The Chicago Teachers Union Foundation Quest Center is reshaping professional development by addressing the academic and socio-emotional needs of our students, members and the greater community.

SPECIAL SECTION ON PAGES 9–13
They call us “alien”

By CRIS HERNANDEZ

My mom came to the U.S when she was 14.
Hair thicker than her accent.
Crosed planes of desert with nothing but water
and the prayers she kept in her pocket.
Grew up here cleaning toilets in houses she’ll never get to
live in.
Had 7 children, when I was younger I remember learning
our multiplications together.
Watched Barney the purple dinosaur like it was the gospel.
Never thought of our lives as awful
until someone told us it was.
We bounced from place to place so much you’d
think our lives were a 25 cent bouncy ball.
Being thrown into a million directions.
Eventually being forgotten under the couch cushions of life.
Being suffocated by the constant weight of others.
Being safe and secure is a luxury we cannot afford.
Not that we can afford any other luxury either
when my mother makes
less than minimum wage.
More than she’s used to but not what she deserves.
Immigrant students are treated like mutants.
Being told they are denied financial aid and in-state tuition
because of their status.
They say this like it’s supposed to be an apology.
I’ve had it with them saying “maybe there are some borders
that can’t be crossed.”
The exhauston of fighting between deportation
and diploma has weighed down
our minds.
But we will rise.
The following night of the elections I asked my
mother if she was worried she said:
“Mija, I am too tired to be worried.”
Her favorite things to draw are planets and stars
when I asked her why she said:
“When they call you alien enough you start to feel homesick.”
She says I wish I could fly far, far away until I
can’t see my past anymore.

Cris Hernandez is a junior at Gage Park
High School. She wrote this poem for her
mother, who is her inspiration in life.

O
n March 17, the Union celebrated
Clerk Appreciation Day in a show of
solidarity and support for some of
our most cherished and beloved members. As
Chicago Public Schools’ expanded its KRO-
NOM pilot program to 117 schools during the
week of March 20-24—part of CEO Forrest
Claypool’s plan to eliminate clerk positions
throughout the district—members honored
these front-line workers for their vital and in-
dispensable contributions to Chicago’s public
school communities.
—Ronnie Reese

Save our clerks!

Counterclockwise from right: Pasteur Elementary
sign; Cather Elementary lunchroom staff; Wescott
Elementary clerks; Schurz High School; Saucedo
Elementary celebrates clerks Maria Gonzalez and
Suhaity Torres; Langston Hughes Elementary love.

CPS PASTEUR ELEMENTARY

SANCTUARY SCHOOLS INCLUDES

SCHOOL CLERK

FRONT LINE DEFENSE IN OUR SCHOOLS.

#SAVE OUR SCHOOL CLERKS

SCHOOL CLERKS IN CHICAGO

24 BOC MG

Ms. Flemming

ROCKS!

LANGSTON HUGHES ELEMENTARY

We love our clerk!

We need you.
We care for you.
We love you.

Cris Hernandez is a junior at Gage Park
High School. She wrote this poem for her
mother, who is her inspiration in life.
This year, we celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Chicago Teachers Union Quest Center and the 20th anniversary of National Board Certification support through our highly acclaimed Nurturing Teacher Leadership program. The Quest Center first opened its doors to professional learning opportunities so that teachers would not have to rely on attending professional development offered by private companies or classes outside of Chicago. At the time, very little professional development was provided by Chicago Public Schools, and rarely did it meet the needs of all teachers, clinicians and PSMARTs.

But as our beloved, late president Jackie Vaughan once said, “Professional development is union work,” and we believe educators have a right to receive professional development in their field. The best place to get this development is through your union—the organization that best knows and understands teacher needs, school constraints and student outcomes.

I am extremely proud of the work of our Quest Center, including its NTI candidate support program for advanced certification from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. NTI has supported thousands of educators as they pursued National Board Certification, and provided each of these members with more than 100 hours of free professional development. Chicago Public Schools currently has more than 2,000 NBCTs, and I am happy to say that I myself am National Board Certified, having renewed my credential in 2013.

When the mayor and his handpicked CPS CEO furlough our members on contractually agreed upon professional development days, it negates the growth that is part of the Quest Center’s mission. Professional development is designed to meet a spectrum of educator learning needs, and our members have developed a culture of learning—both inside and outside of the classroom—that supports what we need to do our jobs. To go along with the mayor’s illusory Board of Education’s furlough fiasco, the CPS CEO moved to impose furlough days and make other attempts to cut jobs in our schools.

So much of what you do every day is out of love for your students and your profession, and as I often say to anyone who will listen, you are the voice of the CTU. When you speak, we listen. So there will be no May 1 walkout, but we will continue to stand together in solidarity with our students, parents, immigrant communities, and other labor and community allies to demand that our district receives the revenue that will support the schools our students deserve. We also ask families and communities to stand with our members in the difficult days ahead as we take a series of actions to protect our schools.

Both the mayor and the Illinois governor have the power to stop budget cuts and keep school doors open with the stroke of a pen, but instead, they do nothing but pointlessly bicker and leave us all in limbo under the looming threat of ending the school year early. So we will act. In the coming weeks, you will learn more about the plan for May 1, when our union will participate in a series of actions throughout the day in a demonstration against the governor’s impotence and the mayor’s illusion of a sanctuary city, as deep cuts to schools and unprecedented violence in our communities have triggered an incredible amount of trauma and lost opportunities for our students.

We are the true protectors of public education in Chicago, and remain committed to working for revenue to enrich our school communities, and make them true, democratic sanctuaries.

In solidarity,
Karen GJ Lewis, NBCT

When CPS furloughs our members on contractually agreed upon professional development days, it undermines the quality education that CPS insists it cares about.
Modern-day movements unite seniors and youth

By Earachel Johnson and Beatrice "Bea" Lumpkin

CTU retirees are forming broad coalitions with other unions and community retirees to defend their health care and pensions from attacks by Gov. Bruce Rauner and President Donald Trump. Retired teachers played a major role in bringing together a new activist chapter of the Illinois Alliance for Retired American-Chicago/Metro Retirees (CMR). Among the officers of the IARA-CMR are CTU retirees, Stephanie Collins and Beatrice Lumpkin.

On March 14, 2017, the snowiest day of the new year, the IARA-CMR joined the Jane Addams Senior Caucus in a bus trip to Racine, Wisconsin, to tell U.S. Speaker of the House Paul Ryan, "Kill the [Affordable Care Act repeal] bill before it kills us." The seniors were protesting just hours after the Congressional Budget Office revealed that Trump/Ryan's bill to "replace" the Affordable Care Act would result in 24 million people losing medical coverage within a decade. As many as 14 million would lose health care within a matter of months. Those with employment-based health care would also have much to fear—seven million would lose that coverage by 2026.

Other serious impacts of Trump/Ryan's bill were exposed by Collins. "Talk of defunding Planned Parenthood is disrespectful to women," she said. "It's a vital health service needed by millions of women... And March is supposed to be Women's History Month!"

