

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

Union Messenger

"A Union of Professionals"

April Calendar

4/10—ExBd Mtg. (5:30 p.m.—Westmont)
 4/10—HOR Mtg. (6:45 p.m.—Westmont)
 4/10—571 proposed budget presented to HOR
 4/17—Registration deadline for TRS Seminar
 4/20—TRS Seminar -VIRTUAL
 4/22-23—IFT Spring ULI (Westmont)

Union Messenger

Kyle Stern, President
 Dr. Jaqueline Payne, Vice-President
 Sandra Erickson, Treasurer
 Cathleen Pope, Secretary
 Eugene Poull, Financial Secretary
 Brett Blair, Legal Defense Secretary
 Rachel Esposito, IFT Field Service Director
 Max Schoenberg, IFT Field Service Director
 Renee Wagner, 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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The Power of Vulnerability

Dear Union Siblings,

I am an avid reader who over the past few years have read over one hundred books a year. I typically enjoy non-fiction but do dabble in the occasional novel. One of my favorite authors is Brene Brown. She is a renowned researcher, author, and speaker on topics related to vulnerability, courage, and empathy. Her work has been particularly valuable to us in education, who often navigate complex and emotionally charged situations.



One of the core tenets of Brene Brown's work is the power of vulnerability. This means being open and honest about your feelings and experiences, even when it's uncomfortable or risky. As a member of a union, it is important to find colleagues, family, and friends with whom you trust to be vulnerable. Share your struggles, your fears, and your hopes with those around you, and be open to receiving their support and feedback.

Empathy is the ability to understand and share the feelings of another person. In our profession, empathy is essential. It allows you to connect with your students and administrators, understand their needs and concerns, and provide the support they need to succeed. It also allows you to connect with your fellow union members, to understand their struggles and concerns, and to work together towards common goals.

Courage is another key component of Brene Brown's work. It is the ability to take risks, to be bold, and to speak up when it's necessary. As a member of a union, I find courage to be essential. It requires standing up for what you believe in, even when it's difficult or unpopular. It also requires advocating for your students and your fellow union members, even when it requires going against the status quo. Brene Brown often quotes a famous Theodore Roosevelt saying:

"It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who neither know victory nor defeat."

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The Power of Vulnerability

Self-care is also essential for anyone in a demanding job like ours. It is important to take care of yourself, physically and emotionally, in order to be at your best for your students and your union. This may mean taking breaks when you need them, seeking support from friends and family, or engaging in activities that help you recharge and de-stress. I find exercise, reading, or playing a game with my family to be restorative.

Finally, in a challenging job, it is important to celebrate the small victories. This may mean recognizing when a student has made progress, when a lesson goes well, or when you and your fellow union members have achieved a small win. By celebrating these small victories, you can stay motivated and energized, even when the going gets tough as we never want to give up.

I find the work of Brene Brown to offer valuable insights and advice for us. By embracing vulnerability, empathy, courage, self-care, and celebrating small victories, we can be a more effective teacher, counselor, social worker, psychologist, speech pathologist, custodian, maintenance worker or PSRP, and a more effective union member.

In Unity,

Kyle Stern

Leyden's Dr. Sawsan Jaber Named Cook County Co-Regional Teacher of the Year

Congratulations to Dr. Sawsan Jaber from Leyden High School District 212 for being named Cook County Co-Regional Teacher of the Year. This is what is written about Dr. Jaber on the ISBE website.

The daughter of refugees, Dr. Sawsan Jaber knows the value of education. "People can take your land and your physical belongings, but they can never take your mind," she says. She teaches English at East Leyden High School, in Leyden High School District 212.

Her assigned texts change yearly, in response to her students and world events. When school buildings closed due to COVID-19, she created a purely project-based curriculum, allowing students to form collaborative learning groups. It worked so well that she has kept that model. Students tell her it's their hardest class besides physics, but that they love it.



John Rossi, the English department chair, says it works. "Her American literature courses are grounded in conversations that need to occur. She seeks out texts that expand students' perspectives and deepen their capacity for empathy. She understands that adolescents are capable of adult conversations but often need support."

Student Haley Garcia calls Dr. Jaber an inspiration. "Her classroom pushes everyone to grow in ways we would've never thought possible."

Argo's Kyle Stern Honored by Illinois State of Board of Education

It is difficult to know where to begin in describing why Mr. Kyle Stern is so worthy of the ISBE Teacher of the Year award. He is a colleague who has become a friend and a mentor. His commitment to his students, his leadership work, and his compassion for everyone with whom he comes in contact make him a teacher whom others try to emulate.

