

**AFT Local 604
Presidents-Treasurers
Workshop
August 2023**





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Tips for Leaders

- ▶ Don't try to do it all yourself!
 - ▶ Divide up the work
 - ▶ Recruit members to be active
- ▶ Work with your executive board
- ▶ Listen to your members!
 - ▶ Value all input and work together to resolve different ideas
- ▶ Recruit a strong member in each building to connect with each new hire
- ▶ Know your contract and identify things to highlight for new hires
- ▶ Worksite Leader Handbook
- ▶ Be represented at Local 604 Senate Meetings—normally @ 6:00 p.m. at the Local
 - ▶ August 9, October 11, December 13 (5:00 p.m. at IBEW 176 Hall), February 7, April 17



Tips for Leaders

- ▶ Communication is Essential
 - ▶ One-on-one conversations
 - ▶ 10 to 1 ratio is ideal (recruit help)
 - ▶ Union bulletin board
 - ▶ Email (**personal**, not district)
 - ▶ Council website or Facebook page
 - ▶ Potential & pitfalls—provide info to members, can be a forum, but important to monitor & follow up in a timely fashion



Tips for Leaders

Building Meeting Strategies:

- ▶ Coordination between officers and building reps is important.
- ▶ Accustom members to meeting on a regular basis.
- ▶ Appreciate members' time by keeping it short and to the point—stay on topic.
- ▶ Develop a rhythm, members know what to expect.
- ▶ Promote communication between executive committee and members.
- ▶ Get feedback from your members - what are you doing right? What needs work?



Tips for Leaders

- ▶ Materials & Resources:
 - ▶ Copy of the current contract
 - ▶ Council constitution/bylaws
 - ▶ Names, addresses, home phone, cell phone, worksite telephone numbers and home email of all officers
 - ▶ Membership forms (New Member Packets), payroll authorization deduction forms and grievance forms
 - ▶ Members' home email addresses & cell phone numbers
 - ▶ District Website
 - ▶ Employer rules and policies
 - ▶ Board packets (agendas, minutes)
 - ▶ District budget & financial statements



Tips for Leaders

- ▶ AFT Local 604:
www.aftlocal604.org
- ▶ Illinois Federation of Teachers
www.ift-aft.org
- ▶ American Federation of Teachers
www.aft.org



Maintaining Membership

Important information regarding New Member sign-up:

- ▶ The district must provide contact information, including personal cell phone number and email (if collected) to the union 10 days prior to the start of the school year, 10 days after hiring a new employee or any time upon request from the union.
- ▶ You have the right to meet with new employees for at least 30 minutes during orientation.
- ▶ Be clear that joining the union is voluntary and that non-members are not required to pay any dues or fees, but they will not receive the benefits of membership (explained in following slides).



Maintaining Membership

- ▶ Members of the bargaining unit may or may not be members of the Union. 100% membership is the goal—get them signed up!
- ▶ Our membership card requires 2 signatures—one to become a member, the other to authorize dues deduction on a year-to-year basis.
- ▶ Members may resign membership at any time, but dues may only be revoked during the month of August (unless on an “old card”).
- ▶ At the beginning of each school year, the Union provides the district:
 - ▶ The amounts to withhold from members for dues (payroll deduction)
 - ▶ A complete list of Union members
- ▶ Correct, current bargaining unit data (in Excel) is important!



Maintaining Membership

- Use the “What are the Benefits of Membership” form (see separate attachment) when encouraging new members to join.



American Federation of Teachers
Local 604
AFT/IFT, AFL-CIO



What are the Benefits of Membership?

- Members belong to an organization that is the collective voice for public schools, school employees, and students.
- Members have a voice in or can participate in any local union meetings and social events.
- Members can vote on contract ratification, election of officers, or any other union matter.
- Members can serve on a local bargaining team.
- Members can provide input into negotiations of my contract.
- Members are eligible to attend IFT/AFT training on special education, employment law, bargaining, legal issues, common core, evaluation, grievance processing, leadership development, etc.
- Members can hold union office at the state, local, or national association level.
- Members can be appointed to IFT Executive Board committees, task forces, and constituency



