



A Union of Professionals

ILLINOIS FEDERATION OF TEACHERS

CONSTITUTION

AND

BY-LAWS

2025-2028

Adopted by delegates to the IFT Convention
October 18, 2025

Stacy Davis Gates
President

Cyndi Oberle-Dahm
Executive Vice-President

Pankaj Sharma
Secretary-Treasurer

John Miller
Membership Secretary

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ILLINOIS FEDERATION OF TEACHERS CONSTITUTION

ARTICLE I NAME AND AFFILIATION

Section 1. The name of this organization shall be the Illinois Federation of Teachers (IFT).

Section 2. It shall maintain affiliation with the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) and the Illinois AFL-CIO and its local AFL-CIO labor council(s) if such council(s) exist(s). Failure of any local union to maintain the affiliations as required in Section 2 of this article shall be grounds for denial of delegate representation at any IFT Convention or other appropriate penalties set by the Executive Board, except that the Executive Board may, by a two-thirds vote, waive these requirements for good and sufficient reasons.

ARTICLE II OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the Illinois Federation of Teachers (IFT) are:

To improve the status of teachers, educational workers and other workers to provide for better educational opportunities for all citizens;

To give mutual aid and support to Illinois teachers, educational workers and other workers in securing favorable state and national legislation and policies;

To serve as a medium of exchange for teachers, educational workers and other workers for the welfare of working people;

To secure and maintain high professional standards and to secure the conditions necessary for the greatest possible success of our members and the institutions where they work;

To preserve and promote the welfare of the public education and the public service systems of our communities and state;

To secure adequate financing to provide high quality education in all public schools, colleges and universities and high quality public services in Illinois;

To identify and promote practices and policies that enhance student achievement in safe, supportive learning environments with our parents/guardians and communities;

To promote the organization of teachers, educational workers and other workers;

To obtain, preserve and defend collective bargaining rights for all teachers, educational workers and other workers;

To promote mutual assistance and cooperation among the locals of the IFT, promote the formation of federated locals within the IFT, and to provide support to area councils;

To expose and fight all forms of racism, discrimination, and promote policies, programs and trainings that enhance participation in the union by underrepresented minorities;

To further the aims of the American Federation of Teachers, the AFL-CIO, and other affiliated labor bodies;

To support the principles of the American labor movement and a free trade union movement throughout our nation and the world; and finally

To support and promote the ideals of a robust and socially just democracy.

ARTICLE III MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. All Illinois locals and chartered retiree organizations of the AFT shall be eligible for and shall hold membership in this organization.

Section 2. Any local which is more than three (3) months in arrears in payment of per capita tax to the IFT or the AFT shall be considered delinquent and may be suspended from membership and subject to the provisions as outlined in Article V, Section 7. Such local may be reinstated upon receipt of delinquent per capita tax.

Section 3. Any local may be suspended for cause by action of the Executive Board after an opportunity for hearing. The action of the Executive Board in such cases shall be final unless an appeal against the decision is made at the next IFT Convention.

Section 4. A local may be reinstated by action of the Executive Board.

Section 5. The Executive Board of the IFT may admit any teacher, educational worker or other worker to at-large membership if such a person is not employed within the jurisdiction of a local union of the AFT.

ARTICLE IV OFFICERS

Section 1. The elected officers of the IFT shall be President, Executive Vice-President, Secretary-Treasurer, Membership Secretary, and forty-three (43) Vice-Presidents. These forty-seven (47) shall constitute the Executive Board. The President, Executive Vice-President, Secretary-Treasurer, and Membership Secretary shall be the executive officers of the IFT. They shall be elected every three years at the IFT Convention and take office immediately following the adjournment of the election convention. Vacancies occurring between elections shall be filled as described in Article III, Section 1 of the IFT By-Laws, provided, however, that a vacancy in the office of the President be filled by the Executive Vice-President.

From among the forty-three Vice-Presidents, there shall be seven (7) Area First Vice-Presidents appointed by the President designated as follows; 1) First Vice-President, Equity; 2) First Vice-President, Pre K-12; 3) First Vice-President, Higher Education; 4) First Vice-President, PSRP (Paraprofessional and Support Personnel); 5) First Vice-President, Public Employees; 6) First Vice-President, Next Generation; and 7) First Vice-President, Retirees.

Section 2. The office of any IFT Executive Board member who misses three meetings in any twelve (12) month period shall be declared vacant unless that member shows acceptable cause to the Executive Board at the next regularly scheduled Executive Board meeting. Any such vacancy shall be filled in accordance with Article III, Section 1 of the IFT By-Laws.

Section 3. The President shall be the Chief Executive Officer of the IFT and shall administer the affairs of the IFT and execute policies of the IFT as determined by the IFT Convention and the Executive Board. The President may hire or appoint a chief administrator to assist in carrying out the President's directives with the advice and consent of the Executive Board. The duties of the President shall be to:

- (a) execute the policies of the IFT as determined by the IFT Convention and the Executive Board.
- (b) preside over IFT Conventions, IFT meetings and meetings of the Executive Board.
- (c) appoint committee chairs with the approval of the Executive Board.
- (d) direct the work of the administrative staff and other IFT employees, outside professionals, and consultants in consultation with the Executive Board.
- (e) perform other duties ordinarily incumbent upon that office.

