

together

ILLINOIS FEDERATION OF TEACHERS CONVENTION REPORT 2022



Illinois Federation of Teachers
A Union of Professionals

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Members fighting
powerfully for a **strong
union** and the **future
we all deserve.**



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THE FUTURE WE ALL DESERVE IS AN ILLINOIS WHERE WE WIN

- Full and equitable funding for all levels of education and public services
- Economic and social justice in communities anchored by strong public schools
- Respect and voice for all workers

2021 IFT STRATEGIC GOALS

- Illinois Federation of Teachers will center its work around and antiracist, justice-centered, and human recovery.

MUST-WIN BATTLES

- Unify board, locals, and leaders around a clearly defined recovery agenda
- Increase grassroots legislative and political action
- Advance a more equitable and inclusive union



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together

It's only been three years since we gathered for our last convention, but it seems like a lifetime. In that short time, our communities, our members, and our unions have been tested (literally and otherwise!) like never before.

From the Capitol riots to the murders of more Black and Brown men and women at the hands of police, to COVID-19 with its school and campus closures and remote learning, to more tragic school and community shootings, we all have suffered serious blows – to our human rights, our physical and emotional health, and even our faith in democracy. In the midst of it all, we saw our nation become more politically divided than many of us ever thought possible.

Faced with this incredible array of challenges and hardships, IFT members could have given up and given in. We could have put our hands up and simply said, “We’re exhausted. We have nothing left to give. There’s nothing we can do.” But that’s not who we are as professionals and union members.

Instead, we stepped up. We showed how much we **CARE** for our students and communities while fighting to **PROTECT** one another. We worked to **BUILD** our strength and create a more antiracist union. We **ACTED** in our locals and Springfield to secure critical victories. We took the **LEAD** on important social issues that impact us all. And we showed that when we **UNITE**, we are an unstoppable force for good.

At this convention, we’ll be shining a light on the extraordinary accomplishments of our members and unions over these last three difficult years. At the same time, we’ll establish our collective goals and chart a course to a better future for us all. Most importantly – as always – we’ll do it **TOGETHER**. That’s what makes us #IFTstrong.



PRESIDENT & COO
DAN MONTGOMERY

Life continually proves that much can change in an all-too-brief span of time. At our last convention in October 2019, we gathered unaware of the earth-shaking changes that lay before us: COVID and remote work with over one million Americans dead and inestimable impacts on our economy, lives, and the future of our children; the election of a new president and an insurrection attacking our democracy, and more. Climate catastrophes on a scale we haven’t ever seen. And more rampant violence—from the casual brutality of everyday shootings and deaths in city streets to the horror of mass shootings in schools and public places. We can rightly feel so overwhelmed.

I put this before you not to depress you, but because it is in fact all part of the reality that we have faced as citizens, workers, and unionists. I have seen us all confronted like never before. In the end, the challenge to our union is the same challenge all unions face from their very inception—unity. **How do we stay together and united in the face of struggle?** That is our essential question. How do we advance the cause of our union, of benefiting our members and improving our lots in life and making the world we live in and will pass on to our children better? And, we even ask, “Can we?”

Achieving that unity is more difficult and more important than ever, yet I am confident that we can do it. Keep reading through these pages and see if you don’t agree! The work of our union—our members, our locals, and the state federation—has transcended the crucible of the last three years. We have bound ourselves **together** in tremendous unity on the streets; we have achieved political victories that make huge differences in our lives; and we have moved our unions towards more racial justice and equality. All this while keeping our unions strong in our workplaces. So many of you have shared with me that it was your local and the IFT that got you through COVID, it was your union that fought for workplace safety and better services for the public and your members, while our employers were often immobilized.

That’s us. That’s our union and our unity.

I will not sugarcoat it—there are many deep and difficult mountains to climb ahead, with much at stake for all of us, from two critical Illinois Supreme Court races to the fiscal realities that lie ahead. But I know this—we will prevail and thrive because we work **together**, even when we have differences. That’s what has gotten us this far. You and me and each of us bound together in our union.

It is a deep honor to lead this union and count you as a friend and compatriot in our pursuit of justice and a better world for all.

together we care

The members of the Illinois Federation of Teachers and our local unions are deeply committed to helping others. From educating and supporting students to providing critical state services to Illinois citizens, dedication and compassion are inherent in every IFT member's chosen profession. But in the spring of 2020 when the COVID-19 pandemic began, members and our unions showed the world a whole new level of **CARE** for our students and communities.

As schools, colleges, and workplaces were initially shuttered to protect everyone from the new, deadly virus, members around the state took incredible steps to promote safety and provide kids and communities with essential services and support.

Remote teaching was likely the greatest challenge many members faced.

With little notice, minimal (if any!) training, and often limited technological resources, educators statewide were asked to manage virtual classrooms and teach diverse learners entirely online. We quickly learned that platforms like Zoom were literally online lifelines to connect and provide instruction. Despite the steep learning curve and other challenges, **IFT members went all-in and got the job done.**

Read more online at
ift-aft.org/together.



But that was just the beginning. We did SO. MUCH. MORE.



Joel Gherardini of Belleville Area Special Services Cooperative Employees Union (Local 6143) doing his part making masks.

Providing masks to keep others safe

Early on in the pandemic when facial coverings were in high demand and short supply, members from the **Chicago Teachers Union** (Local 1), the **Northwest Suburban Teachers Union** (Local 1211), and the **Belleville Area Special Services Cooperative Employees Union** (Local 6143) were among those who created and donated homemade (and even 3-D printed!) masks to help protect healthcare workers and others.

