

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

Union Messenger

“A Union of Professionals”

September Calendar

9/11—ExBd Mtg. (5:30 p.m.—Westmont)
 9/11—Registration deadline for Legislative Breakfast
 9/19—Retirees Council New Retirees Lunch/Meeting (11:00 a.m.—Westmont)
 9/30—571 Legislative Breakfast

Union Messenger

Kyle Stern, President
 April Giannosa, Vice-President
 Sandra Erickson, Treasurer
 Cathleen Pope, Secretary
 Eugene Poull, Financial Secretary
 Brett Blair, Legal Defense Secretary
 Emily Moore, Cope Chair
 John Wardisiani, Cope Treasurer
 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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Welcome Back

Dear Union Siblings,

It’s hard to believe it is already the end of August. Local 571 extends our warmest welcome back to each and every one of you. It is with great joy and excitement that we embark on this new journey together—a journey filled with the promise of growth, learning, and most importantly, making a difference in the lives of our students.



As we step into the halls of our schools, we are reminded of the profound impact that educators and staff have on shaping young minds. Your dedication, passion, and commitment to nurturing a love for learning are the building blocks of our school's success. Your unwavering support and enthusiasm create an environment where students feel safe, encouraged, and motivated to reach their fullest potential.

Every school year marks a fresh beginning, an opportunity to reflect on the past and learn from our experiences. As we navigate these challenging times of culture wars and political debate, let us stand united, drawing strength from our shared vision and purpose. As I was reminded at the Illinois Federation of Teachers Retreat this summer, together, we can overcome any obstacle and create a supportive community that thrives on collaboration, innovation, and determination.

As you return to your classrooms and offices, remember that you play an instrumental role in shaping not only the minds but also the hearts of our students. Your kindness, understanding, and empathy can make a lasting impression on a child's life. Your encouragement can inspire them to believe in themselves, to persevere, and to dream big. Together, we can make the world a better place.

Each one of you brings something unique to the table, and together, we form a vibrant tapestry of knowledge and expertise. Let us value and respect the differences that make us stronger, nurturing an inclusive environment where everyone feels valued, heard and seen.

As the school year unfolds, let us remember to support one another. I show my students the following quote each year:

Resolve to be tender with the young, compassionate with the aged, sympathetic with the striving, and tolerant of the weak and the wrong. Sometime in life you will have been all of these.-George Washington Carver

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Welcome Back

The challenges of the academic year may be formidable, but together, we are the Union, a force to be reckoned with. We must lean on each other for advice, share our experiences, and celebrate our achievements together. Let us also seize this moment to create a school year that will be remembered for its excellence, compassion, and transformative impact.

Here's to a great school year ahead!

In Unity,

Kyle Stern



We have been busy at the Local this summer. We have some new faces on our leadership team. April Giannosa joins us as Vice President and IFT Vice President after Jacki Payne stepped down at the end of May. Emily Moore is our new Cope Chair and John Wardisiani is our new Cope Treasurer. Additionally, Cathy Pope (Secretary), Gene Poull (Financial Secretary), Brett Blair (Legal Defense), Sandy Erickson (Treasurer) and Kyle Stern (President) have been re-elected as officers. We wish them and you all the best.



Congratulations to Amelia Gardiner, daughter of Lora Gardiner, a member of Cicero Council, for winning a 2023 Union Plus Scholarship.

American Federation of Teachers (AFT) Convention Delegates

Nominations are now being accepted for delegates to the American Federation of Teachers Convention that will convene in Houston, TX, on July 22-25, 2024. All Local 571 members are eligible to be nominated as delegates to this convention. There can be up to fifty-three (53) delegates, including the ten (10) Officers which include Area Trustees, who became delegates by virtue of being elected to office. Ballots will be counted, and candidates will be ranked by the number of ballots received. Allowing for the ten (10) Officers, the forty-three (43) candidates with the most votes will be declared delegates. The remaining candidates will be declared alternate delegates; and should any delegate(s) notify the Local of an inability to fulfill the duties of delegate, these alternate delegates will be selected in rank order of votes received to serve in place of the delegate who is unable to serve. Delegates who attend the convention will be reimbursed for expenses up to \$2,081/delegate. Nominations must be printed or typed (name and Council) and received in the Local 571 office on or before February 5, 2024. Nominees will receive a written or electronic acknowledgement of receipt. Voting will take place in April 2024 via secret ballot. Council leaders will notify members of the date(s) that voting will take place. Members' ballots without emails on file will be mailed via U.S. Postal Service to their homes.

