UNITED FEDERATION OF TEACHERS
A Union of Professionals

NEW MEMBER HANDBOOK

13th Edition
Dear Colleagues,

It is my pleasure to welcome you to your union, the United Federation of Teachers, and to your new profession.

As educators — teachers, paraprofessionals, guidance counselors, nurses and so many others — I have no doubt that each and every one of you will help make dreams come true. The work that we do in our classrooms and our schools every day is critically important for our students, our communities and our society as a whole. But it isn’t easy. You will be challenged every day of your careers.

One of the union’s highest priorities is to support you professionally. That’s why all of us at the UFT stand ready to help you become the best educators you can be. Whether you need help with licensing and certification, information about evaluation or your salary, or support to improve your working conditions and your students’ learning conditions, we are only a phone call or email away.

You should especially avail yourselves of the resources offered by our UFT Teacher Center. Staffed by experts in educational best practices, the center is an incredible source of support to help you improve your pedagogy as you grow as an educator.

The UFT is committed to making every single school and work site a place where our members want to work and parents want to send their children. That’s why we fight for smaller class sizes, better funding, adequate supplies and instructional materials, improved health and safety regulations, a greater voice for parents in the decisions that affect their children, competitive salaries and benefits, and support and respect for our members and the work we do.

As you begin the school year, I hope you will take the time to talk with your school’s chapter leader, who will be able to help you as you navigate the world of teaching, answering your questions about both pedagogy and your rights as a public employee and as a union member.

I also hope you’ll take the next step and become actively involved in your school or functional chapter. Remember: You are the UFT. We face many challenges as educators, but if we are united, I have no doubt we will overcome them.

Most important, however, I also hope you will enjoy this exciting new journey. We have much work to do — both inside our schools and workplaces and outside them as advocates for our students and their schools and communities — but it’s important to have fun, too. Enjoy your students and your time in your schools, and know that you are making a profound difference.

I wish you all the best and hope this is the first year of a great adventure and a satisfying new career as a New York City public school educator and member of the UFT.

Sincerely,

Michael Mulgrew
UFT Officers
Michael Mulgrew ....................... President
Howard Schoor ............................ Secretary
LeRoy Barr ................................. Assistant Secretary
Mel Aaronson ............................. Treasurer
Tom Brown ................................. Assistant Treasurer
Karen Alford .............................. VP for Elementary Schools
Richard Mantell ......................... VP for Intermediate/Middle Schools
Janella T. Hinds ......................... VP for Academic High Schools
Sterling Roberson ....................... VP for Career and Technical Education (CTE) High Schools
Evelyn DeJesus ......................... VP for Education
Carmen Alvarez .......................... VP for Special Education
Anne Goldman ......................... VP for Non-DOE Employees

Headquarters
52 Broadway, NY, NY 10004 ............... (212) 777-7500

Borough Offices and Representatives
For help with questions about contractual rights and benefits, salaries, grievances and pensions.

BRONX ..................................................... Mary Atkinson
2500 Halsey St., Bronx, NY 10461 ............... (718) 379-6200

BROOKLYN ............................................ Elizabeth Perez
335 Adams St., 25th Floor, Brooklyn, NY 11201 ............... (718) 852-4900

MANHATTAN ........................................ Dwayne Clark
52 Broadway, 10th Floor, New York, NY 10004 ............... (212) 598-6800

QUEENS ................................................ Amy Arundell
97-77 Queens Blvd., Rego Park, NY 11374 ............... (718) 275-4400

STATEN ISLAND ........................... Analia Gerard
4456 Amboy Road, 2nd Floor, Staten Island, NY 10312 ............... (718) 605-1400
UFT Headquarters

Subway Stops

Check the MTA website at www.mta.info for transit updates.

4 or 5 train (first car from uptown; last car from Brooklyn) to the Wall Street station: “Broadway and Exchange Place” or “Broadway and Rector Street” exit. Walk one block south.

2 or 3 train (first car from uptown; last car from Brooklyn) to the Wall Street station: “Wall Street” exit. Walk one block south on William Street to Exchange Place. Walk two blocks west on Exchange Place and make a left onto Broadway. Walk half a block south to 50/52 Broadway.

R or W train (last car from uptown; first car from Brooklyn) to the Rector Street station: “Rector Street and Trinity Place SW” exit. Walk one block east on Rector Street and turn onto Broadway. Walk one and a half blocks south to 50/52 Broadway.

J or Z train (first car from uptown; last car from Brooklyn) to the Broad Street station: “Exchange Place and Broad Street” exit. Walk two blocks west on Exchange Place and turn left onto Broadway. Walk half a block south to 50/52 Broadway.

1 train (first car from uptown) to the Rector Street station: “Morris Street and Trinity Place” exit. Walk one block east on Morris Street. Make a left on Broadway and walk half a block north to 50/52 Broadway.

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YOUR UNION

When you join the United Federation of Teachers, you become a vital part of a union with a long and proud history of protecting members’ rights, providing learning opportunities and standing up for social justice. The UFT is here to help you in your new career, whether you have a specific issue to resolve or seek broader support.

As a UFT member, you are now part of an organization that is dedicated to:

- Supporting you and helping you succeed in your career;
- Securing you a good salary, strong benefits and professional working conditions;
- Improving the education and lives of New York City’s 1.1 million students; and
- Strengthening your school and community.

Your Contract

The contract for every bargaining unit represented by the UFT is now available on the UFT website, www.uft.org. All new members, regardless of their titles, are encouraged to read their contract and to seek out their chapter leader if they believe their rights are being violated. Attend chapter and other union functions to learn more.

Your School

The basic unit of the UFT is the chapter — that is, the union members in your school or functional chapter. Every three years, you and your colleagues elect chapter leaders and delegates to be your union representatives. Members of functional chapters also elect their own chapter leader and delegates.

Your Chapter Leader & Delegates

These local representatives are your first source of information and help on everything from salary and benefits to health and safety, and can direct you to the appropriate resources as necessary. If your chapter leader has not already contacted you, make sure you ask a colleague for an introduction.

Your local representatives represent your school or functional chapter at the union’s highest decision-making body, the 3,400-member Delegate Assembly (DA). The Delegate Assembly is the union’s legislature, with elected representatives from every school. It meets monthly to consider issues facing members and to shape union positions and policies. Delegates from schools and functional chapters help set the union’s agenda on educational and political issues, as well as social justice, labor and human rights.

The Union also features an elected Executive Board that sets policy on a variety of education, labor and union issues, and an Administrative Committee, composed of the union’s officers, borough representatives and selected department heads, that oversees day-to-day operations.

Your Borough Office

The UFT has offices in every borough where you can find experts — all fellow UFT members — to answer questions about salary, certification, educational and workplace issues, health and other benefits, safety, pension and more. Throughout the school year, each borough office also hosts many helpful workshops, conferences and meetings.

The borough office staff resources include:

- **Borough Representatives:** Your borough representative (BR) is a union leader who coordinates all UFT activities in that borough.
- **District Representatives:** District representatives (DR) are union leaders who coordinate all UFT activities in their district. They work to resolve issues, usually raised by chapter leaders, that cannot be settled at the school level.
- **Salary representatives:** These experts can help you with payroll issues or delays.
- **Pension consultants:** These skilled staffers can respond to your questions about the pension system.
- **Educational liaisons:** These helpful staffing can advise you about certification requirements and other classroom issues.
- **Safety representatives:** These staffers are specially trained to respond to incidents as well as environmental health and safety issues.
- **Special Representatives:** Special Representative are union representatives who have specialized expertise in topic such as payroll, personnel, grievance, political action, harassment, and professional conciliation. Each borough office has special representatives who visit schools and provide support to members. Central UFT has special representatives who provide support to our Union Officers as well as support to central departments.

Looking for information about grants, awards and freebies? Look for regular articles in the New York Teacher, the UFT’s award-winning newspaper!

**Need help with classroom management? Want to learn more about the Danielson Framework? Looking to network with other teachers in your content area? The UFT has a class for that! See listings for the latest workshops, including ones specifically for newer members, on the UFT website!**
The UFT offers many different ways to stay in touch with the union and get the latest updates on your rights, benefits, discounts, workshops, campaigns and more.

**NEW TEACHERS**
When you register on the UFT website, you'll receive the monthly New Teacher Bulletin by email. Read it to get important information about your rights and benefits, a monthly to-do list, a UFT Q&A and more.

**Email Alerts**
Register on our website, [www.uft.org](http://www.uft.org) using your non-DOE email address to receive the latest news, alerts and special announcements.

**Text Messaging**
Want to be among the first to be notified about snow days and more? Text UFT to 30644 from your mobile phone (standard messaging and data rates apply) or sign up online at [www.uft.org/text](http://www.uft.org/text).

**Mobile App**
The power of the union is now in the palm of your hand, thanks to the new UFT app. Connect with UFT offices, register for events and CTLE workshops, catch up on the latest union campaigns, and unlock special UFT members-only discounts for your shopping and entertainment needs. Search for UFT-Mobile in the App Store and Google Play.

**Social Media**
Like us on Facebook: [www.facebook.com/uftny](http://www.facebook.com/uftny)
Follow us on Twitter: [@UFT](http://twitter.com/UFT)
Follow us on Instagram: [@UFTNY](http://instagram.com/UFTNY)

**Website**
When you visit [www.uft.org](http://www.uft.org), you’ll find a wealth of information about the programs and services offered by the UFT, as well as health benefit information, your contract, the latest news and more.

**Newspaper**
Once a month, we’ll mail you the New York Teacher, the union’s award-winning newspaper. Regular features include seasonal to-do list of reminders, profiles of newer teachers, a column offering advice and tips, and blog posts by new teachers in our “New Teacher Diaries.”

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Want to contact the New York Teacher?
Letters to the Editor: nytletters@uft.org
Other correspondence: nytmail@uft.org
Photos & videos: UFTphotos@gmail.com
Welcome to your union – the UFT!

There’s so much to do before your first day. Use this easy-to-follow checklist to get your personal items settled, so that you can concentrate on getting ready for your students!

For All New Members
- Enroll in the UFT
- Enroll in a health insurance plan
- Enroll in the UFT Welfare Fund
- Register on the UFT website
- Connect with your Chapter Leader
- Apply for your salary steps & differentials
- Begin a professional file, where you will keep important documents
- Enroll in the Tax-Deferred Annuity (TDA)

For New Teachers
- Review your teaching program
- Verify the license you are being appointed under
- Verify your professional time, preparation time and lunch
- Ask about getting a mentor

For New Paraprofessionals
- Enroll in the Teachers’ Retirement System (TRS)

Get Connected
- Sign up for Text Messaging
- Download the UFT Mobile App
- Follow the UFT on social media:
  - facebook.com/uftny
  - @uftny
  - @uft
UFT PROGRAMS

ALBERT SHANKER SCHOLARSHIP FUND..........................(212) 539-0500
The UFT awards $1 million in undergraduate and graduate scholarships to academically excellent and financially eligible students from New York City public schools.

