaint.



CPS spokesman Mike Vaughn (above right) attended the meeting and was later quoted in press reports regarding the incident. Vaughn often gets the most complex stories in the media.



Lincoln Park history teacher Jeff Jaglois (above) warned the Local School Council that the transfer of Bernice Eshoo would add to the chilling effect on teachers that had been growing at the school under the current administration. Administration representatives (above right) did not speak during the meeting, but took extensive notes and were publicly noted by the students during the discussion. Most of the teachers who spoke with Substance said that they believed Eshoo had been targeted for termination by the school administration because she was a strong union delegate and because this year she had protested against the increasing overcrowding of both individual classes and overall teacher program loads. At the same time, the administration at Lincoln Park High School, for the first time in the school's history, has created two jobs with the title of "Dean" outside of the usual administrative channels. Teachers noted that the teachers holding the title "Dean" could have been given greater teaching loads, making the cuts unnecessary. Many view these positions as examples of local patronage.

Letters

Consortium excludes Spec Ed data from H.S. report

October 13, 2006

[The following letter was sent to the Consortium on Chicago School Research and is published here with the permission of the writer. Sent via email to: elainea@consortium-chicago.org]

Elaine Allensworth, PhD.

Consortium on Chi. School Research
1313 East 60th Street
Chicago, Illinois 60637

Dear Dr. Allensworth,

I have just reviewed your update to your study *From High School to the Future* that the Consortium on Chicago School Research released earlier this month. The central comment I have in relation to this update relates to the exclusion of data related to students with disabilities. This data exclusion also appeared in the April 2006 pre-updated study *From High School to the Future*. I am aware that some data related to students with disabilities was included in the April 2006 study in an appendix, but no such appendix was developed for the October 2006 update to that study.

I did not comment on this issue when the original study was released in April 2006, because at that time I was part of a US District Court appointed monitoring team overseeing the *Cory H.* special education settlement agreement. I was also playing a similar role in a case in another state. In general it is not considered to be appropriate for an individual working in a quasi judicial role to engage in commentary on a study directly related to the school district one is required to monitor.

I am now in an advocacy role and feel that some comment to you and the Consortium on this issue now is appropriate. I would first like to restate your rationale for this special education data exclusion as it appeared in your April 2006 study. It appeared on pages 12-13 and reads:

Throughout the report, our sample of graduates differs in two significant ways from the sample used by the CPS Department of Postsecondary Education in their recent report on the college outcomes of the class of 2004. First, we report college outcomes only for students who were not enrolled in special education at the time of graduation. Second, we do not include students enrolled in alternative high schools.

Appendix 1 presents an analysis of the postsecondary outcomes of special education graduates for the classes of 2002 and 2003. Fully 12 percent of CPS graduates in and 2003 were in special education at the time of graduation. African-American graduates, particularly male graduates, were the most likely to be in special education at the time of graduation. In 2002 and 2003, 21 percent of African-American male students (versus 13 percent of white male students) and 10 percent of African-American female students (versus 8 percent of white female students) were enrolled in special education at the time of graduation.

Given the high rates of special education placement among students who graduated from CPS, why exclude them from our analysis in the main sections of the report? A central

focus of this report is understanding how students' postsecondary outcomes are influenced by their entering high school test scores, performance in their coursework (as measured by GPA), participation in advanced coursework (e.g., honors and Advanced Placement classes), and performance on the ACT. While most special education students take exams such as the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS) and ACT, we do not know the extent to which performance on these exams is comparable to that of regular education students. The same issues arise in examining students' grades and coursework. Because we cannot assess the extent to which information on pre-high school and high school performance is comparable for special education and regular education students, we cannot adequately investigate the determinants of college outcomes for special education students.

I found your rationale for the exclusion of special education data to be simply astounding in the context of the reporting requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act. To exclude 12 percent of all CPS graduates and 21.5 percent of all Black male graduates from your analysis because they have a disability is no small step. It is clear that the Chicago Public Schools has a moral and legal responsibility for providing the same high quality education for students with disabilities as it has for all other students. If the Consortium's position is that the ISAT, ITBS, TAP, and PSAE administered with appropriate modifications are not valid instruments for measuring the achievement of students with disabilities then it has an obligation to raise this issue. If the Consortium believes that the CPS is not providing students with disabilities access to the general curriculum and therefore testing these students is unfair, it needs to say so. I believe that the Consortium by excluding this data helps perpetuate low expectations for CPS students with disabilities. It helps perpetuate the exclusion of significant numbers of students with disabilities, who do not have even mild cognitive impairments, from meaningful access to the general curriculum.

It is also clear to virtually all advocates for students with disabilities that the CPS is not fulfilling its mandate to provide a high quality education to students with disabilities and to work to close the performance gap between these students and their non-disabled peers. The fact that the 2005 Illinois State Report Card for District 299 indicates that only 5.1% of eleventh grade students with disabilities were reading at or above state standards indicates the disregard the CPS has for academic achievement for this subgroup. To add additional academic punishment to this subgroup the CPS has carried out significant special education staffing reductions in its FY 07 budget.

We need to also recognize that both the NCLB and the Illinois State Board of Education allow the CPS to test up to 4,200 students with disabilities using the Illinois Alternative Assessment (IAA). IAA data is not included in the PSAE subgroup data. Soon the CPS will be allowed to give a modified as-

essment to an additional 8,500 students with disabilities based on the determination of the US Department of Education. These testing requirement changes could mean an exclusion of 22.5% of special education students from standard testing requirements.

In the appendix to your April 2006 study the data provided on students with disabilities who were graduates indicated the educational holocaust these students are faced with. On page 93 we are informed that only 6.5% of special education students who graduate ever enroll in a four year college and no estimate is made of the number who ever get a degree. Based on data for 2002 CPS graduates in your April 2006 study (13,379 excluding 16% special education and alternative school graduates) we would estimate that out of about 1,900 students with disabilities who graduated only about 125 ever even enrolled in a four year college and only about 575 ever enrolled in any type of college program. Even though the Consortium does not indicate the percentage of CPS students with disabilities who ever graduate from a four year college it is not unreasonable to assume it is under one third of a percentage point.

On a national scale we can see the results of the current failure of special education in that adults with disabilities are much less likely to be employed than adults without disabilities. Unemployment rates for working-age adults with disabilities have hovered at the 70 percent level for at least the past 12 years. Even when employed, too many adults with disabilities earn markedly less income than their nondisabled peers.

Access Living and other advocacy organizations support strong academic achievement for all students; we recognize that academic achievement alone will not lead to successful outcomes for students with disabilities. We recognize that some students have significant disabilities and their standardized test results are in question. Students with disabilities need educational supports and services to promote the acquisition of skills throughout their school lives. But we do know that academic achievement is critical for long term outcomes. I would ask that the Consortium help promote higher achievement for students with disabilities enrolled in the CPS by holding the CPS accountable for those students who should appropriately be given standardized tests and include these students in any studies of post secondary outcomes.

Yours truly,

Rodney D. Estvan

Access Living, Chicago

cc: John Q. Easton jqeaston@consortium-chicago.org

cc: Special education advocacy groups

cc: Dr. Renee Grant-Mitchell, CPS Office of Specialized Services

Something to think about

August 3, 2006

Substance:

I was forwarded the following on-line and thought you'd like to share it with readers. Something to make you think...

Is it just me or did I just see what I thought I saw? The United States just made a mass evacuation

of Americans half way around the world during the war in Lebanon, on foreign soil. The evacuation used cruise ships, helicopters, 747's, DC 10's and military soldiers. And they did this while bombs were falling and the Americans were hiding. However, they couldn't evacuate Americans in New Orleans that were all sitting on the roof tops of buildings.

Tim Galloway

Retired CPS teacher, CTU delegate, and executive board member (last assignment, Kenwood High School)

Mayoral control now in Los Angeles

October 9, 2006

Substance:

Please renew my subscription to the Substance newspaper. I forgot to send it during the summer and hope my subscription has not lapsed. Enclosed is my \$16 check.

As you know, we in Los Angeles schools are having a "partial mayoral takeover" here. It was foisted on us using the same claims that are being made out of Chicago. In fact, Chicago is often cited as the example of how good mayoral takeovers are.

I can send you more information to share with your readers on the draconian — actually, Machiavellian — political maneuvers planned for the Los Angeles public schools if you wish.

Neil Chertcoff

Los Angeles, CA

Chertcoff1947@cs.com

How to publish your letter in Substance

Regular readers who wish to publish letters in Substance are encouraged to do so.

Letters should be submitted by e-mail to Csubstance@aol.com and be as brief as necessary to cover the topic chosen.

All letters must be signed and are encouraged to include an e-mail or other address so that interested readers can communicate.

Anyone who wishes to know how our Letters policies are implemented can browse the letters available on our website (www.substancenews.com) or e-mail the office for examples.

Because of our limited budget, we generally do not find the space to publish letters which come from those who are not regular readers. When we are in doubt, we check with our subscriber list before making a decision.

Letters

Csubstance@aol.com

Detroit: Militancy and reaction...

Continued from Page Three

organizational structure, an inclusive and democratic structure, drawing in as voting members people from the community, other jobs, students; and a cadre of dedicated leaders. The DPS bosses aligned themselves as an organized class. The DPS administration had an eager trumpet, the local press, distributed by the thousands. The DFT rank and file needed their own internal communication system, even an open web site, and a method to talk to the community as well. Again, an online web site could achieve that. The bosses would throw everything they had at them. The workers' response would need to match the play.

