



# UPDATE

American Federation of Teachers Local 604, AFL-CIO

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

April/May 2022

## Banning books: It's Messy

By Mark Eleveld, Kankakee H.S. Teacher

I am an English teacher of 26 years. I was out for a little bit. As I made sub plans and recommendations to colleagues on texts (books that have been in the book room for over two decades in some cases), I felt a tug (Socrates refers to this as his daemon)



of panic. Sandra Cisneros's *House On Mango Street* was the center piece of the reading and includes a sexual assault on the main character Esperanza. What had I done? Had I set up the sub? What if someone complains? I reached out to my immediate boss, expressed my concern, and then he checked with the content specialist who gave it a green light. Whew ... why my concern? Why the mess?

A fellow high school teacher told me that for the first time in her 20 plus year career of teaching English she had to list all of the characters from all of the plays, the short stories, the novels, and the poems the class had read to make sure everyone is "represented." She was told that too many novels marginalize characters of color, or use racial slurs, or celebrate the savior complex. "I was told that Atticus Finch was not a *good* man." She added, that's what some people consider equity in today's world. It's messy.

What about Mark Twain? One of the most banned and controversial books in America is *Huck Finn*. The slave Jim is the loving adult Huck never had. Huck loves him. Jim's own children would have loved him had slavery not been present. But it was. It is Twain's brilliant use of satire that Jim and Huck be-

come family in a hateful "sivilization." My friend and retired English teacher Mike offered, "The conclusion of the novel is one of the most touching scenes ever written: Huck willingly accepts the 'fact' that he will burn in hell for freeing Jim from slavery. *'All right, then, I'll go to hell.'* Huck accepts the adult Christian ethos, but his own soul won't let him walk away from his best friend, a slave. *Greater love hath no man...* Mark Twain's satire attacked 'sivilization' as it was." English teacher Mike is a smart guy. It's messy.

A retired theater professor who hates everything (you know the type), recently bemoaned the state of theater in general. A fellow teacher offered up he just finished *Lolita*; he hadn't read it before. He also offered how inappropriate it is, "Why is it considered good?" The retired theater prof yelled, "Because of the prose! It is good because of the prose. Not everything has to be everything. You find a better bit of prose written ... and people like sex. It's natural." Too taboo?

Everyone has opinions. Are all opinions equal? Recently, in Wyoming, Oklahoma, and Tennessee, elected positions which include prosecutors' offices, school boards, and county boards have actively looked to ban books that speak to gender norms, sexual identity, or include nudity or curse words, irrespective of context. Funding was almost withheld from the Madison County Library System until books with L.G.B.T.Q. themes were removed. The American Library Association recently reported an "unprecedented" 300 plus challenges to books in the fall of 2021. Some have attempted to press criminal charges against school librarians. And it's not driven by only one political ideology. There is cooperation in ignorance. It's messy.

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## Imagine 'the world will be as one!'



Bill Briggs

At church, recently, one of the singers changed his intended song to John Lennon's song "Imagine" because of the images coming out of the Ukraine. He talked about Lennon's reaction to the Viet Nam War.

Now, the images of what war can do are real, and I imagine that maybe this senseless act by the dictator Putin could unify our country after the divide that started with Donald Trump and continued through the Pandemic.

On *Morning Joe*, the host said that his son, a middle school student, came home and said that for the first time, he saw his classmates unified on one topic: how horrific this war is. This comment started my mind racing on if it could be true. Remember, some on Fox News still side with Putin and report that it's the Ukrainians who are the aggressors.

Bringing it closer to home, the war we have been battling in public education for over a decade is also real. We have seen a steady drop in the number of high school graduates who select education as a career. Currently, Illinois has 4,000+ vacancies in the classroom. Couple that with the shortage of paraprofessionals and support staff.

As if this fact wasn't enough, look at the divide that the state mandate for schools has created. We have the vaccinated arguing with those who opt to be tested; and all of you have seen the signs that read, "Unmask our children."

