

Update

American Federation of Teachers Local 604, AFL-CIO

October/November 2018

Your DCFS reporting responsibility *by Adam Harding, IFT FSD*

What does it exactly mean to be a “mandated” reporter? What are my obligations under the law, and what processes must I follow? What happens if I am accused of not reporting or perpetrating abuse?

These are questions we field all too often within our Local. Let’s take a further look into these ideas.

What does it exactly mean to be a “mandated” reporter? Under the laws within Illinois, all school personnel are required to report any suspected child abuse or neglect directly to the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) by telephone (1-800-25-ABUSE). You will also have to follow the directions from DCFS regarding a follow-up written report.

What are my obligations under the law, and what processes must I follow? This responsibility is the mandate that requires each of you to satisfy this obligation, if needed. The law is extremely clear that every mandated reporter has this responsibility, and the process that needs to be followed is direct contact with DCFS. It does not satisfy the mandate if you report it to your administrator, you need to directly contact DCFS, or ensure that the call has been made. The best advice is make the call yourself. Your employer also has a policy on this, and you should be aware of any expectations they have regarding reporting. Usually, it is notification to your direct supervisor that a report has

been made. A special note here that the law also protects you from any repercussions from your employer for filing a report.

What happens if I am accused of not reporting or perpetrating abuse? This is an area that we at the office seem to get involved with. As a union member you would have rights to representation for any accusations against yourself. This is a benefit that the union does not have to provide to non-members. In addition, if you are accused of either not reporting or accusations against you, your union membership also provides the Occupational Liability Insurance in the amount of one-million dollars (\$1,000,000). If you are accused of not reporting, and possible criminal charges are brought against you, your union membership also provides criminal defense legal assistance.

We know working in education has many mandates and knowledge of both your responsibilities as well as benefits of union membership is the key to empowerment.



Manhattan members help community

Forty-three members came throughout the day on August 14th to collect food and toiletries donated by the staff, students and the community. These items helped stock the shelves for the back to school food supply! This was sponsored by the Manhattan Council to benefit the Manhattan Food Pantry.



2 The time is now, Vote!
by President Briggs

4 Endorsement Information
A word from JB Pritzker

6 Workers’ Compensation by
Attorney James Ridge

The time is now, **VOTE**

from the president's pen

The last week of August saw millions of Americans giving Senator John McCain a proper send off after the battle with cancer took his life, a life that any patriot should admire.

Watching some of the events that spread over multiple days, I noticed something that seems to be missing in our country now, civility.

Many images are stuck in my mind: speeches from former Vice-President Joe Biden and former Presidents George W. Bush and Barack Obama. Then, there is the image that went viral, George W. passing a piece of candy to former First Lady Michelle Obama.

But on Sept. 4th, we were brought back into the reality of politics in America today. If you did not see or hear Sen. Lindsey Graham's comments during the initial hearing for the confirmation of Brett Kavanaugh to the United States Supreme Court, the news outlets made sure we were informed. The Republican Senator from South Carolina chastised the Democrats for questioning the nomination. He said, "if you want to pick judges for your way of thinking, then you better win an election!"

How quickly he and other Republicans forget that just a little over two years ago, his party blocked Federal Appellate Judge Merrick Garland from even getting a hearing after President Obama nominated him for Justice Antonin Scalia seat. And yes, Obama had won his election.

Graham's tirade came after Kavanaugh entered the room and refused to shake the hand of Fred Guttenberg, the father of a slain Parkland student. He had introduced himself as Jaime Guttenberg's dad, but Kavanaugh pulled back his hand and walked away. Guttenberg said, "I guess he did not want to deal with the reality of gun violence," CNN reported.

But for once, I do agree with Graham; we do need to win elections, and 2018 will probably go down as one of the most important ones in Illinois history, if not the country's. I know we seem to hear this cry every election cycle, but after what we have experienced two of the last three years in Illinois, it really is critical.

We went without a budget for over two years. This action has crippled higher education as budgets remain stagnant, for the most part, and students are leaving the state to attend college in Alabama and Iowa. Most likely, they will not return once they graduate.

In addition, enrollment in colleges of education is down between 25 and 35% while school districts are feeling the teacher-shortage pinch and more non-licensed staff are filling spots in the classroom.