Feeding children and first responders



Grant-Illini District #110 Federation of Teachers Council of the Southwestern Illinois Federation of Teachers (Local 6600) helps families in need by donating to a local food bank.

When closed schools meant no breakfast or lunch for many low-income students and families, we stepped up to help.

In northern Illinois, members from the **Woodland Federation of Teachers and Staff Council** (Local 504) prepared grab-and-go meals for hundreds of students daily, while the **Warren Township High School Federation of Teachers Council** (Local 504) organized a food and paper goods drive for local food pantries. **Harlem Federation of Teachers** (Local 540) members distributed free meals to

families via a drive-up location at a popular community restaurant. In central Illinois, faculty in the **Eastern Illinois University Chapter of UPI** (Local 4100) donated pizza to healthcare workers at their local medical center to support first responders' tireless efforts. And in the Metro-east, the **Madison Federation of Teachers and Support Staff Personnel** (Local 763) packed and delivered lunches to their students, while the **Grant-Illini/District #110 Federation of Teachers Council of SWIFT** (Local 6600) donated food and money to their local food bank.

Supporting students and staying connected

With their worlds turned upside down, we knew students needed us more than ever. All across the state, members found creative ways to show students and their families that we were still there for them.

Peoria Federation of Support Staff LOCAL 6099

Member **Jackie Monckton** created an amazing online health lesson about the body for her special needs students.

Chicago Teachers Union LOCAL 1

Former President **Jesse Sharkey** recorded a heartfelt video message for high school graduates who were unable to celebrate their accomplishments with family and friends in a traditional ceremony.

Champaign Federation of Teachers LOCAL 1925

Members **Abby Crull** and **Brandon T. Washington** organized an uplifting virtual sing-along for students.

And in community after community, IFT locals held socially-distanced parades on foot and by car through their towns and neighborhoods to honk and display encouraging signs to show kids and parents that their teachers and school staff were missing them and never far away.



Illinois Federation of Public Employees (Local 4408) mechanic Craig Wilkinson working to keep IDOT vehicles running during COVID.

Keeping Illinois running

Even though state offices were initially closed, our IFT public employees worked nonstop to provide essential services and keep the state running during the crisis. For some like Carlton Merritt, a vehicle emissions compliance inspector and member of the **Illinois Federation of Public Employees** (Local 4408), that meant shifting gears to work remotely. For others like mechanic Craig Wilkinson (Local 4408), it meant being onsite every day to keep IDOT vehicles operational.

We saved lives through vaccination and testing efforts

When doctors and scientists developed a COVID-19 vaccine in record time, IFT members worked quickly to educate their communities about the vaccines and help make life-saving shots available to those who were eligible.

The **Chicago Teachers Union** (Local 1) offered numerous free community vaccination clinics at CTU center, first for adults, then for children, once the CDC approved the shots for minors. In Bloomington, members of the **Heartland Faculty Association** (Local 6038) and the **Heartland Adjunct Faculty Association** (Local 6077) contacted more than 800 students and colleagues to encourage them to get vaccinated and spread the word about the college's plan for a safe return to campus as reopening began. And in Pontiac, teacher and co-president of the **Pontiac William-Holliday Federation of Teachers** (Local 1811), Captain Bob Monroe, took a military leave from school and used his Air National Guard skills to help setup and supervise a state-run COVID testing site in East St. Louis.

Since the last convention we also showed how much we care in ways unrelated to the pandemic. Locals and members went above and beyond to help kids and the communities we live and work in.

The **Waubensee Community College Faculty Council** (AFT Local 604) collected more than

\$1,000 in donated school supplies for needy students in East Aurora. PJ and Jamie Creek, teacher members from the **O'Fallon Classroom Federation of Teachers** (Local 628) and **Belleville Grade Federation of Teachers** (Local 6600), published a book about the American presidency for young readers. Middle school teacher Amanda Baum of the **DeKalb Classroom Teachers Association** (Local 4328) was recognized as a "Hometown Hero" in her community for her work spreading positivity through the design and sale of "Add Love/Subtract Hate" t-shirts. And bus driver and custodian Alan Carter, a member of **Skokie 73.5 Support Staff Council of the North Suburban Teachers Union** (Local 1274), was recognized by NPR as a "Community Changemaker" for making a positive impact on students and families for nearly three decades.



GET VACCINATED AT THE CTU CENTER ON JULY 1.

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT



EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT STACY DAVIS GATES

I am deeply honored to serve as our IFT Executive Vice President and President of the Chicago Teachers Union.

I join Dan and Jane in celebrating our 100,000 IFT members and their families across the state – and honoring the solidarity and commitment to giving our students and their families the schools they deserve.

Our convention continues to be a tremendous opportunity to gather to commit to reshaping our state by prioritizing the common good approach to unionism. An overarching strategy that centers the whole person and their whole community, it has the opportunity to transform both the union and our communities. It has been our work during the pandemic that has sharpened the need for common good bargaining.

Our society has changed. COVID exacerbated its already profound inequities. And, over the span of the last several years, the Supreme Court affirmed the revocation of voting rights, worker rights, reproductive rights, and civil rights. Our collective opposition to the exclusionary policies of the right wing will require building power and organizing with every stakeholder in all of our school communities. Our solidarity will be more important in the coming years than it has been ever before. The vision for our work must be anchored in the common good and a willingness to lead with a coalition of members, parents, students and

community organizations who see their power in the struggle for human rights.

