There are many reasons to join JFT...Here’s another

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here’s not enough space in this newsletter to list all of the benefits of joining JFT. What we want to highlight in this newsletter is the legal protection for members who are sued or who face criminal charges arising out of your employment activities.

The Occupational Liability Insurance Plan provides AFT members with broad protection for legal defense costs and court judgments. The Plan is tailored to meet the needs of educators, who face lawsuits, criminal charges made by students, parents, and others. The Plan is designed to reimburse certain expenses to defend any claim made against a member resulting from the following acts:

1. Lawsuit against a member: The Plan provides for damages and attorney fees from claims arising out of a member’s employment activities due to: (1) accidental bodily injury (e.g., member opens a classroom door and breaks a student’s tooth), (2) accidental property damage (e.g., member knocks a student’s laptop computer to the floor, while explaining a concept) or, (3) personal injury claim, such as slander, libel, false arrest, false detention, imprisonment or invasion of privacy. Examples include a locker search (invasion of privacy) or putting a message on Facebook that libels a student.

In order to be protected under this policy, you must be a member in good standing with JFT at the time of the incident. You will not be protected if you join after the incident or allegations against you in question.

The Plan provides up to $2 million protection per member per occurrence for damages arising out of claims of bodily injury, property damage, and personal injury, subject to its limitations and exclusions.

2. Commission of a criminal act, where such charge arises solely out of your employment activities, the Plan will pay up to $5,000 per member per year regardless of the outcome. Reimbursement up to $35,000 is made only if the member is “completely exonerated.” Complete exoneration means that a finding or verdict of not guilty has been entered into the record as to all charges of the criminal act, or a final order of dismissal has been entered into the record without appeal. In both instances, reimbursement is for reasonable and approved legal expenses. Note: pleading guilty to a lesser charge, or pleading “no contest” is not “complete exoneration.”

If the criminal act is the result of corporal punishment, and corporal punishment is allowed under school board policy, then, reimbursement of up to $35,000 for defense costs incurred by the member will be made regardless of the outcome. Note: you must be a member in good standing with JFT at the time of the incident. You will not be protected if you join after the incident or allegations against you in question.

We hope, of course, that you would never need these protections. But if you believe “I’ll never be accused of anything because I would never hurt a student,” then you need to be aware that there are an increasing number of educators around the country who face false accusations, unfounded criminal charges, and frivolous lawsuits. Without AFT’s Occupational Liability Plan, you face the prospect of thousands of dollars of attorney fees simply to defend yourself against something you never did in the first place. Many members have told us that they never thought they would need this protection, and they were glad they had it.

But remember: to be covered, you must be a member when the incident allegedly happened. You won’t be covered if you join JFT after the fact.

The annual LFT Winter Conference is scheduled for Saturday, February 1, 2020, 9:15 a.m., at the Crowne Plaza Executive Center, 4728 Constitution Avenue, Baton Rouge, LA 70808. Registration begins at 8:15 a.m.

Join your union sisters and brothers from across the state as we gear up for this year’s legislative session and discuss other key issues.

All JFT teacher and PSRP members are invited to attend. Registration for the conference is FREE.

If you would like to attend, please email sandra@jft.org by Thursday, January 23, 2020.

Know Your Contract: Teacher Supplies

Article VII - Teacher Supplies - “Teachers shall be reimbursed $100.00 per semester for teaching materials/registration fees for pre-approved conferences/workshops, including sales tax. A teacher who does not expend his allocation or any part thereof for the 1st semester shall be permitted to spend it during the 2nd semester. Reimbursement shall occur promptly, but no later than 20 work days following submission, provided receipts were furnished with all expenditures fully documented.”
Union Plus Scholarship Program

This scholarship is sponsored by the Union Plus Education Foundation and is open to students attending or planning to attend a four-year college or university, a community college or a technical college or trade school.

The amount of the award ranges from $500 to $4,000. This is a competitive one-time cash award sent to individual winners for undergraduate study beginning in the fall of the same year.

Winners are chosen based on academic achievement and potential, character, leadership, social awareness, career goals and financial need. Applications are judged by a committee of impartial post-secondary educators.

For more information and to download the 2020 scholarship application, please visit: http://www.unionplus.org/college-education-financing/union-plus-scholarship

The deadline to return the completed application is January 31, 2020.

Robert G. Porter Scholars Program

The Robert G. Porter Scholars Program offers four 4-year $8,000 post-secondary scholarships to students who are dependents of AFT members, as well as 10 one-time $1,000 grants to AFT members to assist with their continuing education and/or fund their proposed ideas to strengthen and grow their union.

All students must submit a well-researched essay as part of the application. As a measure of assistance, a list of relevant websites is recommended. Grant applicants must also submit an essay explaining how they would use the grant if awarded.

For more information and to download the 2020 scholarship application, please visit: http://www.aft.org/benefits/scholarships/eligibility.cfm

The application deadline is April 14, 2020.

JFT Scholarship Opportunity

JFT offers two (2) college or university scholarships. Each scholarship will be in the amount of $500 per year over a period of four years, for a total scholarship of $2,000 each. Children of JFT members, who are graduating high school seniors, are eligible to apply for the scholarships.

Scholarship applications can be found on the JFT website: www.jft.org.

Deadline for submitting applications is March 16, 2020.

JFT PSRP Committee

The JFT PSRP Committee is in full swing. The committee met in December and earlier this month. As a result of the first meeting, the committee has decided to focus on three areas of advocacy:

1. Mentoring
2. Meaningful Professional Development
3. Planning of a celebration for PSRP appreciation week, which is celebrated the third week in March (The committee is in the process of planning this celebration).

Please join them at their next meeting, Thursday, February 6, 2020 to share your ideas. This committee is open to any JFT PSRP member (paras, school secretaries, general clerks, account clerks, custodians, cafeteria employees, crossing guards, etc.).

JFT Community Outreach Committee

The JFT Community Outreach Committee held its first meeting on December 11, 2019 and their second on January 15, 2020 to discuss their goals and objectives on ways that the community and educators can provide mutual support. The next meeting date is to be determined. All JFT members are invited to attend.

Teacher Perfect Attendance Award

Teachers* who have perfect attendance over one complete semester, August 5, 2019-December 20, 2019 shall be afforded one of the following two options: (a) $250 issued in a supplemental check with all appropriate deductions or (b) $250 in teaching supplies ordered in accordance with proper purchasing guidelines.

For this purpose, perfect attendance is defined as no absences being charged against a teacher’s sick and/or emergency leave account except those donated according to Board Policy. Perfect attendance must begin with the first day of the semester. Teachers hired any time after this date are not eligible to receive the $250 for the semester.

*Teachers are defined as: Regular Classroom Teachers, Adult Education Teachers, Special Education Teachers, Vocational Coordinators, Counselors, Librarians, Social Counselors, Career Education Counselors, School Based Resource Teachers, Certified Speech Pathologists, Social Workers, Educational Diagnosticians, Certified School Psychologists, Nurses, and ROTC Instructors.

TAP Survey

The TAP survey will remain open until Friday, January 24, 2020. Please use the following link to complete the survey. http://bit.ly/2019TAPsurvey.