As I said at the August Senate meeting, most of us did not enter educa-

your **VOTE**
is your **VOICE**



Bill Briggs

tion to become political, but now it is critical to the future of education in Illinois that do we get involved. My friends in the IFT wonder why it is difficult to get our members to work for campaigns, and it is not because we have not tried. But the reality is that few do become engaged.

This year, we have seen an increase in members redirecting their COPE funds to one of three scholarships. When asked the reason, the response is usually something on the lines of "I don't want any money going to politicians who support choice in the abortion issue." Yes, we all know that most Democrats lean pro-choice, while most Republicans are pro-life. I understand the thought process, but I also wonder if they watch how these same people vote on issues that effect children after they are born! Issues like health and nutrition, public safety, or Head Start programs.

What I am asking is for you to vote, and vote for the candidate who is pro public education. Our list of endorsed candidates is included in the *Update*. These candidates were selected on their voting record on education issues, like

HB 5136, which provides that the PERA committees meet annually and include language exempting RIF and PERA committees from the Open Meetings Act.

HB 5175 which removes provisions allowing the State Charter School Commission to reverse a school board's decision to deny, revoke, or not renew a charter.

SB 2546 which allows graduate employees of all classifications to unionize.

or SB 2892 that raises the minimum starting salary for a public school teacher to \$40,000 by 2022; remember also that Gov. Rauner vetoed this bill.

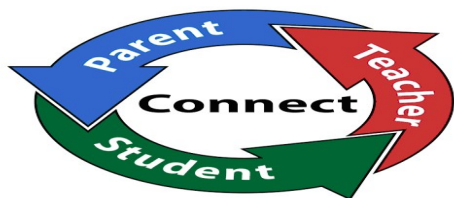
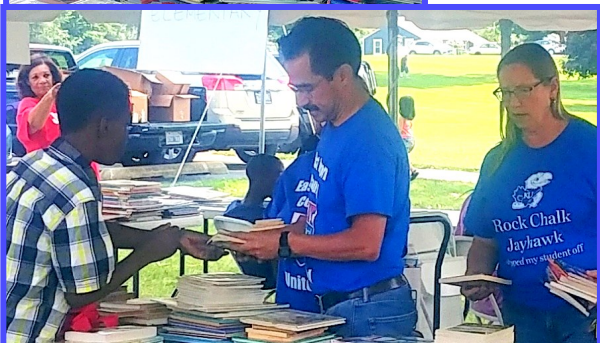
Yes, this election is important. For public education in this state to move forward, we need to make sure that JB is our next governor and that he has both the House and Senate to work with him. In addition, we must do our part to help the Democrats take back at least the House in Washington.

So yes, become political even if it is just getting out to vote and taking a friend with you. Our survival is in your hands, as is our demise.

William E. Briggs

Successful book drive at East Aurora

East Aurora Council members participated in a book give away at the annual Back to School Fair. It was organized by building representative Melinda Thomas from East High. Members came throughout the day to help out. Several hundred books were given away to local children! Books were donated by council members, the community and school libraries.



Lincoln school voting on 1st contract



Lincoln teacher, Talitha Shi (above) places her vote in ballot box on August 9, 2018. Teachers ratified their first contract after successful negotiations with the Will County Regional Superintendent, Shawn Walsh.

Waubonsee 10 year tradition!

The Faculty Council of Waubonsee Community College (below) collected back to school supplies for children at East Aurora School District 131. Many faculty donated pencils, pens, markers, rulers, index cards and backpacks. These items were delivered to the East Aurora School District mid-August in time for the distribution of school supplies. This was the 10th year the Waubonsee Faculty Council donated school supplies to a local school district.



ILLINOIS 2018 GENERAL ELECTION LOCAL 604 ENDORSED CANDIDATES

Please see our website at
aftlocal604.org

To see the complete list of IL Senate & House endorsements, please go to:

www.ift-aft.org/vote/candidates

We care.
We fight.
We show up.
We vote.



One of the IFT and Local 604 endorsed candidates is Lisa Dugan, who is running for the 79th District state representative seat. At the Herscher Labor Day Parade, Lisa (fourth from the left) had support from IFT field staffer Katie Kollross, Beth Anderson, Kankakee senior Chase LaRoche, and Local 604 president, Bill Briggs.



Pritzker for Governor



Hello to the hardworking members of AFT Local 604. I'm JB Pritzker, I'm running for governor to put Springfield back on the side of working families, and I need your help.