(f) designate, with the approval of the Executive Board, the Area First Vice-Presidents from among the forty-three (43) Vice-Presidents.

(g) attend the regular and special conventions of the IFT, the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), and the Illinois AFL-CIO.

Section 4. The Executive Vice-President shall be the second highest ranking officer and also shall execute policies of the IFT as determined by the IFT Convention, the President, and the Executive Board. His/her duties shall be to:

- (a) advise and assist the President and perform functions as assigned by the President.
- (b) preside over all IFT Conventions, meetings, Executive Board, and Executive Committee meetings in the absence of the President.
- (c) coordinate the work of the Constituency Councils.

Section 5. The Secretary-Treasurer shall be the Chief Financial Officer of the IFT and shall direct and be responsible for IFT's finances. The Secretary-Treasurer, under the direction of the President, shall execute financial policies as determined by the IFT Convention and the Executive Board. His/her duties shall include but not be limited to:

- (a) collection of all monies, properties, files and effects of the IFT.
- (b) payment of all monies properly authorized by the Executive Board through the adopted budget of the IFT.
- (c) arrangement from time to time but no less than annually the audit of all books, accounts, records and financial transactions of the IFT by an independent auditing firm. Such audit will be provided to the officers of the IFT.
- (d) performance of other duties ordinarily incumbent upon that office.
- (e) reporting on IFT's finances at Executive Board meetings and furnishing a written financial report at each IFT Convention and meeting or upon request.
- (f) providing by August 15 of each IFT Convention year to the Chair of the Nominating Committee a list of the locals that are in good standing together with the number of members in each of these locals as of August 1 prior to the IFT Convention.
- (g) prepare for the other executive officers and make available upon request to the President of each local of the IFT a confidential monthly report of the IFT per capita tax payments of each IFT local, including the most recent per capita tax payments.
- (h) provide financial information and advice as shall be prescribed by the Executive Board or other executive officers.

Section 6. The Membership Secretary shall act as Secretary at general meetings, and of the Executive Board. The Membership Secretary, under the direction of the President, shall keep and shall have charge of adequate records of these meetings including attendance at the meetings of the Executive Board. His/her duties shall include but not be limited to:

- (a) attend all Executive Board meetings, take minutes of these meetings, and send a copy of these minutes to all locals.
- (b) manage any correspondence of the Executive Board or any other correspondence as directed by the executive officers.

(c) performance of other duties as required by the Constitution and By-Laws of the Union or ordinarily incumbent upon that office.

(d) issuance of the call for the IFT Convention every three years and cause the proceedings of the convention to be recorded.

(e) support organizing and mobilization of members.

ARTICLE V EXECUTIVE BOARD

Section 1. The Executive Board shall be composed of the President, the Executive Vice-President, the Secretary-Treasurer, the Membership Secretary and forty-three (43) Vice-Presidents.

Section 2. Any member of the Executive Council of the AFT who is a member of a local affiliated with the IFT shall be a non-voting member of the Executive Board.

Section 3. The Executive Board shall meet no fewer than five (5) times per year except in the case where a majority vote of the total membership of the Board determines otherwise.

Section 4. Special meetings may be called by the President or upon the written request to the President of at least one-third (1/3) of the Executive Board membership.

Section 5. A majority of the Executive Board shall constitute a quorum for the conducting of official business.

Section 6. The Executive Board shall have the power to conduct the business affairs of the IFT, including, but not limited to, the power to execute on its behalf any or all of the following:

(a) to sue and be sued, complain and defend on behalf of and for the use of the IFT.

(b) to employ attorneys and counselors to advise the IFT Convention, Executive Board, officers and employees on all matters pertaining to its business and affairs.

(c) to employ accountants, agents and other persons having skills and knowledge needed in the conduct of the business.

(d) to adopt an official seal, which may be altered and used by causing it, or a facsimile thereof, to be impressed or affixed or in any manner reproduced.

(e) to purchase, take, receive, lease as lessee, accept any gift, devise or bequest or otherwise acquire and to own, hold, use, deal in or with any real or personal property or any interest therein.

(f) to sell, convey, mortgage, pledge, lease as lessor and otherwise dispose of all or any part of its property and assets.

(g) to purchase, take, receive or otherwise acquire, own, hold, vote and use shares or other interests in or obligations of domestic or foreign corporations, associations, partnerships or individuals; and sell, mortgage, loan, pledge or otherwise dispose of such shares, interests or obligations.

(h) to make contracts and incur liabilities to accomplish any or all of its purposes; to borrow money for IFT purposes at such rates of interest and terms and conditions as they may determine; to issue notes, bonds and other obligations; and to secure any of its obligations by mortgage, pledge or deed of trust of all or any of its property and income.