The DFT workers needed to know that, despite appearances to the contrary, their struggle would be an international struggle. DFT, and many US unions, has relied on the idea that they only had to organize the US work force. This appeared to be effective for skilled tradespeople, but only briefly.

However, the work force is truly an international, multi-racial group. Teachers in Oaxaca Mexico were engaged in a bitter social uprising during and after the Detroit strike, and even a message of solidarity would have inspired both sets of educators. Indeed, Detroiters would have had a lot to learn from Oaxacans.

Both struggles remain blacked out in the mainstream press. That may be due to a mix of racism and nationalism, but it is assuredly also about the fact that these battles play out on very dangerous grounds for elites; they go to the heart of control of communities and the rule of knowledge itself. In comparison, the little spectacle of a transit strike in New York City in 2006, sold out in one day, got national headlines. Why?

The workers should have known that the law is there to guarantee that they lose; that they would need to break it again and again. Threats of injunctions and court orders cannot teach, nor even warehouse, kids. They should have known that to win the strike would not only require civil strife, but the support of an active, conscious community that understood what they were doing and why they were doing it. All would need to rise with all. They should have understood that pacifism in this strike would probably mean a loss.

The rank and file should have known that there is nearly no one left in the AFL-CIO, or the NEA, who actually knows how to lead a strike, and of that handful, nearly no one who has ever really led one. Fewer still led a strike that won. For the last 25 years and more the AFL-CIO just organized one series of concessions after the next. The labor bosses in power now are habituated to losing, and are unable to make strategic estimates and tactical plans for a fight, even if they wanted to fight — and they do not want to fight as that might interrupt dues income and their coming pensions. Even if the DFT drew on the widely proclaimed vast resources of the AFL-CIO for this strike, the arsenal was empty.

Unfortunately, it is clear that the work force understood little of this, had learned nothing from the period following the 1981 PATCO strike (when newly-elected Ronald Reagan was allowed to smash the air-controllers strike by the inaction of the AFL-CIO). The fact of their heroic struggle does outweigh their lack of prescience, but only by a little.

That the DFT members did not know this is testament to the US educational system which manages to train people to overlook the obvious, to become instruments of their own oppression—even to desire it — and to search for someone else to save them, to tell them what to do. The decisive viewpoint that “all of history is the history of class struggle,” is obliterated in US schools and the DFT members are, after all, products of school themselves.

The Strike Continues

On September 10, elected County Judge Susan Borman reluctantly issued a back to work order that was read to the members in a meeting of about 3000 in Cobo Hall. As the order was read, members chanted, “No Contract! No Work!”

DFT President Janna Garrison probably missed a chance for fame. She could have, with little fear of reprisals, just paraphrased John L. Lewis' famous response to a Taft-Hartley injunction aimed at his striking coal miners, “Taft can mine it, and Hartley can haul it.” A tough, open defiant stance from Garrison could have inspired the strikers, and made her career.

It might have, however, threatened the union treasury. DPS would demand fines. And, if the DFT did nothing about deteriorating school conditions, and the loss of thousands of members, and more cuts to come, guaranteed; the DFT bureaucrats did find resources to buy a new \$5 million dollar building in 2005.

Garrison read the court order and closed the meeting. The potential of a mass meeting of 3000 educators engaged in one of the sharpest classroom battles of a decade was lost.

On September 11, the Governor ordered fact-finding, a hollow gesture to call in a third party designated to find non-partisan facts. There is no such thing in a strike. Fact finders, however, are commonly paid by states, or arbitration associations, and through their very well to do lives share the outlook of employers, and feel terrific pressure to foist concessions on unionists in order to “reach a mutual settlement for the good of the community.”

Despite claims of civility between DFT and DPS bargainers, which were probably true, this was a vicious strike, with all the weapons of domination aimed at the strikers. The law threatened them, the press denounced them, Coleman III said teachers were responsible for destroying school.

On September 12, after negotiators on both sides agreed to halt bargaining, and an assigned mediator consented, Mayor Kwame Kilpatrick directed all sides to his office, where he demanded a settlement. The preachers intervened as well, indicating they would turn the community on the strikers.

Garrison and the DFT negotiators caved, completely, but reported to the membership that they had gained a “non-wage concessionary Tentative Agreement,” that is: They lied.

On September 13, DFT members met again in Cobo Hall, but not to vote on the TA, only to vote on whether to return to work and cast ballots from there. DFT had used the period since the 1999 Cobo wildcat to shift the voting procedure into mail ballots, which are more easily controlled, manipulated (would they cheat? Of course they would cheat.). There would be no more Cobo uprisings to prolong the strike.

The DFT bureaucracy was going to be sure they could “deliver” their membership to DPS, proving, in a twisted way, their strength.

The Sellout

DFT and other unions frequently hide the full text of tentative agreements from their members, even through the life of contracts. It may be that what is at hand is not the real agreement, but we plunge ahead anyway. In the “non-wage concessions” package:

DFT bargained wage concession after wage concession. The union bargained away a 10% co-pay for health benefits (as noted above, educators hired before 1994 had no co-pay) for all educators, probably a loss of \$50 per pay.

DFT bargained a wage freeze the for year one, a 1% increase for year two, and a 2.5% increase for year three. DFT did not underline the fact that a part of the TA is missing on this topic, that is, just who will get the increase. A clause is inserted in each note of a wage increase indicating that some educators may not get it, and, moreover, DFT has repeatedly torn up wage increase promises mid-contract, and just returned the money to DPS as yet another concession. Even so, if inflation remains unchanged, during the three years of the contract, educators will lose at least 10% of their earning power.

One prep period was taken from every elementary teacher, the vast majority of the educators, meaning the work day is extended, with no pay. That is a wage cut.

The teachers lose pay for three days of the “phony strike” (no kids) week, plus lose pay for Labor Day. That is a wage cut.

But a clause in inserted guaranteeing DFT support for a potential state tax increase, again alienating educators from the citizenry. That weakens the union.

DFT claimed they “won” a promise from DPS that the district would assume liability for its employees who were not engaged in unlawful or unprofessional conduct. DFT did not note that this is simply the law, nor did they advise members that a DPS refusal to accept liability is not grievable, but is a decision of DPS alone. This clause is a shabby trick.

DFT agreed that five days of all teacher sick leave would be frozen, not paid out. This is a wage cut. It's a no interest loan.

DFT agreed to make it much easier for DPS to use subs at low pay, and to keep subs from becoming tenured teachers, just as DFT had agreed, earlier, to let DPS “reconstitute” schools, that is, lay off all the teachers in an entire school with, for example, low test scores, and those teachers have no guarantee of another job. As DPS relies heavily on subs, because of deplorable working conditions, this is a significant setback. This will become a wage cut.

The tentative agreement contains nothing about books, supplies, lower class size, academic freedom, or the controversial high-stakes tests. It does nothing about the culture of contempt and disrespect that makes daily life on the job so difficult, and causes students to leave. The union demurred.

This is not a wage cut. It is a life cut.

What Can be Learned?

To date, DFT has not announced when the vote will be on the TA. It is unlikely it will be voted down. Once teachers get with their kids, it is hard to pull them out. It is possible, of course, that the rebelliousness among

DFT members will rise again, fast, but the union promised them a two week strike beforehand. That was the limit of many members' finances.

Steve Conn, a high school teacher from one of the city's better schools, and a leader of the past wildcat who is now seen by most teachers as “full of himself, a camera-hog,” insisted that the TA would “go down in flames,” at the meeting in Cobo Hall. He was remarkably wrong. Wild mis-estimates do not improve the status of radicalism. It's possible the contract will be voted down in mail balloting, but if it does, DFT members will have a lot to overcome.

Surely we can see how the DPS administration exploited DFT weaknesses:

*Trust in the DFT and community leadership,

*Religion, reliance on the preachers to be neutrals, when they have their own selfish interests, require dues, like union leaders, to interpret god,

*Care for kids, a weakness only the most cynical would exploit, but they do it,

*Splits within the bargaining unit (health care) and between Detroit and suburban teachers (racism),

*Financial strain on all educators and especially younger teachers,

*Fear of the law,

*The false notion that we are all in this together, in one community that we all must share, when in fact this was a bitter class-room war.

*Isolation and inactivity, as in picketing empty buildings, fostered by DFT leaders.

In total, it is clear that it is key to identify real divisions, that is, the unity of DFT/DPS elites against the rank and file, the kids, and the citizens; and false divisions, of race, age, city boundary and so on, divisions which, if we do not demolish them, they will be used to demolish us.

We can learn the same lesson of the 1999 wildcat, proved to all by the heroic actions of educators who made big sacrifices again in the battle of 2006, that the law pales before the solidarity and direct action of masses of workers. Nothing was done, nor will be done, to any striker in either action. It is not possible to replace 9000 school workers. Other educators should not be deterred by district boundaries. It is fairly simple to set up coordinated bargaining communities, with bargaining “minimums,” that is, lines beneath which we will not sink, operating with the slogan, “An injury to one is an injury to all—if one suffers—all act.”

We can learn that we can fight, and win. But justice demands organization.

Teachers are the most unionized people in the US. Combined, the educator unions have nearly 4 million members. School workers are among the few who have predictable salaries and health benefits, and, in a society dedicated to offering its youth little more than perpetual war and deepening inequality, teachers face a choice: will they be missionaries for capital, seek to teach for equality and democracy? Schools, today, are a vital choke point in society — as is the military, the health care system, the transportation system (many immigrants), the food system, and the prisons.