And it doesn't stop here. Legislation, like the ones that support the banning of books or the don't say gay law in Florida, are cropping up everywhere.

The Illinois School News Service reported that in Idaho, the House imposed a \$1,000 fine and up to a year in jail on any professional educator for "disseminating material harmful to minors." And you guessed it, no definition of harmful material was included.

*The Deseret News* reported that Oklahoma state Sen. Rob Standridge introduced a bill that would allow people to "sue teachers if they offer an opposing view toward religious beliefs held by students." The Students' Religious Belief Protection Act included

- ◆ "Teachers can be fined a minimum of \$10,000 'per incident, per individual,' and the fines have to be paid from personal resources. If the teacher can't pay the fine, they would be fired.
- ◆ "It will also allow parents to demand the removal of any books perceived as anti-religious. This includes topics like evolution, the big bang theory, and even birth control.
- ◆ "Per *Forbes*, the bill does not specify what 'deeply held beliefs' are but is bound to change how subjects like history, science, and health are taught."

The list does not stop here. Remember that in Tennessee, the legislature banned *Maus*, a Pulitzer Prize-winning novel about the Holocaust. Themes of Guilt, Anger, and Redemption are prevalent. Of course, this

action triggered so many orders for the book that a wait list grows. What is missed is the teacher connection to students to guide them through history and encourage questions so that doesn't happen again.

What do all of these proposed and signed bills have in common? All were sponsored by Republicans. Yes, even though we did not sign up to be political, the reality speaks for itself.

Crazy as it sounds, it couldn't happen in Illinois, right? Wrong. HB 3254, which says literature books used by schools in courses or promoted on summer reading lists must "include books written by diverse authors, including women, African Americans, Native Americans, LatinX, and Asian" is unacceptable to House Republicans.

Or what about HB 3173 which offered "students a course on gun safety." Harmless, right? In the Senate, though, amendments were included to make "bullying, deaths in the family and other traumas relevant to a suspension review of a student." "Family Values" groups oppose the amendments and so will Republicans.

The National Education Association recently reported the results of a poll they commissioned that said, "an alarming 55% of educators are ready to leave the profession earlier than planned." Is that reality, probably not. But it shows they are thinking about a less-stressful career.

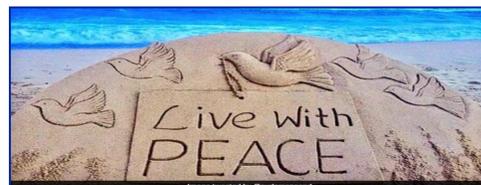
In Illinois, we cannot even get support across both aisles for HB 4139, which would "establish and administer a teacher reimbursement grant program to reimburse public school teachers and students for tuition and mandatory fees they paid" to earn their teaching degrees at an Illinois public college and then teach in an Illinois public school for 10 years.

So, as we approach a much-anticipated summer break, I imagine that we can communicate and return to a time when teachers were allowed to teach, where politicians basically stayed out of the way, and where a student's ability to question was a given in education.

Your summer assignment, listen to Lennon's song or let his words camp in your mind:

"Imagine there's no countries/ It isn't hard to do/ Nothing to kill or die for/ And no religion too/ Imagine all the people living life in peace, you/ You may say I'm a dreamer/ But I'm not the only one/ I hope some day you'll join us/ And the world will be as one.

"Imagine no possessions/ I wonder if you can/ No need for greed or hunger/ A brotherhood of man/ Imagine all the people sharing all the world."



## “IFT Union Leadership Training”

by Alan Scott D131, Local 604

Good intentions are not enough.

What often motivates those who gravitate towards union leadership is an innate sense of justice. Another motivator can be a love for our fellow teachers and staff, our students, and the community in which we work.

What doesn't come innately, however, is a knowledge of the law. Or how to organize. Or knowing how to manage the innumerable other tasks which are required for making your Local Council an efficient and productive mechanism of worker power.

In addition to caring, union leaders also need to be organizers, attorneys, psychologists, public speakers, public relations campaigners, meeting facilitators, negotiators, and much more.

