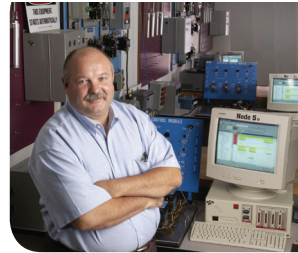




A Union of Professionals
An affiliate of the AFT, AFL-CIO



MembershipGuide

WHAT EVERY IFT MEMBER SHOULD KNOW

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A Guide to the Benefits and Services Offered by the Illinois Federation of Teachers



From the **President**

No matter what your profession, you face challenges on the job and at home each day. Your union, the Illinois Federation of Teachers, is dedicated to making those challenges a little easier.

To help you succeed at work, the IFT offers professional development training for members in every profession. At the state capitol in Springfield, IFT lobbyists work each day to promote legislation beneficial to Illinois students, citizens and all IFT members. In your local union, the IFT's field service directors dedicate themselves to helping secure good contracts and providing other essential union services.

The IFT also offers ways to help you stretch your paycheck with member benefits programs. From mortgage programs to dental insurance to travel discounts, the union offers money savings on merchandise and services that add value to your union membership.

“What Every IFT Member Should Know” is your informational resource about your union. Please review it carefully to learn how you play a vital role in its success. As your president, I'm proud you are a part of the IFT.

In unity,

Ed Geppert, Jr.
IFT President



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Welcome

The IFT is dedicated to working with you as a partner to help you succeed in your profession. We hope that this membership guide will prove useful to you.

As a new member, you may often feel overwhelmed as you struggle to “learn the ropes” in the union. Veteran union members may simply need a refresher course on IFT programs and services. No matter how you use it, this guide is designed to be a convenient reference, offering quick access to important information about your profession and your union. Keep it close at hand and refer to it often so you can make the most of your membership in the Illinois Federation of Teachers.

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Your Professional Development

The IFT knows that one of the most important things we can offer you is professional development training to help you develop your workplace and union skills. Whether you are a PreK-12 teacher, a paraprofessional, a public employee, a higher education faculty member or support professional, the IFT offers professional development opportunities to meet your needs.

The IFT's Union Professional Development department is the hub of the union's training and professional development programs, offering numerous programs covering a broad variety of topics.

Union Leadership Institute (ULI)

The union's longstanding ULI program is a highly successful training opportunity for new and veteran IFT members. Courses cover a wide-range of union leadership topics to help you become involved and effective in your local union and your profession.

Among the courses offered are:

- Introduction to Collective Bargaining
- Grievance Administration
- Union Leadership Development
- Building a Political Powerhouse

Educational Research and Dissemination (ER&D)*

The ER&D program, originally created by the American Federation of Teachers, is a union-sponsored, research-based professional development program designed to improve the skills of classroom teachers and paraprofessionals and increase the achievement of their students.

Among the courses are:

- Foundations of Effective Teaching I and II
- Beginning Reading Instruction
- Reading Comprehension Instruction
- Thinking Mathematics (four courses)
- Managing Anti-Social Behavior
- Instructional Strategies That Work for All Disciplines
- School, Family and Community: Supporting Student Learning

Additional IFT professional development resources

Critical Thinking

This course provides teachers with field-tested strategies for effective integration of critical thinking skills into their instruction.

IFT Induction/Mentoring Program assistance, including:

- Program development and implementation
- Mentor training of trainers

Making Data Work for You

A 12-15 hour course to help educators become savvy users of data so they can make informed decisions about school improvement strategies.

Most Valued Profession (MVP) series

The MVP program is a professional development training series in a convenient CD-ROM format for use on a personal computer. MVP also includes a classroom discussion component.

Current MVP titles include:

- MVP 1: Effective Classroom Management
- MVP 2: Learning to Read - Beginning Reading Instruction
- MVP 3: Reading to Learn - Reading Comprehension Instruction

Strategies for Student Success

An AFT professional development module, this series of courses features research-based content on teaching and learning for novice and veteran teachers alike.

Assistance to locals, teachers and paraprofessionals with:

- Federal education initiatives, including Race to the Top
- No Child Left Behind legislation
- State certification and Federal Highly Qualified requirements
- Special education issues
- Response to Intervention (RtI) processes

**Many courses are available for CPDUs or course credit at Governor's State University or Prairie State College.*

To learn more about any of these programs or to find out how to participate, visit www.ift-aft.org or call 800/942-9242, 618/624-4373, or 630/468-4080.



Your Membership Benefits

Your union provides you with support at your workplace, but it also offers you and your family money savings on high quality consumer benefits and services. Whether you're looking for discounts on merchandise or travel, good mortgage rates, even health insurance for your pet, your union membership can save you money. The IFT and the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) have developed programs that offer a broad variety of cost-saving options. In addition, check with your local union; many locals have negotiated discounts or benefits from merchants or service providers in your community.

AFT+

As an IFT member, you are entitled to the benefits offered by the AFT member benefits program, AFT+. These programs include discounts, voluntary insurance programs and services to help members save money and add value to their union membership.

To obtain full access to the AFT+ member benefits programs on the AFT Web site, all members are required to visit www.aft.org/members to activate the membership number found on each member's AFT membership card. (To request a new membership card, send an e-mail to membership@aft.org.) Members without computer access may activate their membership by calling 888/AFT-JOIN (238-5646).

This is only a summary of the benefits available through AFT+. For more information, call the numbers below or visit the Web sites listed. Questions may also be directed to the AFT+ member benefits department at 800/238-1133, ext. 8643 or via e-mail to aftplus@aft.org. The following voluntary insurance plans are available through USI Affinity, the AFT+ insurance administrator. For information on these plans, call 888/423-8700 or visit www.aftbenefits.org.

Catastrophic major medical insurance

Catastrophic major medical insurance is designed to further cover members and/or their families in the event of major illness or accident. Plan participants must have and maintain an underlying core health plan that meets or exceeds this plan's minimum requirements.

Disability income protection insurance

Voluntary disability insurance provides non-taxable income replacement in the event of the inability to work due to an accident or serious illness. Plans cover up to 60 percent of gross monthly earnings, with elimination periods of 14 or 60 days.

Limited supplemental medical plan

The limited supplemental medical plan offers cost-effective coverage to members and their families who might otherwise go uninsured due to lack of employer coverage or the cost of plan participation. Optional components or stand-alone benefits include a dental plan and a vision plan.

Term life insurance

Voluntary term life insurance is designed to provide insurance coverage in the event of death or an accident leading to the loss of limbs, hearing, speech, sight or paralysis of the arms or legs.

Universal life insurance

Voluntary universal life insurance provides an opportunity for actively-at-work members to obtain up to \$150,000 of permanent, cash-value insurance protection with a long-term care living benefits rider. Absolutely no medical questions or tests are required. Insurance is guaranteed to be issued as long as the member is actively working at the time of application.

Book discounts - Powell's online bookstore

www.aftplus.org/books

Powell's online bookstore has a huge selection of new and used books. This is a great source of new and used textbooks, as well. A portion of every sale made through the AFT link is donated to the AFT Disaster Relief Fund.

Car rental discounts

www.aftplus.org/travel/carrental

Discount car rental programs are designed to fit your travel and budget needs. Call Alamo at 800/354-2322 (Code 93643), Budget at 800/455-2848 (Code T544500) or National at 800/227-7368 (Code 5130283) for information and reservations.

Credit card

www.aftcard.com

The customized AFT MasterCard offers no annual fee, exclusive member rates and benefits, 100 percent fraud protection, extended warranty and merchant dispute assistance. Personal credit history determines actual interest rate. To apply, call 800/522-4000. (Call 800/651-5108 to apply for the secured card.)

Credit counseling

www.unionplus.org/creditcounseling

Services are available to help members become debt free, learn new money management skills and save for the future, along with offering free personal financial counseling, budget analysis and advice. Members who choose to have a debt management plan created receive a discount on the set-up fee. Call 877/833-1745 for more information.