Kyle's expertise is one of many things that make him stand out among educators I've worked with. Regardless of whether his students excel or struggle, Kyle approaches all students with an unparalleled level of dedication. He has been on the cutting edge of using technology in his classroom and is also an advocate for balancing student screen time with more traditional methods of learning. For these reasons and many more, he is a teacher who is trusted by parents, colleagues, administrators, and of course, his students.



Kyle's commitment to students extends beyond those in his classroom. He has long been a vocal advocate for equity. Kyle's insistence on holding the district accountable for addressing inequity manifested in a Memorandum of Agreement in 2020 that required the District to conduct an equity audit and follow through on recommendations made by the auditor. As Council President for the schoolteachers' union, Kyle insisted on the agreement over the mere word of administrators. Years later, Kyle remains active in the District Equity Leadership Team and an invaluable resource to the District Equity Director. Because of Kyle, we have a Union equity team and a District equity team. These teams, with Kyle's continued involvement and support, are trying to make Argo a more equitable place for all students and a more equitable place for faculty and staff.

As is clear from his work to bring about equity teams, Kyle is a collaborator and leader. While some leaders feign collaboration, Kyle both courts and values it. As a member of the Union executive board, Kyle worked with the President to recruit new leaders. As President himself, he coached and mentored other leaders, trusted them with vital tasks, and was honest with them about how to build the team. In his current role as the President of Local 571, Kyle is now supporting the work of many council Presidents and therefore extending his model of leadership through trust and compassion to more schools and more students. Kyle is one of the most prolific readers I know, and much (perhaps most) of what he reads is to improve as a leader. He shares not only the book recommendations but also what he learns from these books with other leaders. In so doing, Kyle makes not only Argo but many other schools more collaborative and supportive for students and faculty.

Although I could fill pages on Kyle's intelligence, expertise, commitment to equity, collaboration, and leadership, I want to use the space I have to share a bit about Kyle's compassion, which in my perspective is one of his most remarkable traits. I have never met anyone who cares more deeply. I stop that sentence there deliberately because to list what he cares about would be never-ending. Kyle cares – full stop. And that care is felt, it is seen, and it is contagious. Kyle cares so much about his students that he sends Remind messages of encouragement and support long after his students leave his classroom. He sends personalized postcards to his students at their homes. Kyle is the greatest cheerleader at Argo for programs that support student learning – both academic learning and social-emotional learning. He is also the first to send a thank you note or an apology if he feels it necessary. Kyle is also an amazingly patient listener. In so doing, he encourages others to arrive at their own conclusions by talking out issues and concerns.

Every year, teachers at Argo collect funds to donate Thanksgiving groceries to students and families in need. Kyle does not just donate; he offers challenges to match the daily donations of others. His generosity sparks others to do the same. Just this year, within moments of Kyle's challenge, this fundraiser collected an additional \$1000 or more. Without Kyle's challenge, those donations may not have been made. I share this example because it demonstrates how his compassion, leadership, and commitment to students come together. I am one of many teachers who try to be better because of Kyle's example. What comes naturally to him, what he just does because of his deep care and commitment to the Argo community, is something I only think to do because of him.

Although I am his senior, Kyle is a mentor to me, and I believe that he can be a mentor to all educators in the state. For that reason and so many more, I cannot recommend him more highly for the Illinois Teacher of the Year.

Respectfully,

Heather Siegel-Hickman

Endorsements

At the February House of Representatives meeting, the House of Reps voted to endorse **Kim Cavill, Steve Rosenblum, Michelle Barron** and **Jane Russell** for District 211 School Board and **Brandon Johnson** for Mayor of Chicago.

An IFT member from Local 604 - **Jared Ploger** - is running for the school board in this district. Jared is an educator with 17 years of experience and a prior member of the 308 school board. With the support of his local and help from the IFT we are hopeful that Jared will once again be elected to the Board.


As part of the IFT support of Jared's campaign we will be providing him with a list of IFT members that live in the 308 District so he can mail and/or contact them as part of his voter outreach – this will include some members from your local so we wanted to notify you in advance.

Michelle Paul

Director, Department of
Political Activities

IFT

The Elmhurst Teachers Council from District 205 have endorsed **Kelly Asseff, Kelly Henry, Courtnae Trautman**, and **Beth Hosler** for the school board.



**COOK COUNTY COLLEGE
TEACHERS UNION**

1901 W Carroll Ave, Suite 200 • Chicago, IL 60612 • 312.755.9400

20 January 2023

A message to our members...