When I started as a Building Representative in my district, a lot of false notions had taken root within our leadership and membership, for example, what our union could or couldn't legally do during contract negotiations. And I'll never forget on my first day when I'd asked another rep, "How do we file a grievance?", and was told, "We don't. Maybe our president does."

A major obstacle for those new to union leadership can be cutting through the speculation and guesswork when it comes to our union's rights, what resources are available to us, and which strategies will help us become more effective leaders and advocates.

One possible reason for this communication breakdown can be that when older leadership steps down, they take their skills, knowledge, and experience with them, leaving new leadership in a lurch and seemingly having to reinvent the wheel. When local councils do thrive, it is at times because of hardworking, charismatic individuals who carry a lot of weight, but when they step down they leave a void.

Sequestered off in our districts, in our separate buildings, faced with major issues and dilemmas, we can feel isolated, perplexed, and disconnected.

But it doesn't have to be this way.

IFT field offices are points of continuity and connection: storehouses of knowledge and experience, lighthouses to guide us through the storm, meeting houses to unite us in our common struggles.

They provide training, advice and wise counsel, and connect us to leadership in other areas.

More union leadership out there need to be aware of this valuable resource and take advantage of the opportunities they provide.

Recently, Building Representatives and Executive Council leadership from all around Local 604 descended on the IFT Center in

Westmont, an unassumingly small building nestled away within a tangle of side streets and parking lots.

To me, it felt like coming home.

We were there to take a variety of classes taught by the IFT, all of which are refreshingly useful "professional development." Truly, tools for the toolbox. Taking classes with IFT is to take concrete steps towards learning how to better advocate and win gains for our membership.

In my grievance class, we received lessons on labor law, participated in practice scenarios, and were given forms to use in the future, all as taught by experienced, enthusiastic Field Representatives who have been in the trenches for many years.

Although we're only 2/3 of the way through our class, it's already begun to open new doors in what I'd imagined to be possible. I now have a broader set of tools through which I hope to improve the working (and thus learning) conditions within our district.

Another advantage of the training is networking. It is awesome to meet others from our Local who are similarly engaged in the good fight, whether those in higher ed, primary or secondary education, and all kinds of other staff members.

Here is some of what others had to say:

"Attending the ULI conference on Effective Grievance Administration is providing me with the knowledge, confidence and empowerment to become a stronger, more active advocate for the members of my local union. I look forward to upcoming sessions on Effective Grievances as well as future workshops on other topics on building better unions." ~ Tameka Longoronsaye at D163, Local 604

"After completing the first session of the Introduction to Collective Bargaining, I already feel empowered. I have learned so many new things from the talented group of staff." ~ Charmie McKinney at D163, Local 604

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# Your rights under the Workers' Compensation Act

by James M. Ridge, attorney at law

## Physical Altercations in the Workplace

Over the last three years, educators have been called upon to perform many roles that they had never previously considered part of the job. The slow return to normalcy has been peppered with new, often negative, developments in teachers and students alike. One such development is the rise of aggression against teachers, reaching levels that many experts have deemed "a national crisis". According to a survey published by the American Psychological Association, 80 percent of teachers questioned were victimized at least once in that school year, or the year before. In light of physical altercations becoming more prevalent in, and out of, today's classrooms, it is important to discuss how they intersect with workers' compensation.

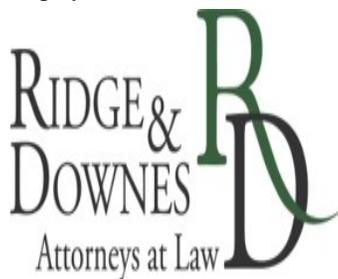
Physical altercations in a school setting, whether intentional or negligent, are compensable under the Illinois Workers' Compensation Act. Indeed, in the vast majority of cases involving injuries from physical altercations in an educational setting, worker's compensation is the *sole* recourse. Proving an accidental injury is the first step to receiving benefits under the Illinois Workers' Compensation Act. This is a two-pronged analysis. Being at work satisfies the first prong: that your injury occurred "in the course of" your employment.