COVID continues to be an unprecedented event that has transformed every facet of our society. We went from providing in-person instruction to virtual instruction in the blink of an eye. We initiated mutual aid spaces for our students and their families. We secured paid time off for educational employees forced to quarantine because of their own, or their children's, COVID-19 illness or exposure. We pushed for and won vaccination opportunities for every school stakeholder and their families. We implemented safety agreements that required surveillance testing and upgrades to HVAC systems and we continue to push for the full funding of social and emotional support for every member of our school community. We helped lead a coalition to stop evictions during the pandemic. Negotiations over safety protocols were a real time simulation on how entrenched racial and socioeconomic inequities show up in every single facet of daily life while exposing the lack of infrastructure and capacity our institutions have to address these inequities. We were not bargaining simple safety agreements — we were bargaining for our lives and the lives of every stakeholder in our community. This is the common good bargaining perspective and it was the only perspective we could have during these fights.

Our union must continue to prioritize the need for a common good leadership perspective. It begins with rejecting performative policymaking that leaves our school communities as the only under-resourced safety net in communities. We have to center all of our stakeholders and especially those who identify as LGBTQIA+ and those who live below the poverty line and whose families continue to push for the enforcement and recognition of their full citizenship and personhood in our society. Our union is helping to create a state that expands democracy, provides sanctuary, protects a woman's right to choose, and implements racially just laws to address systemic racism and its impacts. While our neighbors to

the north, south, east and west fight to protect democracy, we expanded and strengthened democracy by winning an elected representative school board in Chicago. We passed historic legislation that restored bargaining rights for educators in Chicago that were stripped from us in 1995.

Meaningfully addressing the school worker shortage begins with recognizing our power to lead the discussion and secure policies that reflect our common good needs inside and outside of our school communities. We cannot cede space to education defectors that have gotten it wrong — people who advocated for school closings and high stakes evaluation processes that pushed Black teachers out of the profession and made it nearly impossible for Black students to attend well-resourced neighborhood schools.

The necessary vision for our union must be anchored in the common good and a willingness to embrace strategies that anchor our power within a coalition of stakeholders who see their power in solidarity. Our union must put our students first by demanding safe, fully-funded schools with smaller class sizes, culturally responsive curriculum, and social and emotional supports to help address the needs our students bring into the school community every day. The only way to win well-funded school communities is to win well-resourced neighborhoods.

We appreciate the humanity and love demonstrated by our union in the fight for the schools our students deserve. In this moment, in this country, we are an inspiring example of the power of common good unionism.

There is, of course, much still to do — and much at stake for public education. Together, we have beaten back the worst of the education reform movement and their austerity agenda. **Together, we will succeed in our fight to win real equity and educational justice for our students, their families, and our communities.**

together we protect

When schools and workplaces began to reopen, we shifted gears to **PROTECT** not only our students and communities, but ourselves and our colleagues. And when some employers illegally refused to bargain with our unions over health and safety conditions, IFT used our power and put our collective foot down to demand that safety be the top priority.

| Supporting the science

At the state and local levels, we took the lead and insisted that employers and elected officials follow the science and CDC guidelines. On behalf of all IFT members and those we serve, President Montgomery consistently issued statements supporting Governor Pritzker's responsible mandates on masking, social distancing, vaccinations, and other proven public health measures. Recognizing the disparate and devastating impact COVID had on communities of color, we paid particular attention to centering our support for mitigation efforts on those most impacted. At the same time, we focused on ensuring that employers followed state labor law and bargained with our local unions to develop and uphold safety agreements. Prioritizing safety was not about politics, we said, but about people.

Read more online at
ift-aft.org/together.



Providing information and resources

To help members and communities stay healthy, we provided online tools and resources. From an initial webpage offering essential COVID-19 resources to the development of a vaccination resource center which included FAQs, vaccine myth busting information and more, the **IFT kept leaders and members informed**. In early 2021, we took those efforts a step further and launched the IFT COVID Tracker, an online tool that allows members to report outbreaks and report health and safety violations. By collecting and comparing data about potential COVID “hot spots,” our unions were better able to hold state and local officials accountable for everyone’s safety.

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I was only allotted 11 sick days and I used eight of them just for COVID-related reasons. If IFT had not worked to pass legislation granting school staff COVID-specific sick-days, I would have lost multiple paychecks.

Angela Bulger, Central Teachers Support Staff Association (Local 4673)

Fighting for COVID-related safety legislation

We didn’t just fight – WE WON. Thanks to the tireless advocacy of IFT members and other workers, our union secured many critical victories in Springfield to ensure we were treated fairly at work and our safety was prioritized.

Among our successes was **House Bill (HB) 1167**, a major victory for all vaccinated educators and school staff (PreK-16). Signed into law by Governor Pritzker, the bill created COVID-specific sick days for vaccinated educators and school staff (PreK-16) and restored previously used sick time for those who were forced to quarantine (or stay home with a quarantined school-aged child) during the 2021-22 school year.

- **HB 2455 and HB 2643**, which allowed non-instructional and non-administrative employees of schools, colleges and universities to qualify for unemployment benefits during summer 2020 and 2021.
- **Senate Bill (SB) 3914**, which allows a teacher to use up to five sick days for mental health reasons.
- **HB 12**, which allows public school, university, or community college employees who have been employed for at least 12 months and worked at least 1,000 hours in the previous 12-month period to be covered by the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA).
- **HB 18**, which extends the time between evaluations for teachers previously rated “proficient” or “excellent” from two to three years.
- **HB 816**, which allows educators and school employees to use paid sick leave after fostering, adopting, or giving birth to a child.

Our fights to protect one another weren't just statewide collective ones. Those fights happened in our locals, councils and chapters too. In urban and rural communities alike, IFT members harnessed their collective strength to demand the safe workplaces we deserve.

