

West Suburban Teachers Union, Local 571, IFT, AFT, AFL-CIO

Union Messenger

"A Union of Professionals"

April Calendar

4/4—AFT Convention Delegate Election ballots deadline (4:00 p.m.)
 4/11—ExBd Mtg. (5:30 p.m.)
 4/11—HOR Mtg. (6:45 p.m.)
 4/11—571 Proposed budget presented to HOR
 4/15—Registration deadline for TRS Seminar
 4/19—TSR Seminar (virtual)
 4/22-24—AFT PSRP (St. Louis, MO)
 4/23-24—IFT ULI (Westmont)

Union Messenger

Rachel Esposito, President
 Kyle Stern, Vice President
 Sandra Erickson, Treasurer
 Cathleen Pope, Secretary
 Eugene Poull, Financial Secretary
 Brett Blair, Legal Defense Secretary
 Shavonne Henry, COPE/PAC Chairperson
 Tom Smith, IFT Field Service Director
 Arnavaz Mistry-Mujthaba, IFT Field Service Director
 Carolyn Wilson, Membership Support Staff
 Patty Clancy, Office Support Staff
 Andrew Bendelow, 571 Web Administrator
 Robin Hancock, 571 Union Messenger Editor



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New Year, New Beginnings...

A new year marks the beginning of new adventures for several staff members at Local 571. Julie Masterton, longtime Membership Secretary, retired in January. Julie had been hired as part-time support staff starting in 2006. In 2009, Julie needed to find insurance for her and her family. At the time, the IFT did not offer insurance to part-time workers. The Local



and IFT worked together and resolved this issue, making it possible for part-time people to have access to insurance. This decision helped Julie stay with the IFT and gave her an opportunity to grow with our organization. Eventually, Julie moved to a full-time staff position. Julie brought a unique set of skills to her position. With a degree in Geology and a background in computer programming and graphic design, she was able to update our current systems

to bring us into the technological age. Julie is excited about spending more time with her husband of forty years. Julie is also looking forward to volunteering at pet shelters and hospitals. Julie is an avid reader and enjoys book clubs. We will be celebrating Julie's retirement in May.

Although we are very sad to lose Julie, we are excited to gain a new member of our team: Carolyn Wilson. Carolyn is not new to our organization, however. Carolyn has worked for the IFT for fifteen years. She has held positions in the Program Development Department where she helped with meetings and conference planning for conferences, training sessions and other events. Carolyn has also worked in the Department of Internal Operations where she helped local treasurers and field staff with dues related issues as well as accounts receivable functions. She is eager to be our new membership support staff and is ready to take on the challenge of a new position. In her spare time, you can find Carolyn spending time with her friends and family. She also loves to watch Lifetime movies and crime dramas and loves to go shopping.



Carolyn Wilson

Rachel Esposito
President

West Suburban Teachers Union

Members Engaged

Article by Jon Leonard, Argo Teachers Council

The Argo Community High School (Local 571) Union Equity Committee began in 2019 with an idea that sprung from a department representative meeting. Interested teachers were invited to join and the committee began meeting that fall. We began meeting every 4-6 weeks to discuss issues of equity and how we might start to tackle inequities at Argo and work with the administration to work consistently on this issue. Over the previous few years, there had been sporadic attempts at equity work, but nothing consistent, nothing with buy-in from not only the current principal, but the district level administration and school board. After several months of meetings, we landed on the need for an equity audit to see exactly where we were as a district so that we could make a plan of action. Our committee members worked with our incoming principal to research and select an auditor.



Pictured: Federico Garcia, Jon Leonard, Felicia Minnito, Aimee Guldin, Kyle Stern

The administration proposed Dr. Yvette Dubiel as a candidate, and, after interviewing her as a committee and then again with a smaller working group and the administration together, there was unanimous agreement that she was the best candidate for the job. We asked, and the administration agreed, to hire her on not only for the equity audit, but to complete PD over the course of this school year as well as an equity action plan once the audit was completed. Under Dr. Dubiel's guidance, we put together a District Equity Leadership Team composed of teachers, staff, and administration. This team helped select the questions for the focus group portion of the equity audit. The focus groups met with Dr. Dubiel and collected data from the district on grades, attendance, graduation rates, and discipline trends. She has just now completed her

report and is working with members of the Union Equity Team and the administration to make final edits and determine how it will be presented to the school board. Once the audit is complete, Dr. Dubiel will work with the Union Equity Committee and administration to create the equity action plan based on the recommendations in the equity audit report. As the audit process draws to a close, our principal has recommended the hiring of an equity coordinator to take the lead on carrying out the equity action plan and to work with our various affinity groups across the school. We are both pleased and grateful for this change and look forward to the next steps.

2022 Share My Lesson Virtual Conference (Mar. 21-24)

Over 50 free one hour webinars available for credit



Registration is Now Open!