There have been many pivotal moments for what is left of the labor movement since it entered decline: The Patco strike of air-traffic controllers, crushed when the AFL-CIO abandoned

Continued on Page Ten

Special Education cuts and security worries dominate public concerns at August 2006 Chicago Board of Education meeting

By Lotty Blumenthal

(CHICAGO) The Chicago Board of Education's new president, Rufus Williams, called his first regular meeting of the Chicago Board of Education to order at 10:30 a.m. on August 23, 2006. [Williams had chaired a special meeting of the Board the week before, when two charter schools were the sole agenda items, but August 23 was his first full meeting]. He opened with a reminder that he was not Michael Scott, his predecessor, and any similar actions on his part to Michael was coincidental.

As usual, ceremonial activities took up the earliest part of the meeting. Williams called upon 51 CPS classroom teachers who had won awards for great work of up to \$7,500 each. The awards were for travel for "rigorous summer sabbaticals" that were educational in nature. A moment of silence was then held for former Board President Clinton Bristow who passed away the previous week suddenly. At the time of his death, Bristow was president of Alcorn State College in Mississippi.

The public participation section began with David Gregg of the Edgewater community telling of the accomplishments of the Senn High School students. Gregg likened the existence of the Rickover Naval Academy — forced into the building against the wishes of the community — to a foreign parasite which would eventually take over its host. Gregg noted that the military academy had repeatedly been rejected by the Senn community since the plan first came to public light two years ago. The most recent rejection came in the form of a referendum approved last Spring during the election season. Gregg then asked Rufus Williams to attend a town hall meeting on September 26 about the situation, or send any designee. Williams begged off and asked High Schools Chief Don Pittman about the situation. Pittman said both schools are doing well and there is no overcrowding. He did not mention that the Board gives much more to the naval academy while Senn students suffer with less, a charge that had been documented by speakers from Senn for nearly two years.

For instance, all the science labs are in the wing taken over by the Navy. The result is that about 250 students have about six labs all day — while the 1,600 students in all programs for regular Senn have one rolling cart for science that travels to all students regular rooms. The 250 naval academy students have one librarian. The 1600 students have one librarian since one was taken to service only the navy students. Some observers have said the 1,600 Senn students are like Cinderella — with the CPS Board acting like an evil step parent. Pittman said he'd go to the community meeting.

Jovita Flores of Parents United for a Healthier Schools and Maureen Damnitz of the American Lung Association both said that CPS needed an improved Wellness Policy. They said hoped that the wellness policy could be amended to include more specific items for student well being. They felt that many aspects of student health were missing, including mental health, physical health, attention to asthma and diabetes, and others. They felt CPS should deal more often and directly with parents and the community about specific student health problems. They brought



August 16, 2006. The Chicago Board of Education held a special meeting on August 16 on two agenda items. Above: Teachers and administrators from what was supposed to become the "Global Alliance 21st Century Charter School" were told that their charter was being withdrawn because they had failed to secure a location. The staff of the school claimed that they had been promised the Ralph Bunche public school at 65th and Ashland. After putting in \$4 million in renovations three years ago, Arne Duncan had been closed Bunche for what he called "under performance" in 2005. The Bunche site was given to Paul Adams and Providence St. Mel's for its first public charter school. Global Alliance speakers charged impropriety because the Chicago Board of Education's new president, Rufus Williams, is on the board of Providence St. Mel's. The teachers who had planned to teach at Global Alliance were out of jobs. Photos on this page by George N. Schmidt, Substance.



August 16, 2006. Representatives of Chicago's Virtual charter school thank the Board for approving their proposal. The Chicago Board of Education approved the creation of Chicago's first "Virtual" charter school on August 16, despite controversy over the plan. In September, the Chicago Teachers Union sued to block the opening of the Virtual charter school, charging it violated the Illinois School Code.



Rufus Williams (above) became Board president in August 2006, succeeding Michael Scott.



August 23, 2006. Representatives of the Senn High School community continued their protests against the military academy at Senn as the controversy entered its third school year. Speaking at the August 2006 Chicago Board of Education meeting, David Gregg (above at microphone) noted that community opposition to the "Rickover Naval Academy" had continued and invited the board to attend a community forum in September. Flanking Gregg are (left to right) Neal Resnikoff, Helen Murtaugh, and Sara Leven.

October 25 and November 15 Chicago Board of Education meetings promise fireworks as special ed cuts, overcrowding, and security reductions create growing problems...

Despite warnings from across the city, the Chicago Board of Education on June 28 approved a budget that unnecessarily cut more than \$50 million from programs in the schools. At the same time, the Board added nearly \$50 million in funding for charter schools, a major form of privatization, and ignored federal law regarding the rights of disabled children.

At Substance press time, several groups had announced that they were planning protests at the October 25 board meeting. Others are beginning plans for the November 15 meeting. Board meetings have been held at CPS headquarters at 125 S. Clark St. since April 2003, because the Board fears protests. Sign-in for public participation is from 8:00 to 9:00 a.m. on meeting day. 🍎

out that in doing so, attendance would increase and CPS get more funds. Board President Rufus Williams said that he'd try to be flexible in the policy so that it could address the "dynamic" issues. Board member Tariq Butt, a physician, interjected that they'd been working with the groups about chronic illnesses as asthma and would continue to do so and thanked them for helping. Damnitz gave written materials which included the wellness policies of other cities.

Alderman Ricardo Muñoz appeared with a large group that picketed the front of the building prior to the meeting. Father Matt Foley of St. Agnes Church spoke, along with Carmen Anderson and Josefina Estrada. Finally, the alderman spoke. They all told the Board that the old abandoned Washburne trade school building, at 31st and Kedzie, had to be torn down. They said that demolition plans had been announced, then both CPS and City Hall put a stop to the contract to demolish the building. It is not only an eyesore, but it is infested with rats and drug dealers, broken glass. Given the deteriorating condition, the building is a danger to children — as an attractive nuisance. Taggers have put graffiti on the roof, and to women coming home from work alone. They asked it be torn down. Williams said CPS alone was not responsible. Munoz said he thought CPS could do it. Williams said CPS would do all it could.

George Elam of Gilespie School appeared with a group of parents and charged that abuses by the principal to students, teachers, and parents were not being addressed. The principal was not present. Elam cited all the various departments of the CPS administration who have ignored all communications. As usual, no one responded in any way. He said he wanted a meeting with CPS before school opened in September so another year would not be lost. Chief Education Officer Barbara Eason-Watkins said a meeting would be arranged with her and her staff within a week.

Taalib-Din Ziyad of Service Employees International Union (SEIU) Local 73, spoke against special education cuts of \$26 million that had been approved by the June Board meeting and which were beginning to take effect. Ziyad said that the cuts amounted to 35 percent of classroom assistants (title: "Special Education Classroom Assistants" or SECAs) and 15 percent of Child Welfare Attendants (CWA's), and other cuts, including school bus aides. He wanted to know how the students could receive adequate service, implementation of their IEP's. Williams said he'd answer after the other two speakers.

The next speaker was Lizzie Osbourne, who been cut from Spenser Elementary School. She asked a series of questions including how this affects student services, how could students be in mainstreamed classrooms with no aid to assist their progress, and if CPS administration knew "this day was coming," why didn't they handle it with less confusion and chaos?

Tabetha Newell (of Blair Early Childhood School) mentioned that the severe and profoundly challenged children program was promised at an end of the year meeting that their program would not be "touched." Major cuts

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One speaker, from Blair school, listed the kinds of services that would not be provided to disabled children in September

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took place instead. She said that the cuts need to be reversed since the children needed "help, feeding, and medical attention," and that they go back and "forth to the nurses station all day long." She said Blair school had been visited by Michael Scott, Arne Duncan, and Renee Grant Mitchell (Chief Specialized Services Officer). One of them was "appalled" and did not know such a school existed.

Williams said that it was difficult making the cuts, which were made by deciding on the needs of each school. He said that a new staffing program was to be used so that on the first day of school in September, needs of a school would be ascertained and employees hired to fill the needs. When told that a fire department official said that lack of aids would result in safety hazards for special education students, Williams said that safety was of concern to the Board. Eason-Watkins spoke of the new system designating and implementing needs. Duncan talked of the need for State funding. Theresa Garate, director of specialized services, told the Board that she'd been to some of the schools and seen the problems and that her department was looking at enrollment all the time so that IEP's would be implemented during the first week of school.

Duncan and the representatives of SEIU agreed to work together for more funding from the State of Illinois. [During the September meeting, three weeks after school started, these same problems would be brought again as unresolved with horrible stories of unattended students on buses as well as classrooms. See this month's Letter section, and elsewhere.] Williams thanked all for coming today and to previous meetings. The SEIU people gave out flyers entitled "...The Board's Assault on Our Special Education Program" and "...the 2006 Budget Cuts to Special Education in the Chicago Public Schools."

Dwayne Truss of the Austin Transition Advisory Council (TAC) asked about the delays in building a new Westinghouse High School because the only two bids were — \$82 and \$83 million — way over budget. According to the Board, new bids are to be taken in 2007. Truss also complained about only a few of the 80 workers at the new Austin are African-American. Austin High School is now the Austin Academy of Entrepreneurship, run by former Illinois Schools Supt. Michael Bakalis.

Reverend Lewis Flower, who was standing with Truss, interjected that local people in the community could do the work "As well as foreigners." Truss accused CPS of treating the west side as a "stepchild." Rufus Williams said both he and his predecessor Michael Scott were from the West Side and were not treating it as anybody's stepchild. He said work was going on at the site. Truss said it was site preparation which was a separate bid. Williams said he would look into the problems.