Intergen membership includes the IARA-CMR, where the retirees come from labor unions and faith-based and community organizations. Youth activists include members of Chicago Young Workers, SEIU Healthcare's Future Fighters, United Steelworkers Next Gen and the Painters Young Lions. Chicago Young Workers is promoting leadership for young workers in its unions and working to build bridges between public and private sector unions.

The youth activists are fighting to save Medicare and Social Security to help seniors. But they are also fighting so Medicare and Social Security will be there for them when they need it. In turn, retiree activists are rallying for a Tuition Free Illinois, supporting the Fight for $15 and the right to join a union.

As part of the fight to the save the Affordable Care Act, the IARA-CMR is helping form Intergen, a new, intergenerational alliance of retirees and young activists. In the few months since Intergen was established, seniors, young workers and students have worked together on issues such as health care, Fight for $15 and Tuition Free Illinois. They held a rally and press conference urging early voting and took a busload of seniors and young health care workers to an early voting center last October. Lakesia Collins, president of SEIU Healthcare Future Fighters and Esau Chavez of the Chicago Student Action spoke at the rally. Five days before Trump was inaugurated, Intergen brought seniors and young activists to an overflow save health care rally.

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Intergen is also planning an intergenerational retreat in June 2017. This will be a pilot project for the IARA to further promote intergenerational coalition building.

Some years ago, the largely youth-focused Occupy movement swept the country and before that, the Gray Panther fight for senior rights left a big mark. As Tawanna Ellison, SEIU Future Fighter said, "Wouldn't it be dynamite if we could unite the energy and wisdom of those movements?"

Earachel Johnson is a Chicago-based community activist. Beatrice "Bea" Lumpkin is a 20-year veteran of Chicago Public Schools and the City Colleges of Chicago. She retired from CPS in 1990.

Sexual slavery and human trafficking are tough topics, but they are vitally important topics of which teachers, staff and students should be aware. The Chicago Teachers Union Foundation and the Chicago Teachers Union Women’s Rights Committee have just completed a series of professional development workshops focused on this difficult subject.

A subcommittee of teachers and staff worked on developing curriculum aligned to various subjects ranging from civics to English, and from performance and visual arts to science. The curriculum includes information targeted to students in grades 7-12 and combines general information and specific activities based on the play, "Money Make’m Smile," written by retired CTU teacher Mary Bonnett. The play ran for four weeks during February and March at Greenhouse Theater, where approximately 3,000 students attended with their teachers.

Each "Money Make’m Smile" showing included a post-show discussion with an expert on some aspect of the issue of human trafficking. Many of the students’ teachers also attended a day-long workshop to learn how to lead discussions and provide support for student activism surrounding this issue. Bonnett is also the author of the play "Shadow Town," which the CTU helped sponsor and President Karen Lewis campaigned in several years ago.

Domestic sex trafficking is a huge problem in most major cities, including Chicago. Many Chicago Public Schools students are victims of sex traffickers, and the average age of sex-trafficking victims is only 13 years old.

Special thanks to Melinda Wilson from Curie High School for assisting with development of this curriculum and co-teaching the workshops with Bonnett and the author.

Debby Pope is a CTU retiree and part-time grievance writer.
The metrics of school turnaround and closing discrimination

The Chicago Public Schools turnaround policy is not only unjust, but also discriminatory and illegal.

The attacks on Black educators, principals, children and communities are an attack on all. The first line of defense is to have quality education for all. That is why we are the first to be attacked. —Tammie Vinson

Tammie Vinson started her Chicago Public Schools career at Bethune Elementary, and was there when the district targeted the school for turnaround in 2008. That year, everyone in the building, from the veteran teachers to security and the cafeteria workers, was displaced from their jobs. At the time of turnaround, over two-thirds of Bethune’s staff were African-American.

Bethune is a tough example of the disruption that schools faced under the district’s turnaround and school closing policies. Just four years after imposing the turnaround at Bethune, CPS decided test scores hadn’t rose fast enough, and with that—coupled with “underutilization” of the building—the school was to be closed.

Bethune sat abandoned after the closing. When Vinson campaigned in the community as part of her aldermanic run in 2015, she spoke to many residents who were among multiple generations of family members who had gone to Bethune. One man told her, “I have no school to visit with my kids to show them this is where I went to school.”

To Vinson, the turnaround and its subsequent closure are the “visual evidence” that those who control the city and school district don’t value the community. “You could see it lit up… it lit up the sky and the community, and the school was part of the community,” Vinson said.

CPS Used Discriminatory Metrics for Turnarounds

The Chicago Teachers Union has previously filed suit against CPS over its school turnaround policy. The ongoing suit is a federal class action civil case alleging that the turnaround and school closing policies are most-likely based on standardized test scores, which have high correlations to poverty and students’ socioeconomic status. Since turnarounds began in 2004, target schools have predominantly been schools with majority Black student populations and staff on the South and West sides of Chicago, with few exceptions.

In the four-year period from 2008 to 2012, 25 CPS elementary schools and high schools were selected for turnaround. In CPS, schools have a long, troubled history of being racially segregated in both student population and staff. So turnarounds in CPS have not only disproportionately impacted Black students, but also Black teachers and paraprofessionals. For example, the schools selected for turnaround in 2013 and 2014 were all majority Black. In comparison, the percentage of Black teachers across all of CPS schools was just under 25 percent in those years.

Baker’s report found that the “metrics used for determining both employee and school effectiveness are both inadequate and discriminatory.” In its turnaround decisions, the Chicago Board of Education used its Performance, Remediation and Probation Policy (Performance Policy) as the primary tool to identify schools for turnaround. The Performance Policy consisted mainly of measures like “current status,” “trend” and “growth” metrics, which were all derived from standardized test scores.

The report states that of the metrics used by the Board in its Performance Policy, 85 percent make no attempt to measure school effectiveness and reflect “both socioeconomic and racial bias.” The other 15 percent of metrics did attempt to actually measure school and staff effectiveness, but even these measures were found to introduce bias into the Performance Policy, showing correlations with student demographics. The study found that a 1 percent increase in the percentage of Black students resulted in a 2.3 percent increase in the likelihood of an elementary school being assigned Level 3 status, the lowest rating on the Performance Policy used by CPS up until 2014.

Such metrics not only punished staff on measures not related to their own capacities or effectiveness, but also punished staff for working in low-income schools serving disadvantaged students. And because student race is associated with teacher race in the context of our highly segregated school system, the turnaround criteria used discriminated against students as well as against teachers and certified staff.

Schools like Bethune are often under-resourced, but instead of infusing them with support personnel, funding and programs, and giving the schools an opportunity to improve, the district chose to pursue a policy of disruption. Such top-down accountability policies are unfair in all circumstances, but in CPS, this effectively meant disproportionately punishing Black teachers who had chosen to work in predominantly Black schools on the South and West sides of Chicago.

CPS’ school turnaround policy is not only unjust, it is discriminatory and illegal.
Basketball diaries

Forrest Claypool was as much a terror on the court as he is as the head of Chicago Public Schools.