Go Ahead Tours (for adults)

www.goaheadtours.com/aft

Go Ahead Tours offers more than 70 different tours to destinations in Europe, North and South America, Africa and Asia. Go Ahead has a variety of tour types, including food and wine tours, safaris, walking tours, spa tours, cruises and city stays. AFT members receive \$200 off any all-inclusive package. Organize a group of 12 travelers and you will receive two free places. Call 800/318-3728 for more information.

Entertainment discounts

www.unionplus.org/entertainment

AFT members can get reduced prices on movie tickets, theme parks, live theater, movie rentals and more. Call 800/565-3712 (AFT ID# 744387769).

Flowers

www.unionplus.org/flowers

Save 20 percent on every floral order. Call 888/667-7779.

Health club discounts

www.unionplus.org/healthclubs

Receive discounted fees at over 7,000 health clubs, including Curves, Bally's Fitness and selected World and Gold Gyms. Members must sign up through the toll-free number (888/294-1500, Code AFT) or online to access these discounts.

Dental and health savings

www.aftdental.com

Dental, vision and prescription discounts available for members and their families from a network of participating providers. The dental plan is only \$99 per year. The dental, vision and prescription plan gives you and your family substantial savings on dental care, eyeglasses and prescriptions. For more information, call 888/949-8184.

Hotel discounts

www.aftplus.org/hotels

Receive great discounts off the regular rates at thousands of participating hotels. Advance reservations are required. Call 877/670-7088, Option 1 (AFT ID #20952) for information.

Legal services

www.unionplus.org/legal

No-cost legal consultations are available with more than 2,000 law offices across the country. AFT members receive discounted rates on additional legal services. Call 888/993-8886 for more information.

Magazines

www.buymags.com/aft

AFT Subscription Services provides members with the lowest rates and the best customer service on magazine subscriptions, renewals and gift subscriptions.

Mortgage

www.aftplus.org/mortgage

AFT+ mortgage program makes buying or refinancing a home, condo or apartment more affordable than ever before! The program offers competitive rates, special assistance for first-time buyers, low down payments and includes special financial protections in the event of a serious illness, layoff or strike. Call 800/981-3798 for more information.

Pet care programs

www.unionplus.org/pets

Veterinary savings - A monthly fee (discounted 40 percent for AFT members) brings savings of up to 25 percent off bills at participating veterinarians. Call 888/789-7387 (Discount code UP2003) for more information.

Pet insurance - Retain the veterinarian already caring for a family pet by purchasing a pet insurance policy. Policies include older pets, accident-only coverage and more. Call 866/473-7387 for more information.

Shopping discounts (AFT Advantage)

AFT Advantage is a shopping program that gives members access to online savings on recognized brands nationwide. These dynamic offerings include electronics, apparel, shoes, tickets and much more. Access AFT Advantage savings by activating your AFT membership card at www.aft.org/members and clicking on the "AFT Advantage" link.

Moving van discounts

www.unionplusrmoving.com

AFT members receive discounts on interstate moves from major moving companies. Call 800/234-1159 for more information.

AT&T Wireless discounts

www.unionplus.org/att-wireless.cfm

AT&T is the only unionized wireless company. AFT members receive a 10 percent discount off AT&T Wireless plans, plus a \$50 equipment discount.

Dell computers

www.unionplus.org/benefits/computer/dell.cfm

Save up to 30 percent on selected products. Call 877/882-3355 for more information.

ConsumerReports.org

www.unionplus.org/consumer-reports-online.cfm

Member discounts are available for online Consumer Reports subscriptions.

In addition to the numerous AFT+ member benefit discounts available through your membership, other money-saving programs are available for IFT members. Go online or call the numbers below for more information about these benefits.

VALIC (financial services)

www.VALIC.com

Providing solutions throughout each phase of your financial life cycle, VALIC offers expert advice on annuities, investments, retirement planning and more. Call 800/426-3753 for more information.

Reduced-fee personal legal services

For your personal legal needs including wills, real estate, divorce or other matters, the IFT has negotiated reduced rates with law firms in Chicago, suburban and downstate Illinois locations. Call the IFT at 800/942-9242 for a current list of participating attorneys.

United Credit Union

www.unitedcreditunion.com

Starting a consistent savings program is an important part of developing a sound personal financial plan. Check out the United Credit Union for a variety of savings programs, as well as online banking and bill payment options. Call 800/848-3444 for more information.

S.A. Peck and Co. Jewelers

www.sapeck.com

Members receive a 10 percent discount on the purchase of watches, jewelry, loose diamonds and precious stones from this premier Chicago jeweler. Online shopping is available. Certain restrictions may apply. Call 800/922-0090 for more information.

Disclosures

The AFT and AFT Benefit Trust have expense reimbursement/endorsement arrangements with many of the listed program suppliers. Expense reimbursements and endorsements defray the administrative, marketing and communication costs associated with providing and promoting these programs to AFT members and their families. Just as no AFT dues are used to support the AFT Benefits Trust in any way, no expense reimbursement dollars received by the Trust are shared with AFT. For information about these programs or about contractual expense reimbursement and/or endorsement arrangements with providers of endorsed programs, please call the AFT Financial Services Department at 800/238-1133, ext. 4493, send an e-mail to disclosureinfo@aft.org, or visit www.aftplus.org/disclosure.



Protecting Yourself at the Workplace

Members must be aware of more than just their job duties. Employees must behave in ways (and avoid certain situations and actions) that will help protect themselves physically, medically, legally and professionally.

Touching students

There was a time when schools and teachers acted in loco parenti (literally, in the place of a parent), and no one thought twice about teachers touching kids to praise, discipline, comfort or restrain them. Those days are long gone.

Now, a school employee who touches a student for perfectly innocent reasons may be accused of child abuse, sexual harassment or assault. We've all heard or read about employees being charged with such crimes. Often, the charges are groundless and the case never goes to trial, or the employee is found not guilty.

It's not fair, but the reality is the eventual disposition of the charges may have a far lesser impact than the original accusations. The reputation and career of an innocent employee may be irreparably damaged.

Some students come to school with knives, guns and other weapons. An employee trying to restrain or discipline such a student risks bodily harm. If at all possible, secure assistance from school administrators before acting. The use of physical force should only occur as a last resort in a drastic situation. If you must use physical force against a student to protect yourself or others or to restrain the student, make sure there are witnesses to your actions. Obtain names and written statements from student and adult witnesses immediately following the incident. Don't use more force than is necessary and never use physical force to punish a student.

Union representation

As a union member, you may have a right to the presence and counsel of a union representative at a meeting where your conduct is being questioned and you believe disciplinary action may result. If you are in doubt about whether you are entitled to union representation, ask for it anyway.

Below are a few examples of situations that could confront any employee at any moment of the day and, if common sense isn't used in dealing with these situations, could result in career-threatening consequences.

Notes and jokes

Personal notes should never be written to students unless they deal solely with educational matters. Notes and jokes can get you into trouble and should be used,

if at all, within the educational context of your assignment. Jokes and stories can be misinterpreted and may be offensive.

Handling money

Regardless of the circumstances, do not handle money unless you first understand the procedures required by your employer for doing so. Consult your contract, your union representative and your supervisor.

No matter what your job title, at some point you will be asked to handle money. It might be as simple as holding lunch money for some students or as significant as managing the school store or being in charge of a major fundraiser at your workplace. If the procedures for handling money are not in writing, you should do your part to have them reduced to writing, and then follow the procedures exactly. Sometimes it is hard to draw a distinction between mishandling and misappropriating. Be careful when you handle money; never commingle or mix workplace funds with your own.

Being alone with students

Do not place yourself in situations outside the educational setting of your school where you could be alone with a student. This includes addressing the personal care needs of a student, giving a student a ride in your car, taking a student home with you or taking a student to a movie or camping. Any time you are alone with a student, you are at a greater risk than when you are with a group of students and/or in the presence of adults. If there is an allegation of misconduct between you and the student and there are only two witnesses — you and the student — what really happened no longer becomes the issue. The issue becomes credibility — whose version of the incident is more believable?

Showing videos

To avoid unnecessary problems, a good practice is to ask for administrative input into video selection. It is an excellent idea to preview any videos to be shown in your classroom if you are not familiar with the content. Employees with the best intentions have gotten into trouble as a result of unintentionally showing inappropriate videos to students.