The **Chicago Teachers Union** (Local 1) helped to set the stage by winning a groundbreaking first-in-the-nation school reopening agreement that included strong safety measures to protect educators, staff, and students as well as a vaccination program for students and families.



Chicago Teachers Union (Local 1) held a series of walkouts to advocate for stronger safety measures.



Members of the University Professionals of Illinois (Local 4100) held a Teach Out to raise awareness to the lack of safety measures on campus.

Several councils of the **West Suburban Teachers Union** (Local 571) successfully filed and won Unfair Labor Practice (ULP) charges against employers who attempted to disregard their own COVID safety metrics and violate return-to-work agreements as they attempted to reopen schools. These important wins strengthened IFT's consistent position that all employers must negotiate and abide by safety agreements with their unions under established labor law.

Members of the **University Professionals of Illinois** (UPI Local 4100) won tough fights for COVID safety protections in chapters from DeKalb to Charleston. UPI also partnered with higher education colleagues in the **University of Illinois-Chicago United Faculty** (Local 6456) and the **Columbia Faculty Association** (Local 6602) to educate the public about the need for critical safety measures on campus. Their collective effort included an online press conference that provided expert insight and data for reporters. The press conference generated statewide media attention on the concerns surrounding the safe return of in-person learning on Illinois campuses.

And at the City Colleges of Chicago (CCC), members of the **Cook County College Teachers Union** (Local 1600) and the **Federation of College Clerical & Technical Personnel** (Local 1708) conducted a nationwide media campaign and issued a vote of "no confidence" in CCC administration when employees were required to work in-person at unsafe campuses.

LETTER FROM THE SECRETARY-TREASURER



SECRETARY-TREASURER
JANE RUSSELL

Welcome to the 2022 IFT Convention!

It is wonderful to be here in person with one another once again.

The last three years have been tumultuous! In my time as IFT secretary-treasurer and before that as a long-serving local president, I've seen our members and our unions do amazing things. But during the toughest time of most of our personal and professional lives, **I've never been more proud of our individual and collective strength as unionists as I have been since our last convention.**

This convention report beautifully highlights all the incredible work we've done, and I want to reiterate a few things that I believe are truly impressive!

Organizing tops that list. Since 2019, and despite the pandemic, many new groups have joined the IFT. It seems that unrepresented workers saw their colleagues in IFT unions not only survive, but thrive, and they wanted to increase their power and join the family. We are so glad to welcome these new professionals to our union!

During this same time, I'm proud to say that revenue and expenses have remained steady. As good stewards of IFT finances, our elected leaders have worked to provide the necessary resources for organizing, professional development opportunities, and other programs that help members enhance important workplace training and skills.

I'm also proud of our union's incredible work to keep members, workplaces, and communities safe during the pandemic. Every step of the way, the IFT worked with Governor Pritzker's office and education and community organizations to

ensure that safety is a priority in every school, on every campus, and in offices where our members work. At a time when the "rules" changed almost daily, and we all were forced to constantly pivot and adapt our work to teach students or serve the public, we got it done. At the same time, we came together in our local and statewide unions to raise our collective voice and demand that safety was paramount.

With IFT support, our locals, councils and chapters continued to insist that we be treated and paid fairly. During these uncertain times, IFT members have bargained some outstanding contracts and won healthy raises. Average salary increases climbed to 4.84 percent for 2022-23!

Finally, our union has long fought for a fairer system of school funding to ensure that all students - regardless of their zip code, first language, or skin color - are provided an equitable, high-quality education. We successfully passed the Evidence-Based Funding model in 2017, and over the last three years we've worked with lawmakers in both parties to ensure it is fully funded and operates as intended. We also continued our fight to increase higher education funding, which has suffered for decades in our state. We will not yield!

The last two years have been tough, but we have weathered many storms. **TOGETHER we can accomplish what would be impossible to do alone - winning key fights for our public schools, our communities, and our democracy.** I know I speak for every elected IFT leader when I say we are grateful for each and every one of you as IFT members. Thank you for all you do!

together we build

Our members and our union dedicated so much energy to keeping everyone safe and supported over the last three years that it's amazing we were able to do much else! But as unionists, we know that our success comes from collective action. That's why - despite the challenges of the pandemic - we worked harder than ever to **BUILD** the IFT into a union that empowers members and is fair and welcoming to all.

