

CONSTITUTION

of the

Southwest Suburban Federation of Teachers, Local 943, IFT, AFT, AFL-CIO

Amended/Ratified on December 15, 2022

ARTICLE I NAME

This organization shall be known as the Southwest Suburban Federation of Teachers, Local 943, IFT, AFT, AFL-CIO.

ARTICLE II PURPOSE

The objectives for this organization shall be:

- Section 1. to bring the members of the organization into relations of mutual assistance and cooperation;
- Section 2. to obtain for them all the rights to which they are entitled, even to the extent of securing legislative action;
- Section 3. to raise the standard of the education profession, and to secure public recognition of education as a profession;
- Section 4. to cultivate social intercourse, educational interest, and professional solidarity among members;
- Section 5. to promote such a democratization of the schools as will enable them to better equip their pupils to take their places in the industrial, social, and political life of the community;
- Section 6. to organize unorganized workers within this organization's jurisdiction;
- Section 7. to promote engagement among the membership;
- Section 8. to pursue social justice and racial equity in our schools and our community; and
- Section 9. to engage within our community in order to form partnerships that strengthen our local outreach and influence.

ARTICLE III
MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. All members of certified IFT/AFT bargaining units located in South Suburban Cook County, Illinois and all individuals retired from such bargaining units are eligible for membership in this organization. The following types of membership shall be maintained for this organization:

a. Active Membership

The Active Membership shall consist of currently employed members of certified IFT/AFT bargaining units.

b. Retired Membership

The Retired Membership shall consist of individuals who are retired from employment in a South Suburban Cook County school district where there is an IFT/AFT bargaining unit.

Section 2. This organization may admit at-large members. Such members must not be eligible for membership in any council that is affiliated with this organization.

Section 3. No person shall be denied membership, nor shall this organization ever discriminate against individual members or applicants for membership on the basis of race; creed; color; national origin; disability; sex; sexual orientation; gender identity and expression; and social, political, or economic status.

Section 4. Discipline of members

a. A member may be disciplined by the organization for actions contrary to this Constitution or to the interests of the union or its membership. Such action may only be initiated by the bringing of written and signed charges to the Executive Board by two or more members of the Local; these charges must include a specific and detailed accounting, including any documentation, of the allegations against the member.

b. Upon the receipt of such charges, the Executive Board shall cause a preliminary investigation to be conducted in order to determine whether the charges against the member have merit. In addition, at this time, the Executive Board shall give a copy of the charges to the accused member.

c. Following the preliminary investigation, the Executive Board shall vote on the question of whether a disciplinary hearing should be held. If a majority of the Executive Board votes to hold a hearing, the member shall be given at least ten (10) days written notice of the hearing.

d. At a disciplinary hearing, the accused member shall have the right to be represented by a person of his or her choice and shall have the right to question the charges and present evidence and witnesses to support their

defense. At the conclusion of the hearing, a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Executive Board shall be required for discipline. If a member of the Executive Board has brought the charges against the member, that Executive Board member shall recuse him/herself from the vote.

- e. A disciplined member may appeal the decision of the Executive Board to the senate by requesting a vote at the next regular Senate meeting. A simple majority of the senators voting shall be sufficient to overrule the decision of the Executive Board to discipline.

Section 5. A member in good standing is a member as defined in Article III, sections 1 or 2 who is current in payment of dues to the organization. A member who is more than thirty (30) days delinquent in dues payment shall be considered to be a member in bad standing and shall be promptly notified of such status. A member shall be removed from membership in this organization, with notice, following three months of dues nonpayment, unless a plan to pay back dues is made and approved by both the Executive Board and the member.

Section 6. The Executive Board shall establish guidelines for retiree membership, dues, and participation in the local in the form of a retiree council, in accordance with AFT guidelines. Said retiree council is charged with representing the concerns of retired members.

ARTICLE IV FINANCES

Section 1. Dues shall consist of the AFT, IFT, Illinois AFL-CIO, CFL per capita dues, the liability insurance premium, the accident insurance premium and Local 943 per capita dues. Local 943 per capita dues shall be \$50.00, or the amount specified in the American Federation of Teachers' constitution.

Section 2. Effective September 1982, the dues shall be increased annually by an amount equal to the total annual increases in AFT, IFT, Illinois AFL-CIO and CFL per capita dues plus the total annual increase in the AFT liability and accident insurance premium.

Section 3. Special arrangements may be made for dues in the interest of organizing councils and special membership categories within the councils.

Section 4. Yearly membership shall be from September 1 to August 31 of the following year.