Social networking

The best way to prevent a problem arising from social networking is to simply avoid it. If you choose to participate in social networking, you should take steps to ensure that your information remains private.

Do not post any material that may be considered offensive. Do not “friend” students or permit students to “friend” you. Also, consider using something other than your full name as a username.

Be alert to the possibility that students or others might post information or media about you on the Internet. Most Web sites that allow posting by the public have methods for individuals to contest information that has been posted about them. YouTube will generally remove unauthorized videos, for example.



PreK-12 Teacher Survival Tips

Although directed mainly at PreK-12 teachers, some of the tips below may also be helpful for other IFT members.

Classroom Management

The information below is selected from the IFT/AFT Educational Research and Dissemination (ER&D) program.

First day tips and suggestions

- Greet students at the door
- Direct students to assigned seats
- Establish name identification through the use of nametags, introductions or roll call
- Introduce students to the room arrangement and explain functions for different areas of the classroom
- Introduce classroom procedures, model and post them
- Introduce three to six classroom rules, explain and post them
- Plan for maximum contact with students
- Establish yourself as a leader of the class
- Avoid distractions; stay with the class as much as possible
- Learn students’ names as soon as possible

Effective room arrangements

Ensure that:

- High traffic areas are free from congestion
- Students are always visible to the teacher
- Storage space and necessary materials are accessible
- Students can easily see instructional displays and presentations

Establish and maintain a positive learning environment by:

- Thinking about the subject to be covered, the composition of the student group and the type of interaction expected
- Planning lessons that are appropriate and meet the students’ needs
- Addressing the positive behavioral strategies included in the Individualized Education Program (IEP) of any student with disabilities
- Addressing the learning needs of all students
- Making smooth transitions from one activity to another
- Avoiding unnecessary lapses from one activity to another
- Using signals to prepare students for transitions
- Conducting lessons at a brisk pace and providing continuous tasks for students
- Avoiding long, drawn-out directions or information, lecturing on student behavior or breaking activities into steps that are too small

- Varying turn-taking approaches
- Varying questioning techniques
- Devising ways to ensure that individual students are participating in the activity

Establish clear and specific rules and procedures by:

- Teaching rules and procedures to students as you would other content areas
- Clearly defining and modeling rules and procedures for students
- Consistently reinforcing rules and procedures by monitoring student behavior and applying reasonable and appropriate consequences
- Establishing a hierarchy of consequences for violating rules and procedures and re-evaluating them throughout the year

Prevent or discourage behavioral problems before they occur by:

- Knowing students' names and showing respect for them
- Maintaining high levels of student involvement
- Giving the impression of being with every student at all times
- Frequently scanning the entire class
- Directly interacting with students
- Providing constructive feedback
- Accurately targeting misbehaving students
- Enforcing fair consequences for misbehavior

Parent-Teacher Conference dos and don'ts

- 1 DO** always greet parents warmly at the door. Plan and create an inviting environment. Accompany parents to a place where you can sit together and converse comfortably. Some teachers opt to group chairs in a semi-circle near a table or other surface where they can share student work. (And make sure the chairs are big enough!)

DON'T summon parents into the classroom and direct them to sit in front of your desk. Parents may be anxious or fearful about meeting with you, a key authority figure in their child's life. If you distance yourself, put them in a subservient position or appear to condescend, you're undercutting the chances of a successful meeting.

- 2 DO** start the meeting by showing that you care and know something positive about their child. Summarize the student's strengths before raising problems. Of course, if you have a heavy student load, it can be hard to get to know each student well by early fall conferences.

Three hints:

1. Keep an index card on each student and jot down observations that you can later share. For example: "Alex told us in class the other day about his winning home run." "Tamira has a wonderful way of making friends with children who are new or feeling shy."
2. If you have access to a camera, take photos of your students to use on a seating chart or to jog your memory before parent-teacher conferences.
3. As a getting-to-know-you assignment, ask students to write about their interests, both academically and outside of school.

DON'T begin by focusing on the student's problems. A teacher recalled a parent-teacher conference when she was on the receiving end as the mother of a second-grader. "The teacher's first words to me were, 'Well, she's very messy.' She went on in detail about my daughter's messy desk, her writing — even her hair — until I wanted to cry. There was nothing about my daughter's wonderful

sense of humor or her creativity. I wondered if she even liked my daughter." The students in your class are all somebody's beloved child, and parents expect that you can see all their child's traits.

- 3 DO** dress in a way that reflects the meeting's importance and your respect for the parents and their child.

DON'T dress too casually for the occasion. Some people think casual attire will make the parent feel more comfortable, but that can backfire. You are a professional, and professional attire communicates that message.

- 4 DO** rehearse what you want to say. Practice warm-up introductions, prepare an outline and prepare a checklist of areas to cover. Plan how you will keep track of time.

DON'T wing it.

- 5 DO** use materials from the student's work folder. It is much easier to demonstrate progress or show parents concretely what a student needs to do to improve if you utilize these materials.

DON'T rely on verbal descriptions of the student's work and progress. Avoid subjective statements such as "His conduct is bad." Instead, cite specifics such as "She talks out of turn" or "He won't sit in his seat."

- 6 DO** use positive, nonverbal behavior. Listen reflectively. Maintain good eye contact. Lean in when you speak or make suggestions. In your suggestions, acknowledge the stresses of parenting: "I know it can be difficult to find the time to read with your child every night. Try asking your child to read aloud while you're preparing dinner" or in the case of an older student, "Try asking your child about their school day and school work during dinner conversation."

DON'T point a finger at parents or place blame.

- 7 DO** engage parents in planning the best ways to help their child. Seek their suggestions first.

DON'T dominate a meeting so that parents can't ask questions or make suggestions. There's so much you want to tell them, but think hard about how much information parents need. Parents are most interested in specifics related to their child and will almost always have concerns or questions of their own. Allow for occasional silences, which give the parents an opportunity to ask a question or voice a concern.

- 8 DO** give parents something to take home with them. They can review material more completely at home and refer to it during the year. This can also save time at the conference. If you offer a handout on curriculum, for example, you won't need to go over it verbally in exhaustive detail.

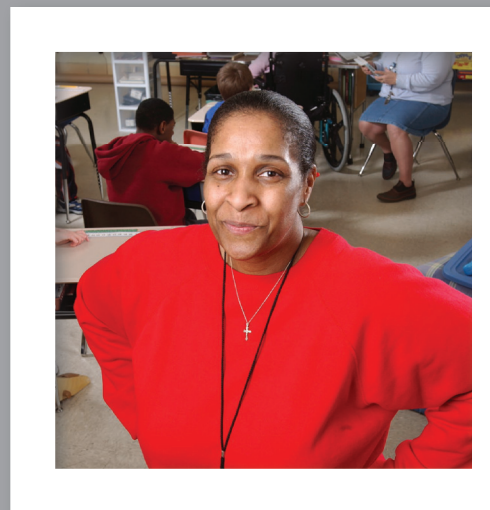
DON'T send them home empty-handed.

- 9** **DO** use clear and descriptive terms. Adjust to the parents' needs and levels of understanding. If you must use a buzzword, get in the habit of defining it: "This year we will use math manipulatives, which are objects, like this set of marbles, that let kids touch and experience what is meant by mathematical symbols."

DON'T use education jargon or acronyms. This can have a negative effect on parent communications. Some common buzzwords that you know but parents might not include whole language, math manipulatives, SATs, ACTs, IEPs, paradigm, inclusion and cooperative learning.

- 10** **DO** end positively, with a proactive message. Set goals. Review how parents can help. Mention plans for follow-through. Let parents know their support is needed and appreciated. If appropriate, send a follow-up letter.

DON'T end the meeting on a negative note by recounting the student's problem



Paraprofessional and School-Related Personnel Survival Tips

The following information is adapted from the IFT/AFT Educational Research and Dissemination (ER&D) program, *Managing Student Behavior for Support Staff and Teachers and Support Staff, Building Safe & Orderly Schools: Tools & Skills to Make It Happen*, a joint project of the AFT and the National Education Association.

