

# Update

American Federation of Teachers Local 604, AFL-CIO

August/September 2017

## Thinking outside the box

*Kankakee staff and administration work together to reach out to the community*

One and done. Not this group.

After a successful community walk—where teachers, administrators and paraprofessionals walked the neighborhoods of Kankakee—on May 10, the union and administrators were encouraged to plan a second walk.

This time, on August 14, the connection with the community will be linked to the district's fourth annual Back-to-School Bash held downtown near the train depot area.

"KFT members are committed to demonstrating our desire to build and strengthen relationships with community members," said Beth Anderson, Kankakee's LEAD 2017 team and council president.

When Anderson and the other team members—teachers Antonio Young and Samantha Rocknowski—first generated the idea of a walk, the outcome was unclear. The team was confident that the administration would buy into the concept.

To begin, one of the goals was to reintroduce the community to all that District 111 offers to its students. Although a charter school is not currently on the table, the teachers need to be out front, if some form of school choice were to become a reality.

Since being named Secretary of Education by President Trump, and confirmed with the necessary vote of Vice President Mike Pence, Betsy DeVos has been on a path to make school choice and/or vouchers a reality.

"We accept the challenge DeVos presents for public education staff," Anderson said. "We look forward to promoting the talent and success of students educated in community schools."

Kankakee has also started to refer to the district as "community schools," and not "public schools," in part, because of the negative image some politicians, like Governor Rauner and far-right political groups have created.

However, in May, all did not go as the committee had planned. The goal was to inform community members of all the summer activities and classes available. Before the walk, a bit of resistance surfaced as some teachers feared walking in certain neighborhoods where their students live and play. Since it was part of the district's

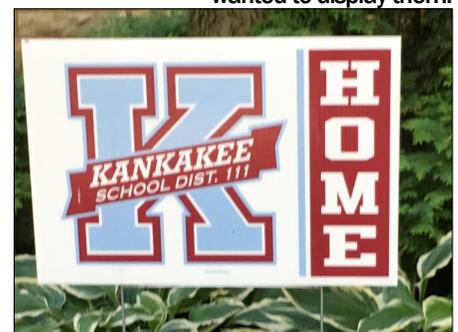


At the August 14 walk and Back-to-School Bash, Kankakee staff will be wearing the "We Work for You" t-shirts to show appreciation of the community's support.



After Trump was elected President, Kankakee wanted to make sure all students felt safe and welcomed in their buildings. Now in the neighborhoods, signs, like "Hate Has No Home Here," are becoming more evident.

In addition, the district offered "Kankakee School District 111 HOME" signs to the community homes that wanted to display them.



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# Rauner—A do nothing governor

from the president's pen

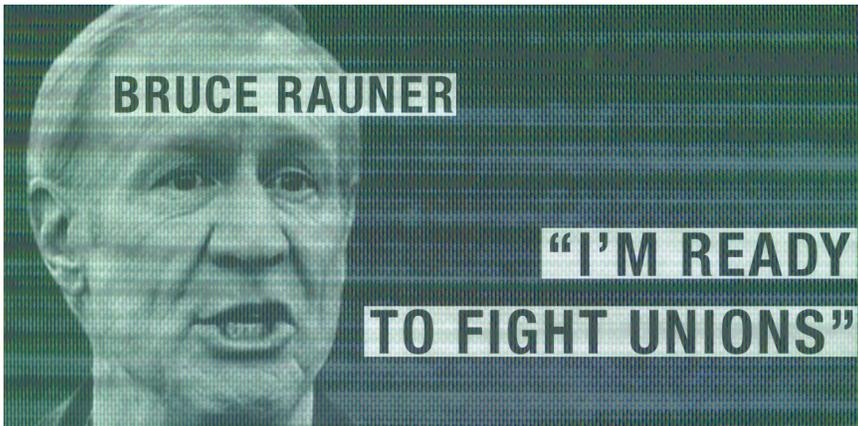


Photo courtesy of the IFT

Finally, Senator Andy Manar, a Democrat from Bunker Hill, got our message. Local 604 staff and officers have told him repeatedly to include a hold harmless provision in the school aid bill, and finally he listened to us.