| Growing our membership

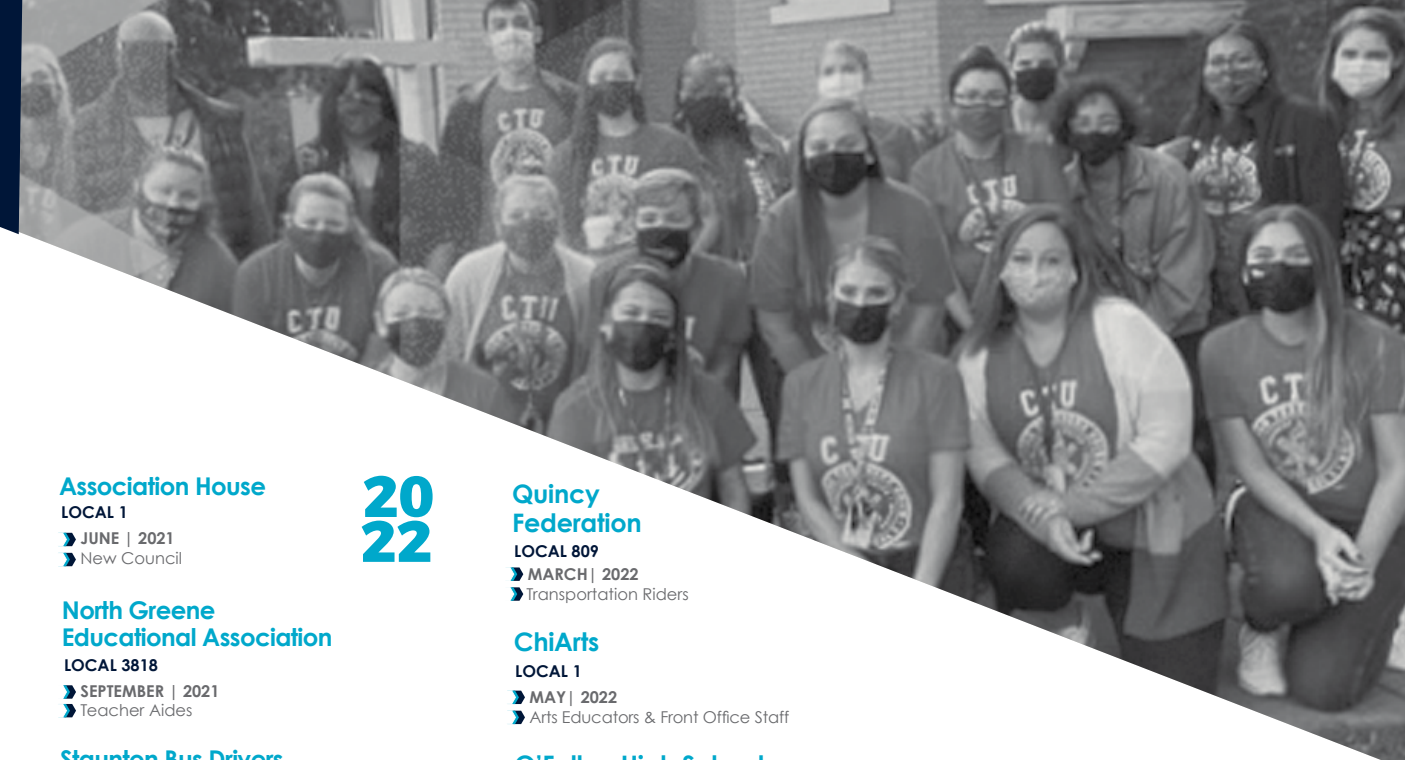
If anything positive has come from the pandemic, it has been a surge in unionism across the country. From Amazon to Starbucks to staff in the U.S. House of Representatives, workers are finding their voice and organizing to demand fairness and respect on the job.

In the IFT, our collective power to advocate for members and those we serve during the pandemic did not go unnoticed. **All around Illinois, workers saw what it truly means to be #IFTstrong!** About 1,400 new members joined our ranks since 2019 to secure a safer workplace, a voice on the job, and a brighter future.

Read more online at
ift-aft.org/together.



Organizing Victories



2019
Civitas, LLC
 LOCAL 1
 ▶ NOVEMBER | 2019
 ▶ Office Professionals, Dean's Office Assistants, & Nurses

Chicago Heights Teachers & Support
 LOCAL 604
 ▶ DECEMBER | 2019
 ▶ Parent Teacher Coordinator

Joliet Junior College
 LOCAL 604
 ▶ DECEMBER | 2019
 ▶ Part-time Clerical Staff

2020
EPIC Academy
 LOCAL 1
 ▶ JULY | 2020
 ▶ New Council

IL Mathematics and Science Academy
 LOCAL 604
 ▶ OCTOBER | 2020
 ▶ New Council

Skokie District 73 1/2 Support Staff Council
 LOCAL 1274
 ▶ DECEMBER | 2020
 ▶ New Council

2021
IL Mathematics & Science Academy Council - Resident Counselors
 LOCAL 604
 ▶ JANUARY | 2021
 ▶ New Council

The Joseph Sears School District 38
 LOCAL 1274
 ▶ FEBRUARY | 2021
 ▶ New Council

Association of International Comedy Educators
 LOCAL 6612
 ▶ APRIL | 2021
 ▶ New Local

Tobacco Compliance Specialist
 LOCAL 4408
 ▶ JUNE | 2021
 ▶ New Position

Christopher House
 LOCAL 1
 ▶ JUNE | 2021
 ▶ New Council

2021
Association House
 LOCAL 1
 ▶ JUNE | 2021
 ▶ New Council

North Greene Educational Association
 LOCAL 3818
 ▶ SEPTEMBER | 2021
 ▶ Teacher Aides

Stanton Bus Drivers
 LOCAL 4818
 ▶ SEPTEMBER | 2021
 ▶ New Council

Northbrook District 28
 LOCAL 1274
 ▶ NOVEMBER | 2021
 ▶ New Council

Parent Educator Teaching Mentors
 LOCAL 540
 ▶ NOVEMBER | 2021
 ▶ New Council

Granite City Federation of Teachers
 LOCAL 743
 ▶ DECEMBER | 2021
 ▶ Nurses

2022
Quincy Federation
 LOCAL 809
 ▶ MARCH | 2022
 ▶ Transportation Riders

ChiArts
 LOCAL 1
 ▶ MAY | 2022
 ▶ Arts Educators & Front Office Staff

O'Fallon High School Paraprofessionals
 LOCAL 3939
 ▶ JUNE | 2022
 ▶ Nurses, Athletic Trainers & Sign Language Interpreters

UIC - Bridge to Faculty Postdoctoral Research
 LOCAL 6465
 ▶ JULY | 2022

Mannheim District 83 Certified Teaching Staff
 LOCAL 571
 ▶ SEPTEMBER | 2022
 ▶ New Council

Joliet 86 School Related Personnel
 LOCAL 604
 ▶ SEPTEMBER | 2022

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We knew forming a union would help us continue to fulfill IMSA's mission to be an innovator and leader in STEM teaching and learning.