Tips for successful management of student behavior

- Before the beginning of the school year, carefully consider the guidelines needed to promote positive student behaviors
- Establish three to five overarching rules by which students can be guided to develop positive behaviors
- Discuss, teach and reinforce the rules until students regularly demonstrate the expected behaviors
- Review the rules when necessary over the course of the school year or when individual students are disruptive
- Modify rules that are not working
- Organize daily routines that enable school-related activities to proceed safely, smoothly and effectively
- Include students in the performance of daily routines by giving them tasks and responsibilities
- Praise students for abiding by the rules and procedures
- Provide corrective feedback to students who do not follow the rules and procedures
- Document behavior problems and record actions taken to use for discussion with school administrators, parents or other school staff
- Model the behaviors expected from students

Preventing problem behavior during instruction

- Reinforce classroom expectations and rules
- Frequently acknowledge cooperative students
- Assign consequences for students who do not comply with rules
- Secure all students' attention before beginning explanations
- Keep initial explanations brief
- Catch problems early
- Use direct speech
- Avoid dead time
- Use appropriate materials and activities
- Create a learning-friendly classroom environment
- Settle students down near the end of each activity
- Plan for difficult transitions

Behavior management techniques to be avoided

The following behavior management techniques usually have the opposite of the intended effect. They can alienate students, make communication more difficult or escalate problem behavior.

- Forcing a student to do something he or she does not want to do
- Ridiculing or making fun of a student
- Forcing a student to admit to having lied, especially in front of others
- Demanding a confession from a student
- Asking students why they act out (when you know they do not understand their own behavior)
- Punishing students (not to be confused with assigning consequences)
- Making disapproving comments
- Comparing one student's antisocial behavior with another student's behavior
- Aggressively confronting a student in public or in private
- Yelling at a student
- Engaging in verbal battles with a student
- Making unrealistic threats

Dos and don'ts for successful management of student behavior

- **DO** discuss and reinforce the rules with students
- **DO** be consistent
- **DO** make students feel safe
- **DO** be a good role model
- **DO** review the rules when necessary
- **DO** praise students for abiding by the rules
- **DO** be compassionate and understanding but remain firm
- **DO** provide corrective feedback to students who do not follow the rules
- **DON'T** assume that the rules are automatically understood
- **DON'T** ridicule or make fun of a student
- **DON'T** compare a student with his or her sibling
- **DON'T** ask students why they behave the way they do
- **DON'T** make unrealistic threats
- **DON'T** yell at a student



Higher Education New Faculty Survival Tips

Many new faculty at colleges and universities often have relatively little experience structuring and teaching their own classes, especially since they are usually hired primarily on the basis of scholarship. This can make a professor's first year of teaching more difficult than need be.

One way to help nip any such problems in the bud is to ask a more senior colleague with years of teaching experience to serve as an unofficial mentor. This colleague can visit your class, offer you feedback on what is or isn't working, and be there to discuss any problems you may be having. Such an informal mentor can often spot problems of which you may be unaware and be able to suggest strategies for dealing with them based on his or her similar experiences.

Some other helpful tips

While it may seem self-evident, nothing will help you as much as taking time initially to structure your syllabus well and then spend time explaining it to your students. Students need to know up front 1) what criteria you will use to assess their work; 2) how you will determine their grades; and, 3) what you expect in terms of classroom participation, attendance, etc. Remember, many of your students will have just graduated high school and may have no idea of what college-level work entails. Taking time to explain your expectations and policies thoroughly at the outset will save haggling about grades and assignments later on.

Try to be attentive to the needs of all kinds of learners. Some of your students will excel in class discussion but have trouble writing; others may write brilliant papers but sit silently in class. Getting to know students as individuals early on can help you "read" them and address these differences. Although it is time-consuming, asking all students to sign up for brief office hour visits in the first few weeks of class will help you to know them better and encourage them to trust you. Be sure to emphasize throughout the semester that you have regular office hours so they can address any difficulties they are having before these become bigger problems.

Another way to recognize problems early on is to distribute a brief survey to students after the first few weeks of class which they can fill out anonymously. Such a survey could ask whether they are understanding the material, have any problems with your teaching style or assignments, feel anything is being overly stressed or is missing, or have any other suggestions. Students appreciate such a chance to contribute to the success of the course.

Relying on input from your students and your colleagues can help make your first year an invaluable learning experience for you and your students!



Your Union Contract

As you dedicate yourself to your work each day, it is easy to overlook the protections offered through union membership. One of the most important protections is the contract that exists between you and your employer.

What is it?

Your contract is a legal document bargained for you by your union. It is designed to bring a measure of equity, justice and accountability to the workplace. It outlines your rights and responsibilities as an employee, as well as the rights and responsibilities of your employer. The contract affects the nature of your workplace on a daily basis.

Getting to know your contract

The best way to avoid confusion about the contents of your contract is to stay informed. Since the contract guides the actions of both you and your employer, you should become very familiar with its language. Keep a copy of it and review it frequently, particularly when a new contract is ratified, in order to be aware of any changes made since the previous contract was in effect. If you don't have a copy of your contract, be sure to obtain one from your union building representative or local president.

Breaking it down

All contracts are divided into articles and sections that deal with working conditions. Although every contract varies widely, a typical contract will address issues such as:

- Salary
- Work hours and assignments
- Voluntary and involuntary transfers
- Leaves (sick, personal, bereavement, maternity, vacation)
- Insurance benefits
- Union representation
- Pay schedules

If you have questions about any language in your contract, seek clarification from your union building representative or local president, not your employer.

Living by the rules

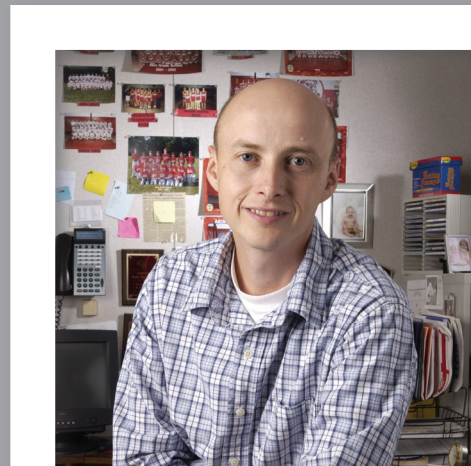
Every contract must also contain a grievance procedure — a tool to assist you and your colleagues in resolving contract disputes. Such disputes may arise when a contract violation has been committed by the employer. Your local union will assist you with filing a grievance, should you ever find it necessary to do so; however, you should be aware of your responsibilities, too.

All grievance procedures contain time limits for the filing of grievances. Failure to meet the time requirements may jeopardize your right to file a grievance. Seek the advice and assistance of your building, department or worksite representative or local president immediately if you believe a contract violation has occurred. When in doubt, don't wait. In the meantime, follow instructions given by your supervisor — even if you believe they may be in violation of your contract. Follow this rule of thumb: OBEY, then GRIEVE.

Weingarten rights

One of the most vital functions of the union is to prevent management from intimidating employees. Nowhere is this more important than in closed door meetings when supervisors attempt to coerce employees into confessing to wrongdoing. The rights of employees to have a union representative present during investigatory interviews were validated by the U.S. Supreme Court in 1975. These rights are commonly known as Weingarten rights.

Employees have Weingarten rights only during investigatory interviews. An investigatory interview occurs when a supervisor questions an employee to obtain information which could be used as the basis for discipline or asks an employee to defend his or her conduct. If an employee has a reasonable belief that discipline or other adverse consequences may result from what he or she says, the employee has the right to request union representation. Management is not required to inform the employee of his/her Weingarten rights — it is the employee's responsibility to know. Employers often assert that the only role of a union representative in an investigatory interview is to observe the discussion. The Supreme Court, however, clearly acknowledges a representative's right to assist and counsel workers during the interview.



