

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

Union Messenger

"A Union of Professionals"

May Calendar

5/2—IFT Convention Delegate Election (not required)
 5/2—571 Area Trustee Election (not required)
 5/9—HOR Mtg. (6:45 p.m.)
 5/9—Vote on 571 proposed budget
 5/17—Registration deadline for IMRF Seminar
 5/19—IMRF Seminar (virtual)

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



Inside This Issue:

TRS Seminar- (Teachers)	2
Meet the Candidates: Upcoming PAC Meeting	2
Women's History Month at Argo	3
Leyden's Victoria Valentine -2022 Special Education Teacher of the Year	3
Legislative Report	4
Teach Not Test	4
I.M.R.F. Seminar - (PSRP)	5
Social Security Webinar	5

The Time to Mobilize and Organize is Now

Strikes are occurring very close to home. Most recently, Proviso from Local 571 and Patton Council from Local AFT 943. Both went on multiple day strikes fighting for members' benefits and better schools for their students. Being with Proviso on the picket line and at the rallies, I saw first-hand how important mobilization and brotherhood are to our organization. The union is a family; when someone is having a difficult time, we quite literally rally around to support



and protect our members. Members from all over the state came out to support our members on strike. Many leaders rose to the top during this collective action. Proviso Teachers Union was successful because they had a strong structure already in place.

The IFT also supported Proviso for over a year in many ways with things like negotiations, organizing strike events, media coverage, and used established relationships with legislators to help influence board members and administrators. For the first time, we used a robocall that called residents in the district to give them information about the strike. It also gave them an option to press a button to call board members directly. The IFT prepares for events like strikes to occur, so they were ready to hit the ground running. What can councils do to strengthen their membership without actions like a strike? How do we build strength and unity to endure the good times and the bad?

Having established relationships and partnerships with community outreach groups, local businesses, and other local organizations creates a strong community. You can establish relationships by frequenting a business for food for meetings, holding social events at local establishments, donating, and attending charity functions in the community, or forming a partnership with community outreach groups to help support students in different ways. Members who work and live in the same neighborhood have a valuable perspective on life in the community. These views should be shared with your local leaders.

Beyond tapping into members, creating a healthy relationship with your local Board of Education is crucial. The most impactful action a council can take is getting involved in School Board Elections. Members should have a voice in choosing who makes decisions for students and members. Local 571 and IFT will lend support for any council looking to run a ticket for their School Board Elections.

There are many ways for councils to strengthen and unify their councils. Whether you are an organization of 19 or 1,000 members being organized and mobilized for action, even when there is no action to take, makes all the difference.

Rachel Esposito
President

West Suburban Teachers Union

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

**Local 571
REMINDER**

Register before deadline

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 con-
tact Patty Clancy via email at
pclancy@ift-aft.org

**MEET THE
CANDIDATES**
YOUR VOTE COUNTS

**Meet the Candidates:
Upcoming PAC Meeting**

Would you like to know what IFT
learned about candidates running for
Office? Consider attending our local
PAC meeting.

If you would like to attend or would
like to know more information about
additional PAC meetings, please contact
Rachel Esposito.

April 20, 2022 at 5 p.m.
Local 571
500 Oakmont Lane, Westmont

*Region G meeting covers candidates running
for Senate Districts: 24, 25, and 42

*Region H meeting covers candidates running
for Senate Districts 21, 23, and 41 and
Congressional District 3

VOTE BY MAIL

**General Primary Election
Election Date: 6/28/2022**

Voting by mail is an option for voters to cast their
ballot prior to Election Day. Voters can request a
vote by mail ballot through the mail or in person.

All requests by mail must be received by the
Election Authority by 6/23/2022.

All in-person early voting requests must be made
by 5/19/2022.

For more information visit:

[https://elections.il.gov/electionoperations/
votingbymail.aspx](https://elections.il.gov/electionoperations/votingbymail.aspx)

Illinois State Board of Elections

Who is Running for Office?

Candidates for federal and statewide offices, state
senator and state representatives, judges, and
multi-County School offices file petitions or certificates of
nomination with the State Board of Elections.

