

# Advocate

The Official Publication of the 132,800-Member Illinois Education Association-NEA • Vol. 8 • Issue 1 • September 2011



What policies does your school have in place to protect you? *See page 4.*

Stay informed on important political issues that affect you and your students. Subscribe to the Capitol Report and the Insider at [realistens@leanea.org](mailto:realistens@leanea.org)



*Get active!*

Fall deadlines, election forms and budget timelines  
Pages 5-7



Victory for the Glenbard Education Association  
Page 3



Holding our heads up high  
Page 2

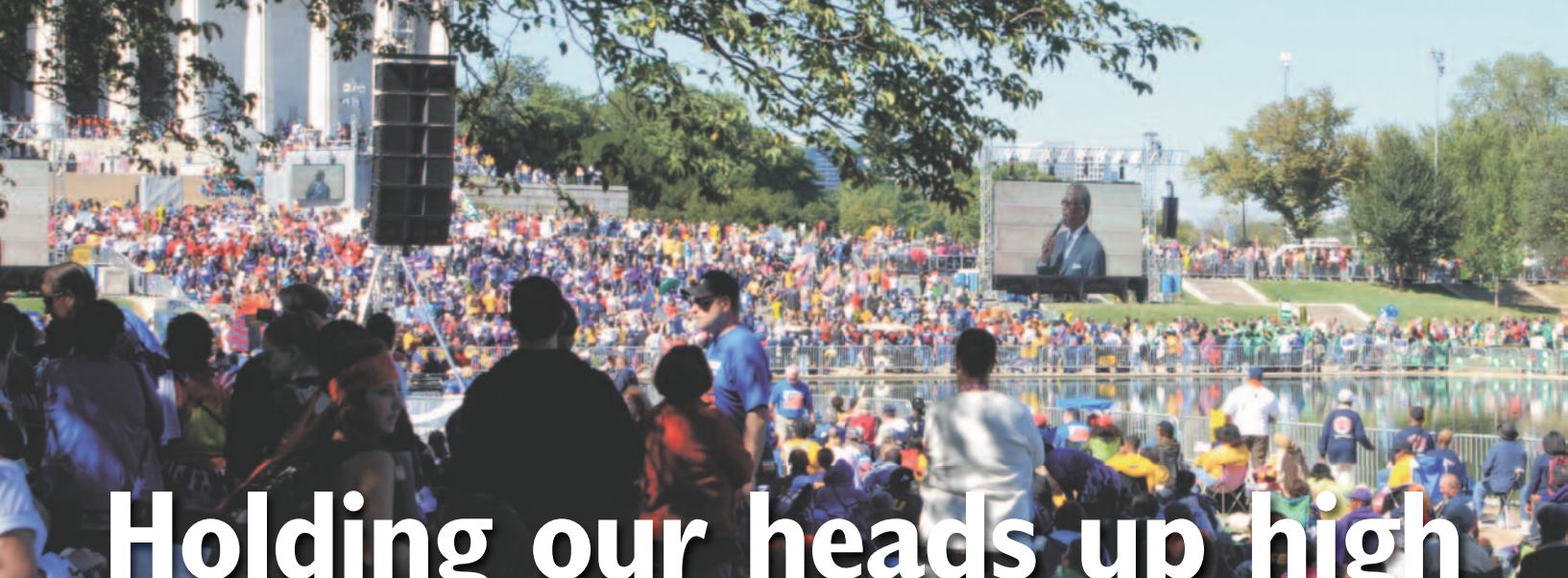


**Inside**

Illinois Education Association-NEA  
100 East Edwards  
Springfield, IL 62704-1999  
[www.leanea.org](http://www.leanea.org)



Non-Profit Org  
U.S. Postage  
Paid  
ILLINOIS EDUCATION  
ASSOCIATION



# Holding our heads up high

*From Cinda*

This school year, as we file into our classrooms, buses, cafeterias, offices, lecture halls, or boiler rooms, let's all hold our heads up high, stand up a bit straighter, and take on an air of confidence.



