

Draft Minutes of
The East Aurora Council of the AFT Local 604
January 15, 2026

In attendance: Aviva Pollack Paradise, Alan Scott, Becky Roireau, Beth Cotter, Cyn Citro, Carrie Snyder, Jessica Sheldon, Jeff Hansford, Jon Kuehl, Jennifer Gentile, Karen Mueller, Lorraine Garciacano, Melinda Thomas, Patrick Bednarik, Stephanie Campbell, Sandra Williams, Stephanie Hansen, Tim Snyder, Trevor Schrage, Victoria A. Haier

Building Representatives, Executive Council Officers, or Senators Not In

Attendance: Aishia Jefferson, Ann Snodgrass, Arlette Gomez, Angie Sanchez, Amy Van Cura, Alison Mann Nile, Anndella Bee, Brittany Peterson, Beth Eadens, Brian Henricks, Christy Harding, Danielle Grady, Dalila Sanchez, Dulce Jonsson, Dawn Stanfa, Eileen Pasturczak, Elaine Halleran, Fatima Ballesteros, Gloria Salinas, Henry Johnson, Iliana Ochoa, John Burkhalter, John Devine, Janel Jaros, Jill Doyle, Jodi Eppenstein, Julie Melendez, Julie Schmale, Jessica Fisher, Jessica Sheldon, Joy Caro, Justin Skattum, Judy Durham, John Fanning, Joyce Ladewig, Kara Bown, Kaliegh Soumar, Kim Stolpestad, Kristi Pokornowski, Lisa Samp, Lisa Pena, Mary Carol Smith, Mara Clucas, Michelle Hanna, Michelle Taylor, Mary Taylor, Nicole Connoly, Nicole Thayer, Pablo Macias Contador, Pamela Miller, Stacey Boyce, Sara Lojewski, Sandra Vazquez, Sandro Bonilla, Susan Salinas-Ramirez, Tim Hollins

Becky: Welcome everyone, thanks for coming. We will start with the senators' reports.

Senators' Report: **(5 minutes)** (uninterrupted)

- Info

Senator: I'd like to share some scholarship deadlines. The Richard Manly scholarship - that is the professional educator scholarship - and we have someone who won it who is getting their Masters. But there is one for high school seniors.

Here are some of them:

Richard Manley Scholarships: Professional Educator & Support Staff, up to \$2,000 each.

Winners are:

Alexis Alcantara (Professional Educator)

Gretchen LePore (Support Staff)

Local 604 student scholarship application deadline is February 9, 2026. There are three. Scholarships valued at \$4,000 each.

1. Jacqueline B Vaughn for high school seniors
2. Paul O. Johnson for high school seniors going into education
3. Bill Briggs Current College Student Scholarship for students already enrolled in college or a trade school

IFT Scholarships are \$20,000 each, \$5,000 a year for four years. They are due March 1st, 2026

1. The Carl Megel Scholarship is for high school seniors enrolled in a special education school, class, or program for students with disabilities. Due February 28, 2026

2. The Porter Scholarship is for high school seniors attending a public Illinois university or college. Due March 6, 2026

Senator: We have retiring members. They do great outings, workshops, so if you'd like to stay involved, they can.

Senator: Lorraine! SENATOR GAVE HER A MUG.

Susan! SENATOR GAVE HER A GIFT.

Jessica! SENATOR GAVE HER A TOTE WITH GIFTS.

Becky: The winner for the food raffle was Allen Elementary.

Secretary's Report:

- Reviewed union meeting minutes from 12/11/25.

Motion to approve: Patrick Bednarik, Melinda Thomas - Approved. Pass, all. Nays, none. Abstains, none.

Treasurer's Report:

Sandra: W2s will be out by the end of the month.

- Reviewed 12/2025 budget report

Motion to approve: Patrick Bednarik, Beth Cotter. - Approved. But no vote.

VP - Teachers:

- Renewal Process

Jennifer: I think that people who are up this year got an email saying *urgent*, you need to recertify, but it doesn't start until April 1st. 120 PD credits. You can put it in in April. But you have until August, if you need it. But if you don't have enough, you can supposedly pay \$500 to get your licence renewed. The other way is \$50 and the PD. But tell the members that April 1st is when you can submit.

- Audits

Jennifer: You can get audited. The state sent it out to everyone who is expiring saying You will be audited. But we usually get ten per year. But it can be kind of stressful but we have it all digital now. You print them. And you have to have the sign-in sheets, but those are all digital now. I feel it is easier if you get audited now because it is digital.