Maintaining Membership

Financial Benefits of Membership

- ▶ Mortgage/Home Services
- ▶ Numerous discounts
- ▶ Scholarships
- ▶ Legal services
- ▶ Student Debt Clinics



Maintaining Membership

Additional Benefits of Membership

- ▶ Insurance
 - ▶ \$1,000,000 occupational liability insurance
 - ▶ \$5,000 upfront money in criminal charges
 - ▶ \$35,000 accidental death & dismemberment
- ▶ Trauma Counseling
- ▶ www.aft.org/member-benefits



Maintaining Membership

Additional Benefits of Membership

- ▶ Strong, Collective Voice
 - ▶ Council Level
 - ▶ Local Level
 - ▶ State Level
 - ▶ National Level



Maintaining Membership

- ▶ Recent examples of pro-educator legislation in Springfield:
 - ▶ HB300—Minimum Teacher Salary (6% exemption, \$40k this year, future increases tied to CPI-U).
 - ▶ SB1351—May waive evaluation in final year (proficient or better).
 - ▶ SB1872—Tenure after 3 years if proficient in years 2 & 3.
 - ▶ Additional \$350 million in Evidence-Based Funding for K-12
 - ▶ \$45 million for 1st year (of 3) to fill teacher vacancies.
 - ▶ Average 5% increase to higher education funding
 - ▶ Additional \$100 million for universities & community colleges.
 - ▶ Additional \$100 million for MAP grants
 - ▶ Full payment plus \$200 million to pension systems plus an additional \$500 million upon retirement of pension funding/tax proceed bonds.



Maintaining Membership

- ▶ In addition, the IFT is advocating for improvements to Tier 2 pensions:
 - ▶ Improve COLA increases to the greater of 3% or CPI-U (currently the lesser of 3% or half of CPI-U).
 - ▶ Lower retirement age to 62 with 35 years of service credit (currently 67).
 - ▶ These improvements are in the discussion phase—nothing has been passed by the legislature, yet.



Maintaining Membership

▶ Member Inoculation

- ▶ Anti-union groups (such as the Illinois Policy Institute) might try to contact members. Prepare members for such attacks so they don't fall for the misinformation.
- ▶ Such groups may send fliers to members' homes, call them, or even knock on their doors.
- ▶ The district is required by law to inform you of any FOIA requests for information about the bargaining unit.
- ▶ Notify the Local/your Field Service Director immediately if you become aware of any such mailings/attacks.



Maintaining Membership

- ▶ Resignations & Non-Members
 - ▶ When a member asks about resigning, the Council President or another worksite leader meets with the member to fill out the **Non-Member Informed Consent Form** (see separate attachment)
 - ▶ Use the same approach with new employees & existing bargaining unit members who refuse to join the union.



Maintaining Membership

▶ Representing Non-Members

- ▶ As the “exclusive bargaining agent,” the union is required to represent non-members (duty of fair representation)
 - ▶ When determining how to represent members or non-members, work with your Field Service Director to determine the following:
 - ▶ The merit of claim
 - ▶ The likelihood of success
 - ▶ The cost of pursuing claim
 - ▶ The benefit to membership as a whole
- ▶ Non-contractual issues not covered for non-members:
 - ▶ Tenured teacher termination hearings
 - ▶ **Representation at DCFS investigations**
 - ▶ Educator licensure issues
 - ▶ Members-only Sick Leave Bank (must be bargained and conditions removed from the contract)



Elections—how our members can help

- ▶ Purpose
 - ▶ Elect union-endorsed, pro-labor candidates
- ▶ **REV = Register, Educate, Vote!**
 - ▶ Encourage members to register (<https://ova.elections.il.gov/>)
 - ▶ Promote Early Voting, Vote by Mail
 - ▶ Utilize/publicize websites (www.ift-aft.org/legislative)
- ▶ Reach your own members
 - ▶ Cell phone numbers (phone tree), home emails, social media



In conclusion...

- ▶ Feeling overwhelmed? Remember—
 - ▶ You're not in this alone!
 - ▶ Delegate duties to other officers, building reps, members (get more members involved)
- ▶ Remember your resources:
 - ▶ Other worksite leaders, members
 - ▶ Local 604 staff
 - ▶ Local 604 website: www.aftlocal604.org