Why?

Because we are educators and support professionals, and we know the difference we make in the lives of our students and in the quality of life in our communities.

As you know, not everyone supports our efforts to make sure every student receives a high quality education. Some would have us lower our voices and our aspirations for our students and for public education.

That must never happen. When we speak out for our students and ourselves, we are doing our part for democracy. Our advocacy is crucial if our students are going to attain their version of the American Dream.

The SOS Rally in Washington, DC, in July was a good example of that advocacy. It provided a reminder that, despite what often seems like nonstop attacks on public education employees, we have plenty of passionate supporters.

The rally lineup included actor Matt Damon, who spoke movingly of his respect for teachers and what he learned from his mother, a teacher.

"As I look at my life today, the things that I value about myself — my imagination, my love of acting, my passion for

writing, my love of learning, my curiosity — came from the way that I was parented and taught."

After his speech, Damon educated a reporter who, during her interview, repeated an age-old falsehood — that tenure means teachers don't work hard. The reporter suggested that Damon is a success in his field because actors don't have tenure.

"So you think job insecurity is what makes me work hard?" Damon said.

"I want to be an actor. That's not an incentive. That's the thing. See, you take this MBA-style thinking, right? It's the problem with education policy right now, this intrinsically paternalistic view of problems that are much more complex than that. It's like saying a teacher is going to get lazy when they have tenure. A teacher wants to teach. I mean, why else would you take a {expletive} salary and really long hours and do that job unless you really love to do it?"

Another speaker at the SOS rally was Supt. John Kuhn from Texas.

"We say: 'Send us your poor, send us your homeless, the children of your afflicted and addicted. Send us your kids who don't speak English. Send us your special-needs children, we will not turn them away.'"

Kuhn's speech makes one feel proud to be an educator — taking in all kids, proud to do so, and knowing how WE help them each and every day.

"I will march headlong into the teeth of your horrific blame machine and I will teach these kids. You give me my scarlet letter and I will wear it proudly, because I will never cull the children who need education the most so that my precious scores will rise."

I don't proclaim to be as eloquent as either Supt. Kuhn or Matt Damon, but I do proclaim:

I am a teacher, proud to be part of the union fighting for our rights and for the rights of our students, and if that is the scarlet letter I have to wear, so be it.

I, for one, will be walking a bit taller, holding my head up high now and all year. Join me in the cause.

## Advocate

**IEA Advocate, Volume 8, Issue 1, Sept. 2011.** The *Advocate* is published five times annually by the Illinois Education Association-NEA. Send correspondence to: [iealistens@ieanea.org](mailto:iealistens@ieanea.org) or IEA Department of Communications, 100 East Edwards Street, Springfield, IL 62704-1999. The IEA-NEA *Advocate* (ISSN #1540-482X) is the official publication of the Illinois Education Association-NEA as a benefit of membership. A non-member subscription is available at \$10 per year. Periodicals postage paid at Springfield, IL.

**The Illinois Education Association-NEA's mission is to effect excellence and equity in public education and to be THE advocacy organization for all public education employees.**

- |                                     |                                                |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| Cinda Klickna<br>President          | Charles McBarron<br>Director of Communications |
|                                     | Bob Ray<br>Media Relations Director            |
| Kathi Griffin<br>Vice President     | Sarah Antonacci<br>Communications Specialist   |
|                                     | Mark Ritterbusch<br>Graphic Designer           |
| Al Llorens<br>Secretary-Treasurer   | Denise Ward<br>Administrative Assistant        |
|                                     | Linda Rice<br>Secretary                        |
| Audrey Soglin<br>Executive Director | Christina Williams<br>Secretary                |

Postmaster:  
Send address corrections to Illinois Education Association, attn: membership processing, 100 East Edwards, Springfield, IL 62704-1999

# VICTORY!

**T**he Glenbard Education Association (GEA) recently won a significant grievance arbitration victory that demonstrates just how difficult it can be for unions and union members to assert their rights when faced with a hostile administration.

