

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

Union Messenger

"A Union of Professionals"

WSTU Jan-Feb Calendar

All Executive Board and House of Representatives meetings will be held virtually until further notice.

1/11—Ex.Bd Mtg. (5:30 p.m.)
 TBD—Deadline AFT PSRP application
 2/6-7—IFT ULI (Virtual)
 2/8—HOR Mtg. (5:30 p.m.)
 2/8—Deadline for Local 571 Convention proposed amendments to the 571 constitution and bylaws
 2/8—Deadline for Local 571 Convention delegates/alternates

Union Messenger

Jane Russell, President
 Rachel Esposito, Vice President
 Sandra Erickson, Treasurer
 Cathleen Pope, Secretary
 Jonathan Pazol, Financial Secretary
 Brett Blair, Legal Defense Secretary
 Julie McShane, COPE/PAC Chairperson
 Tom Smith, IFT Field Service Director
 Arnavaz Mistry-Mujthaba, IFT Field Service Director
 Julie Masterton, Membership Secretary
 Patty Clancy, Office Secretary
 Andrew Bendelow,
 571 Web Administrator
 Robin Hancock,
 571 Union Messenger Editor



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Where Do We Go From Here?

With 2020 nearing an end, and none too soon, we await the new year with some anxiety, even though several of the pharma companies have announced a new vaccine to inoculate us against COVID-19.



We look forward to working with both the Congressional and Legislative representatives who were elected/re-elected in November 2020. (See the Election Recap on page 3 of this issue). Many of those legislators were endorsed by the IFT and Local 571. If not endorsed, we will work to engage those legislators as well to find common ground for legislation that continues to ensure the safety and health of our students, educators, and state workers.

The biggest loss was that of the Fair Tax amendment. Without an Illinois graduated tax, an income tax increase on all taxpayers will be considered for the state to be able to continue to fund education and vital state services. At the same time, there will be cuts to those same programs. With a seat at the legislative table, the IFT will work with the Governor and legislators to support and provide a safety net for our children and most vulnerable citizens.

We can only hope that widespread vaccination of the population will allow us to return to some semblance of normalcy. If schools can safely reopen, many, including parents, can return to work with the economy opening once again. Well known economists predict the economy to come "roaring back" in 2021.

No matter what is in store, the officers and staff at West Suburban Teachers Union, Local 571, look forward to continuing to work with you as we move into 2021. We wish your holidays be filled with friends and family (albeit virtually) and a time to relax and renew until we can meet again in person. Stay safe and be well.

In unity,

Local 571 President



West Suburban Teachers Union 15th Annual Legislative Breakfast



West Suburban Teachers Union President and IFT Secretary-Treasurer Jane Russell welcomed members and guests to our 15th annual Legislative Breakfast. Although virtually held on Saturday, October 3, 2020, aptly described as “The Year of the Woman”, the event was just as successful and informative as in the past.

Russell thanked the Local 571 Legislative Breakfast Committee, chaired by Rachel Esposito (Cicero Council President and 571 Vice-president). Additionally, 571 Councils donated to the 571 scholarship and COPE funds to assist both programs in 2021.

IFT President Dan Montgomery reminded everyone of the importance of voting, not only for federal races, but for both candidates and the Fair Tax ballot initiative in Illinois. Montgomery made the case for the Fair Tax amendment, pointing out that its passage will help fund our schools and is the best chance to avoid a middle-class tax increase.

To incentivize members to ask a question of the legislative women candidates, a raffle for a \$10 grocery gift card was held. Winners of the gift card who submitted their questions before the virtual event included Sonya Prater (PAEC), Anamarie Jani (Cicero), Diane Vegter (District 88 CATS), Kyle Stern (Argo Teachers) and Marilee Castaneda (Retiree).

The General Assembly candidate panel followed and was moderated by IFT Director of Political Activities, Cynthia Riseman-Lund. Cynthia also continues to work with Local 571 members in our political and legislative programs.

Using a PowerPoint presentation, Lund briefly welcomed each of the ten women candidates who introduced themselves and were asked questions about education legislation, using their voice as a legislator to influence dismantling of systemic racism, health and safety concerns in schools in the time of COVID 19, potential job loss due to the pandemic, and social and emotional support for both students and educators.

All the candidates wholeheartedly agreed to support the Fair Tax. Legislative Candidates interviewed were:

Janet Yang Rohr, HD 41

State Senator Celina Villanueva, SD 11

State Representative Karina Villa running for SD 25

State Representative Barbara Hernandez, HD 84

State Representative Diane Pappas, HD 45
Jennifer Zordani, HD 47
Maura Hirschauer, HD 49
Kate Monteleone, HD 50
Maggie Trevor, HD 54
Martha Paschke, HD 65

No West Suburban Teachers Union Legislative Breakfast could end without the raffle led by Rachel Esposito. Ten lucky virtual event attendees whose names were randomly drawn, eagerly accepted their “table centerpiece prize.” Esposito closed the program by thanking the speakers and attendees for joining the 1 ½ hour event which gave all attending an opportunity to get to know the exciting women legislative candidates. Everyone was asked to vote for the candidates and to vote YES on the Fair Tax Amendment.