The phrase "in the course of employment" refers to the time, place, and circumstances of the injury. A compensable injury occurs "in the course of" employment when it is sustained while a claimant is at work or

while they perform reasonable activities in conjunction with their employment. In this case, the "in the course of" prong is easily satisfied, as the altercation would more than likely be happening on school grounds. However, it is important to remember that this also applies whenever the employee is fulfilling their role as a teacher, which could also extend to fieldtrips, dances, and school sanctioned events.

Where things become a bit trickier is the second prong: your injury must "arise out of" your employment. To satisfy this requirement it must be shown that the injury had its origin in some risk connected with, or incidental to, the employment so as to create a causal connection between the employment and the accidental injury. A risk is incidental to the employment when it belongs to or is connected with what the employee has to do in fulfilling his or her job duties. It can be assumed that an educator did not go into the profession to stop fights but preventing harm to students and staff is nonetheless in "fulfillment of his or her duties."

As always, if you or anyone you know is injured at work as a result of a physical altercation or otherwise, please do not hesitate to contact our office for a free consultation, by calling 1-800-572-1136, or fill out our free consultation form available at [www.ridgedownes.com](http://www.ridgedownes.com). We are always happy to help.



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### IFT Union Leadership Training

Let's be real for a moment. To be a union leader is to be engaged in a labor struggle. The administrators who are tasked with leading your buildings and districts are not going to make it easy for you. They won't hold your hand and correct your mistakes as you are seeking to expose their missteps, shortcomings, or, in some cases, lies and distortions. You have to be knowledgeable and you have to be organized.



"Winging it" isn't the approach you want to use when someone's job is on the line, when you are negotiating a contract that will impact innumerable families, or when trying to make concrete changes to work conditions which will affect dozens, hundreds, and maybe thousands of people.

Educate yourself. Level-up the leadership in your buildings and district. Organize your members. And lay a solid foundation for new leadership to be able to step right into their roles and not miss a beat. That's how we'll win real victories.

But to do this, you'll need to connect with others who can help. The IFT Field Centers are here for us. By connecting with the larger IFT organization, we can become the type of union leadership that will leave a positive legacy within the communities in which we serve.

"Question: What can the union do for me?"

Answer: You are the union.

The union is stronger with you. But you are stronger with the union." ~

Mark Fouhi at D163, Local 604

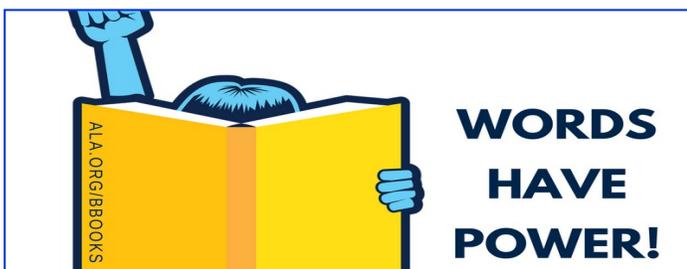
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## Banning Books: It's Messy

And what is on the line? *Of Mice and Men* and *All Boys Aren't Blue*; *To Kill A Mockingbird* and *Native Son*; *Always Running* and *Gender Queer*. You can't get to Richard Wright without going through Ernest Hemingway. That's what Wright said. August Wilson's comments about equity for Black theater aren't exclusive. The influence of Eugene O'Neill and Tennessee Williams is in his plays. That's what Wilson said. Toni Morrison is draped in William Faulkner. I saw Morrison speak at the University of Chicago. She was beautiful. Funny. Smart. All the things you hope from an author who you have spent large sections of your life reading. Someone asked her how to pronounce *Be-loved*. She gave a short answer, and then ended, "I always say, *Be ... Loved*". *Be-loved* is a regular on the banned book list. What a mess.

