AFT PSRP VIRTUAL CONFERENCE
From Surviving to Thriving—PSRPs on the Frontline
APRIL 23-24, 2021
OUR MISSION

The American Federation of Teachers is a union of professionals that champions fairness; democracy; economic opportunity; and high-quality public education, healthcare and public services for our students, their families and our communities. We are committed to advancing these principles through community engagement, organizing, collective bargaining and political activism, and especially through the work our members do.

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FRIDAY, APRIL 23

7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

OPENING SESSION: PSRPS ON THE FRONTLINE AND SCHOOL REOPENING

WELCOME
Shelvy Y. Abrams, chair, AFT PSRP Program and Policy Council

PROGRAM DETAILS
Lauren Samet, director, AFT PSRP

WELCOME AND MODERATOR
Fedrick Ingram, AFT secretary-treasurer

PANELISTS
Kyle Arnone, deputy director, AFT Research and Strategic Initiatives
Montserrat Garibay, senior advisor for labor relations, U.S. Department of Education
Leven (Chuck) Wilson, assistant director, AFT Health Issues

*Please note, all times are Eastern time.*
SATURDAY, APRIL 24

10:00 a.m. – 10:45 a.m.

**JOB CLASSIFICATION BREAKOUTS**

**Food Service Workers**
**MODERATORS**
Yolanda Fisher, Dallas Alliance
Bernadette Jiron, Denver Federation for Paraprofessionals & Nutrition Service Employees

**Higher Ed Office/Clerical/Registrar**
**MODERATOR**
Teri Jones, Oregon School Employees Association
Tina Solórzano-Fletcher, AFT Guild, San Diego Community College District

**K-12 Office Clerical/Secretarial**
**MODERATORS**
Karen Riggleman, Jefferson Federation of Teachers
Kris Schwarzkopf, Toledo Federation of Teachers

**Maintenance/Grounds/Custodial**
**MODERATORS**
David Gray, Oklahoma City Federation of Classified Employees
Carl Williams, Lawndale Federation of Classified Employees

**One-on-One Instructional Assistants**
**MODERATORS**
Donna Jackson, Detroit Federation of Paraprofessionals
Sandra Thompson, Totem Association of Educational Support Personnel

**Paraprofessionals K-6**
**MODERATORS**
Bernie Kemp, Broward Teachers Union
Catherine Mastronardi, Springfield Federation of Paraprofessionals

**Paraprofessionals 7-12**
**MODERATORS**
Margaret Diakite, United Federation of Teachers
Rhonda Jones, East St. Louis Federation of Teachers

**School and Campus Safety Officers**
**MODERATORS**
Karen Arthmann, Rush Henrietta Employees Association
Christel Williams-Hayes, Chicago Teachers Union

**School Bus Drivers**
**MODERATORS**
Wayne Scott, Colorado Classified School Employees Association
Jo Ann Sweat, Buffalo Educational Support Team

**Special Education Paraprofessionals**
**MODERATORS**
Sandra Davis, Baltimore Teachers Union
Jeffrey Whittle, Macomb Intermediate Federation of Paraprofessionals

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MENTAL HEALTH BREAKOUTS

Function Fit

This 45-minute total body workout incorporates a mix of cardio and strength training intervals with plenty of options for every fitness level. The class is designed around functional movement—meaning strengthening the muscles we use the most by simulating movements you encounter in everyday life. Attention is also given to movement patterns that help counteract some of our most common ailments, including tight hips, hamstrings and lower backs.

Suggested Equipment:
- Set of light or medium weights
- Mat (optional)
- Water

Don’t have dumbbells? These household objects are good substitutes: wine bottles, large water bottles, laundry detergent.