Section 5. The defense fund shall be used solely for financing the necessary protection needed to preserve or expand the legislated, constitutional and/or contractual rights pertinent to the employment and/or authorized union activities of those persons entitled to the protection of the organization. Official protection shall be extended to all persons who are members of councils affiliated with the organization.

ARTICLE V
DUTIES OF OFFICERS

Section 1. The President shall:

- a. preside over all regular and special meetings of the membership, Senate, Universal, and Executive Board;
- b. except as otherwise provided in this Constitution, appoint committee chairpersons with the approval of the Executive Board;
- c. take general responsibility for and general supervision of the functioning of the relations to other organizations;
- d. make an annual written report to the membership;
- e. be an ex-officio member of all standing committees except the Elections Committee;
- f. be the principal executive officer of the organization;
- g. receive report and respond to correspondence of the organization;
- h. supervise all employees of the organization;
- i. be one of the responsible financial officers of the organization and shall be authorized to co-sign financial instruments and make regular and usual disbursements of funds;
- j. represent the organization before bodies of the employer, executive and legislative officials;
- k. represent the organization before the public, community organizations, and the news media;
- l. be, by office, a delegate to the Chicago Federation of Labor, and the Illinois AFL-CIO;
- m. be, by office, a delegate to the convention of the American Federation of Teachers and the Illinois Federation of Teachers;
- n. be able to delegate the responsibilities of the office except where otherwise specified by the Constitution;
- o. be succeeded in office, in the event of death, disability or resignation, by the most senior vice president of the organization; and
- p. perform other duties as are ordinarily incumbent upon the office.

Section 2. Vice President for Political Action shall:

- a. be in charge of the organization's political action;
- b. be the legislative chairperson;
- c. assist the councils in their political activities; and
- d. perform other duties as delegated by the President, or assigned by the Executive Board.

Section 3. The Vice President of Communications and Public Relations shall:

- a. be in charge of communications and public relations;
- b. be responsible for the publication of the Local 943 newspaper;
- c. coordinate and assist in preparing material for publication to the IFT, AFT, and other news media; and
- d. perform other duties as delegated by the President, or assigned by the Executive Board.

Section 4. The Vice President of Educational and Professional issues shall:

- a. be responsible for the coordination and distribution of information on educational and professional issues from the AFT, IFT, and other sources;
- b. coordinate professional development and training programs in the areas of educational practices, reform, and professional issues; and
- c. perform other duties as delegated by the President, or assigned by the Executive Board.

Section 5. The Treasurer shall:

- a. receive, record, and deposit in the name of the local all monies from dues and other sources;
- b. forward all per capita dues and current membership lists to the affiliated organizations to keep the local in good standing at all times in coordination with the IFT staff member assigned to the local;
- c. take special care to see that per capita tax through June 30 is sent to the national office no later than ten (10) days prior to the opening of the national convention to make sure delegates from the local will be seated;
- d. present a written report to all members annually;

- e. keep accurate records available at all times for the Executive Board and Senate;
- f. pay all bills incurred by the local and shall prepare a statement of dues receivable, local income and local expenses to be presented at each meeting;
- g. be bonded and arrange an annual audit of the books by an impartial party;
- h. chair the Defense Committee; and
- i. perform other duties as delegated by the President, or assigned by the Executive Board.

Section 6. The Secretary shall:

- a. maintain the non-financial files and records and be the custodian of the seal and charter of the organization;
- b. record and keep accurate minutes of meetings of the membership, the executive board, the universal, and the senate;
- c. assist the president in handling the correspondence of the organization;
- d. maintain a Policies/Procedures file that compiles, in chronological order, the policies passed by the Executive Board and the Senate; and
- e. perform other duties as delegated by the President, or assigned by the Executive Board.

ARTICLE VI
ELECTION OF OFFICERS AND DELEGATES

Section 1. General Provisions

- a. Elections shall be conducted in accordance with the AFT Constitution and the standards adopted pursuant to the Labor-Management Reporting and Disclosure Act of 1959 (LMRDA).
- b. All elections for Local 943 officers and delegates to the conventions of the IFT, AFT, and Illinois AFL-CIO shall be by secret ballot vote of the active members of Local 943.
- c. Should an election provided for in section 1 of this Article be uncontested, the nominees shall be considered elected by acclamation and no balloting shall be conducted for that office.

