

Happy 75th Anniversary!



Diverse. Dedicated. Determined.
Proudly Representing You Since 1946

AFT Local 943, IFT, AFL-CIO

Southwest Suburban Federation of Teachers

15521 South 70th Court, Orland Park, Illinois 60462

(708) 633-0943 Fax (708) 633-0944

www.aft943.org

2021-2022 Union Membership Guide

The Southwest Suburban Federation of Teachers, AFT-Local 943, unites 3,156 teachers, paraprofessionals, school-related personnel (PSRP), and employees in Southwest Suburban Cook County, Illinois as well as 459 retirees, into a federated union comprised of dedicated members who articulate the needs, desires, and legitimate rights of our educational community. In order to help accomplish this, we hold regular meetings at our Union office. At AFT Local 943, 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, sex, sexual orientation, disability, social, political, or economic status, or national origin.

Senate Meeting Dates

4:30 p.m. - 6:30 p.m. (IN-PERSON)

September 14, 2021

October 12, 2021

December 14, 2021

February 8, 2022

March 8, 2022

May 10, 2022

All designated Union Senators and Member Guests are invited to attend. A light meal and refreshments are served.*

Senate Meetings will be held at AFT Local 943 Meeting Hall

15521 South 70th Court

Orland Park, IL 60462

(708) 633-0943 FAX (708) 633-0943

Universal & Executive Board Meeting Dates

4:30 p.m. - 5:30 p.m. - Universal (REMOTELY)

5:30 p.m. - 6:30 p.m. - Executive Board (REMOTELY)

August 31, 2021

September 28, 2021

November 30, 2021

January 25, 2022

February 22, 2022

April 26, 2022

All Council Presidents and IFT Constituency Council Members are invited to attend Universal Meetings

All Local 943 Officers are invited to attend Executive Board Meeting.

Be sure to check your email for Remote Meeting Links.

What is the Local 943 Senate?

The senate is the governing body of the local. They give input and cast votes on the latest, most relevant information on matters such as legislative issues, union policies, professional concerns, negotiations, recertification, scholarship winners, etc.