INSTRUCTOR
Braegar Padley, certified personal trainer (NASM) and fitness instructor, MINT DC

Meditation and Mindfulness Practices for the Busy Mind

In a world full of chaos and chronic busyness, it can be difficult to find a state of presence and clarity. Commonly reported benefits of mindfulness and meditation include reduced anxiety, improved focus, reduced blood pressure and pain management. We will spend some time talking about the research supporting these practices and ways you can incorporate mindfulness and meditation into your self-care toolbox. You will be invited to try some new beginner-friendly techniques.

INSTRUCTOR
Kelly Trautner, senior director of Health Issues, AFT Nurses and Health Professionals

PSRPs: Knowing Your Value

Join this fun and interactive session where a cognitive behavioral therapy model is used to help you recognize the concrete and important ways that you contribute to your school and community, and how to build coping skills and recognize how you can effect what’s in your control, and put aside the things you can’t control.

PRESENTER
Leven (Chuck) Wilson, assistant director, AFT Nurses and Health Professionals

The Art of Minimizing Stress and Practicing Self-Care at Home and Work

We all deal with stress—sometimes fleetingly and sometimes more chronically. In this workshop, you will learn what stress is, how it affects you, and some strategies to manage stress in your work and home life. Please have a paper and something to write with for this session.

PRESENTER
Catherine Mastronardi, president, Springfield Federation of Paraprofessionals

Yoga

Join us for an all-level, relaxing yoga session where special focus will be on opening up your shoulders and neck and stretching out your lower back. All you need is space to lie down on the floor and about 2 to 3 feet of space on your wall! A yoga mat is optional, but you can always use a bath towel or two underneath you.

INSTRUCTOR
Eleanor Harris, AFT national trainer; board member, Education Austin

Zumba

Join us for a fun and energetic Zumba session! All you need is comfortable exercise clothes, including athletic shoes, a towel, water and space to move. You don’t need to know how to dance. All you need is the willingness to move and have fun. But be careful. Zumba is known to cause extreme happiness. So if you are attached to sadness, be prepared to let that go!

INSTRUCTOR
Glenda Macal, AFT ELL national trainer; president, Fort Bend Employee Federation

*Please note, all times are Eastern time.*
Noon – 1:00 p.m.

**GENERAL SESSION WITH AFT PRESIDENT RANDI WEINGARTEN**

**SPEAKER**
Randi Weingarten, AFT president

**MODERATOR**
Shelvy Abrams, chair, AFT PSRP Program and Policy Council

1:15 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.

**CONCURRENT WORKSHOPS**

**Community Schools**
Learn about community schools and equity strategies. Now more than ever, our school districts, communities, educators, staff and families need to come together and support the trauma, inequities, and economic stressors our students and families are facing. In this session, you will learn about the community schools strategy, your role in this work and hear from the field how the strategy has impacted schools.

**PRESENTERS**
Katrina Kickbush, special education teacher, Wolfe Street Academy
José Muñoz, director, Coalition for Community Schools; interim president, Institute for Educational Leadership
Corina Ortiz, staff representative, Texas AFT
Shital Shah, manager, AFT Educational Issues

**Electrifying Online Learning**
It is hard to imagine that learning in a virtual space could ever be electrifying and engaging. But it can be. The needs of the learner are the same and can be addressed in that space. Join AFT Strategies for Student Success (SSS) trainers as they share exhilarating and exciting research-based techniques to wow the audience.

**PRESENTERS**
Sarah Elwell, professional development coordinator and SSS national trainer, Washington Teachers’ Union
Briana Miller, SSS national trainer, Education Minnesota

**Engaging with Our Communities**
As we work to recover from the pandemic and the economic crisis harming so many of our members, our vision and goals in labor can’t be achieved without partnering in serious ways with our communities. It can be overwhelming to be there for our members while simultaneously fighting back against attacks on voting rights and unions, and increased racism and hate. So how do we engage our community in a way that builds power and lasts for the long haul?

This session is intended as an overview of why community engagement is increasingly vital to the labor movement and the essential steps and skills you and your activists will need to create and implement your community engagement plan. This session will emphasize the importance of building long-term relationships with those we serve (parents, patients, students and community partners). It will also cover specific examples of local unions that have done this successfully and how you can incorporate those lessons into your own long-term strategic community engagement plan for your union.