By JOSEPH MCDERMOTT

Chicago Public Schools CEO Forrest Claypool wants to rid our district of fraud, corruption and waste, right? That’s why he created the Department of Internal Audit and Compliance, which is the department that sent dozens of teachers threatening emails asking for a doctor’s note when it conducts its attendance audit. The department’s job is to catch teachers who have called in sick once too often.

Perhaps CPS should launch a study on the effect of furloughs and budget cuts on teacher morale and attendance. This, however, would mean the district was too progressive in its thinking.

Claypool is spending at least $1.3 million in salaries for this newly created squad of super sleuths. Keep in mind this is a new department that never before existed, with a budget that dwarfs the $300,000 that’s already spent on the law department’s investigations unit. Why does Claypool not choose to use these experienced, in-house investigators who know the ins and outs of CPS?

The most logical conclusion is that he seeks no higher purpose other than loyalty to him and settling scores with those who confront him.

You should also ask, why does the CPS CEO need his own secret band of investigators, when we already have an independent inspector general’s office? This office only receives $1.4 million per year, and it repeatedly asks for more money to investigate fraud and abuse. This is an office that can only investigate a small fraction of the complaints that it receives.

The Office of the Inspector General is an office that, in theory, has no agenda. It is independent of the CPS CEO and the mayor’s hand-picked Chicago Board of Education. This is a stark contrast to Claypool’s secret squad of interrogators. The purpose of this squad is to put fear in the minds of teachers. The fear is a form of retaliation against teachers for—insert sarcasm here—doing such irrational things as demanding respect and dignity in the workplace.

Claypool basically told us, “Keep quiet and don’t speak ill of the school district’s shortcomings and short-changing of children, or my agents will investigate all your sick days.”

Of course, Claypool has only his own self-interest to consider as a reason not to fully fund the Inspector General’s office. He hired Ron Marmor as CPS general counsel, despite no background in education or labor law. Marmor did, however, have a background as a major contributor to Claypool’s political action committees. Marmor also came from the powerful law firm Jenner and Block, which is still paying Marmor a generous severance package.

While Marmor received a severance from Jenner and Block, Claypool approved a contract for the firm to file a lawsuit on behalf of CPS. The lawsuit ended up costing CPS $250,000.

The contract with Marmor’s former employer was a clear violation of CPS ethics policies. If this sounds familiar, former CPS CEO Barbara Byrd-Bennett is going to jail for steering contracts to her former employer, SUPES Academy. And who is investigating all of this? The CPS Inspector General. Funding his own secret terror squad takes resources away from the independent department that has the power to investigate his malfeasance.

Now, what do Claypool’s secret spies have to do with basketball? I was a young man working for the park district in the late 1990s. I was a summer camp recreation leader, so I was an hourly employee. If I missed a day of work, there were no paid sick days—I just lost the money.

There was a Friday when I had to leave town to attend a graduation, which would have meant the loss of a day’s pay. My supervisor told me I could make up the time by working two hours every Saturday for the next three weeks. She said it was a special project.

I didn’t ask any questions or find this odd. I just planned to report to the park the next three Saturday mornings. That first Saturday, I found the supervisor and asked, “What am I supposed to do?”

“We have some big shots from downtown that play pickup basketball here every Saturday morning,” she said. “They need you to run the clock and operate the scoreboard.”

Apparently, prior to guys like me requiring to pay for use of the gym. And I’m sure that no other city residents could, or would, have been required to pay for use of the gym. And I’m sure that no other city residents could, or would, have been required to pay for use of the gym.

It’s rich irony that this pious crusader against fraud and corruption enjoyed this free perk with his friends. Then, 20 years later, he spends $1.3 million on a secret unit to rid CPS of fraud. So I’m just going to call it what it is—hypocrisy, smoke and mirrors and more of The Chicago Way. Don’t be fooled, Claypool is no different than the rest. He’s just another false prophet walking through the leadership turnstile at CPS. And when he’s gone, the rest of us will still be here dealing with his mess and listening to the next hooch blame their predecessors.

Joseph McDermott is a CTU teacher field representative.
ASPIRA charter teachers achieve victory

By KEVIN HOUCH

After 10 arduous months of negotiations, on March 9, 2017, the Chicago Alliance of Charter Teachers and Staff Local 4343 council that represents teachers, counselors, and mentors at ASPIRA charter schools reached a tentative agreement with management on its second successor agreement. Over the course of negotiations, the bargaining team dealt with several challenges, including the transfer of its president to Chicago Public Schools and a revolving door of administrators.

In October, the ASPIRA chief executive officer was reassigned and the chief administrative officer (CAO) was fired. In November, the human resources director resigned, and by February, the interim CAO was terminated or resigned. To the bargaining team’s dismay, this insecurity in leadership extended to ASPIRA’s financial situation. Despite opening a new campus, ASPIRA has accumulated $30 million in debt, and management made it clear that it intended to build its cash flow through reduced labor costs. Management’s first proposal was insolvent—0 percent salary increase in the first year, 1 percent non-compounding increase in the second year, 1 percent compounding increase in the third year and a reduction in the pension pick-up from 7 percent to 4.5 percent for new employees.

The ACE bargaining team soon realized that in order to secure equitable benefits for its members, it needed to make management face the music and stop denying the real cause of ASPIRA’s deficits. With support from CTU education policy analyst Pavlyn Jakov and attorney Robert Bloch, the team, led by ACE President Maritines Martinez, proved that each of ASPIRA’S four campuses generate a surplus of funds, but high management costs quickly erode these revenues.

On average, CPS charter school operators spend 25 percent of their revenues on administrative costs. ASPIRA’s costs are closer to 40 percent—with no clear indicator of where these funds are spent. With a starting salary of $45,000, it certainly is not directed toward unionization. The board members. There, they requested that Noble’s lead-...
Building solidarity through work-to-rule

Our battles with the Board of Ed are long, but if we stick together, we can win.

By ALISON EICHHORN

The board and top management of Chicago Public Schools refuse to acknowledge the work that educators across the city do in the classroom, and it’s easy to get demoralized and frustrated when our employer shows no gratitude for the effort we put in each and every day. To add insult to injury, CPS continues to ask us to do more with less and cut our pay—through mandatory furloughs—while insisting that they’re not the cause of the financial instability that we feel on a daily basis. CPS pay—through mandatory furloughs—while in essence to ask us to do more with less and cut our work every day. To add insult to injury, CPS continues using our profession and our students as pawns in its fight with Gov. Bruce Rauner. We were overworked, and as staff, we were past the point of exhaustion. We knew that whatever we decided to do needed to be representative of the problem, but also provide relief.