Click on the link below to learn more about a candidate's
filing status :

<https://elections.il.gov/campaigndisclosure/searchoptions.aspx>

Members Engaged

Women's History Month at Argo

By

Aimee Guldin

English teacher, Argo Community High School

After a two-year hiatus due to COVID, Argo Community High School returned to celebrating Women's History Month with various events this year. A group of women teachers initiated the planning and invited students to join the committee. Among our events were a spirit week celebrating the accomplishments of women and a Girls' Night that included a self-defense lesson run by PE teacher Lauren Evoy and her students. Art teacher Alexa Edwards led the students and teachers in creating and assembling an art installation in the Argo library that highlights important and inspiring women, both historical and contemporary.

The group also ran a contest for a design that incorporated our hashtag, #empowHERargo. Two student designs were made into stickers that were distributed to students, and a third was put on to a t-shirt. We sold 160 t-shirts to both teachers and students, and the proceeds were given to three organizations: She Should Run, which promotes women running for public office, the Malala Fund, which promotes worldwide education for girls, and Crisis Center for South Suburbia, a local organization that provides housing and resources for women and families affected by domestic violence.

This amazing group of women worked together to create something special this year, and we are inspired to expand our efforts next year as we continue to celebrate the essential roles that women have in our schools and our society.



Congratulations!

Leyden's Victoria Valentine 2022 Special Education Teacher of the Year

Victoria Valentine's path into the classroom started back when she was in high school. Valentine, a special education teacher at West Leyden High School in Leyden Community High School District 212 in Franklin Park, was diagnosed with a disability that affected her functioning at school, and an Individualized Education Program was written for her. It changed the trajectory of her life and put her on a path to a career as a special education educator. Victoria realizes the struggles her students will face as they grow into adults and points to this as motivation to encourage her students to practice self-advocacy and to prepare them to educate others who may not realize the incredible things people with disabilities can do if they receive the right support. Victoria encourages her students to participate in extracurricular settings. They support the entire school by serving as the recycling team. They also are very competitive in local Special Olympics sports. All of this encourages her students to try things beyond the walls of their classroom and realize the value they have to contribute to life.





Legislative Report April Union Messenger

This has been a busy session with over 4,000 new bills being introduced. Please click on the links below to see updates.

HB1167 creates Covid-19 specific sick days for employees to use and is retroactive to the first school day this year. This bill is currently awaiting the Governor's signature.

HB 4089 requires a school district to provide a plant-based school lunch option to students who submit a prior request for such to the school district. The plant-based school lunch option must comply with federal nutritional mandates.

HB 4139 allows for eligible teachers to be reimbursed for tuition at a public college or university in Illinois for up to ten years.

HB 4246 lowers the lapsed license fee for educators from \$500 to \$50 and provides that a retired teacher, even if returning to a position that requires educator licensure, shall not be required to pay registration fees.

HB 4256 allows a school district to waive certain teacher evaluation requirements (for the 2022-23 school year only) if the governor has issued an emergency proclamation.

HB 4716 requires the Illinois State Board of Education, in collaboration with stakeholders, to adopt rigorous learning standards for the classroom and laboratory phases of driver's education.

HB 5214 requires that any parent who is deaf or a non-English speaker and whose student requires an IEP meeting, multidisciplinary conference, 504 meeting, or due process hearing be entitled to the services of an interpreter.

takeaction

ACTION ALERT! Spread the word: Teach not test.

The IFT has been working for over a year to urge the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) to abandon their [misguided proposal](#) to increase state testing for grades 3-8 and expand testing to grades K-2. **We've made some progress, but ISBE intends to make this decision in the next two months, so we need your voice now more than ever** to urge ISBE to work with educators, families, and assessment experts to build a more balanced assessment system.

UPDATES

CONVENING: With our partners, IFT held a [convening](#) on February 12, *Advancing Equity Through Deep Learning and Meaningful Assessment*, to discuss the [research about assessment, deep learning, the limits of standardized tests](#) like those proposed by ISBE, and [how to engage in critical, culturally relevant teaching and learning](#).

MARCH 16 ISBE MEETING: Dr. Brian Gong from the Center for Assessment [presented findings](#) from ISBE's assessment survey and reviewed initial findings of the focus groups they conducted earlier this year.

