

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

# Union Messenger

*“A Union of Professionals”*

## This Is Not Business As Usual

### May Calendar

All House and Executive Board Meetings will be held virtually until further notice.

- 5/10—ExBd Mtg. (5:30 p.m.)
- 5/10—HOR Mtg. (6:45 p.m.)
- 5/10—Vote on 571 proposed budget
- 5/18—Registration deadline for IMRF Seminar (virtual)
- 5/20—IMRF Seminar (virtual)

### 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

It took quite a while for the education community and others as well, to stop bemoaning student “learning loss” throughout the COVID -19 pandemic. Our students did not stop learning when classrooms met remotely. Some in the education community believe that students have been irreparably harmed if not for future work or career attainment, but for their entire lives.



Rather than amplify “learning loss”, the Learning Policy Institute (LPI) led by Linda Darling-Hammond would rather raise up “learning recovery.” There is no denying that COVID-19 has had an impact on learning. Less content was covered. Student engagement and performance have been lower. Because of the shortened school day (or time in front of a screen), there have been lost opportunities for expanded learning. And devastatingly, increased mental health issues of both students and their teachers continue.

How do we restart and reinvent school for our students? The LPI has provided a framework for doing so.

<https://restart-reinvent.learningpolicyinstitute.org>

Rather than look at what was not covered during the last year, let’s look at strategies for accelerating learning. These include assessing what students need (not the yearly state student assessments), using effective teaching and learning, making the most of summer learning, utilizing intensive interventions like tutoring, providing expanded learning time, and establishing and expanding community schools. (See *Community Schools as an Equitable School Improvement Strategy: A Review of the Evidence*)

[https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/sites/default/files/product-files/Community\\_Schools\\_Effective\\_REPORT.pdf](https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/sites/default/files/product-files/Community_Schools_Effective_REPORT.pdf)

Effective teaching and learning include ensuring supports for social and emotional learning, redesigning school for stronger relationships, emphasizing authentic, culturally-responsive learning, and preparing educators for reinventing schools.

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### **This Is Not Business As Usual** *(cont'd from pg. 1)*

Social and emotional learning should strive to create a mindset for a sense of belonging, a sense of purpose, and a sense that school is worthwhile. By addressing SEL, it can lead to safer schools, greater belonging, higher achievement, higher graduation rates, and improved college-and career-ready skills.

Key factors for effective summer learning programs should:

- intentionally design programs to meet student and community needs
- have a sufficient duration to make an impact (5+ weeks)
- provide high quality, meaningful learning opportunities
- create a positive climate

Key strategies for summer learning are universal enrichment and contextualized learning that is culturally responsive, personally engaging, that fosters belonging and connection, and partners with community organizations.

Tutoring is found to be highly effective for improving student learning in a relatively short period of time. There are 5 Key Elements for sustainable and effective tutoring. A recent study shows impressive gains.

<https://www.nber.org/papers/w27476>

1. Employ certified teachers and trained support providers such as current teachers, retirees, paraprofessionals, or teacher candidates
2. At least 3 days a week, 30+ minutes, during the school day
3. Groups of 5 or fewer students working with a tutor
4. Tutor training and support for continuous improvement
5. Structured time with alignment to local curriculum

Findings show that a wide range of well-implemented programs yield benefits for students which are greater achievement, higher attendance, increased graduation rates, improvement of relationships and attitudes, and reduced racial and socio-economic gaps. A cost benefit in savings may also occur.

With the release of federal dollars to accelerate learning through the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, to school districts and states, both current and future needs of students can be addressed if these funds are used strategically and equitably over time and focus on evidence-based interventions.

As we prepare to welcome students back into the classroom, we cannot return to “business as usual.” We have an opportunity to transform our education system so that all students, regardless of zip code, can participate in supportive and meaningful learning experiences.

## Members Engaged

The **Argo Summit Council of Teachers** has been without a logo and the Executive Board decided it was time to get one! Seeking help from the membership, a contest was held to find a great logo that best represented the Council and District 104. After reviewing the submissions, **Monica Cardenas**, a former District 104 student, and a current Council member and teacher, won!



In unity,

*Jane A. Russell*

Local 571 President

## West Suburban Teachers Union Local 571 PSRP members



You have known and loved our professional issues conference for more than 40 years. While we can't safely get together for our 44th conference in person this year, COVID-19 can't stop us from meeting virtually to share our best practices, tactics and strategies for organizing, and the camaraderie and "can do" PSRP spirit that make us the heart and soul of our workplaces.