Our response was a two-week implemen-
tation of work-to-rule. With the additional burden of no professional development time, it made sense to us that we try to take some of that time back. But now that we had decided what to do, we needed to decide what this action actually looked like and how we would implement it. We met as staff and addressed the parameters of this action. Did we want to make our lives harder? No. We all know that teachers must prepare for classes on our own time. The job of teaching wouldn’t get done if we didn’t. For us, though, we knew that we needed to reclaim some of that lost time, so we decided to try and minimize our preparation time outside of school. We agreed that we would be prepared for our classes. If we weren’t, we’d just get more stressed out—and it isn’t worth it. If this was the approach we agreed to, however, we knew that other things needed to give.

The first and most obvious was time spent grading. We all admitted that in order to get some time back, we wouldn’t have as much time to grade. The time we spend during the school day on our self-directed prep would be used for less planning. Our lunch was our own; we were unavailing to provide tutoring or work with students during that time. Our contractually obligated day started at 7:53 a.m. and ended at 3:00 p.m. Because of this, we were no longer available to provide before- or after-school tutoring. We were more than willing to provide other additional or differentiated support that we could during class time, but we became unavailable outside of the contractual school hours.

We knew that these decisions would be a hard sell to many of our staff, even though this strategy was entirely within our rights provided in the contract. To be frank, our teachers are used to going above and beyond and spending long days and well into the evenings in our building. Nevertheless, the majority of our staff agreed to work-to-rule for two weeks.

True, though our students would have been excited about telling students “no,” many teachers saw the importance of what it meant to undertake this action together. Teachers saw their participation in the action as a demonstration of solidarity with other staff and more obvious when one of our teachers was targeted for discipline by the Board even though they had not violated any part of their contract or any of the Board’s policies. While the investigation was pending, the rest of our staff wore red ribbons. We enlisted words of support to that teacher. We checked in with that teacher to make sure that she knew that her colleagues were there for her. In the end, no discipline came. We assumed that would be the end result—an action within the parameters of work-to-rule is our right to take.

These two weeks, though, were important. It helped teachers learn to say “no” and it gave them a very visible way to support each other. The fight we have with the Board of Education will be long and difficult, if we expect to win, we must build solidarity.

Alison Eichhorn is a CTU delegate and a teacher at Lindblom Math and Science Academy.

Know Your Limits: Collected ideas for work-to-rule campaigns

They’ll push us to teach too many students and do too much work—if we keep saying “yes.”

By KIMBERLY GOLDBAUM

We do the work. We paraprofessionals, clinicians, teachers and doctors—do the work—not those who load work onto us. Not those who try to force us to use computer programs which are not in sync with our contract. Not those who promise to cut our work in half, only to add to it again virtually and in hard copy. Not those who tell our children until there is little learning time, then make us analyze students that a computer does far quicker and more accurately. Nothing in the school or district can be done that we don’t do. We do the work.

So it’s time we put limits on ourselves. We constantly talk about how healthy it is to say “no” to people. We tell people that our parents said “no” to us, and that it made us better able to deal with rejection. It helped us learn to consider dilemmas. “No” bought us time, tempered our expectations and helped us learn discipline. But in every “no” that we education workers say to children, a “yes” is implied. We always give more of our time and money to them than can be counted or compensated.

We also make the costly mistake of having the same people say “yes” in the building to various professional interests, like clubs, internal meetings and leadership teams. We take burdens of paper work, robbing our families of our attention and heart.

We refuse to take sick days when we’re ailing or need a rest. Our backs and feet hurt from lugging supplies around. We agree to more work assigned by the network or administration—and sometimes from our own leadership teams within the school. And we become incredibly unhappy when the negativity is directed inwards.

Ask your delegate about the top five ailments which beset school workers. All are health-related, and most are stress-induced. We say “yes” to unhealthy working conditions and come undone about processes that don’t help educate children better. And this is what we should not be doing.

Why shouldn’t we be doing those things? Because we have a contract, negotiated by peers and lawyers, that has protections written inside that help us say “no” in legalise. Rules and laws, when they are not properly enforced, get ignored. But as in life, teachers, in the battle, for example, some people scoff at the law, the bosses push as far as our elasticity will allow them. They will push for us to teach too many students, do too much work and get too little money—as long as we keep saying “yes.”

It’s why we should say “no” to ourselves first. “No, I’m on my break and lunch. See me during my prep or during school hours.”

“No, putting a student with severe and profound disabilities into PARCC testing is not going to be on the ELP.”

“No, Staying after hours to show you that I’m a dedicated, self-sacrificing martyr does not prove I am not a good teacher.” Then, we should say “no” to the district in a way that our colleagues will join us in a collective action as a school union.

“No, we are not following unnecessary steps to teach a child.”

“No, we are not writing one document several different ways.”

“No, we are not staying past the end of school.”

“No, our work is done. Not one more task.”

We are no longer 19th century Chicago spinsters, long-suffering, dutiful, out of the way and proper. This is the 21st century, and technol-ogy, communications and medicine are health-related, and most are stress-induced. They will push us for too much, too little and too little money—as long as we keep saying “yes.”

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We are no longer 19th century Chicago spinsters, who were taught to have no life if they had no prospects. They were expected to take work home and be dutiful, useful, out of the way and proper. This is the 21st century, and technol-ogy, communications and medicine are health-related, and most are stress-induced. They will push us for too much, too little and too little money—as long as we keep saying “yes.”

Then, we should say “no” to ourselves first. “No, I’m on my break and lunch. See me during my prep or during school hours.”

“NO, putting a student with severe and profound disabilities into PARCC testing is not going to be on the ELP.”

“NO, Staying after hours to show you that I’m a dedicated, self-sacrific-ing martyr does not prove I am not a good teacher.”

Then, we should say “no” to the district in a way that our colleagues will join us in a collective action as a school union.

“No, we are not following unnecessary steps to teach a child.”

“No, we are not writing one document several different ways.”

“No, we are not staying past the end of school.”

“No, our work is done. Not one more task.”

We are no longer 19th century Chicago spinsters, who were taught to have no life if they had no prospects.
National Board Certification: My journey of change

This program isn’t like other professional development programs. For one, it’s harder—but it’s also the hardest thing I’ve truly enjoyed doing. And I appreciated the opportunity to remember what it feels like to be a student.

By PAULA WYATT

In our profession, we face obstacles that prevent us from being as effective as we dream to be. I personally love what I do, but I’ve often felt defeated, ill prepared and unsure of my efforts have produced even a negligible benefit. Before I enrolled in the Chicago Teachers Union Foundation’s Quest Center Nurturing Teacher Leadership (NTL) support program for teachers going through the National Board Certification (NBC) process, I had only rated my effectiveness by my students’ standardized test scores, evaluations from my principal, feedback from parents and my favorite—those “ah ha” moments from my students.

My practice was driven by my intuition and experience. I knew what effective teaching “looked like” but struggled with articulating mine. I knew what learning “looked like” but had a hard time sharing evidence of it with others. I knew areas of my craft needed work. I felt I was always working harder without seeing the results I wanted, but I could not pin down exactly what I needed to do. To enhance my teaching, I took more classes, joined professional committees, attended more classes, joined professional development programs. For one, it’s harder—but it’s also the hardest thing I’ve truly enjoyed doing. And I appreciated the opportunity to remember what it feels like to be a student.