After more than two years of dispute, an arbitrator has decided in favor of the GEA's contention that Glenbard School District #87 (DuPage County) violated contractual provisions that protect employees from discrimination on the basis of their union activity. The arbitrator further ruled that the school administration had created a hostile and anti-union environment.

As a result, the school district was ordered by the arbitrator to post legal notices district-wide that it had committed anti-union discrimination when it targeted a bargaining unit member for reprisal after he had openly supported a union position against the will of his principal. The district was further ordered to post notices that it reaffirms its support for employee rights to speak freely about union matters without fear of retaliation.

"This is a very significant victory for our union and for all the members," said GEA President and NEA Director Tom Tully. "I think it's helped all of us feel more confident that we won't be discriminated against because of union activity or for advocating for proper enforcement of the contract."

The dispute in Glenbard started over two years ago when Joe Opp, an experienced English teacher, union member and newly appointed English department chairman at Glenbard West High School, recognized he was being pressured by his school principal to support a change in school practice that he knew would violate provisions of the GEA employment contract.

The principal had sought support from department chairs to change the student resource period — a teacher-directed period during the school day that traditionally had been used for meeting with struggling students, making parent phone calls, doing lab work and conducting other professional activities. The administrative change would have taken professional control of the period away from the individual teachers, a right that the GEA had fought to protect in its collective bargaining agreement.

When union officers learned of the proposed change, they filed a class action grievance to protect the right of individual



**From left to right, GEA Grievance Chair Kevin Sutton, UniServ Director Michelle Couturier, English Teacher Joe Opp, Former GEA Grievance Chair Judith Weinstock and GEA President and NEA Director Tom Tully.**

teachers to make their own professional decisions about how to best use the resource period.

In subsequent department chair meetings and in meetings with his principal, Opp openly shared his viewpoint that the principal's proposed change was a violation of past practice and specific contractual language. He told others that the union position would certainly be sustained in the grievance process. He did not want to support a change that would violate the agreement.

The principal soon made it clear to Opp that in his role as department chair she expected him to convince his colleagues to accept and implement the proposed change without regard to the contract. In private meetings she asserted that his evaluation as department chair would be in jeopardy if he were to fail to try and convince his colleagues to accept the change. The GEA soon filed a second grievance and unfair labor practice charge in an effort to protect Opp from administrative discrimination because of his pro-union stance.

At first the negative treatment from his principal came as a surprise to Opp. His evaluations as a teacher had always been excellent. The principal thought so highly of him that she hired him as department chair and had gone well out of her way to compliment his early work as leader of the English department. His unwillingness to force a contract violation upon his department colleagues clearly motivated a change in the principal's attitude.

"My initial reaction was shock," said Opp. "I really was only trying to mediate what was sure to be a dispute and avoid a contract violation. I said that we should find solutions before a grievance occurred."

Opp, who had been an association leader prior to his appointment as chair, said he believed his experience with the union at the time could help school stakeholders to work through to an acceptable solution. But it was not to be.

Just as Opp had predicted, when the original resource period grievance made its way through the process, the superintendent of schools agreed that the pro-

posed change to the period would have violated the contract. The resource period grievance was sustained. Opp had been proven right.

But that did not end the dispute. The second grievance and unfair labor practice asserting that he had been subject to discriminatory treatment remained. Additionally, shortly before his year as leader of the English department concluded, his chair position was posted as vacant for the following year. The vacancy posting served as notice that he would not be retained as chair, though his employment as a teacher remained secure.

The arbitrator's ruling in favor of the union was issued late last year. The unfair labor practice charge was also resolved through the arbitration ruling. For Opp and the union, the hard-won decision came as vindication for their efforts to protect teacher rights and the employment contract.