We started a one-district read. We chose *Half A Life* by Darin Strauss. Our librarian recommended the book. It is good. It is a non-fiction piece about Strauss hitting, and killing a young woman on her bicycle when they were both teenagers. What do I mean when I say it is good? Instead of only critiquing how the book makes *me feel* – Strauss displays the formal elements of story: How suspense is created, how symbols are utilized, how repetition makes the ghosts of characterization haunt the pages. Students need to see the forms, not be so obsessed with wanting every piece of literature to be some idealistic creed of fairness. Strauss came and spoke to our schools. He was on stage speaking to a full auditorium of engaged students, and several students expressed anger. They shouted and Strauss said, "Go ahead and talk. A lot of this book isn't very nice. There were times I was not very nice. I am honest though. I am honest about not being very nice when I was that young. I am still trying to figure it out." It was messy. The same girls who yelled at Strauss went up to speak to him after the reading, and they had an important, healthy conversation. It's messy.

The end of education can't be not to read. Education is the freedom. Reading is the answer. It's ok to get messy.



## Joliet 86 District Teachers Named Great Teachers/ Joliet Region Chamber of Commerce Recognizes Eight District 86 Teachers Joliet, IL Patch Joliet Public Schools District 86, Community Contributor



Congratulations to the eight Joliet Public Schools District 86 teachers who were named 2022 Joliet Area Great Teachers by the Joliet Region Chamber of Commerce & Industry. Overall, 20 local teachers were recognized. The teachers were nominated by students, parents, colleagues, administrators, or community members.

This year's District 86 winning teachers included (front row, from left to right) Tanya Burcenski: M.J. Cunningham Elementary, fourth grade bilingual and Amanda Wilhelmi: Dirksen Junior High, eighth grade math, athletic director (back row, from left to right) Vanessa Serrano: A.O. Marshall Elementary School, third grade bilingual; Karina Alonso: A.O. Marshall Elementary, second grade; Deidre Sinchak: Thomas Jefferson Elementary, second/third grade special education; Angela Klunder: Thomas Jefferson, A.O. Marshall, Isaac Singleton, and Lynne Thigpen Elementary Schools, elementary art; Jennifer Wynveen: Gompers Junior High, general music, choir director; and Stefanie Young: Carl Sandburg Elementary, Kindergarten.

Combined, these teachers have worked for over 74 years in Joliet Public Schools District 86 schools. The teachers were recognized at the District 86 Board of School Inspectors meeting in March.

# IMSA Council Appropriations Update

Michael W. Hancock, Ph.D.  
President, IMSA Council, Local 604 AFT-IFT

Since 1986, IMSA's selective admissions residential STEM program for Illinois students in grades 10-12 has relied almost entirely on state higher education appropriations for our budget, making our funding always political and often precarious. Developing and maintaining working relationships with legislators from across the state has been vital to the institution's continued existence. Now that my colleagues and I have our own Council, formed just before the pandemic, taking part in appropriations hearings has given us the opportunity to directly communicate our interests to legislators from across the state.



In the IMSA Council's second year, we've begun to develop our own network of legislative contacts with the help of IFT Legislative Directors Cynthia Riseman Lund and Nick Yelverton and Field Service Director Adam Harding. Last month, they arranged for me to testify before members of the House Appropriations Committee for Higher Education on February 10. In the days leading up to my testimony, Cynthia, Nick, and Adam joined me in a meeting with Committee Member Rep. Barbara Hernandez (D-83rd District), a former IMSA colleague, about the school's recent level-funding and the urgent need to attract and retain highly qualified educators through competitive compensation. Our candid conversation provided me with helpful insight into Rep. Hernandez's concerns about the school's leadership and institutional budget priorities, which prepared me well for my testimony.

Cynthia emphasized the need to have one or two main points for my testimony, which formed the basis of a letter that I later submitted to the House and Senate Appropriations Committees for Higher Ed. Cynthia helped me to coalesce my argument for raises for our educators around a central theme: supporting teachers is supporting students. Moreover, writing up my talking points encouraged me to align my case with our management's budget request for program maintenance and to give specifics about how far my colleagues' pay lags behind teachers' salaries at local districts and comparator schools. Cynthia's feedback on my draft letter also helped me to fine-tune my message for my specific audience.