I went to the Quest Center website, read more about NBC and what the NTL program offered, as well as the incentives I would receive, and mulled it over again. I asked a colleague to join me in the process. We attended a recruitment/informational meeting together. It was here that I learned that I would get support to become a distinguished teacher; increase my earnings by advancing salary lanes; receive an annual stipend; earn all my needed Illinois State Board of Education PD hours; be marketable across all 50 states; participate in leadership opportunities; work in a cohort of certificate-eligible colleagues from all across the district; and even get a full scholarship to cover the entire cost of certification from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. One could even earn a master’s degree.

We decided to fill out the program’s profile and make the commitment. That was the easy part. I soon learned that Nurturing Teacher Leadership is the hardest “thing” I have ever done in my life—harder than my master’s degree and harder than anything I have accomplished academically. But it is also the hardest thing I have ever loved. I have had to push myself beyond what I thought were my limits. NTL is very different than any professional undertaking I have experienced before. During classes, we are given tools to explore our own practice, and to study the National Board’s five Core Propositions and interpret the professional teaching standards. We write, share, discuss and repeat. This is where the similarities with other professional development and education opportunities end. This is where NBC is different. This is where the transformation happens.

Between NTL classes, candidates return to our own classrooms and evaluate the standards we have discussed with our cohort members and leaders. This is where our practice changes. We have all been to PD where we know the topic is a good idea. We might even implement part of it, but most of the time we tell ourselves we will do it “someday” because it doesn’t meet our needs today. In NTL, however, that “someday” happens immediately. When you return to the next class, you reflect, share, write about and discuss the week’s experience with your cohort. You reflect on the impact that your teaching had on student learning, review assessment results, get advice from your colleagues and mentors and go back to school to try other methods again and again until you have an “ah ha” moment yourself. You may have forgotten what it feels like to be a student again—the feelings of frustration, of wanting to give up and then the moment where the fog clears and suddenly it all makes sense! That’s what happens in NTL, where you are constantly unpacking and rebuilding your practice. You might have also forgotten the reward of accomplishing something you had almost given up on. And here it is!

This is the moment that makes the effort of going through the NTC process worth it—when you no longer need scores, evaluations or compliments to measure your effectiveness. This is the point where you have learned to evaluate your own practice, enhance your teaching, defend your decisions and trust your intuitions because they are rooted in professional teaching standards that have stood the test of time. For me, this undertaking was a turning point in my career. Now I measure my own effectiveness and, more importantly, adjust my practice and hone my craft to make it even better each and every day.

The NRC process is a series of four components, each with its own set of requirements ranging from videos of your practice and exams, to demonstrations of student growth and evidence of professional growth. Your cohort meets with mentors who have achieved National Board Certification and other colleagues going through the process in your same area of study. With three components under my belt and one more about 80 percent complete, the end of my journey is in sight.

Hopefully, I will achieve National Board Certification, but in the end, it is not the letters I was looking for anyway. My goals were met. I better understand the practice of teaching and how to improve my own craft. I wanted to know that my efforts were truly making a difference in my students’ learning and to be able to confidently support the decisions I make in the classroom—regardless of the new network initiative being implemented or what school mandate comes down the pike. I have achieved this and much more. I have made friends with colleagues across the district who are as dedicated and passionate about teaching as I am. I have a better understanding of our union and how the dedication of the people on staff and support us in ways we may not always know and be able to appreciate. I have laughed and I have cried. I have graciously accepted help, and I have helped others. I have a new understanding and renewed sense of purpose in education. I am confident, I am articulate and I am excelling in my REACH ratings. I am working with my administration and Instructional Leadership Team to implement changes that will benefit teachers and students alike. I am more prepared than ever to advocate for public education and for our profession going forward. I was always a good teacher, but the NTL process has made me better, stronger and more resilient. I may never be perfect, and I may never truly master the profession, but I do know what it takes to nurture children to become compassionate, articulate and critical thinkers. They someday will wield the power to make this world a better place.

Regardless of whether you decide to jump in yourself and give NTL your heart and soul, when you see those letters—NBCT (National Board Certified Teacher)—know that the person behind that title is someone who has gone over and above to meet national standards. That is a truly significant accomplishment. I hope to join their ranks. I hope you do, too.

Paula Wyatt is a teacher at Bausch School and a Middle Childhood Generalist Candidate for National Board Certification.
National Board Certification:
If I can do it, so can you!

The CTU Foundation’s Nurturing Teacher Leadership program is an agent of change for teachers both inside and outside of the classroom.

By EDUARDO AMÉZQUETA

My name is Eduardo, and I’m a current candidate for National Board Certification (NBC) for the World Languages Other Than English certificate. I teach Spanish to grade 9-12 students at Consuella B. York Alternative High School in Cook County Jail. When I first learned about the Nurturing Teacher Leadership (NTL) professional development support program that CTU offers for free to teachers who pursue NBC, I wasn’t quite sure what to expect—or if it was for me. There was only one National Board candidate from program directors to my union chapters. I learned to do more consistently, a consequence of reflecting thoroughly upon my practice and collaborating with excellent teachers from different schools or networks; a consequence of meeting regularly with a mentor (a National Board Certified Teacher) who completed the program and knew exactly the struggles and difficulties that we candidates face; a consequence of weekly professional development; a consequence of embracing high and rigorous teaching standards that have been created by teachers/peers with years of experience in different subject and developmental areas; a consequence of delving deeply into new pedagogy and increasing my content knowledge; and, finally, a consequence of implementing strategies and approaches that I learned in one of the most amazing learning communities that I’ve ever experienced, which is NTL.

Another apprehension I had was soon quelled. As a non-native English speaker, I knew that discussions with my cohort members and composition of the portfolios were going to be a challenge. I’ve always found support and respect from every single member of NTL, however, from program directors to my cohort facilitator, mentor and other colleagues who, like me, started the NBC program together and went through the whole process as a group, and almost like a family, I’ll always be thankful for that. I haven’t even finished the program yet or received my NBC results, and all I can say is that I’ve already succeeded.

To me, this no longer about being National Board Certified, but about growing professionally and personally. I feel empowered and capable of reflecting upon my practice and identifying areas of improvement in almost every thing I do, plan or design with or for my students—something I didn’t do much before beginning this process. Some people may say it’s not OK to be a perpetual non-conformist, but I say that it’s OK to challenge myself to maximize students’ efforts to learn. That’s what I learned to do more consistently in NTL.

In NTL, I have also learned to apply different strategies and assessment methods with which I was unfamiliar and that have had a direct impact on my students’ learning, such as student self-assessment or reflective questions and discussions on their written and oral products. After applying what I learned in NTL, my instructional units have become more meaningful and full of cultural context that has enabled my students to communicate in Spanish in situations that are not just useful and meaningful, but also interesting and oriented toward their transition once they leave the school.