Michael Hancock, Illinois Mathematics & Science Academy (Local 604)



Creating antiracist unions

We know our collective efforts can help to change the narrative, enact new policies and create more equitable, inclusive unions that are welcoming spaces for all. That's why our members, locals, and the IFT have made antiracism a Must-Win-Battle and ramped up this critically important work during the last three years.

At every level of our union, the IFT and our members are striving to view the work we do through an antiracist lens, from the professional development of IFT staff and leaders to providing members with support and resources.

To that end, we developed a special section of the IFT website to educate members and the public and promote diversity, equity, inclusion, and racial justice. The site offers a wide variety of resources, including information about the Black Lives Matter at School movement, Sustainable Community Schools, the truth about critical race theory, and much more.

The site also provides an in-depth informational video created by the IFT's Organizational Equity and Inclusion (OEI) task force called

"IFT REAL TALK: Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Racial Justice." The video is an incredible resource about the effects of racism and our union's commitment to making powerful, positive change.

To further help members do this important work in their locals and workplaces, the IFT OEI Task Force also developed and distributed our union's first **"IFT Antiracism Organizing Guide."** The guide is designed to help spark member conversations and center racial justice in organizing and collective bargaining work.



Taking the LEAD

The IFT's **Leadership Education and Development** (LEAD) program for 2021-22 amplified our collective efforts to build antiracist, justice-centered unions. As part of the ongoing LEAD program, local and council teams from around the state focused their union-building efforts on these critical goals.

2021-22 LEAD TEAMS

- **Argo Summit Council - West Suburban Teachers Union** (Local 571)
- **D214 Education Association - Northwest Suburban Teachers Union** (Local 1211)
- **North Suburban Teachers Union** (Local 1274)
- **Champaign Federation of Teachers** (Local 1925)
- **Illinois Federation of Public Employees** (Local 4408)

Empowering members with professional development

We understand that to build stronger unions we must support our members' professional and union growth. Over the last three years, the pandemic forced us to find new ways to do that through our Union Professional Development program, but we met the challenge!

IFT professional development offerings quickly adapted to a virtual format when traditional in-person opportunities were unavailable. Timely and relevant online summer courses included **"The Union's Response to Student Stress and Trauma," "Member Self-care During This Traumatic Time," "Supporting Students With Grief and Loss,"** and many more.

Our longstanding, popular **Union Leadership Institute** (ULI) program was also adapted to meet members' needs for safe but effective professional and union training. After being cut short in 2020, sessions were virtual in 2020-21 and then modified to a hybrid model (two sessions per year in-person and one virtual).

In collaboration with the Illinois Education Association and ISBE, we also offered an exciting opportunity for both new and veteran educators in the **Virtual Instructional Coaching** (VIC) program. The program provides training and support for early career educators by pairing them with experienced teacher coaches who receive a stipend for their services.

together we act

Over the last three years as we have continued to build our strength and knowledge, we've also harnessed our power to **ACT** collectively and secure incredible wins that improved our contracts and professions and benefited the students and citizens we serve.



Read more online at
[ift-aft.org/together.](https://ift-aft.org/together)



Making the ultimate sacrifice

Sometimes to secure these wins, our members were forced to walk the picket lines. These local unions bravely stood up to employers who refused to bargain fair agreements until members went on strike.



Chicago Teachers Union
(Local 1)



Decatur Federation of Teaching Assistants
(Local 4324)



Graduate Employees Organization (GEO) at the University of Illinois-Chicago
(Local 6297)



Grayslake Federation of Teachers of the Lake County Federation of Teachers
(Local 504)



Grayslake PARA Council of the Lake County Federation of Teachers (Local 504)



Patton Federation of Teachers Council 133 of the Southwest Suburban Federation of Teachers Union (Local 943)



Proviso Teachers Union Council of the West Suburban Teachers Union (Local 571)



Triton Mid-Managers Chapter of Cook County College Teachers Union (Local 1600)



Other locals and councils narrowly averted walkouts but were forced to file intent-to-strike notices to demand that their employers get serious about bargaining.

STRIKES AUTHORIZED, CONTRACTS SETTLED

- **Blue Ridge Federation** (Local 3350)
- **Champaign Federation of Teachers** (Local 1925)
- **Chicago Teachers Union** (Local 1)
- **DeKalb District 428** (Local 4328)
- **Graduate Employees Organization (GEO) at the University of Illinois-Urbana-Champaign** (Local 6300)
- **University Professionals of Illinois** (Local 4100)
 - **Governors State University Chapter**
 - **Northern Illinois University-Tenure Track Faculty Chapter**

KAMALA

makes history!

CONGRATULATIONS VICE PRESIDENT-ELECT



Electing Biden/Harris

The collective action – and votes! – of our members played a key role in ousting Donald Trump in 2020 and electing union-friendly Joe Biden to our nation’s highest office. The victory was made even sweeter with the glass ceiling-shattering election of Kamala Harris, who became the first female woman of color ever to serve as vice president.

The Biden/Harris team immediately took action to fulfill its campaign promises,

including the commitment to increase diversity in their administration and nominate the first-ever Black woman to serve on the Supreme Court, Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson.

