Waukegan Psychologists Council Ratifies Four Year Deal with District 60 Board of Education

by Matt Beverley, IFT Field Service Representative

The Waukegan Psychologists voted to ratify its new contract November 7, 2018, with the Board of Education approving the deal later that month. The negotiations entailed changes to multiple aspects of the new contract, including many cleanup provisions, but also includes new language that will improve working conditions, and teaching and learning at the District. Some highlights include:

- Enhanced union security language
- A decrease of the work year by two days
- Increases to intern, summer employment and bilingual stipend amounts
- A decrease in the amount of mandatory attendance at division meetings
- Elimination of limitations on placement on the salary schedule, including the one-time ability of current psychologists to move multiple steps this school year to recapture actual school psychology experience lost from previous districts, resulting in almost all members moving more than one step this school year, and some members receiving five figure raises as a result

“"I had a great team to work with during this long process,” said Council President and School Psychologist Gretchen Classon. “In the end, I believe we bargained a good contract that supports our members and the entire educational community at Waukegan District 60.”

In addition to many other changes to the contract, another notable win for the Union was settling on a 4-year wage deal that includes, with step, an 8.67% raise for all school psychologists in 2018-19, a 4.54% raise in 2019-20, a 4.00% raise in 2020-21, and a 3.50% in 2021-22.

The bargaining team consisted of Members Gretchen Classon, Liora Mendelsberg, Sharon Prystalski and Pauline Williams, and IFT Field Service Director Matthew Beverly.
From the Desk of

Michael T. McGue

State of the Union

I am proud and honored to report that our Union has never been stronger. Thanks to your leadership efforts your Local 504 now has the most members ever! This year we have 5,701 working members up from 5,503 in 2018. Last year at this time we were unsure what our collective future held. Over the summer, when the anti-Union leaning US Supreme Court ruled, as expected, against fair share, the lion’s share of you redoubled your efforts toward organizing.

Our membership increase came about by a concerted effort by many of you to sign up former non-members. What made this process easier was that these new members shared a common goal: they wanted to join a professional organization with you. Folks want to join an open, democratic Union, where their individual voice can be heard. They want to join a Union where they are empowered to voice their workplace concerns, both large and small, to colleagues they have elected democratically. They continue to join because they see that their voice also determines how their Union is run, what it advocates for, and who it supports.

Proponents of the so called “right-to-work” laws, lobbyists for unfettered business greed, Union busting lawyers turned judges, politicians whose campaigns have been financed by big business and others who just believe that “the boss knows best”, stubbornly and diligently contrive to undermine our collective bargaining rights. They’ve tirelessly made outrageous claims, self-serving and disingenuous assertions based on hyperbole or just plain nonsense, about how “bad” Unions are for workers. Some even argue that Unions compromise our individualism. Ironically, we have discovered over the years that another benefit of joining a Union is that our professional autonomy is best protected by uniting together to defend our rights.

After years of sustained attacks by these anti-Union groups we have once again proven that as Union members, we are stronger together than they are even in their best, well-funded efforts.

We must never lose sight of the role each of us models both to the children we educate and our colleagues throughout our Union. As we continue to work for and serve our members we provide daily opportunities for good people to observe the good work we do. People will continue to join this great Local because they want to belong to a Union with you!

Keep up the good work, your essential work, and let’s persist as a solid and unified team to work for and inspire those in our schools.

In Unity,

Michael T. McGue, President,
Lake County Federation of Teachers

February 2019
LCFT Retirees Celebrate the Holidays

As has become their custom, the LCFT Retirees Council got together in December to share food, recipes and fun! Each retiree brings a dish to share and then provides the recipe to the LCFT office. Our office staff then format the recipes into a take home “recipe book” for all of the attendees, which is ready to go when the Retirees are ready to call it a day.
The vicious anti-worker assault on American public sector unions—epitomized by the Janus Supreme Court case—has failed to gain traction, new data released today by the Bureau of Labor Statistics confirm.

Despite a multimillion-dollar, decades-long war waged by special interests on public sector workers’ right to join together for a better life—culminating in Janus, which was meant to “defund and defang” unions—official statistics show 2018 public sector membership held strong at 7,167,000, a marginal 0.5 percent decline, with total U.S. union membership at 14,721,000 million. Public service unions have all seen more membership joins than drops since the decision.

Since Janus was decided in June, its funders have poured millions of dollars into deceptive campaigns encouraging public service workers to quit their unions, while continuing to manipulate the judicial system to attack the rights and freedoms of working people. But courts are increasingly siding with workers over special interests in the face of attempts to further disenfranchise working families by asking judges to reverse pre-existing and sound law.