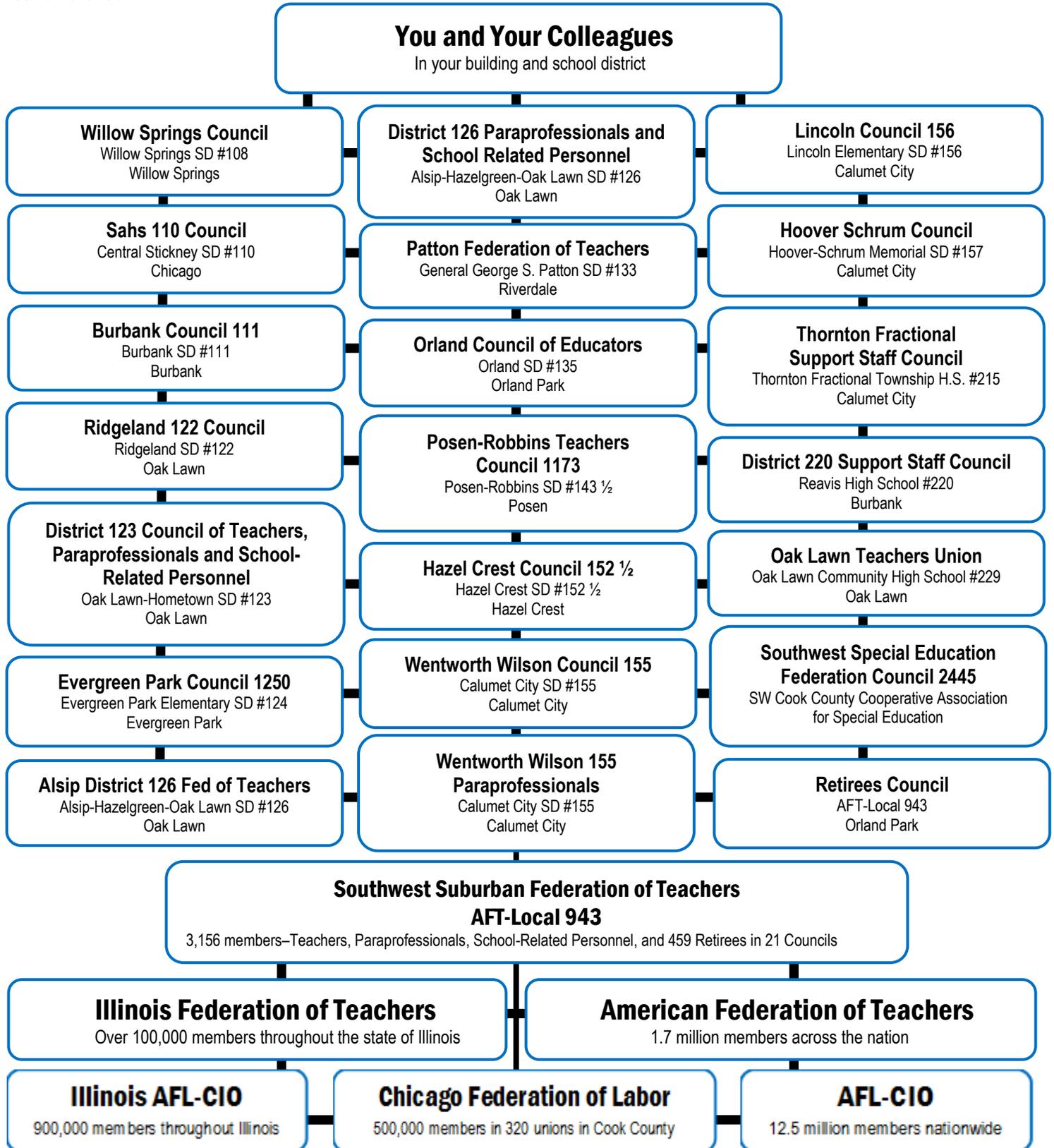
*All Local 943 members are welcome to attend, but only appointed or elected senators will be eligible to vote.

What is the Universal Team?

Council presidents are invited to join members of the Local 943 Executive Board and IFT Constituency Council to give input into planning the agenda of our senate meetings. This small group forum is designed to allow open discussion in a non-formal setting.

The "U" in Union is YOU!

There is no union without you. We are thankful for all of you who stand in solidarity with working people. Each AFT Local 943 member is an essential part in building a strong union, especially at your workplace. However, you also play an important part of a much larger picture. Each of us alone can only do so much, but with the power of a collective voice, we can make a real difference.



“What Are 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.

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 slowdowns, 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:

If notified of such meeting in advance, 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 without prior notice, 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.

(Information in this article taken from *The Legal Rights of Union Stewards* by Robert M. Schwartz)

“What is a Collective Bargaining Agreement?”

A collective bargaining agreement or CBA is the contract between you and your employer. It acts as a legal document that is negotiated with your employer by your union.

The best way to avoid confusion about the contents of your contract is to be informed. Since the contract guides the actions of both you and your employer, you should become very familiar with its language. Be sure to obtain a copy of your contract from your union building representative or council president.

Every contract is different, so it is important to contact your union building representative or council president, NOT your employer, if you have questions about anything in your contract.

Seek the advice and assistance of a union representative immediately if you believe a contract violation has occurred.

“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 misinterpretation of a specific term of your contract agreement. Sometimes it can refer to an established policy or practice that has been applied unfairly. Note: Not all contracts allow a “past practice” grievance.

If you believe a grievance has occurred, please 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 leader (building representative or a council officer) whenever you feel a grievance might be warranted. Your council president should know about problems as they occur and will then contact your IFT field service director or the Local office.
4. Document all of the facts:
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.
6. Council presidents should contact AFT-Local 943 at 708-633-0943 to keep the office informed of the suspected 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.