In December, your union – the Illinois Federation of Teachers – was the first major public employee union to endorse me and my candidacy for governor. I was so proud to receive that support. At the time, I said that the IFT's endorsement was the beginning of my work, not the end. I pledged to work hard and listen closely to earn the votes of rank and file union members across the state.

There are clear differences between Bruce Rauner and me. I support collective bargaining rights and the right to organize, Bruce Rauner wants to destroy those rights. I believe a pension is a promise that the state must keep. Bruce Rauner thinks we need to cut your benefits and jeopardize your retirement security. I support a fair tax system where wealthy people, like Bruce Rauner and me, pay more and working families pay less. Bruce Rauner wants to keep the regressive, outdated, flat tax system and thinks that he should pay the same income tax rate as a teacher's aide.

Bruce Rauner has focused his campaign on lying to distract from the fact that he has no real accomplishments as governor. Whether he's lying about my support for public education or running false TV ads saying I support a vehicle mileage tax, it's clear that Rauner can't run on his failed record, so he's lying about mine. I'm ready to put Illinois on a different path. That's why my campaign is focused on putting forward real plans to invest in education, expand healthcare, and create jobs in all of our communities.

I pledge to you that, as your governor, I will value and seek out the voice of educators and public employees. I will listen to teachers, faculty, and staff – and your unions. By working *together*, we can fix what is broken in our state and move forward.

I wish that I could meet every voter – and every union member – personally. I know that isn't possible, and I appreciate the opportunity to speak to you directly via your Local newsletter. Thank you for all the work you do each and every day serving your students and your community. Juliana and I would be honored to have your vote in this election, and we won't let you down.

JB

The Janus Effect *by*

Bob Marcink, Joliet Junior College Council President

When the Supreme Court announced its decision on the Janus case in June, public employee union leaders across the country collectively shook their heads, and then they did what they do—they went to work.

As you probably know by now, Mark Janus was an Illinois state employee who was a Fair Share worker under AFSCME. His case was fast-tracked through the Illinois court system in order to put it before the Supreme Court last spring. In deciding in his favor on June 27, the Court, in essence, said that workers who choose not to join the union do not have to pay fair share because that violates their First Amendment rights.

The decision was expected, and the AFT-IFT and other public service unions planned for the worst for several months.

At Local 604, the leadership discussed the potential consequences of the Janus case with our senators for several months leading up to the decision. We were given fact sheets and other handouts explaining the benefits of union membership, and we took that message to our members. It looks like our three community college councils have successfully passed the first test.

Nancy Christensen, president of Waubensee Community College faculty council, said Waubensee “is holding steady” at 92 percent membership. That reflects no change compared to the pre-Janus days. Steve DePasquale, president of Kankakee Community College faculty council, said the decision may have impacted new membership slightly, but overall the council membership remains strong. “We didn’t lose any previous members, but two new faculty chose not to join,” DePasquale said. Joliet Junior College maintained 100-percent membership. All the new members joined, and all of the current

members remained.

The work on Janus will be ongoing. Each college is working on a Memorandum of Agreement on the removal of Fair Share language from contracts now that Fair Share is a thing of the past. A template was provided by Local 604. JJC should have that in place in the near future.

In other news, the state legislature passed a budget in the spring provided some certainty to community colleges for fiscal 2019 funding. That was the good news.

The bad news was a decision to effectively “cap” raises at 3 percent for SURS and TRS members for years that will be counted toward retirement. In short, the colleges (along with local school districts) will be surcharged by SURS (or TRS) for any raises above 3 percent in the years that will be counted toward a teacher’s retirement, most often the final four years of employment. One concern is that school boards and colleges will use the rule to depress all raises, not just the raises for those close to retirement.

This was clearly a back-door effort to pass along retirement costs to local districts and community colleges. Not uncharacteristically, the 3-percent rule was buried deep inside the budget, and many legislators voted on it without knowing it was there.

There is some hope that legislation will be introduced in the lame-duck session following the November election to overturn that rule, but all three colleges are preparing as if the 3-percent rule will take effect.