However, Rauner is going to amendatory veto it—when it gets to his desk—because it gives Chicago too much money.

The *Chicago Tribune's* Kim Geiger reported July 26 that the proposed education funding provides additional money to

Chicago Public Schools because CPS is “the only district in Illinois that has to cover the costs of its teachers’ pension system.” They are required to cover a part of the CPS pensions that the state “picks up for suburban and downstate teachers.”

Ironically, Rauner agrees with 90% of the bill that will fund schools on “a new ‘evidence-based’ approach, which both sides agree is the best way to distribute dollars equitable,” Geiger reported.

Rauner’s cronies put together a budget that went nowhere in the General Assembly; and now he has fired most of his advisors and gone to the most right, the Illinois Policy Institute, for their replacements. Bonk!

So, this is the danger of having ideologues in Springfield.

This is short, because there is nothing else to report regarding Rauner’s tenure in office.

*Dick Manley*

## Lawmakers defy Rauner to end budget impasse

Pitting one group against another is nothing new in politics. Look at what President Trump did on July 24 when he addressed the Boy Scouts of America. He used the event to tout Trumpcare and to bully the GOP to support his plan, although no one at the time was sure what the plan was.

Now, in Illinois, we finally have a budget, but of course public education is caught in the middle of this tug-o-war, again. Lest we forget, however, the IFT and our members cannot forget the 15 brave House Republicans who supported the balanced budget proposal and the ones who then stood their ground against Rauner’s bully 11 to override his veto.

IFT President Dan Montgomery said, “We want to thank House and Senate lawmakers from both sides of the aisle who voted to support this balanced budget package. This is what governing looks like.”

Illinois had gone 736 days without a budget. Included in the spending, per the IFT, is the following:

- ◆ \$743 million increase for K-12 education (over FY 17) Much of the increase is contingent on passing legislation that implements a new Evidence-based Funding Model.
- ◆ Funding to make colleges and universities whole for FY 17

(equal to FY 15 levels)

- ◆ FY 18 funding for colleges and universities at 90%
- ◆ Fully funds FY 17 and FY 18 MAP grants for low-income students
- ◆ Funding for FY 18 group health insurance expenses, including funds to pay down the nearly \$8 billion owed to providers

The staff of Local 604 is encouraging our members to **take a moment to thank these courageous Republicans**, even if you are not in their district, for supporting fair funding for all of Illinois’ public-school children. Give them a call with words of support; we might need them again.

- \* Rep. Steve Andersson, R-Geneva 217-782-5457
- \* Rep. Terri Bryant, R-Mt. Vernon 217-782-0387
- \* Rep. Mike Fortner, R-West Chicago 217-782-1653
- \* Rep. Norine Hammon, R-Macomb 217-782-0416
- \* Rep. David Harris, R-Mount Prospect 217-782-3739
- \* Rep. Chad Hays, R-Danville 217-782-4811
- \* Rep. Sara Wojcicki Jimenex, R-Springfield 217-782-0044
- \* Rep. Bill Mitchell, R-Decatur 217-782-8163
- \* Rep. Reggie Phillips, R-Charleston 217-782-1040
- \* Rep. Robert Pritchard, R-Sycamore 217-782-0425
- \* Rep. Michael D. Unes, R-East Peoria 217-782-8152

## Treasurers' corner

by Carla Hettinger, AFT Local 604 treasurer

The start of the new school year brings new treasurers for some of our councils. Keeping that in mind, it is time to remind all treasurers of things that need to be done beginning with September.



### Monthly checks and balances

Be sure you balance your checkbook and receipts with your bank statement each month. Additionally, you need to make certain you have itemized receipts to coincide with expenditures. These receipts should be stapled to your monthly reconciliation sheet and kept in a monthly file. You do not need to send copies of the reconciliations or bank statements to our office.

### Council Audit, 2016-2017

It is time once again to complete your 2016-2017 council audit. All council presidents and treasurers received a memo from me detailing the directions for completing the audit. Make certain your audit committee gets a copy of the memo detailing the process for doing the audit and that they follow the directions that were highlighted. Please try and get this audit completed as soon as possible. The deadline for filing the completed audit with AFT Local 604 is **November 15, 2017**.