Despite the challenges of COVID recovery and a struggling U.S. economy, the Biden/Harris team continues to make progress on issues that matter to our members and unions, including gun violence, reducing student loan debt, climate and clean energy policies, and the right to organize.

Securing workers’ rights

In a huge victory for working men and women, the advocacy of IFT members was critical to getting the **Workers’ Rights Amendment (WRA) on the ballot in November 2022.**

As passed by the Illinois General Assembly in May 2021, Senate Joint Resolution Constitutional Amendment 11 would amend the Illinois Constitution to guarantee that employees have a fundamental right to organize and collectively bargain. It would also prohibit so-called “right-to-work” laws. We are hopeful that the continued efforts by our members and others will encourage voters to **say YES to this historic protection for working people.**



IFT members and staff helping educate the public about the importance of passing the Workers’ Rights Amendment.

Scoring critical legislative wins

Member advocacy helped our union successfully lobby for other important legislation that benefits members, students and communities. Among our big wins were:

- **HB 2275**, which restores bargaining rights to the Chicago Teachers Union (Local 1).
- **HB 2908**, which creates a 21-member elected school board for the City of Chicago.
- **HB 375**, which provides university and community college adjuncts with notice of the status of the class(es) they were hired to teach.
- **SB 654**, which requires all public schools to provide 30 minutes of daily supervised, unstructured, child-directed play for students in grades K-5.
- **SB 525**, which expands the number of state employees who can join a union and have collective bargaining rights and reverses the Rauner-era practice of using an outdated job description to misclassify workers.

Stopping harmful increases in standardized testing

In a huge win for students, we used our collective power to stop the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) from increasing standardized testing for students in grades 3-8 and adding testing for our youngest learners.

When ISBE announced their ill-conceived plan in spring 2021 our union sprang into action. Working with allied education stakeholders, we launched “**Teach Not Test,**” an

informative website and social media campaign designed to stop ISBE approval of the plan and create a more balanced, equitable assessment system. Overwhelming member response to the campaign not only helped stop ISBE’s plan, but fueled our lobbying efforts! **In May 2022, we successfully passed SB 3986** (Public Act 102-0875), legislation which prohibits ISBE from funding standardized tests for students in grades PreK-2.

together we lead

All across the state, our union, locals, and members have raised our collective voice during the last three years to make a positive impact. We have proudly – and powerfully – taken the **LEAD** to not only promote antiracism, but to advocate for a host of social justice issues to benefit our students, communities, and society. As always, our members and leaders have guided our work.

Advancing equity and inclusion

As a basis for many of our social justice efforts, the IFT developed the **Organizational Equity and Inclusion (OE&I) Taskforce** in early 2020. This group of IFT staff, administrators and elected executive board members has been tasked with advancing the goals of racial justice, equity and diversity in our state and local unions.

To that end, the taskforce has assisted with the development of the IFT's OE&I webpage and its many member and leader resources, as well as supported statewide and local efforts to center work around an antiracist, justice-centered, and humane recovery. Many IFT locals have followed suit and increased their OE&I efforts too; the **Illinois Federation of Public Employees** (Local 4408) established a local Diversity Committee made of members and leaders to focus on critical social justice issues in their union and workplaces.

Read more online at
ift-aft.org/together.



Our union is not just “talking the talk” when it comes to advancing equity, we’re getting it “in writing.” Member support helped our union pass two historic bills since the last convention: HB 376, which requires Illinois public schools to provide a unit of instruction on Asian American history, and SB 564, which requires the teaching of the contributions made to the United States by Muslims, Muslim Americans and others of non-Christian faiths.



West Suburban Teachers Union (Local 571) members show their support during Black Lives Matter at School week.

Putting antiracism into action

As another layer of our antiracist work, IFT and our locals continued to support the **Black Lives Matter at School** campaign. Members joined voices with thousands of parents, students and educators across the country in January 2021 to support the **National Day of Resistance**. And to educate members and help them spread this important message about equality, our union also provided information and social media resources for **Black**

Lives Matter at School Week, which occurs each February during Black History Month.

We also stepped up our calls for the funding and development of **Sustainable Community Schools** (SCS). The wraparound services provided by SCS have been proven to benefit kids and communities of all types and sizes, so IFT developed a brochure and webpage to promote them and encourage districts to invest in them.

Supporting leaders to do the work

With so much at stake and despite the pandemic, our union ensured that local, council and chapter leaders had the support they needed to engage members in these critical social justice fights and all our collective efforts. In March 2021, the IFT adapted the annual Presidents’ Conference

to an online, energizing one-day format. Under the banner of “**Sustaining Your Leadership**,” **nearly 150 leaders from IFT unions statewide convened via Zoom to learn about available resources, connect with one another, and share their successes.**

Guiding us forward, making a difference

As always, member input has directed our statewide efforts and goals since we last convened for convention. In early 2022, IFT conducted a scientific survey of our members to get their feedback on everything from COVID safety mandates to contract issues. A few months later, President Montgomery and IFT administrators traveled the state to hold 37 in-person and virtual meetings with members. The additional feedback from these meetings helped shape the resolutions being considered at this convention.

Members have continued to have a powerful impact beyond our union, too. **Every one**



Mary Edly Allen, Lake County Federation of Teachers (Local 504), talks to potential voters about issues.

of us makes a difference each day in the workplace, but some courageous active and retired members ran for public office in 2020 to help improve the lives of kids, communities, and Illinois residents. We’re so proud!

