

Local 1075

March 2025

## Meet Our Executive Board:

**Kelly Erinakes** – President  
**Debra Lathrop** – VP  
 Elementary  
**Joe Fargnoli** – VP Secondary  
**Tiffany Risch** – Secretary  
**Greg Wightman** – Treasurer  
**Sue Toohey-Kaye** –  
 Professional Development  
**Ted Mitchell** – Public Relations

**Donna Beaudoin** – CHS Rep.  
**John Kelly** – CHS Rep.  
**Matt Paiva** – CHS Rep.  
**Christine Conklin** – ASFMS Rep.  
**Derek Larginho** – ASFMS Rep.  
**Jennifer Limoges** – Western Rep.  
**Colleen Riessen** – Western Rep.  
**Tara D'Aleno** – Tiogue Rep.  
**Julie Marran** – Hopkins Hill Rep.  
**Kristin Hill** – Washington Oak Rep.  
**Michelle Gallagher** – Washington Oak Rep.  
**Helen Tiernan** – Blackrock Rep.

## Membership Meeting Dates:

May 8th

ASFMS @ 4PM

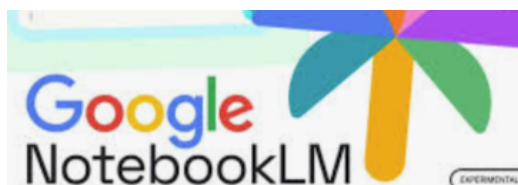
## 2025 Virtual PD Sessions

### RIFTHP Virtual Professional Development



Session 2 – April 2, 2025  
**Khanmigo & Khan Academy**  
[meet.google.com/ybi-zgyn-uqn](https://meet.google.com/ybi-zgyn-uqn)

Many Rhode Island districts have signed onto the RIDE partnership with Khanmigo and Khan Academy. We will explore the Khanmigo AI teacher tools that can assist you in planning and creating student materials, tasks, projects, and assessments. We will review the student supports in Khan Academy including differentiation and translation.



Session 3 – April 10, 2025  
**Notebook LM**  
[meet.google.com/syp-mixm-ixy](https://meet.google.com/syp-mixm-ixy)

This is a free Google AI tool. Participants will learn how to upload and interact with resources and create personalized podcasts, quizzes,

(Continued) frequently asked questions, study guides, etc. that can be used to engage all learners. You can customize the student resources into their home language.



Session 4 – May 1, 2025  
**Brisk**  
[meet.google.com/meo-qano-jow](https://meet.google.com/meo-qano-jow)

The basic free version of this AI bot is the Swiss Army Knife of AI tools!!! Participants will learn how to use Brisk to level or adapt materials to meet diverse student needs (levels and translation). You can get help with curriculum feedback, differentiation, and more – right from the apps and websites you already use.

### Behind the Hype: Unlocking AI Literacy in the Classroom

Session 5 – May 8, 2025  
**AFT AI Literacy: Beyond the Hype!**  
[meet.google.com/jpw-pbrr-tzc](https://meet.google.com/jpw-pbrr-tzc)

This session delves into the deeper issues of where and when AI could be used to support student learning and the ethical considerations teachers must consider. AI literacy and Digital Citizenship skills are important to demonstrate, model, and reinforce at all grade levels even for those students too young to be using AI (for example – the importance of maintaining student privacy and security).

**[Click here for RIFTHP Virtual PD Site for more](#)**

## RIFTHP Professional Learning Virtual PD Recordings from the Past

RIFTHP Past Virtual PD Recordings – In case you missed one, you may still access the content

### Supporting Students through Grief & Loss

[Resource Document – Slide Deck Recording of Session](#)

It is common and normal for young people to grieve. A grief sensitive educator can powerfully support a grieving student and promote mental health. Participants will learn more about the impact of bereavement on learning, strategies to talk about death and ideas for support. (presented by Melissa Labossiere & Sharon Usher, Pawtucket Teachers' Alliance)

More of these recorded virtual PD sessions are available for anyone to access.