Your Pension

When you were hired to work in an Illinois public school, community college, university or state agency, you and your employer began to make contributions for a very important benefit — your pension. Nearly all IFT members participate in one of the following pension systems:

Chicago Teachers' Pension Fund (CTPF)
www.ctpf.org

Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund (IMRF)
www.imrf.org

Municipal Employees' Annuity and Benefit Fund/Chicago (MEABF)
www.meabf.org

State Employees' Retirement System (SERS)
www.state.il.us/srs/sers/home_sers.htm

State Universities Retirement System (SURS)
www.surs.com

Teachers' Retirement System (TRS)
<http://trs.illinois.gov>

Public pension plans in Illinois and most other states operate as a defined benefit program for participants. Defined benefit pension plans guarantee a pension amount at retirement based upon final average salary and the number of years of service at the time of retirement. Lately there has been an increasing push in the public arena by those advocating for Illinois public pensions to switch to a defined contribution system. Defined contribution plans are 401(k) type plans most commonly seen in the private sector.

Articles and news reports often focus their attention on the issue of changing public pension systems from a defined benefit plan to a defined contribution plan. Proponents of this switch frequently fail to mention that individuals in the private sector who participate in defined contribution plans also participate in Social Security. In Illinois, public school teachers and university employees do not participate in Social Security, making any proposed change to a defined contribution plan risky and unwise. In fact, switching from a public pension like TRS to Social Security and a defined contribution plan would actually cost the state more than the current defined benefit plan does.

Here is a quick comparison of the two retirement benefit plans:

Defined benefit

- Guaranteed benefits
- Lifetime benefits
- Survivor and disability benefits are part of the plan
- Encourages stable workforce
- Investment fees paid by retirement system

Defined contribution

- Benefits based on investment earnings
- Benefits terminate when account is exhausted
- Survivor and disability benefits not part of the plan
- Allows for portable assets
- Investment fees paid by member

Traditionally, retirement planning has focused on the three-legged stool of defined benefit plans, Social Security and defined contribution plans. The public pension systems of Illinois provide retirees with a stable and secure retirement.

The IFT strongly opposes any attempt to “cut the legs off the stool,” that is, to switch to a defined contribution retirement plan. The union promises to fight any efforts to undermine the benefit structure of the current defined benefit system under which all the pension systems listed previously operate.

Your retirement security is an essential part of the benefits to which you are entitled after a career in public service. As an IFT member, you can be confident that your union will fight with you to protect your pension.



Photo courtesy of Mary Kelly-Durkin, Local 4100

Your Voice in Springfield

The officials you elect to represent you in Springfield have a great impact on your job and standard of living. The right to bargain a contract, school funding and protection of pensions are legislated and regulated by members of the General Assembly.

IFT’s political staff works every day at the state capitol to ensure that your voice is heard when decisions are made that affect you. Your union’s legislative headquarters, just three blocks from the capitol, is the hub of the union’s lobbying effort. Our lobbying team works to promote pro-worker, pro-education legislation while working to defeat or amend bills that might negatively impact IFT members. Public employee collective bargaining, tenure and education reform and induction/mentoring are just a few of the IFT successes in the Illinois General Assembly. You can get involved and help ensure that your concerns are addressed by serving on regional Political Action Committees (PACs) to determine which candidates deserve the union’s endorsement in elections. Decisions are based on candidates’ voting records, questionnaires, position papers and other candidate information. The regional endorsements are approved by the IFT Executive Board, but locals may endorse separately if they choose to do so.

The IFT’s Committee on Political Education (COPE) also works to elect officials who are truly concerned with providing the resources and support necessary for quality public education and vital statewide services.

The combined efforts of IFT local members across the state and your union’s legislative staff continue to make the IFT one of the most effective lobbying organizations in the state capitol. In Washington, D.C., our national organization, the American Federation of Teachers, supports the IFT’s efforts in Congress. This support is further bolstered by the lobbying work of the AFL-CIO, with 1 million members in Illinois and 10 million nationally.

How do I register to vote?

Registration requirements:

- Must be a U.S. citizen
- Must be at least 18 years of age by Election Day
- Must have been a resident of the precinct in which you live for at least 30 days prior to Election Day

When can I register?

Registration is open year-round, except:

- During the 27-day period preceding an election
- During the 2-day period after each election (1 day after in the city of Chicago)

Where can I register to vote?

- Your IFT regional office (call to request a voter registration form)
- County Clerk's office
- Board of Elections office
- City and village offices
- Township offices
- Precinct Committeemen's office
- Some schools
- Some public libraries
- Some labor groups
- Some civic groups
- Some corporations
- Military recruitment offices

Or register to vote when applying for services at the following:

- Driver's license facilities
- Department of Healthcare and Family Services offices
- Department of Employment Security offices

What forms of identification may be needed when I register to vote?

Two forms of identification, one showing your current residence address. If you register by mail, you must vote in person the first time you vote.

Will I automatically be registered to vote when I renew my driver's license?

No. But you will be given the opportunity to register to vote. If you are already registered to vote, there is no need to register again unless you change your name or address.

When and where can I vote?

In the past, voters were allowed to vote only on Election Day or by absentee ballot (under certain circumstances). But a new Illinois law enables voters to take advantage of early voting. Early voting was created to allow voters to cast their ballots at a designated polling place from 22 days to five days preceding an election. (In nearly all cases, the early voting polling place is different from a voter's regular polling place.) No reason is required to take advantage of early voting. To find the location of a local early voting polling place, call your local Board of Elections office or visit the Illinois State Board of Elections Web site at www.elections.il.gov.

Voters who vote on Election Day are still required to cast their ballots at their designated polling places. To find the location of your Election Day polling place, contact your local Board of Elections.

Information provided by the Illinois State Board of Elections



Where Do You Fit In?

Every member of the IFT is essential to the strength of the union. The information below will help you understand how you fit into the union and why your involvement is so important.

The Organizational Structure of the Union

You

Members of the Illinois Federation of Teachers are an important part of a much larger picture. As a member, you are part of a local union of colleagues. By getting involved in your local, you help determine the issues that are addressed within your workplace. You also have the chance to share your concerns and experiences with colleagues at your workplace.

Your local

The local unions in the Illinois Federation of Teachers (IFT) are distinctly different from one another, but they share a common characteristic. Every IFT local – from Chicago to Quincy, East St. Louis to Peoria – operates autonomously, with each local's governing body and its members making decisions in the local's own best interests. Locals range in size from less than 10 members to more than 33,000 members. Some large locals, called federated locals, consist of several smaller groups, called councils or chapters. Every local receives support and assistance from the IFT.

The Illinois Federation of Teachers (IFT)

The IFT is a 103,000-member union comprised of PreK-12 teachers, paraprofessionals and school-related personnel, higher education professionals, public employees and dental hygienists across Illinois in local unions. The IFT supports – but does not govern – local unions and their members. The IFT is affiliated with the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) and the AFL-CIO.

The American Federation of Teachers (AFT)

The AFT is a national organization comprised of more than 1.4 million members, including PreK-12 teachers, paraprofessionals and school-related personnel, higher education professionals, public employees and healthcare workers. The AFT is based in Washington, D.C. and is an affiliate of the AFL-CIO.

Central Labor Councils

Central labor councils (CLCs), also referred to as central bodies, are comprised of AFL-CIO-affiliated locals in a county or region. CLCs work to organize new members and support existing union members to ensure that workers and their families have a voice in their areas.

The Illinois AFL-CIO

The Illinois AFL-CIO is a state affiliate of the AFL-CIO with more than 1 million members. Like the national organization, the Illinois AFL-CIO represents workers in many different jobs across the state. All IFT members are part of the Illinois AFL-CIO.

The American Federation of Labor - Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO)

The AFL-CIO is a national labor organization with more than 10 million members. The union and its affiliates represent workers in nearly every profession, from the building and electrical trades to education professionals and public employees.



Your Information Source

The IFT knows that one of the most helpful things the union can do for its members and locals is to provide up-to-date information on union and professional issues. When you need to know what is happening with important legislation in Springfield, want to find out about the latest trends in your profession or would like to learn more about union training programs and events, the IFT offers you convenient resources to find the information you need when you need it.

www.ift-aft.org

The union's award-winning Web site provides fast access to information 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Whether you are looking for legislative updates, professional development information or details about member benefits, www.ift-aft.org is the place to find the answers to your questions about the union and your profession.