(i) to invest the funds of the IFT from time to time in any real or personal property, and to take and hold real and personal property as security for funds so invested or loaned.

(j) to do anything it deems necessary or appropriate in the exercise of the foregoing powers or any other power granted to the Executive Board in this Constitution.

Section 7. The Executive Board shall have the authority to declare a local/council in bad standing when per capita tax is sixty (60) days in arrears and so notify the local in writing. The Executive Board, thirty (30) days after written notice, may take any or all of the following actions:

- (a) notify the members of the local/council that the local is in bad standing and that services and benefits to the members and the local/council will be suspended.
- (b) deny financial support to the local/council for defense, assistance, rebates or any other money due to the local as per the IFT Constitution whether said financial support is mandatory or discretionary.
- (c) withdraw assistance to the local/council of any field service director(s) or services provided by other IFT employees.
- (d) take appropriate legal action to collect per capita tax owed.
- (e) audit the books and records of the local/council.
- (f) charge interest on unpaid per capita tax not to exceed six (6) percent per annum.
- (g) notify the local/council, after a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Executive Board, that an IFT committee has been appointed by the President and approved by the Executive Board to review and make specific recommendations to the local concerning its finances. The specific recommendations shall be submitted to the local/council in writing by certified or registered mail. If the local/council does not implement the specific recommendations within thirty (30) days after written receipt of the recommendations, the committee has the specific authority to take control of all financial records, pay debts, collect and disperse revenues and handle all financial records of the local/council for a time not to exceed 180 days. The local/council officials shall cooperate with the committee or its representatives. The Executive Board has full authority to implement this provision including seeking legal authority to enforce said provision.

ARTICLE VI COMMITTEES

Section 1. Committee chairs shall be appointed by the President with the advice and consent of the Executive Board, unless otherwise specified herein.

Section 2. Members of committees shall be appointed by the President, after consultation with the chair and with the advice and consent of the Executive Board, unless otherwise specified herein.

Section 3. The following shall be standing committees: Auditing, Defense, Legislative and Nominating. The chair of each standing committee shall be a member of the Executive Board appointed by the President with the advice and consent of the Executive Board.

Section 4. The President shall appoint Vice-Presidents and Constituency Council Chairs, with the advice and consent of the Executive Board, to serve with the President, Executive Vice-President, Secretary-Treasurer, and Membership Secretary as the Executive Committee.

Section 5. The Executive Committee shall have the duty to advise the President, when requested, and shall be authorized, with the approval of the President and the Executive Board, to perform various management functions:

- (a) procure quarters for the union offices and provide for necessary maintenance.
- (b) procure office supplies, furniture and equipment.

(c) negotiate with unions of employees of the IFT and, at its discretion, enter into agreements with such unions; procure all needed employees and, in its discretion, enter into written contracts with these employees.

(d) procure such insurance as may be necessary in its judgment to protect against hazards to IFT's property and other liabilities and procure and keep in force such fidelity bonds for employees as may be required.

(e) exercise control and management of all union property and provide for the maintenance thereof.

(f) make reports of specific matters to the Executive Board when requested to do so by the Executive Board.

(g) make arrangements for the IFT Convention.

(h) act as the Budget Committee of the Executive Board.

ARTICLE VII AREA COUNCILS

Section 1. Area councils may be formed within geographic areas of the state. Such councils shall comprise no fewer than five (5) locals or, if less than five (5) locals, a potential membership of 750 within the jurisdiction of member locals.

Section 2. Each such area council shall devise and submit a constitution and/or by-laws to the Executive Board of the IFT. Any amendments thereafter shall be likewise submitted.

Section 3. Each newly organized council shall pay a charter fee of \$20 to the IFT upon approval of its constitution and/or by-laws.

Section 4. If an area council employs salaried personnel with financial aid from the IFT, such personnel shall be subject to the mutual approval of the Executive Board of the IFT and the area council employing such persons.

ARTICLE VIII IFT CONVENTION

Section 1. The regular IFT Convention shall be called by the Executive Board in the last quarter of each third year beginning in 2010.

Section 2. The President shall appoint, with the advice and consent of the Executive Board, a Credentials Committee, the duty of which shall be to review and approve the credentials of all IFT Convention delegates.

Section 3. All delegates' credentials must be submitted to the Credentials Committee fourteen (14) days prior to the beginning date of the IFT Convention. Names of alternates and their ranking shall be appended to the list of delegates from each local. Each delegate and alternate shall serve in that capacity until the election of the successor delegates and alternates from that local, after which point the newly-elected delegates and alternates shall become the delegates and alternates of that local for purposes of conducting the business of the IFT.

Section 4. The formula for determining delegate representation to IFT Conventions shall be as follows: one (1) delegate to the IFT Convention may be elected by each affiliated local having a membership of twenty-five (25) or less. For each seventy-five (75) members or major fraction thereof, one (1) additional delegate may be elected.

