Lake Villa Federation of Teachers Ratifies Four Year Deal with Board of Control

by Matt Beverly, IFT Field Service Representative

The Lake Villa Federation of Teachers (LVFT) voted to ratify its new contract March 7, 2016, which officially ended contract negotiations that began in the spring of 2015. Because of several outstanding matters that still had to be clarified after ratification, the process of finalization took the parties into the summer for the formal conclusion of the process. The negotiations entailed changes to multiple aspects of the new contract, including some clean-up provisions, but it also includes new language that will improve teacher working conditions, and the teaching and learning environment of the District. Some highlights include:

· The enhancement of a joint curriculum committee with stronger teacher input opportunities and language that ensures a more robust and prudent overall process
· The enhancement of “notice of assignment” provisions
· Better teacher evaluation language that allows for more collaborative and meaningful conversations between the teacher and evaluator, and a process for a more transparent and fair evaluation
· The enhancement of contractual leave language
· Increases to multiple stipends
· The enhancement of preparation time language
· The enhancement of extra-curricular contractual language
· The preservation of the retirement benefit—a huge and hard-fought teacher win

“Though a long process, we believe we made progress in our contract not only for our Members, but for the overall learning conditions of our students too,” said LVFT president and physical education instructor Melissa Merges. “With a clearly defined curriculum process that will allow teachers to work with administration in the best interests of student learning, and a more collaborative teacher evaluation process, our jobs as professional educators will be more effective in our classrooms.”

In addition to many other changes to the contract, the 4-year deal also includes, inclusive of step, a 3.25% raise for teachers in 2015-16, and 3.5% raises in 2016-17, 2017-18, and 2018-19; longevity raises are 2.28% in 2015-16, and 2.45% in the remaining three years. For the first time, teachers will pay an annually capped amount towards their single health insurance starting in the second year of the agreement, with teachers paying annually on average around 4% of the total premium cost. The District-provided dependent benefit will be increased over the life of the agreement, substantially mitigating the effect of premium increases—and as already realized this school year. With these changes to insurance came a demand by the teachers to include contractual language that will allow teachers a more active role in the overall insurance program, including a joint insurance committee that will meet no less than quarterly to make recommendations to the board of education on all matters related to insurance. Finally, limits were included that will check the Board’s ability to make changes to insurance coverage levels during the life of the agreement, as happened under the old contract.
From the Desk of

Michael T. McGue

I’ve heard repeatedly that this presidential race is a change election. Folks seem to be more curious than ever about the candidates as evidenced by the nearly 90,000,000 Americans that watched the first presidential debate. I’m not going to tell you who I think you should support nor am I going to explain why I’m supporting who I do. If you’ve read my columns before, then you can probably guess with some accuracy. I do believe that there are enormous consequences for our Union at stake.

In my sixty years, I’ve spent nearly 50 of those following politics as a passion. I have been so fortunate to be born in the United States. I enjoy being part of the democratic process and the intellectual stimulation it provides me. Spend anytime around me and you’re sure to hear my opinion about things and I also enjoy hearing others’ views as well. Journalist Chris Mathews once replied to a question about why he talks so much, often interrupting guests during interviews. He replied with a genuine smile saying “I can’t help myself!” I guess the same is true for me.

Like Mathews, I find our political and legislative process too exciting in which not to participate. The presidential election cycle is for me like the playoffs are to a sports fan. I can’t wait to see whose ideas triumph, feeling the tremendous elation when my supported candidate wins and often suffering through the humiliation of defeat with them when they don’t.

Just like anyone with a passion, I am often surprised when others don’t display the same level of interest.

But this year I’ve experienced something new: fear. This fear is an existential one that may define the future and existence of our Union. I believe that we are truly on the potential verge of a political and philosophical shift in our country and the world, the likes of which I’ve never witnessed.

This philosophical shift may be a result of a thoughtful desire for change, but I’m betting that we are in for a change in no small part due to anger, ignorance, and just plain frustration. I’ll let the pundits analyze the causes and effects after the election. I see my role now as one to inform our members of the consequence of their choices at the poles believing that a better informed electorate makes better decisions.