### Council Dues Payments

At the end of each month, you need to complete and submit to AFT Local 604 the monthly dues statement along with your remittance. The forms are provided for your use throughout the school year. Remember dues are paid over ten months from September through June of each school year. When submitting your dues, please remember to fill in the **number of members**, and **do not staple the check to the remittance slip**. Make all checks payable to **AFT Local 604**.

For members that begin employment after the start of the school year, their level of dues payment **is not based on how much they will earn in the amount of time they work**. **Their level of dues payment is based on how much they would earn if they had worked the entire year.**

### 990 Filing

It is the time of year again to file 990 forms to keep the tax-exempt status. Be certain that your council files the **appropriate** form by the deadline. Councils that are filing late are subject to a daily fine for each day the form is filed late. Information regarding the filing requirements for the 990 forms and the council's deadline for filing, based on the end of your fiscal year, has been sent to council presidents and treasurers.

## Thinking outside the box (cont.)

(Continued from page 1)

professional development plan, it was required participation. As we hoped, most came back with positive reactions.

Now, the walk is taking a different path. For the past three years, the Back-to-School Bash has brought the community downtown for school supplies and other school information. "It has always been an amazingly fun time for the students, parents and teachers to gather before the busyness of the school year," said Young, a Kankakee Junior High School teacher who has served as the entertainment coordinator for the bash each year. "The attendees are able to see students show off their wide variety of talents from singing, to dancing and comedic acts. Teachers take time to interact, as well as dance with parents. I think it is so important for students to see staff members getting involved, outside of their respective school buildings," Young said.

This year, there is a new twist. First, venturing out into the neighborhoods will be all of Kankakee District 111 staff members. Teachers, paraprofessionals, clericals, custodians and administrators will connect with the community about upcoming events, such as the opening date of school and a reminder that registration can be completed online.

In addition, to help generate more interest in school-related activities, the district will offer passes for senior citizens to use for all home, non-IHSAA events, like plays, concerts and athletic events.

Then, from 5 p.m. to 7:30 p.m., staff members will return to the depot area to help promote the district by having tables staffed by each school with specific information for parents and students. In addition, free school supplies will be distributed to those who request them, vendors will offer food, and music will be provided by the students. In the past, more than 300 families have taken advantage of this bash.

Rocknowski, a teacher at Kankakee High School, also looks forward to the bash each year—feeling that it gives teachers an "extra way to connect" with students before school starts. She anticipates that this year's festivities will be even greater.

"One of the many reasons I love Kankakee as much as I do is because we never stop. We're always finding ways to improve upon past accomplishments," Rocknowski said. "We always have fresh, new ideas."

Now, we can only hope that the weather cooperates!

**By IFT field service director Bill Briggs**

## Put a group of union leaders in a room and the results are not surprising

Council leaders attend Worksite Leader Training at Local 604 office

After the Worksite Leader Training in June, the common theme that emerged from the participants was that they loved talking with other leaders and hearing how they solved their issues.

Cathy Clayton, a junior high teacher from Homer, said, "Dialog! In many ways, much of this material was REVIEW. However, being able to discuss the application with others and the instructors was very helpful."

The three-day workshop offers five modules of training: *Union 101, Communication and Information, Member Advocacy, Mobilization and Engagement, and Political, Legislative and Community Engagement.*

as an executive board team member. I feel more confident to do my job in supporting teachers and, ultimately, the students," said Michelle Fugger from Richland.

In reality, these leaders also sacrificed part of their summer break for this second worksite leadership training.



(above) Local 604 field service representative Vicki Leuck explaining ways to mobilize members.

Photos by Kathy Stenson

(below) AFT Local 604 field representative Erik Jurgens discussing the last module on how to engage with legislators and their community.



Sometimes, the members forget or were never introduced to all that unions have done to create a better atmosphere in the workplace.

"This training provides information about our rights and how to get others involved in our union," said Homer council member Carrie Jermolowicz.

Since member engagement is part of the IFT's goals, the workshop spent a lot of time discussing ideas to help mobilize membership. "When we stand together, we are strong," said Richland teacher Ruth Dietrich. "Together we can make good things happen for our communities and our futures."