BE BRAVE Against Bullying...........................................(212) 709-3222
Confidential hotline for students. You can also text BRAVE to 43961
Anti-bullying workshops for schools...........................................(212) 701-9630

COMMUNITY LEARNING SCHOOLS INITIATIVE ...............(212) 598-6862
Information about setting up a Community Learning School. You can also visit their website: www.nyccls.org

DIAL-A-TEACHER ..........................................................(212) 777-3380
Homework help for students and parents (Mon-Thurs., 4-7 p.m.)

PEER INTERVENTION PROGRAM........................................(212) 844-0600
Confidential, individual assistance for tenured teachers and guidance counselors.

POSITIVE LEARNING COLLABORATIVE (PLC) .................(212) 701-9499
Information about this innovative approach for creating positive school environments. You can also email PLC@uft.org.

Progressive Redesign Opportunity Schools for Excellence (PROSE) .......................(212) 701-9633
Learn more about PROSE and how highly collaborative schools are redesigning their programs. You can also email prose@uft.org.

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

TEACHER CENTER .............................................................(212) 475-3737
School-based and citywide professional development
You can also visit their website: www.ufttc.org

LEARN UFT .................................................................(Need Phone #)
Low-cost professional learning opportunities, including CTLE hours, specifically designed to meet members’ needs.

Elementary School Workshops ...........................................(212) 598-9272
JHS/IS Committee Workshops .............................................(212) 598-6839
High School Committee Workshops ....................................(212) 510-6444

CHAPTERS

FAMILY CHILD CARE PROVIDERS ........................................(212) 598-9288
General information ....................................................(212) 598-9511
Grant Kits .................................................................(212) 598-6829

FEDERATION OF NURSES/UFT ........................................(212) 420-7981

PARAPROFESSIONALS ..............................................(212) 598-9295
General information ....................................................(212) 598-9291
Free and confidential information, counseling and referral services

SPEECH IMPROVEMENT .....................................................(212) 598 7774

ALL OTHER FUNCTIONAL CHAPTERS ..............................(212) 777-7500

SAFETY & HEALTH

SAFETY AND HEALTH EMERGENCY HOTLINE ...............(212) 701-9407
Environmental issues HOTLINE ......................................(212) 598-9287
To report asbestos, lead, air quality issues, blood-borne pathogens, etc.

VICTIM SUPPORT PROGRAM ...........................................(212) 598-6853
Practical assistance and psychological support to schools and individuals
LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, TRANSGENDER MEMBERS ..... (212) 598-9279
Confidential help on discrimination & harassment

VIOLENCE PREVENTION & Dignity for All Students
(DASA) Workshops ............................................................. (212) 701-9413

CHILD ABUSE DETECTION & REPORTING COURSE ........ (212) 475-3737
low-cost two-hour, state-required workshop offered by Teacher Center

HEALTH BENEFITS

WELFARE FUND
Information/assistance with health coverage................. (212) 539-0500
Welfare Fund forms............................................................ (212) 539-0539
You can also visit their website: www.uftwf.org

HEALTH & CANCER HOTLINE ........................................ (212) 539-0500
(Monday – Friday, 10 a.m. - 6 p.m., 24 hr. answering machine)

MAP (MEMBER ASSISTANCE PROGRAM) ....................... (212) 701-9620
Help with personal challenges, including mental health, family and financial matters

MSK DIRECT – Guided access to expert cancer treatment at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center for UFT members, retirees & their family members .............................................. (800) 350-5034

NURSES-HEALTHCARE BENEFIT FUND ....................... (212) 982-5547

HIV and AIDS HELPLINE .............................................. (212) 598-9275
(Mon.–Fri., 4–6 p.m.)

WORKERS’ COMPENSATION SERVICE PROGRAM ........ (212) 510-6460
Confidential assistance and referral
YOUR CHAPTER

The basic unit of the union is the chapter, which is composed of all the UFT members at a school or worksite. Members are supported and represented at multiple levels — the chapter, the functional chapter, the district, the UFT borough office and central headquarters.

The chapter leader is the front-line representative of the union and the first source of information, support and guidance for a chapter. Chapter leaders have the entire union behind them to answer questions and assist members on a range of matters such as working conditions, teacher evaluation, Teacher’s Choice and health and pension benefits.

The chapter leader is there to represent both the staff as a whole and the union. The role of the chapter leader is to listen, encourage, support and represent all members and to speak knowledgeably in the union’s voice.

Chapter leaders are also there to ensure that members’ contractual rights are enforced. They make sure all represented members know what their rights are. Violations can be resolved formally or informally. Not everything is a grievance; whatever the nature of the member’s complaint or concern, the chapter leader will try to address it.

WE NEED YOU!

Members are strongly encouraged to participate regularly in chapter meetings and join school-based committees in which their issues can be discussed and resolved. School-based committees ensure that UFT members have a voice in decision-making at the school level.

It’s vital that all members participate in their chapters. The more engaged chapter members are, the stronger the chapter’s voice and the union overall.

Looking for ways to enhance your classroom?
The New York Teacher features regular ‘Linking to Learning’ and ‘Teacher to Teacher’ columns, where teachers share ideas and advice on classroom technology and other strategies.

New to the UFT? When you register on the UFT website, you’ll receive the monthly New Teacher Bulletin by email. Read it to get important information about your rights and benefits, a monthly to-do list, a UFT Q&A and more.
Whether you’re a teacher, nurse, guidance counselor, school secretary or any other title, you work hard to provide your students with the best education. You deserve to be paid well for your efforts, as well as to have suitable benefits and good working conditions.

The UFT’s contracts are the linchpin of your financial benefits. Through unrelenting effort and decades of union solidarity, the UFT has negotiated higher salaries and excellent health benefits.

**How to Read Your Pay Stub**

It’s important to check your pay stub to be sure you are getting the correct salary with the proper deductions.

To verify that you are getting the right amount on each paycheck, most members (pedagogues & paraprofessionals) should look for the words “RECURRING GROSS” and multiply that number by 24 (the total number of pay periods each year). That number should equal the gross amount you expect based on your years of service (salary step) and approved differentials or college credits.

Other titles such as nurses, therapists, education analysts and other H-bank titles are paid bi-weekly instead of semi-monthly, and receive 26 checks annually. They must take their recurring gross, divide by 14 and then multiply by 365 to get their gross annual salary, including their experience differential. That amount does not include their longevities or education differentials if applicable, which must be calculated separately.

If you think your salary is incorrect, talk to your payroll secretary, then check with a salary rep in your UFT borough office.

**Optional deductions and codes**

You can choose to have additional deductions taken from your salary:

- **Health insurance:** If you enrolled in a cost-free health plan, the stub will say, for example, HIP or GHI, with no amount. If you are paying for additional benefits, there would be a charge; for example, the stub might say GHI-CBP.

- **Flexible Spending Account:** These are pretax deductions for dependent care expenses and uncovered medical costs.

- **Transit Benefit Program:** Employees can enroll, update and cancel their participation through the DOE’s Payroll Employee Self-Service Application website https://payrollportal.nycboe.net. The pay stub code is COMM NO FEE.

**NYSUT insurance plans:** You can opt to pay for certain benefits, such as insurance against catastrophic illness, through our state affiliate, New York State United Teachers. Any options you select from the NYSUT Member Benefits Trust will show up on the pay stub as “UFT insurance.”

NYSUT Member Benefits (800) 626-8101.

**Common deduction codes**

The city Department of Education (DOE) makes deductions for federal, state and local income taxes, Social Security and other items. Your pay stub will indicate the amount deducted for each item during that pay period and also will show you a cumulative total for the calendar year. Here are some abbreviations for common deductions:

- **#1 Voluntary UFT COPE Contribution:** This is a contribution you volunteered to make to support the union’s lobbying and political action program.

- **#2 & #3 Pension Contributions:** These contributions into your qualified pension plan are dependent on your date of membership in the Teachers Retirement System.

- **#4 Union Dues:** This allocation funds union services. This code does not necessarily mean you are a union member. To ensure your membership, please make sure you fill out a membership card.

- **#5 Tax-deferred annuity:** This is your contribution to the TRS Tax-Deferred This is your contribution to the TRS Tax-Deferred Annuity program. Only members who are enrolled in a pension program with the Teacher’s Retirement System may voluntarily participate in the Tax Deferred Annuity Program.

- **#6 Tax-deferred Annuity Goal:** This is your annual TDA savings goal.

- **#7 Tax-deferred Annuity Balance:** This is how much is left to save before you reach your annual TDA savings goal.

- **#8 Cumulative Absence Reserve (CAR):** This shows how many days, hours and minutes you have available in your Cumulative Absence Reserve. Based on the amount of time worked, each employee earns sick leave that can be used as needed for days of illness. The sick time earned is accumulated in the teacher’s CAR bank.

- **#9 Split Reporting (SR):** This code indicates that the employee is on split reporting (or split pay).

- **#10 & #11 Miscellaneous:** Miscellaneous deductions and codes that are not common.

**Direct Deposit**

Members must have their paychecks deposited directly into their personal savings or checking account through the department’s Electronic Fund Transfer Program. You can enroll online at https://payrollportal.nycboe.net. Download the form and submit it directly to the department’s Payroll Division. The fax number is (718) 935-3702.

**NYSUT insurance plans:** You can opt to pay for certain benefits, such as insurance against catastrophic illness, through our state affiliate, New York State United Teachers. Any options you select from the NYSUT Member Benefits Trust will show up on the pay stub as “UFT insurance.”

NYSUT Member Benefits (800) 626-8101.

**DOE Payroll Portal**

You can access your salary information, sick day balance and print your pay stubs by accessing a self-service employee system available through the internet. Log on to the payroll portal https://payrollportal.nycboe.net with your DOE email ID.

**Problems with Your Paycheck?**

Delays in getting paid? Errors in the payment amount? The UFT can help you cut through the red tape and resolve paycheck problems with the DOE. Please consult your chapter leader or a salary rep at your UFT borough office.
How much will I earn?

Because you are represented by the UFT, you receive regular pay increases negotiated in each UFT–Department of Education contract as well as differentials, step payments and longevity increases based on your level of education and your years of service. The UFT–DOE contract for your title contains a salary schedule that calculates the new salaries when each negotiated pay increase takes effect.

The amount of your Department of Education paycheck depends on:

- The salary schedule the union and the DOE negotiate;
- Years of approved prior teaching experience outside the New York City Department of Education and in some situations for related non-teaching experience;
- How long you have been working in the New York City Department of Education; and
- Credits and degrees you earn beyond your bachelor’s degree.

How to read the salary schedule

The UFT salary schedule allows you to earn more money — thousands of dollars more each year — as you spend more time on the job (in what are called steps) and as you earn more education credits (in what are called differentials).

The salary schedule for teachers appears on the opposite page. Visit www.uft.org to see salary schedules for paraprofessionals, guidance counselors, psychologists, social workers, secretaries and other titles.

Salary Steps

Listed vertically down the left-hand side of the schedule are salary steps. An employee will move one step for each semester of satisfactory service. A salary step is an incremental increase in salary based on previous qualifying professional experience. All newly hired teachers, as well as members of functional chapters such as school secretaries, must report their prior work experience in their online application (TSN) for employment. Members who have not entered any previous work experience will automatically be placed on the beginning salary step and granted an equated date that coincides with their first day of employment.