Rep: If you took university courses-

Jennifer: They ask for your transcript. And again, that is digital.

Rep: When do they tell you?

Jennifer: It is random. But last year, three from Cowherd got it. But they give you quite a bit of time.

VP - Clerical

- Job Description Survey

Rep: The stuff that PLC were asked to do for Job Description-

Jessica: We sent out the surveys to get input. We used PLC times because the group defined that as protected time so that they could craft these outdated descriptions.

Rep: I wanted to verify-

Jessica: We encourage everyone to share all that information. As a group, we want to rewrite them to align with what we actually do.

Rep: My team filled it out. But when we submitted it, it said Elementary Non-SPED. Now I'm wondering, did we answer the wrong survey?

Becky: On the back end, we can cross check that against our list.

Rep: Do the job postings use those descriptions?

Jessica: Yes. All those descriptions are coming from the district. We were trying to update them as a group.

Rep: The job survey and the descriptions were sent in separate emails.

Becky: We met with Julie, then Adam Harding. We had the best intentions. And they thought they'd go through twelve descriptions. But the victory was having all the staff go through them.

As much as we'd love to just start negotiating, but if we have to push some dates we will if the committees need more time.

It is important to get the job descriptions right because we can't negotiate what we don't know.

It was absolutely last minute. We should have waited but we didn't.

Jessica: It is how we are going to grow.

Becky: It was not meant to be punitive. And it just ended up being the last minute.

VP - Support

Becky: Sandro is not here today.

President's Remarks

- Know Your Rights Training

Becky: Thank you all so much for those who came to our Know Your Rights training on December 19th. At our next faculty meeting, we'll have shareouts.

Senator: Just a reminder that we may have good intentions if we encounter someone coming to our school wanting to come in. But if they enter, that might give ICE the right to enter. We understand that someone might be inclined to let someone in for safety, but that might put them and the students in harm's way.

Becky: Thank you.

- Negotiations

Becky: The table team is the union.

Union: Becky Roireau (Lead & President), Sandro Bonilla (VP Support Staff, Sandra Williams (Treasurer), Jessica Fisher (VP Office Staff), Jennifer Gentile (VP Teaching Staff), Alan Scott (Secretary), and Adam Harding (IFT Field Service Director & non voting member of team)

But more important is the names of those from the district.

District: Julie Swartzloff (Lead & Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources) Laura Erlenbaugh (Assistant Superintendent of Student Services and Differentiation), Ami Engel (Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum, Instruction & Assessments), and Mike Engel (Associate Superintendent/Chief Financial Officer)

Becky: We submitted a finance request. It is standard economic information, as well as a list of staff, retirees, and a list of all contracted employees. And we asked for all the years of the contract. In particular, contracted employees, with such information as names, hire date, worksite, base pay, bonus, commissions, benefits, and more, including their contracts.

Julie asked us how we wanted our data. What!?! That's a big change. So we laid it all out.

Rep: How long before you get it?

Becky: Ten days.

We do have some tentative dates.

Tentative Dates:

Kick off: Wednesday, January 21, 2026

Official Bargaining:

February: 2/5/2026, 2/12/2026, 2/26/2026

March: 3/5/2026, 3/12/2026, 3/26/2026

Becky: They wanted to make shared notes, but we did not agree to that. But we agreed to a shared understanding. We'll end every meeting with a shared agreement.

Rep: Those will go to all members.

Becky: Yes. And it may become part of a bulletin. So everyone knows what we are doing.

The role of the Big Bargaining Team:

- *The House of Delegates will be there to help us with negotiations.

- *Representing members' voices

- *Discussing and debating important issues

- *Helping to guide union leadership

- *Sharing perspectives from your schools and groups within your schools

- *Vote on TAs

- *Help shape decisions that affect the union's future

- *Carry a unified message

Becky: Super important is the unified voice. Sandra, you always explain the idea of "packaged message" best.

Sandra: Sometimes the message is kinda hard but how we present a message, and we're negative about it, they're going to take that energy and that is how it goes out. If the union has decided by way of vote, this is the message? We need to be careful with how that goes out.

Becky: How we present something really makes a difference. At the table, if we made a decision, it is an unfair labor practice once we've decided to then go against that decision. We need to be conscientious. If we've decided through the process, it's important that we carry that message.

That's the most important part. If we get the best deal possible, but you say *shit*, that's going to be the message.