Join AFT's Share My Lesson for our annual virtual conference. You'll be in good company with preK-16 educators, specialized instructional support personnel, paraprofessionals, support staff, parents and caregivers from around the world on March 21-24. This is the virtual professional development conference that you can attend in your PJs, in the comfort of your own home!

With nearly 50 free webinars—[each worth one hour of professional development](https://sharemylesson.com/community/smlvc2022)—you are sure to find something of interest to you.

For more information visit: <https://sharemylesson.com/community/smlvc2022>

**The Illinois Teachers
Retirement System
(TRS) Seminar
Sponsored by the
West Suburban
Teachers Union
Local 571**

- WHEN:** Tuesday, April 19, 2022
5:00 p.m.—6:30 p.m.
- FOR:** Local 571 members
(*teachers*) close to
retirement
- WHAT:** A presentation by a
representative of the
Illinois Teachers
Retirement System
- WHERE:** Presentation will be
virtual. Link will be
provided via email
- R.S.V.P.:** If you plan to attend,
please contact
Patty Clancy **by April 15th**
at 630-468-4083 or
pclancy@ift-aft.org
- OTHER:** Once signed up, if you are
unable to attend, please
contact Patty Clancy via
email at
pclancy@ift-aft.org

THE
influence
OF A GOOD
teacher
CAN NEVER BE
erased



**I.M.R.F. SEMINAR
Retirement Information
For Local 571
(PSRP) Support Staff
Union Members**



A speaker from the Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund (IMRF) will present information and answer questions for **PSRP (support staff) Union Members** of the West Suburban Teachers Union, Local 571.

- WHEN:** Thursday, May 19, 2022
- TIME:** 5:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.
- WHERE:** A virtual presentation. A link will be provided.
- R.S.V.P.:** If you plan to attend, contact
Patty Clancy via e-mail at
pclancy@ift-aft.org or by phone
at 630-468-4083 **by Tuesday,
May 17th.**

**The Spring Equinox begins
on Sunday, March 20 at
10:30 am.**

In the Northern Hemisphere, the March equinox (aka spring equinox or vernal equinox) occurs when the Sun crosses the equator line, heading north. This event marks the start of the spring season in the northern half of the globe. After this date, the Northern Hemisphere begins to be tilted more toward the Sun, resulting in increasing daylight hours and warming temperatures. (In the Southern Hemisphere, it's the opposite: the March equinox marks the start of autumn, as the Southern Hemisphere begins to be tilted away from the Sun.)





Legislative Report

March Union Messenger

Elections matter. That is why we encourage all members, if they are not already, to register to vote. You can find how to register to vote by going to <https://ova.elections.il.gov/>.

Things have been busy in Springfield reports the IFT. <https://www.ift-aft.org/post/legislative-highlights-for-the-week-of-2-21-22>.

Some bills you might be interested in.

HB 1167 is the agreement between the IFT and the Governor regarding COVID days legislation. For more information use the following link: <https://www.ift-aft.org/covid>

HB4246 lowers the lapsed license fee from \$500 to \$50.

HB4256 allows school Districts to not evaluate tenured teachers during the 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 school years who have been rated as either “excellent” or “proficient” in their last evaluation.

SB3914 provides an additional 5 mental health days for teachers in addition to the required 10 sick days. An amendment was added though that allows 5 of the 10 required sick days to be used for mental health purposes.

HB5060 and SB3983 allow teachers to gain tenure in three years rather than four years.

Remember to find your legislators you can go to <https://elections.il.gov/>. Reach out to them and let them know where you stand on the various issues.

AFT’s Weingarten on President Biden’s State of the Union Address

WASHINGTON—Statement of American Federation of Teachers President Randi Weingarten on President Joe Biden’s State of the Union address:

“Tonight, Joe Biden proved why Americans were right to elect him as president. He met a moment in history with gravity and empathy. He urged unity to recover from the immense economic challenges of the pandemic, with a laser focus on boosting wages and cutting costs to help American families recover and thrive.

“And he made the case against the threat posed by autocrats and those who excuse them, both here and abroad. Democracy and freedom are worth fighting for—as the Ukrainian people are showing us every day.

“The president laid out just how far we’ve come in a year—from closed schools, millions of COVID-19 cases and soaring unemployment, to record growth, jobs, vaccines and the return of reliable and safe in-person learning. But we are still dealing with the pandemic’s terrible effects, and the president outlined a plan to curb prices, increase pay and create a better economy that puts American workmanship and creativity front and center and American workers first.

“We commend his specific, practical measures that would reduce costs for families right now, including child care, pre-K and prescription drugs. And we echo the need to take rapid action on climate change after yesterday’s U.N. warning that the world is at a tipping point.

“Our members are on the frontlines of the pandemic, and we were honored to have progressive care unit nurse Refynd Duro of Ohio in the audience with the first lady tonight. Our healthcare heroes know what it will take to emerge stronger and healthier.

“The health, well-being and academic recovery of students is every teacher’s priority, and the pandemic has multiplied the stresses and strains on us all. We share the president’s concerns over the mental health crisis facing our young people, including the negative effects of unbridled social media because we live with the fallout every day.