You’ll earn more money the longer you stay in the system. If you teach without interruption, you can move through the steps at the rate of two steps per year (e.g. 1A and 1B) for each year you work, increasing your earnings up to Step 8B. You will automatically receive pay increases based on your anniversary/equated date of hire and on March 1.

Differentials

Listed horizontally across the top of each salary schedule are the salary differentials. An employee is eligible to move horizontally across the schedule as the employee’s level of learning increases. Salary differentials are granted to teachers who earn credits beyond a bachelor’s degree, including CLEP exams. You may be entitled to more than one differential at a time. Each differential can add thousands of dollars to your annual earnings — permanently — and cumulative differentials can make a big difference in your earning power. You must apply in order to receive differentials. To ensure that you receive pay retroactively from the date you earned the additional credits, you must apply within six months of earning the credit.

Teachers and members in functional chapters should contact a UFT salary representative at a UFT borough office or their functional chapter leader for information about how they can earn salary differentials. You can accumulate the credits you need to qualify for salary differentials by, among other ways, taking courses through the UFT Teacher Center.

Longevity increases

Regularly appointed teachers are eligible, as are some pedagogues and administrative workers (who should refer to their contracts for more information). After the fifth year and at intervals thereafter, teachers will receive “longevity” increments — also called “longevities.” These come after you have taught in New York City for five, 10, 13, 15, 18, 20 and 22 years. A longevity increase becomes part of the teacher’s base salary and is immediately pensionable.

Please note: Titles other than teachers also can receive salary differentials and should refer to their contracts or contact their borough office for details.

Unsure of your salary step? Have questions about licensing exams?
The UFT has representatives who specialize in issues such as certification and salary. You can contact the UFT’s certification department at 212-420-1830. You can also call your borough office and ask to speak to an educational liaison or a salary representative.
### TEACHER SALARY SCHEDULE

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Subject to correction

Salary schedules for paraprofessionals, secretaries, guidance counselors, school psychologists and social workers, nurses, occupational therapists, physical therapists, supervisors of occupational and physical therapists, lab technicians and lab specialists, adult education teachers and more can be found on [www.uft.org](http://www.uft.org).

It’s worth checking the salary schedule, particularly if you are a new teacher, to make sure you have been given credit for all the educational credits you’ve earned and all the experience you have. You must apply for a salary differential or outside work experience within six months of completing the coursework or receiving your appointment to later receive a lump-sum payment that reflects that increase.
YOUR MONEY

Per-Session Activities

Throughout the school year, teachers and other titles can also apply for per-session activities that occur either before school, after school, on weekends or holidays, or during the summer. If you are a teacher who applies for and is accepted for such an activity, you are paid at the hourly rate of $47.73, which will increase to $50.13 effective May 16, 2018. Rates for other titles (as listed in the contract) ends or holidays, or during the summer. If you are a
differentials.

Differentials in the Salary Chart

Here is a brief summary of the teacher differentials and how they appear on the UFT salary chart:

C1: This is the basic salary for those who have only a bachelor’s degree.

C1+PD: This column applies only to teachers hired before 1970.

C2: This is called the first differential. It requires 30 credits beyond the bachelor’s degree requirement. These may be all excess undergraduate credits, all graduate credits or a combination of both.

C2+ID: This column, the intermediate differential (ID), applies to people who have earned their first differential and, in addition, have 60 credits beyond the bachelor’s.

C2+ID+PD: This is called the promotional differential or PD. It requires 36 credits in an approved subject matter area; those 36 credits may be undergraduate, graduate or a combination. Generally speaking, you qualify when you get your master’s degree.

C2+ID+PD: This is for people who have met the requirements for the first differential, the intermediate differential and the promotional differential.

C6+PD: This is the second differential. It can be achieved in several ways:
- With a master’s degree plus another 30 credits that were taken after the date of your bachelor’s but not as part of your master’s credits. The credits can be from undergraduate or graduate courses;
- With professional development courses and/or activities approved by the chancellor;
- By getting National Board for Professional Teaching Standards certification.

Selection for most per-session activities is based on the individual criteria established in each posting that appears on the DOE website. If the activity you desire is specifically listed in the contract, selection is based on your meeting the posted qualifications and your seniority in the system.

You can work up to 400 per-session hours (except for school social workers and school psychologists, who are capped at 270 hours) in one year (July 1 through June 30.) If you want to work more than 400 hours, you need to obtain a waiver in writing from the executive director of the Division of Human Resources.

You should check the contract for the number of sessions for each activity you are interested in.

Like regular salary, per-session pay is now pensionable as a result of a long legal battle won by the UFT.

Do you have prior experience?

All newly hired teachers must report their prior work experience in their online application for employment. The information will automatically be submitted to the DOE’s new online salary step application which must be validated by the teacher via the DOE’s payroll portal. It takes approximately two to four weeks for the DOE to evaluate your prior work experience if you are a newly appointed teacher. You will receive a Certificate of Salary Status via email informing you of your salary step up to Step 8B if eligible and a new equated date.

If you have no previous work experience, you will automatically be placed on Step 1A and your equated date will be your hiring date for moving up in salary steps.

Non-appointed teachers will also receive a Certificate of Salary Status via email but will not receive an equated date. The highest salary step that a regular substitute teacher can attain credit for, even if certified, is Step 4A.

School secretaries, guidance counselors, social workers and psychologists: You can earn salary credits for approved outside service.

Therapists and therapist supervisors do not have steps, but have experience differentials that can translate into outside credit. Therapists also receive longevity increases at five, seven, 10, 15, 20 and 22 years.

Nurses and nurse supervisors do not have steps, but have experience differentials that can translate into outside credit. Nurses/supervisors also receive longevity increases at five, seven, 10, 15, 20 and 22 years.

Education analysts/officers do not have steps or education differentials, but they do have longevities that are earned upon completing five, 10, 15 and 20 years.

Paraprofessionals do not have steps, but they do have longevities that are earned upon completing five and 15 years. They have a combination of education and experience requirements to advance in title.

Check with your school’s UFT chapter leader, call a salary rep at your UFT borough office or visit the UFT website for more information on steps and differentials.
Teachers’ Retirement System of the City of New York (TRS)

With pension benefits eroding nationwide, your pension becomes more valuable every day. By enrolling in the TRS pension system, teachers and paraprofessionals will:

• Build a pension package that could become their largest financial asset;
• Secure a death benefit to protect beneficiaries; and
• Secure a special pension in case they become disabled and must retire.

TRS deductions usually begin within two months of the first paycheck, and the pension benefit is vested after 10 years of credited service. These contributions also lower your taxable income.

Enrolling in TRS

Your membership in TRS is not automatic. You must complete a TRS enrollment form and a Designation of Beneficiary form and return them to TRS. You must include proof of your date of birth when you file. Delaying enrollment may affect benefits for you or your beneficiaries. Call TRS at (888)-8NYC-TRS or your UFT borough office for more information.

Note: If you previously were a member of another New York State public pension system, you may be eligible to purchase or transfer credit for your prior service when you become a member of TRS. Call a pension consultant in your UFT borough office for help.

Board of Education Retirement System (BERS)

The Board of Education Retirement System (BERS) is available to most employees other than appointed teachers/pedagogues or paraprofessionals. Examples of eligible employees include: occupational therapists, physical therapists, nurses, substitute teachers and substitute paraprofessionals.

To verify your eligibility and to enroll, please contact the BERS at (929) 305-3800 or online at https://www.nyctbers.org. Call a pension consultant in your UFT borough office for help.

Your Tax-Deferred Annuity (TDA)

Another smart move toward a secure retirement is participating in the voluntary tax-deferred annuity (TDA) program. This is a supplemental retirement plan that enables you to invest money for your future on a tax-deferred basis through automatic payroll deductions. To apply, please call TRS at (888)-8NYC-TRS or your UFT borough office.

Participants have six investment choices: a guaranteed fixed investment and five variable funds. Federal, state and city income taxes are deferred on contributions and earnings until they are withdrawn. When you retire, you can withdraw all or part of these funds or turn them into an annuity.

Pension News

To keep you up-to-date on pension matters, the UFT offers an array of services throughout your teaching career:

• Frequent articles in the New York Teacher;
• PensionNews, our pension newsletter;
• Speakers for chapter meetings;
• Pension consultants in each borough office available for telephone questions or for personal interviews by appointment;
• Special boroughwide meetings;
• Pension clinics; and
• Three elected teacher-members on the Teachers’ Retirement Board to represent your interests.

Teacher’s Choice

New York City teachers spend an average of $500+ a year of their own money on classroom supplies including things like pencils, paper, math manipulatives, instruments, telescopes, compasses and even gym equipment. We have heard from our teachers who have paid for things such as school trips, lumber and tools to outfit a wood shop, and warm coats for shivering children.

Thanks to the Teacher’s Choice program, created in 1986 by the DOE and the UFT, NYC teachers are reimbursed for a portion of what they spend. In 2017, each teacher received $250 in reimbursement. The exact rate for this year will be set by the end of August.

Some tips for getting the most out of your Teacher’s Choice money:

• You may start spending the money on Aug. 1 at the store or Internet site of your choice, but no later than Feb. 28.
• Keep receipts for all your purchases; You will need to submit them to receive payment.
• Join with colleagues to pool some or all of the money to buy more expensive items to share.
• See your school secretary or chapter leader with any questions.

OTs and PTs gained Teacher’s Choice funds for the first time in 2017-2018. They also get reimbursed for professional development and a uniform allowance (even though they don’t wear uniforms).

Where Do My UFT Dues Go?

Members’ dues pay for the full array of services that your union provides to support you and your career — everything from creating educational support services to negotiating and enforcing the contract; to working on regulations at the city, state and federal levels; to providing you with professional, social and entertainment activities; to producing this New Member Handbook.

Only dues paying members in good standing can access the full spectrum of union resources and vote on proposed contracts or in UFT elections at the school, functional or citywide levels. If you aren’t sure if you are a member yet, please contact your school or functional chapter leader or call your UFT borough office.

In the 2017-2018 state budget agreement, the UFT and other unions lobbied for and won a provision that will allow members to deduct the cost of their union dues from their New York State taxes.

You Must Enroll

Remember: You must enroll now to receive a pension later. Your UFT pension has:

A “defined benefit,” which guarantees you a set monthly income for life upon retirement (versus the “defined contribution” plans common in industry, whose benefit is not guaranteed); and an automatic cost-of-living adjustment (COLA), preserving your pension’s value.
CERTIFICATION

Check Your Credentials

To answer any questions about your certification, you first must know the type of certificate you currently hold. You’ll find that by checking your TEACH account information (www.highered.nysed.gov/tcert).

First-year teachers can consult a recent New York City Department of Education (DOE) email that clearly identifies the individual license appointment code, certification and date of hire.

Once you know your certificate type and the expiration date, it’s possible to determine the requirements you need to fulfill and how much time you have to complete them.