The change—raises were previously “capped” at 6 percent for salaries counted towards retirement—is a particular problem for colleges that have a step system. For example, at JJC the steps are about 2.85 percent apart. That would leave very little room for any cost-of-living increase if the college were to try to avoid any surcharges. Like most colleges, JJC starts new faculty low, with the understanding that time and commitment to the college will pay off as you progress up the

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Local 604 members learn 21st century technology

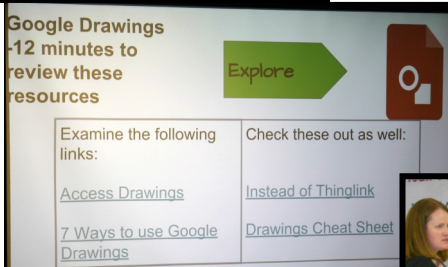


Photos by Kathy Stenson



(left) Instructor Michelle Nevin, Lemont council president, helps a member. (above) A member describes a situation she had in her classroom.

During the summer, Lemont council president Michelle Nevin taught a workshop that gave participants an opportunity to build on technology skills in education while also gaining professional credits. The courses taught were: Rocking Formative Assessments with Technology, Intro to Google Suite, Intermediate Google Suite and Advanced Google Suite. Michelle helped to provide knowledge, skills and strategies for intended goals as well as helping participants with various classroom assessments. The courses were well attended.



These classes are offered by Local 604 at no cost. Watch for any upcoming information on more classes to be offered!

The Union Difference *by Vicki Goebel, Local 604 FSD*



Below are two examples of what can happen when your union is involved vs when it is not.

A support staff employee had needed access to the district's provided insurance when the spouse lost employment. Upon asking the district about open enrollment, the district did not respond to the insurance request, but instead, suspended all her daily extra duties, resulting in a significant loss in pay. The employee reached out to the union to see if this was permissible for the district to do. The union got involved and asked the same questions but got a very different response. The employee will be back to work doing all the normal daily

duties and regained lost hours and will also be allowed access to the insurance!

A nonmember covered by the contract had never reached out to the union for help in dealing with a disrespectful, bullying supervisor. Health issues developed as a result of the work environment and the employee quit the job, acquired a different job and settled for a significant pay cut. Had this employee reached out to the union, chances are this situation could have been resolved without a resignation and cut in pay. The employee sent the union a message after the fact in hopes that the union can prevent other employees from enduring this type of work situation.

Your rights under the workers' compensation act

by James M. Ridge, attorney at law

Concentrating in workers' compensation claims FELA and personal injury cases.

Know the facts about Workers' Compensation before you head to the polls this November!

Two recent reports show Illinois Workers' Compensation costs are going down again. The 2017 Illinois Department of Insurance Workers' Compensation Insurance Oversight Report shows insurance profitability increasing, while their loss ratio is going down. This is primarily due to decreases in permanent partial indemnity benefits and medical payments to physicians.

In addition, the independent National Council on Compensation Insurance issued its new rate recommendation for 2019: 8.5%. This brings the cumulative total reduction since the Amendments of September 2011 to over 50%. Despite the significant cost reductions, Governor Rauner continues to argue that structural reforms to our workers' compensation system are needed to reduce costs to employers.

Last year, the Illinois General Assembly passed two bills intended to make Workers' Compensation Insurance more cost effective for employers while continuing to protect injured workers. Governor Rauner vetoed both bills.

For example, HB 2525, sponsored by State Senator Kwame Raoul, candidate for Illinois Attorney General, primarily added oversight to the process of setting Workers' Compensation premiums so they could be more in line with the recommendations being made by NCCI. **No Republican Representatives and only one**

Republican Senator from southern Illinois voted for the legislation.

It is vital that we hold our politicians to account for their positions on Workers' Compensation! If you have any questions regarding your local candidate's position, please contact us.

For more information on your rights contact:

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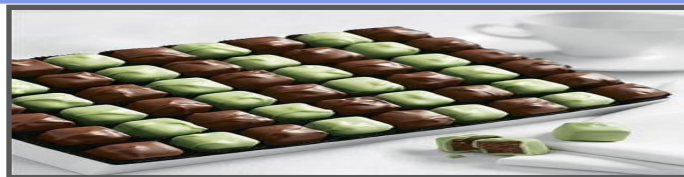


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Grand Total			\$ _____

Make checks payable to AFT Local 604
Deadline for Christmas delivery-Friday, December 14

Janus...continued from page 5

steps. JJC is entering a negotiation year, so the 3-percent rule will definitely be part of the negotiations. The good news is that the college appears to be willing to work with the council to find a solution to the 3-percent dilemma. Like other institutions, JJC realizes that the 3-percent rule could affect recruitment of qualified faculty and administrators. The faculty contract expires next summer.