**PRESENTER**
Bill Shiebler, deputy director, AFT Human Rights and Community Relations

**Five Lessons for Bargaining from the Pandemic**
The pandemic tripped the “check engine” light of our bargaining agreements, relationships with management, and our public education system. Long-standing health and safety issues suddenly became matters of life and death. Frayed labor-management relationships made it difficult to collaborate in response to crisis. However, many AFT affiliates rose to the occasion, diagnosing problems and retooling. This session will cover five lessons for bargaining we learned during the pandemic, from rethinking how we design our dispute resolution procedures to resolving high-stakes health and safety issues, to addressing equity gaps for our members and our students.

**PRESENTER**
Kyle Arnone, deputy director, AFT Research and Strategic Initiatives

*Please note, all times are Eastern time.*
Meet Summer: The AFT’s Free Student Loan Repayment Benefit

Join us for a brief overview of the AFT’s unique student loan member benefit, Summer. Summer is a mission-driven, Certified B Corp working with us to tackle the student loan crisis. Summer offers our members savings and forgiveness optimization tools as well as expert consultations and guidance. More than 1,100 locals across the country have signed members up for Summer and, on average, they are already on track to have $52,432 of their loans forgiven and have reduced their student loan payments by $180 per month. You can learn more and sign up ahead of the workshop at aft.org/benefits/summer. Q&A will be available toward the end of the presentation.

PRESENTER

Alyssa Picard, director, AFT Higher Education

Nuts and Bolts of Creating Health and Safety Committees

More than ever, AFT school staff need health and safety committees—union only and joint labor-management committees. Work-related illnesses and injuries have gone neglected or unrecognized for too long. An important way to ensure safe conditions on the job is to form health and safety committees—both union and joint; these committees provide a powerful forum for unions and management to work together to quickly identify and address health and safety problems. Effective committees can help prevent injury and illness on the job; increase awareness of health and safety issues among workers, administrators and managers; and develop strategies to make the work environment safe and healthy. Join us for this introduction to the nuts and bolts of creating strong health and safety committees in your workplace!

PRESENTER

Amy Bahruth, associate director, AFT Nurses and Health Professionals

Social and Emotional Learning: How Our Work Matters

Join us as we explore the important role social and emotional learning plays in helping our students. We will spend time unpacking various ways to connect with your students and help them become better at managing their emotions, setting goals, showing empathy, creating positive relationships and making responsible decisions. Your work on this topic matters and helps your students grow into the best version of themselves.

PRESENTER

Leonard Edmonds, retired, AFT PSRP Department Emeritus

*Please note, all times are Eastern time.*
2:15 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

CONCURRENT WORKSHOPS

Community Colleges as Centers in Their Communities

Community colleges host diverse populations and are accessible ways for community members to access higher learning, and often are the hub of their communities. What is the potential of this? How do community colleges fill these roles now? This will be an interactive session where the community schools model is introduced as a framework, and participants can engage in discussion about the potential of this model in higher education.

PRESENTERS
Violet Knoll, associate, AFT PSRP
Alyssa Picard, director, AFT Higher Education

Finding Strengths: Supporting Students with Disabilities

In this session, we will focus on the strengths of students with disabilities. Too often we focus on what students can’t do, rather than what they can do. Using this positive mindset, we will develop strategies to support students in accessing the curriculum and to help them become successful learners.

PRESENTER
Debbie Wright, AFT national trainer; building representative and policy board, Middle Country Teachers Association

“I Will Never Be Someone’s La Basura Again”: How Paraprofessionals and School Employees Gained a Voice in the History of the AFT

This workshop will be an introduction to the history of the AFT and paraprofessionals presented by Dan Golodner, the AFT archivist. For 105 years, AFT members have built one of the most powerful unions in the United States; and for almost 40 years of that period, paraprofessionals and school employees have been building this legacy. Hear stories, watch videos and learn how we became who we are today.

