

## Portland School Professionals Local 111 see their union grow

Portland Federation of School Professionals Local 111 has converted more than 130 “fair share” employees to full union membership so far this year.

Local 111 — an affiliate of American Federation of Teachers (AFT) — represents about 1,300 support staff at Portland Public Schools, including special ed para-educators, classroom education assistants, school secretaries and close to 60 other occupational classifications. But after a wave of retirements last year, less than half of those working under the terms of the union contract were full-fledged union members.

Under Oregon law, union-represented public employees who don’t want to join the union may pay a reduced “fair share” fee covering just the cost of bargaining and grievance handling. At PPS, fair share has been the default setting for new hires, and Local 111 President Belinda Reagan says many represented employees thought they were union members.

So in letters and in organized phone banks, union staff and member volunteers are reaching out to non-members to share the value of union membership. The difference amounts to \$5 to \$8 a month, and members can

vote on the contract and elect union leadership, as well as get access to union member discounts and life insurance. But the most important benefit of membership, Reagan said, is that it shows management the union has broad support when it comes time to bargain a contract.

“While we have a really terrific relationship with PPS, there are times we need those voices behind us,” Reagan said.

As of late May, Local 111 had signed up 132 fair share employees to full membership, bringing the total to 655.

**M**embers of Portland Federation of School Professionals, American Federation of Teachers Local 111, returned incumbents to union office at their May general membership meeting. They are: Belinda Reagan, president; Tim Taylor, treasurer; and Michele Catena and Ryan Arditi, vice presidents at-large. All terms of office start July 1 and run two years.



Kathy Muir, Michelle Batten, Tim Taylor and Belinda Reagan, officers of Portland Federation of School Professionals Local 111, present a check for \$2,000 to Labor’s Community Service Agency Executive Director Vickie Burns. The local has seen significant growth over the last two years, with the Portland Public School District hiring more classified employees, and the union recruiting more “fair share” co-workers to become full-fledged members. The donation will allow LCSA to extend its Helping Hands program this year.

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## Machinist Lux new president of Labor History Association

Machinists District Lodge 751 retiree Tom Lux has been



elected president of the Pacific Northwest Labor History Association. He succeeds Ross Rieder, who did not seek re-election.

Lux was elected to the post during the association’s annual conference held May 1-3 at SeaTac. The association works to preserve the history and heritage of workers in Oregon, Washington, and British Columbia. Members are trade unionists, students, academics.

“We believe the labor movement must know where it’s been to know where it’s going,” Lux said. “I feel that those of us who are active in the labor movement need to take a significant role in telling our own story.”



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