Khalid Johnson of the West Side School Improvement Coalition (WESIC) talked about Julia Ward Howe Elementary School has gotten into such disrepair that it looks like a school in "Soweto" or "Cuba" — where there are no resources like paint. Johnson said that Howe has had no repairs in 30 or 40 years. Photos were passed to Board members. Johnson felt there may be a Civil Rights infraction since the 800 students — all African Americans — were not being treated equally to other stu-



August 23, 2006. Lizzie Osborne, at microphone, describes the impact of the cuts in special education to the Board of Education. Osborne had spent the 2005-2006 school year as a full-time aide to a first grade student with autism. In July 2006, the Board cut Osborne's position at Spencer Elementary School, part of cuts to more than 200 teachers and more than 700 aides in special education programs. To Osborne's right, Tabettha Newell, who had worked the previous year at Blair Special Education school, prepares to discuss the impact that the cuts would have on Blair when it opened in September for the regular school year. Osborne and Newell were among the members of Service Employees International Union (SEIU) Local 73 who protested against the special education cuts throughout the summer of 2006, including at the annual Bud Billiken parade. Photos on this page by George N. Schmidt, Substance.



August 23, 2006. Dwayne Truss (above, at microphone) asked the Board why work hadn't had been begun on the new Westinghouse Vocational High School, which has been promised to the West Side for years. Rev. Lewis Flowers (to Truss's right) demanded to know why local laborers weren't being used in the work being done to prepare Austin High School, which is now a charter school, for opening in September 2006.



August 23, 2006. Students from the Alain Locke Charter School present a tee shirt to Board president Rufus Williams. The August 2006 meeting was one of the few meetings where charter school students marketed their schools without also missing a day in school. For three years, Chicago Board of Education officials have encouraged charter school operators to bring their students to Board meetings — during school hours — and get their presentations on the Board's monthly television shows. Students and teachers (and in some cases principals) from the city's regular public schools are threatened with disciplinary action (either as AWOLs or truants) if they try and appear at school board meetings during the regular school day. Although the meetings of the Chicago Board of Education are open to the public, they are held during working hours, at a downtown location where parking costs more than \$20, and are made as inaccessible to the public as possible.

dents in CPS. Williams saw the photos and agreed. He called on "Chris" (operations chief Christine Rule) who said she would go out there and see where it was on the priority list. Johnson said that similar promises had been made often before and nothing occurred.

Continuing a trend during which charter schools appear before the Board to talk about their achievements, Taylor Shaw and Vonyell Foster of Alain Locke Charter School (not the other Locke Elementary School, a traditional public school) spoke of their success with after-school clubs and on test scores. They read a poem and gave a t-shirt to Rufus Williams.

Beverly King who spoke about sacrifices made by parents so NCLB. Her son won a ROTC award at CVS. One of the ROTC programs there had been cut, she said. She also said there were security problems at Lindblom high school.

Howard White of Curtis School said that his having to appear at the Board portrays all poorly. But, he said that some member of CPS administration was disrespectful to parents, students, the council, everyone in doing his job. Safety concerns about rats walking into school and a closed lunchroom have not been attended to. He wanted the school re-placed into Area 15 from Area 18. Williams only said thank you.

Juan Rodriguez and Jeri Myles Flennoy (of Bogan High School) talked of a contractor working on the roof and ruining football equipment. They said that the old gravel roof of 50 years fell through the ceiling onto the football equipment which is sent out at a cost of \$7,000 each year for reconditioning. The contractor admitted fault, but CPS only tested for asbestos. Fearing other impurities on pads and helmets touching players' skins and that reconditioning, they were asking for immediate assistance. They said the conditioning can't be done in the fall, so the principal ordered new equipment for this season. The funds are coming out of the school funds instead of the contractors, they said.

The staff member said that to get the contractor to pay, they would have to prove damage to the goods. The parents had pictures.

Delilah Stidwell said that she had communicated with Duncan's office, Pittman's office, and the area office — with no response about her 14-year-old freshman son being forced to go to Bowen, where, she said, gangs put him in harm's way. His records and IEP were not sent to the school they requested they be sent to. Instead, against the wishes of — and with no communications with — the parent, all records were sent to Bowen.

This type of CPS action has happened to others. Williams called on Pittman who said he'd find a place.

Another woman said her daughter had the same problem at South Chicago Elementary and had to run home from school each day. She went outside the Board room to resolve the problem after speaking.

Asenath Jackson of Carver Military Academy talked of having six asthma attacks last year because of pollution entering the school. She also talked about the loss of waivers for school fees. Williams said he'd investigate both.

Edward Brown talked about the unfair CTA contract between CPS

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A Grim Fairy Tale

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depressing frequency.

"They didn't get their old jobs back," sniffed Nancy. "We saw to it that those positions were closed."

"Who is 'we'?" asked Millicent.

"You know very well who 'we' is," snapped Nancy, ungrammatical and unpleasant as ever. "'We' is the EwePeeCee, the part of the CTEwe that works for you," she smirked. And it was the EwePee Cee that saw to it that those jobs were eliminated."

"And then," added Millicent, "come September, as we have seen, classrooms open without enough teachers, and we're right back where we started."

Nancy opened her mouth again, but wisely chose to remain silent.

"You didn't do anything about equivalent consultant positions that were opened simultaneously by the Big Baaaad Bored, at a salary increase. So they got new jobs for better salaries, which they accepted, leaving classrooms uncovered in the opening weeks of school," added Scott, who was studying statistics for fun.

"And we all know that those first weeks are very important for the children, especially the little ones. They need stability at school, and having a new teacher every day

is a disaster for them," added Millicent.

"So? What's the problem?" asked Nancy Naive, who had been sitting on the sidelines, making lists on legal pads "You guys are always looking for conspiracies," she added in her typical snotty tone, which, by the way, had gotten worse in direct proportion to the number of EwePeeCee events she attended.

It was rumored that every EwePeeCee meeting began with a discussion of the game plan, devised to either retain or to snatch control of the House of Dull-A-Gates meeting. It was essential to the success of the EwePeeCee that nothing but the old party line was ever heard.

If that entailed intimidating delegates at the microphones, so be it. Of course it took five or six large sergeants-at-arms to loom over one little first-grade teacher with a question about class size.

If that involved snatching the microphone out of someone's hand, fine. If it involved miscounting a hand vote, or inappropriately calling for a quorum, okey-dokey.

The recently hired parliamentarian, who was recommended by the famously fair and unbiased IFT (Ill-A-Noise Federation of Teachers) generally went along with the abuse of the process. So the planning and plotting continued.

That tradition was followed

by an even more popular one: the Hall of Shame notices.

"What would that be?" whispered Ewenice.

"Any EwePeeCee member who was seen being civil to a PACT or other group member loses his Pammypoints. The severity of the infraction determines the amount of lost points," explained Scott, who had established a clandestine professional relationship with a supposed EwePeeCee member who was acting as a confidential informant. "It's usually the newer EwePeeCee members who slip up, and they are publicly chastised for their behavior."

"But what are Pammypoints good for?"

"You get enough points and you become a field drip; it can be very profitable, not to mention it can get you out of the classroom.

And so, as the school year lurched along and CTEwe elections loomed on the spring horizon, there were important issues to be confronted. The EwePeeCee was considering the purchase of multiple vending machine franchises, in order to capitalize on the healthy food faaaad.

The plan was simple. "First we let the Big Baaaad Bored of Education get rid of all those gym classes. There aren't enough P.E. teachers to seriously challenge anything, and that way there's no one left to coach, so we get rid of all the athletic programs, too. It's a great money saver for them, and we can say that it's not OUR fault. And again, we won't lose that much in

dues money," Mercenary Mary explained to the other officers, as they sat in their spacious offices overlooking the Chicago river.

"And we can just raise the dues to cover the loss, right?" added Teddy, the Obsequious Toady.

"And then we get them to cancel recess for the kids. The teachers already have too much free time, right?"

"And then, we stock our vending machines with stuff for those poor kids, who are becoming blobs before our very eyes. They'll be able to buy tofu, yogurt, carrots, celery, spinach and aaaalfalfa sprouts!!" said Mercenary Mary.

"Ugh," said Teddy, echoing the sentiments of many.

Scott leaned over to whisper the rest of the plot to his friends. "But I hear they are also filling other machines with candy, cookies, pop, and the holy three-itos: Fritos, Cheetos, and Doritos. At high prices. Right next to the Tofu machines. They'll make a fortune."

Everyone created a mental picture. "Oh, I see," they said.

"O.I.C." 🍏

Deadline for letters for upcoming issues of Substance:

-- November. Deadline October 27, 2006.

-- December. November 28, 2006.

Remember: All letters must be signed and come from regular Substance readers. 🍏

Detroit and the lessons of history.

Continued from Page Seven

it; the Hormel strike, crushed from inside by its union leadership, the Detroit Newspaper strike, the UPS strike (evaporated after it was won), the failed California Grocery Strike, and now, perhaps, the Detroit Teachers Strike.

What is abundantly clear, in hindsight, is that unions do not unite people; they divide them—by industry, job, race, skill—and the leadership is divided from the rank and file, especially in that the leadership has no interest whatsoever in a class conscious membership: the leaders would have nothing to sell to management, i.e., could not trade off a promise to deliver labor peace, and the workers would not tolerate the privileges of the union bosses.

People simply do not trust unions any longer, for good reason. Remarkably, the Detroit Free Press reported on September 2, 2006, that poll asking Michigan residents if they support, or oppose, the "Optional Union Dues," found overwhelming opposition to the agency shop — in one of the most unionized of all states.