The two-hour Zoom appropriations hearing involved even more patient waiting and listening than I anticipated, but it was rewarding to be heard. Testimony from IMSA's administration, students, and alumni followed GSU's presentation. Just as I was getting ready to speak, the committee inadvertently skipped over my testimony, but thanks to Cynthia's on-the-spot communications with legislative staff, the chair circled back to me afterwards. The committee seemed especially receptive to hearing from me following their tense exchange with a SURS representative. Former mathematics teacher Rep. Katie Stuart

(D-112th District) spoke in strong support of Illinois teachers after both IMSA's testimony and mine.

It was encouraging to talk with legislators who have been educators themselves and who want the best for our students in the midst of a national teacher shortage. It was also advantageous to be able to tell our mediator during recent collective bargaining that I'd testified before ongoing appropriations hearings, to make clear that our Council is doing its part for our colleagues and students.

## AFT Local 604 Scholarship Winners



**Paul O. Johnson Scholarship:** 1st place-\$4,000  
2nd place \$3,000  
9 Applicants

**First Place: Madelyn Zitkus** attends Lincoln-Way West High School. Her mother, Karrie, teaches in Summit Hill District 161, Walker Intermediate. Madelyn will attend North Central College and major in Special Education. She said in her essay, "Every summer my mother, grandmother, and I would spend time together setting up their classrooms." Education is in her blood!

**Second Place: Allison Legrenzi** attends LaSalle-Peru High School. Her mother, Kelly, is a social worker in Oglesby Elementary School district #125. Allison will attend Northern Illinois University and major in English.

**Jacqueline B. Vaughn Scholarship:** 1st place-\$4,000  
2nd place-\$3,000  
27 Applicants

**First Place: Sofie Young** attends Joliet West High School. Her mother, Kimberly, is a Paraprofessional in Joliet Elementary District #86. Although she has not decided on a college, she plans to major in Communication Sciences and Disorders. In her essay on how her teachers handled the Pandemic, she wrote, "Without the kindness and commitment that my teachers demonstrated, I would not have been able to get through the challenges of the past two years."

**Second Place: Hannah Delorto** attends Illinois State University with a double major in Political Communication & Economics. Her mother, Cheryl, is a Paraprofessional in Peotone.

*Someone you should know*

## Teacher of the Year, Megan Hillegass

Megan Hillegass, an 18-year veteran professional educator currently at Dr. James Mitchem Early Childhood Center in the Valley View School District, has been named Early Childhood Teacher of the Year by ISBE. Busy like all of our members, Megan took some time to answer a few questions.



**Nominated by her former assistant principal, Tonia Williams, Megan was asked what questions on the application stood out?**

“The question that challenged me the most was why I wanted to become a teacher and what I see as my greatest accomplishments. I didn’t realize until I started answering this question that I am completely different teacher now than I was when I started. Children have always been the driving force for me, but as my career has progressed, I find myself more and more interested in looking at the systems and policies that affect children and their families. In the past few years, I’ve had lots of opportunities to grow as a leader and early childhood advocate. I’m very proud of the policy and advocacy work I’ve been able to do to impact the larger field while still honoring the commitment I’ve made to my students and their families.”

**What do you like most about teaching and your position?**

“Teaching in a Dual Language Early Childhood Special Education classroom means every day presents a new adventure! It’s what I love the most about my job and at the same time, what I find most challenging. I have to always be on my toes, reacting in the moment while staying intentional, taking advantage of the hundreds of teachable moments that present themselves every day while still maintaining the consistent, predictable routines that my students need and deserve. It is relentlessly difficult, but the daily rewards I receive from my students are immeasurable.”

**Why are early childhood programs important?**

“With the improvements in brain research over the past 20 years or so, we know, without a doubt, that the first five years of a child’s life are the most crucial. Early childhood programs are absolutely essential to ensuring that our youngest learners have the opportunity to realize their full potential. In early childhood, we focus on the development of the whole child—social-emotional, cognitive, physical, and language—and must have a deep understanding of how those domains are interconnected. A large part of what we do involves collaborating with and supporting families. Developing a strong home/school relationship during a child’s first few years of school impacts families’ involvement in their children’s education for the rest of their lives.”