Finally, I learned that becoming a “distinguished” teacher should be a permanent goal, and that the only way to take my teaching skills and abilities to higher levels of accomplishment is by updating my practice and taking it out of my comfort zone.

Thanks to collaboration with colleagues and mentors while going through the NBC process, I’ve improved my teaching practices (unit planning, instruction and assessment creation) and have learned how to maximize my impact on students’ learning. One of the many things the National Board’s professional teaching standards reinforced for me was the importance of gathering “knowledge of students” to create appropriate objectives, lesson and unit plans, and assessments that truly addressed students’ needs and interests. (And it didn’t hurt that they aligned directly to the CPS REACH Domain 1.) These professional teaching standards exposed my professional practice to specialized methods and diverse theories about Second Language Acquisition required for any area of certification.

During this two-year program, I’ve used countless resources, techniques and strategies—which I had never felt comfortable using and others that I never even knew about—to promote engagement among my students. Although I am not yet successful at using all of them, NTL has helped me reflect and identify what doesn’t work so well and why, and supports me in figuring out what else I can do from there to lead to increased student learning. I can apply all this knowledge in my school environment, it can be applied in any school context.

*Eduardo Amézqueta is a teacher at Consuella B. York Alternative High School and a current candidate for National Board Certification.*
National Board Certification: What, why and how

BY MARGOT TAYLOR

I knew for years that I wanted to be a National Board Certified Teacher (NBCT) because I am reflective, hardworking and relentlessly dedicated to improving my practice—three characteristics that NBCTs and other exemplary teachers share. The process of completing the four National Board Certification (NBC) components is challenging—as indicated by the low national achievement rates—and I felt confident about embarking on this journey with the support of the Chicago Public Schools/Chicago Teachers Union Nurturing Teacher Leadership (NTL) partnership, which boasts a 94 percent achievement rate, which is more than twice the national average.

This candidate support and professional development program is structured into content area cohorts with National Board Certified teacher facilitators and mentors who provide constant feedback and suggestions on how to improve teaching portfolio, component entries and content knowledge. My cohort facilitator is exemplary; she challenges me to be the best teacher, writer and professional I can be. For example, she supported me as I worked to successfully complete the “Teaching Practice and Learning Environment” component, which consists primarily of making instructional decisions based on formative assessments, videotaping the subsequent teaching and then writing reflections about the results of that teaching on student learning. My facilitator and I carefully watched and discussed videos of my teaching practice multiple times, after which I was able to select the clips that most clearly demonstrated that I met National Board standards. She then provided cognitive coaching as I wrote deep, meaningful analyses of my practice, followed by reflections about the teaching that an observer—the NBC assessor—would see on the videos.

The NTL support program also provided much mentoring and professional development on the other three components that are part of the National Board Certification process. One is primarily a series of content knowledge assessments; another, “The Effective and Reflective Practitioner,” has teachers examine student data and their work with professional learning communities; and the final component has a candidate show student growth over time and their differentiation in instruction. My coach also ensured that I was ready for the content area assessments through intensive preparation sessions, including simulations of the extended responses and selected responses I would encounter at the Assessment Center.

Before joining NTL, I thought I did a pretty good job of explaining why I was making choices in my classroom based on what I knew about my students, but I could not yet describe how those choices informed my instruction or planning and how they would impact future student learning. Now, because of what I have learned, I know how to describe my instructional choices in detail, providing a rationale with evidence. I can also describe how children’s learning has progressed as a result of my decision-making and instruction. And believe me, this has made all the difference in my REACH conferences—I feel prepared and confident when explaining my instructional decisions to administrators.

Becoming an NBCT is a difficult and at times labyrinthine process, but thanks to NTL it is not an impenetrable one. I can now reflect on my practice on a much deeper level, and I can explain it to colleagues, administrators, families and others in a clear and effective manner. This process has also advanced my teacher leadership and allowed me to share my content area knowledge and “best practice” pedagogy with my impact across my building. I know I am a stronger teacher now than when I began this process, because I now know right away how I would change a lesson and what instructional adjustments I will make in the future in order to impact student learning.

Thank you to the CTU and to CPS for the time and resources that made this possible. I am dedicated to helping our students achieve their highest potential, and I will work to ensure that they are provided with the best instruction and resources possible. Thank you to NTL for your support and encouragement throughout this process.

Margot Taylor is a teacher at Chappell Elementary School and a candidate for National Board Certification in Literacy: Reading-Language Arts, Early/Middle Childhood, Ages 3-12.

Quest Center offers online and hybrid professional development

BY THERESA A. INSALACO-DECICCO, M.ED., NBCT

For 25 years, the Quest Center—now the Chicago Teachers Union Foundation Quest Center—has been the premier professional development provider for Chicago Public Schools teachers. One of the keys to the Quest Center’s long-term success is that it continues to reinvent itself as best practices in education change and develop by always providing state-of-the-art courses, classes, workshops, learning series and action labs to the rank and file.

This spring, the Quest Center is evolving once again by introducing Canvas access to our members. Canvas is an online interface that many K-12 schools and universities implement to support online learning. The Quest Center will begin the year with several hybrid professional development offerings. Teachers will participate in professional development through face-to-face sessions, but also have access to the materials and resources online in between classes. Additionally, in early summer, online-only professional development offerings will be offered along with our regularly scheduled face-to-face and hybrid offerings. Teachers will also have access to informational webinars and other online interactive tools.

All Quest Center professional development offerings will continue to provide Illinois State Board of Education Professional Development hours, and more courses will now offer the lane credit option. Teachers will be able to learn at their own pace using the asynchronous learning feature and collaborate with colleagues in synchronous online sessions.

The new online interface will also provide members with access to a live course catalogue for registration and professional development selection. Offerings and descriptions will be easily located on the Quest Center’s website at www.ctuf.org/pd. Online payment options will remain similar, although now, once you register for a session, you will receive a universal login username. This username will provide you with access to all online accessible professional development offerings in which you register for the duration of your union membership.

The Quest Center staff hopes that through the incorporation of this new technology, more members will have access to our professional development offerings. We acknowledge that, like our students, not every adult learns in the same way. We hope that by providing online and hybrid offerings, more members will take advantage of this high-quality professional development, specifically designed to meet their needs as CPS teachers, teacher-librarians, clinicians, counselors and paraprofessionals.

Theresa A. Insalaco-Decicco, M.Ed., NBCT, is a CTU Foundation professional development facilitator.
The Quest Center is manufacturing a new generation of advanced manufacturing instructors

**Michael P. Moriarty, NBCT**

The Chicago Teachers Union Foundation (CTUF) Quest Center is expanding its professional development opportunities for its members to reinvigorate the Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs throughout Chicago Public Schools. At Austin College and Career Academy, students earn their National Institute for Metalworking Skills (NIMS) certificates through Manufacturing Connect, a proven program for developing students’ competencies in advanced manufacturing.