Please, make no mistake, this political and philosophical shift may be profound. Consider only one effect: the makeup of the Supreme Court. Some popular pundits will have you believe that anything other than a strict construction or literal interpretation of our constitution is heretic. I believe, however, that the true beauty of our constitution is that it may provide guidance to finding solutions to questions that have not even been contemplated yet or will be in our lifetimes. Finding answers to these questions requires investigation and application to each and every one of our philosophical world views. The give and take of this democratic process can be very cumbersome, awkward, and sometimes upsetting when the result doesn’t align with our view. Sometimes, as a nation and society we come to the wrong conclusion. Conclusions that must constantly be reevaluated by applying the constitution’s meaning to these new challenges. These are challenges not unlike those faced by educators on a daily and ongoing basis.

Ultimately, I believe that our Constitution is broad enough to answer these unknown questions of our future United States and wish to see justices seated

“Their is my opinion that although a Clinton or Trump presidency may risk many things each of us believe important, the most profound, long-lasting impact of either of these two as president will be upon the make-up of the Supreme Court.”

--LCFT President Michael T. McGue
Retiree News
by Carolyn Scaccia,
Retirees Council President

On Thursday, September 15 the Retirees' Council had a fall luncheon. Our newest members are Perrie Kominski, Randi Willis and Lisa Zalapukis. We had Dave Comerford from the IFT talk to us about the importance of voting and what is at stake both nationally and at the state level. He also fielded questions from the group.

The Taste of 504 will be held here at the Union Hall on December 8, 2016 at 11:00 a.m. Members should bring a dish to share and the recipe for it. While we eat, the recipes are duplicated and put into a cookbook. You will go home with some new ideas for your holiday entertaining.

In conjunction with our get together on December 8, we will conduct a food drive. Retirees attending will be asked to bring a non-perishable food item to be donated to a local food pantry. If you cannot attend on December 8 but would like to make a contribution, please drop it off at the Union Hall.

Don't forget to vote for officers and delegates to the Executive Board for the Retiree's Council. Ballots should be included with the issue of The 504 Word and must be returned by November 10, 2016. Results will be published in the December newspaper.

Enjoy the fall weather and colors and have a wonderful Thanksgiving!

President, continued from p. 2

who are willing to best interpret the document's intentions, without applying inherent personal bias. By nature this requires an open mind, one capable of embracing different ideas and applications to our changing world.

I ask you this: should the Supreme Court decisions adapt to changing times or are changing times to adapt to the past? By nature, conservatism suggest the latter.

As of this writing, Mr. Trump has ascribed to a list of judges from which he will draw any future appointment to the Supreme Court. By most analysis, his list contains only judges that interpret most current issues in a more conservative fashion.

It’s my opinion that although a Clinton or Trump presidency may risk many things each of us believe important, the most profound, long-lasting impact of either of these two as president will be upon the make-up of the Supreme Court. An impact lasting for decades, not merely years.

A Trump presidency will most certainly guarantee that we will no longer be able to charge fair-share fees to those who would choose to benefit from the Union’s work, while freeloading on the cost. Union dues will be harder to collect. But most importantly, your right to join together to determine your working conditions may be entirely eliminated. Lastly, and most importantly to me, your right to a decision by a neutral third party in a dispute with your boss (arbitration) may be eliminated. Yes, the boss will finally be completely in charge. Do you believe that these actions will make your life better?

This is a philosophical choice you will be making when you vote for President of the United States. Please do so with your eyes wide open.

In unity,

Mike McGue

PLEASE VOTE!!
Emmons Unanimously Ratifies Agreement

by Jim Pergander,
LCFT Business Agent

The Emmons Federation of Educational Professionals negotiating team worked cooperatively with a team consisting of board members and administrators from the month of February through August to create a new three year collective bargaining agreement for the years 2016-2019. Most of the twenty some items discussed were agreed upon quickly by May, though one item concerning formal observation paperwork required much more deliberation, resulting in a mid-August end to negotiations. On August 22, the council membership unanimously ratified the agreement.

Over the three year period of the CBA, teacher salaries will increase by approximately 11.2 percent. The paraprofessionals will experience average wage increases of approximately 12.1 percent over the same three year period.