On Tuesday, April 4th, elections will be held for two positions for the Moraine Valley Community College Board of Trustees. We were very honored to meet with all of the candidates, all of whom are well-qualified, community members who clearly care about the future of Moraine Valley.

Members of Cook County College Teachers Union which represents the faculty and staff at Moraine Valley have endorsed the following trustee candidates:

- Mr. Brian O'Neill
- Mr. Jose "Yusuf" Vidal

As sitting Board Chair, **Mr. O'Neill** has guided Moraine Valley through the COVID 19 pandemic. He has demonstrated solid leadership and a clear understanding of how to manage a government body. He has maintained a focus on the needs of students while supporting staff and faculty in reaching strategic goals. He is a valued partner.

As much as Mr. O'Neill brings experience to the table, **Mr. Vidal** offers a new vision and fresh ideas to the board. Mr. Vidal's background in government management, his knowledge of policy, and his personal connections to community colleges will be useful in the times ahead. His family relationships in both the Latinx and Muslim communities present much needed representation and insight. We look forward to working with him in the future.

Historically, the Faculty Association, the Adjunct Faculty Organization, and the Support Staff Association have worked in a spirit of partnership with the Board of Trustees to offer affordable, high-quality education to our district. We seek to maintain a culture of innovation, cooperation, and integrity within our campus community. We believe that these candidates will help us maintain our high standards and record of success. **We urge you to vote on Tuesday, April 4th, and we urge you to vote for O'Neill and Vidal.**

Troy Swanson CCCTU Legislative Chair	Delwyn Jones CCCTU Vice President, Suburban Faculty
David D. Burns, Ph.D. President, MV Adjunct Faculty Organization	Lynn Douglas President, MV Support Staff Association
Michelle August President, MV Faculty Association	

At the end of January, the Argo High school teacher's council sent a Candidate Questionnaire to all the candidates that will be on the ballot for District 217's Board of Education election. After review of all the questionnaires that were returned, on February 16th, the Argo High School teacher's council voted to endorse **Ms. Ramanda Bond**.

Federico Garcia - Vice-President Argo High School Teacher's Council

Members Engaged



Members of Argo-Summit Council of Teachers, Mandy Bond, Summer Neal, and Chris Hofer helped organize a special presentation for Black History Month with students of Argo Community High School and other members of the community!



Kyle Stern, Jacki Payne, and Jon Monique Manuel represented Local 571 at the IFT Executive Board meeting in January.



Kyle Stern and Jane Russell attended the Local 1211 Legislative Breakfast. They met with Rep. Mark Walker and other legislators.



Kyle Stern and Sandy Erickson attended an event honoring Rep. Stephanie Kifowit. Kyle also met with Congressman Bill Foster and Rep. Michelle Mussman.

Local 1211 Legislative Breakfast Photos



Congressman Raja Krishnamoorthi and Kyle Stern at the Local 1211 Legislative Breakfast.



Kyle Stern and Jane Russell with Senator Mike Simmons at the Local 1211 Legislative Breakfast.

KNOW YOUR WEINGARTEN RIGHTS

by Rachel Esposito, Max Schoenberg and Renee Wagner

Periodically, employees may be required to meet with a representative of the Administration regarding disciplinary issues. Starting in the 1970s the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB), Illinois Education Labor Relations Board (IELRB), and the U.S. Supreme Court have issued decisions supporting what is known as an employee's "Weingarten Rights." Any time you find yourself facing a meeting with any agent of the Administration and reasonably believe this meeting could result in disciplinary action against you, these rights apply. It is not necessary that the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) include these rights for you to be protected; however, the CBA may include broader rights than the statute provides, so it is important to know your CBA.

.Any time you are called to a meeting with your Administration, you should know the nature of the meeting beforehand. If the person calling this meeting does not volunteer this information, ask

If you reasonably believe the nature of the meeting is disciplinary, respectfully request that a Union representative be present. Interrupt this meeting, if necessary.

3. The Administration now faces three options:
 - a. Stop the questioning until the Union representative arrives,
 - b. Cancel the meeting, or
 - c. Give you the choice of ending the meeting or continuing without representation.
4. Do not continue the meeting without Union representation.
5. If the Administration insists that the meeting continue without representation, an unfair labor practice has been committed. You have the option of keeping silent or leaving the meeting. Inform the Union at once and memorialize in writing management's denial of your Weingarten rights.

When you meet with the Administration and the Union representative, the Administration must afford you certain privileges.