Though Opp was not returned to his position as department chair, union leaders agree that the ruling in favor of the GEA was a significant victory that will carry weight in future school district interactions.

IEA Region 32 UniServ Director Michelle Couturier, who represented the association in the grievance arbitration, noted that Opp was not alone in his advocacy for employee rights during the dispute. Along with others, former GEA Grievance Chairs Chris Meade and Judith Weinstock (both now retired) and current Grievance Chair Kevin Sutton also testified in the arbitration and brought a great deal of expertise and credibility to the association's contention.

"What the school district was doing to Joe Opp was wrong," said Couturier. "He has a right to express his views honestly as a union supporter without fear of reprisal. He tried to protect the teachers and the school district. He didn't want the district to violate the contract. Those are the kinds of things that excellent leaders do."

# Teamwork saves FACE

**Heather Todd** joined Facebook several years ago when she was in charge of her 20th high school class reunion. It was an easy way to track down old friends and acquaintances and to keep in touch after the celebration was over.

The seventh and eighth grade science teacher in Breese never encountered a problem until one day last September, while lining her students up for lunch, two of the girls in her class stopped her.

"Mrs. Todd. We want you to know that two boys in our class made a Facebook account with your picture on it. They asked us to be your friend and when we got in there and saw the wall, we knew it wasn't you because you don't speak that way."

Todd was shocked. She wondered what the boys could have put on there.

Before she checked it out herself, Todd went immediately to the school's administrators and told them what the girls said. They called in the local police officer assigned to the school, the school's attorney and the technology coordinator.

The technology coordinator summoned the eighth grade girls to the office and asked them to pull up their page so they could see what the boys had posted.

Up came the fake "Heather Todd" page. On it was a photo the boys had stolen from the school's website, basic information such as Todd's husband's and child's names and her husband's place of employment.

"This is all information that I'd talked about in class," Todd said.

In addition, acting as Todd, the boys had called other students in her class vulgar names.

On her own, Todd contacted a friend with the Illinois Attorney General's office. A group decision was made to allow the boys to continue to post, in essence to dig a deeper hole for themselves. Meanwhile, Todd was to play dumb about it.

"I kept teaching these boys and never acted differently toward them. I never let on," she said. "When other kids would mention it, I would just act like I didn't hear them or just act like I didn't know what they were talking about."

Todd monitored the boys' activity.

"I would come home and check each

night what they had written. They'd even post things on former students' walls and other people's and I would check all of it and print everything out."

Only a handful of people knew the truth behind the page. Eventually, a union meeting was held so that her fellow educators would know what was happening. Everyone wanted to know why these boys did this. Were they problem students? Did she have trouble getting along with them?

"Surprisingly, I had a great relationship with them. One in particular was an ornery student. But, I like ornery students."

She learned of the account on Sept. 22, 2010. She continued to monitor it, along with her friend at the attorney general's office, until late November. It was then that the boys went way over the line.

They posted what were supposedly intimate details of Todd's relationship with her husband. Of course, they weren't true. Todd was devastated. The page was taken down immediately at the request of law enforcement and the boys were called into the office.

But not before a former student's mother found out about the post. Thinking the page actually belonged to Todd, the mother notified local law enforcement, went to the school and complained, telling administrators that Todd should be fired.

Thankfully, the school already knew what was going on. Todd's job was safe, but things could have ended much differently had Todd not found out about the page, or handled it the way she did.

Both boys were suspended for 10 days. The legal system is still deciding whether to press charges. Todd is considering filing a personal lawsuit.

The experience did not deter Todd from being a Facebook fan. She just wants others to be aware of what happened to her.

"I joined Facebook because I wanted to connect with friends. It was not because I was on Facebook that this happened," Todd said.

"Will I stop up using Facebook? No. If it wasn't Facebook, it would have been something else."