PRESENTER
Dan Golodner, AFT archivist, Wayne State University

Managing Student Behavior

Participants in this interactive session will develop a common understanding of what behavior is and why students exhibit certain behaviors; we’ll also examine ways we can influence student behavior. We will discuss schoolwide behavior intervention systems, as well as individual tools and techniques that can be employed to encourage positive behavior and extinguish negative behaviors.

PRESENTER
Evan Lundeen, assistant director, AFT PSRP

Online to Offline: Using Digital Tools to Strengthen Your Local

There are more digital tools available today than ever before. So how do we pick the right tool for the job? This workshop will talk about Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and the Action Network, and how your local can use these online tools to strengthen offline organizing and communicating.

PRESENTER
Danielle Mathias, senior associate, AFT Communications

Staying Vigilant in the Time of COVID-19

As more and more schools return to full in-person status, it’s important to keep key mitigation strategies like ventilation, filtration, masking and distancing strongly in place, even after people are vaccinated. Make sure your school district doesn’t rely on vaccination as its primary strategy to protect staff and students. For the rest of the school year, it’s not enough. Join us for a review of those health and safety protections and a discussion on how we can advocate and organize toward a safer workplace for all.

PRESENTER
Amy Bahruth, associate director, AFT Nurses and Health Professionals

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CONCURRENT WORKSHOPS

Essentials of Adult Learning
It’s no secret that adult learning is different than student learning, yet we still design trainings in ways that do not meet the needs of an adult learner. In this session, participants will learn about how adults learn best and how to meet the needs of an adult learner; participants will also get a template to help them begin planning a training. Session attendees will even get the opportunity to practice using adult learning strategies with other participants.

PRESENTER
Ami Turner Del Aguila, assistant director, AFT Educational Issues

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PRESENTER
Evan Lundeen, Assistant Director, AFT PSRP

Organizing with AFT + Member Benefits
AFT + is what we call the array of discounts, resources and special services available to AFT members and their families. AFT + member benefits can help members save money and enhance the value of their union membership. To effectively use AFT + programs as an organizing tool, you need to have a rudimentary understanding of the benefit programs and how they help AFT members. AFT + benefits include some managed directly by the AFT and others through Union Plus, the AFL-CIO benefit arm. AFT + benefits include entertainment discounts, savings on AT&T wireless services, reputable budget and credit counseling assistance, free college programs for members and their families, trauma counseling, a new prepaid debit card and much more. In addition, we’ll discuss strategies for how to take this contact with your members and turn it into an organizing ask.

PRESENTER
Mary Pascale, associate director, AFT Member Benefits

PSRP Legislative Priorities
This workshop will provide an overview of the issues of concern to PSRPs in state Capitols, including broader democracy issues like voting and union rights; issues concerning our members’ immediate well-being like the minimum wage, health and safety in the workplace and access to unemployment insurance; as well as the future of public education. Participants will leave with an understanding of what the best state policies in these areas look like, and what to be concerned about in the worst policies.

PRESENTER
Ed Muir, manager, AFT Research and Strategic Initiatives

Social and Emotional Learning: How Our Work Matters
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PRESENTER
Leonard Edmonds, retired, AFT PSRP Emeritus
**Work Shouldn’t Hurt**

Many workplace injuries and accidents are preventable, but it requires a joint effort on the part of employers, employees and their unions. This session will examine common issues that support staff encounters in their workplaces and the ways they can address these issues with their unions.

**PRESENTER**

Imani Sims, senior associate, AFT PSRP

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**Closing General Session:**

**PSRPs Thriving**

**Welcome**

Lauren Samet, director, AFT PSRP

**Remarks**

Evelyn DeJesus, AFT executive vice president

**Closing**

Shelvy Y. Abrams, chair, AFT PSRP Program and Policy Council

**Activity**

Clarisa Coleman, graphic designer/illustrator