Zion-Benton Federation of Teachers Host Cookies & Contracts Sessions

by Kelly Regnier, 504 WORD Editor

Typically, negotiations teams will begin their planning by surveying the membership. Often, these surveys are already contained within our contract as well as discussing potential changes to it. By focusing on one or two articles of the contract over eight different after-school sessions, we feel like we have been able to really hear our members’ voices.”

Sessions have been attended by members from across the district, including teachers, secretaries, paraprofessionals, teacher aids, and more. Both buildings have been represented.

“We love the idea that our members have had the opportunity to weigh in on our contract. With so many different job classifications across the district, we only hear about the problems as they become immediate. This way, we have had the opportunity to address issues in a proactive manner,” Regnier said.

With a contract that expires on June 30, 2018, the Zion-Benton Federation of Teachers council leadership decided to take a different approach as they prepare for the next round of negotiations.

Council president Kelly Regnier said, “We wanted to come up with a way to educate our members about the benefits

Congratulations to the ZBFT for trying out a new way to engage our members in the negotiations process!
From the Desk of
*Michael T. McGue*

Why Your Local Union Political Endorsements Matter

One of the more common complaints about Unions that I hear is “I don’t agree with the politics.” It’s an understandable sentiment that illustrates frustration with differing opinions which may have nothing to do with education or Unionism. While it’s true that we hear from some Union leaders about issues that seemingly have little to do with education, my promise to you is that we will only endorse on issues that affect you in the classroom and school building.

Our Union’s political endorsements appear to me to be one of the most misunderstood processes in which we engage. We all know that candidates run on a host of issues and we often hear most about the concerns which resonate with voters at any particular time: topics that poll the highest. This year the economy, healthcare and the occupant of the White House are all high on this list. However, these concerns, as important as they may be to us individually, bare little or no consequence into earning an endorsement from the Lake County Federation of Teachers.

All of us in public education are government employees earning salaries paid for through tax dollars. As a result of this system our working conditions are heavily influenced and affected by the politicians in our state capital. To make the claim that our Union, our democratically elected representative body, should not form an opinion on political issues is similar to stating that your Union should not care about the actions of your supervisor, department chair, principal or superintendent!

Our endorsement process is really quite simple. We evaluate the voting records of incumbent office holders on a list of issues that have come before them. These issues are potential laws which will affect your working environment or regulations that apply to you. We also look at actions legislators and state executives have taken that impact our brothers and sisters in our affiliated Unions. We then send questionnaires on many of the same concerns to new candidates and invite all of them for a PAC interview. Based on these voting records, survey responses and personal interviews, the LCFT then makes a recommendation on endorsements.

Here’s what we don’t do: we don’t make endorsements based on any issue unrelated to your working environment or the children we serve.”

--*Mike McGue, LCFT President*

*see PRESIDENT, page 3*
PRESIDENT, continued from page 2

endorsements including our state or national affiliates. The IFT and AFT have the means to make their own feelings and recommendations known.

You also have the means to make your convictions known. Just as in negotiating a contract, you must share your concerns or they can never be considered by others. To quote a good friend "Democracy is cumbersome," and at times quite frustrating. But those of us who believe in the Union know that democracy is the best way to fulfill our collective wishes.

Please read the back page of this paper as our PAC worked very hard to help inform you as to which candidates will best assist you in your careers. Please take these endorsements into consideration when casting your vote. Of course you may find other candidates more worthy of your vote for a variety of other reasons but I believe it is all-important that you know which candidates will best serve you in your profession.

In unity,

Mike McGue, LCFT President
November 20: Election

Voting for Your Profession

by Corinne McGue, LCFT PAC Chair

To say that this upcoming election has been hyped as the most critical of our time is an understatement. We have been overwhelmed by messaging from a multitude of groups with varying interests trying to win our votes in November. While there are, indeed, many concerns at stake here, we, as Union members have relatively clear-cut decisions when it comes to voting our professional interests.

The recent Janus decision posits that our work is political, simply because we care enough about our profession to assert our concerns in the political arena. But what we are not is staunchly partisan in spite of the preponderance of Democratic candidates earning our endorsements. I have been involved in our LCFT PAC work for several decades and I can assure you that we have courted candidates from both political parties for our vetting interviews. Some Republicans have not only earned our endorsement and support but have continued to work with us on educational issues over the course of many years. The drivers’ education program at Zion-Benton Township High School continues to exist for the benefit of our students because of the concerned efforts of Senator Adeline Geo-Karis (R). Our PAC team, quite simply, is concerned with supporting legislators who advocate for us in our schools. Unfortunately, the optics of heavily-tilted support for Democratic candidates is often misunderstood and used against our Union by those with other special interests. For many reasons which I will not elaborate on at this time, the Democratic candidates have been, and continue to be, more closely aligned with and supportive of our only criteria for existing as a PAC: to better our public schools for all.

This brings me to our upcoming election and our enthusiastic candidates who we hope you will agree, deserve our support. Our PAC group began our interviewing process late last year and have not only endorsed but continue to offer support to these candidates and their campaigns. These hard-working political contenders continue to go door-to-door reaching out to voters of all political persuasions while they advocate for our public schools. Some are teachers and some have close family members who dedicate their lives to public education. One is a current school board member. What they all share is a commitment to the betterment of our public schools. We are convinced that they understand first-hand the challenges all of us face in today’s public schools and that they are determined to help us as we move forward. Our PAC realizes that there are many reasons to vote for a specific candidate but as your professional advocates in the all-important political arena we ask you to seriously consider voting for our passionate and committed group of recruits in the November election.