"I love the idea that we are a team and identified as the union," commented Dave Ladehoff from Clifton Central. "Our team's strength makes for better moral and working conditions for all members."

Homer council president Tammie Ebelagreed stated, ***"You are your union. Your union is as strong as its members."***

Valley View member Alicia Edwards, tagging a current IFT motto, added, "We have to 'shift into action' our members have to get involved to keep our unions."

Some in attendance are new to leadership roles or unclear what their roles are. "It helped me better understand my role



However, Clayton said the time spent had value. It was "worth every minute of precious summer break to strengthen leadership skills."

Most liked the laidback attitude of the workshop. Although the always present PowerPoint dominated the screen, Wendy Bruin, Homer, said, "The instructors did not necessarily commit to the script. It was nice to go with the flow of what the group's issues were."

Ladehoff added, "It was nice to have such small groups, but sad, in a way, that more members did not go through the training."

Before anyone believes that concerns at the end did not exist, two stood out: chocolate and CPDUs.

After great brownies with the first-day's lunch, staff did not follow through. That problem will be corrected next year! Second, even though most wanted CPDUs, the law does not include union action as a provider.

## Four Kankakee county council presidents meet with state representative

### Door open to education discussion

Most teachers are pretty much on board with one view: they did not get into education to be political.

However, in the current climate, they can no longer just sit back and wait for something negative to happen that will affect the classroom.

On May 1, the Day of Action in Illinois, council presidents Beth Anderson, Kankakee teachers; Steve Depasquale, Kankakee Community College; Cara Anderson, Herscher; and Debra Troupe, Pembroke; spent time with newly-elected state Representative Lindsay Parkhurst (R) to learn more about her views regarding public education in Illinois.

“Although we view things differently,” Debra said, “I can say that I believe everyone there shares one commonality. We agree that our schools, colleges and institutions of learning need to be funded, so that students can have a fair/good chance at obtaining their goals.”

Cara said she felt the meeting was important to have. “We now have opened the dialogue between the unions and Representative Parkhurst. I will be interested to find out if what Representative Parkhurst said in regard to funding really happens.”

During the 45-minute meeting, Representative Parkhurst repeatedly said she is “confident that K-12 will be funded,” and maybe at a higher level than expected. She also added that she believes House Speaker Michael Madigan “doesn’t appear to want a budget until 2019.”

Representative Parkhurst might be right in that assumption. Democrats are hoping to win back the governorship to end the stalemate in Springfield, but Steve was quick to point out that “the governor needs to understand that Illinois is not a red state,” like Indiana.

Steve and Beth both agreed that not knowing what their budgets are year-to-year is the problem. Steve said, “From Kankakee Community College’s perspective, I took it as a positive that we may still get some funding this year, and that she will work to secure the funding for our unfinished building.”

Kankakee Community College broke ground on a new Advanced Technology Education Center in March of 2015, with an expected completion in April 2016. Although the legislature appropriated the money, former Governor Pat



A group photo of Kankakee’s Day of Action (front l to r) Pembroke council president Debra Troupe and Herscher council president Cara Anderson (back l to r) Kankakee council president Beth Anderson, IFT field service director Bill Briggs, Representative Lindsay Parkhurst, Kankakee Community College council president Steve Depasquale and IFT director of organizing & community engagement Lorenzo McDonald.

Quinn released the money and construction began. Rauner stopped the project with just the foundation completed.

Parkhurst mentioned that Kankakee Community College is one of her “#1 priorities.”

He also felt positive when she said she supports the “possibility of us getting the BSN Program.” The college already has a highly respected two-year nursing program and is equipped to take the program to the next level, Bachelor of Science in Nursing.

Unfunded, mandated categorical requirements are a major concern for both Cara and Beth, and Parkhurst said she was against funding drivers’ education and physical education, which brought concern. Beth mentioned that many of the Kankakee students could not afford to take driving lessons away from school because of the cost, around \$500. She said she believes some students “would just be forced to drive without a license.”