Here are the most common types of certificates New York City teachers hold:

Internship Certificate
Students enrolled in an approved graduate teacher education program may qualify for this certificate, provided they have completed half of the program’s credit hours. The graduate school has to request this certificate for you and it allows you to teach full time in a position that matches the certificate title. You have two years to complete your course and test requirements for the initial certificate; in addition, your college must recommend you for the initial certificate. You cannot renew or extend your Internship Certificate. In order for you to be hired under an internship certificate, the city requires you to have passed all exams except the edTPA, which is the student teacher performance assessment developed by the Stanford Center for Assessment, Learning and Equity (SCALE).

Transitional A Certificate
Districts that need teachers in specific technical or vocational fields may offer this temporary certificate to candidates who have related work experience but who do not meet all the requirements for an initial certificate. With this certificate, you have three years from the issue date to complete the requirements for a career and technical education initial certificate. For details on those requirements, call an educational liaison in your UFT borough office or UFT Certification Services at (212) 420-1830.

Transitional B Certificate
This temporary certificate is issued to those enrolled in an alternative teacher certification program, such as Teaching Fellows. The college in which you are enrolled for a master’s degree under this alternative teacher certification program is responsible for recommending you to the state Education Department for a Transitional B Certificate.

You must log into your TEACH account to apply for your Transitional B Certificate and successive certificates. You have three years from the issue date of your Transitional B Certificate to complete your master’s degree and fulfill any test or other requirements for the initial or professional certificate. When you have done so, your college must recommend you for either the initial or professional certificate, whichever pertains.

To ensure you get credit for the years of service under your Transitional B Certificate, it is very important that the title of your Transitional B Certificate matches: The master’s program in which you are enrolled and the teaching position for which you were hired.

Initial Certificate
This is an entry level certificate. With this certificate, you have five years from the issue date to complete the following requirements for a professional certificate:
• a master’s degree;
• 12 graduate credits in the certificate area’s content core (If your master’s degree is pedagogical, this 12-credit requirement is already met by the program);
• three years of full-time teaching experience;
• one year of mentored experience;
• required classes at a college or university;
• and
• U.S. citizenship or permanent residency.

Paraprofessionals
Paraprofessionals who want to apply for Teaching Assistant certificates for Levels I, II and III must complete the application online at the website www.highered.nysed.gov/tcert.

If you are already registered with TEACH, click “Log in to TEACH.” If you are not yet registered, click “Self register with TEACH” and follow the instructions to register. Complete the basic profile and then click to apply for the certificate.

If you are applying for a state Teaching Assistant Certificate Level 1, you will need to submit an OSPRA 104 form to the DOE. You can find the form at www.highered.nysed.gov/tsei/documents/ospra104.pdf. This will authorize the city to release the results of your fingerprinting to the state.

If you have difficulties with the online system, contact a certification specialist at (212) 420-1830. If you need more information, call your UFT borough office educational liaison.

Professional Certificate
With this advanced certificate, you have met all current state requirements. However, even after you achieve your professional certificate, the state Education Department requires you to complete 100 hours of Continuing Teacher Leader Education (CTLE) within five years of the issuance of the certificate. The cycle will begin on your birth month after the certificate has been issued. The five-year cycle will repeat for as long as you wish to keep your certificate active.

The UFT Teacher Center and the LearnUFT program offer many professional learning activities that teachers with professional certificates and teaching assistants with Level III certificates can use to meet the CTLE requirement.

Navigating teacher certification regulations can be confusing to veteran educators, let alone new teachers and paraprofessionals. Don’t wait to complete your requirements for certification.

The UFT has a team of UFT consultants and educational liaisons to provide new members with clear, reliable answers. If you have questions or need additional information, talk to your chapter leader or call your UFT borough office and speak to an educational liaison.
Please note: Teaching assistants (paraprofessionals) who obtain a Teaching Assistant Level III certificate must also complete 100 hours of CTLE and the same rules of recordkeeping as for teachers apply. For additional information about CTLE hours, please see the PROFESSIONAL GROWTH section of this book, or contact an educational liaison at your UFT borough office.

Pupil Personnel Service Professionals

Pupil personnel service professionals such as guidance counselors, school psychologists and social workers are required to hold a certificate issued by New York State or city in order to be employed in the city's public schools. Licenses of social workers, nurses, occupational therapists and physical therapists must be renewed every three years. Members in these functional chapters also have requirements for continuing education credits. Nurses also require CPR certification.

For information about your specific requirements, go to www.uft.org and click on “Our Chapters” and the link to your functional chapter. You can also contact your functional chapter leader or speak to one of our educational liaisons in the UFT borough offices.

Nurses, OTs and PTs are not PPS service titles; they are professional licenses and have to get their licenses renewed every three years under a different system.

Completing the Process

Even after you have passed all your tests, fulfilled all your mandates and achieved all your degrees, you’re still not done. Remember that no certificate is issued automatically. Once you complete your requirements, you have to apply to the state Education Department online at www.highered.nysed.gov/tcert for your professional certificate. For more information, please visit www.uft.org/chapters/school-nurses.

Additional tips:

- Check your TEACH online account for the documents you need to submit with your application fee.
- Make copies of everything before you send them in.
- Mail your packet Return Receipt and file the receipt with the copies of your paperwork. It can take up to six months for the state Education Department to process your application.

Programs and Services

The UFT offers many programs and services to help you hone your skills and meet certification and licensing requirements:

- Low-cost coaching sessions to help you prepare for state-mandated exams;
- A two-hour course in child abuse detection and reporting for those who have not already fulfilled this state requirement;
- Violence prevention – a two-hour course that meets state Education Department requirements that all new teachers take a violence prevention workshop;
- Children with autism workshop that fulfills the state Education Department’s requirements for all teachers who are seeking initial or professional state certification in special education. The three-hour workshop on the needs of children with autism is given in one day;
- Workshops that meet the Dignity for All Students Act (DASA) requirement for anyone applying for a New York State teaching certificate after Dec. 31, 2013, to complete six hours of training on harassment, bullying and discrimination in schools;
- Times and locations for courses and workshops appear in the New York Teacher and online at www.ufttc.org (click on “conferences”). Once you complete a workshop, the UFT will forward your certificate of completion to the state Education Department electronically.

She brings the world to her classroom

“I literally want to bring the world into the classroom,” says Leslie Martinez, a teacher at Manhattan’s Humanities Prep Academy, a District 79 alternative high school. “I don’t want to just teach a curriculum and read a book. I want to bring the author in. I want it to be as real as possible.”

Martinez brought “Night at the Museum” to life in her previous career, creating a wildly successful kids’ overnight program at the American Museum of Natural History. “Because of the vision I had,” Martinez said, “it became a million-dollar program.” And it exposed kids to science. They’d sleep under the whale in the Hall of Ocean Life or amid dioramas in the Hall of African Mammals. They’d meet animals brought in by wildlife educators: a black bear, a wolf, a bird of prey.

It’s all about “kids having access to experiences, whether I do it through being a teacher or being a program director at a museum or being a Girl Scout leader,” Martinez says. “That’s really what I want to do with my life — bring access to underserved children; let them see what their possibilities could be.”

In her classroom, Martinez weighs what is relevant to students and considers how to make that tangible. “I come from a culture with a lot of oral history, so if I can tell a story I always go with that.”

Born in the South Bronx, Martinez is Garifuna and spent her early years living on the Caribbean coast of Honduras. She speaks Garifuna, Spanish and English.

“It’s really important for kids to see their reflections in teachers and to see teachers of color who have had other careers and can influence them in a positive way,” the third-year teacher says.

She believes her own career choices have been rooted in her inquisitiveness. “I remember as a kid sitting on the fire escape in the South Bronx just very curious about everything,” she says. “I think curiosity is what got me to this place.”

A special education teacher in a co-teaching class at Humanities, Martinez was part of the Urban Teaching Residency Program, which partners career changers with mentors. It’s been hard no longer being a manager, she says.

“I’ve learned that sometimes we have to let go of our titles, we have to let go of our expectations. What’s important is your purpose and what you’re passionate about.”

— By Suzanne Popadin, September 7, 2017, New York Teacher
YOUR TENURE

Gaining tenure is an important milestone. Having tenure means you can’t be terminated without due process and you’re entitled to a hearing if the Department of Education takes disciplinary action.

Teachers begin working on probation and are generally eligible for tenure at the end of their fourth year. Tenure isn’t automatically granted at the end of your probationary period. To be granted tenure, you must:

- Be on track to complete all your state certification and city licensing requirements;
- file an application and receive professional certification;
- have a record of acceptable service during your probationary period; and
- be recommended for tenure by your principal.

Your tenure becomes permanent only after you complete all your certification requirements.

There are many steps you can take to prepare for your tenure decision.

- **Know your tenure date.** To find it, check with your payroll secretary. You’ll want to be proactive in meeting with your principal in advance of your tenure decision to review your work.

- **Confirm your license code matches the subject and level in which you are teaching.** In New York City, tenure is granted in your license appointment area, and those pieces of information must match.

- **Keep records and documents that reflect on your performance,** such as observation reports; notes or emails to and from your colleagues, mentor, supervisors and parents; and evidence of your professional contributions to your school. Add a brief explanation or context for each piece of evidence you include and be sure to show how you differentiate to accommodate children with diverse abilities.

- **Document the work you’ve done for your school community,** such as clubs or student groups you advise or activities in which you’ve participated.

There are many ways you can organize this information. Some teachers choose to build tenure portfolios using binders organized into subsections where they store lesson plans, student work and assessments, observation reports, certificates from professional learning activities and other records.

Other teachers recommend digital record-keeping, using online resources to organize files. Dropbox, Google Drive or iCloud are all services you can use to store your work.

If you are up for tenure and your principal asks you to agree to extend your probationary period, you should contact your chapter leader or a UFT representative to help ensure that your rights are protected.

There are two ways to reduce your probationary period:

- **If you worked as a regular substitute in the same license and at the same school level,** you can reduce the normal probationary period by up to two years. This is called Jarema Credit, and you should apply if you think you are eligible. The application form is online.

- **Another way to reduce your probationary period is called “traveling tenure.”** If you received tenure in one license area and elect to take an appointment in a new license area or if you were tenured in another school district in New York State, you should apply to have your probationary period reduced by one year.

If you think you are eligible for either of these options, or have any questions, please contact your UFT borough office.

The UFT offers tenure workshops in its borough offices. Check the UFT events calendar for details.

Teaching immigrant students adds up for this math teacher

Soon after becoming a full-time teacher last fall, Michael Oeckel figured out why he couldn’t best the most obstreperous of his teenage students at the HS of World Cultures in the Bronx: “My face,” says Oeckel, a New York City Teaching Fellow. “It’s round and I smile constantly, so there’s no way I’m intimidating.”

Colleagues suggested he develop a teacher stare. “I practiced in the mirror,” he recalls, laughing. “It’s really scary. When I give the stare, you should feel like you caught on fire.”

Once his students saw that their disruptive or disrespectful behavior could turn their young teacher’s smile upside down, they buckled and behaved. These days, he meets them at the door, makes eye contact and shakes their hands. Once inside the classroom, he deploys physical tools to teach Algebra 1, Algebra 2 and geometry.