[Click here to go to the RI Federation of Teachers Virtual Past PD](#)

# CTA Newsletter

## DEMOCRACY FORWARD

### A Collaboration of Teachers, Professors, School Districts and Unions File a Lawsuit to Challenge Trump's Executive Order to Dismantle the Department of Education

The American Federation of Teachers joined with other educators, school districts, and unions filed suit against the Trump administration to stop the mass firings that threaten essential educational services at the Department of Education. "The dismantling of the Department has begun via mass layoffs of at least half of the entire Department. Prior to January 20, 2025, the Department employed 4,133 employees. After the Trump administration's recent actions, just 2,183 will remain."

This lawsuit is led by Democracy Forward and argues that eliminating the department would harm students, particularly those with disabilities, low-income backgrounds, and English learners.

This executive order seeks to close the Department of Education and shift responsibilities to different federal agencies that lack the expertise in handling these critical services. Union leaders, like Randi Weingarten, warn that this decision will disproportionately impact vulnerable students, reduce access to affordable higher education, and eliminate needed funding for public schools. They contend that President Trump is prioritizing tax cuts for the wealthy over providing the necessary funding so all children may succeed in our economy. The lawsuit highlights that Congress has consistently funded and mandated the department's programs for nearly 50 years.

"The Department of Education, and the laws it is supposed to execute, has one major purpose: to fill opportunity gaps to help every child in America succeed," said AFT President Randi Weingarten.

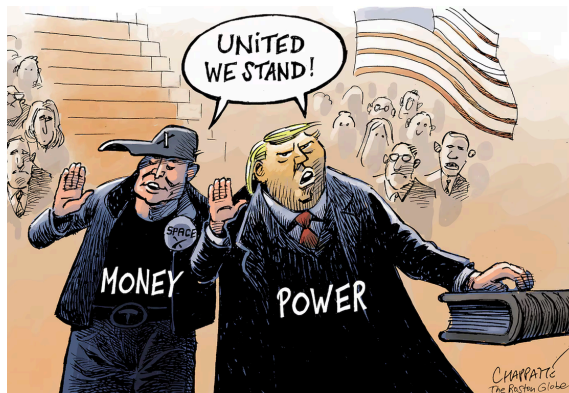
**AFL-CIO**  
AMERICA'S UNIONS

### Our Billionaire President Cuts the Wages of Hundreds of Thousands of Workers

President Trump recently rescinded an executive order from the Biden administration that raised the minimum wage for federal contractors to \$15 an hour. Given that this order was adjusted to inflation, the wage was increased to \$17.75 since then. This is a direct attack on the livelihoods of hundreds of thousands of low-wage workers—such as janitors and food service staff. Although the Trump administration still needs to formally overturn the rule, it will allow employers to cut wages knowing that there is no enforcement.

If the Trump administration fully eliminates the higher minimum wage for federal contractors, those workers—unless protected by a higher state minimum wage—will be forced to earn the federal minimum of \$7.25 per hour, a rate that has remained unchanged since 2009. This rollback would slash wages for full-time federal contractors by nearly 60%, costing them approximately \$22,000 per year. (It's important to note that all workers, not just federal contractors, deserve a higher minimum wage, but only Congress has the power to enact a nationwide increase—the president can only set wages for federal contractors.)

The move is perceived to benefit large government contractors by reducing their labor costs rather than increasing government efficiency. Trump has also suggested other superficial policies, like eliminating taxes on tips, which critics argue serve to further benefit employers rather than genuinely aid workers. This pattern highlights Trump's tendency to use pro-worker language while taking actions that hurt low-wage workers, suggesting a primary focus on boosting profits for corporations.



### Tell Congress: No Cuts To Education

The Trump administration's plan to gut federal support for public schools and give tax cuts to billionaires at the expense of loans for students to make college affordable and health care services for those who need it the most (including disabled children) sends a terrible, symbolic message.

Ending support for federal education programs would mean:

- Eliminating funding for low-income children in rural, suburban and urban areas.
- No services for kids with disabilities denying them their right to a free and appropriate education.
- Gutting career and technical education programs nationally.
- Cutting access to Pell Grants
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Those are not the solutions families voted for.

Send a letter to Congress right now and tell them: No cuts to education!

**Click here to access the form**