When the subject of vouchers, charter schools and school choice surfaced, Parkhurst’s response raised some concerns. She supports the idea of helping parents who would like to send their children to private schools, but cannot afford to send them.

After a discussion about how private and charter schools do not have to live by the same standards as public schools, she was asked if she thought any school that accepts state tuition money should have to live with the same standards. She said, “Yes.”

Everyone agreed that the meeting was positive and set the right tone for future meetings to discuss education in Illinois.

*By Bill Briggs, IFT field service director*

# Frequently asked questions about workers' compensation

Your rights under the workers' compensation act by James M. Ridge, attorney at law

First, we would like to extend our sincere thanks to all AFT Local 604 councils that welcomed us to their May meetings. If you have not had the opportunity to have us out to give your members a quick update on their rights, please do not hesitate to contact Amylee to schedule at [ahogan@ridgedownes.com](mailto:ahogan@ridgedownes.com) or 312-372-8282. We wish everyone a safe and happy return to school this month!

We wanted to use this issue to talk about some of the things we learned from questions we were frequently asked at the meetings we attended. Injured workers have three main benefits under the Illinois Workers' Compensation Act. But before they can even get to use those benefits, they need to give proper notice of the injury. When giving notice of an injury, please remember to be specific about what it was about your work environment that caused the injury. For example, if you are asked what you slipped on in the hallway, do not say, "I don't know." You may not know what liquid you slipped on, but you know it was liquid. After you report your injury, it is important to remember to give the same history of the accident to the first physician you see. Make sure to start with the history of the work accident you just sustained, before detailing prior issues to the same body part. Finally, you are NEVER required to give a recorded statement regarding your injury to an insurance adjuster.

Once you have successfully traversed the reporting of your injury, you can start to receive workers' compensation benefits. The first benefit you have is the right to limited medical treatment. You have the right to two treating providers of your own choice and anyone they refer you to. We always recommend that you opt out of the employer's recommended physician and seek your own advocate. The emergency room and the company clinic do not count as

your choices. Please remember that you can fight Utilization Review and Independent Medical Examination decisions that seek to limit the medical care being recommended by your treating physician.

Your second main benefit is the right to be compensated for any lost time because of your injury. Temporary Total Disability (TTD) benefits are paid at 2/3 of your Average Weekly Wage (AWW.) The most important thing for school personnel to know about this benefit is that it is calculated based on the number of weeks per year you work, not the 52 weeks per year you may opt to have your salary paid out. We are frequently finding that adjusters are calculating these benefits incorrectly when new clients come to us. We recently found a teacher over \$8,000 in underpaid benefits for her lost time.

Finally, you have the right to a settlement or award for the permanent damage that has been done to your body because of the injury. You are entitled to this even if you return to your regular job duties. It is important not to be fooled by an AMA Impairment Rating. An Impairment Rating does not dictate the Permanent Partial Disability of your injury.

As always, do not hesitate to contact Ridge & Downes with any questions about workers' compensation and personal injury. Don't forget we also represent the injured in motor vehicle accidents, premises liability, medical malpractice and railroad workers injured on the job.

**For more information on your rights contact us at:**

**RIDGE & DOWNES**  
Attorneys at Law  101 N. WACKER DRIVE, SUITE 200  
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60630  
312-372-8282 OR 1-800-572-1136  
Website: WWW.RIDGEDOWNES.COM

## 2017 IFT PSRP and School-Related Personnel/Public Employees Conference

The 2017 IFT paraprofessional and school-related personnel/public employees conference is October 20-21, 2017, at the Wyndham Springfield City Centre, 700 East Adams St., Springfield, IL

Any paraprofessional, clerical or support staff union member wishing to be considered as a potential attendee must call the Local 604 office at 815.725.0402 or 630.896.8220 to receive a qualification form. The questionnaire must be completed, signed by your council president and returned to the Local 604 office by Friday, September 8, 2017.

**No applications will be accepted after that time.**



Illinois Federation of Teachers  
A Union of Professionals

## AFT Local 604 awards two scholarships



Awarded the Jacqueline B. Vaughn Scholarship is Sydney Whalen with her mother Nicole, a teacher in our SOWIC council, and her father Glenn.