Section 5. Each officer and member of the Executive Board, by virtue of his/her office, shall be a delegate at the IFT Convention, except that such delegate shall not be entitled to nominate any candidate for office or vote in the election of officers unless such delegate has been elected to that position by secret ballot vote.

Section 6. Each area council may send one (1) delegate to the IFT Convention.

Section 7. Each chartered retiree organization may elect one (1) delegate to the IFT Convention and shall be entitled to one (1) vote at the convention. Such delegates are entitled to all rights and privileges of a delegate except that such delegate shall not be entitled to nominate any candidate for office or vote in the election of officers unless such delegate has been elected to that position by secret ballot vote.

Section 8. On all roll calls at the IFT Convention, each local represented shall be entitled to votes equal to the average number of members for whom per capita tax payments are paid to the IFT for the September 1 to June 30 period immediately preceding the convention. The votes of a local shall be divided evenly among the delegates registered or their duly qualified alternates. The Election Committee shall divide the votes to four (4) decimal positions at the time of tabulation. Election results will be reported by rounding the results to the nearest zero decimal position.

Section 9. No local/council may be seated at the IFT Convention if it is in bad standing with the AFT as delineated by Article X of the AFT By-Laws.

ARTICLE IX REFERENDUM VOTING

Section 1. The Executive Board may at any time take a referendum vote to determine the policies concerning problems arising between IFT Conventions.

Section 2. A referendum may be taken either at the recommendation of the Executive Board or at the request of at least ten (10) locals containing at least twenty-five (25) percent of the IFT membership.

Section 3. In a referendum, each local in good standing shall have voting strength in accordance with Article VIII, Section 4 of this Constitution but based on the per capita tax payments to the IFT on the first of the month in which the call for the referendum is made.

Section 4. In referendum votes, a majority of the votes cast shall prevail except in votes taken on amendments to this Constitution.

ARTICLE X RECALL ELECTIONS

Section 1. All officers are subject to recall. A recall election shall be held either upon the recommendation of the Executive Board or at the request of at least ten (10) locals containing at least twenty-five (25) percent of the IFT/AFT membership. Any request for a recall election shall be submitted to the President of the IFT who shall thereafter immediately transmit the request to the Chair of the IFT Nominating Committee.

Section 2. Upon receipt of a request for recall election, the Chair of the IFT Nominating Committee shall notify in writing each local of the IFT/AFT, each IFT Convention delegate and alternate delegate and the IFT officers subject to such recall election. No recall election shall be held earlier than forty-five (45) days from the date of such written notices of the recall election.

Section 3. Within fourteen (14) days of the date of the written notice of the recall election, each local of the IFT shall notify the Chair of the IFT Nominating Committee of any changes in the composition of their delegation, by reason of the resignation or other loss of a delegate, and the name(s) of the alternate(s) replacing such delegate(s). All alternates shall be named as delegates in accordance with their ranked order. In the absence of such written notification of delegates and alternates from the local, the local's delegates shall be deemed to remain as credentialed at the immediately preceding IFT Convention.

Section 4. All recall elections shall be conducted by mail ballot. The date by which the ballots must be received shall be considered the election date.

Section 5. The ballot shall be mailed to the delegates of each local union of the IFT. The ballot shall be so mailed no later than fourteen (14) days prior to the election date.

Section 6. On all recall elections, each local of the IFT shall be entitled to a number of votes equal to the average number of members for whom per capita tax payments are paid to the IFT for the last full three (3) calendar month period immediately preceding the request for a recall election. The votes of each local shall be distributed as evenly as possible among its delegates, but votes shall not be fractioned.

Section 7. In recall elections, the ballot question presented shall be, “Should (name of individual officer subject to recall) be recalled as a (name of office) of the IFT?” In recall elections, the majority of the votes cast shall prevail. Any vacancy resulting from a recall election shall be filled in accordance with Article III, Section 1 of the IFT By-Laws.

Section 8. All recall elections shall be conducted by the IFT Nominating Committee.

ARTICLE XI AMENDMENTS

Section 1. All amendments must be submitted to the Executive Board forty-five (45) days prior to the beginning date of the IFT Convention and presented to the locals thirty (30) days prior to the opening date of the IFT Convention.

Section 2. All amendments must be submitted either by a local or area council in good standing or by the Executive Board.

Section 3. Amendments to the Constitution shall be adopted by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the total registered delegates at the IFT Convention or by a referendum of the locals as described in Article IX.

Section 4. Amendments to the Constitution adopted at the IFT Convention shall take effect immediately following the convention. Amendments adopted by referendum of the locals as described in Article IX shall take effect the first day of the month following such adoption.

ARTICLE XII PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE

Roberts’ Rules of Order (Revised) shall govern all meetings.

BY-LAWS

ARTICLE I ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

An administrative staff shall be employed by the Executive Board upon the recommendation of the President. The Executive Board shall not employ an administrative staff member under written contract for any term beyond December 31 of the year of the IFT Convention completing the term of office of the Executive Board which employs him/her, with provision for not more than six (6) months of severance pay.