An intuitive pragmatist, Oeckel deploys teaching methods that are invaluable at this particular school, where most of the 450 students are newly arrived from scores of far-flung countries. They bring with them dozens of languages and dialects. “I’m completely at home with a class full of students who don’t speak English,” he says. “I’m in my element.”

A caffeine-loving, suburb-hating New Jersey native, Oeckel has traveled the world, run a foreign exchange program, taught English in Japan and holds a master’s degree in Asia Pacific Policy Studies from the University of British Columbia. He lives (temporarily) with his parents in Rockaway, New Jersey, and drives a punishing two hours to and from school daily. “I have a lot of time to come up with ways to explain mathematical concepts so the kids get them,” he quips.

Oeckel employs exaggerated hand motions and expressions (“I look ridiculous!”) and gets students out of their seats to illustrate, for example, the difference between the degrees of an angle and a radian. One student will stand in the middle of the room facing a window. The student will then turn until her back is to the window: a 180-degree turn. To demonstrate a radian (an arc around a central point), Oeckel invites a second student to stand in the middle of the room facing the first, then asks the second student to walk completely around the first student: Orbiting the student equals one radian.

Many of his students, he says, migrated through several countries before they reached the United States, an immigration path that disrupted their formal education. “They never learned, or they’ve forgotten how to learn,” he said. “My job is to teach them how to do school. When I see them look proud because they understand a concept, I feel great!”

— By Christine Cheakalos, May 4, 2017, New York Teacher
PROFESSIONAL GROWTH

For more than 50 years, the UFT has helped its members expand their skills and knowledge through courses, workshops and conferences. Now as a state-approved provider of Continuing Teacher and Leader Education (CTLE) hours, the UFT’s LearnUFT program offers low-cost professional learning opportunities specifically designed to meet our members’ needs. These workshops are taught by qualified teachers and instructors, specifically designed to meet members’ needs.

LearnUFT offers work sessions in all five borough offices after school, on weekends and during the summer. Please see http://www.uft.org/teaching/learnuft for a listing of available courses.

The UFT is also committed to archiving members’ certificates of completion for CTLE hours they obtain through LearnUFT, so that you can be sure there is a backup of your records.

The UFT Teacher Center is the union’s nationally known professional development program. Its professional development philosophy is straightforward and practical, emphasizing instruction based on the state and city standards and ongoing, collegial support.

Teacher Center instructional specialists can help you deepen your content knowledge and enhance your teaching skills. They offer seminars, work sessions, institutes and content-area conferences. Teacher Center staff also can help bring together staffs from different schools to learn and discuss best practices. They are your colleagues and their goal is simple: to help you become a dynamic and knowledgeable teaching professional. When you collaborate with a teacher center instructional specialist in your school and classroom, you can expand your repertoire of skills.

School-Based Professional Development

The Teacher Center operates sites at over 100 schools across the city. At each of these sites, teacher center staff can:

• Provide you and your colleagues with instructional coaching;
• Help you find instructional resources;
• Assist you in planning instruction and projects;
• Problem-solve classroom management situations;
• Teach you how to integrate instructional technology in your classroom;
• Help you engage with other colleagues by participating in one-on-one coaching, teacher team meetings, instructional planning sessions and study groups; and
• Facilitate ongoing professional learning connected to classroom practices.

Professional Development Academies

Professional Development Academies (PDAs) are designed to support the challenging work of professional development and to build the capacity of teacher leaders and professional developers, e.g., school-based mentors, lead teachers, master teachers, instructional specialists, instructional coaches and administrators.

P–12 Instructional Citywide Conferences

P–12 Instructional Citywide Conferences are conducted after school and on weekends and focus on the New York State Standards. Sessions are designed to deepen content knowledge, enhance educators’ pedagogical skill and foster collaborative professional dialogue. Conferences are differentiated by grade level (early elementary, upper elementary, middle and high school).

Offerings and Additional Resources

For more information about UFT Teacher Centers, please call (212) 475-3737 or visit their website: www.ufttc.org.

Mentors

Eligible new teachers receive 10 months and at least 40 hours of mentoring throughout their first 180 school days of employment. Mentors are experienced colleagues who have trained extensively in ways to best support you.

They may demonstrate lessons, co-teach classes with you and offer constructive feedback on your teaching practices, depending on your particular needs.

Mentors can also help you analyze student work, make suggestions about planning instruction and help you connect to people and instructional resources in your building.

Perhaps most important, mentors work with you on a non-evaluative, non-judgmental basis, and your discussions are professional and confidential.

If you believe you are eligible and have not heard from a mentor by mid-September (or for spring-term hires, two weeks into the term), see your UFT chapter leader or call your UFT borough office.

National Board Certification

Teachers who have completed three years of teaching and are striving to further their growth may want to consider working toward a national board certification — a designation that not only would bring them to the city’s second salary differential, but also would put them among the nation’s most accomplished teachers.

National Board Certification comes from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, an organization that grew out of an idea from our national affiliate, the American Federation of Teachers. This certification is evidence that you have reached a level of excellence in your field based on rigorous standards. The standards are primarily written for and by teachers and articulate accomplished teaching practices.

The UFT Teacher Center offers a pre-candidacy course to help participants prepare for this rigorous process, as well as ongoing support throughout the program. For more information on National Board Certification, visit our website: www.ufttc.org/national-alboard

UFT Course Program

Thousands of UFT members enroll each year in the UFT Course Program. In partnership with a variety of colleges, the union provides reduced tuition graduate-level courses to enable you to qualify for state certification or a salary differential, earn a master’s degree or simply strengthen your teaching skills. For current listings, go to www.uft.org and click the Teaching tab and select "Courses and Workshops" in the drop down menu.
Master’s Degrees and College Credits

To matriculate into a master’s program, you have to apply to and be accepted by the sponsoring university.

Degree programs include:
• Dual education and special education (grades 1-6);
• Instructional technology;
• Childhood Education; and
• Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), with an optional bilingual extension.

Certificate and Extension programs include:
• Gifted Education;
• Students with disabilities;
• Bilingual education;
• STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering & Math);
• Global Career Development; and
• Teacher leadership.

There are graduate-level general education classes in which you can explore subjects that interest you while earning credits toward salary differentials. Courses include, but are not limited to, assessment and behavior management, reading and teaching strategies, mathematics and special education.

WHAT ARE CTLE HOURS? AND DO I NEED THEM?

State regulations now require all teachers who hold professional certificates and paraprofessionals who hold Level III teaching assistant certificates to collect and track 100 Continuing Teacher and Leader Education hours (known as CTLE hours) by a state-approved provider in five-year cycles.

For all teachers, 15% of these hours must be related to instruction of English language learners and for English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers the requirement is 50%.

LearnUFT and the UFT Teacher Center are both approved by the New York State Education Department to offer CTLE hours and you can find more information about the many activities we offer to help our members meet this requirement on the UFT website and in the New York Teacher.

It is the responsibility of the teacher to maintain a record of acquired CTLE hours (by collecting CTLE certificates) once the professional certificate has been issued. At the end of each five-year cycle, it is the teacher’s responsibility to inform the state Education Department’s office of teaching initiatives that the requirement has been met, using TEACH, the online certification registry. You can read more information in the Office of Teaching Initiatives section of the state Education Department’s website at www.highered.nysed.gov.

Please contact an educational liaison in your UFT borough office if you have any questions.

World looks different from District 75 classroom

Tara Jarvis traverses New York City wearing a huge grin. “People smile back at me and that’s when I realize I’m smiling,” says Jarvis, a first-year art teacher of students with special needs at District 75’s Brooklyn Transition Center.

“I’m just so happy,” she says. “I get more joy being a teacher than I ever have doing anything in my entire life. And I always dreamed of living in New York.”

Jarvis was raised in Florida by her grandparents in a household that included her mom and sister, who both have special needs. Her grandfather died when she was 12, leaving her grandmother as guardian. She wanted Jarvis to be a lawyer or a doctor. Jarvis wanted to be an art teacher.

But college “didn’t really work” for Jarvis once she realized her youth — spent helping to care for her mother and sister — wasn’t normal. “I wanted to be a child for once,” she said. “I rebelled: I was super artsy, got a bunch of tattoos.” Jarvis dropped out of Florida State University to attend cosmetology school.

Color theory and design, basic to art education, are also integral parts of the hair industry.

Jarvis became a colorist and climbed the industry ladder. She worked Kanye West’s first fashion show and traveled the world doing hair. Along the way, she finished her bachelor’s degree at night.

When Jarvis decided to change careers, she was the perfect candidate for the city’s Teaching Fellows program, where “special education kind of chose me. Life came back full circle,” Jarvis says.

“As a hair stylist, it’s so easy to be ego-driven; it’s all about talking yourself up. When I go to work now, it’s all about what these kids need and want.”

Other people, Jarvis says, “sometimes get annoyed at the students and I can’t help but laugh, because none of their behaviors or attitudes are personal. It’s kids with disabilities trying to express themselves, kids being kids.”

She sees the world through a different lens now. “A lot of people in the fashion industry, they think it’s the be-all and end-all,” she says. “These kids have given me a fresh perspective on what really matters in life.”

— By Suzanne Popadin | May 3, 2018, New York Teacher
As a UFT member, you have one of the best health-benefits packages anywhere. At a time when many workers have no health benefits and higher costs are leading many employers to reduce existing benefits, the union has maintained quality benefits and even made improvements.

As a full-time member, you are entitled to:

A choice of health plans, which city unions jointly negotiate for their members. There is a health plan for everyone, from free plans like HIP to basic GHI to a range of plans that will fit your family’s needs. The plans are listed on the nyc.gov/olr website;

Supplemental benefits such as dental, optical, hearing and prescription drug coverage are provided by the union through the UFT Welfare Fund;

Optional additional benefits are available through our state and national affiliates, NYSUT and AFT;

Sick days are earned, one per month, after the 15th of the month. Together, these benefits represent savings to you worth thousands of dollars a year;

Hospitalization and medical coverage for you, your spouse or domestic partner and your dependent children up to age 26; and

Adult dependent children from ages 26 to 29 may be eligible to purchase coverage under New York State legislation.

Beyond the medical and hospitalization benefits you receive through the city’s health plans, you also have an array of additional benefits through the UFT Welfare Fund, including dental, optical, hearing and prescription drugs. The UFT Welfare Fund benefits cover you, your spouse or domestic partner, and your eligible dependents.

Make sure you enroll ASAP: You must enroll in the Welfare Fund separately from your city health plan. There are no waiting periods for benefits once you enroll as an eligible member. The fastest and easiest way to enroll is online at www.uftwf.org. You can also get an enrollment form from your chapter leader.

Within two weeks of enrolling, you should receive:

- A UFT Welfare Fund drug card, which is your identification for purchasing prescription drugs. Call the Welfare Fund if your card is delayed. Your name will be the only one listed on the card, although the names of your eligible dependents will appear on the pharmacist’s screen.
- A booklet called “The Red Apple,” which describes the full range of your benefits. It’s also available online.
- You are covered as soon as you enroll and will be reimbursed if you need to fill a prescription before your card arrives.

Prescription Drug plan

This plan covers prescription drugs (but not drugs sold over the counter).