STATE SENATE

Meg Loughran Cappel* (Local 604)

STATE HOUSE

Mary Edly Allen (Local 504)
Nidia Carranza (Local 1)
Aaron Ortiz* (Local 1)
David Seiler (Local 2296)
Paul Stoddard (Local 4100)

COUNTY COMMISSIONER

Brandon Johnson* (Local 1)
Cook County

SCHOOL BOARD

(Active members)

Matthew Casper-Bassler (Local 434)
Keith Padgett (Local 434)
Grant Ferkaluk (Local 604)
Katie Kramkowski (Local 604)
Dave Kondela (Local 1274)
Julie Zimmer (Local 604)
David Rush (Local 604)
Karen Daniels (Local 4140)
Carl Berry (Local 6270)
Christine Mitchell-Endsley (Local 6143)
Cynthia Winfield (Local 4183)
Judy Rayson (Local 943)
Peggy Kunz (Local 604)
Deb Martin (Local 604)
Kathy Kusiak (Local 2394)

Monica Koch (Local 4336)
Rachel Marroquin (Local 571)
Sarah Svoboda (Local 434)
Aaron Schirmer (Local 4100)
Leslie Ecker (Local 434)
Malika Manouzi (Local 571)
Christine Lynn (Local 604)
H. Todd Evans (Local 3906)
Anne Dulski (Local 434)
Shawn White (Local 504)
Nora Downing (Local 1)
Jacqueline Reick (Local 604)
Jaclyn Jaime (Local 1274)
Andrea Ballard (Local 943)
Jared Olesen (Local 1810)
Bruce Brown (Local 6300)
Regina Houston (Local 943)
Kimsha Flex (Local 1)

(Retirees)

Alice Couch (Local 571)
Jerry Miceli (Local 504)
Ted Schaal (Local 8011)
Karen DeFilippis (Local 604)
John Headley (Local 8011)
Elizabeth Hitzeman (Local 604)
Avis Miller (Local 604)
Linda Stoll (Local 8011)
Debbie Sykora (Local 604)
Donna Waldrom (Local 943)
Jim Chamness (Local 8011)
Dennis Lynch (Local 8011)
David Price (Local 8011)
Greg Sarver (Local 604)
Bonnie Rising (Local 943)
Cindy Collier (Local 8011)
Mike Hyland (Local 8011)

*IFT member

together we unite

If there was ever a doubt, the last three years have made this crystal clear: When we **UNITE** in our union, we are a powerful force for positive change. As we look ahead to the next three years, take a moment to reflect on the challenges we overcame and the progress we made for our members, our professions, and our communities during one of the most difficult times in our lives. Then just imagine what we can do next when we do it **TOGETHER.**



Read more online at
[ift-aft.org/together.](https://ift-aft.org/together)



REST IN POWER



KAREN LEWIS, NBCT
1953-2021

Executive Vice President, Illinois Federation of Teachers (2010-2019)

President, Chicago Teachers Union, Local 1 (2010-2019)

Vice President, American Federation of Teachers (2010-2019)

“Karen Lewis was a warrior, an undeniably powerful presence, and she spoke truth to power like no one else. She was one of the most committed unionists I have ever known, and she did absolutely nothing half way for the cause of labor. To stand beside her and see her members’ love for her at rallies on the streets of her beloved hometown of Chicago was a sight I’ll always cherish.

“Karen dedicated her life to the fight for equality, fairness, and respect for all people. She led the revival of the Chicago Teachers Union and sparked the reinvigoration of teacher unionism across the nation. Under Karen’s leadership during the historic strike of 2012, CTU won a fair and equitable contract for members and reframed the education debate in Chicago around the schools all children deserve.

“...In her heart she was a teacher, a nationally board-certified chemistry teacher, no less. It was a privilege to work with her in her role as IFT executive vice president, a position she held for nearly a decade before retiring in 2019. It was an honor to call her a distinguished colleague. Most importantly, it was a joy to call her a friend.”

--- IFT President Dan Montgomery

REST IN POWER



RICHARD “DICK” MANLEY
1936-2021

Vice President, Illinois Federation of Teachers (2010-2019)

President, AFT Local 604 (1976-2018)

Vice President, American Federation of Teachers (1974-1992)

A mighty and powerful advocate for education and labor, Dick was a legend. He spent his life advancing the cause of public education, unions, and his members. Over more than four decades, Dick’s work helped AFT Local 604 grow to be the second largest union in the IFT with more than 12,000 members in 75 councils in 10 Illinois counties. In 2010, he received the IFT Lifetime Achievement Award at our statewide convention and a Special Order of Business was passed in his honor.



SEAN NOONAN
1969-2022

Vice President, Illinois Federation of Teachers (2015-2022)

Legislative Chair, Cook County College Teachers Union, Local 1600 (2016-2022)

The IFT and Cook County College Teachers Union lost a tireless leader and friend with the passing of Sean Noonan. Sean fiercely sought and fought for a better world and saw the labor movement as the vehicle for that transformation to take place.

As a new instructor at Harper College in 2002, he took a leading role there in organizing and promoting a successful strike. A few years later, he took on the battle of turning the Cook County College Teachers Union into a fighting social organizing union, founding Educators for a Democratic Union.



LEO WELCH
1938-2022

Vice President, Illinois Federation of Teachers

President, Southwestern Illinois College Faculty Union, Local 4183

As an educator for more than 50 years - including 45 at Southwestern Illinois College in Belleville - Leo devoted his life to students and learning. He was also a committed unionist, serving in long term leadership roles in the Illinois Federation of Teachers and as a proud president of the Southwestern Illinois College Faculty Union. Leo was a powerful voice for educators and higher education downstate and across Illinois.



together



Illinois Federation of Teachers
A Union of Professionals

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