Parents, assessment researchers, and educators including IFT First Vice President Cyndi Oberle-Dahm voiced concerns about the interim testing plan again at this meeting,

and our partner, Illinois Families for Public Schools, shared a petition with over 1,000 signatures in support of the Too Young to Test bills, which would prohibit K-2 state standardized testing.

MORE WORK NEEDS TO BE DONE, AND WE NEED YOUR HELP!

Contact your state legislators TODAY. We need them to support the "Too Young to Test" bills by this Friday (4/1) to prevent standardized testing of K-2 learners. ([Senate Bill 3986/House Bill 5285](#)).

Make a public comment to the State Board. ISBE members need to hear from IFT members before they make this decision. Register to provide public comment at the upcoming April 20 or May 18 ISBE meetings. (Comments are no more than three minutes and you will receive additional information and support from your union if you participate.)

Share information on opting out of state tests.

Especially this year, state tests have the potential to increase student stress, and all Illinois public school students can refuse to take state tests.

Learn more.

<https://www.teachnottest.org/getinvolved>

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



REMINDER—REGISTER BEFORE DEADLINE

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.

A Social Security Webinar
for Local 571 Members

Sponsored by the West Suburban Teachers Union, Local 571

*Webinar will be virtual
 for both June and July*

Identical Social Security Webinars will be presented and questions will be answered by a representative of the Social Security Administration.

WHEN: Thursday,
June 9, 2022
 10:00 a.m.—Noon
OR
Tuesday,
July 12, 2022
 1:00 p.m.—3:00 p.m.

FOR: Local 571 members

WHERE: A virtual webinar

R.S.V.P.: If you plan to attend the **June 9** Webinar, contact Patty Clancy by June 7 at pclancy@ift-aft.org and you will be sent a link to register for the webinar.

If you plan to attend the **July 12** Webinar, contact Patty Clancy by July 8 at pclancy@ift-aft.org and you will be sent a link to register for the webinar.



Did you know?

April was the second month in an early Roman calendar, but became the fourth when the ancient Romans started using January as the first month.

April is named for the Greek goddess of love, Aphrodite.

Small animals that hibernate are usually coming out of their burrows in April. The birds fly back northward and settle down to have their families. The bees and butterflies begin to gather nectar from the first flowers of the season.

In some parts of the world, it is planting time, while in other parts, it is the harvest season.

April is Humor Month, so laugh it up!

The birthstone for April is the diamond.

The zodiac signs are Aries (March 21 – April 19) and Taurus (April 20-May 20).

The birth flowers for the month of April are the sweet pea and the daisy.



Historical moments in the month of April

- America's first astronauts were announced by NASA on April 9, 1959.
- The first Webster Dictionary was copyrighted by Noah Webster on April 14, 1828.
- The Titanic sank on April 15, 1912.
- The Revolutionary War in America began on April 19, 1775.
- The United States Library of Congress was established April 24, 1800.
- Our first President George Washington was inaugurated on April 30, 1789.

Earth Day is Friday, April 22.



The Earth Day 2022 theme is **'Invest In Our Planet'**. This year, Earth Day 2022 calls on everyone to divest from unsustainable investments; support eco-conscious brands and products; and to use your own skills and voice to fight climate change. There are also several ways to celebrate at home or your backyard using the concepts of "Reduce, Reuse, Recycle".

Did you know, when placed over weeds in your yard, cardboard can be used to kill weeds naturally, without any chemicals. Simply lay the broken down box flat on the weeds and wet with a hose, then cover with dirt.

Administrative Professionals Day is Wednesday, April 27.

In the modern workplace, new titles such as Administrative Assistant and Executive Assistant represent a legion of women and men who are highly skilled and educated. Far from just possessing the stereotypical "interpersonal and communications skills", today admins are responsible for office duties ranging from expert computer troubleshooting to managing new hires.



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

West Suburban Teachers Union Local 571
500 Oakmont Lane
P.O. Box 390
Westmont, IL 60559-0390
Phone: 630-468-4098 Fax: 630-468-4088
E-mail: resposito571@ift-aft.org