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## AFT National President Randi Weingarten Visits Edinburg

AFT National President Randi Weingarten visited the Rio Grande Valley recently in a trip to hear from our members and leaders and see first-hand the challenges educators face in Edinburg and the incredible successes we have with our students every day.

Her trip included:

- A meeting with local superintendents and school board members from Edinburg and from our sister locals in La Joya, McAllen and Corpus Christi to discuss the challenges our districts face and how we can improve them together
- A reception in Edinburg with members from all over the Rio Grande Valley
- School visits in La Joya
- A meeting with press outlets and the Monitor Editorial Board

Our National President recognizes the importance of our fast-growing region; now we just need to make sure we are meeting the demands of

our growing student population with a well-prepared and respected group of educators.

Join us today to strengthen our union

News clips from the visit can be found at [edinburg.tx.aft.org](http://edinburg.tx.aft.org)



## Survey Says....

During the month of December 2013, Edinburg CISD teachers and staff participated in AFT's survey, providing information about their occupational experiences and the district's work climate. The respondents consisted of 89% certified professionals and 11% non-certified professionals, while 71% of the respondents were AFT members and 11% were non-members.

A number of professional concerns were revealed through the responses of the survey. About 42% of professionals who are entitled to a conference period stated that they were not receiving the amount of time provided by law. Similarly, 11% of the respondents reported that they were not receiving the minimum 30-minute lunch as specified by law. 74% of the respondents stated that they believed they were being

treated professionally in the work place and 76% responded that they felt safe in their specific work place, while 24% expressed that they did not feel safe on the



job. And concerning the mandate that all elementary teachers should be required to be bilingually certified, 70% disagreed with the idea. Surveyors were asked to identify the issue that they believed was of utmost

concern to the Edinburg CISD. The 10-month teacher contracts was voted the number one issue facing teachers in the district via the survey and reiterated by the members at the January 15<sup>th</sup> member meeting.

We want to thank everyone for their participation in the survey. The information is proving valuable in our efforts to service the needs of our district members as we strive to educate the children of Edinburg CISD. And though the survey has been closed, our organization is always interested in the opinions of our members and suggestions for improving the educational experience of our children and our members. Thanks again for all of your support in this survey.

## Know Your Rights- Documentation & Your Signature



You may be faced at some time or another with the dilemma of receiving a document or written reprimand that you do not agree with. In the event that it happens to you, you should usually go ahead and sign it. Failure to do so may result in another reprimand or memo for being insubordinate. If you do not agree with a document here are some things you can do:

- Sign it and write next to your name "My signature indicates that I have received a copy but does not indicate that I agree with the content"
- After receiving any document, you have up to 10 business days to write a response (your defense) and attach it to the original document. At the bottom of your response you should include: "Note: Please attach this response to the original document and any copies filed." You should consult with your union on how best to respond to certain documents.

- You also have the right to file a grievance but you should always contact your union before proceeding with a grievance.

If you are unsure about signing a document, call **Edinburg AFT at 956.502.5340**. Never sign a prepared confession or resignation letter without first consulting your union.



## I am being singled out. What do I do?

Harassment is sometimes obvious and sometimes not so obvious. The feeling of being singled out may be the first indicator that something is wrong. Here are some things you can do to protect yourself.

Keep a journal and document. You must be able to establish a pattern of harassment before making your case. It is your word against theirs. Be sure to include dates, times, names, snippets or conversations, the environment in which each situation took place. In essence, you should be keeping your own documentation, because nobody will be able to do that for you. Your documentation will help make your claims valid.

Keep and print all e-mails and written correspondence that is relevant to your situation. File these documents in your journal in chronological order.

If you are given verbal directives or have a verbal conversation with an administrator, follow up with that person with an e-mail restating what you talked about. Example:

*Dear \_\_\_\_\_,*

*From our recent conversation on \_\_\_\_\_ (date or today, I understand that you stated the following \_\_\_\_\_. If I have not understood correctly, please let me know.*

*Sincerely, \_\_\_\_\_ (your name)*

Be sure to print a copy of the email for yourself immediately after sending it and put it in your file.

