



# BYTES

January 2024

## Grievance or Work Site Issue: Know What to Do

### What is a Union Grievance?

A “Union Grievance” involves one of two kinds of problems. The first is where the District or MDE takes or threatens to take an adverse action against you, like a termination, suspension, discipline, or performance improvement plan. The second is where there is a serious concern about the legality of a situation, like sexual harassment, potential whistleblowing, or medical accommodations and leave. Grievances involve seeking advice about your legal rights. Grievances do not include disagreements with your employer over a teaching assignment, classroom or building placement, or personality conflicts with supervisors or coworkers.

### What is a Worksite Issue?

“Worksite issues” are for practical concerns and are a little less formal. This can include heating and cooling issues within a building, bullying or harassment from an administrator (the kind that doesn’t implicate legal rights like sexual or racial harassment), and unnecessary assignments that fall outside of job duties. Worksite issues can even include handling disagreements between an employee and a supervisor or even between two employees. Worksite issues can affect one person, a few people, or all employees.

### Is this the same as a District Grievance?

No. A union grievance or worksite issue is a **unique** benefit that you receive as a union member, and allows you to go outside the chain of command and get help with your issue from someone who stands on your side. District grievances are internal complaints dealt with by the district’s lawyers - who are not necessarily on your side.

### How do I file a grievance or worksite issue?

Always start by contacting your building leader or union representative. That person should refer you to the Work Site Issues Form - which is where both grievances and worksite issues begin. A union committee and leadership will review your Worksite Issues Form to determine if the issue warrants legal support, and you will be asked to complete the Grievance Form.

### What happens next?

If a grievance is necessary, the union attorney will contact you and help you with your grievance.

*Continued on page 3*

## Unions in Mississippi: More Than Meets the Bargaining Table

Mississippi's low union membership rate might mislead. Though formal bargaining is restricted, unions play a crucial role beyond the table. They advocate for workers, provide training, build community, and push for policies that benefit all Mississippians.

### Unions offer more than just contracts:

- **Advocacy and Representation:** Legal support, workplace safety, fair wages, and benefits are all championed by unions, even without formal bargaining.
- **Education and Training:** Valuable resources and programs help members develop skills and advance their careers.
- **Community and Solidarity:** A sense of belonging and support networks empower workers.
- **Political Engagement:** Unions mobilize voters and advocate for policies that improve lives.

### A stronger union presence benefits Mississippi:

- **A More Competitive Workforce:** Skilled, productive workers attract new businesses and industries.
- **Reduced Inequality:** Fair wages and benefits create a more equitable society with increased economic activity.
- **Improved Working Conditions:** Safer workplaces, better healthcare, and stronger protections benefit everyone.

Challenges exist, but efforts are underway to revitalize the labor movement.

Recognizing the multifaceted contributions of unions and supporting their growth can create a brighter future for all Mississippians.

## Meet the Board



My name is Mildred Sandifer. I have two daughters and three grand-daughters. I live in Jackson and work for the Jackson Public School District, and I have been a member of AFT for several years now. I currently serve on the executive board as the AFT Vice-President for Paraprofessionals and School-Related Personnel.

My vision for the union is to help people who are treated unfairly, through no fault of their own, to help resolve their issues on the job or with people who are causing trouble for them. I also want to help people understand what it means to be part of a union that cares about them and is willing to help fight for them, making this union bigger and better today for the future leaders of tomorrow.

### Board Members to be featured in a later edition:

Lynnita Balu, VP of Membership

Chanda Rhodes, VP of Educational Issues

## IS YOUR MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION ACCURATE?

Let us know if your name, address, or other info has changed. Scan the code or click the link below.



[Update your info here](#)

## Wanted: Little Free Library

We would like to install a little free library at the Union House for our neighbors in Mid-Town.

Do you have carpentry skills to build a LFL?

Would you be willing to donate a small amount of money towards the cost of a pre-built LFL?

Let us know! Contact the office or email us at [mail@jftpsrp.com](mailto:mail@jftpsrp.com)

## CALLING ALL RETIREES

Join us for a monthly retiree meeting

Tuesday, February 6, 2024  
9:00 AM - 10:30 AM  
at Banner Hall

This is a come-and-go meeting, but we will be talking about how retirees can still be active in the union, as well as highlighting Union Plus benefits.

