

Hearing Education Services

CHAPTER NEWSLETTER



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UFT Delegates: Caryn Benjamin, Betty Hintz

April 2009

MESSAGE FROM Cecilia Cortez

Last month I had the opportunity to attend a wonderful training offered by the UFT in Princeton, New Jersey. I learned a great deal about the UFT, the contract, the DOE and especially about special education laws and our rights as special education teachers.

It's spring time — a time to grow, so I hope by sharing information to make you aware of your rights you will grow and learn, too.

One of the things that was emphasized during the training was that “knowledge is power.” The more you know about your rights, the better off you are. Become familiar with your rights and benefits, and use them. The more you know, the more empowered you will be.

— Cecilia

P.S. I had the first consultation meeting with Helen Kaufman on March 11. Please see the minutes.

Know Your Rights

WHAT THE CONTRACT SAYS ABOUT: Absences

If you are absent from school because of illness, you will be paid for up to 10 days in any school year without the need to submit a doctor's note. These are known as “self-treated days.” If you take more than 10 self-treated days in any school year, you will not be paid for those additional absences unless you submit a doctor's note, even if you have accumulated days in your Cumulative Absence Reserve (CAR). Wherever possible, you should submit medical certification for each day you are absent to preserve as many of your self-treated days as possible.

You can use three of those 10 days for personal business, provided that you give reasonable notice to your principal. Personal business is officially defined as something that cannot be done at any time other than a school day, during school hours. Two of these three personal business days may be used to care for family members who are ill. If you have exhausted all the days in your CAR (commonly known as your “sick bank”) and you are regularly appointed, you may borrow up to 20 additional sick days. Regardless of the nature of your absences, it is most important that you call your school each day and notify the principal that you will be absent.

Absences due to childhood illnesses that are listed in our contract (German measles, mumps and chicken pox), for the death of a member of your immediate family or to appear in court as a juror or witness are considered “non-attendance” days, and are not deducted from your CAR. Your chapter leader can advise you about the forms you must file for these days.

You should know

- ✓ The next consultation meeting will take place on May 6, 2009 at 4 p.m. at the HES office in Manhattan. Please send your concerns, issues, comments to Chapter Leader Cecilia Cortez (ccortez@uft.org) and she will be happy to add them to the agenda.
- ✓ If you would like to see the teacher seniority list you can do it. Just ask your supervisor.
- ✓ If you are planning to apply for salary differential, you can do it online as of May 15, 2009. Have all your papers ready.
- ✓ The principal can't place a letter in your file for an event that happened more than 90 days ago.

Events

- **Wednesday, April 29, 2009**

Free open house aboard the Intrepid Sea, Air and Space Museum! Open house beginning at 4 p.m. to preview upcoming programs and exhibit highlights. The event will conclude at 7:30 p.m. The museum is located at West 46th Street and 12th Avenue, Pier 86. REGISTER for this free event by April 20 by contacting our education programs coordinator at (646) 381-5163 or educationprograms@intrepidmuseum.org.

- **Saturday, May 9, 2009**

UFT Spring Education Conference at the New York Hilton.

- **Just For Fun**

Visit the Botanic Gardens in NY:

www.bbg.org

www.nybg.org

www.queensbotanical.org

April 9-19 Spring break
April 8 Passover begins
April 12 Easter
April 22 Earth Day
April 24 Arbor Day
April 28 Poetry Reading Day



Things to do

- Find out who is the chapter leader in each and every school you are in. Write down his/her name, the room and the time he/she is available. If you need something immediately, go to him/her. Let him/her know what your issue is. As long as you are in a school building, he/she is your chapter leader, too.
- Sign up on uft.org to get the latest chapter and union news, e-mail alerts and more. Plus access to the members-only section of uft.org. Go to the HES chapter page on the Web site (www.uft.org/chapter/hearing) and click where it says "Sign up."
- Enroll in COPE and vote. Through COPE we have gained such things as Teacher's Choice, tenure protection and of course 55/25. Help us build the UFT's political power member by member!

"The fight is never about grapes or lettuce. It is always about people."

Caesar Chavez