When you need to fill a prescription, go to a participating pharmacy, show your UFT Welfare Fund drug card, and pay a co-payment.

For a 30-day supply, the Fund has three tiers of co-payment:

- Generic - $5
- Preferred brand - $15; and
- Non-preferred brand $35.

Be sure to save receipts for prescription drugs you paid for before receiving your drug card so you can be reimbursed.

The Federation of Nurses/UFT has separate health benefits administered through its own health and welfare fund. Members can get information by calling their fund administrator at (212) 982-5547.
After filling 90 days of maintenance medication locally, mail order is mandatory. As of March 2016, your doctor must submit your prescriptions electronically, so ask your doctor to order your 90-day supply directly from the Express Scripts Home Delivery Service (800) 723-9182.

The UFT Welfare Fund drug formulary is a great tool for understanding whether a prescription drug is covered, your co-pay cost and how to obtain it. The formulary is available on the UFT Welfare Fund website at www.uftwf.org.

Dental plan

Through the Welfare Fund you can choose between two plans:

- A Scheduled Benefit Plan that allows you to use participating dentists (at no charge or with a co-payment); or non-participating dentists (with reimbursement according to the dental fee schedule)
- A dental HMO (Dentcare) with no copayment.

Optical plan

The Welfare Fund covers the cost of a basic eye exam and eyeglasses entirely or gives you an allowance you can apply toward an upgrade. You also can elect to purchase contact lenses and receive a credit per the fee schedule.

The Fund will issue you an optical plan voucher that explains the details of the plan. Members can order the voucher either online at www.uftwf.org or by calling the hotline at (212) 539-0539.

Hearing aids

Members are entitled to one hearing aid every three years. Participating providers have agreed to give a minimum 25% discount off the cost of a hearing aid. The Fund will issue you a hearing aid voucher that explains the details of the plan. Members can order the voucher either online at www.uftwf.org or by calling the hotline at (212) 539-0539.

MSK Direct

The UFT Welfare Fund has partnered with Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center to provide a program that offers guided access to expert cancer treatment for UFT members, retirees and their family members. When you are faced with cancer, reliable information and comprehensive care coordination are crucial. The experts at MSK are there to help you understand the cancer treatment process and provide practical support during your treatment. Call: 844-350-5034

Additional Benefits

The following Welfare Fund benefits are available only for you and not your dependents:

- Disability insurance: Qualifying pedagogues may be covered for $475 per week for a maximum of 52 weeks ($375 per week for paraprofessionals). Call the UFT Welfare Fund at (212) 539-0500 if you need an application or more details.
- Death benefit: When you enroll in the UFT Welfare Fund, you must designate a beneficiary in case of death. The younger you are, the higher the death benefit will be, starting at $30,000 and declining through the years. This complements the death benefit that accrues through the pension system or any other life insurance you may have.

Additional Information

You can learn about all of your available benefits by reading “The Red Apple” benefit booklet or on the UFT Welfare Fund website: www.uftwf.org.

The website also has lists of participating panelists, updates on benefits, links to providers’ websites and answers to frequently asked questions.

Change of Address or Status

If your address or marital status changes, you can update it through the online “change of status” process at www.uftwf.org, or ask your chapter leader for a blue “Change of Status” packet, or phone the UFT Welfare Fund Forms Hotline at (212) 539-0539.
UFT members are also members of the statewide affiliate – New York State United Teachers, the labor union representing more than 600,000 members across New York State in the education and health care industries.

Your NYSUT membership gives you the opportunity to participate in more than 40 endorsed programs and services offered by NYSUT Member Benefits, including a variety of insurance, financial, legal, shopping, travel and personal programs.

NYSUT Member Benefits endorses crucial insurance programs along with important legal and financial services that offer the convenience of paying through payroll or pension deduction so you never have to worry about missing a premium payment or bill.

UFT members also have access at no charge to an online Financial Planning Center on the NYSUT Member Benefits website. Choose from more than 100 modules on different financial topics along with a financial wellness check-up so you can see where you stand in regards to your savings and retirement.

For UFT members looking for some assistance with day-to-day purchases, Member Benefits endorses a number of shopping, travel and personal programs. Whether it’s discounts on movie, concert or theme park tickets, or savings on hotels and condo-style resorts, Member Benefits can help you save time and money on your next vacation, excursion or simply a night out. You can also enjoy savings on restaurants, car and truck rentals, medical alert services or hearing aids for you or your loved ones, and much more.

The Member Benefits desktop and mobile websites are easily to explore and navigate. Visit memberbenefits.nysut.org and then click on the “Insurance,” “Legal/Financial” and “Shopping/Travel/Personal” tabs to learn more about the programs available to you as a UFT member. You are also always welcome to contact Member Benefits by phone at 800-626-8101 weekdays from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. (EST) to speak with a live Member Benefits staff member.

UFT members can also join the Member Benefits MAP Alert email service to receive regular updates from Member Benefits about new programs, special offers available and highlights on various endorsed offerings.

**Level Term Life Insurance**

This program allows members and their lawful spouses (or certified domestic partners) to apply for coverage up to $1 million for either 10, 15 or 20 years. Your age determines the length of term you may apply for under the coverage. Applicants must be under age 55 to be eligible for the 20-year plan, under age 60 for the 15-year plan and under age 65 for the 10-year plan.

**Term Life Insurance**

This program offers up to $1 million of group-rated term life insurance. Coverage can be purchased by you and/or your lawful spouse (or certified domestic partner); dependent child coverage can be added. An accelerated death benefit is available for those who are insured and are terminally ill, up to the age of 70. If you are between the ages of 65 and 84, you are eligible to apply for, or continue with, up to $30,000 in coverage—depending on your current age. The plan provides decreasing term coverage to age 85. Benefits decrease as age increases.

**WrapPlan® II Universal Life Insurance**

This group universal life insurance plan offers you a way to plan for the continuing need for life insurance coverage while taking advantage of the term life insurance that you already have. This program also allows you to purchase life insurance coverage that increases as your term life coverage decreases or terminates. Premiums may be set at a level to produce as much or as little accumulation of cash value at age 95 as you choose. You must be age 70 or under to apply.

**Personal Property & Liability Insurance**

Enjoy special member rates on insurance coverage for your vehicle, home, condo, apartment, boat, mobile home (New York State only), snowmobile, motorcycle, fire, landlord’s rental dwelling, and personal excess liability (umbrella). Coverage is available in all 50 states. Various discounts may apply.

**Disability Insurance**

This program provides valuable income replacement benefits to help meet your living expenses if you become partially or totally disabled and are unable to work. Disability insurance can be customized to fit within your budget and still provide peace of mind until you are able to return to work. Long-term, five-year or short-term disability insurance plans are available.

**Legal Service Plan**

This plan provides unlimited toll-free legal advice; a SimpleWill, Health Care Proxy, Living Will and Power of Attorney; guaranteed maximum fees for many personal legal matters; and legal assistance at discounted rates throughout the continental United States. The plan can provide assistance with identity theft, debt consolidation and mortgage foreclosure issues. Optional Elder Law and Business Protection Riders are available.

**No-Cost Accidental Death & Dismemberment(AD&D) Insurance**

The NYSUT Member Benefits Trust provides and administers this benefit to all members at no charge. You are automatically insured for up to $1,500 in the event of death or dismemberment resulting from accidental injuries; the maximum benefit amount for AD&D for a Common Carrier is $3,000 in the event of death or dismemberment resulting from accidental injuries. This benefit includes travel assistance services provided by Europ Assistance at no cost that focus on providing coordination services to travelers.

For more information, applications or brochures about any of these endorsed programs and services, please call 800-626-8101 or visit memberbenefits.nysut.org.

Other Options for UFT Members:
AFT+ Member Benefits
800-238-1133, ext. 8643
aft.org/benefits

NEA Member Benefits
800-637-4636
neamb.org

UFT Teacher & Educator Discounts
www.uft.org/our-benefits/teacher-and-educator-discounts
As a UFT member, you are also an AFT member. You belong to a community of colleagues—with benefits that go beyond the workplace. AFT + Member Benefits brings you the purchasing power of AFT’s 1.7 million members. With a union, you don’t have to go it alone on or off the job—or in making financial decisions big and small. Need a great deal on your next new car? A competitive mortgage rate? A choice of no-fee credit cards? A great wireless plan? AFT + can help. Our AFT + Member Benefits program is just one more way that joining the AFT gives us the strength of many in every part of our lives.

Accidental Death and Dismemberment Insurance

All active, working AFT members have a $5,000 Accidental Death and Dismemberment policy. If a covered injury or death occurs as a result of a workplace accident, the policy provides extra benefits. Coverage is not available to retiree members or fair share payers.

Credit Cards

Three different no-annual-fee credit card options for AFT members and their families are available: Rate Advantage Card has the lowest APR for members who have excellent credit; Cash Rewards Card offers unlimited 1.5 percent cash back on every purchase; Primary Access Card allows you to build credit through responsible use. Special features are available for union members suffering financial hardship.

DinnerTime

Make healthy meal planning easy, fun, delicious and affordable by incorporating ingredients from your favorite grocery store’s weekly sales. The cost for AFT families is $5.99 a month (40 percent off the regular cost). Enroll in a free one month trial now.

Hotels

Save up to 20 percent off the best available rate at more than 7,700 participating hotels worldwide. See the website for participating hotels and locations.

Car Rental

Save up to 25 percent with car rental discounts. Visit online to reserve and compare prices, or call to reserve using the telephone numbers and codes listed on the website.

AT&T Wireless Discount

Save 15 percent on the monthly service charge of qualified AT&T wireless plans through the Union Plus Wireless Discount Program with AT&T, the only national unionized wireless company. Not available for unlimited plans.

Powell’s Bookstore

Powell’s Bookstore in Portland, Ore., is the largest independent, unionized bookstore in the country (ILWU, Local 5).

Teleflora Flowers & Gift Baskets

Save 20 percent on flowers, gifts and plants through Teleflora, and have them delivered anywhere in the world—100 percent satisfaction guaranteed.

Entertainment Discounts

Save on movie tickets, theme parks, theater and restaurants across the country. There is a mobile app for easy access to savings on the go!

AFT ADVANTAGE

This is an exclusive online shopping program for AFT members. Save 10 to 70 percent on electronics, apparel, tickets, gifts and more. Earn WOW points on your purchases to save even more.

Amalgamated Bank Mortgage

This program features competitive interest rates, exclusive discounts and refinancing solutions, and a program to help first-time buyers (licensed in New York and New Jersey, not yet licensed in all other states; see website for more information).

Rosetta Stone

Use this award-winning language learning program for only $99 a year to study one of 30 languages on your computer, tablet and smartphone. Rosetta Stone Pro at $139 is also available.

Student Debt Clinics

This is a resource where you can learn about the landscape of free and underused federal programs that help many student loan borrowers lower their monthly payments and, in some cases, even have their debt forgiven.

Share My Lesson

Exchange lesson plans, ideas and best practices, join free professional development webinars, and access thousands of standards-aligned lesson plans and activities for early childhood through grade 12.
SAFETY AND HEALTH

The mission of the UFT's Safety & Health Department is to protect UFT members from occupational hazards and to protect members’ rights when incidents happen.