In the balance, today, may not only be the life of a union, or schools, but the life of a city. Both sides, the DFT and the board, claim a strike could destroy what remains of the once-model Detroit Public Schools, destroyed by, above all, the connection of racism, opportunism, and profits. A fine case could be made that the Detroit Public Schools are already in ruins, and all that is left is to bury them. DPS itself projects another 40% loss of students.

An equally good case can be made that Detroit is now completely ghettoized, that those who remain in the city are fully trapped, and that the extermination of education in the city is only indicative of a society which has nothing to offer black youth but prison or the military, fighting dying for oil profits. Most Detroit schools can be easily described as either pre-prison, or pre-military, though some elite few (Renaissance High, Cass Tech, etc) still get the basic supplies necessary to conduct, say, pre-teacher training.

People who are trapped and without hope tend to rebel, as evidenced in the city's past uprisings, or, at a distance, the rebellions in France of 1968 and 2005. In societies that are grotesquely inequitable, the myth that schooling will move you up is very powerful. Schooling will not move the overwhelming majority of youth up. The trajectory in the US economic structure is not up, but down. Still, schools are a key source of hope, real and false. The real hope is that kids could get the kind of education that would assist them to, collectively, radically change structural injustice: exploitation.

In the past, Detroit's rebels were always able to hold something hostage; not people, but property. Buildings could be, and were, put to the torch, looted, as were police stations. Now, there is little of value left in the city, other than sports stadiums and casinos in an easily defended, and largely unpopulated, small downtown area.

Given that segregation carried on to the extremes of Detroit always

means, at the end of the day, death (life expectancy alone is a good indicator), a rebellion could trigger repression that might be compared to Hurricane Katrina, where racist neglect allowed more than 1400 people to die, and left the poor of New Orleans devastated, while the rich now see opportunities to exploit.

Where is hope in all this? Hope is owed to no one. Hope is created in the persistent and usually wise resistance that the vast majority of the people in the world must engage if they are to survive. Hope is also, however, located in wise leadership, something that Detroit school workers must create, fast, if their struggle is to be won.

For the long haul, justice demands organization in new ways, organization that draws people together in a struggle that recognizes what is now easily seen as an international war of the rich on the poor. Hints of that kind of organizing exist, in Substance, in the Rouge Forum, for example, which brings together people of all ages and races in an educational project that unites people with knowledge and nature. GI resistance is escalating. The immigrant rights movement demonstrated on May Day that a massive general strike is indeed possible. The two million poor people in US prisons are beginning to recognize that it is not so much race, but class, that both divides and unites people, and multi-racial unity is growing in jails. In many cities, workers councils which involve people with two toes inside their unions, and eight toes out, are taking form. Activist youth communes sprout up all over the US, and there is a large one in Detroit—that played no role in the strike.

The school workers of Detroit might, just might, play an exemplary role as well, or, if in retreat, learn from the past, persevere as we all must, and fight again. On September 14, the day DFT members returned to class and met kids, Marilyn Daily, a second grade teacher at Howe Elementary on the impoverished east side, was quoted in the Detroit Free Press: The school is just 3 years old and yet the drinking fountain in the main corridor doesn't work, a first floor ceiling leaks, and it took three years for the heating and cooling systems to work properly.... She said her room was so cold the year it opened that she bought sweatshirts for her students at a secondhand store to keep them warm.

On the same day, Peter and Julie Fisher Cummings, announced a \$5 million dollar gift to Cranbrook School in suburban Bloomfield Hills, to build a girls' middle school. The Cummings are a marriage of Fords, and developer-Fishers.

From the Detroit News: "A new kind of giving is emerging," Julie Cummings says. "People aren't just scattering checks around. They are targeting their money to institutions they can connect to."

Combining with other major donors, the \$16 million dollar middle school will open on the beautiful Cranbrook campus in 2009, ready to train a new ruling class, and to pick off a few of the children of the poor as well, just as the church has done for a thousand years. About 30% of Cranbrook's kids are minorities, and one-quarter on scholarships. The mission metaphor works. So does the metaphor of Class War. 🍏

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Many speakers warn of impact of special education, security cuts at August Chicago Board of Education meeting

Continued from Page Nine

and CTA for student fares which do not permit students to use student fares after a certain time, coming home from school activities, jobs, on week-ends for the same reasons or during the summer. In addition, students were never told about "Smart Cards," and there is always a delay at the beginning of each year when students must pay full fare until they obtain cards. A staff person agreed that CPS should seek some remedy from the CTA. He said he'd see if the contract could be altered.

Derrick Harris of (North Lawndale Accountability Commission) was signed up, but did not speak.

Signed up as speaker #47 was Herman Baker, a community rep from the Ashe Elementary School. He asked for some procedures to remove the principal for not following the law governing the actions of principals in regard to LSC meetings and rules. They had letters on file with a number of departments from CPS regarding what they said was the principal's unlawful behavior. The complaints included not posting meeting notices, not notifying members of meeting dates or times, leaving meetings when asked questions about the budget, not having any principal evaluations, and other things.

Williams replied that by State law, the LSC is responsible. He said that there is little the Board or administration can do (unless a law is broken). A staff person named Carol stepped forward and said she'd have a meeting arranged to try to resolve the problems.

Next, Grace Lewis (Simeon Vocational High School) took the floor to say that she had three students graduate college who were from CPS. Since 2001, she continued, she has been the legal guardian of her nephew Darwin. The elementary school, Caldwell "Academy," had "dropped the ball" by not sending out Darwin's applications, test scores and IEP to the school she as a guardian and the child had selected. Instead they sent his records to Bowen, which she said was gang beset, and where she was determined he not go. By the time she found out that Caldwell had failed to forward the information to the other schools, admissions were closed and he was on waiting lists. She wanted some consideration for changing him to one of the schools where his records were wrongfully not sent. This case was the third of the day. Williams asked Duncan who responded that someone from Pittman's office could help — with two weeks before School was to start. One of the assistants was present.

The next speaker was Myra Christian, of the Family Resource Center on Disabilities. She said that her group was one of three offices in Illinois — and 100 in the Country. She said that the special education cuts would deprive special ed students of proper training to become independent tax payers. Without the proper training, the students would become tax users instead of contributing taxes to help others. Williams thanked her for coming even though she was the fourth speaker on the topic.

Substance Editor George Schmidt, who said he spoke as a CPS parent and taxpayer, entitled his topic "Lies, damned lies, and charter schools." He said Chicago's statistics about the success of its charter schools



August 23, 2006. Little Village resident picketed before the Board of Education meeting demanding that the board demolish the Washburne Trade School building at 3233 W. 31st St. Speakers during the meeting told the Board that the building has become a haven for rodents, drug dealers, and other dangers to the community. Substance photo by Lotty Blumenthal.



August 23, 2006. Above, Chicago Sun-Times reporter Kate Grossman (right) interviews Alderman Ricardo Muñoz about the problems with the Washburne site. Sun-Times editors decided the following month (see Substance, September 2006, Subscripts) that they could cover the school board meeting more efficiently without having a reporter attend the meeting, so they reported the "news" from the September 27 Board meeting on September 25, then ignored most of what happened at the actual Board meeting on September 27. Cutbacks at both newspapers have resulted in more and more stories being picked up from the Board of Education's massive "Communications" department, which has more full-time people distributing public relations than both newspapers have trying to cover news of the city's massive public school system. Substance photo by George N. Schmidt.

were invalid. He said that the charter school were also presented in a poor way in the budget, and that instead of collating data on its charter schools, CPS passed the buck. Freedom of Information (FOIA) requests had to be filed for each one separately to get any statistics on them. He said that it's unfair to parents and taxpayers not to know how much money is being spent on them when they are compared to regular neighborhood schools. He said that because of their selective enrollment policies and the fact that they require applications, charters should be compared to magnet schools since that is what they actually are. He said next April the honest statistics would be presented at a conference on educational research to be held in Chicago.

Schmidt said the applications for magnet schools had deadlines of December while charters had April

deadlines, while regular public schools had to take in any child whose family could prove residency. These unfair practices aren't fair to everyone else. People, especially those with children in schools, have a right to know how much is spent as well as any other differences in treatment of students. Comparisons are unfair to neighborhood schools. He added that special education services at the charter schools were insufficient by state and federal standards — as was reported to the Board last May by the Illinois State Board of Education. If the neediest of children are being excluded from charters, they shouldn't be compared to regular schools.

Williams responded that there are many ways to present material, and he said that he did not believe anyone on the staff was being intentionally dishonest (This was Williams first full

meeting as chair) with statistics and information. "We're trying to provide the best choice we can" with charters. No one's trying to be dishonest," he said. Schmidt said many disagree with you as well as statistics from around the country. Williams thanked for coming and giving his time and asked for the next speaker.

EvAngel YahWnew BN talked about August 28, Dream Day Black History Study honoring Emmet Till, King's month and DuSable's vision. The August 28th ceremony would give King's uncut speech. As usual, she criticized adults who call human young people "kids" instead of children, students, girls, boys, siblings, young people or any title appropriate to human offspring. She also objected to the incorrect spelling of her name on the Board name sheet even though she spelled it correctly when registering and gaps in black history learning which, she said, ceased progress in 1990.

Williams said he was aware of such gaps and thanked her for sharing her wealth of information.

Amy Lux was the last speaker. She felt that State Law requiring 30 minutes a day of physical exercise was not being uniformly complied with in every school and throughout the system. She gave examples. Williams said that this matter was being included in the Wellness Policy being developed and had many complex aspects to be considered for enforcement with oversight.