“Our journey will be difficult, but our direction is clear. And with the president’s leadership, now is the time to broaden the tent—to unify and organize for a better life for all Americans and to fight for and defend democracy, at home and around the world.”

IFT Statement on Executive Order Lifting Mask Mandate in Schools

Westmont, IL – **Illinois Federation of Teachers (IFT) President Dan Montgomery** issued this statement following Governor Pritzker's executive order lifting required masking in schools: “We are grateful for Governor Pritzker’s leadership throughout the pandemic ensuring that science, not politics, has informed guidance. It has been a long two years, but there is finally light at the end of the COVID tunnel.

“We welcome this new guidance for a safe off-ramp from universal masking in schools. The CDC’s new guidelines set us on a path to a new normal in schools. By using an analysis of hospitalizations in addition to community transmission, school districts, in collaboration with educators, staff, and families, can decide when to ease mask requirements.

“Our sole priority since the start of this pandemic has been to protect students, teachers and staff, and their families by following the proper mitigations. Schools have remained open because of the implementation and enforcement of these mitigation strategies designed to protect everyone.

“We urge school districts to prioritize the most vulnerable, including our Black and Brown communities, as well as the immunocompromised, in all off-ramping decisions. They continue to be at a higher risk of exposure, illness, and death.

“We insist that school districts statewide work with their unions to maintain or come to agreements that will promote health and safety in schools and follow our laws around safe schools and workplaces.

“Finally, we ask everyone not to stigmatize students, teachers, and staff for their individual masking choices. And no one should be pressured into unmasking. These last two years have taught us that we must protect each other and that we all have a duty to protect our most vulnerable populations.”

— FREE —
COLLEGE

 **UNIONPLUS**

 Free College

**Info sessions about
your Free College
benefit**



The Union Plus Free College Benefit Team is inviting you to join an online info session to learn more about your Free College Benefit.

If you have questions about eligibility, degrees offered, transfer of credits or enrollment process, don't miss one of the info sessions.

Register today!

**March 15, 2022
9pm Eastern Time / 6pm Pacific Time**

**March 16, 2022
8pm Eastern Time / 5pm Pacific Time**

<https://freecollege.unionplus.org/>

March is Women's History Month

Caregivers, frontline workers focus of 2022 theme

March is Women's History Month, and this year's theme set by the National Women's History Alliance is "Providing Healing, Promoting Hope." The organization said it chose the theme as a tribute "to the ceaseless work of caregivers and frontline workers during this ongoing pandemic and also a recognition of the thousands of ways that women of all cultures have provided both healing and hope throughout history."

"The 2022 theme proudly honors those who, in both public and private life, provide healing and promote hope for the betterment of all." The NWA says women have always served as emotional and physical healers, dating back to ancient times. The alliance encourages communities to honor local women who serve in the roles.

"These are the women who, as counselors and clerics, artists and teachers, doctors, nurses, mothers, and grandmothers listen, ease suffering, restore dignity, and make decisions for our general as well as our personal welfare," the website states. A 2019 study showed that over 60% of employees entering the healthcare industry are women in the U.S. According to the Association of American Medical Colleges, more women are becoming doctors.



Application for the Illinois National Board First Time Candidate Fee Subsidy

The National Board Resource Center (NBRC) at Illinois State University (ISU) is excited to announce that the Spring 2022 window for the Illinois NB First Time Candidate Fee Subsidy will be open from March 01, 2022 until May 10, 2022. The National Board Resource Center (NBRC) is a nonprofit organization that has been charged with overseeing the Illinois State Board of Education program that enables teachers and school counselors to become National Board certified. The NBRC provides payment for teacher-candidate fees and support through the process in the form of cohorts, certificate-alike webinars, and matching candidates with National Board Resource Center trained readers. The National Board process has been updated in recent years, so educators may want to view and listen to the updated 15 minute power point and brief video from National Board Certified Teachers.

Please click on this link for the power point and video: <https://nbrc.illinoisstate.edu/firsttime/index.php>



St. Patrick's Day is Thursday, March 17. The date marks the death of Saint Patrick, Ireland's most celebrated patron saint. The history of St. Patrick's day in Chicago goes back more than 175 years. Now a longstanding tradition, Chicago's Irish parade was first held in 1843 and became an official city event in the 1950s. The dyeing of the Chicago River was added in 1962, quickly becoming one of Chicago's most famous events.

Visit the sites below to learn about some activities that will be held to celebrate St. Patrick's Day in Chicagoland.

<https://www.timeout.com/chicago/things-to-do/the-best-st-patricks-day-events-in-chicago>

<https://www.choosechicago.com/articles/holidays/st-patricks-day-chicago/>

What's Missing from the Messenger?

Is there something innovative or exciting happening at your school? If so, we want to hear from you!

Email your news to Robin Hancock at: 571editor@gmail.com

We Want To Hear From You



We're on the Web!!!
www.wstu571.org

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