We do this by providing information about potential hazards; advocating on behalf of members to address unsafe conditions, safety, and student discipline issues; and collaborating with appropriate city and state agencies to enforce health and safety standards.

Please call your borough office and ask for your local health and safety representative if you need assistance with:

- An incident in your school;
- An environmental safety hazard; or
- An unsafe situation at work.

Additional Resources:

- **UFT Safety & Health Emergency Hotline:** (212) 701-9407
- **UFT Environmental Issues Hotline:** (212) 598-9287
- **Violence Prevention Workshops:** (212) 701-9413
- **Information on safety issues:** uftsafety@uft.org
- **Information on health issues:** healthsafety@uft.org

To learn more about incident reporting, school safety plans, environmental and health hazards, safety workshops and more, go to www.uft.org/our-rights/safety-health.

Union Programs & Services

The UFT offers a multitude of health and safety programs to assist you and your colleagues.

**Be BRAVE Against Bullying:** The UFT’s BRAVE Campaign provides tools, knowledge and support for UFT members so they can be more proactive in confronting and stopping bullying. For information and resources for your classroom, visit us on the web at www.uft.org/BRAVE. BRAVE also hosts a confidential hotline for students, Monday through Friday, 2:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.: Call (212) 709-3222 or text BRAVE to 43961.

**Classroom management classes:** The union offers many workshops on classroom management, on teaching students self-discipline and on instructional techniques that engage students so they do not start misbehaving out of restlessness. Check the New York Teacher newspaper for upcoming sessions.

**DASA Workshops:** The UFT offers DASA workshops that meet the Dignity for All Students Act (DASA) training requirements and the certification for the state Education Department. This six-hour workshop gives participants an understanding of the dynamics of assaultive, aggressive behavior and the tools to defuse violent situations at school.

**Positive Learning Collaborative:** The UFT’s Positive Learning Collaborative (PLC) supports schools in creating a positive learning environment. Through intensive training and direct consultation with school staffs, the PLC program equips educators with the skills, knowledge and confidence they need to safely and effectively anticipate behavior challenges.

**Peer Intervention Program:** Are you a tenured teacher or guidance counselor who is struggling with pedagogical and professional issues? Are you ready to take responsibility for achieving high standards and becoming more effective? Get confidential one-on-one help from highly experienced, specially selected colleagues who will create individualized professional development plans with you to emphasize your strengths and improve your shortcomings.

With the Peer Intervention Program (PIP), you can take charge of your own professional standards, address instructional issues and turn your career around. Call PIP at (212) 844-0600 or send an email to pip@uft.org.

**Member Assistance Program**

We all experience challenges in our personal and professional lives from time to time. While people often handle these on their own, some issues can be difficult to manage without a helping hand.

The Member Assistance Program (MAP) has trained professional counselors who guide you through the problems that can put your health and job in jeopardy. Our services are confidential, professional and supportive.

The MAP program provides short-term counseling to in-service UFT members by professionally trained mental health staff as well as referrals to outside resources including:

- Short-term counseling in the MAP office;
- Peer support group for bereavement;
- Peer support group for Caregivers
- New Teacher support and informational groups
- Assistance for victims of domestic violence;
- Connection to community support groups to fit your needs;
- Assessment and referrals to appropriate substance abuse, eating disorders and mental health service programs;
- Referrals for trauma, bereavement and loss;
- Referrals for legal and financial counseling services.

The MAP phone number is (212) 701-9620 and the email address is mapinfo@uft.org. Our normal hours are 10 a.m. – 6 p.m., Monday through Friday (summer hours are 9 a.m. – 5:15 p.m., Monday through Thursday). Please note that sessions are by appointment only; no walk-ins. MAP services are provided at no cost to members.

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**Be BRAVE Against Bullying:** The UFT’s BRAVE Campaign provides tools, knowledge and support for UFT members so they can be more proactive in confronting and stopping bullying. For information and resources for your classroom, visit us on the web at www.uft.org/BRAVE. BRAVE also hosts a confidential hotline for students, Monday through Friday, 2:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.: Call (212) 709-3222 or text BRAVE to 43961.

**Classroom management classes:** The union offers many workshops on classroom management, on teaching students self-discipline and on instructional techniques that engage students so they do not start misbehaving out of restlessness. Check the New York Teacher newspaper for upcoming sessions.

**DASA Workshops:** The UFT offers DASA workshops that meet the Dignity for All Students Act (DASA) training requirements and the certification for the state Education Department. This six-hour workshop gives participants an understanding of the dynamics of assaultive, aggressive behavior and the tools to defuse violent situations at school.

**Positive Learning Collaborative:** The UFT’s Positive Learning Collaborative (PLC) supports schools in creating a positive learning environment. Through intensive training and direct consultation with school staffs, the PLC program equips educators with the skills, knowledge and confidence they need to safely and effectively anticipate behavior challenges.

**Peer Intervention Program:** Are you a tenured teacher or guidance counselor who is struggling with pedagogical and professional issues? Are you ready to take responsibility for achieving high standards and becoming more effective? Get confidential one-on-one help from highly experienced, specially selected colleagues who will create individualized professional development plans with you to emphasize your strengths and improve your shortcomings.

With the Peer Intervention Program (PIP), you can take charge of your own professional standards, address instructional issues and turn your career around. Call PIP at (212) 844-0600 or send an email to pip@uft.org.

**Member Assistance Program**

We all experience challenges in our personal and professional lives from time to time. While people often handle these on their own, some issues can be difficult to manage without a helping hand.

The Member Assistance Program (MAP) has trained professional counselors who guide you through the problems that can put your health and job in jeopardy. Our services are confidential, professional and supportive.

The MAP program provides short-term counseling to in-service UFT members by professionally trained mental health staff as well as referrals to outside resources including:

- Short-term counseling in the MAP office;
- Peer support group for bereavement;
- Peer support group for Caregivers
- New Teacher support and informational groups
- Assistance for victims of domestic violence;
- Connection to community support groups to fit your needs;
- Assessment and referrals to appropriate substance abuse, eating disorders and mental health service programs;
- Referrals for trauma, bereavement and loss;
- Referrals for legal and financial counseling services.

The MAP phone number is (212) 701-9620 and the email address is mapinfo@uft.org. Our normal hours are 10 a.m. – 6 p.m., Monday through Friday (summer hours are 9 a.m. – 5:15 p.m., Monday through Thursday). Please note that sessions are by appointment only; no walk-ins. MAP services are provided at no cost to members.
lenges in their schools so they can prevent crises and, ultimately, help students focus on academic goals. For more information, call (212) 701-9499 or email PLC@uft.org.

Victim Support Program: The UFT’s Victim Support Program provides members who are injured on the job with one-on-one advice, counseling and assistance with police, the judicial system and the city Department of Education’s (DOE) medical division. The program offers victim outreach, psychological counseling and crisis intervention. All services are free and completely confidential. For more information, call (212) 598-6853.

Violence Prevention Program: A state Education Department mandated program. The UFT’s Violence Prevention Program works with individuals and schools to improve safety. Two-hour workshops will show you how to identify the warning signs of danger to yourself and your students and teach you ways to defuse volatile situations before they reach the point of no return. For more information, call (212) 701-9413.

General Response Protocol (GRP) The General Response Protocol (GRP) has been designed to provide all schools with the direction they will take when an emergency incident occurs. At its core is the use of common language to identify the initial measures all school communities will take until first responders arrive. In every incident, school administrators will need to assess the unique circumstances that will affect how the GRP is implemented.

Each protocol has specific staff and student actions that are unique to each response. In the event that a student or staff member identifies the initial threat, calling 911 and administration is required.

Securing Personal Property Theft is unfortunately a regular occurrence in schools, and right now is the number one crime happening in our buildings. We recommend that you:

- Try to minimize theft by not wearing or bringing valuables to school;
- Keep your pocketbook, briefcase and coat under lock and key;
- Never walk away from your laptop;
- Keep your money and expensive jewelry concealed;
- Secure doors upon exiting;
- Do not leave belongings visible through classroom windows; and
- Report all thefts to your chapter leader and file a UFT incident report.

School Health Wellness Councils The DOE encourages each school to have a health wellness council that develops, implements and monitors policies around school nutrition and physical activity. These councils advise the principal on health wellness issues and may include parents, students, teachers, administrators, health and food professionals and members of the public.

Student Fights Breaking up fights between students is the prime cause of school-related injuries among UFT members. If you are witness to a fight, we recommend that you:

- Use nonviolent techniques to break up fights or confrontations. Speak loudly to order students to stop fighting.
- Send for help, by intercom or phone if possible, or send another staff member or a student. Many schools use a special pass with a classroom’s room number which, if carried out of the room, is a code indicating an emergency there.
- Remember that a trained school safety agent, supervisor or dean can do more than you can do alone and will serve as a witness if any injuries occur to you, another staff member or a child.
- Do NOT get between fighting students unless you believe it is absolutely necessary to prevent serious injury.

Injuries and Assaults If you are injured or assaulted, seek medical treatment immediately. If warranted, file a criminal complaint report with the NYPD. We also recommend that you contact your chapter leader or district representative as soon as possible for help with completing the paperwork required to protect your rights. Filing delays can cost you. An injury or assault must be reported to the school within 24 hours.

New Teacher Support Groups These sessions provide new members with general union information and concrete educational support. Learn about welfare fund health benefits, pension plans and TDA, end-of-term procedures, and essentials about licensing, tenure and certification. Educational sessions concentrate on student engagement, professional collaboration and classroom management. The UFT Teacher Center provides CTE credits for some educational sessions.

These sessions provide an opportunity to help one another get through the nuances of a school year. Participants can discuss stressors, challenges and strategize ideas. The MAP program helps them develop support systems, and learn how to engage and navigate through the many mental health resources provided inside and outside the union. These groups are open to all new teachers (1-3 years). They are held at central headquarters and in each borough office and are limited to 40-50 members per session.
As a professional, you deserve a safe working environment. Here are a few things you can do to protect yourself, your students and your school:

- **Establish classroom rules:** Start in your own classroom by defining consequences for behavior from the first day of school.
- **Learn the DOE Student Discipline Code:** The guidelines the school must follow are established by the DOE’s Student Discipline Code. Become familiar with the code and any variations of the code that your school has adopted. Stand behind that code, too. It might be worthwhile discussing it with your students.
- **Read your school safety plan:** This is a plan specific to your building that details every facet of security in your school. Every fall, the safety plan must be reviewed and, if necessary, revised. If you believe your school needs to change or add procedures to address potentially threatening situations or changed circumstances, contact your chapter leader.
- **Report issues and violations:** If you experience any safety-related problems, alert your chapter leader. Likewise, if you see that provisions of the safety plan are being violated, or if a principal has not followed the steps required by the discipline code, you should speak to your chapter leader and UFT borough safety representative for advice about how best to resolve the matter.
- **Student removal protocol:** If a student’s conduct poses a continuing danger or an ongoing threat of disruption to the academic process, you may request to remove that student from the classroom as long as it is one of the listed infractions in DOE Student Discipline Code. You should consult your school’s student removal plan to make sure you have filled out all the necessary incident forms and followed the correct protocol.
- **Pupil Personnel Team:** If you have a student who is struggling academically or social emotionally, or is disruptive to the classroom, you may refer that student to the Pupil Personnel Team (PPT). The PPT is a cross-functional committee that determines appropriate interventions to help meet the student’s needs. Interventions may include peer mediation, at-risk counseling, a mental health referral, tutoring, extended day classes, etc.