Williams thanked her for coming. He then called the regular meeting to order. It started with Don Pittman using Power Point to talk about high school test scores and programs. Board members asked about Advanced Placement (AP) classes and their distribution. Williams noted that our students usually do not have the resources as tutors, materials as others taking the test and CPS should find ways to increase resources for these students. 🍏



August 23, 2006. Above, Substance editor George N. Schmidt spoke to the August Board meeting on the topic "Lies, Damned Lies, and Charter Schools." Schmidt pointed out that the annual Chicago reports claiming that the city's charter schools are doing better than the city's neighborhood elementary schools are lies because the charters have to be compared to the city's magnet schools — not to the neighborhood schools which are required to accept any student who can prove residency. Schmidt promised the Board that by April 2007, when the American Educational Research Association (AERA) comes to Chicago, there will be studies countering the propaganda claims that Chicago has put forward for the "success" of its charter schools in the face of growing national research showing the opposite to be true of charters. Photo by Lotty Blumenthal for Substance.

Lincoln Park protests cite 'fear and intimidation'

Continued from Page Five

and Eshoo and how the students were shocked when Eshoo was "escorted out of the building" after Karvelas closed her position.

At various times during the early student speakers, the LSC secretary, Lisa Skolnik, interrupted the students, demanding that they keep their remarks to two minutes. As time went on, more and more students pointed out that such an important matter could not be limited to the time limits being artificially set by the Local School Council. Others at the meeting wondered whether some of the LSC members had met prior to the meeting with Karvelas and Board of Education officials to discuss how to operate the meeting, a possible violation of the Open Meetings Act.

Senior student Joanna Wolska, who is in the International Baccalaureate program, told the LSC that the library was not open only part-time and that the administration had to show more respect for the teachers. Wolska said that 846 students had signed a petition demanding that Eshoo be returned to Lincoln Park.

I.B. student Joanna Klekowicz, a senior, described how the principal had interrupted one of the most important examinations in the I.B. program during third period classes to discuss the elimination of Mrs. Eshoo, and how the interruption had jeopardized the students' standing in the I.B. program. A number of students told the LSC that they or their families had tried to talk directly with the principal and had either been rebuffed or given unsatisfactory answers.

Teachers, parents, and community leaders also spoke out in favor of Mrs. Eshoo.

Former Lincoln Park teacher Jim Gibbons talked about Mrs. Eshoo's years of service to Lincoln Park and warned that such teachers should be "cherished" rather than thrown away.

Judith McIntyre, an executive who works with the homeless, said that like many she had called the office and not received a return call. She spoke about Mrs. Eshoo's contributions to the community.

Lori Daruger, a former LSC member and head of the Friends of Lincoln Park, said that "Bernie is the voice of teacher dissent" whose voice should be welcomed, not silenced, in a school that values intelligence as much as Lincoln Park says it does. "If by silencing Bernie Eshoo, Dr. Karvelas thinks she is silencing the dissent, she is wrong," she declared.

Also speaking were more than a dozen teachers, both from Lincoln Park and from other schools (disclosure: including this reporter, who talked about the Board of Education's spending on non-instructional items that could easily go to restore the library position at Lincoln Park).

After the many comments were concluded, the entire crowd, with a handful of exceptions, gave a standing ovation to Bernice Eshoo. The Local School Council began its regular meeting. Many noted that Mrs. Eshoo continued to represent the teachers of Lincoln Park High School on the LSC, despite the current controversy. 🍏

Letters to begin next month. Beginning in the next issue of Substance, Substance will publish a sample of letters about the Lincoln Park affair. See page six for our Letters policy. 🍏



Lincoln Park Principal Bessie Karvelas, above, read quickly from a prepared statement, and then left. Karvelas's statement was not distributed to the community. After she read it, put on a cape with a sweeping gesture and left, allowing only one question from the stunned audience. Karvelas did not read the hundreds of statements (some visible on the sign on the wall behind her, above) in support of Bernice Eshoo. Karvelas later tried to tell some people who were not at the October 12 meeting that fewer than 30 students attended the meeting. Actually, there were that many forced into the hall because the LSC refused to move the meeting to a larger room and more than 30 forced to sit on the floor during the reading of the official statement. All photos on this page by George N. Schmidt for Substance.



Lincoln Park senior Jade Williams (with hands gesturing, above right) was wearing a "Bring Back Ms. Eshoo" tee shirt that the students had produced. Williams was one of a dozen students who spoke passionately on behalf of Bernice Eshoo's contributions to Lincoln Park High School. By that time, however, the principal had exited the meeting.



Even with the tone of intimidation that had been set by the Lincoln Park administration, a number of teachers, including those without tenure, spoke up in favor of Bernice Eshoo. Above, teacher Shannon Romanski (hands clasped) talked about how the freedom to discuss issues was a key to the school's unique spirit.

A Grim Fairy Tale



Memories of Then, Realities of Now

By Sister Grim

Once upon a time it was the magic month of October in the city of Chicago, which was still, sadly, located in the superlatively scandal-ridden cheapskate state of Ill-A-Noise, not to mention the county of Crook — oops — Cook.

Ill-A-Noise, which, although it ranked right down there at the bottom of the barrel when it came to unimportant stuff like educational funding, shot swiftly to the top when the categories included elected politicians who were: 1) already in jail; 2) currently awaiting sentencing; 3) awaiting indictments; 4) arrogantly pretending to be surprised by upcoming indictments; 5) writing books about their previously served prison sentences; or, 6) making plans to sneak across the border to a nearby neutral country, like Alabaaama, where they could escape the fate they so richly deserved.

For many of the downtrodden members of the CTEwe, it had been a difficult summer break, and melancholy memories were still fresh in their minds. June was the end of the traditional school year, a time when the members could finally take a little breath as the last half day of the semester arrived. It was time for some socializing with grownups, and perhaps going out for a nice long lunch, unless a teacher had missed one of the two contractually scheduled parent/teacher grade pick-up sessions, in which case he or she would have to stay in school an extra two hours as punishment, except that if the aforementioned employee missed both grade pick-up days, he or she would have to sit in the office, like a bad child, until closing time.

So, as farewells rang out and addresses were exchanged, some of the teachers packed up their personal belongings — all the necessary educational aids and resource materials that the Bored never supplied — since they had already been notified of the closing of their positions, even though it really went against the long-established Bored of Education policy prohibiting any demonstration of courtesy to the employees.

The actual policy regarding notification of transfer, trade, or termination was entitled “Three-Tee Soo-Prize!!”, with the actual documentation to be presented at the end of the working day, thereby ensuring that the unfortunately transferred, traded or terminated teacher or teacher aide would not have a chance to slack off, hide incriminating materials, or worse, steal extra crayons.

By June, many of the CTEwe members had finally turned in their record books and retired, having reluctantly decided to let someone else experience the thrill of teaching for the Chicago Public School System. Dealing with the students was only the tip of the proverbial iceberg, and no one really wanted to be on the Titanic year after year. Enough was enough, after all. And rumor had it that the CTEwe always hosted a lovely retirement luncheon, complete with gifts.

“You know,” said Millicent Militant, “some of my friends attended the CTEwe retirement luncheon, and they did receive gifts.”

“Gifts? Really? Like what?” asked Ewenice, who was still Toonice for her own good.

“A nice certificate of appreciation, and a television set, among other things,” said Millicent.

“Television set?? What size?? Flat screen? LCD? With a built in DVD-player?”

“Calm down, Ewenice,” said Scott Skeptic, journalism-teacher-in-exile, who had just walked in for his weekly visit. “I saw the TV sets. They were sort of basic models.”

“Basic?” Ewenice looked crestfallen.

“Yes,” confirmed Millicent. “To answer your questions, 5 inch, black and white. Yes, they are portable. No, batteries were not included.”

Nancy Naive was mumbling in the corner. “Good enough for a bunch of old fogeys who probably never saw a color tv anyway,” she said. “What a bunch of ingrates.”

“What’s wrong, Nancy?” asked Scott solicitously. “Where you

on the selection committee?”

“As a matter of fact, I was. Veronica Vicious and I had to select gifts for ALL of the retirees, not just the sensible, hard-working members of the Pee-Yu caucus, but for all the lazy, useless rest of them, too. We did the best we could, and it really infuriates me the way everybody complains.”

“And may I safely assume the televisions were union-made?”

Nancy opened her mouth. And closed it again, as Millicent answered for her, while holding one of the cute little portable sets aloft. “I do believe it says ‘Made in China’ right on the baaack here, under the baaattery compartment.”

“So?” snapped Nancy. “What did expect? Did you want the CTEwe to waste precious money on members who won’t be paying dues anymore?”

“Aaabsolutely not, Nancy,” said Scott. “It’s perfect the way it is.”

Back in June, some teachers went on to other school systems, having sneakily but understandably made use of CPS facilities and supplies to fax and or e-mail applications to school districts which weren’t negatively in the news every single day of the year.

Some left the profession altogether, having come to the realization that they were too young to retire, too old to be hired elsewhere, and simply unable to cope any more. Others, who had yet to “find” themselves after college, were moving along and changing careers once again, after enduring a rigorous week or two of teacher training by the Big Baaad Bored, followed by a semester or two in the classroom. Sort of a stunt followed by a stint, or vice versa.

But, it must be noted, at the same time, many veteran Bored employees seemed to be re-entering the actual classroom teaching force. It was, at first glance, very odd. Why, wondered some other teachers and support staff members, would anyone leave a job that paid far better than classroom teaching, involved absolutely no contact with students,



parents or even school administrators, and allowed, nay, demanded an elegant and highly fashionable wardrobe.

