William McNary Speaks Out About a Potential North Chicago Charter School

by Matthew LaPierre,
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The LEARN charter school corporation has been seeking to expand its reach within North Chicago District 187. This past January and again in March the District 187 oversight boards held open public forums where the community and other interested parties could speak on this important issue. The opponents of any expansion into the North Chicago community outnumbered the LEARN proponents by 3 to 1. One of the speakers at the January 7 open forum was William McNary, Co-Director of Citizen Action/Illinois*. We are printing his remarks in this edition of the 504Word.

“Good evening Superintendent Martindale, Chairwoman King and other distinguished members of the board. My name is William McNary and I am the Co-Director of Citizen Action/Illinois. Citizen Action/Illinois is the state’s largest public interest and consumer organization. We work on an ambitious agenda of public interest issues, but if you would sum up what we believe; we believe that every man and woman is entitled to a livable job with a living wage, safe working conditions and a secure retirement. But in order to get that job, we believe that every child needs a high quality PUBLIC school education regardless of where they live or who they were born to.

We at Citizen Action/Illinois are opposed to the LEARN Charter School expansion proposal because we believe, above all, that what North Chicago and the entire state of Illinois needs is more investment in PUBLIC education for the betterment of ALL students. When our public education system doesn’t work, we all pay the price – in neighborhood safety, higher taxes and communities that people move away from instead of staying and prospering.

The importance of education in the 21st century cannot be overstated. In a global economy, knowledge-based industries and a highly educated workforce are the keys to economic competitiveness and future prosperity.

Every child may not have equal abilities, but all children should have an equal opportunity to attend a public school that is fully equipped to give them the skills they need to become deep thinkers and high earners.

On the eve of Dr. King’s Birthday celebration, it’s appropriate to remember one of his quotes: “Too many people of goodwill have never connected bigotry with economic exploitation. They deplore prejudice but they accept or tolerate economic injustice. But these two evils share a malignant kinship.”

Dr. King understood that you cannot have racial justice without economic justice.

Many of the current problems with public schools are because the resources are inadequate and the funding is unfair. School funding should be the number one priority aimed at creating better schools. That means moving away from a property-tax

see CHARTER SCHOOL, page 3
Bright Future

While this may sound overly optimistic to some of you, I believe that we are about to enter a political environment where the Union movement will, once again, flourish. As I write this, dialogue from both political parties openly acknowledges the unconscionable chasm between the haves and have nots in our country. For far too long, access to the American Dream has evaded the working class. “Trickle-down economics” proved to be a myth; in reality it turned upside down and our country’s wealth flowed the other way. However, there are strong indicators that the concerns of the working class cannot continue to be ignored. Aside from just a seemingly hopeful rhetoric, depending on the results of this unprecedented presidential election, unions could be poised to find a Supreme Court sympathetic to the concerns of working America.

Unions help all workers make financial gains while providing a mandatory vehicle for due process within the workplace. We exist to help maintain the necessary checks and balances critical to all of us in our jobs. Most of you, like me, share a deep passion for Unionism in our profession and believe that Unions are good for society. Many of you, as LCFT, Local 504 members, have demonstrated your willingness to stand up for your employment rights when faced with unreasonable or erroneous proposals from management. Your actions and commitment are evidence of the relevancy of your Union to not only your own well-being but that of your fellow LCFT members.

I believe the move toward populism by our presidential candidates is a direct reflection of the feeling that many Americans are losing a voice in their future. Is there a better, more democratic way for us to empower our employment destinies than by all of us working together through Unionizing?

Our Union isn’t perfect. We participate in a democratic organization that needs the active involvement of the members. I continue to remain humbled by the ongoing sacrifices and contributions made by all of you, both individually and collectively.

Unquestioningly, we have our immediate concerns. We must remain vigilant with regards to our very unfriendly, anti-union governor and the damage he seeks to incur on our professions, our pensions and our lives. But, as we look to the future and focus on this presidential election, let’s remember to support Union workers on all fronts and continue to carry the message forward. As the great Cesar Chavez once asserted, “there is no turning back... We will win. We are winning because ours is a revolution of mind and heart...”

Thank you in solidarity,

Michael T. McGue, President
Lake County Federation of Teachers
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CHARTER SCHOOL, continued from page 1

based system that always leaves poorer school children behind.

At a time when our public schools are facing drastic cutbacks, teachers from all over the state are being laid off, class sizes are swelling to unmanageable sizes and teachers are competing over things such as pens and staplers, the last thing we should be considering is more public giveaways to a charter network that will widen the opportunity gap instead of closing it. ALL children deserve a quality public school education.

Under this proposal, the North Chicago Public School System would lose roughly 41% of its students to the LEARN charter network and therefore lose out on many federal dollars. This will only serve to enhance the inequity and injustice that already exists.