Local 571 Executive Board Area Trustees

Nominations are now being accepted for Local 571 Executive Board Area Trustees. The Executive Board of Local 571 shall consist of the Officers of Local 571 which include four (4) Area Trustees, at least one of whom is a PSRP member, and the Local 571 Council Presidents who serve as Trustees. All Local 571 members are eligible to be nominated as Local 571 Area Trustees. The term of office is two (2) years beginning July 1, 2024, and by virtue of their election, they shall be elected also as delegates to the AFT and IFT Conventions. Nominations must be printed or typed (name and Council) and received in the Local 571 office on or before March 11, 2024, Nominees will receive a written or electronic acknowledgement of receipt. Voting will take place in May 2024 via secret ballot. Council leaders will notify members of the date(s) that voting will take place. Interested individuals may request further information about the duties of the office by contacting Local 571. Members' ballots without emails on file will be mailed via U.S. Postal Service to their homes.

BACK TO SCHOOL LEGISLATIVE OPEN HOUSE & RECEPTION

West Suburban Teachers Union cordially invites you and your family to our Back to School Legislative Reception

Friday, September 8, 2023
4:00 - 7:00 p.m.

IFT Robert M. Healey Center
500 Oakmont Lane
Westmont, IL

QUESTIONS

Call 630.468.4088
or email
kstem571@ift-aft.org

Please join us for
cocktails and hors d'oeuvres

RSVP

<https://forms.gle/gV4vpQYLAYMszcNR6>



WEST SUBURBAN TEACHERS UNION

wstu571.org facebook.com/wstu571 @iftaft

18th Annual LEGISLATIVE BREAKFAST

West Suburban Teachers Union cordially invites you to our
18th Annual Legislative Breakfast

Saturday, September 30, 2023
8:00 - 9:00 a.m. | Registration
9:00 a.m. - noon | Program

Hilton Chicago/Oak Brook Hills Resort & Conference Center
in the Marquis Banquet Facility (white tent on the northside of the hotel)

3500 Midwest Road
Oak Brook, Illinois
Parking: Golf Lot
(upon entrance is the north side of the lot)

PROGRAM

- Plated Breakfast
- Illinois State & Federal Lawmakers
- Gift Card Raffle

RSVP

Contact your
Council President by
September 11, 2023.

COST

Free* for Local 571 members.
\$50 for member guests.

*A \$50 fee will be charged
for every member that signs
up and does not attend.



WEST SUBURBAN TEACHERS UNION

wstu571.org facebook.com/wstu571 @iftaft

Please use this link to RSVP to the Back to School
Legislative Reception:

<https://forms.gle/gV4vpQYLAYMszcNR6>

I Am Proud To Be IFT!



The Influence Of A
Good Teacher Can
Never Be Erased!!

Great Lakes Union Leadership Institute

By: April Giannosa

For the last number of summers, the Great Lakes Union Leadership Institute has trained and connected both new and experienced local leaders and activists in all constituency groups from Illinois and the surrounding states. This popular, long-running program, co-hosted by the IFT and AFT, provides participants with hands-on learning of union skills, professional development opportunities, and a chance to network with fellow union members from throughout the Great Lakes region at the beautiful Lake Lawn Resort in Delavan, Wisconsin.

Under the theme, RECLAIM,REIMAGINE,REBUILD, four separate and unique courses were offered during the week-long training at the end of June. I signed up for Powerful Partnerships - Uniting Families and Educators to Build a Thriving School Community for Our Students, not knowing what to expect but hoping to walk away with a couple of new ideas to use with my council.

The course was pretty intense. Not intense in an impossible way, but in a way that challenged participants to really dive deep and analyze the importance of community building and how to strengthen connections with those shareholders who need to have a voice to make schools thrive. The daily conversations in class were extremely insightful. My group and I not only learned together, we also built relationships and bonded. After the ULI concluded, I felt empowered and energized to apply a number of concepts and best practices in my district. I didn't just walk away from Lake Lawn, I paraded out of there ready to start a new school year with a fresh set of skills to grow my council and school community.



2023 IFT PSRP/Public Employees Conference

October 20-21

Springfield, Illinois

The IFT is excited to announce that the popular **PSRP and Public Employees Conference** is back in 2023 after a pandemic hiatus!

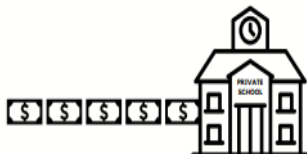
Please mark your calendars now and get ready to register your members to attend this informative two-day event designed just for IFT paraprofessionals and school-related personnel (PSRPs) and public employees.