The following changes were made for teachers:
- Progressive discipline and due process language was added, matching that of the language protecting paraprofessionals.
- Language restricting non Master’s program coursework lane movement was added.
- On-line Master’s programs will now be reimbursed, though at a reduced rate of $3500 as compared to traditional Master’s program reimbursement of $7000.
- Reimbursement is now allowed for undergraduate courses that are taken to acquire additional endorsements.
- Days a teacher may use to observe other staff or programs within the teacher’s field of instruction was reduced from five to two days.
- Special education teachers (LBS1) will receive two release days per year to attend to duties specific and relevant to their position (i.e. paperwork).
- The number of required formal observations has been reduced for non-tenured teachers to two per year for their first two years, then one a year for the next two years. For tenured teachers, formal observations have been reduced to one every other year.
- Post retirement, unused and unreported sick leave will be paid out at a rate of $90 a day.
- A new post formal observation form was created in which observations and judgments made will be reported via Danielson subdomains.

The following changes were made for paraprofessionals:
- Tuition reimbursement for coursework taken during the school year will be paid for up to six hours of coursework per school year.
- Language was added addressing the training of paraprofessionals to keep their skills current.
- A new paraprofessional wage schedule was implemented with a higher starting wage along with a provision for longevity for those without a step.

All staff who choose to not enroll in the district health insurance program may now receive up to $3500 each school year for medical reimbursement. Those representing the Emmons Council were Sydney Ryan, Council President, Cheryl McCameron, and Sharon Page.

The Administration and Board were represented by Eileen Conway, Superintendent, Lisa Lawler-Ludwig, Business Manager, and Board Members Laurie Christophersen, Bruce Gottermeyer, Kelly Sheehan, and Paula Norkus.

Assisting the teams were Jim Pergander, LCFT Business Agent, and Mike Loizzi, and Tony Loizzi, Attorneys for the Board.
Grant Teachers Ratify Three Year Agreement

by Michelle Standridge,
IFT Field Service Representative

Negotiations for Grant Teachers, which began in early December 2015, culminated in a Tentative Agreement on June 8, 2016. A mediator from FMCS (Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service) joined the parties toward the end of negotiations to help finalize a deal. The Council held its ratification meeting on August 12th. Members voted in favor of the 2016-2019 Agreement which brings many new benefits for members, competitive increases in salary, and a structural salary change which will reap benefits moving forward.

The three-year contract affords average salary schedule increases of 5% per year for the three years of the Agreement. In exchange for eliminating retirement benefits that exceeded the still-remaining twenty-year benefit of four, 6% increases in the final four years of employment, the Council added four steps to their schedule and were able to place those in longevity back onto the schedule to yield 5.93%-8.16% increases in salary for those individuals in addition to allowing them additional time on schedule with higher raises before jumping into longevity. This change will yield significant benefit over time for all of the members on schedule.

Just a few among many provisions of the new Agreement include an increase in flex money, an increase in the amount of accumulated sick leave teachers can use toward parental leave (eight weeks), modifications to allow greater access to tuition reimbursement, the addition of summer compensation for Social Workers and Psychologists, and increased access for members to attend professional meetings. In addition, there are miscellaneous stipend increases throughout the contract for items such as tuition reimbursement and internal substitution, and the team was able to add language for a committee to address adequate levels of extracurricular activity staff similar to a committee already in place for coaching staff. Extracurricular stipends increased, as did the allocation for certain activities/sports, and the contract reflects the addition of extracurricular activities/sports that weren’t previously included.

The Union’s bargaining team had representatives from a variety of departments, and they worked diligently and collaboratively to secure a deal they felt worthy to bring back to their members. Congratulations, Grant!

On the Union’s bargaining team were Council President Dan Benes, Council Vice-President Shane Rivette, Secretary Ellen Skolar, Treasurer Jeff Austin, Jeremy Anderson, Lauren Behm, Sheryl Dempsey, Dan Duffy, Kurt Roux, Will Schmadeke, and IFT Field Service Director Michelle Standridge.
Hillary shares our values on education

HILLARY’S PRIORITIES

• Work collaboratively with educators. “It is just dead wrong to make teachers the scapegoats for all of society’s problems. Where I come from, teachers are the solution. And I strongly believe that unions are part of the solution too.”

• End the fixation on high-stakes testing. “I believe we need better, fewer, and fairer tests.”