Higher-performing children are pulled from the public school system and absorbed into the charter system, and that then allows the Charter schools to claim this as a “success”. Charter schools are not required to teach those students with challenges in learning that come from mobility, health, family background, poverty or stress. This proposal is not the answer. Instead, we should be focusing on these things:

1) Acknowledging that all students from all backgrounds should be able to thrive in a strong, fully-funded public education system and
2) Hiring enough teachers to keep class sizes small and providing our hard working public school teachers the cutting-edge, 21st-century training and development that they have earned and deserve.

There are no quick fixes for a school system where 81% of students live in low-income households. However to make meaningful progress requires the cooperation of all of the stakeholders: teachers, parents, staff, administrators, public officials and the community at large. It also requires the commitment of much greater resources and a willingness to tackle the obscenity of child poverty.

Which families in North Chicago deserve to send their children to a high-achieving public school? The answer is obvious: ALL families. The North Chicago community values all of its students and it should provide equitable educational opportunities to all 3500 of them, not divide and carve out pieces of the school district to benefit some students at the expense of others.

I learned my values in three places. In my home. In my church. And in a public school system. (We did it tonight before we started this meeting). Every day, they made me put my hand over my heart and say “One Nation, Under GOD, Indivisible, With liberty and justice
• Not just for the privileged few.
• Not just for the ones who were born on the right side of the tracks.
• Not just for those who are lucky enough to hit the lottery.

But with liberty and justice for ALL. We all do better, when we ALL do better!

Honorable Board Members, we urge you to oppose this charter proposal and reaffirm your commitment to meeting the public school needs all of the children in North Chicago.

Thank you.”

Although the District 187 oversight boards voted to reject the LEARN request for charter school expansion the District’s CEO has been holding closed door private meetings with LEARN in an effort to avoid the charter commission overruling the desires and wishes of the North Chicago community. As of press time for this edition of 504Word it appears that the CEO is willing to ignore the wishes of his community and our union and allow LEARN to expand its operations within District 187.

*Citizen Action/Illinois is the state’s largest public interest organization and a progressive political coalition committed to creating social change both in Illinois and across the nation. Please visit citizenaction-il.org for more information. 

May 2016
LCFT shows solidarity in the

#FIGHTFORFUNDING

All photos taken by council members from Diamond Lake, Grant, Lake Villa and Zion-Benton.

April 1, 2016

Diamond Lake

Grant

by Kelly Regnier,
504 Word Editor
regnierk@rocketmail.com

In late March, the Illinois Federation of Teachers asked locals and councils around the state to rally around the need for Illinois to fund our schools. Councils from all areas of Lake County answered the call on April 1, 2016.

Councils were asked to plan some kind of event in support of fair funding for education across the state to remind state legislators that we stand for quality public schools and quality public services, but that these entities can’t exist without fair funding.

While IFT members in other areas of the state held rallies or held “walk-ins,” councils around LCFT gathered together for photos or to share some home baked goodies, in an effort to spread the word about school funding. In many cases, administrators joined LCFT members for some fellowship and discussion about a problem that affects us all. LCFT councils shared their experiences via social media to spread the word that fair funding is essential not only for school employees, but more importantly, for the students we serve.
Shortly after this event, Illinois Governor Rauner released a school funding proposal. President Dan Montgomery laid out the IFT’s position on this proposal, saying, “For the first time in several years, the General Assembly is having a meaningful conversation about school funding, but Governor Rauner’s proposal only distracts from that serious debate. Let’s be clear: the Governor has not put forth a real education funding reform plan. He merely suggested putting slightly more money into the same broken formula without addressing the core need for fairness or adequacy. His proposal further demonstrates the flaws of the current system where students in dire need would face more cuts if nothing changes.

We’d be foolish to think this is a silver bullet, especially coming from a Governor who is presiding over an epic collapse of social services and higher education because he refuses to ask the wealthy to pay their fair share. The same schools Rauner claims he wants to help are the center of the communities he is hurting. With limited resources, teachers and school staff are doing their best to educate students whose families are losing the support they need today and the college educations they want tomorrow.”
REGISTRATION FORM
LCFT LOCAL 504 – 2016 SUMMER
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT COURSES

(Please Print Clearly)
Name: ____________________________________ Home Phone: _____________________

Home Address: _______________________________________________________________

City: _________________________________________ State: ____ Zip: ______________

Personal E-mail: _______________________________ (School District): ______________

Grade Level: __________________

Select courses you will attend:

SUMMER DAILY ATTENDANCE IS REQUIRED

☐ Strategies for Student Success Part 2
   Monday - Friday (9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.)
   June 13th – June 17th

☐ Beginning Reading Instruction
   Monday – Friday (9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.)
   July 25th – July 29th