The legal merits, the facts and public opinion have always been on the side of working people.

American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees President Lee Saunders said: “Momentum is on our side. Public support for unions is at its highest level in 15 years, and elected officials nationwide are embracing unionism as the key to unrigging an economy that overwhelmingly favors the privileged and powerful over working families. Our challenge now is to make it easier for working people to join unions—the one way for workers to get the dignity and respect they deserve.”

“I didn’t have to pay fair share fees anymore unless I wanted to,” said Todd Bennington, principal planning analyst for Hennepin County Human Services in Minnesota and a member of AFSCME Council 5, Local 2864. “That’s when I became a member. Being a member is very important to me, particularly in the wake of that decision. It’s important because I believe in the power of collective action, that working together we have a lot more power to effect change in the world and in our own lives. A sense of community and connectedness is so much more appealing to me than the idea of every person for himself. Collectively, we’re going to get a lot better outcomes.”

American Federation of Teachers President Randi Weingarten said: “It’s heartening that working people have seen straight through these right-wing groups’ brazen attempts to destroy our union and other democratically run, independent public sector unions. In fact, our union is growing, and winning. Since Janus, we have had 11 organizing wins, adding thousands of new members across higher education, healthcare and PSRP units.

“Union members have sent a clear message to the anti-labor right-wing ideologues: We are sticking with the union. While the right wing has many acts left in its playbook, Janus and the follow-up attacks have backfired. Educators, nurses, grad workers and so many others are joining unions because they see them as vehicles for a better life, a voice at work and a vibrant democracy. This week, the Los Angeles teachers are on strike to ensure students have the resources they need to succeed. The attacks will continue, but our members—and the American labor movement as a whole—are determined to stare them down and emerge stronger than ever.”

According to AFT member Holly Kimpon, a high school biology and anatomy teacher
and president of the Genoa Area Education Association in Ohio, “It’s no different now than it was in June when the Janus ruling came out: The teachers in our district will stick together and stick with our union to make sure we have a say in the future of our kids.” Kimpon continued, “I come from a rural and conservative part of Ohio, and all but one of our teachers are dues-paying members, and not one has left the union. In fact, all six new staff members hired this year joined the union. Why? Because we know that our ability to create a safe learning environment for our students and make teaching a viable profession comes directly from being part of a strong union.”

National Education Association President Lily Eskelsen García said: “Support for unions remains strong, even in the face of continual attacks on the rights of working people by corporate special interests, because unions represent the voice of working people in the fight against an economy rigged against the middle class. The NEA remains the nation’s largest labor union because educators—from West Virginia to California and in cities across America—know that together we have a powerful voice to make sure that our students have the public schools they deserve.”

“After the Janus decision, many people across the country wrote off labor unions,” said Jay V. Barbuto, a seventh- and eighth-grade language arts teacher from Phoenix. “You know what they didn’t consider? Reality. The constant struggle our students face in their schools due to a lack of funding and resources. Educators and support professionals who live check to check because of their undervalued pay. Educators like me will continue to advocate for our students and colleagues as a collective power—as a union—regardless of any decision made by politicians or powerful special interests.”

Service Employees International Union President Mary Kay Henry said: “The numbers back up what we’ve seen all across the nation: Public service workers are sticking together in unions because they know they are stronger together. When workers are united, they have the power in numbers to have a strong voice for the good jobs and quality public services our communities need.”

“I’ve had several conversations with co-workers about how important it is we maintain a united front to continue winning higher wages and better working conditions,” said Adam Korst, a graphic designer for the city of Beaverton, Ore., and SEIU Local 503 member. “While extremist groups like the Freedom Foundation continue to attack our rights and encourage us to drop our membership, we must strengthen our resolve and fight harder than ever. The assault on working people is an assault on all of us who have come together and gained the right to voice what we want and need in the workplace.”

Background

Not only does the strategy to get members to quit their unions appear to be backfiring, but so does the anti-worker legal crusade in the wake of Janus. Recently, in Danielson v. AFSCME Council 28, a case out of Washington state, the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Washington tossed out an attempt to force AFSCME to pay back lawfully collected fair share fees that public service workers chipped in to help cover the cost of collective bargaining prior to the Janus decision. The court ruled that the fees were collected in good faith. In Fisk v. Inslee, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 9th Circuit also rejected an effort by such groups to cancel contracts made between public service workers and their unions.
News from “Under the Dome” in Springfield

from ift-aft.org

House Personnel and Pensions Committee to hear bill to repeal 3% salary limitation
HB 350 (Willis) is scheduled to be heard in the House Personnel and Pensions Committee February 14. HB 350 would repeal the 3% pension liability limit on the state’s responsibility for pay raises that are used in pension calculations. If the legislation is enacted, the limitation would revert to the previous 6% threshold. To file a witness slip in support of this bill click here.