**What advice can you offer to new teachers?**

“Forgive yourself. This is the hardest job in the world, and you will make LOTS of mistakes. As long as you keep students at

the forefront of everything you do, mistakes are just opportunities to get better. Find a network of like-minded teachers and rely on each other for lesson ideas, materials, and most of all, emotional support. This job is too hard to do on your own!”

**If you could change one thing about education or your job, what would it be?**

“Teaching is structured in such a way that it makes it virtually impossible to complete our job responsibilities within our contractual day. If I had a magic wand, I would somehow give teachers the gift of time, allowing for a stronger separation between our home and school lives, and allowing us to do the emotional refueling that is such an important element to doing our jobs well.”

**How can we attract more young people to select teaching as a career?**

“I think we need to start developing relationships with young people in high school who may be interested in teaching. We can pair them up with a mentor teacher who supports them as they finish high school and maintains that relationship throughout their teacher training in college. On a larger scale, we need to look at the systems that are contributing to the high teacher attrition rate and reorganize our priorities to attract high-quality candidates to the teaching field. Teacher voice needs to be included in discussions on how to reduce burnout and support classroom teaching as a sustainable field.”

**Any final comment you would like to make?**

“I am so honored to have been chosen as the Early Childhood Teacher of the Year. I am eternally grateful to the amazing students, teachers, teacher assistants, administrators, social workers, parent educators, school nurses, and secretaries that I have learned from along the way!”

## STUDENT DEBT CLINIC

Let IFT Field Services assist you to reduce the burden of your student loan(s).

Members will be given information on Income Driven Repayment Plans, Public Service Loan Forgiveness, and how the current economy and anticipated federal student loan guideline changes may affect your repayment and possible student loan forgiveness.

**This clinic is for IFT-AFT card-signed members only.**

If you decide to attend this clinic, please be aware of the type of student loan(s) you currently hold, the loan servicer(s) who holds your loan(s), and your student loan payment history.

Please have your FAFSA account and student loan servicer portal page printed, or available for personal reference during this presentation.

Space is limited so please register soon!

Next debt clinic... May 9, 2022 from 5pm-7pm

**Held on Zoom**

**If interested, contact Tyler Kirk at [tkirk@ift-aft.org](mailto:tkirk@ift-aft.org)**

Our Region M PAC meeting for endorsements will be April 20<sup>th</sup> at 4 pm at the Local 604 office.

If you plan to attend, let Darlene know by April 18th. 815/725-0402 or [darmercercer@ift-aft.org](mailto:darmercercer@ift-aft.org)

## Welcome to Local 604--Stella Kapusta

Stella Kapusta is no stranger to Local 604. She helped to organize the support staff group in Homer 33c and has been co-president since the beginning.

At Homer, Stella started as a Special Education Paraprofessional in 2004.

Then in 2019, she became a school secretary.

At Local 604, she will have a variety of office duties that include working with our field service directors and keeping track of membership changes.



Welcome

## Welcome to Local 604--Tony Floriani

Anthony Floriani comes to Local 604 from the University of Illinois in Chicago.

His background is extensive in contract bargaining; organizing and membership development; and campaigns and membership mobilizing.

Tony will be working as an IFT Field Service Director for a number of our councils.



Welcome

Next Senate Meeting--August 10, 2022 @ 6pm.

“ Today in America, unions have a secure place in our industrial life. Only a handful of reactionaries harbor the ugly thought of breaking unions and depriving working men and women of the right to join the union of their choice. I have no use for those — regardless of their political party — who hold some vain and foolish dream of spinning the clock back to days when organized labor was huddled, almost as a hapless mass. Only a fool would try to deprive working men and women of the right to join the union of their choice.”

President Eisenhower  
(Spiegelhoff & Moerke, 2015)

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