What are the Benefits of Union Membership?

Diverse, Dedicated, and Determined

- Members belong to an organization that is the collective voice for public schools, school employees, and students.
- Members have a voice in and can participate in local union meetings and social events.
- Members can vote on contract ratification, election of officers, or any other union matter.
- Members can serve on a local bargaining team.
- Members are able to provide input into negotiations of the Union contract.
- Members are eligible to attend IFT/AFT training on special education, employment law, bargaining, legal issues, common core, evaluation, grievance processing, leadership development, etc.
- Members can hold union office at the state, local, or national association level.
- Members can be appointed to IFT Executive Board committees, task forces, and constituency councils.
- Members can attend IFT or AFT conferences including but not limited to bargaining and public affairs conference, summer leadership conference, higher education conference, and paraprofessionals and support staff conference.
- Members and their dependents are eligible to apply for and receive scholarships provided by the local union, the IFT, the AFT, or the AFL-CIO.
- Members receive \$1 million employment liability insurance. This protects members if sued for events in the workplace, and if exonerated members will not be responsible for personal legal defense and payment of any judgment. The AFT plan provides for damages and attorney fees up to:
 - \$1 million per member from claims arising out of a member's employment activities due to: (1) accidental bodily injury to a student or staff member, (2) accidental property damage of school or student property, or (3) personal injury claim against you by a student, such as slander, libel, false arrest, false detention, imprisonment or invasion of privacy.
 - Defense cost reimbursement of up to \$250,000 per member per year for suits involving the denial of constitutional rights.
 - Up to \$1 million per member per year for inadvertent acts or omissions - including "failure to educate."
 - Defense cost reimbursements up to \$35,000 per member per year for criminal charges arising out of school activities or sexual harassment if exonerated, otherwise \$5,000
 - Up to \$5,000 for defense of covered claims in licensure board or credential hearings resulting from educational employment activities.
 - \$10,000 in the event of death due to assault while working.
- Members receive Accidental Death and Dismemberment Insurance in an amount ranging from \$5,000 to \$17,500 if they accidentally die or accidentally lose a limb or sight. The amount doubles if the accident occurs at work.
- Members are eligible for the Union Plus/AFL-CIO benefits program including:
 - Members-only discounts on auto, home and life insurance, travel, entertainment, moving, car rental, auto buying, AT&T wireless, financial services, legal services for personal matters, mortgage/real estate programs, Goodyear tires, flowers, magazines, and more. The program also includes subscriptions to AFT's *American Educator*, IFT's *Union Link*, Local 943's *AFTerthoughts*, and membership in the AFT Advantage online shopping program.

NEW! Free College Benefit

Members, their spouse, children, financial dependents and grandchildren, are eligible for the new Union Plus Free College benefit that offers the opportunity to earn a free associate degree from Eastern Gateway Community College (EGCC)-an accredited, non-profit public institution. To take advantage of this Free College opportunity visit www.unionplus.org.

Southwest Suburban Federation of Teachers • AFT Local 943 • 15521 S. 70th Court, Orland Park, Illinois 60462 • (708) 633-0943

An affiliate of the Illinois Federation of Teachers (IFT) and the American Federation of Teachers (AFT)



Diverse, Dedicated, and Determined

Online Resources for Members

Southwest Suburban Federation of Teachers AFT-Local 943

www.aft943.org

Website for your local union, Local 943. Stay up-to-date by visiting often.

Illinois Federation of Teachers

www.ift-aft.org

IFT's website, where you can find news, professional development opportunities, and more.

American Federation of Teachers

www.aft.org

Website for our national union, the American Federation of Teachers. IFT members are AFT members, too.

Member Benefits Sites

www.aft.org/about/member-benefits and

www.unionplus.org/

These sites highlight the service and discount programs offered through your AFT membership.

Illinois AFL-CIO

www.ilaf-cio.org

Website for the Illinois federation of the AFL-CIO, an affiliate of the Illinois Federation of Teachers.