Kankakee is in a good position because it will be unaffected for the next several years after agreeing to a new contract this year. Contracts in place before the ruling will be honored, according to the state.

"The 3-percent rule won't apply to us for four years," DePasquale said. "We signed a new contract before that bill passed. That contract still has language pertaining to the 6-percent rule."

Christensen of Waubensee said her council is already looking at the question as they approach negotiations this year. She is hopeful that the college and the council can continue to make progress towards making Waubensee faculty salaries more competitive within its peer group, something promised in the last negotiation.

"The college has money," she said.

We hope to have more clarity on the 3-percent issue and other higher ed concerns following the November election. We will report back to you after that.



Time sure flies! I've watched the Local 604 office grow in staff size from 5 to 11 and member size from 7,500 to 11,000. I've met many wonderful people over the years and can say it's been a pleasure and privilege to know and work with all of them. Through thick and thin, flurry and calm, we helped each other with whatever was necessary wearing whatever hat required, to get the job done. Local 604 has an amazing team that will continue to grow and succeed. Thank you for the opportunity to have been part of the Local 604 family. And, thank you, Dick Manley and Kathy Stenson for believing in me 20 years ago.

Dorene

Best Wishes

AFT Local 604 Retiree Meetings / AFT Local 604 Retiree Chapter Planning Committee

UPCOMING PROGRAMS

November 13th at 2 p.m.

1520 N. Rock Run Drive, Crest Hill (AFT Local 604 office)

December 5th at 11 a.m.

Al's Steak House in Joliet

For reservations, sign up at the retiree mtgs or call the AFT Local 604 office at 815/725-0402 by Nov 28th.

These meetings are held the second Tuesday of the month from Sept - May at the Local AFT office at 2:00 p.m. (with the exception of field trips.) The meetings include a brief update on union activities by Bill Briggs, AFT Local 604 President; a program on a topic of interest to retirees; along with refreshments and door prizes. Meetings are free of charge.



Is Facebook a useful tool for your council?

by Claudine Sharko, Valley View Council President
AFT Local 604 Vice President

It is imperative that we inform and educate our members to the best of our ability as union leaders. As we approach a negotiations year and had the JANUS case staring at us from SCOTUS, we as a council, realized the need for another media outlet that could reach as many members as quickly as possible. We understood that using the school district server was not the best approach for handling these matters, as it pertains to FOIA requests using a public domain server.

I approached Traci Hartigan, who was our current communications director at the time, to start the process of a Facebook account.

Traci set up a closed Facebook account that requires verification prior to being approved. Members have to answer two questions, "What is your name?" and, "What is your position in the Valley View School District?" This helps in determining whether or not they are allowed access to the group. Members can also add other Valley View council members to the group. Our group currently has 833 members and many actively participate in conversations regarding union issues.

In addition to Facebook, Traci also created a Google Site that has links to AFT and IFT news, a slideshow featuring union members and contact information for the council along with a Members-Only Dashboard. Members are required to fill out a contact form prior to signing up for the Wix, and their emails are used to send out union communications. The dashboard includes links to important information, such as our Valley View Council Big Cartel Shirt Shop, negotiations, surveys, etc.

New field service director at Local 604

Katie Kollross has been an active Local 604 union member and leader since she began her teaching career in New Lenox School District 122. A summa cum laude graduate of Governor's State University with a focus in mathematics, Katie proceeded to become a union representative in year two of teaching, then named the New Lenox Council of Teachers President, next a Local 604 Vice President, and finally a Vice President serving on the IFT Executive Board. She is greatly looking forward to working with you and your members during this school year.



Next Senate Meeting
Annual Holiday Party
Wednesday, December 12, 2018, 5:00 pm
Local office in Crest Hill



IFT/AFT, AFL-CIO

Update

American Federation of Teachers Local 604
www.aftlocal604.org

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Kathy Harris, IFT Secretary

AFT Local 604 website

Thank you goes out to Erik Jurgens, our Local 604 Field Service Director, who got our website up and running!

Please check it out at www.aftlocal604.org

The website offers information about staff, IFT news, resources and contact information. Also, you can view the latest Update from this site!