If the person approaches you verbally to address your email, send an email again. The reason you should do this is because a verbal conversation can always be denied or made up. Once documentation is generated in this fashion it also puts accountability for that conversation back on the other person and memorializes it.

Never send inappropriate messages to anyone you work with, no matter how upset you may be. They can always come back to haunt you. Always compose your messages in a professional manner.

If you are having difficulties with a co-worker,

first you must establish the pattern with your documentation. Then you must meet with your supervisor to express your concern. You cannot file a grievance against a co-worker, but you can file one against an administrator for not addressing/ remedying the situation after you brought it to his or her attention.

If you feel that you are being asked to do more than others are being asked to do or being denied something that everyone normally gets, you might want to investigate these things in depth before making your case. The statement "everybody except for me ....." carries no weight if you cannot back it up with facts.

Above all, contact your union to discuss your concerns. This section of advice is meant to assist you in assessing whether you have a case of harassment, but not meant to diagnose the problem and fix the issue. That is what your union will help you do.

**Please contact us if you have any questions by calling 956.502.5340.**

## Why Join Edinburg AFT?

Join your fellow educators

Teachers and school-related personnel in your district are working together to create a strong voice for change. Change is how we will tackle the tough issues such as funding our public schools, ending excessive testing in the classroom, keeping our classrooms safe and passing the federal Social Security Fairness Act.

Join your co-workers in their mission to build an affiliate of the 1.5 million-member American Federation of Teachers and more than 65,000 member strong Texas AFT.

- We have a local office
- We have local staff representatives
- We are focusing on our educational future as a district
- We defend member's rights
- We educate our members and prepare them for success
- We are building local strength
- We have committees that meet regularly to keep our members up-to-date
- We have special discounts for our members

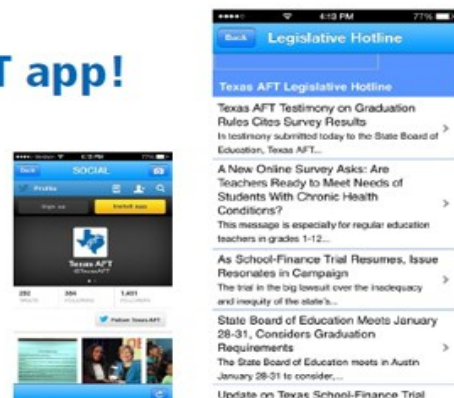
Contact **Edinburg AFT at 956.502.5340** for more information and to join today.



## Download the new Texas AFT app!

Want to receive instant notice when there's an Action Alert on issues that affect you as school employees? Need quick access to the *Legislative Hotline*, *Texas Teacher* and breaking news?

Download the Texas AFT app for iPhones, iPads and Droid devices at iTunes or Google Play. (Simply search for "Texas AFT.")



## Become a Building Representative!

Become the VOICE for your campus!!!

What is a Building Representative (BR)?

- Being a Worksite Leader
- Being a Union Builder
- Being a Problem Solver
- Being a Communicator



A strong Building Representative (BR) structure means a Strong Voice for you and your union—Edinburg AFT!

Make a difference — consider becoming one today or encourage one of your co-workers to do so!

Contact **Edinburg AFT at 956.502.5340** for more information and to join today!



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[www.facebook.com/EdinburgAFT](http://www.facebook.com/EdinburgAFT)



**You could save \$\$ HUNDREDS \$\$ with your Union Plus/AFT + Member Benefits?**

Read what our members are saying about the ways the union has saved them money:

Tony: I used my Union Plus discounts for holiday shopping and saved almost \$200 on gifts for my whole family. It definitely helped my budget go the distance!

Donna: The 15% AT&T discount saved me \$34 on my wireless phone bill.

Jerry: We found a discount of \$26 on a Six Flag ticket through AFT+.

Amber: I sent my Mother flowers with the Union Plus code and saved \$22.

**You can SAVE REAL MONEY too!**

**To learn more about AFT discount, call Member Benefits Representative Barbra Lightheart at 1.800.222.3827 ext. 3215, or email [belightheart@texasaft.org](mailto:belightheart@texasaft.org).**



**March 26, 2014 5:00 PM**

General Membership Meeting

Location TBA

**April 30, 2014 5:00 PM**

General Membership Meeting

Location TBA

