



AFT Local 943, IFT, AFL-CIO SOUTHWEST SUBURBAN FEDERATION OF TEACHERS

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A Union of Professionals

Union Information Booklet

COUNCIL PRESIDENTS

- Willow Springs 108** **Sharon Conrad**
Teachers & Support Staff
- Sahs 110** **Karen Delestowicz**
Teachers
- Burbank 111** **Pamela Lindemann**
Teachers & Support Staff
- Ridgeland 122** **Nancy Havlin**
Teachers & Support Staff
- Oak Lawn-Hometown 123** **Elaine Barlos**
Teachers & Support Staff
- Evergreen Park 124** **Laura Anzelmo**
Mariellen Newquist
Teachers & Support Staff
- Alsip 126** **Kathe Luszczak**
Teachers
Donna Waldrom
Support Staff
- Riverdale 133** **Kimberly Summerrise**
Teachers & Support Staff
- Orland Park 135** **Eve Bukowski**
Teachers & Support Staff
- Posen-Robbins 143½** **Jean Fitzgibbon**
Teachers
- Hazel Crest 152½** **Ruth Barrett**
Teachers & Support Staff
- Wentworth-Wilson 155** **Bonnie Rising**
Kristine Cochrane
Teachers
Christine Gutowski
Support Staff
- Lincoln 156** **Mary Ellen Uribe**
Teachers & Support Staff
- Hoover/Schrum 157** **Laura Beth Meyer**
Teachers & Support Staff
- Thornton-Fractional 215** **Cynthia Winbush-Acoff**
Support Staff
- Reavis High School 220** **Andrea Frausto**
Support Staff
- Oak Lawn High School 229** **Christopher Newton**
Teachers & Support Staff
- SWCCCASE** **Rueben Prince**
*(Southwest Cook County
Cooperative Association
for Special Education)* Teachers & Support Staff

AFT Local 943 Senator Meetings

According to the Local 943 Constitution, Senators elected by their respective councils on February 1, 2011 will serve for a term of two years. Senators represent their respective council at the Local 943 Senate meetings. The Senate is the governing body of the Local.

Senate Meeting Dates

<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
September 13	February 14
October 11	March 13
December 13	May 8

The latest, most relevant information on matters such as union policies, professional concerns, negotiations, legislative issues, recertification and politics are discussed, reviewed and disseminated. Each council president is an automatic senator to Local 943. Councils are then allowed additional senators in proportion to the number of members in the Council.

In the event a council president or senator cannot attend, another representative should be in attendance. Any member is welcome to attend but only those duly appointed or elected senators will be eligible to vote. If you are interested in representing your council at the local level, please contact your council president.

2012 AFT Convention July 26-30, Detroit, Michigan

If you would like to be a Local 943 delegate to the 2012 AFT Convention, please submit your name in writing to:

Dawn Stanovich, Secretary, Southwest Suburban
Federation of Teachers, AFT Local 943
15521 S. 70th Ct, Orland Park, IL 60462
by February 14, 2012

Names can also be submitted at the Local 943 Senate meeting on February 14, 2012. For more information, please contact Local president Kathryn Setlak at 708-633-0943. (Local 943 will set the number of delegates at its September, 2011 meeting.)

Make Your Contract Work for You

How to File a Grievance

The contract between the Union and the Board of Education is a legal document that spells out your salary, benefits and conditions of employment. It brings a measure of justice, equity and democracy to the workplace. As with any other legal document, the contract is only as effective as its enforcement. A contract that is not enforced becomes a "dead letter." Using the grievance procedure effectively can change a contract from a piece of paper into a "living" document.

What Is a Grievance?

A grievance is a complaint by an employee, a group of employees or the union that there has been a violation or mis-interpretation of a specific term of this agreement. Sometimes it can refer to an established policy or practice that has been applied unfairly. Not all contracts allow this "past practice" grievance.

If you believe a grievance has occurred, do the following:

1. Check the contract to find the section that is to be grieved.
2. Check the grievance procedure in the contract and be sure to **follow the timeline**. Grievances need to be filed in a timely manner and can be lost if the timeline is not followed.
3. Contact your union building representative or a council officer.
4. Document all of the facts answering the six "W" questions
Who is involved? (employee, supervisor, witnesses)
When did it happen? (date and time)
Where did it happen?
What happened? (separate fact from opinion)
Why is it a grievance? (contract section, past practice, board policy)
How to remedy the grievance? What must be done to make the grievant **Whole**?
5. It is important that a grievant write down as soon as possible a narrative describing the situation that started the grievance.

Don't be Insubordinate!

The act of refusing or deliberately failing to carry out a legal assignment could lead to a charge of insubordination. When in doubt, carry out the work under protest and follow up the assignment with a grievance. **"Obey first and grieve later."** Please remember that being insubordinate can lead to loss of job.