“There’s no mystery here,” observed Millicent Militant as she skimmed the latest Scum-Times article about education. The story, written by one of the many gullible reporters, highlighted Arne Duncan, Big Baaad Bored muckety-muck and CEO of the CPS, and his money-saving methods. To be accurate, method. One. The same old same old. Declare a massive deficit, close positions, fire teachers and cut benefits.

It was still the same old story, but instead of love and glory, it was a fight for favoritism and patronage. Much attention was always placed on the Bored reluctantly making administrative cuts at the Central, Area, Regional, District and Local offices, which made for good sound bites on the nightly news. It was a totally disingenuous distraction, however, since it inevitably resulted in established classroom teachers being pushed out in favor of the supposedly displaced consultants and consultantesses.

“It’s creative bookkeeping at its finest,” agreed Ewenice. “This happens all the time. The Big Bored members complain about a huge deficit, and they close positions, phase out programs, cut employee benefits and create huge waves everywhere. Then they reshuffle people all over the place.”

The results were incredibly inequitable: some people were never out of work, while others were always out of luck. Of course, no one ever considered the students, and the disruptions that would occur if, or more likely, when the aforementioned current-teacher-former-consultants and consultantesses regained their former illustrious positions, leaving the students with no teachers at all, since many of the previously displaced and/or disposed educators had moved on to other things in other places, and there were no viable replacements just sitting and waiting to be called. It was a situation that was repeated with

Continued on Page Ten

Subsceipts

...Within the next 90 days, Arne Duncan will present his annual "State of the Schools" speech and the spin centers at CPS, City Hall, and the Tribune Tower (with occasional assistance from the little newspaper a few blocks west down the river) will begin the screaming headlines about how there is a huge BUDGET DEFICIT and all that stuff. Aside from a handful of groups and Substance, who will be reading the fine print and demanding that Arne explain where all those hysterical numbers come from? Dishonesty in budget presentations is the norm here. In Chicago, the CPS budget can be cracked if you can read 1,000 pages on a CD. The four-volume City of Chicago budget is just as convoluted and deliberately opaque. The mayor wants it that way, and the editorial boards of the major newspapers cheer him on. Reading the CPS budget, for example, who would have guessed that Arne Duncan each year provides between \$8 million and \$15 million in kickbacks to Mayor Daley in the form of payments for police working in Chicago schools? Not every major city is as dishonest as Chicago, especially in the Internet age. Can anyone imagine the following story, which came out of New York City last summer. "The New York City Independent Budget Office today introduced on its Web site, www.ibo.nyc.ny.us, a new feature that provides a summary of 25 years of city spending, revenue, staffing, and related budgetary data. The information is presented in a easy-to-access, easy-to-use format for analysts, researchers, students, and anyone else interested in how the city's budget has evolved over the past quarter century.... "Providing this historical data is part of our ongoing efforts to make the city's budget more understandable and accessible to the public," said IBO Director Ronnie Lowenstein. "The value of this resource will continue to grow as we add to the annual data as the city completes its current and future fiscal years." The new Web-based resource is divided into seven separate tables, each one now covering the fiscal years 1980-2005. The seven tables include a condensed summary of revenue and expenditures; spending by each city agency; revenue from different local taxes; revenue from fees, fines, franchises, and additional sources other than taxes; state and federal aid; actual full-time staffing by agency; and a restatement of annual expenditures on debt service that adjusts for the city's use of a large portion of budget surpluses to prepay this cost for the following year.... For 10 years IBO has been providing New Yorkers with clear and objective fiscal and economic facts and analyses. During this time, IBO increasingly has made its Web site the cornerstone of how the agency makes information available to the public. This new set of historical budgetary data is presented in spreadsheet form so it can be easily downloaded and formatted to meet the needs of users.... In addition to being available on IBO's Web site, the new tables and other resources such as the agency's guide to understanding the budget and "roadmap" to the city's budget — making process, as well as all of IBO's other reports and reviews, can be obtained for free in printed form by calling 212-442-0632. Doug Turetsky, Chief of Staff/Communications Director, NYC Independent Budget Office, 110 William Street, New York, NY 10038, Phone: 212-442-0629/Cell: 917-513-7488, Fax: 212-442-0350..." 🍏

... COWs and corruption? You know things are really getting corrupt when Business Week reports on Bush family corruption. The October 16, 2006 Business Week (owned by Bush family

friends, the McGraws) carried an article entitled "No Bush Left Behind" The President's brother Neil is making hay from school reform" The entire article is worth reading, but the first paragraph sums it up: "Across the country, some teachers complain that President George W. Bush's makeover of public education promotes 'teaching to the test.' The President's younger brother Neil takes a different tack: He's selling to the test. The No Child Left Behind Act compels schools to prove students' mastery of certain facts by means of standardized exams. Pressure to perform has energized the \$1.9 billion-a-year instructional software industry." With backing by investors like Saudi Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal and onetime junk-bond king Michael R. Milken, Neil Bush runs a company that is now selling devices called "curriculum on wheels," (COWs). The COWs cost \$3,800. COWs are described as "purple plug-and-play computer/ projectors [that] display lively videos and cartoons: the XYZ Affair of the late 1790s as operetta, the 1828 Tariff of Abominations as horror flick." The COWs also play sounds that are supposed to aid, for example, in the memorization of the 22 rivers of Texas or other facts that might crop up in state tests of 'essential knowledge.'" Neil Bush's company is called Ignite! Inc., and it has sold 1,700 COWs since 2005 — "mainly in Texas, where Bush lives and his brother was once governor." In August, Houston [which produced U.S. Education Secretary Rod Paige for the first term of the Bush administration] approved a plan to spend up to \$200,000 for COWs. Given his record as an "entrepreneur," some might argue that Neil Bush is better suited to teaching about political cronyism and connections than at running an educational software company. "The stars haven't always aligned for Bush," Business Week continued in an odd choice of metaphor, "but at times financial support has. A foundation linked to the controversial Reverend Sun Myung Moon has donated \$1 million for a COWs research project in Washington (D.C.)-area schools. In 2004 a Shanghai chip company agreed to give Bush stock then valued at \$2 million for showing up at board meetings. (Bush says he received one-fifth of the shares.) In 1988 a Colorado savings and loan failed while he served on its board, making him a prominent symbol of the S&L scandal." What isn't explained is why a school would need a dedicated computer-like device when a complete microcomputer, and software, can be purchased for half what Houston and D.C. are spending on Bush's cash COWs...

...Anyone who wonders why the majority of Chicago public school principals are either cowardly or craven (note: not all, just the vast majority) should look no further than the leadership of the Chicago Principals and Administrators Association (CPAA). Last year, the CPAA challenged Arne Duncan at several Board of Education meetings — not about cuts in staff or mistreatment of public funds or crazed testing programs — but about increasing their six figure salaries even higher. Once that was resolved, the principals went silent again. Now we admit the present leadership of CPAA isn't as compromised as the former. When Beverly Tunney used to go to the films at Evergreen with her buddy Paul Vallas, you knew the principals weren't going to speak out against educational atrocities under corporate "school reform." Now flash forward to Septem-

ber 14, 2006. When the current president of the CPAA was asked why CPAA hadn't supported Gage Park principal Marty McGreal, she responded that McGreal hadn't joined CPAA (yet?). She added the claim that McGreal had been "hand picked by Arne Duncan" (huh?) "despite his history of being a maverick." Then she claimed that he acted too quickly when hundreds of students were trying to enroll at Gage Park (while nearby Lindblom was nearly empty, with a small magnet high school and that new boys' charter school, "Urban Prep" rattling around in the nearly empty halls). What McGreal should have done, according to the city's chief principal, was take all the kids in, then "request more help from CPS." She then added, almost gratuitously, that McGreal would not be eligible to run for President of the Chicago Teachers Union because of a "break in his teaching service". Does anyone wonder why the principals supported Marilyn Stewart against Deborah Lynch three years ago?

...Every now and then even the Tribune gets a fact more than right. On October 6, the Tribune reported as follows: "Apparently shedding his Democratic Party label momentarily, Chicago Mayor Richard Daley joined other Illinois Republicans in worrying about the possibility of losing Hastert as speaker..." Daley's been carrying out a ruthless Republican agenda since he first began privatizing the Chicago Park District and Chicago Public Schools in the mid-1990s. The main propaganda for Daley's Republican program has been from the Chicago media. From our point of view, there is almost no difference between the "New Democrats" and the old Republicans. It's nice to see the Tribune cleaning up the record. Accuracy...

...All the news that fits, we print" could be the motto of the Chicago Tribune, the unabashed propaganda organ of Mayor Daley's version of corporate "school reform." Consider the following two stories (actually, one was a story and the other was ignored). On January 2, 2005, less than two years ago, the Tribune ran a major story under the headline "Schools report good gun news. Just 1 student found with one this year." The story, puffing along, quoted Arne Duncan as saying: "The message is getting out. Don't bring guns to schools or you're going to get caught... Kids know it's a danger now and they are very apt to report it. That's extremely positive because it means that kids are taking ownership of their own safety..." Flash forward to the data on guns just one year after those talking points became major news. On September 27, 2006, Arne Duncan proposed (Board Report 06-0927-PR24, which was passed unanimously and without debate) that the Board pay \$4,000,000 to the City of Chicago for the "Chicago Police Department's School Safety Teams..." Why these "teams" aren't paid for out of the budget of the City of Chicago wasn't discussed. But even more interesting were the facts reported in the Board Report. "During the period from January 1, 2006 - June 30, 2006, there were 5,508 physical arrests in and around schools made, 27, 899 student school absences found, and 20 guns recovered..." Leave aside the fact that CPS appears to be helping balance Mayor Daley's budget by paying the city for services that should come with the territory. Leave aside the fact that highly paid Chicago police officers seem

to be doing the work that was done by truant officers until Mayor Daley abolished them more than ten years ago. That report said that the Board of Education's cops had gotten 20 guns in the first six months of this year. Why wasn't there a Tribune story with the headline "Guns in Chicago schools increase 2,000 percent! Duncan decries lack of ownership of safety..."? The motto of The New York Times is "All the news that's fit to print..." In Chicago, the motto of the propaganda publications for corporate "school reform" and the Mayor Daley education miracle should be "All the news that fits, we print..."