I remember CAT teams from under Gerry. We are going to embrace that same model. There is a clear communication pipeline. When we need to show up to board meetings, issue identification, building solidarity, and rumor control.

Rep: Will it be through Hustle?

Becky: Yes. I had a training session. So we downloaded all the data, matched people to their buildings, removed those who are no longer with us, then sent out emails to you guys - we need phone numbers - then we'll update the list and go from there.

1232 people are already in there. But there will be people we need to add.

Rep: Organizing, quick actions, updates?

Becky: Through the Hustle app.

CAT. There will be a main team (district level), then buildings (and how your buildings organize it is up to you).

When I was on a CAT team, I had eight to ten people.

We connect to them. Talk to them.

We'll get volunteers for the district level. Once we start, the Table Team will need to focus on the negotiations. The CAT team will be sending out the info. We need to get everything off our plates.

Rep: Out of you guys, have you selected who will release it yet?

Becky: The Executive Leadership met. We have decided to have observers. And we agreed we'd have two on our side, and two on their side.

Rep: Are those chosen or do we ask for volunteers?

Becky: We have some in mind, having the 10,000 foot view.

Rep: The observers will be coordinating with the Communication Team, which will then talk with the CAT team.

Becky: Yes.

We have done a lot of preloading of work. We have our member data - like grievances, our survey,

Over the summer, Contract Work Groups worked to make suggestions on the contract.

And we have everything IFT/AFT provides us.

And then we have our outside comparisons.

And our data requests.

There really are thirteen really big themes.

We'll take advantage of every piece of data we have.

We sent our survey to union membership. Collected and analyzed that data. Sorted into the big ideas. Share with HOD and membership. Then had our contract work groups work on this.

Our 13 Big Ideas:

- *Benefits and Leaves
- *Birth-Pre-K
- *Dual Language
- *Joint Committees
- *Misc

- *Other services (certified w/no classroom like counselors, nurses, and social workers)
- *Pay (excluding salaries)
- *Pay (salaries)
- *SPED
- *Stipends (original committee)
- *Transfers, moving, and job assignments
- *Work Day
- *Working conditions

Building Issues

- Dual Language

Rep: Who would get the survey first, staff or parents?

Rep: For dual language?

Jennifer: Looks like parents have until March 25th. They can opt out or in. Once they have that info on how many people want to be in it, they'll start staffing.

Parents have asked, *Is this going to the middle schools?*

There was some trouble translating. They were not doing great.

Rep: When will teachers get it?

Rep: Mid Feb. They need to see the data they get from parents. New assignments will be based on the percentage.

Rep: At Bardwell, I thought it was exciting. That there would be choice. I was very happy.

Becky: There was so much data given. He already knew that dual was an issue. We had 68 pages of data, and the meetings. It was preloaded by you.

I just want to be clear, this was a grassroots effort by teachers in the district that this model does not work. There was not one district that was wall-to-wall dual. This was a grassroots effort to change efforts for students and staff. It was you. All you all the time.

Even when you made a committee, and it was a crappy committee, but it was data.

Rep: We want a crappy committee!

LAUGHTER.

Rep: Will their transfer rights be protected if they wanted to be in the program. Let's say Hermes won't have it but Bardwell is, will staff have to move?

Becky: I would have been forced out of Hermes because I was not qualified to teach dual. I would have had to go somewhere somewhere else.

Jennifer: We still have involuntary transfers.

Rep: We'll still have bi-lingual rooms.

Rep: The levels will be: Dual 50/50 (what we have right now), 80 (Spanish)/20 (English) for newcomers, then mono-lingual (English).

Rep: The parents have to opt in. Otherwise, they go into English.

Rep: There is no point in having a language survey, because it is the parents' choice.

Rep: There is a meeting next week. One here, and one virtual.

Rep: These are for parents. But there will be some for staff.

- Sharing Principal Notes / Chain of Command

I put this is out slides, a reminder of our structure:

Troubleshoot at the individual level. If a resolution is not met, escalate to the building level. If not resolved at building level, bring to district leadership. If not resolved there, we'll bring it to the union-superintendent meeting.

Becky: On Monday, January 19th, there will be our MLK Day Celebration. This year's keynote speaker is Stacy Davis Gates, President of the Chicago Teachers Union and President of the Illinois Federation of Teachers. She is amazing.

Rep: When do we need to start getting our elections together?

Becky: March or April.

Rep: Then we vote by the end of the year.

Meeting adjourned.

[SLIDES](#)