IFT Insight

The union's publication offers a wealth of information on important topics affecting IFT members, from pensions to politics to professional development. *IFT Insight* is your best source for in-depth articles on topics of interest to you as a professional and a union member.

Inside IFT

The union's newest information resource, *Inside IFT* is an online newsletter e-mailed to members every other Tuesday. Each issue highlights important, time-sensitive information in a convenient-to-read format, making it easier and faster than ever for IFT members to stay informed and involved with the union. New IFT members will be automatically subscribed to receive *Inside IFT*. (Members who joined the union prior to fall 2008 must sign up to receive the publication by going online to www.ift-aft.org, clicking on the "Inside IFT" link on the homepage and following the simple steps.)

AFT resources

In addition to the information sources provided by the IFT, the AFT offers online and print resources to help you stay informed. From the *American Educator* magazine and other print publications for IFT members in every profession to the union's Web site, www.aft.org, the AFT helps you understand how the issues in Washington, D.C. and around the country may impact you as an IFT member.



Glossary of Commonly Used Terms and Acronyms

As a new education professional or state employee, you may encounter unfamiliar words, jargon and abbreviations. Don't hesitate to ask your colleagues or union representatives for clarification. This section contains definitions of some of the terms and acronyms you may encounter at your workplace and in the union.

Academic Support Personnel (ASP)

On higher education campuses, this is the term used for staff who are not faculty members.

American Federation of Labor-Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO)

The AFL-CIO is a national labor organization with 10 million members. The union and its affiliates represent workers in nearly every imaginable job field, from the building and electrical trades to education professionals and public employees.

American Federation of Teachers (AFT)

As a member of your local union and IFT, you are a member of the American Federation of Teachers. The AFT was founded in 1916 to represent the economic, social and professional interests of classroom teachers. With more than 1.4 million members, the AFT represents PreK-12 teachers, paraprofessionals and school-related personnel, state and municipal employees, higher education faculty and staff, and nurses and other health professionals. The AFT is an affiliate of the AFL-CIO (*see definition above*).

AFT sponsors conferences for its state and local affiliate leaders and members and produces a variety of publications on education, labor, healthcare and public service issues. The president, executive vice-president, secretary-treasurer and a 39-member executive council govern the AFT. A national convention is held every two years to elect officers and adopt resolutions which set union policy.

American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA)

This federal stimulus package was designed to provide education funding for all states. The purposes of ARRA funds are to save and create jobs, as well as improve education through grant funds directed to federal education reform initiatives.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

Title I of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 prohibits private employers, state and local governments, employment agencies and labor unions from discriminating against qualified individuals with disabilities in job application procedures, hiring, firing, advancement, compensation, job training and other terms, conditions and privileges of employment.

An individual with a disability is a person who:

- has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities
- has a record of such an impairment
- is regarded as having such an impairment

A qualified employee or applicant with a disability is an individual who, with or without reasonable accommodation, can perform the essential functions of the job in question.

An employer is required to make an accommodation to the known disability of a qualified applicant or employee if it would not impose an “undue hardship” on the operation of the employer’s business. An employer is not required to lower quality or production standards to make an accommodation or to provide personal use items such as glasses or hearing aids.

The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission issued regulations to enforce the provisions of Title I of the ADA in 1991. The Act covers employers with 15 or more employees.

Assignment of Duties (AoD)

The form used in community colleges and universities to indicate the scope of a person’s job responsibilities in a particular semester.

Arbitration

Arbitration is a process of dispute resolution in which a neutral third party, called an arbitrator, renders a decision after a hearing at which both parties have an opportunity to be heard. This is the final step in a grievance procedure, and the arbitrator’s decision is binding on both parties. The cost of such arbitration is borne equally by the educational employer and the union.

Bargaining in Good Faith

Parties subject to bargaining obligations must meet at reasonable times and confer in good faith with respect to wages, hours and other terms and conditions of employment, and execute a written contract incorporating any agreements reached. Bargaining in good faith does not require the parties to agree to a proposal or to make a concession.

Building Representative, Department Representative, Steward, Union Representative

A local union official who represents members at the work site level. Responsibilities include keeping members informed of union activities and assisting members with professional issues. Many work site representatives also assist members with grievances and issues related to the collective bargaining agreement.

Central Labor Council (CLC)

A central labor Council, also referred to as a Central Body, is a regional organization of area labor leaders from different unions formed to deal with labor issues affecting the community or affecting their members collectively or individually. Many CLCs are also a source for labor’s point of view on issues affecting the area’s workforce.

Certificate Renewal

The process by which teachers renew Standard or Master teaching certificates.

Collective Bargaining

The Illinois Educational Labor Relations Act (IELRA) and the Illinois Public Labor Relations Act (IPLRA) define collective bargaining as the performance of the mutual obligations of the employer and the representative of the employees to meet at reasonable times and confer in good faith with respect to wages, hours and other terms and conditions of employment, and to execute a written contract incorporating any agreement reached by such obligation, provided such obligation does not compel either party to agree to a proposal or require the making of a concession.

Collective Bargaining Agreement

A collective bargaining agreement, also known as a contract, is a written legal document negotiated between representatives for the employees and the employer and must

contain a grievance resolution procedure which shall apply to all employees in the unit and shall also provide for binding arbitration of disputes concerning the administration or interpretation of the agreement. The agreement shall also contain appropriate language prohibiting strikes for its duration.

Continuing Professional Development Unit (CPDU)

A measurement used in continuing professional development to award credit for participation in a broad range of activities, including action research, staff development programs, curriculum design, mentoring, supervision of a student teacher, workshops and seminars. CPDUs generated by workshops, seminars and conferences are earned at the rate of one for each hour of participation. Such a workshop or seminar must be offered by an approved provider.

Committee on Political Education (COPE)

The IFT’s Committee on Political Education (COPE) also works to elect officials who are truly concerned with providing the resources and support necessary for quality public education and vital statewide services. Members’ contributions to COPE are critical in helping the union support candidates who will look out for our best interests in Springfield and Washington, D.C.

Delegate

Each IFT local elects individuals to serve as delegates or representatives to the IFT convention, which is held every three years. Delegates are empowered with the authority to elect the officers and board members of IFT and to vote on policy resolutions and constitutional amendments.

Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS)

The Illinois Department of Children and Family Services provides child welfare services in Illinois. Some of the services offered are child protection, foster care, adoption, day care and early childhood services. DCFS is best known for its child protection program. More than 65 percent of all child abuse/neglect reports are made by mandated reporters, which include teachers.

Duty of Fair Representation

The union must fairly and impartially represent all bargaining unit members during collective bargaining and in the enforcement of the collective bargaining agreement.

Duty to Bargain

As set forth under the Illinois Educational Labor Relations Act (IELRA) and the Illinois Public Labor Relations Act (IPLRA), employers and unions are required to bargain in good faith with respect to wages, hours and other terms and conditions of employment, and to comply with the agreements reached in collective bargaining contracts.

Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) *(also see NCLB, pg. 38)*

ESEA is the reauthorized Elementary and Secondary Education Act passed in 2002. The goal of the law is to enable schools to provide opportunities for all children to attain a high quality education and acquire the knowledge and skills contained in the state academic achievement standards and state academic assessments. However, serious problems with the structure and implementation of the law since its passage have been exacerbated by a lack of adequate funding from the federal government.

The AFT and the IFT have long supported the principles and goals of the law, but continue to work to obtain needed changes to the reauthorization of ESEA and to secure the federal funding necessary to ensure that the law accomplishes its goals. The U.S. Department of Labor’s Employment Standards Administration, Wage and Hour Division, administers and enforces the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) for all private, state and local government employees and some federal employees.

Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA)

The most important and far-reaching federal law guaranteeing workers the right to be paid fairly.

The Fair Labor Standards Act:

- defines the 40-hour workweek
- covers the federal minimum wage
- sets requirements for overtime
- places restrictions on child labor

Since the law's passage in 1938, it has expanded to:

- require that male and female workers receive equal pay for work that requires equal skill, effort and responsibility
- include in its protections state and local hospitals and educational institutions
- cover most federal employees and employees of states, political subdivisions and interstate agencies
- set out strict standards for determining, paying and accruing compensatory or compensatory time-time given off work in lieu of cash payments

Teachers are not covered by the FLSA; however, school secretaries, custodians and most other non-certificated employees are covered by the Act.