1. The Administration must inform the Union representative of the subject of the meeting.
2. The Union representative must be given adequate opportunity for the representative to take you aside for consultation before the meeting.
3. During the meeting, the representative has the right to interrupt to clarify confusing questions or to end intimidation.
4. The Union may give you advice on how to answer any question.
5. The Union may add information at the end of the meeting to support your position.

The biggest mistake employees make is to meet without the Union being present. Your Union leadership will provide you with a Weingarten rights card. Please keep this card handy, take it with you into a meeting, refer to the back if necessary, and do not hesitate to contact a Union representative. Always remember that exercising these rights and securing appropriate Union representation rest solely with you. The Administration is under no obligation to read you your Weingarten Rights. You must initiate these rights to enjoy the protections which are yours by law.

YOUR RIGHTS AS A UNION MEMBER

As a Union member you are entitled to a number of benefits. One such benefit is the right to have Union representation and/or assistance in resolving disputes that arise out of the work place. This benefit is summarized below.

- You have the right to legal assistance in controversies that arise from incidents occurring in conjunction with your job. The Union determines the level of legal support that will be provided.
- You have the right to file a grievance over violations of the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) by your employer.
- You have the right to Union assistance in processing and resolving any grievance over a violation of the CBA.
- You have the right to appeal any denial of Union assistance in exercising the aforementioned rights to the Local 571 Executive Board.
- You have the right to appeal a denial of assistance by the 571 Executive Board to the Local 571 House of Representatives.

If you have any concerns or questions regarding these rights or the implementation thereof, please call the Local 571 office at 630-468-4098.

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

WHEN: Thursday, April 20, 2023
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
17th** at 630-468-4083 or
pclancy@ift-aft.org

OTHER: Once you have signed up, if you
are unable to attend, please
contact Patty Clancy via email
at pclancy@ift-aft.org

I.M.R.F. SEMINAR

*Retirement Information for Local
571
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 11, 2023

TIME: 5:00 p.m.-Light Dinner
5:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.-
Presentation

WHERE: Robert M. Healey
Conference Center
500 Oakmont Lane
Westmont, IL 60559
(Entrance D or E)

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 Friday
May 5th.

**Anyone who signs up to attend this
seminar and finds that they cannot at-
tend must notify the local 571 office by
5:00 on May 5th, or they may be
charged \$15 for the cost of the dinner.**



Quality legal assistance can be
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Do You Know How IMPORTANT April 4, 2023 Is?

Jon Monique Manuel

According to Illinois Association of School Boards, nearly 6,000 men and women serve on local public school boards in Illinois. These men and women govern the education of almost 2 million public school students across 850 different school districts. These elected men and women serve a four year unpaid term.

As teachers, PRSP, and community members it is important to get involved in electing individuals who recognize the interest of the community and understand the struggles that both PRSP and teachers face every day. We know that public education is under attack, and we need a board that will stand up to the pressure of these attacks.

As union member a great opportunity for us to show our support is by getting involved in our local school board campaigns and voting on April 4th. **As Union members we are always stronger together.**

An example of being stronger together, the Elmhurst CUSD205 teachers and PSRP held a School Board Candidate Forum on February 15th at the Elmhurst Public

Library. It was a huge success! Approximately eighty-five teachers, PSRP and community members were in attendance. All nine candidates participated by answering questions that focused on teacher and PSRP issues. Local 1211 and Proviso are also local's that have held successful school board candidate forums.



Women's History Month



Did You Know?

History was made prior to kick off on Super Bowl Sunday as the military flyover commemorated 50 years of women in the Navy. For the first time ever, the military aircraft flying over the game were piloted by all women. The Navy began teaching women to fly in 1973.

Women's History Resources:

[WALSH-LORETTA | The United States Navy Memorial](#)

[Celebrating the First Enlisted Women > U.S. Department of Defense > Defense Department News](#)

[Over 200 Years of Service: The History of Women in the U.S. Military · United Service Organizations \(uso.org\)](#)

[Women's History Month \(womenshistorymonth.gov\)](https://www.womenshistorymonth.gov/)

This 1917 photo released by the U.S. Navy shows the Navy's first female Chief Petty Officer Loretta Perfectus Walsh, who enlisted in 1917. On Sunday, March 21, 2021, one of the cannons aboard the USS Constitution, the world's oldest commissioned warship still afloat, was named "Perfectus" in honor of Walsh.

(U.S. Navy via AP)

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



www.wstu571.org

<https://www.facebook.com/WSTU571>

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