Register [here](#) for this year's conference to celebrate not just surviving, but thriving. Because of the resilience and resourcefulness of our school and college staff, our public schools and colleges will come out of this pandemic stronger than ever.

Our free virtual conference will help equip members with the tools they need to strengthen our unions for the challenges we face now with COVID-19 and reopening as well as our ongoing fight for dignity, respect and living wages. Encourage your members to [register!](#)

Without the traditional costs of travel and lodging, the 2021 conference is accessible to even more members and locals than in previous years.

Our virtual conference will begin on the evening of **Friday, April 23**, from 7 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. EST, and continue on **Saturday, April 24**, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. EST.

We will be adding more conference information on our [website](#) and through the online registration portal.

**Please NOTE: If you attend the AFT PSRP Conference, the cost of the registration fee of \$50/person can be reimbursed from Local 571 as follows:**

- 1) Contact [pclancy@ift-aft.org](mailto:pclancy@ift-aft.org) for a reimbursement form and
- 2) Submit a one or two sentence summary on how you will use what you learned to increase membership engagement in your council. This summary may be shared in the May *Union Messenger* issue. Please submit your summary by Monday, April 26, 2021

### ADMINISTRATIVE PROFESSIONALS DAY

WEDNESDAY—APRIL 21

Administrative Professionals Day is an observance that takes place on the Wednesday of the last week of April.



It is a day to recognize the work that administrative professionals such as secretaries, administrative assistants, receptionists, among others do, and how they are essential not only to their respective workplaces but also to the economy around the world.

### Earth Day

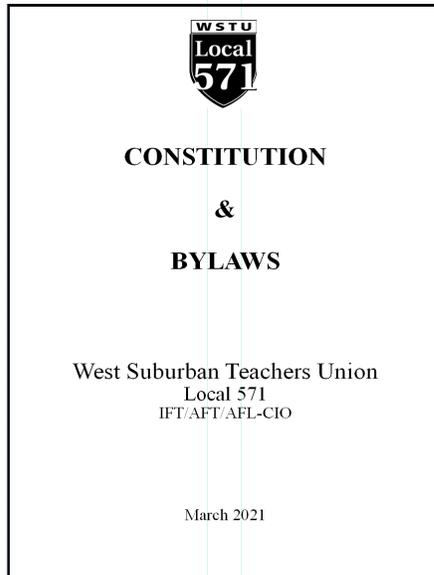
THURSDAY-APRIL 22

Earth Day is celebrated internationally on April 22. It is a day to educate people about the issues affecting the planet and to raise awareness for and celebrate the efforts in place to protect the environment.



As a global observance, it sometimes extends to a week-long celebration, aptly named Earth Week, and the celebrations are coordinated by the Earth Day Network across 193 countries.

## It's Union Work



Over 50 Local 571 members worked to make the West Suburban Teachers Union convention a success. Forty-three members attended the March 18, 2021 convention assembled, virtually, where the Local's Constitution and By-Laws were amended by the delegates. The last convention was held in 2016. The changes in the Local's Constitution and By-Laws directly affect all members as well as the Councils of Local 571.

The Constitution and By-Laws Committee chaired by 571 Financial Secretary Jon Pazol, met in January to review potential amendments. There were 14 proposed changes this year with the committee meeting to ensure there was cohesiveness between proposed changes and the total document. The draft amendments were then shared with the WSTU Executive Board and House of Representatives prior to being sent to the convention delegates for their review one month prior to the convention.

The 571 Convention Committee chaired by 571 Vice-president Rachel Esposito, also met in preparation so that the convention business could be conducted as planned. Robert's Rules of Order are used to provide a framework for the adopted convention rules of conduct and proceedings. The number of delegates must be certified so that business can be conducted to make changes in the Local's Constitution and By-Laws. And, since the proceedings are so important, a Parliamentarian, an expert in Robert's Rules of Order, is present to provide assistance to Local officers both before and during the convention. Nick Christen, IFT Research Director and attorney, served as the Parliamentarian.

Noteworthy changes to the Constitution and By-Laws included:

Amending the Purpose "to expose and fight all forms of racism, discrimination, and promote policies and trainings that enhance participation in the union by underrepresented minorities".

A new standing committee was added-- Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion. A chair and members will be sought in the fall of 2021.

The 571 Retirees Council will be represented by 2 delegates and their president at the House of Representatives meetings, increasing their representation by 1 additional delegate.

Both the 571 Treasurer and Financial Secretary will provide quarterly, rather than monthly reports, to the House of Representatives.