Fair Share

In most union locals, fair share is the monthly amount paid to the union by employees who do not join the union. Such employees are required to share the costs that are chargeable to them under state and federal law for the services rendered by the union.

Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA)

FMLA entitles eligible employees to take up to 12 weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave in a 12-month period for specified family and medical reasons. The law contains provisions on employer coverage; employee eligibility for the law's benefits; entitlement to leave, maintenance of health benefits during leave and job restoration after leave; notice and certification of the need for FMLA leave and protection for employees who request or take FMLA leave.

FMLA applies to all public agencies, including schools and many private-sector employers.

Leave may be granted for one or more of the following reasons:

- for the birth and care of the newborn child of the employee
- for placement with the employee of a son or daughter for adoption or foster care
- to care for an immediate family member (spouse, child or parent) with a serious health condition
- to take medical leave when the employee is unable to work because of a serious health condition

To be eligible for FMLA benefits, a worker must meet certain employment criteria, including having worked for an employer at least 1,250 hours in the previous 12 months.

Your employer is required to maintain group health insurance coverage for any employee on FMLA leave whenever such insurance was provided before the leave was taken and on the same terms as if the employee had continued to work. Upon return from FMLA leave, an employee must be restored to his or her original job, or to an equivalent job with equivalent pay, benefits and other terms and conditions of employment. In addition, an employee's use of FMLA leave cannot result in the loss of any employment benefit that the employee earned or was entitled to before using FMLA leave.

Field Service Director (FSD)

Field service directors employed by the IFT are responsible for a broad range of activities, including collective bargaining and contract enforcement. FSDs provide services to local affiliates of IFT and advocate on behalf of affiliates, members and public education. FSDs work with local affiliates in the capacity of consultant, communicator, trainer and facilitator to resolve local issues.

Grievance

Generally, a grievance is a claim that a policy or practice of the employer or specific provision or provisions of a collective bargaining agreement have been violated regarding wages, hours or terms and conditions of employment. A grievance is resolved through a procedural mechanism provided in the union contract. A grievance may be filed by an employee, a group of employees or the union. The definition of a grievance and the mechanism for handling one is unique to each collective bargaining agreement. To find the grievance definition that applies to your local or council, consult your collective bargaining agreement.

The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)

The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) provides additional health security for American workers and their families. HIPAA prevents discrimination against employees and dependents based on their health status, requires special enrollment periods for individuals who originally declined health coverage for certain specified reasons, and limits exclusions for pre-existing conditions. However, an opt-out provision available to state and local government self-insured plans could exclude millions of public employees from the most important protections of HIPAA and from two related laws, the Mental Health Parity Act of 1996 (MHPA) and the Newborns and Mothers Health Protection Act of 1996 (NMHPA). Since 1997, public employers have begun to exercise their right to opt-out.

Only self-insured state and local government plans can opt out of HIPAA, MHPA and NMHPA. Governments with fully-insured plans must comply with the law. Most HMOs are fully insured so they must comply. However, a large number of state and local government PPOs and indemnity plans are self-insured. Plans electing to be excluded from HIPAA and its related laws must notify the federal Health Care Financing Administration (HCFA) on an annual basis. They must also notify plan participants at the time of enrollment in the health plan and on an annual basis.

Health Maintenance Organization (HMO)

A Health Maintenance Organization (HMO) contracts with purchasers or members to provide all covered health services in return for the payment of a monthly premium. HMOs can be both insurers and providers of healthcare. They can be organized and managed by hospitals, physician groups, insurers, labor groups, employer groups or any combination of the above. Typically, they provide a comprehensive set of services through three models of organization: staff, individual practice associations (IPAs) and networks.

Higher Education Legislative Coalition (HELIC)

HELIC is a coalition of organizations concerned with higher education funding in Illinois. The coalition includes the IFT, other unions and higher education organizations.

House of Delegates

In many locals, this is the official name of the governing group that establishes the policies for the union.

Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE)

A government agency that oversees higher education in Illinois. The IBHE monitors the creation of new programs and the budgeting for all higher education institutions.

Illinois Educational Labor Relations Act (IELRA or Act)

The IELRA is a law that establishes the right of educational employees to organize and bargain collectively, to define and resolve unfair practice disputes and to establish the Illinois Educational Labor Relations Board (IELRB) (*see definition below*) to administer the Act.

Illinois Educational Labor Relations Board (IELRB)

The Illinois Educational Labor Relations Board (IELRB) administers the Illinois Educational Labor Relations Act (IELRA) (*see definition above*).

Illinois Federation of Teachers (IFT)

A statewide union of more than 103,000 members affiliated with the AFL-CIO and the AFT (*see page 31 for AFL-CIO and AFT definitions*). The IFT represents public employees across the state, including PreK-12 teachers, paraprofessionals and school-related personnel, higher education faculty and staff, employees under every statewide elected constitutional officer, retirees and dental hygienists.

Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund (IMRF)

Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund (IMRF) is the pension system that provides employees of local governments and school districts (except teachers) in Illinois (with the exception of the City of Chicago and Cook County) with retirement benefits.

Illinois Public Labor Relations Act (IPLRA)

The IPLRA is the primary law that establishes the right of public employees to organize and bargain collectively, to define and resolve unfair practice disputes and to establish the Illinois Public Labor Relations Board (IPLRB) (*see definition below*) to administer the Act.

Illinois Public Labor Relations Board (IPLRB)

The Illinois Public Labor Relations Board (IPLRB) administers the Illinois Public Labor Relations Act (IELRA) (*see definition above*).

Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE)

The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) sets educational policies and guidelines for Illinois' public and private schools, including grades PreK-12 and vocational education.

Impasse

Impasse exists if, in view of all the circumstances of bargaining, further discussions would be futile. Impasse does not exist if there is a ray of hope with a real potential for agreement if explored in good faith bargaining sessions. In examining whether or not impasse has been reached, the following factors are examined: 1) bargaining history; 2) the good faith of the parties in negotiations; 3) the length of negotiations; 4) the importance of the issue(s) as to which there is disagreement; and 5) the contemporaneous understanding of the parties as to the state of negotiations.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is a law ensuring services to children with disabilities throughout the nation. IDEA governs how states and public agencies provide early intervention, special education and related services to more than 6.5 million eligible infants, toddlers, children and youth with disabilities.

Individualized Educational Program (IEP)

An IEP is a core document in special education that determines the placement and services for a student who has been evaluated as requiring special educational services.

Induction

Induction is the support and guidance provided to beginning teachers in the early stages of their careers. Induction encompasses orientation to the workplace, socialization, mentoring and guidance through beginning teacher practice.

Initial Teaching Certificate

A non-renewable teaching certificate valid for four years of teaching that is issued to qualified individuals who have had less than four years of teaching experience. Individuals who receive an Initial Teaching Certificate and have not completed four years of teaching by the certificate's expiration date must renew the Initial certificate. There is no limit to the number of times individuals can renew the certificate if they do not have the required four years of teaching experience by the expiration. After four years of teaching and completion of one eligible professional development option, individuals are eligible for the Standard Teaching Certificate.

Leave Without Pay (LWOP)

The status granted for a specific period of time to an employee by his/her employer during which the employee retains his or her position but does not receive pay. LWOP is frequently awarded to higher education faculty members for sabbaticals and research.

Lobbying Activities/IFT

Lobbying activities involve local union leaders, IFT officers and staff and rank-and-file IFT members who influence the introduction of legislation and how elected officials vote on legislation and make their decisions regarding issues that affect members.

Master Teaching Certificate

A teaching certificate valid for 10 years issued to an individual who receives National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) certification. A Master Teaching Certificate is renewable every 10 years upon proof of meeting the requirements established for renewal of Standard Teaching Certificates.

Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS)

A Material Safety Data Sheet is a chemical or product fact sheet prepared by the manufacturer of a product or chemical. It summarizes important information on the chemical or product ingredients, such as fire and explosion hazards, health hazards, protective measures and handling and disposal methods.

Mediation

Mediation is a form of dispute resolution using a neutral third party as mediator. Mediation is mandatory at the request of either party under the Illinois Educational Labor Relations Act (IELRA). If the parties engaged in collective bargaining fail to reach an agreement within 15 days of the scheduled start of the upcoming school year and have not requested mediation, the Illinois Educational Labor Relations Board (IELRB) shall invoke mediation. The costs of mediation, if any, shall be shared equally between the employer and the exclusive bargaining agent, provided that, for purposes of mediation under IELRA, if either party requests the use of mediation services from the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service (FMCS), the other party shall either join in such request or bear the additional cost of mediation services from another source.

Mentor

An experienced teacher who meets the criteria for selection, successfully completes required training and serves to provide professional support that focuses on improving the knowledge and skills of beginning teachers and increasing student achievement.

National Labor Relations Act (NLRA)

The National Labor Relations Act is a federal law that defines and protects the rights of employees and employers, encourages collective bargaining and encourages elimination of certain practices on the part of labor and management that may be

harmful in the workplace. The NLRA states and defines the rights of employees to organize and bargain collectively with their employers through their exclusive representatives. This law is administered and enforced principally by the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) and the General Counsel acting through 52 regional and other field offices.

National Labor Relations Board (NLRB)

The National Labor Relations Board is comprised of five members appointed by the President of the United States and with the advice and consent of the United States Senate. It oversees representation and election questions, investigates unfair labor practice charges and issues complaints over such charges.

“No Child Left Behind” (NCLB) *(also see ESEA, pg. 33)*

The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act is the reauthorized Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) passed in 2002. The goal of the law is to enable schools to provide opportunities for all children to attain a high quality education and acquire the knowledge and skills contained in the state academic achievement standards and state academic assessments. However, serious problems with the structure and implementation of the law since its passage have been exacerbated by a lack of adequate funding from the federal government.

The AFT and the IFT have long supported the principles and goals of the law but continue to work to obtain needed changes to the reauthorization of ESEA and to secure the federal funding necessary to ensure that the law accomplishes its goals.

Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)

The federal agency responsible for regulating safety and health for private sector employees in the United States. OSHA sets minimum standards addressing many, but not all, workplace safety and health problems.

Paraprofessional and School-Related Personnel (PSRP)

PSRPs are professional staff members who provide a wide range of essential support services in PreK-12 schools, colleges and universities.

Phone Banking

Phone banking involves a group or team of volunteers who make message-specific phone calls to union members or to targeted members of the voting public during an election period on behalf of a political cause or politician. Phone banking includes support activities for state contests as well as local elections for school board and school tax referenda.

Picketing

Picketing involves patrolling the entrance or vicinity of a work site by members of a labor union in order to inform the public and other employees of a labor dispute, including but not limited to a strike. It connotes peaceable methods of presenting a cause to the public in the vicinity of the employer’s premises.

Political Action Committee (PAC)

The IFT PAC is the union’s mechanism to ensure that candidates who support the IFT and its issues earn the union’s endorsement. Each region of the state has an IFT PAC committee chairperson who oversees the endorsement process and legislative activities of his/her region. The 19 regional PAC chairs, representing all geographic areas of the state and all IFT constituencies, make up the statewide PAC.

Candidates must have a 60 percent or better voting record on IFT issues to be considered. Based upon position papers, candidate questionnaires, interviews and other information, the regional PACs make recommendations for endorsements in their areas. Those recommendations are sent to the statewide PAC.

Preferred Provider Organization (PPO)

A Preferred Provider Organization (PPO) is a group of healthcare providers, usually hospitals and/or physicians, that contract with an employer to provide health services to covered individuals and families at a discount. The sponsorship and configuration can vary significantly. The usual level of discount is 10 to 15 percent.

Privatization

Also known as outsourcing or contracting out, privatization is the hiring of private companies to do the work of public employees. Many governments turn to private companies who claim they can provide the same service at less cost. That cost reduction is accomplished through reduced employee pay, benefits and hours, and changing most full-time jobs into part-time jobs filled with less-experienced workers.

Race to the Top (RttT)

A federal grant program authorized under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 *(see page 31)*. Race to the Top is a competitive grant program to encourage and reward states that are implementing significant reforms in four education areas: 1) enhancing standards and assessments, 2) improving the collection and use of data, 3) increasing teacher effectiveness and achieving equity in teacher distribution and 4) turning around struggling schools.

Response to Intervention (RtI)

RtI is the practice of providing high quality instruction matched to student needs. Response to Intervention (RtI) is a general education initiative which requires collaborative efforts from all district staff including the union’s leadership. In a quality educational environment, student academic and behavioral needs must be identified and monitored continuously with documented student performance data used to make instructional decisions.

School Improvement Grant Fund

A federal program authorized under section 1003(g) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 *(see page 31)* provides additional funds for school improvement grants. These funds are awarded to all states based upon each state’s proportional share of funds received under Title I. Each state must provide sub grants to eligible local school districts that apply for the funds. School improvement grants are intended to support implementation of the requirements of one of four federal intervention models in each state’s lowest-achieving schools that accept these grant funds.

Seniority

The definition of seniority is a mandatory subject of bargaining. Generally, seniority is based on length of service with the employer. Seniority rights are those rights to job security and priority in excess or layoff situations and are based on length of service. However, seniority rights will vary between contracts based on the specific provisions bargained between the employer and the exclusive representative for the union. To find the definition of seniority rights applicable to your local or council, consult your collective bargaining agreement.

Sick Bank

A sick bank is a collection of sick days donated by members of a bargaining unit into a “bank” for use by other members of the unit who may have exhausted their sick days. Use of the bank is determined by contract language developed during union and management negotiations.

Standard Teaching Certificate

A teaching certificate valid for five years issued to teachers with four or more years of teaching experience. This certificate is renewable every five years upon successful completion of an eligible professional development option.

State Employees' Retirement System (SERS)

The Illinois public pension system that provides retirement benefits to state employees (who are not part of the Teachers' Retirement System (TRS) or the State Universities Retirement System (SURS)). The system is funded by the State of Illinois and active, eligible participants.

State Universities Retirement System (SURS)

The Illinois public pension system that provides retirement benefits to university employees. The system is funded by the State of Illinois, active, eligible participants and employers.

Strike

A strike is a work stoppage by employees that is necessitated by an inability to reach agreement with an employer on wages, hours or other working conditions during the collective bargaining process (*see collective bargaining definition, page 32*). The Illinois Educational Labor Relations Act (IELRA) and the Illinois Public Labor Relations Act (IPLRA) contain provisions allowing most employees to strike under the two acts, providing that certain requirements are met prior to the work stoppage.

Teacher Incentive Fund (TIF)

A federal grant program authorized under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (*see page 31*). TIF funds support performance-based teacher and principal compensation systems in high-need schools, primarily through grants to school districts and consortia of school districts. Applicants that qualify for a TIF grant must agree to establish a compensation system that provides teachers and principals with differentiated levels of compensation based on student achievement gains, as well as on classroom evaluations.

Teachers' Retirement System (TRS)

The Illinois public pension system that provides retirement benefits to PreK-12 teachers outside the city of Chicago. The system is funded by the contributions of teachers and the State of Illinois. Teachers in Illinois do not participate in Social Security. TRS is not coordinated with the Social Security program.

Tenure

Tenure is the common name for contractual continued service which is the status conferred by law upon certificated employees who have satisfactorily completed a specified term of probationary employment. For a K-12 teacher first employed by a school district on or after January 1, 1998 and who has not before that date already achieved tenure in that district, the probationary period is four consecutive school terms. For higher education faculty members, tenure comes after six years of successful service and is awarded in the seventh year.

Title I – Improving the Academic Achievement of the Disadvantaged

Title I is the largest federal program supporting education. The purpose of this federal law is to ensure that all children have a fair, equal and significant opportunity to obtain a high-quality education and reach, at a minimum, proficiency on challenging state academic achievement standards and state academic assessments.