Planning is underway, and additional conference details will be available in the weeks ahead. As in the past, you can be sure that this event will offer professional development and union-skills workshops, powerful keynote speakers, and opportunities to network and socialize with union colleagues from around the state.

Watch your inbox for conference information and registration materials as they become available. We look forward to being together in person again for this important and empowering event designed to meet the unique needs of PSRPs and public employees.

Questions? Please email [Debbie Brazzale](mailto:Debbie.Brazzale).

Did you know?



Illinois has a school voucher program (known as "Invest in Kids") that funnels tax dollars to private—almost all religious—schools.

Religious schools receiving vouchers can—and do!—discriminate on the basis of LGBTQ+ status, disability status, religion, and more.

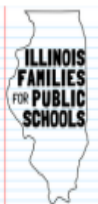
Illinois' public schools must educate all kids, but 80% don't have adequate funding to do so!

Voucher advocates want Illinois' program to keep going and growing.

Public school supporters want public funds to go to public schools that serve *all* kids.

You can help end Illinois' voucher program!

PUBLIC FUNDS MUST BE FOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS THAT SERVE ALL KIDS!



Learn more and take action:
bit.ly/gameovervouchersIL



<https://www.ilfps.org/sunsetilvouchers>

Invest in Kids Act

Jon Monique Manuel
 Legislative Director

Invest in Kids Act, sounds great, right! Well, there is an old adage that says, “All that glitters is not gold.” The Illinois Invest in Kids Act is a voucher program that is truly not gold. School vouchers like Illinois Invest in Kids are tax credit scholarship programs designed to divert resources from underfunded public schools. The Act was passed in 2017 with the intent to expire after five years.

Things you should know:

- Invest in Kids diverts \$75 million a year in tax revenue to fund vouchers.
- 80% of Illinois schools are not adequately funded.
- Vouchers decrease equity, state accountability and transparency. Equity in education is not created when funds are diverted from public schools to private schools through scholarships programs. Equity is created by providing funding for smaller class sizes along SEL services and support.
- Private Schools are not held accountable as to how diverted funds are spent. Also schools receiving vouchers do not have to comply with the full Illinois school code including curriculum standards.

Do not be fooled, the Invest in Kids Act is not investing in Illinois public schools, it is a voucher program that is defunding our public schools. As educators it is our responsibility to see that this Act rides into the sunset. To make sure that our state legislators do not reintroduce the Act, do not take any action on the Act, just let it erase itself off of the books. Please reach out to your state representative and let them know....YOU DO NOT SUPPORT “INVEST IN KIDS!”

120 DAYS/600 HOURS POST-RETIREMENT LIMITS EXTENDED TO JUNE 30, 2026

The Governor has signed Public Act 103-0088, which extends the ability of TRS annuitants to work up to 120 paid days or 600 paid hours within a school year (with a limit of 100 paid days in the same classroom). The yearly limitations were going to return to 100 paid days/500 paid hours, but that is now postponed until July 1, 2026.

Members Engaged



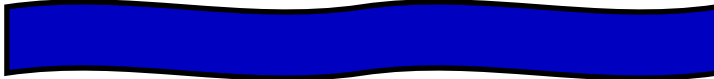
Members Engaged



REMINDER

Retirees Council New Member Luncheon
Tuesday 9/19/2023
11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

To be held at:
Robert M. Healey Conference Center
500 Oakmont Lane
Westmont, IL 60559
Entrance D or E



Reservation forms were sent out to current members and need to be returned by 9/12/2023.

New members, please contact Patty Clancy to RSVP by phone at 630-468-4083 or by email at pclancy@ift-aft.org

Does Treasurer Frerichs have lost money for you or your family?

Check I-Cash!

Does the Illinois Treasurer's Office have money waiting for you?

The I-Cash program safeguards unclaimed property.

Search illinoistreasurer.gov/icash to search for your name and file a claim.

Illinois Unclaimed Property – Official State Site (illinoistreasurer.gov)

Monday—September 4



Union-Made BBQ - Chicago Federation of Labor (chicagolabor.org)



Legal Program

Get quality legal assistance at an affordable price

<https://www.unionplus.org/benefits/home/legal-help>

Do you have a legal question? Need to hire an attorney? Because you're a union member, you can get free access to basic legal help or upgrade to a higher level of premium legal services for a low monthly fee.

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: rhancock@wstu571.org



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