ARTICLE II DUTIES OF STANDING COMMITTEES

Section 1. AUDIT. The Audit Committee shall examine the books of the IFT annually (at the end of the fiscal year) and submit the report to the Executive Board, which shall in turn submit it to the IFT Convention delegates and make it available upon request to Local Presidents.

Section 2. DEFENSE. The Defense Committee shall:

- (a) thoroughly investigate applications by locals and/or at-large members for aid in connection with all legal cases brought before it that regard the welfare of IFT members and/or IFT locals.
- (b) these investigations shall include but not be limited to consultation with the law firm used by the IFT.
- (c) the Defense Committee shall meet regularly to prepare recommendations on each case which will include the extent of financial support and the court level of support proposed by the committee.
- (d) these recommended actions will then be presented to the IFT Executive Board at its next regular meeting.

Section 3. LEGISLATIVE. The Legislative Committee shall meet at the call of its Chair to:

- (a) study major state and local legislation, proposed or pending, pertaining to teachers, other educational workers, state employees and schools or other public services.
- (b) inform and advise the IFT Executive Board of developments in legislation for education and other public services.
- (c) prepare a legislation program for Executive Board submission to the IFT Convention.
- (d) make recommendations concerning the legislative positions of the IFT.
- (e) study the workings of the public pension systems as to their effects upon teachers and other public employees throughout the state.

Section 4. NOMINATING. The Nominating Committee shall:

- (a) in May prior to a IFT Convention, notify members of the nomination and election procedures.
- (b) accept nomination petitions at any time but not later than 10:00 a.m. on the day of elections at the IFT Convention.
- (c) validate petitions based on candidate eligibility and delegate signatures.
- (d) report qualified nominees to the IFT Convention. In the event of a vacancy on the Executive Board, the Nominating Committee shall inform all Local Presidents of said vacancy and receive and process nominations to fill the vacancy as provided by these By-Laws.

Election rules and procedures for the IFT Convention will be developed by the Nominating Committee, approved by the Executive Board prior to the convention and submitted to the convention for approval prior to the election.

ARTICLE III DUTIES AND POWERS OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

Section 1. The Executive Board shall have the duty to:

- (a) fill all vacancies on the Executive Board until the expiration of the term of office in which the vacancy occurred.
- (b) call the IFT Convention in the last quarter of the convention year.
- (c) carry out the decisions of the IFT Convention and have the power to act for the IFT in the promotion of its policies during the time between IFT Conventions.
- (d) sign contracts with the President, Executive Vice-President, Secretary-Treasurer, Membership Secretary, administrative staff and all professional employees and make and provide such adjustments in their salaries and working conditions as the Executive Board deems proper and necessary.
- (e) make all necessary and proper expenditures to provide for the day-to-day operation of the IFT.
- (f) establish or abolish such special committees as it deems necessary in the interests of the IFT.
- (g) submit a budget to the IFT Convention which will include compensation for officers and all employees of the IFT.
- (h) plan the agenda for IFT Convention meetings.
- (i) receive all resolutions and amendments for presentation to the IFT Convention.
- (j) edit the Constitution and By-Laws for non-substantive grammar, punctuation and organizational correctness.

ARTICLE IV PER CAPITA TAX

Section 1.

(a) Effective September 1, 2026, each local shall pay an annual per capita tax according to the following schedule over the ten (10) month period beginning September 1 of each year through the following June 1. On receipt of per capita tax, the IFT will reimburse each local \$6 per member payable over ten (10) months from September through June. The IFT Executive Board will determine a regular servicing per capita tax structure (i.e., total per capita tax less that allocated to IFT Committee on Political Action (COPE) and to IFT Union Professional Development (UPD) as the basis for pro-rata per capita tax calculations per Section 3 of this article.

September 1, 2026	\$416.30
September 1, 2027	\$425.80
September 1, 2028	\$434.30

(b) Each local which employs officers or field staff shall receive one unit of assistance for every unit of 1,200 full-time equivalent per capita tax payments as specified in Section 1(a) above. The Executive Board shall be responsible for determining the guidelines for this assistance formula. Each unit of assistance shall be according to the following schedule:

September 1, 2026	\$17,371
September 1, 2027	\$17,371
September 1, 2028	\$17,892

Section 2.

(a) Annual per capita tax for regular at-large membership shall be an amount equal to the sum of IFT per capita tax, plus the sum of AFT per capita tax, plus the sum of the Illinois AFL-CIO per capita tax for the current September through August membership year for new members and renewals of membership.

(b) Annual per capita tax for special classes of at-large members such as student teachers or directly affiliated retirees shall be established by the Executive Board.

(c) Per capita tax payments for at-large members shall be paid by the IFT to the AFT and the Illinois AFL-CIO.