I Want to Speak to a Lawyer

Many times members want to speak directly to a lawyer when they have a problem. Although your problem may seem unique to you, many times it is a very common one and the Illinois Federation of Teachers' field service directors already know the answer. Other times the field service directors will discuss the situation and can find the answer that way. Sometimes the staff will speak to the lawyer themselves. Be assured that your problem will be handled very carefully to determine the best way to solve the problem. There is another important consideration for members to be aware of. **Members need to first go through their council president when they have a problem.** The council president may already have handled a similar incident. Also the council president should know about problems as they occur. The council president will then call the appropriate IFT Field Service Director.

If discipline looms... Call the Union

For a member, there is nothing more frustrating than not knowing the proper channels to follow when faced with discipline. Similarly, it is equally frustrating for the Union Representative to be uninformed of the discipline being issued or to be given inadequate notice when being called upon to represent a member. To resolve this issue, below are a few simple guidelines to remember when, as a member, you find yourself faced with discipline.

When you receive:

- **A Verbal Warning**

Though a verbal warning is the least severe form of discipline, it is discipline nonetheless. Always take note of verbal warnings issued—your employer will! Remember that these warnings can be viewed as the initial steps of progressive discipline when considering future infractions.

- **A Write-Up**

Upon receipt of a written notice of discipline, inform your building representative or union leadership immediately. They will be able to assist you in determining if the write-up was justified. They may be able to help you fight to have it removed from your record through the use of the grievance procedure or assist you in drafting a rebuttal letter to attach to the written record of discipline.

- **Suspension**

Because this form of discipline can result in the loss of pay for a member, it is important to contact your union leadership immediately. Always request that a union representative attend any discipline meeting with you so that you can be properly advised of your rights.

- **A Notice of Dismissal**

If you find yourself faced with discipline up to and including dismissal, contact your union leadership **IMMEDIATELY** and request that your field service director at Local 943 be contacted to assist with the case or represent you altogether.

Remember that when you are asked to attend a meeting which you believe could result in you being disciplined, you may request that a union representative attend the meeting with you. Remember your Weingarten Rights and help your Union assist you by keeping your representatives informed on what's happening in your respective building.

"My Weingarten Rights"

If this discussion could, in any way, lead to my being disciplined or terminated or cause an effect on my personal working conditions, I respectfully request that my Union Representative be present at this meeting. Without representation present, I choose not to participate in this discussion.

Local 943 Officers, Executive Board and Staff

President Kathy Setlak
Vice President..... Bob Goldsbury
(Communications and Public Relations)
Vice President.....Karen Kendall
(Political Activities)
Vice President..... Mary Stockwell
(Educational and Professional Issues)
Treasurer..... Sue Mirabella
Secretary Dawn Stanovich

Local 943 Executive Board Members
and IFT Committee Members Karen Delestowicz
..... Donna Rehm
..... Terri Stangel
Webmaster and Membership Services .. Judy Spirakes
IFT Field Service Director..... Tonia Havard-Dew
IFT Field Service Director..... Deneen Pajeau
IFT Support Staff..... Laura Kies

Weingarten Rights

Union Representation During Investigatory Interviews

One of the functions of the union is to prevent management from intimidating employees. This is especially important in closed-door meetings when management attempts to induce employees to confess to mistakes or wrongdoing.

Employees have the right to union representation during investigatory interviews. This right was established by the U.S. Supreme Court in 1975 in the case called *NLRB (National Labor Relations Board) v J. Weingarten, Inc.* The rules the Court declared are called Weingarten rights.

Weingarten rights are applicable during meetings employees are asked to attend which are investigative in nature. Investigatory meetings occur whenever management questions an employee to obtain information or whenever an



employee has a reasonable belief that discipline or other adverse consequences may result from what he or she says. Investigatory meetings relate to such subjects as: absenteeism, accidents, compliance with school rules, damage to school property, drinking, drugs, falsification of records, fighting, insubordination, lateness, poor attitude, poor work performance, sabotage, work slow-downs, theft and violation of safety rules.

Not every discussion with management is an investigatory meeting. Management has the right to speak to an employee about the proper way to do a job. Even if the manager asks the employee questions, this is not investigatory because the possibility of discipline is removed. However, if the manager takes a hostile attitude because he/she doesn't like the employee's answers, then the meeting becomes investigatory and *Weingarten* applies.

When an investigatory meeting occurs, the following rules apply:

The employee may request union representation before or during the meeting.

After the request, the employer must choose from among three options:

1. grant the request and delay questioning until the union representative arrives;
2. deny the request and end the meeting immediately; or
3. give the employee a choice of
 - a. having the interview without representation (usually a mistake) or
 - b. ending the interview.

If the employer denies the request for union representation and questions the employee, it commits an unfair labor practice and the employee may refuse to answer.

Another point to remember is that if an employee is requested, for example, to go to the office to talk about the employee's attendance, the employee cannot refuse to go to the office without union representation. Weingarten rights do not arise until the meeting begins. The employee must make the request after the meeting begins. The employee can only refuse to go to the meeting if the employer makes clear in advance that union representation will be denied.