Section 2. Elected Offices and Terms of Office

- a. Officers shall be elected in April of every third year beginning in 2023. Terms of office shall be three years. The organization will elect the following officers:
 - 1. President
 - 2. Vice President for Political Action
 - 3. Vice President for Communications and Public Relations
 - 4. Vice President for Educational and Professional Issues
 - 5. Treasurer
 - 6. Secretary

- b. This organization shall elect delegates to the conventions of all affiliated organizations at least one (1) month prior to any said convention. The officers shall serve as delegates to the conventions of all affiliated organizations by virtue of office. Any other delegate positions shall be elected by secret ballot pursuant to the terms of this Article. Prior to conducting an election for delegates, the Executive Board shall inform the Senate of the number of delegates it has budgeted to send to conventions.

Section 3. Eligibility for Office

- a. To be eligible for office a person must be a member in good standing of the organization for a period of six (6) months prior to the date of the election.

- b. To be eligible for office a person must maintain primary residency within 75 miles of Cook County, Illinois.

- c. Retirees and at-large members are not eligible for the positions listed in Section 2a. of this Article, however if an officer retires from their school district employment or becomes an at-large member mid-term they may finish that term and be eligible to run for an additional consecutive three-year term.

Section 4. The Elections Committee shall conduct all general and special elections and referenda of the organization.

- a. The Elections Committee shall consist of five members in good standing selected by the Senate.

- b. Any member of the Elections Committee nominated for or seeking office must vacate their position and be replaced by a member nominated by the president and approved by the Executive Board.

Section 5. Nominations

- a. Sixty (60) days prior to the date of the election, the Elections Committee shall notify all members of the opening of nominations, the offices to be filled and of the date of the election by first class U.S. Mail to the members'

last known home address or by other means selected by majority vote of the Elections Committee.

- b. To be nominated for office, a written nomination must be submitted to the Elections Committee no later than thirty (30) days following the notice of the opening of nominations. Members nominated to run for office must affirmatively accept their nomination. The Election Committee shall determine whether the nominations were timely and if nominees are eligible for office. The notice of nominations shall state that there will be no provision for write-in candidates.

Section 6. At least fifteen (15) days prior to the election, the Elections Committee shall notify all members of the election date and the candidates for offices.

Section 7. The Elections Committee shall prepare ballots and oversee elections to be conducted via U.S. Mail to the members' last known home address or by some other means selected by majority vote of the Elections Committee among all active members in good standing, in such manner as to ensure the secrecy of the ballot, no later than ten (10) days following the close of nominations. The candidates listed on the ballot shall be limited to those nominated and no write-in candidates shall be permitted.

Section 8. The ballots shall be tabulated by the Elections Committee and a majority of the ballots cast shall determine the outcome of the election. In the absence of a majority, the Elections Committee shall conduct a run-off election between the two candidates who have received the most votes for the office in question. The Elections Committee shall oversee the preparation and sending of ballots by the same means the initial election was conducted. The period between the mailing and return date for the ballot shall be no less than twenty (20) calendar days.

Section 9. Challenges and objections to the election must be submitted in writing, with a statement of supporting reasons that includes specific facts as well as any documentation, to the Elections Committee within seven (7) days of the count. The Elections Committee shall issue its written opinion regarding the objections no later than ten (10) days after receipt of such objections.

Section 10. The final election results will be published and distributed to the membership within thirty (30) days of the count. All elections materials, including the ballots, will be kept in a secure location for one (1) year.

Section 11. Successful candidates shall assume office on the date of the May senate meeting or by May 31, whichever date is sooner.

Section 12. A recall petition signed by thirty (30%) the membership and alleging constitutional violations, fiduciary breaches or acts clearly detrimental to the Local, shall be sufficient to require the Executive Board to vote on whether to conduct a recall election of the officer identified in the petition. The officer subject to recall shall not vote on the question of a recall election. If a majority of the Executive Board

approves a recall election, the Elections Committee shall supervise the recall election.

Section 13. With the exception of the president, or in case of recall, the Executive Board will have the power to fill vacancies in its membership until the next general election of officers.

ARTICLE VII EXECUTIVE BOARD

Section 1. The Executive Board of this organization shall consist of: the President; Vice President for Political Action; Vice President of Communications and Public Relations; Vice President of Educational and Professional Issues; Secretary; and Treasurer.

Section 2. The Executive Board shall meet a minimum of six (6) times per year, or at the call of the President, or at the call of two (2) or more Executive Board members, or at the call of the Senate per Article VIII Section 5b, for the purpose of initiating, overseeing or revising the program of the organization and to conduct other business of the organization that is within its authority. A quorum for the Executive Board shall be two-thirds (2/3) of its members.