☐ English Language Arts (15 hours)
   Monday – Friday (9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.)
   August 4th – August 7th

☐ Foundation I
   Monday – Friday (9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.)
   August 15th – August 19th

☐ Thinking Math Journey to Algebra
   Monday-Friday (9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.)
   June 27th - July 1st

☐ Instructional Strategies that Work
   Monday – Friday (9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.)
   August 1st – August 5th

☐ Mathematics–Common Core (15 hours)
   Monday - Friday (9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.)
   August 10th - August 14th

Number of courses selected: x Cost per course: $50 = $ __________

CHECKS AND REGISTRATION FORM MUST BE IN THE UNION HALL TWO WEEKS PRIOR TO THE START OF THE CLASS. PLEASE DON’T JEOPARDIZE THE CLASS BY REGISTERING LATE. ALL CLASSES ARE HELD IN THE UNION HALL.

Enclose check or money order (no cash) made payable to: AFT Local 504

Return form with non-refundable payment to: Lake County Federation of Teachers, Local 504
248 Ambrogio Drive
Gurnee, IL 60031
Our ER&D classes have continued to be successful this winter and spring. We have scheduled seven different classes for this summer break, which will run at multiple times from June through August. The newer classes that are scheduled were offered this past winter. Many of you will be interested in these as they are only fifteen hour classes and both will be covered in one week in August. There will be one new class for this fall and/or winter. We will finally have an English Language Learner class to offer. We have been waiting for this for a very long time. Check the sign-up pages to see what is being offered and sign up as early as possible to be assured that the class will go and that you will have a place in it. Classes can fill up very quickly.

Things to remember about our classes:
1) Sign up for the class as early as possible;
2) Fees (of $50) are non-refundable if you change your mind at the last minute;
3) If the class is cancelled for lack of participants, your fee will be refunded;
4) Most classes earn you 30 hours of credit for recertification;
5) If you are in the Waukegan, Gurnee, North Chicago or SEDOL Councils, you are entitled to two hours of graduate credit for lane movement; (if your council is interested in getting in-district credits, see Andrea).
6) For others, graduate credits are available from Governor’s State for an additional fee; undergraduate credits are available from Prairie State Community College for an additional fee.

Classes are insightful, informative and taught by outstanding teachers who have been trained in ER&D. Teachers who have taken these classes in the past found them to be an excellent way of sharpening their teaching skills, develop new and more effective ways to engage students, differentiate instruction, managing negative behaviors, and compile effective strategies to use in your classrooms.

Summer is the perfect time to take a class or two, and work on developing new skills and strategies that you can use in your classroom this next school year. The classes are a week long and usually run from 9am to 3pm. Classes must be 30 hours in order to receive all the credits that are available.

Questions can be answered by the union office staff or contact me through the union office. Any of us will be happy to help you.

Take advantage of these opportunities to take reasonable classes that provide you with the opportunity to boost your salary and your educational needs.

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CONGRATULATIONS TO

ISABELLE STILSON

WINNER OF THE 2016 JOE HUTTEN SCHOLARSHIP!

Isabelle is currently a senior at Zion-Benton Township High School. She is pictured (right) with teacher Corinne Slabaugh.
Call for Delegates for the IFT Convention

LCFT is looking for members who would like to attend the IFT Convention October 14-16, 2016 in St. Louis. Delegates are responsible for shaping the direction of the IFT and its endeavors, and for electing officers to carry out those directives. If you are interested, please fill in the form below and return it to the LCFT office NO LATER than June 30. Delegates will be elected at our August LCFT Executive Board Meeting.

YES! I WANT TO BE A DELEGATE AT THE 2016 IFT CONVENTION!

Name:______________________________________________________
Adress:______________________________________________________
City: _______________________ State: _______  Zip Code:___________
Cell Phone: __________________________________________________
Non-school Email Address: ______________________________________
Council (School District):________________________________________

BE SURE TO RETURN THIS FORM TO THE LCFT OFFICE
BY JUNE 30.

PSRP News

by Deborah Phelps,
PSRP Committee Chair
dpehelps60087@yahoo.com

The American Federation of Teachers (AFT) will be transitioning to an online publication at Medium.com and will no longer be printing and mailing the PSRP Reporter to members’ homes after the Summer 2016 edition.

If you are not already staying informed through email from AFT PSRP please go to this link: https://actionnetwork.org/forms/aft-psrp-reporter and sign up to receive their communication electronically.

As your print PSRP Reporter goes digital, the AFT wishes to know the best ways to keep in touch with you. To that end, you may also receive an email with a survey link, created just for our members who are paraprofessionals and school-related personnel, so we can learn your preferences. Are you on Facebook? How often do you check email? Would texting suit you better?

LCFT Union Office Summer Hours

June 13 - August 12
7:00 am - 3:00 pm

May 2016