

**AFT Local 604  
Presidents-Treasurers  
Workshop  
August, 2022**





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# Tips for Leaders

- ▶ Don't try to do it all yourself!
  - ▶ Divide up the work
  - ▶ Recruit members to be active
- ▶ Keep your executive board informed
- ▶ 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 (in-person or on Zoom announced a week prior, normally @ 6:00 p.m.)
  - ▶ August 10, October 12, December 13 (5:00 p.m. at IBEW 176 Hall), February 8, April 19



## 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](http://www.aftlocal604.org)
- ▶ Illinois Federation of Teachers  
[www.ift-aft.org](http://www.ift-aft.org)
- ▶ American Federation of Teachers  
[www.aft.org](http://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.
- ▶ If there is no “in-person” meeting, consider how you will meet with new employees to explain the importance of joining the union. Electronic membership cards are an option—contact the Local 604 office.
- ▶ 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  
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### 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](http://www.aft.org/member-benefits)



# Maintaining Membership

## Additional Benefits of Membership

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



## Maintaining Membership

- ▶ Recent examples of pro-worker legislation in Springfield:
  - ▶ Additional \$350 million in Evidence-Based Funding for K-12
  - ▶ Average 5% increase to higher education funding
  - ▶ Additional \$122 million for MAP grants
  - ▶ Full payments to pension systems plus an additional \$500 million over the next 2 years
  - ▶ Up to 5 sick leave days designated for mental health
  - ▶ Workers' Rights Amendment on the ballot



# 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

- ▶ **Priorities**
  - ▶ Pass the **Workers’ Rights Amendment** (see the following slide)
  - ▶ Elect union endorsed and pro-labor candidates (Governor J.B. Pritzker, Illinois Supreme Court—Mary Kay O’Brien, etc.)
- ▶ **REV = Register, Educate, Vote!**
  - ▶ Encourage members to register (<https://ova.elections.il.gov/>)
  - ▶ Promote Early Voting (starts September 29), **Vote by Mail**
  - ▶ Utilize/publicize websites ([www.ift-aft.org/legislative](http://www.ift-aft.org/legislative))
- ▶ **Reach your own members**
  - ▶ Cell phone numbers (phone tree), home emails, social media



## Support the Workers' Rights Amendment

- ▶ If passed, the amendment will add a new section to the Bill of Rights Article of the Illinois Constitution that guarantees workers the fundamental right to organize and to bargain collectively and to negotiate wages, hours, and working conditions, and to promote their economic welfare and safety at work.
- ▶ It will also prohibit from being passed any law that interferes with, negates, or diminishes the right of employees to organize and bargain collectively over their wages, hours, and other terms and conditions of employment and workplace safety.
- ▶ Passage requires either 60% of those voting on the question or a majority of those voting in the election.
- ▶ Yard signs and other resources are available through Local 604.



## 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](http://www.aftlocal604.org)