Section 3. The annual budget shall be prepared by the Executive Board with the treasurer as chairperson. The budget shall be presented to the Senate at the April meeting and considered for approval at the May meeting. Prior to the May meeting, each council president will present the local budget to their members for discussion.

Section 4. The Executive Board shall employ all professional, technical, clerical and support staff of the organization, if any.

Section 5. The Executive Board shall establish any stipend and expense guidelines for officers and the salary and benefits for any general officer who is employed by the organization.

Section 6. The Executive Board shall be empowered to make contracts and incur liabilities including the purchase of services, equipment and real property, to borrow money, to secure such obligations by mortgage or other instrument, and to otherwise engage in financial transactions to the extent permitted by applicable law or statute.

Section 7. The Executive Board shall have the power to sue, complain and defend on behalf of the membership.

Section 8. The Executive Board shall approve the chairperson and membership of all standing and special committees of the organization, except as otherwise specified in this Constitution, and receive regular reports from such committees.

Section 9. The Executive Board shall be responsible for adherence to and enforcement of the Constitution of the organization.

- Section 10. The Executive Board shall issue regular reports, including an annual report, to the Senate and the membership.
- Section 11. Three unexcused absences from an Executive Board meeting within a year, counted from the date of assumption of office, shall be grounds for an Executive Board member's suspension and/or replacement. Pursuant to Article VI, Section 13, the Executive Board shall have the authority to appoint a member to take the seat of an Executive Board member who was suspended or replaced under the terms of this section.

ARTICLE VIII SENATE

- Section 1. The legislative power of the organization shall be vested in the Senate.
- Section 2. Members of the Executive Board of the organization shall automatically be members of the Senate. Councils will be represented in the Senate as follows:
- a. Councils with fifty (50) members or less shall have one (1) senator who shall be the council president or vice president.
 - b. Councils shall be entitled to one additional senator for each additional fifty (50) members or fraction thereof.
 - c. The Retiree Council shall be entitled to the representation by three (3) senators.
- Section 3. Senators shall be elected or appointed by their respective councils. Senators shall take office immediately.
- Section 4. The Senate shall meet at least six (6) times a year on a day and time to be set by the Executive Board and approved by the Senate. The date and time of the meeting may be changed at any regular or special meeting by a majority of those voting on the question.
- Section 5. Special Meetings
- a. Special meetings may be called by the president.
 - b. The president shall also call a special meeting within five working days after receiving a written request signed by at least thirty percent (30%) of the members of the Senate.
 - c. Each senator shall be notified at least two days prior to any special meeting.
- Section 6. A quorum shall consist of thirty percent (30%) of the senators representing no less than six (6) councils.

- Section 7. The Senate shall consider applications from prospective councils that wish to affiliate with the organization. A majority of those senators voting at any regular or special meeting shall be required for the admission of new councils.
- Section 8. A reduction in union membership within a council shall affect senate representation at the next regular senate meeting.
- Section 9. The organization will recognize any new or replacement senator elected or appointed by a participating council, based on membership formula in section 2 of this Article, at the next senate meeting following the election or appointment of that senator.

ARTICLE IX MEMBERSHIP MEETING

- Section 1. A special meeting of the total membership of all councils can be called by the local president after a signed request of two-thirds (2/3) of the senators made up from at least one half of the councils, or by a signed request of at least ten percent (10%) of the membership with one half of the councils being represented among the petitioners.
- Section 2. Requests for total membership meetings must state the purpose(s) for which the meeting is called. That purpose for which the meeting is called shall be the first item on the agenda.
- Section 3. The quorum for total membership meetings shall be at least ten percent (10%) of the local's membership with at least two-thirds of the councils represented.

ARTICLE X COUNCILS

- Section 1. This organization shall be a federated union local composed of chapters to be known as councils.
- Section 2. Each council of this organization shall:
- a. administer its own affairs so long as they are not contrary to the constitution, policies and welfare of the organization;
 - b. maintain current and accurate membership information and forward to the Executive Board via the IFT staff member assigned to the local an updated list of member names, addresses and phone numbers on a monthly basis;
 - c. submit its dues to the organization monthly; and
 - d. maintain a governing document in the form of constitution or bylaws, subject to review and approval by this organization's Executive Board, that shall provide for a democratic process for contract ratification.

- Section 3. Each council shall transmit to the organization the following documents and materials:
- a. a copy of the council's constitution, forwarding to the organization any amendments as soon as possible after ratification of same;
 - b. copy of the council's yearly audit or financial report;
 - c. a breakdown of the council's dues structure for the current year; and
 - d. a list of council officers, building representatives and senators, forwarding changes to the organization as soon as possible after the changes occur.