Why IFT?

www.ift-aft.org/your-union/labor-101

This page on the IFT's website explains the importance and advantages of union membership.

Share My Lesson

www.sharemylesson.com

The AFT facilitates "Share My Lesson," a digital platform for U.S. educators to collaborate and share teaching resources and innovative ideas.

Colorin Colorado

www.colorincolorado.org

This site provides resources for teachers and parents who work with English Language Learners.

IFT's Protecting Our Students page

www.ift-aft.org/your-work/protectingourkids

Here you can find several useful resources to help immigrant students and their families.

IFT's Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Racial Injustice Resources

www.ift-aft.org/oeiresources

This site provides a wealth of resources for teachers, students, and communities to help critically address inclusion topics.

Illinois Elections

<https://ova.elections.il.gov/>

Online voter registration for Illinois residents as well as other election-related information.

Illinois Performance Evaluation Advisory Council & ISBE Balanced Assessment

www.isbe.net/Pages/Educator-Evaluations.aspx and
www.isbe.net/Pages/Balanced-Assessment.aspx

The PEAC council makes recommendations to the state as it develops new performance evaluation systems for teachers that incorporate student growth measures. ISBE Balanced Assessment provides resources on student learning objectives (SLOs).

ISBE Educator Licensure Information System (ELIS)

www.isbe.net/Pages/Home.aspx

This site is where teachers enter professional development hours and check to ensure that their license, endorsement, and personal contact information is current. Teachers can also renew their licenses here.

Illinois New Teacher Collaborative

<https://intc.education.illinois.edu/>

Illinois New Teacher Collaborative online provides resources for new teaching professionals, teacher mentors, and others interested in supporting new teachers.

State Board Websites

www.isbe.net

Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE)

www.ibhe.org

Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE)

www.iccb.org

Illinois Community College Board (ICCB)

Pension Websites

www.trsil.org

Illinois Teachers Retirement System (TRS)

www.imrf.org

Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund (IMRF)

www.surs.com

State Universities Retirement System of IL (SURS)

www.srs.illinois.gov

State Employees Retirement System of IL (SERS)

Illinois Legislature

www.ilga.gov

Illinois General Assembly: House & Senate legislator and committee information, as well as Illinois legislation and laws, can be viewed from this site.

10

Reasons to Join a UNION

3 COLLECTIVE BARGAINING RIGHTS

IFT has helped thousands of members secure economic gains and other improvements for themselves and those they serve.

7 LOBBYING & POLITICAL ACTION

IFT empowers you to make your voice heard by legislators on key issues that impact members, education, and public services.

4 A CONTRACT

IFT members elect their bargaining team, negotiate terms, & democratically vote to approve their collective bargaining agreements, which provide fair wages, benefits, work rules, & job security.

8 CONSUMER BENEFITS

IFT and AFT offer members savings on a wide range of consumer benefits and services, as well as multiple scholarship programs.

1 A POWERFUL VOICE ON THE JOB

Union workers have the right to negotiate with their employer over things like wages, benefits, & working conditions.

5 PROTECTION & SUPPORT

The IFT provides support to help protect you against employer discrimination, questionable behavior, unfair labor practices, and more.

9 PUBLIC RELATIONS

IFT works closely with media outlets to ensure our members' perspective is included in news coverage.

2 STRENGTH IN NUMBERS

As one of the largest labor unions in Illinois, IFT has strength in numbers & a history of affecting positive change from the workplace to the Capitol.

6 PROFESSIONAL RESOURCES

IFT provides professional development training to enhance members' workplace and leadership skills.

10 RACIAL JUSTICE ADVANCEMENT

Illinois Federation of Teachers
A Union of Professionals
FIND MORE AT IFT-AFT.ORG/IFTSTRONG.

I'm Committed to my Union

We care. We fight. We show up. We vote.