We enthusiastically and wholeheartedly endorse:

JB Pritzker for Illinois Governor
Juliana Stratton, Illinois Lt. Governor

Terry Link, Illinois Senate, District 30
Julie Morrison, Illinois Senate, District 31

Mary Edly-Allen, Illinois House, District 51
Jonathan Carroll, Illinois House District 57
Bob Morgan, Illinois House District 58
Dan Didech, Illinois House District 59
Rita Mayfield, Illinois House District 60
Joyce Mason, Illinois House District, 61
Sam Yingling, Illinois House District, 62
Trisha Zubert, Illinois House District 64
JB Pritzker  
Illinois Governor

Juliana Stratton  
Illinois Lt. Governor

Terry Link  
Illinois Senate  
District 30

Julie Morrison  
Illinois Senate  
District 31

Mary Edly Allen  
Illinois House  
District 51

Jonathan Carroll  
Illinois House  
District 57

Bob Morgan  
Illinois House  
District 58

Dan Didech  
Illinois House  
District 59

Rita Mayfield  
Illinois House  
District 60

Joyce Mason  
Illinois House  
District 61

Sam Yingling  
Illinois House  
District 62

Trisha Zubert  
Illinois House  
District 64

October 2018
Due Process: Get the Facts

Teachers need due process, which is simply the right to a legitimate reason, or "just cause," before you can be fired. Due process gives teachers the latitude to use their professional judgment in their classrooms, advocate for their students, and not fear retribution for speaking the truth or teaching controversial subjects like evolution. As political winds shift in school districts, due process also wards off patronage and nepotism.

Due process is not intended to be a job for life, a cloak for incompetence or a reason for managers not to manage. And where due process laws need to be changed, aligned with good evaluation systems, or made faster and fairer, we must work to do that.

Nationally, we've partnered with the American Association of School Administrators to lay out a due process framework with clear objectives and timelines. It shouldn't take 10 years to dismiss someone who should be ushered out of the profession. In fact, in our framework, we say that it should take at most a year. Union leaders in Connecticut, Maryland, New Jersey and New York, for example, have worked with administrators and legislators to pass innovative due process laws. Many of our local leaders have negotiated peer review systems where educators share responsibility in ensuring that we are all carrying our load.

At the same time, we know that two-thirds of what affects student achievement occurs outside the classroom—poverty, segregation and underfunding are but a few examples. We need an approach that focuses on improving teaching and learning conditions and equity at the same time we're improving teacher quality. That's the way we'll ensure every child has a great teacher. That's the way we'll reclaim the promise of public education for all children.

The real issue for students at risk is how we attract, retain and support good teachers and create safe and welcoming neighborhood schools. Stripping educators of their voice and due process just makes this more difficult.
REGISTRATION FORM
LCFT LOCAL 504 – 2018 FALL
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT COURSES

(Please Print Clearly)
Name: ___________________________ Home Phone: ______________

Home Address: ___________________________________________________

City: ___________________________ State: _____ Zip: ________________

Personal E-mail: ___________________________ (School District): ________

IEIN Number: ___________________________

Select courses you will attend:

FALL

☐ FOUNDATIONS OF EFFECTIVE TEACHING I:
Tuesdays and Thursdays (4:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.) 30 PDU’s 30 hours
September 11 through October 11

☐ ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS 101
Tuesdays and Thursdays (4:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.) 15 PDU’s 15 hours
October 16 through October 30

☐ STRATEGIES FOR STUDENT SUCCESS (PART I)
Tuesdays and Thursdays (4:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.) 30 PDU’s 30 hours
November 1 – through December 4

Number of courses selected: x Cost per course: $50 = $ ___________

CHECKS AND REGISTRATION FORM MUST BE IN THE UNION HALL TWO WEEKS PRIOR
TO THE START OF THE CLASS. PLEASE DON’T JEOPARDIZE THE CLASS BY
REGISTERING LATE. ALL CLASSES ARE HELD IN THE UNION HALL.

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

October 2018
LCFT Seeks Administrative Assistant

The Lake County Federation of Teachers is a progressive labor union dedicated to creating equal opportunities, better wages and working conditions for educational employees in the northern suburbs of Chicago. We are engaged in new member organizing, contract negotiations, political campaigns and professional development. We are seeking an enthusiastic Administrative Assistant to join our team.

The Administrative Support Team specializes in compiling membership information, dues collection, meeting preparation and information sharing with our membership.

Job Responsibilities and Qualifications include but are not limited to:

Interpersonal Skills

- Positive attitude and ability to communicate effectively with others
- Be the "face of the Union" as you interact with our members
- Must be flexible, motivated and willing to work as part of a team
- Dedication to social and economic justice and building a strong labor movement
- Detail oriented, able to work independently, organized
- Possess a cooperative "can-do" spirit
- Managing different projects on varying timelines, at times under pressure
- Must take initiative

Technical Skills

- Telephone and front-desk reception
- Membership database record keeping and report generation
- Document preparation for membership communications
- Collecting, organizing and analyzing data
- Scheduling and managing logistics for meetings and union events
- Proficient in Microsoft Word, Excel, Publisher, Outlook and Google Docs.
- Proficient in website maintenance and social media platforms
- Excellent writing skills
- Ability to read and understand contract language

Initial Occupational Requirements

- Must be willing to work flexible hours
- Part-time initially; hours to be determined
- Experience in education and/or labor relations is an important plus

Please apply online at indeed.com

The Lake County Federation of Teachers is an Equal Opportunity Employer