Section 3. Locals may establish special classes of membership. The salary threshold for special class per capita tax rates shall adjust on September 1 of any year to the same threshold as determined in the AFT Constitution. Special membership classes are:

(a) employees who are eligible for membership whose salary is less than the basic teacher's salary or employees whose salary is less than \$18,000, whichever salary is higher. Such locals pay per capita tax for such members at one-half (1/2) the regular servicing per capita tax rate and IFT UPD rate.

(b) employees who are eligible for membership earning under \$12,000. Such locals pay per capita tax for such members at one-quarter (1/4) the regular servicing per capita tax rate and the IFT UPD rate.

(c) employees who are eligible for membership earning under \$8,500. Such locals pay per capita tax for such members at one-eighth (1/8) the regular servicing per capita tax rate and the IFT UPD rate.

(d) retirees.

(1) An active member who retires or has retired from his/her present position shall be admitted as a lifetime retiree to an AFT chartered retiree organization, other than an AFT chapter within an AFT chartered local. Such retirees' sole voting rights are provided under Article VIII, Section 7 of the IFT Constitution and with the right to participate in IFT programs otherwise available to the general membership.

(2) In addition, such retirees may join a local retiree chapter. Such locals shall pay per capita tax for such members at a rate of \$12 per retired member per year. This shall equate to one-quarter (1/4) rate for determining delegate strength.

(e) laid-off employees or employees on unpaid leave. Such locals shall pay per capita tax for such members at the rate of \$1.20 per member per month for the ten-month payment period of September through June of each membership year. This shall equate to one-twentieth (1/20) rate for determining delegate strength.

Such members shall be entitled to receive full benefits of membership. In determining the delegate strength of the local at any IFT Convention, retirees and employees laid off or on unpaid leave shall be counted as specified in Sections 3(c) and (d) above.

Locals exercising the right to establish the aforementioned special membership classes must be prepared to submit verifiable evidence of class qualification of any affected member to the IFT.

Section 4. The following classes of associate members of the IFT are established:

(a) In jurisdictions where there is no local, employees may be admitted as associate IFT members without IFT voting rights.

(b) Former active members who are not eligible to continue their active membership may be admitted as associate members without voting rights.

(c) The dues for each class of members established in this section shall be determined by the IFT executive board and the AFT.

(d) The IFT executive board is authorized to establish an organization(s) of associate IFT members without IFT voting rights. Associate IFT members in such organization(s) shall elect their chief executive officer.

Section 5. Delegate representation to the IFT Convention shall be determined in accordance with Article VIII, Section 4 of this Constitution on the basis of the average per capita tax payments to the IFT for the September 1 through June 30 period immediately preceding the IFT Convention. The President shall notify the Executive Board and the President of each IFT local of the average per capita tax payments of the September 1 to June 30 period immediately preceding the IFT Convention by July 15 of the convention year.

Section 6. Special Contribution for an Illinois Revenue Campaign

(a) Effective September 1, 2026, a one-time special contribution of \$5.00 per FTE shall be collected from each local and at-large member.

(b) The proceeds of this assessment shall be placed in a designated fund to support a statewide campaign to increase revenue for education and public services and to advocate for policies that equitably and sustainably fund public schools, colleges, universities, and public services.

(c) The assessment shall be collected over the same ten (10) month period used for annual per capita tax payments (September through June) and shall be in addition to the regular per capita tax amounts established in Section 1.

(d) The IFT Executive Board shall oversee the use of funds generated by this special contribution and ensure transparency and accountability in all campaign-related expenditures.

**ARTICLE V
NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS**

Section 1. Nominations for the offices of President, Executive Vice-President, Secretary-Treasurer, Membership Secretary, and forty-three (43) Vice-Presidents shall be by petition signed by at least ten (10) delegates and presented to the Nominating Committee no later than 10 a.m. on the day of the election. Declination of nominations shall be made before the start of the afternoon session on the same day. Candidates shall be introduced to the IFT Convention at the beginning of the afternoon session. Candidates for President, Executive Vice-President, Secretary-Treasurer, and Membership Secretary shall have the option to make five-minute campaign speeches.

Section 2. Each local represented shall be entitled to a number of votes equal to the number of members for whom average per capita tax have been paid to the IFT for the September 1 through June 30 period immediately preceding the IFT Convention.

**ARTICLE VI
EMPLOYMENT POLICY**

All salaried staff positions to be filled, excluding clerical and secretarial help, must be advertised either in the state federation publication or on the IFT Web site or in a special bulletin sent to each Local President before any recommendation to hire shall be made to the Executive Board.

**ARTICLE VII
AMENDMENTS**

Section 1. These By-Laws may be amended in accordance with the following procedures:

(a) by a majority vote of the registered delegates at the IFT Convention of the IFT; or

(b) by a referendum of the locals. A majority vote on the referendum shall prevail. The proposed amendment must be submitted in writing to member locals not less than one (1) month before a vote is taken on the amendment.

(c) all amendments must be submitted to the Executive Board forty-five (45) days prior to the beginning date of the IFT Convention and presented to the locals thirty (30) days prior to the opening date of the IFT Convention.