• Address the impact of poverty on students. “The federal government’s job is to help deal with income inequity and its effects.”

• End tying teacher evaluations to student test scores. “I have for a long time ... been against the idea that you tie teacher evaluation, and even teacher pay, to test outcomes.”

• Hold charter schools accountable. “Charters should be held to the same standards, and to the same level of accountability and transparency, to which traditional public schools are held.”

• Provide universal prekindergarten. “Every child, regardless of parental income, deserves access to high-quality pre-K.”

• Increase college access and affordability. “We cannot continue to increase tuition and costs on the backs of hardworking families and their kids.”

HILLARY’S RECORD

As a senator, Hillary:

• Opposed massive tax breaks for the wealthy and fought back against funding cuts in education, health and job training. (Dec. 21, 2005)

• Voted against budget cuts for domestic programs including education, and instead voted for increased funding for key education programs. (March 14, 2008)

• Took a stand for our neediest students, proposing $4 billion in special education funding and $5 billion for Title I schools. (Oct. 26, 2005)

• Supported increased Pell Grant awards for middle- and low-income students. (April 28, 2005; Oct. 3, 2007)

• Voted in favor of the DREAM Act to provide more education opportunities to immigrant students. (Oct. 24, 2007)

• Backed legislation to authorize more spending on school repair and construction. (May 16, 2001)

• Opposed private school vouchers. (June 11, 2001; Jan. 20, 2004)

For more information on Hillary Clinton’s priorities, go to www.aft.org/election2016. Sign up to join the AFT Political Activist team and receive up-to-date election news. Text VOTE to 69238.
Words and Actions Both Count

by Corinne McGue, LCFT PAC Chair

I last wrote about the need for a vote for civility as we approach the November elections. After viewing the side-show Donald Trump created in the first presidential debate, I can too easily add to the endless list of flaws displayed by this candidate for President of the United States. During the segment in which Secretary Hillary Clinton was sharing the research into Trump’s known tax returns which remarkably exposed his lack of paying any federal taxes he boasted, “that makes me smart!” A self-proclaimed multi-billionaire who not only refuses to pay his fair share but truly believes that this treacherous omission makes him “smart” is an offensive description of anyone, let alone a candidate for the presidency. This revelation should be enough to disqualify anyone from the office of president but when coupled with his assertion that this makes him “smarter” than you and me reveals a complete and utter disdain for what has Made this Country Great: our shared sense of responsibility for our fellow citizens. When confronted with this appalling comment only minutes after the debate, he flat-out denied it, even with the video proof in front of him! Trump continues to demonstrate his complete inability and unwillingness to own up to his mistakes and to tell the truth.

These latest revelations are blatantly arrogant, astonishingly unpatriotic and again reveal why Trump is not fit to be our President. I confess to a “confirmation bias” to some extent, but this latest only underscores a repeated motif throughout his candidacy. Donald Trump is willing to cheat and lie if it furthers his cause, regardless of the situation. He has inflicted a plague of degradation to our politics and it continues to spread throughout our country. The USA Today, for the first time ever in its 34 years of publication, has chosen a side in this presidential election asking voters to “resist the siren song of a dangerous demagogue.” I agree. I urge each of you to vote, just not for Donald Trump.

Your LCFT PAC Committee has vetted and endorsed the following local candidates and we believe that they deserve our support in their individual contests. While no candidate is ever perfect, these individuals have proven their commitment to working with us in our mission to best educate our youth. Please remember them as you go to the polls next month.

Senator Melinda Bush
Senator Julie Morrison
Representative Scott Drury
Representative Carol Sente
Representative Rita Mayfield
Representative Sam Yingling
Nick Ciko
US Senator Brad Schneider

GET OUT THE VOTE!
Election 2016 Endorsements

Hillary Rodham Clinton & Tim Kaine

Melinda Bush  Julie Morrison  Scott Drury

Illinois Senate District 31  Illinois Senate District 29  Illinois House District 58

Carol Sente  Rita Mayfield  Sam Yingling

Illinois House District 59  Illinois House District 60  Illinois House District 62

Nick Ciko  Brad Schneider

Illinois House District 61  US House District 10

The 504 Word is devoted to the interests of the Education Workers’ Union movement and is published five times each year by the Lake County Federation of Teachers.