The newly revised document is being updated and will be available in electronic form for all members to review in late spring. **To obtain a copy of the Local 571 Constitution and By-Laws, please make the request to your Council President.**

Although the Local's Constitution and By-laws have just been amended, we are always mindful that the document can be improved. Many Local 571 members have helped to make the Local 571 Constitution and By-laws a timely, working document. The Local officers appreciate everyone's efforts and thank them for participating in the 2021 West Suburban Teachers Union Convention.



**April is Child Abuse Prevention Month**

**April is Child Abuse Prevention Month.** To help spread awareness, the Children's Advocacy Center created a "**30 Ways to Prevent Child Abuse**" flyer that gives parents, caretakers and anyone who interacts with children advice, warning signs and resources to help keep the children in your life safe!

Download the 30 Ways to Prevent Child Abuse flyer and share it with your friends, family, coworkers or anyone you think would benefit from the information.

Download the flyer by visiting:  
<https://bit.ly/3rAw4v6>

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



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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 20, 2021

**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](mailto:pclancy@ift-aft.org) or by phone at 630-468-4083 by Tuesday, May 18th.

**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 24, 2021  
10:00 a.m.—Noon

**OR**

Tuesday,  
July 13, 2021  
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 24** Webinar, contact Patty Clancy by June 22 at [pclancy@ift-aft.org](mailto:pclancy@ift-aft.org) and you will be sent a link to register for the webinar.

If you plan to attend the **July 13** Webinar, contact Patty Clancy by July 9 at [pclancy@ift-aft.org](mailto:pclancy@ift-aft.org) and you will be sent a link to register for the webinar.

**GREAT LAKES ULI  
CANCELLED**

Unfortunately, the Great Lakes ULI program for 2021 is another victim of COVID. While vaccines become more and more available, the current spike in COVID cases and the wide variance of mask protocols and crowd size restrictions from state to state has made it difficult for the ULI team to plan a program for this summer.

The professional learning team will continue to monitor Illinois COVID guidelines with the goal of providing in-person training opportunities in the summer and is looking forward to the Great Lakes ULI returning in 2022.



## Legislative Director Report

Max Schoenberg and Nicole Burr

With many new and familiar faces taking on important roles in our state and federal governments, there may be great changes ahead that can benefit working families. Members of the IFT have been welcomed at several special events with prominent legislators.

**Illinois House Speaker Chris Welch** described his commitment to organized labor. He spoke about how Unions in the healthcare field protect workers and patients. A stalwart defender of pensions, he opposes taking pension protections out of the Illinois Constitution. He supports the right to organize, and recognizes that at some point, the state will need a better system to raise revenue fairly.

**U.S. Senator Dick Durbin** spoke to concerns held by downstate voters (outside the Chicago metro area). He mentioned that economic populism may be able to bridge cultural differences. He believes that all working families in Illinois will benefit from the Biden rescue plan, which involves cash payments to households, extended unemployment benefits, child tax credits, and subsidies for hospitals. Senator Durbin also spoke about federally guaranteed voting and redistricting standards. The Senator agreed with an observation made by IFT President Dan Montgomery, that the rising success of pro-worker values in college communities is being shaped by the voices of organized labor among college faculty and graduate assistants.

**Illinois Rep. Janet Yang Rohr** (D-Naperville) explained some of the initiatives she has been working on during her first few weeks in Springfield. She is a co-sponsor of HB 1782, which would exempt food service contracts in schools from being selected strictly on the basis of lowest price. Rep. Yang Rohr believes this could help students to receive higher quality food service and could increase wages for cafeteria workers. She is also a co-sponsor of a bill that would repeal limits on retirees serving as substitute teachers in districts that provide evidence of a qualified substitute shortage.

**Illinois Senate President Don Harmon** talked openly about how he believes workers are what makes our economy function. He is confident that the Democrats will maintain a supermajority going into 2022, but also believes we will need every voter to be counted, because Trump and his supporters aren't going away anytime soon, and it will be a liability. He also talked about his desire to see gerrymandering reform taken to the national level, rather than the state.

**Illinois Senator Christina Castro** discussed the American Rescue Plan and how it would help schools, restaurants, small businesses, healthcare providers, and working families that have been hit the hardest during the pandemic. In her discussion she once again talked about her support for labor and specifically her dedication toward teaching. Finally, she discussed her measure to bring tax dollars to Kane County.

And on the lighter side, **Illinois Senator Laura Ellman** hosted an evening of improv game night, featuring Jonathan Keaton. This event was not one where the Senator was speaking on her legislation or plans in office, rather it was a night of levity, and an interesting insight to watch her have to think on her feet. She was impressive with her wit and quick timing!

### 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](mailto:571editor@gmail.com)



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