- Section 4. The Executive Board shall have the authority to declare a council in bad standing when per capita is sixty (60) days in arrears and so notify the council officers in writing. The Executive Board, ten (10) days after written notice, may take any or all the following actions:
- a. notify the members of the council that the council is in bad standing and that services and benefits to the members and the council will be suspended;
 - b. deny financial support to the council for defense, assistance, rebates or any other money due to the council;
 - c. request that the IFT withdraw assistance to the council of any field staff directors or services provided by any other employees of the IFT;
 - d. take appropriate legal action to collect per capita owed; and
 - e. audit the books and records of the council.

- Section 5. All officers of this organization shall have the right to meet with council members at any time.

ARTICLE XI COMMITTEES

- Section 1. This organization shall have two types of committees: standing and special. The standing committees of this organization shall be:
- a. Universal
 - b. Defense
 - c. Elections
 - d. Organizing
 - e. Social

- Section 2. The Executive Board, either on its own initiative, or at the direction of the Senate, may establish special committees.
- Section 3. Unless specified elsewhere in this Constitution, upon appointment by the President and approval by the Executive Board, committee chairs shall have thirty (30) days to select committee members and present their names to the Executive Board for approval.
- Section 4. Within thirty (30) days of formation, each special committee shall present its annual program of action to the Executive Board and the Membership Meeting.
- Section 5. The universal shall consist of the presidents of the councils of this organization and IFT constituency council members. It shall be chaired by the president.
- Section 6. The defense committee shall be composed of the local president, local treasurer and three appointed members of the organization. The treasurer shall be the chair of the defense committee. Support for those cases which may result in disbursement of defense funds shall be approved by the defense committee. The amount allocated for the defense fund will be set annually by the Senate.
- Section 7. The Elections Committee shall conduct and supervise all elections and referenda of the organization.
- Section 8. The Organizing Committee shall assist the Executive Board and the Senate in developing programs and activities to grow the membership and power of the organization.
- Section 9. The Social Committee shall conduct activities that promote the social well-being of the membership, are attractive to potential members, and promote community among organized labor and in the society at large.

ARTICLE XII AFFILIATIONS

This organization shall maintain affiliation with the following organizations:

- Section 1. The American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO (AFT). Whenever possible, the organization will send delegates to the AFT's convention.
- Section 2. The Illinois Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO (IFT). Whenever possible, this organization will send delegates to the IFT convention.
- Section 3. The Illinois AFL-CIO.
- Section 4. The Chicago Federation of Labor.

ARTICLE XIII
RULES OF ORDER

- Section 1. This Constitution shall be the primary governing document of this organization. The organization shall also maintain a Policies/Procedures file that compiles, in chronological order, the policies passed by the Executive Board and the Senate.
- Section 2. *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised* shall govern this organization and all of its subordinate bodies in all matters not expressly covered by this Constitution.

ARTICLE XIV
AMENDMENT

- Section 1. Thirty percent (30%) of the membership, or senators of 30% thereof, may present, by petition, a proposed amendment to this Constitution to the Secretary, who shall notify the senators of the proposed amendment no later than thirty (30) days prior to the next meeting of the Senate. Alternatively, a majority of the Executive Board may vote to present a proposed amendment to the senators at the next meeting of the Senate. A copy of the proposed amendment, along with an explanation of said amendment, shall be distributed to all senators a reasonable time prior to the Senate meeting at which the amendment will be introduced and discussed.
- Section 2. A quorum for any meeting of the Senate at which constitutional amendments are to be considered and adopted shall consist of senators of thirty (30) percent of the membership of the organization.
- Section 3. The senate shall vote on all amendments to the Constitution.
- a. Following the meeting of the Senate at which the proposed amendment was introduced, the Senate will hold a vote on the amendment at the next meeting of the Senate.
 - b. In the alternative, following the meeting of the Senate at which the proposed amendment was introduced, a special Senate meeting for the purpose of voting on the proposed amendment may be called by the Executive Board. The special meeting shall be conducted in accordance with the terms of Article VIII, Section 5 of this Constitution.
 - c. Two-thirds (2/3) of the senators present shall be required for passage of the amendment.

ARTICLE XV
AVAILABILITY OF THE CONSTITUTION

- Section 1. One copy this Constitution and all subsequent amended versions shall be submitted to the office of the Secretary-Treasurer of the American Federation of Teachers via electronic means.

Section 2. One copy shall be sent to the similar officer of each organization with which this organization is affiliated.

Section 3. The Secretary shall make available upon request a copy to any member of the organization.