Charles Harper is IFT Field Service Director for the following councils*:

- Alsip District #126 Teachers/Certified
- Alsip District #126 Paraprofessionals (PSRP)
- Evergreen Park #124
- Hazel Crest #152 ½
- Lincoln #156 Teachers/Certified
- Lincoln #156 Paraprofessionals (PSRP)
- Orland #135 Teachers/Certified
- Orland #135 Paraprofessionals (PSRP)
- Patton / Riverdale #133
- Posen-Robbins #143 ½ Teachers
- Thornton Fractional H.S. #215 Paraprofessionals (PSRP)

Spencer Saal is IFT Field Service Director for the following councils*:

- Burbank #111
- Hoover-Schrum #157
- Oak Lawn-Hometown #123
- Oak Lawn Community High School #229
- Reavis High School #220 Support Staff
- Ridgeland #122
- Sahs (Central Stickney) #110
- SW Cook County Cooperative/Special Education
- Wentworth Wilson #155 Teachers
- Wentworth Wilson #155 Paraprofessionals (PSRP)
- Willow Springs #108

*Council assignments may be adjusted throughout the year as needed.

Politics in the Workplace – Issues v. Politics

We build power brick-by-brick, or in our case, conversation-by-conversation. One-on-one conversations are extremely important to union success. Here are some tips about what's permissible when discussing issues v. politics.

When at the worksite, remember the following:

- ❖ **If it's on the ballot – Don't discuss it at the worksite.**
 - ✓ This includes candidates and referendums
 - ✓ If you want to talk about politics/candidates, make sure you use personal cell numbers and personal email addresses. (DO NOT USE DISTRICT/EMPLOYER EMAIL.)
- ❖ **What can you discuss openly?**
 - ✓ Legislative measures that may affect your profession or work
 - ✓ The need to contact legislators and urge support or opposition of a policy and/or legislation
 - ✓ Advocating for the signature or veto of a bill
 - ✓ Voter registration – checking voter registration status (<https://ova.elections.il.gov>) and getting people registered
 - ✓ Voting in general – encouraging people to vote

Are you registered to vote?

Go to <https://ova.elections.il.gov> to check your registration or to register to vote.

Southwest Suburban Federation of Teachers AFT Local 943 Executive Officers

Elaine Barlos, President
Alfreida Jamison, Treasurer
Renee Wagner, Secretary
Bob Goldsbury, Vice President, Communications/Public Relations
Andrew Weber, Vice President, Political Activities, COPE
Brian Jurinek, Vice President, Educational and Professional Issues

Local 943 Constituency Council and Committee Members

IFT PreK-12 Education Constituency Council

Elaine Barlos, Chairperson
Alfreida Jamison, Leisl Robertson-Brown, Renee Wagner,
and Andrew Weber

IFT Paraprofessionals and School-Related Personnel, PSRP, Constituency Council

Timothy Dugan, Rebbie Kinsella, Sandy Quero, and Valerie Wilhoite

IFT Next Generation Constituency Council

John Jensen, Daniel McNicholas, and Eileen Kennedy

IFT Retirees Constituency Council

Judy Spirakes

Local 943 Defense Committee

Alfreida Jamison, Chairperson
Elaine Barlos, Sue Benigni, Tina Thauer and Renee Wagner

IFT Vice Presidents

Elaine Barlos and Andrew Weber

Staff Members

Judy Spirakes, Webmaster/Member Services
Sandy Quero, Staff Writer
Charles Harper, IFT Field Service Director
Spencer Saal, IFT Field Service Director
Karen O'Dea, IFT Support Staff

2021-2022 Union Dues Categories*

Full Dues Rate: for employees earning \$19,542 or salary equal to a beginning teacher's salary, whichever is greater

Half Dues Rate: for employees earning less than a beginning teacher, or \$19,542, whichever is greater, but more than or equal to \$16,163 per year

Quarter Dues Rate: for employees earning less than \$16,163 per year but more than or equal to \$9,814

Eighth Dues Rate: for employees earning less than \$9,814 per year

**Dollar thresholds are established by the AFT national affiliate and are reviewed annually.*