We all look forward to meeting on **Saturday, October 2, 2021**, for the 16th annual West Suburban Teachers Union, Local 571, Legislative Breakfast—in person (please)!



Virtual Legislative Breakfast Participant
Maura Hirschauer –HD 49



If you are not a member, wait no longer to join AFT's SML. Beside the 51 lesson plans and resources on Indigenous Peoples, there are webinars on teaching in the time of COVID-19, research-based strategies for educators, and most recently, the new Health & Wellness series which even includes a Zumba lesson. You can locate the right resources and plans for every education level. Often the webinars are taped so you can watch at another more convenient time. Professional Development hours are also available. Give yourself an early holiday present. Sign up at [sharemylesson.com](https://www.sharemylesson.com).



Election Recap

by Legislative Directors: Max Schoenberg & Nicole Burr

Local 571 members made a difference in this election. Every member who voted, who helped with phone banking, who sent postcards to friends and family, who engaged in conversations with neighbors and coworkers, was crucial to helping elect representatives that support public education and public employees. There were several important contests which were decided by small margins, making every vote that much more essential.

Several friends of Local 571 were successful in their campaigns. In Congress, **Sean Casten** and **Lauren Underwood** were reelected. In the Illinois Senate, **Karina Villa** was elected to represent western DuPage and eastern Kane County, and **Celina Villanueva** was reelected to represent the 11th District in Cook County. In the Illinois House, **Terra Costa Howard** and **Anne Stava-Murray** were reelected, and will be joined by strong new voices for educators in **Janet Yang Rohr** and **Maura Hirschauer**. We are looking forward to working with the returning and new legislators in the months to come.

As we look to the future, we anticipate two major fronts of activity. First, the state will be grappling without revenue from the Fair Tax. We will have to stay engaged and vigilant to let our representatives know that budget cuts should not harm our most vulnerable residents or our schools. Second, many school districts are being pushed to open for full in-person instruction regardless of social distancing considerations or community spread of COVID-19. We would encourage Local 571 members to decide if they or someone they know might consider running for a position on their school board to give empathy and reason good standing in the debate over school safety. (School board candidacy petitions for April 2021 must be filed between December 14 and December 21, 2020.)

We hope you have a safe and peaceful holiday season.

Another Data Snapshot—The Nation's Report Card



The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) Report Card was issued in October, 2020. Educators, elected officials and policymakers use NAEP results to develop ways to improve education. First administered in 1969, NAEP is the largest nationally representative and continuing assessment in various subjects such as civics, geography, mathematics, reading, science, U.S. History, and writing. NAEP tests a small sample of students at grades 4, 8, and 12 for the main assessments, and at ages 9, 13, or 17 for the long-term trend assessments. These specific three grades and ages represent critical junctures in academic achievement. Only some school districts in Illinois including Chicago choose to have their students participate.

The average scores for 12th-grade students declined in reading and has stayed the same for math since 2019 with scores dropping for struggling students. AFT President Randi Weingarten comments “What we see in this data snapshot, while disappointing, is not surprising: Our students—particularly in Black, Brown and low-income communities—are still bearing the brunt of two decades of austerity, competition and test-based fixation that have failed to prioritize the needs of students. Our most vulnerable students are falling behind across grades and subjects—an indication that they need our help, and more support.”

The question should be “Why”? Almost half of America’s kids have trauma, only exacerbated by the pandemic. Schools need nurses, counselors, and social workers. Without these professionals in every school, students do not have the support they need. Weingarten goes on to state, “--it’s vital to meet kids where they are and to do what evidence shows works for improving student well-being and achievement.” Some policy makers profess student learning loss, while educators embark on learning recovery for students.

With a new federal administration at the helm whose choice for a new Secretary of Education will be welcomed, there is the hope that these issues and the serious investment in the kids who need it the most, will be at the forefront of education policy and funding.

To learn more about the latest NAEP Report Card results, go to: <https://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard>



ATTENTION PSRPs
 Please note a **change**
 was made to the
JoAnn Horowitz Scholarship
 eligibility for 2020-2021

JoAnn Horowitz Scholarship—Two \$1,500 one-time awards will be given in 2021 to current PSRPs who are members in good standing of the WSTU, Local 571 and pursuing a BA/BS or MA/MS in an **education-related field**. Applications will be available at wstu571.org, Local 571's Facebook page, or by calling 630-468-4098.

All application materials must be postmarked on or before February 15, 2021.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Patty Clancy, pclancy@ift-aft.org or call 630-468-4083.

Be Prepared to Stay Safe and Healthy in Winter

Winter storms and cold temperatures can be dangerous. Stay safe and healthy by planning ahead. Prepare your home and cars. Prepare for power outages and outdoor activity. Check on older adults. For safety tips in English and Spanish, go to: <https://www.cdc.gov/ncch/ncch/features/winterweather/index.html>

To All Local 571 Members

We send you our warmest thoughts and best wishes for a wonderful and safe holiday season and a happy new year.

Your Local 571 Officers and Staff



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

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