## Tips on protecting yourself

**Paul Klenck**, an Illinois Education Association attorney and social media specialist, said Heather



Todd made good choices in addressing the fake "Heather Todd" Facebook page, including notifying her administrators.

"It's clear in (many) cases that whatever steps the school employee took to protect and limit the damage to the school is taken into account," he said.

Some school districts have taken steps to write these kinds of situations into their school discipline codes. Others should consider it, Klenck said.

"School districts, and others, are slowly developing social media policies and providing guidance and regulations on how people in that community should behave," he said. "Schools can only regulate behavior so far, and have to be careful of First Amendment and other rights. But, they can only regulate behavior that has a direct affect on the school."

Klenck said there are ways to protect yourself:

- ▶ Limit the number of people you friend to your TRUE friends.
- ▶ Set up a Google alert with your name (this is basically a daily internet search for your name that will notify you of mentions). If your name is common, include a school or hometown in the search parameters.
- ▶ Check Facebook policies as there are protections built in.



Exclusive at  
[www.ieanea.org](http://www.ieanea.org)

# DEADLINES

**Do you know a member who deserves recognition, or are you planning to nominate a student for an IEA scholarship?** Take a moment to review details of the awards that will be presented at the 2011 IEA Representative Assembly.

## IEA-NEA Human Services and Civil Rights Award

An individual IEA-NEA member or an IEA-NEA group may be nominated for this award, which recognizes those who have performed an outstanding humanitarian/civil rights activity or community service above and beyond normal association endeavors. An application for this award, presented by the IEA Human and Civil Rights Committee, will be available on the IEA website, [www.ieanea.org](http://www.ieanea.org) in October. Nomination inquiries before October may be directed to Kristine Argue, 847/359-0300, Ext. 5204. Send completed applications to IEA Human Services and Civil Rights Award, **Attn:** Kristine Argue, Illinois Education Association, 553 N. North Court-Suite 210, Palatine, IL 60067-8124, **by Tuesday, January 17, 2012.**

## ESP of the Year

This award is meant to emphasize the contributions of education support professionals to their association, their schools and their communities. A downloadable application and complete rules are available at [www.ieanea.org](http://www.ieanea.org). Nominations must be mailed to Cathy Wyzykowski, IEA-NEA, 2230 Point Boulevard, Suite 400, Elgin, IL 60123-9204 and **be postmarked by Oct. 21, 2011.**

## IEA-NEA Scholarship Applications

The deadline for the 2012-13 IEA-NEA Education Grant is Dec. 2. Last year, this program offered 45 scholarships of \$1,500 to children/legal wards of IEA members. The scholarship program was designed to support those who wish to go into teaching as a career.

Applications are available now on the IEA website, from your local president, from your IEA region chair or from your field office.

## IEA-Retired Awards

**Mary Lou and Keith Hauge Retiree Award** — Given in honor of the late Mary Lou Hauge, first chair of the IEA Council of Retirees, and her husband Keith, former editor of the IEA-R Informer, this award recognizes individuals

who have made outstanding contributions to the IEA-NEA Retired organization. **Applications must be postmarked by Jan. 6, 2012.**

**Bob Haisman Teacher of the Year Award** — This award, named in honor of former IEA President Bob Haisman, recognizes the individual contributions of a new teacher (a teacher with at least one year's experience and not more than five.) **Applications must be postmarked by Jan. 6, 2012.**

**Haisman Student of the Year Award** — This award honors an undergraduate Student Program member working toward a degree in education. **Applications must be postmarked by Dec. 2, 2011.**

Applications for all of these awards, as well as details regarding eligibility and qualifications, are available at the IEA website, [www.ieanea.org](http://www.ieanea.org).