Photo by Phil Staley



Matthew Adams with his mother Kristen Adams received the Paul O. Johnson Scholarship at LaSalle-Peru High School's Senior Night that was on the same night as our Senate meeting.

At the AFT Local 604 Senate meeting, we awarded two \$4,000 scholarships to dependents of AFT Local 604 members in good standing.

**Sydney Whalen**, a strait A student at Lincoln-Way West High School received the Jacqueline B. Vaughn Scholarship. Her mother is a teacher for the Southern Will County Coop.

Sydney was a member of the National Honors Society, Mathletes, Student Council, Principal's Cabinet and Mu Alpha Theta. She was also involved in the Warrior Way program assisting freshmen students with their transition into high school.

As a member of the Adaptive Physical Education Leader program, Sydney assisted students with intellectual and physical disabilities. In her essay she writes, "My student this year is mostly nonverbal and has physical deformities that make it impossible for him to walk without the use of ankle braces. It has been my pleasure to help him participate in a variety of activities during gym class including basketball, softball and swimming. I will never forget how happy he was to swim for the very first time. His great attitude and persistence is truly inspiring, and I am so grateful to have known him." This truly speaks a lot about her character.

Sydney will be attending the University of Alabama and is enrolled in the pre-med program.

Matthew Adams, a LaSalle-Peru Township High School senior, received the Paul O. Johnson Scholarship. His mother, Kristen Adams, is a teacher and council president of the LaSalle-Peru High School council.

Matthew was in honors curriculum his four years in high school and enrolled in advanced placement courses. He was also a member of the Link Crew helping freshman students transition to the high school setting. His extracurricular activities included soccer and tennis.

Matthew was also involved in his community by volunteering as coach for the youth soccer league, helping out during fair week and the fishing expo for the LaSalle County 4-H club and was also a member of St. John's Lutheran Church High School Youth Group participating in various activities within the community as well as going on mission trips to various states to help families in need who were victims of natural disasters.

Mathew will be attending the University of Northern Iowa pursuing a degree in mathematics for secondary education. Mathew stated, "I am looking forward to continuing my academic career; and this award will definitely help me to do that."

## Local 604 member appointed to State Educator Preparation Licensure Board



After interviewing teachers from around the state, the Illinois State Board of Education chose Valley View council president **Claudine Sharko** to serve on the State Educator Preparation Licensure Board (SEPLB.) When interviewed in June, she was cited for her

work with PERA, a qualified Illinois teacher evaluator, her role as a classroom teacher for 17 years and her role as a council president with a membership total of 1,900 members. Claudine was very excited to hear she was appointed and ready to commit to the new position on the committee.

The IFT currently serves in three positions, two held by Local 1, the Chicago Teachers Union, and one held by Local 604.

SEPLB is a committee that makes recommendations to the Illinois State Board of Education. It focuses on two main components:

1. Reviewing teacher educator preparation programs from state colleges and universities. The goal is to monitor the efficacy of these programs and to review their recommendations to changes or additions to meet the standards of Illinois professional teaching standards. In essence, are we properly preparing Illinois educators to meet the needs of the students we serve in Illinois. Compliance must be with school code when universities are making program changes.
2. Review the revocations or suspension of teachers in regard to their licenses.

Besides being council president of our largest council, Claudine also serves on our AFT Local 604 executive board. She has also attended our state and national conventions, since being elected as president of her council.

*We congratulate Claudine on being accepted to serve on this important state committee!*

## Retiring?



## Change of address?



## New Officers?



**ATTENTION all council leaders and members!**  
Please help us keep our records up-to-date.

**Council leaders:** Please notify the local office of all retirees in your council. Also, please notify us if there is a change in officers (president, vice president, treasurer, secretary or senator.)

**Members:** Please notify the local office if you have a change of address, phone, email address or last name.

Contact us at 815-725-0402 or 630-896-8220 or email Dorene at [dbarrera@ift-aft.org](mailto:dbarrera@ift-aft.org).

**Next Senate Meeting**  
**Wednesday, October 18, 6:00 pm**  
**Local office in Crest Hill**



IFT/AFT, AFL-CIO

## Update

American Federation of Teachers Local 604

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