At the CTUF Quest Center, we recognize that CPS management has disinvested in CTE programs over the years, undercutting the skill sets and future employment opportunities of our students—particularly students of color. The CTUF Quest Center and Manufacturing Connect are determined to change this situation by expanding advanced manufacturing programs for students. As CTE programs develop, schools will need technically, culturally and pedagogically competent teachers. To meet this demand, the CTUF’s Instructors Apprenticeship for Advanced Manufacturing (IAAM) has selected a cohort of teachers to develop their technical, cultural and pedagogical competencies through professional development with the Quest Center and NIMS.

What do we mean by an instructor who is “technically, culturally and pedagogically competent?”

Technically competent instructors will be able to confidently teach manufacturing skills as laid out in the NIMS credentials and standards while being able to implement technical expertise specific for instructors.

**Manufacturing:** Instructors will have the skills and knowledge to effectively teach and prepare students to successfully secure nationally recognized industry credentials like those offered by NIMS. Examples of manufacturing technical skills and knowledge would be how to set up, program and operate a computer numerically controlled mill and lathe.

**Instructional:** Instructors will have the skills and knowledge to successfully translate their manufacturing competency into an educational setting. Examples of instructional skills and knowledge would be awareness of corresponding learning management systems, and basic functions and utilization of computer-aided design for project development.

Culturally competent instructors will be able to identify and value diversity in their classrooms by strategically planning lessons that reflect cultures that are representative of the children they teach. They will respect the diversity within and among cultures. They will avoid stereotyping and overgeneralization. They will use effective learner-centered and parent-centered interactive communication skills to form and maintain constructive and collaborative relationships with students and families. And they’ll incorporate students’ cultural backgrounds into daily teaching practice—all as a way to honor and value diversity, build cultural competency and enhance the classroom environment and instruction.

Pedagogically competent instructors will show the ability to plan, initiate and lead project-based lessons, and they will be able to actively engage their students in learning about manufacturing by evoking analysis and critical thinking skills to develop solutions in the content area. Instructors will utilize restorative and trauma-informed practices to attend to the social and emotional needs of their students.

The CTUF Quest Center will continue to support CTE programs throughout the district in coordination with the Chicago Teachers Union’s Practical Arts and Vocational Education committee. For updates and more information about the IAAM program, visit www.ctuf.org/iaam.

**Walter Taylor, NBCT**

Profound Gentlemen Inc. (PG Inc.) held its second annual Community Impact Assembly, a conference for boys and male educators of color, this year from March 10-12 in Charlotte, North Carolina. The organization—a grantee of the Chicago Teachers Union Foundation (CTUF)—works to keep male teachers of color in the teaching profession and nurture them along the way. PG Inc.’s mission is to build a community of male educators of color who provide a profound positive impact on boys of color, and is grounded in the vision to dismantle the cradle-to-prison pipeline by creating a cradle-to-career pipeline of highly effective leaders, educators, role models and advocates. The organization is headed by co-CEO/Director of Programming Mario Jovan Shaw and co-CEO/Director of Development Jason Terrell.

The Assembly gathered more than 100 male educators of color from around the country to participate in an experience designed to support the effort to create extraordinary outcomes for boys of color through professional development sessions, site visits and community engagement opportunities. Session titles included Self Care, To Date or Not to Date, Trauma, From “G’s” to Gents, Social Emotional Learning and Restorative Practices – An Alternative to Punitive Discipline.

Conference attendees also visited schools in Charlotte, where they shadowed some of the city’s teachers and leaders working to create positive opportunities for boys and men of color, and to learn about local educators’ efforts to create engaging and innovative classroom environments. Educators at the two-day gathering also had many opportunities to network, share resources and build relationships during the symposium itself and during the outings. The conference also included robust discussions designed to offer male educators of color support from veteran teachers on how to solve problems they may experience both inside and outside of the classroom. The conference included a youth component with boys of color diving into sessions on defining community engagement and how they can positively impact the communities in which they live.

Finally, the conference included a semi-formal dinner and awards ceremony where PG Inc. recognized many of the associates and teachers with whom they work and mentor. The CTUF was the only group to be honored by PG Inc. with two awards: Organization of the Year and Philanthropic Partner of the Year.

Walter Taylor, NBCT, is Director of Professional Development at the CTUF Quest Center.
Trust the process
National Board Certification is the highest credential offered to teachers, and the CTU Foundation’s Quest Center can help you get there.

By KAREN GJ LEWIS, NBCT

Chicago Public Schools continues to partner with the Chicago Teachers Union to increase the number of National Board Certified Teachers (NBCTs) in our schools. I am writing to encourage members to seek this advanced National Board Certification (NBCT) through the CTU Quest Center’s nationally recognized Nurturing Teacher Leadership (NTL) program.

NTL boasts a 94 percent achievement rate—more than twice the national average—which is accomplished through a combination of high-quality, rigorous professional development, cohort-based peer support, and individualized mentoring provided by expert NBCTs who are themselves NTL graduates. NTL will help educators who have completed at least three years of teaching, school counseling or library/media work by June 2017 to realize their goal of attaining the highest credential offered to teachers. NTL will also support educators in revolutionizing their teaching practice and supporting student growth. Becoming an NBCT also opens up leadership opportunities at the school, district, union, state and national levels.

Nurturing Teacher Leadership will facilitate its 20th cohort of NBC candidates beginning this August with a seven-day summer institute, followed by a 10-month program of professional development and college support targeted at the needs of the NBC candidates and their schools’ populations.

As negotiated in our 2015-2019 CTU/CPS Collective Bargaining Agreement, the CTU is the sole professional development and candidate support provider for CPS teachers who are seeking NBC. Candidate support and a salary stipend for members who achieve NBC is funded by CPS.

The National Board offers a two-year certification process with funding through state scholarships. CPS teachers who are enrolled in the NTL support program can earn a master’s degree during this period, as well as graduate school and CPS Lane Placement credits that enable them to advance on the salary scale. The cost of the NBPTs application fee will be totally underwritten by the Illinois State Board of Education for anyone who enrolls in the NTL program.

NTL’s partnerships with St. Francis University and Northern Illinois University enable teacher participants to earn graduate credits, including work toward a master’s degree in teaching and learning or curriculum and instruction. NTL has also been designated as rigorous enough for teachers to earn 15 CPS Lane Placement credits. All of these can be earned while going through the two-year NBC process. NBCs advanced and individually tailored graduate-level professional development, aligned to the CPS Framework For Teaching, will increase your content knowledge and improve your classroom practice.

If you are interested in pursuing NBC, we urge you to attend the May 2, 2017, informational/recruitment meeting from 5-8:30 p.m. at the Chicago Teachers Union Center. If you have questions, please contact Lynn Cherasky-Davis, Director of Teacher Leadership and National Board Certification, by email at LynnCherkasky-Davis@ctuf.org or by phone at 312-329-6274.

For information about the NBC process, its standards and assessments, please visit www.nbpts.org. For information about NTL and to learn how you can take the first step on your path to professional growth through NBC and the Quest Center’s NTL program, please visit www.ctuf.org/NTL.

Karen GJ Lewis, NBCT, is president of the Chicago Teachers Union.