(d) all amendments are to be submitted either by a local or area council in good standing or by the Executive Board.

ARTICLE VIII DELEGATES TO CONVENTIONS

Section 1. The President, Executive Vice-President, Secretary-Treasurer, and Membership Secretary will automatically be designated delegates to the AFT Convention, IFT Convention and to the Illinois AFL-CIO Convention.

Section 2.

(a) The at-large membership may elect the remaining delegates and/or alternates to the AFT Convention, IFT Convention and to the Illinois AFL-CIO Convention by a secret mail ballot election held among the at-large membership.

(b) Notice of the right to make nominations must be sent to each member or given a prominent place in the state federation publication. Both notices may be combined in one mailing or publication. Written notice announcing the date of election of delegates must be mailed to the address on record of each at-large member at least fifteen (15) days prior to the election. The results of the election must be published and the ballots kept for one (1) year.

ARTICLE IX BARGAINING IMPASSES AND STRIKES

Section 1. Any local union desiring support or aid from the IFT in bargaining impasses, strikes or other types of work stoppages must consult with the IFT President or his/her designee before any action is initiated in order to be eligible for any kind of monetary assistance.

Section 2. Failure of a local union to follow this procedure shall be adequate basis for withholding of any kind of support for a course of action taken by a local union in such situations. It shall be the duty of the President, as time and other circumstances allow, to consult with the AFT Vice-Presidents assigned to Illinois before making final decisions regarding such support.

ARTICLE X COMMITTEE ON POLITICAL EDUCATION (COPE)

Section 1. Committee

The Illinois Federation of Teachers Committee on Political Education (IFT COPE) shall:

(a) support and strengthen the commitment of the citizens and the government to excellence in public education and public services at all levels.

(b) promote and strive to improve public education and other public services by encouraging IFT members to take a more active part in governmental affairs.

(c) encourage IFT members to know and understand the important political issues and the actions of their governments as they pertain to members' work life.

(d) assist IFT members in organizing themselves for more effective political action and in carrying out their civic responsibilities.

(e) support candidates, causes, and organizations favorable to the positions of the IFT and the trade union movement and oppose those that are not favorable.

(f) participate in questions of public policy.

(g) engage in any suitable activities to achieve the purposes stated above.

Section 2. Committee Membership and Responsibilities

(a) The IFT COPE Committee shall consist of the President, Executive Vice-President, Secretary-Treasurer, Membership Secretary, Director of Political Activities, Executive Committee, and the Chair of the IFT Political Action Committee (PAC).

(b) The committee shall:

(1) make reports of specific matters to the Executive Board of the IFT.

(2) approve expenditures in accordance with Sections 1 and 3.

(c) The committee shall meet as necessary to carry out the policies and objectives of IFT COPE.

Section 3. Funds

(a) Effective September 1, 2017, and each year thereafter, \$35 of each member's annual per capita tax shall be directed to a fund distinct and separate from that of any other fund and shall be audited annually by an independent agent.

(b) The fund shall be administered in compliance with state campaign finance law.

(c) The IFT President and Director of Political Activities shall jointly approve and disburse payments from the fund for operating expenses related to Section 1.

(d) All disbursements approved by the IFT President and Director of Political Activities shall be reported to and ratified by the IFT Executive Board at the meeting following the disbursements.

(e) Funds may be disbursed upon approval of the Executive Board upon the recommendation of the committee, except that contributions to political action committees not exceeding \$10,000 may be disbursed upon the approval of the President and the Director of Political Activities.

(f) The books and records of the fund shall be in the custody of the President.

(g) All voluntary receipts to the fund shall be deposited in a separate and distinct fund and shall be audited annually by an independent agent. These voluntary receipts shall be transmitted to the American Federation of Teachers Committee on Political Education (AFT COPE) via participation in the AFT Partners in Political Education (AFT PIPE) program.

ARTICLE XI ILLINOIS FEDERATION OF TEACHERS POLITICAL ACTION COMMITTEE (IFT PAC)

Section 1. The IFT PAC shall be composed of nineteen (19) members, eighteen (18) of whom shall represent a region approved by the IFT Executive Board. One (1) member shall represent statewide locals. The IFT Executive Board shall designate one (1) member to serve as Chair.

Section 2. The members, hereinafter referred to as Regional PAC Chairs, shall be appointed by the Executive Board and serve terms coterminous with the Executive Board.

Section 3. The two major activities of IFT PAC are:

(a) Endorsement Process

Step 1. Notice of the eighteen (18) Regional IFT PAC endorsement meetings will be mailed by the IFT Springfield legislative office at the request of the Regional PAC Chair to all Presidents of locals who reside in the region.