Minimum teacher salary bill advances
SB 10 (Manar) will be debated by the full Senate in the coming weeks. This is Sen. Manar’s second attempt at raising the statewide minimum salary for public school teachers in Illinois to $40k by 2023. Currently, minimum mandated salaries are set at $11k for teachers with a Master’s degree and $10k for those with a Bachelor’s. The IFT supports SB 10 and believes it will be a significant step towards addressing the state’s teacher shortage.

House Education Committee advances LGBT history initiative
HB 246 (Moeller) was approved by the House Elementary School Curriculum and Policies Committee. This bill would require a portion of public school history courses to include the study of LGBT figures and ensure history books are non-discriminatory. Local school districts would still set the curriculum and have control over when the additional subject matter is included.

Restoration of 105 ILCS 5/18-8.05 update
IFT initiatives SB 28 (Bertino-Tarrant) and HB 247 (Crespo) advanced in committee this week. Both bills seek to restore the instructional day requirements as they were prior to November 9, 2018 prior to issuance of an ISBE memo.

Minimum wage increase passes
SB 1 (Lightford/Guzzardi) passed the Senate and is posted for a hearing February 13 in the House Labor Committee. This bill would increase Illinois’ minimum wage from the current $8.25 per hour (where it has sat since 2010) to $9.25 on Jan. 1, 2020. After a bump to $10 on July 1, 2020, the wage would increase $1 each Jan. 1 until 2025. The IFT supports this bill.

House education hearing on charter management and the CICS strike
Rep. Chris Welch chaired the Elementary and Secondary Education: Administration, Licensing & Charter School Committee for a hearing this week in Chicago. The committee delved into the ongoing lack of accountability and financial transparency by charter management organizations.

Mark Your Calendar
The Illinois Federation of Teachers’ triennial convention will be held in Rosemont, IL from October 18 - 20, 2019.
LCFT will issue a call for delegates in the May 504 WORD.
Never attended? New Delegates are welcome! Plan to attend and watch for the May 504 WORD!

February 2019
LAKE COUNTY FEDERATION OF TEACHERS, LOCAL 504
SPRING 2019 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT COURSES
REGISTRATION FORM

(Please Print Clearly)
Name: ____________________________ Home/Cell Phone: ____________________________

Home Address: ________________________________________________________________

City: _______________________________ State: _______ Zip: ________________________

Personal E-mail: _______________________ School District: _______________________

IEIN Number: ______________________

Please select the courses you will attend:

☐ Journey to Algebra
  Tuesdays and Thursdays (4:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.) 30 PDU’s 30 hours
  March 19th – April 25th

☐ Common Core
  Tuesdays and Thursdays (4:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.) 15 PDU’s 15 hours
  May 2nd – May 16th (for five nights)

Number of courses selected x cost per course ($50) = $ ______________

REGISTRATION FORM AND PAYMENT (NO CASH) MUST BE IN THE
UNION HALL TWO WEEKS PRIOR TO THE START OF THE CLASS.

Enclose check or money order (no cash) made payable to: AFT Local 504

Return form with non-refundable payment to: Lake County Federation of Teachers, Local 504
  248 Ambrogio Drive
  Gurnee, IL  60031

For questions, please call: 847-623-7725

February 2019
SEDOL Stays Strong, Ratifies New Contract

by Rebecca Slye,
SEDOL President

In the recent months, if not years, solidarity in school districts has been increasing across the nation. It has taken on many faces such as wearing a coordinated color, showing up at board meetings, protesting, and even striking. For many districts this might come easily. But for SEDOL, it is a much different story. We have teachers, related services, itinerant staff, part time staff, full time staff, and supervisors across 31 member districts across Lake County. We all have a passion and a love for our job that is second to none, however we are rarely in the same room together. That changed this year. When we began the negotiating process, we had a room with a handful of members in attendance. That process culminated with a ratification meeting that had over 90% of the membership voting, and 10 of those votes coming in from newly signed members.

We were able to get one of the best contracts in SEDOL history as a result of the solidarity of our members, families, staff members and other districts all coming together. We cannot thank everyone enough for their support. The solidarity and unity that was shown drove a significant portion of the agreement we reached.

We will continue this unified work, because after we are done celebrating the tentative agreement we know that we will be at the negotiating table again all too soon.

“Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much.” -Helen Keller