...Readers of Substance who think that Marilyn Stewart and the current leadership of the Chicago Teachers Union never does anything right should stop reading now. We are agreeing with Stewart this month about charter schools. On October 13, CTU President Marilyn Stewart published an op ed piece in the Daily Southtown. (Why it didn't appear in the Sun-Times and Tribune is for others to answer). In it, Stewart called for an end to Chicago's "costly charter experiment..." Among other things, Stewart points out that almost all charter schools generally do no better than comparable public schools. She also notes that Chicago's charter schools have a percentage of unqualified (and very young, we might add) teachers who wouldn't be allowed to teach in regular Chicago public schools. Stewart also points out that Chicago has allowed the illegal expansion of charter schools in Chicago through the trickery of the creation of "campuses" for existing charter schools. Chicago currently is only allowed to have 30 charter schools, but Arne Duncan has allowed the creation of 48! We have already pointed out in Substance and elsewhere how this was done. "The Chicago International Charter School, for example, has nine sites — serving children from kindergarten through grade 12 — and enrolls more than 5,500 students. No matter how you view it, that's not one school. In fact, it's larger than several school districts throughout the state..." Now we hope that Stewart will use the union's political muscle in Springfield to reign in the proliferation of Chicago charters under the false pretext of "campuses" — and call out Arne Duncan and everyone else who is perpetuating this fraud. We'll let our readers know how she does with a regular charter report card for CTU. But on this one, at least, Stewart gets an "A" for effort. We'll see what happens when the General Assembly resumes, and what Stewart and her people do before Chicago's increasingly independent City Council (where she could report to the Education Committee) and in the general public debate on charters. Hint? Spend some money on a study that compares Chicago charters with the magnet schools, debunking the claim that Chicago charters should be compared with the neighborhood schools nearby. That study can be presented in April (alongside ours) to the American Education Research Association (AERA) convention which will be held here in Chicago...

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AfterThoughts

Detroit Teachers Strike 2006: Lessons from the Class Struggle

Part Two

By Rich Gibson for Substance (September 2006)

The Detroit Federation of Teachers — American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO

To know the Detroit Federation of Teachers (DFT) one must first understand how it fits inside the AFT-AFL-CIO, and to do that: meet Al Shanker; corrupt, racist, cold-warrior extraordinaire, and founder of what AFT is today.

Shanker died in 1997, prompting labor-academic Paul Buhle to write, "No Flowers," and researcher Kim Scipes to describe him as a "maggot." They are on target.

Shanker came to power in the AFT in 1968, on the heels of being jailed for leading a racist strike against the New York community of Ocean-Hill Brownsville. The AFT was, behind Shanker, an active opponent of affirmative action. His false martyrdom catapulted him into national leadership, to which he clung for nearly thirty years, not uncommon in the AFL-CIO. He lorded over a culture of cronyism, internal tyranny, nationalism, anti-communism, and corruption that may be unmatched in the history of labor — quite an achievement considering

Jimmy Hoffa, George Meany, et al.

After nearly thirty years of power, and puffed by the corporate media to be the greatest of school reformers, all of the urban schools Shanker represented only reformed backwards.

Shanker had powerful allies. Schools are important to elites, and the AFT represents, by far, most of the urban educators in the US (AFT with a million members is one-third the size of the largest union in the US, the NEA, with 3.2 million, mostly suburban members). Shanker and his close personal friend and constant dining companion, finance capitalist Felix Rohatyn, engineered the infamous New York city bailout in 1975 (the teachers loaned their pension funds) setting the stage for the massive series of concessions from labor thereon.

Shanker enunciated an AFT-AFL-CIO policy of the unity of labor, government, and business, in the "national interest," that should ring out as a pillar of the corporate state: fascism. He tied himself to the bosses, and the school workers mostly followed. His "Progressive" caucus controlled every important move within the AFT, and shot down dissent by eliminating secret ballot votes. His Social Democrats USA controlled a union in a pivotal point in US de-industrializing society.

Behind Shanker, the AFT became profoundly corrupt; leaders held

jobs for life. The boss of the local representing Washington DC is jailed now for looting the treasury of a local representing one of the most impoverished areas in the US for hundreds of thousands of dollars (typically arriving at meetings in a chauffeured limo). Shanker favorite, Pat Tornillo, who stole hundreds of thousands from his Miami local, sits in prison, as does the boss of the Broward County, Florida, local, imprisoned for molesting kids.

Shanker's AFT, the only powerful organized group which had a clear stake in defending urban education in the US, chose to organize its breakdown, supporting every step back and declaring it a victory, or "the best we can do." If a finger is to be pointed at those responsible for the ruin of urban schools, it points at AFT.

The AFL-CIO, of which AFT is a preeminent part, spends nearly one-half of its dues income outside the US. It does so following AFL's historic doctrine: If workers outside the US do worse, workers inside the US will do better—much like the AFL craft union view that segregated unions by skill, locking out black workers in particular. The AFL side of this work began as early as WWI, when the AFL attacked the radical Industrial Workers of the World ("The working class and the employing class have nothing in common...") which opposed the war as an imperialist adventure in which workers were fighting the enemies of their enemies.

Connections between the AFL-CIO and US intelligence agencies tightened during the Cold War. The unions drove communists, who had been key organizers, out of their ranks, and began to work internationally, often through the National Endowment for Democracy, the American Institute for Free Labor Development, and fronts for the Central Intelligence Agency. Shanker and his cronies were, and are, in the forefront of this effort which, among other things, assisted in the overthrow of the elected Allende government of Chile (and the death of thousands), an effort to crush unionism in apartheid South Africa, worked with Philippine death squads to kill off indigenous unions and left-social movements, assisted in the destruction of the Sandanista government in Nicaragua, and on and on.

Elites, and Shanker, recognized the significance of social control through schooling as the war in Vietnam ended. Schools and universities had gone over the top and elites began to plan to stuff the genie back in the bottle. One of many maneuvers elites used was the drive to regiment the curricula in the public, capitalist, schools, through scripted programs, rewriting textbooks to heroize the US failed aggression in Vietnam for example, and via high-stakes standardized tests.

The initial benchmark was called "Nation at Risk." The project culminated with the No Child Left Behind Act, supported by both Republicans and Democrats, the US Chambers of Commerce, the Business Roundtable, and the leaders of NEA and AFT.

Indeed, NEA and AFT joined the corporate sponsors noted above, and Achieve, Inc., and others, to take out full page ads in the New York Times demanding high-stakes testing and regi-

mented curricula. When they succeeded, NEA and AFT, still boosting the unity of labor, business, and government, complained that NCLB was not well funded, and not well implemented, but had no criticism of the essence of the project and, more importantly, they did nothing about it; choosing, instead, to urge people into the electoral arena, where both parties gleefully support NCLB.

NCLB is promoted, especially in minority communities, as an avenue to equality in schooling. However, as educationist writer Jean Anyon says, "Doing school reform without doing social and economic reform in communities is like washing the air on one side of a screen door. It won't work." It hasn't, and isn't meant to. NCLB is a noose, strangling knowledge, deepening segregation, and using "scientific" test scores to prove inequality (rooted in exploitation) is inevitable.

After Shanker's death, a new leader came to the AFL-CIO presidency — John Sweeney from the Service Employees International Union, started by the Chicago Capone mob. Sweeney promised to cut labor ties to the CIA, to reinvigorate organizing and solidarity, and to be transparent about the budget. Sweeney did nearly nothing about labor ties to the CIA. He immediately backed the AFL-CIO betrayal of the Detroit Newspaper Strike, crushed after months, but crushed by UAW and AFL organizers who used violence on picket lines against militant strikers, and who turned them over to the police. And Sweeney continued the AFL-CIO habit of double-dipping his salary, collecting nearly \$450,000 from an old local, while he collected his President's salary as well. There were no new tricks for the old dog.

So, the AFT, through its connections with the AFL-CIO, worked to bolster US imperialism abroad, and to feed the war machine from within the US, by offering the bogus science of high-stakes testing, at the expense of members of the AFT who were deluged with demands for concessions, and convinced to make them by their quisling leaders—and at the expense of kids who would, too often, pay with their lives for schooling that did not tell them that Vietnam was all lies.

Let us be abundantly clear. Labor imperialism, the AFL-CIO's backing of CIA-corporate adventures all over the world, may have served a relatively tiny number of US workers for a short time, but at the end of the day, it inevitably failed. The lack of international solidarity of working class people is destroying the lives of workers all over the world, and the members of the AFL-CIO as well. That the class war is also a classroom war is, due to de-industrialization, is a significant particular, developing world-wide.

The Detroit Federation of Teachers

Members of the DFT and the kids of Detroit paid an equally heavy price for the AFT's kind of unionism which, on the face of it does more to divide people than unite them as, for example, school workers from their most vital allies, parents and kids, while at the same time DFT-AFT urges educators and others into the hands of Democrats.

That process of division and diversion may be hard to see, as the

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