Nominations and supporting data for the Retiree award, Teacher of the Year and Student of the Year awards should be sent to Dottie Beeler, 9057 S. Colfax Avenue, Chicago, IL 60617

## PROPOSED Bylaw Amendments for 2012 IEA RA

Proposed bylaw amendments must be received by the IEA Bylaws and Resolutions Committee, in care of the President's Office, Illinois Education Association, 100 East Edwards, Springfield, IL 62704-1999, no later than **5 p.m.** Central Standard Time, **Dec. 9, 2011.** This will enable the Bylaws and Resolutions Committee to prepare the proposed bylaw amendments for presentation to the executive committee and for publication in the *Advocate*. Proposed bylaw amendments submitted after this deadline will not be printed in the *Advocate*, and, therefore, will need a three-fourths vote for passage at the Representative Assembly. Forms are being sent to the board of directors in September and also will be available from the Springfield Legal Services office at Headquarters. The IEA Bylaws, Values and Vision can be found in the "About" section of the IEA website, [www.ieanea.org](http://www.ieanea.org).

If you have questions, please contact **Freddy Hatfill, Chairperson, Bylaws and Resolutions Committee, 23470 Hollow Avenue, Jerseyville, IL 62052, (618) 498-4559 or fhatfill@gtec.com.**

# Legislative Platform Outreach

Please use this form to share your ideas with the Legislative Committee to assist in the development of IEA-NEA's Legislative Platform.

Please indicate which section of the Legislative Platform your suggestion applies to (Employee Rights, Retirement, School Finance, Quality Education, or Electoral Process). If you would like to read the 2011-2012 Platform, please log on to the **IEA web page** (<http://www.ieanea.org/media/2009/07/2011-2012-Legislative-Platform.pdf>). Copies have not been printed for distribution.

My IEA-NEA legislative platform comment is:

Section: \_\_\_\_\_

Suggestion: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Rationale: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Use additional sheets if necessary.

Please return your comments to:

Legislative Platform • Illinois Education Association • Government Relations Department  
100 East Edwards Street • Springfield, IL 62704 • Fax: 217/544-0691  
Email: [Arlene.Criglar@ieanea.org](mailto:Arlene.Criglar@ieanea.org)

Submitted by: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_





# CORE Conferences



Register online at [www.ieanea.org](http://www.ieanea.org)



Marriott Chicago Schaumburg • Schaumburg, IL  
IEA Professional Development Center • Springfield, IL

## Mark Your Calendar

26th Annual IEA-ESP Conference  
October 14 & 15, 2011 • Doubletree, Oak Brook



There will be a registration fee of \$50 per local registering. You may send as many members as you wish for this \$50 fee (overnight accommodations, if needed, not included in the price).

Visit <http://illinoiseducationassociation.org/members/esp/> for full conference program brochure and registration details. Or, call IEA Conference Registration at 217-321-2303.

## GREAT SAVINGS ALL YEAR LONG!

Save up to **70%** on hundreds of your favorite brands.



**FREE** access to great deals in travel, apparel, electronics, restaurants, movie tickets, and more

Visit [neamb.com](http://neamb.com) to start saving now. Find us under *Everyday Living*



CS160911

# YOU ARE THE SECRET WEAPON!

*Proponents aren't giving up their plan to pass a proposal that would negatively impact active participants in the Teachers Retirement System (TRS) and the State Universities Retirement System (SURS).*

**Activism by IEA members and staff helped stop SB 512 last spring.** However, it was clear during an August 12 forum on pensions that supporters plan to make another attempt to pass the bill this October and they aren't planning to significantly change the legislation to make it more palatable. Get active and visit [www.ieanea.org](http://www.ieanea.org) for the latest breaking news regarding your pensions.



**WATCH FOR THIS ICON AT [www.ieanea.org](http://www.ieanea.org)**

*For more information on Senate Bill 7 (education reform)*



Subscribe to the Capitol Report and the insider at [iealistens@ieanea.org](mailto:iealistens@ieanea.org)  
Stay informed on important political issues that affect you and your students.