JFTP&SRP will provide coffee; Broad Street Bakery is open for you to buy breakfast if you'd like.

### **Grievance or Work Site Issue, *continued from page 1***

Otherwise, for worksite issues, union leadership will be in touch with you to talk about what you want to achieve. Leadership will then contact the appropriate person to help you resolve this issue. That may entail contacting a building principal, or someone at Central Office, or even a deputy superintendent or the superintendent to help solve the issue.

#### **How much will this cost me?**

As long as your membership is current and remains current throughout the grievance process, and (per the union attorney) as long as you have been a member for at least ninety (90) days, any grievance the attorney agrees to take on is covered by your union dues. That's quite a deal, as other professional organizations either reimburse you or offer the attorney on a sliding scale, and keeping a labor attorney on retainer is far more expensive than dues.

**Whether you have a minor problem or a serious issue, know that the union is here to help.**

**If you feel you have a situation that requires union intervention, please complete the Work Site Issues form linked above and/or contact your union representative at [mail@jftpsrp.com](mailto:mail@jftpsrp.com).**

# JFT BYTES - JANUARY 2024

Check us out on  
Facebook



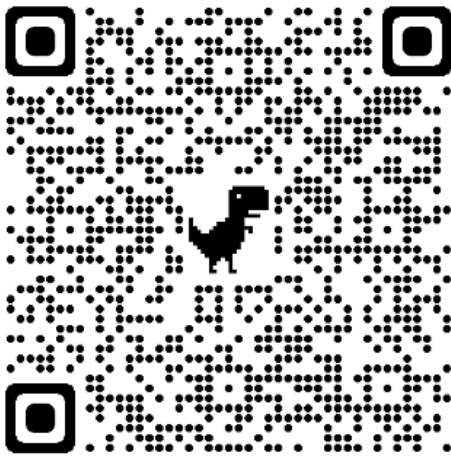
Have you  
done the  
January  
Challenge?

How has the union  
helped you?

Share  
your  
stories  
with us



Work Site Issues Form



## Updated Professional Development Calendar

2023-2024 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT  
JACKSON FEDERATION OF TEACHERS,  
PARAPROFESSIONALS,  
AND SCHOOL RELATED STAFF

ALL Workshop Session Times are  
9:00 am - 3:30 pm

Workshop FREE for JFTPSRP Members  
\$60 for Non-Members  
\$10.00 for CEUs for all Attendees

SIGN-UP NOW!  
<http://www.jftpsrp.com/professional-development.html>  
Email questions to [pd@jftpsrp.com](mailto:pd@jftpsrp.com) or  
Call 601-352-7613

### Virtual/ZOOM PD (5.4 CEUs)

Jan. 27, Feb. 3, &  
Feb. 10, 2024  
Foundations For  
Effective Teaching, Part I  
(1.8 CEUs - Must Attend  
all 3 sessions for CEUs)

Feb. 24, & March 2, 2024  
Foundations For Effective  
Teaching, Part II (1.2 CEUs -  
Must Attend both sessions  
for CEUs)

March 23, 2024  
Navigating The Bridge  
Between Stress & SEL (0.6  
CEUs)

April 6, 20, & 27, 2024  
Foundations For Effective  
Teaching, Part III (1.8CEUs  
-Must Attend all 3  
sessions for CEUs)

### In-Person PD (4.2 CEUs)

February 3, 2024  
The Game Factor (0.6 CEUs)

March 23, 2024  
Differentiating Instruction  
(0.6 CEUs)

March 30, 2024  
Managing Behavior in  
School Communities (0.6  
CEUs)

April 20, 2024  
Students With Challenges (0.6  
CEUs)

May 4, 2024  
Reading Comprehension  
Instruction (0.6 CEUs)

May 18, 2024  
Tools for Teachers From Brain  
Researchers (0.6 CEUs)

May 25, 2024  
Engaging Students Long Term  
Memory (0.6 CEUs)

## JFTP&SRP Local #4402 Executive Board

Ebony Rice, President  
Joshua A. Strong, Executive Vice President  
DeBora Turner, Treasurer  
Mildred Sandifer, VP Paraprofessionals

Lynnita Balu, Vice President of Membership  
Vija Lee, Secretary  
Chanda Rhodes, Executive Vice President  
of Education Issues