Step 2. The regional endorsement meeting will be conducted by each Regional PAC Chair with the assistance of an assigned IFT staff member to:

- (1) inform the regional members by a legislative/political report including a review of the voting records and/or questionnaire responses of candidates prepared by the IFT Department of Political Activities.
- (2) receive local endorsements for all regionally elected state and federal offices that are open for election including U.S. House of Representatives, Illinois appellate court justices, Illinois supreme court justices, state representatives and state senators.
- (3) attempt to resolve any conflicting recommendations by consensus of the locals in attendance at the regional endorsement meeting.
- (4) make recommendations for those offices in which the locals do not make any endorsement recommendations.
- (5) cause a report to be drafted with the assistance of the IFT Department of Political Activities listing agreed recommendations, contested recommendations with a statement of the rationales for the conflicting recommendations and offices where no recommendation for endorsement was made with a statement of the rationale for no endorsement. Each Regional PAC will present such a report to the statewide IFT PAC.

Individual locals may also submit documentation for their respective positions to the IFT statewide PAC.

In determining endorsements for elections within their region, the Regional PAC shall review the voting records, questionnaire responses and records of interviews with candidates. An incumbent with a seventy-five (75) percent or better voting record on IFT issues shall normally receive a Regional PAC recommendation for IFT endorsement.

In elections where there is no incumbent with a seventy-five (75) percent or better voting record on IFT positions, the Regional PAC should attempt to seek consensus on a recommendation. For a candidate to receive a recommendation for IFT support, the candidate's questionnaire and interview must demonstrate support for IFT positions.

If there is a division on a recommendation, the Regional PAC Chair shall invite local representatives to submit a statement of rationale for support or non-support of an IFT endorsement of any candidate not receiving consensus support in the Regional PAC. Under special circumstances, the Regional PAC may reach consensus and recommend an IFT endorsement for a candidate that is an exception to the above stated standard. In such an exception, the Regional PAC Chair or his/her designee shall submit a rationale for the recommendation to the IFT Executive Board.

For the purposes of this section, consensus means the concurrence of those in attendance at a regional meeting regarding a particular candidate or race. If there are one or more objectors on any question before the Regional PAC, the objectors shall reduce to writing the reasons for the objection, and that document shall be forwarded to the IFT PAC as part of the Regional PAC's report. Failure to do so prior to the IFT PAC endorsement meeting shall void the objection.

Step 3. The IFT PAC Chair, with the assistance of the IFT Director of Political Activities, shall convene and conduct an IFT PAC endorsement meeting. Notice of this meeting shall be given at least thirty (30) days prior to the meeting date. The chair shall review the endorsement reports from the eighteen (18) Regional IFT PAC endorsement meetings. The committee shall:

- (1) accept the endorsement recommendations of the Regional PACs for the state and federal offices open to election.
- (2) make recommendations to the IFT Executive Board in cases where conflicts exist or where no recommendations were made.
- (3) make endorsement recommendations to the Executive Board on statewide elections or statewide referenda issues.
- (4) cause a final report stating the consensus endorsements and the conflicting endorsements with a statement of rationales for each candidate supported by an individual local or regional PAC to be prepared for the Executive Board.

Step 4. The IFT Executive Board shall review the IFT PAC recommendations. Regional PAC decisions within the guidelines shall be honored by the Executive Board. If a Regional PAC makes a recommendation outside the guidelines, the Executive Board shall review and consider the statement of rationale. In accordance with the IFT Constitution and By-Laws, the Executive Board retains the final authority between IFT Conventions to make policy decisions regarding political endorsements.

(b) Legislative Activity

Committee members shall endeavor to establish favorable relationships with legislators and other political office holders within their districts and develop contacts with each Local President and/or COPE Chair within their district for lobbying purposes. The IFT will encourage all locals to establish an active COPE Committee with a COPE Chair who will work with the IFT PAC member in their district. The committee member shall encourage representation from each legislative district within their region at all IFT Lobby Day events.

Section 4. Meetings:

- (a) The IFT PAC shall meet as necessary, but at least:
 - (1) prior to primary elections for endorsements; and
 - (2) prior to general elections for endorsements.

- (b) The regional PACs shall meet as necessary, but at least:
 - (1) prior to primary elections for endorsements; and
 - (2) prior to general elections for endorsements.

(c) Additional meetings may be called by the IFT Director of Political Activities for training purposes, prior to legislative sessions or for other reasons authorized by the President.

(d) A Regional PAC Chair may cancel either of the meetings required by (b) (1) or (b) (2) if the chair considers the endorsement recommendations to be non-controversial and the President(s) of the local union(s) representing the majority of the IFT members in the region concur. In order to cancel a meeting, the Regional PAC Chair must notify all Presidents of locals who have members who reside in the region. The notice must include:

- (1) endorsement recommendations that are to be made even though no meeting will be held.
- (2)
- (3) a form to return to the IFT indicating concurrence with the meeting cancellation and endorsement recommendations.
- (4)
- (3) instructions for objecting in writing to the proposed cancellation and/or endorsement recommendations.

Section 5. The IFT will assist all IFT locals and the PAC by preparing endorsement guidelines, voting records of incumbent legislators and candidate questionnaires. The IFT will also assist with regional meeting arrangements and provide IFT office space for such meetings where possible.