A PSRP win, thanks to our updated contract clause

By JOSE JIMENEZ

School clerks and other paraprofessionals are fighting for fair evaluations. Mrs. Eledna Smith-Neris, a school clerk, devoted 26 years of service to Chicago Public Schools. She was wrongfully laid off from her position at Juarez High School, effective August 31, 2016, even though she was not the least senior clerk assigned to Juarez. The Chicago Teachers Union argued that Smith-Neris was wrongfully laid off due to seniority, since she received a final rating of proficient for the 2015-2016 school year.

Article 9-10, Layoff and Recall, states: “The BOARD'S ESP Layoff and Recall Policy will be applied to include criteria for determining bargaining unit employees to be laid off. Except when bargaining unit employees are laid off due to school actions, employees shall be laid off by school unit in the following manner: The school principal or unit head shall determine the number of positions and which classification(s) within the unit shall be affected. Employees within those classifications will be laid off in the following order: 1. Employees who do not possess the highly qualified status or who do not hold necessary certifications or other qualifications; 2. Employees rated unsatisfactory (i.e., below 1.9 points on current system) in their most recent performance rating; 3. Employees rated developing (i.e., 2.0 to 2.6 points on the current evaluation system) in their most recent performance rating; 4. All other employees by seniority.”

For purposes of this policy only, “seniority” with regard to layoff and reappointment shall mean the length of full-time accumulated service in any career service/ESP position, with such seniority accruing from the date of initial appointment to a career service/ESP position with the Board. This definition of “seniority” shall apply only to those ESP employees who are represented by a bargaining unit at the time of their layoff. CPS agreed that Smith-Neris had been unfairly laid off.

Thanks to our contract and to the assistance of her field representative, who filed the grievance on her behalf, she not only won her job back but will be receiving approximately eight months of back pay.

Jose Jimenez is a CTU paraprofessional field representative.

We are family.

Do members of your family also work at CPS? We want to know your story!

Credit: nbctnation.org

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Writing Across the Disciplines for Elementary School (Kindergarten – 5th Grade)

This three session course with online components focuses on teaching young children how to write across the disciplines. Participants will learn how to design instruction to teach elementary level students how to write “like” a historian, mathematician, and scientist. Teachers will learn what resources work best for supporting this type of writing, and how to create exemplar pieces for students to analyze. Participants will be encouraged to use what they have learned in-between session meetings, in their own classrooms, and bring their student examples back to the class for analysis, reflection, and discussion.

Course Dates: 4/26, 5/3, and 5/31/2017, 5:00 pm – 8:00 pm

Cultural Competency: Valuing Diversity

10.5 ISBE PD Hours

In this offering, participants will learn what cultural competency and diversity mean. They will learn the importance of developing cultural competencies and identifying and valuing diversities. Attendees will begin to build the capacity for cultural self-assessment. They will understand implicit and explicit biases and their effects. Participants will develop skills that enable them to respect diversity within and among cultures; avoid stereotyping and overgeneralizations; and, use interactive communication skills to form and maintain constructive and collaborative relationships.

Course Dates: 6/5, 6/12, and 6/19/17, 5:00 pm – 8:30 pm

The Art of Questioning and Discussion

12 ISBE PD Hours

This hybrid (face-to-face and online) offering will familiarize teachers of all grade levels and subjects with “Best Practice” questioning and discussion techniques and their benefits. Participants will analyze their current practice in terms of low-level and high-level questioning strategies. Attendees will learn discussion techniques that advance students’ explanation of their thinking. Teachers will view and participate in Fish Bowls, Four Corners, and Socratic Seminars and learn how to use these strategies and activities in their classrooms. They will learn ways to encourage student participation in class discussions and how to teach their students to evaluate others’ points of view.

Course Dates: 6/6, 6/8 (online), 6/13 (online), and 6/15/17, 5:00 pm – 8:00 pm

Differentiated Instruction

12 ISBE PD Hours

This hybrid (face-to-face and online) offering introduces teachers to the approach of differentiated instruction and provides them with research based readings, practical ideas and hands-on practice that enable them to create a differentiated learning environment in their own context. Participants will learn how to utilize learning contracts, learning centers/stations, tiered assignments, choices boards and learning menus.

Course Dates: 6/20, 6/22 (online), 6/27 (online), and 6/29/17, 5:00 pm – 8:00 pm

CPS Framework for Teaching Colloquia

3.5 ISBE PD Hours per session

The CPS Framework for Teaching Domain Colloquia offers CPS teachers the opportunity to learn more about each of the Domains through discussion, analysis, and collaboration with their colleagues. The instructor will guide participants through the process of ‘breaking down’ each Domain and determining what is considered ‘Distinguished level’ practice by evaluators during the observation cycle. Each 3.5-hour session provides participants with the opportunity to share experiences, discuss best practices, and learn strategies and techniques for improving their practice, as well as develop a long term plan for their professional development goals for the upcoming REACH evaluation cycle. Teachers are welcome to attend individual sessions or the entire Colloquium.

Session Dates: 6/24 (Domain 1), 6/27 (Domain 2), 6/28 (Domain 3), and 6/29/2017 (Domain 4), 9:30 am – 1:00 pm

National Board Certification Informational Meeting

Register to attend our Informational Meeting, Tuesday, May 2, 2017, 5:00 pm to 8:00 pm

Do you practice the five core propositions of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS)? Accomplished teachers: are committed to students and their learning; know their subjects and how to teach them to students; manage and monitor student learning; think systematically and learn from experience; are members of learning communities.

If so, then National Board Certification is for you! The CPS/CTU’s two-year free professional development and candidate support program, Nurturing Teacher Leadership, prepares CPS teachers, counselors, and librarians for National Board Certification (NBC). If you will have completed at least three years of teaching in your certificate area by this June, attend the 5/2/2017 NBC Recruitment meeting to learn how you can earn this advanced certification, the highest credential a teacher can achieve, as well as advance on the CPS Salary Scale, and fulfill your state re-licensure requirements at the same time.

We look forward to informing you about financial and contractual incentives including an annual stipend of more than $1,950, full scholarship opportunities, program requirements, leadership opportunities, and how you can earn an optional Master’s Degree and/or graduate and CPS Lane Placement salary credits, and attain the Illinois NBPTS Master Certification Endorsement in only two years. Attend the meeting to learn about the union’s role in supporting National Board candidates, and how you can increase student achievement and make yourself more marketable by joining our 2017-2019 cohort.

Nurturing Teacher Leadership boasts a 94% achievement rate, twice the national average. It includes: weekly professional development and small group facilitation; collaboration with a cohort of other CPS teachers going through the NBC process; preparation for rigorous content knowledge Assessment Center exercises; individual coaching and mentoring by CPS National Board Certified Teachers; assistance with writing required for the National Board portfolio.

For more information and to register for the May 2 meeting, go to www.ctuf.org/questcenter/ntl.

Questions? Contact Lynn Cherhasky-Davis at 312-329-6274 or LynnCherhasky-Davis@ctuf.org