**Some advice for handling challenging situations**

Our school system has many policies and procedures in place to help educators do the right thing for their students. But as a new teacher, you are bound to encounter situations with students that are challenging to navigate. Hopefully, you have a trusted colleague or administrator to whom you can turn for support. If you find yourself in one of the following situations, here is some guidance for making a plan of action.

If you have reason to suspect that a student is being neglected or abused, remember that you are a mandated reporter. You must call the New York State Central Register (SCR) for Child Abuse and Maltreatment at 800-635-1522. Your call is confidential, but it cannot be made anonymously. You must provide SCR with the name and contact information for any other staff members who have direct knowledge about the allegations. Both Child Protective Services officials and school employees are prohibited from disclosing the reporter’s name or confirming that the school led the report. SCR will provide you with a call ID number, which you must share with your principal no later than the end of the school day.

If a student’s behavior is significantly disruptive or a student poses a danger to himself or others, you have the right to have the student removed from the classroom. Your school should have a procedure in place for student removal and a special location (known as a SAVE room) where students can be sent if they are removed from the classroom. Your school should also have a crisis intervention team whose members are trained to help students in crisis. Ask your chapter leader to walk you through your school’s plan.

If you believe one of your students is in need of special education services, you can submit a Request for Initial Referral to your principal. You must explain your reasons for requesting the referral; describe any intervention services, programs or instructional methodologies you have tried; and describe the extent of your contact with the student’s parents or guardian. Your school may have a team of educators who meet regularly to discuss students who are academically at risk. The team may suggest strategies for you to try or develop a plan for working with your student. If your principal agrees with your referral, he or she will initiate the process for obtaining parental consent.

If you believe one of your students is not receiving the services he or she is entitled to for special education or English language learners, the UFT can work with you to help resolve the issue. File a confidential special education complaint or an English language learner complaint. Both are available on the UFT website.

**UFT- Partners Through Experience Program:** UFT- Partners Through Experience Program: The UFT Partners Through Experience program is a voluntary program that matches a new teacher (1–3 years of experience) with a recent retiree (from 1–5 years) to form a collaborative relationship. Register at www.uft.org/partners-through-experience

For new teachers, it’s a great way to receive support and guidance when starting out in the profession and, addresses your own questions and concerns.

For retirees, it’s a great way to stay active in the life of the union and share valuable experience with new teachers. For more information contact mapinfo@uft.org or register at www.uft.org/partners-through-experience.
Your Work Day

Regular work day

In single-session schools, the regular school day for teachers and paraprofessionals is 6 hours and 20 minutes, inclusive of a duty-free lunch.

Hours for other members will differ. For example, nurses and therapists work 6 hours and 55 minutes, including a 30-minute lunch break, while school secretaries work 7 hours and 20 minutes, including a lunch period. Functional chapter leaders can provide information specific to each title.

In District 75 (citywide special education) buildings, District 75 self-contained classes in other school sites, as well as District 79 and multi-session schools, the school day may be 6 hours and 50 minutes including a duty-free lunch.

Teachers get five preparation periods per week for unassigned professional duties.

Professional Development, Parent Engagement and Other Professional Work

For members who work 6 hours and 20 minutes in single-session schools, the schedule also includes 155 minutes a week dedicated to professional development, parent engagement and other professional work. In most schools, that schedule looks like this:

Monday: There is an 80-minute block of time immediately following the school day that will be used for Professional Development. If less than the entire 80 minutes is used for Professional Development on a given day, the remaining time will be used for Other Professional Work. This period of time ends exactly 80 minutes after the end of the school day.

Tuesday: There is a 75-minute block of time immediately following the school day, 40 minutes of which is for parent engagement and 35 minutes for Other Professional Work. This period of time ends 75 minutes after the end of the school day. Paraprofessionals are only required to work the first 70 of the 75 minutes of this block.

The staff of individual schools has the flexibility to modify the school day and determine how to repurpose the 155 minutes based on the needs and philosophy of each school community using a procedure known as a school-based option, or SBO. Please note: In single session schools without an SBO, the day cannot start earlier than 8 a.m. or go later than 4 p.m. on Mondays and Tuesdays, and no later than 3:45 p.m. on Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays.

Other Professional Work: Appropriate Activities

Appropriate activities during the 35-minute block of time for Other Professional Work are:

- collaborative planning;
- lesson study;
- inquiry and review of student work;
- measures of student learning (MOSL)-related work;
- Individualized Education Program-related work (excluding IEP meetings);
- work with or related to computer systems/data entry;
- preparing and grading student assessments;
- mentoring; and
- responsibilities related to teacher leader duties for all individuals in teacher leader positions.

In addition to the activities listed here, a teacher or a group of teachers may propose additional activities that may include working with a student or students for any portion of the school year, which requires approval by the principal. In addition, a Staff Development Committee (SDC) may choose to meet to continue its work during times when other professional work is appropriate. Speech teachers can use this time to do SESIS activities.

Please be aware that Other Professional Work that is done during time designated in the Teachers’ and Paraprofessionals’ Collective Bargaining Agreements for Other Professional Work should be self-directed by the teacher or paraprofessional from the menu of Activities set forth in Article 6 and Article 4B respectively.

On an as-needed basis, principals can direct teachers or paraprofessionals to activities on the contractual list but, per the contract, this direction cannot be done on a regular basis and must be the exception rather than the rule.

Preparation periods

Preparation periods are unassigned periods to be used for professional work. A teacher may decide to use preparation periods to write lesson plans, grade papers, analyze student data, meet with parents, students or colleagues or other professional responsibilities. Prep periods are self-directed, that is, you determine what to do during your prep periods.

A principal cannot mandate meetings or administrative duties during your prep period. If you’re directed to do things like these on your prep, you should follow the directive and then file a grievance because you are entitled to be paid for a lost prep. Speak to your chapter leader about such an assignment.

Your prep period can only be taken away in the event of an emergency. The unavailability of a teacher to cover a class constitutes an emergency and a supervisor may direct another teacher to cover that class during his or her prep period. However, the covering teacher must be compensated for all lost prep periods after one unpaid coverage per term.

Professional periods

There are often questions about our Professional Activities/Administrative Duties — Circular 6R — You select your activity from a menu ap-propriate to your grade level that is specified in Article 7 of your contract. If you want to participate in an activity not listed on the menu, you can do so with the permission of your principal. Your principal is required to meet with your chapter leader to consult on the position you hold and qualifications for each menu item. If your principal fails to consult, the chapter leader should notify his or her district representative and file a grievance.

If you are assigned homeroom or AM/PM bus duty, you are fulfilling the responsibilities of the profession—al role; your professional period becomes one for you to use like a preparation period.

All teachers should only have one assignment per school year. You should not be given different activities/duties on different days. If you are given more than one assignment per school year, you should discuss this with your chapter leader.

A recent arbitration settlement protects members’ contractual rights and will create a new opportunity for high school teachers to work on targeted credit recovery in lieu of their Circular 6 professional activity. Credit recovery is not a professional activity because credit recovery is a teaching period and the UFT-DOE contract stipulates that professional activities cannot be additional teaching periods. For more information about this position, speak with your Chapter Leader.
School Year

The school year in New York City normally ranges from 180–191 days, depending on when the holidays fall. Most members will report to school on the Tuesday after Labor Day. Time is allocated to professional development and classroom preparation before students are present. School holidays include:

- Rosh Hashanah (September or October)
- Eid-al-Adha (September or October)
- Yom Kippur (September or October)
- Columbus Day (second Monday in October)
- Veterans Day (Nov. 11)
- Thanksgiving recess (fourth Thursday and Friday in November)
- (Winter recess) Includes Christmas, Hanukkah and New Year’s Day
- Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s birthday (third Monday in January)
- Lunar New Year (February)
- February midwinter recess (includes Presidents’ Day)
- Spring recess (includes Good Friday and Passover)
- Memorial Day (last Monday in May)
- Eid al-Fitr

Sick Days & Leaves

Sick Days & Personal Business

Teachers and other titles have 10 days per school year that can be used for self-treated illness. Of the 10 days, up to three can be used for personal business (caring for a sick family member, closing on a house, etc.) that cannot be conducted at another time, 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.

Unused sick days become part of a member’s Cumulative Absence Reserve (CAR), commonly referred to as your sick bank. Please note: These days cannot be used for vacation days.

Whenever possible, you should submit medical certification for each day you are absent to preserve as many of your self-treated days as possible.

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 CAR.

Maternity and child care leave

As of this printing, the UFT is fighting for a Paid Parental Leave policy. Please watch your email for announcements.

Currently, you have the right to take a leave of absence at any time during your pregnancy with medical documentation or during your baby’s first years.

Family Medical Leave Act

The federal Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) provides eligible members up to 12 weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave with benefits. FMLA leave can be taken for the birth of a child, the care of a child up to age 1, adoption or the start of foster care. Either parent can take an unpaid child care leave under FMLA.

Maternity leave of absence

During a maternity leave, you must use any days in your sick bank. To extend your paid leave, pedagogues can also borrow up to 20 sick days; paraprofessionals and other administrative employees can borrow up to 10 sick days.

Grace Period

Pedagogues also are entitled to a “calendar month” grace period, which pays you for all weekends and holidays for the calendar month following the exhaustion of the days in your sick bank and/or your borrowed days. The advantage of borrowing days and using the grace period is that since you remain on payroll, those days count toward your pension, seniority and pro-rata summer vacation pay, and it also keeps your health benefits intact.

Extending Your Leave

If you choose to extend your leave of absence beyond 12 weeks, you can apply for a contractual child care leave. The DOE, however, is under no obligation to approve taking you back in the middle of a term.

Either parent can apply for a contractual child care leave, though you and your spouse cannot take a child care leave at the same time if you are both DOE employees. This unpaid leave, which does not include health benefits, begins after the six- or eight-week recuperation period and can last through the first day of the school year following your child’s fourth birthday. You must apply for your maternity/child care leave of
absence on the DOE’s online SOLAS system.

**Special Leave of Absence Coverage (SLOAC)**

Members may also be entitled to four months of Special Leave of Absence Coverage (SLOAC). Special Leave of Absence Coverage (SLOAC) entitles eligible and approved City employees up to a maximum of 18 weeks or 4 months (depending on pay cycle) of benefits coverage in a 12-month period during unpaid leave resulting from a disability or serious illness of the employee. Additionally, you may be eligible for an additional eight months of coverage through the UFT Welfare Fund. Please be aware that to be eligible for SLOAC, you must exhaust your CAR days, end your borrowed days (if you choose to borrow) and grace period at least one day before the baby turns 6 weeks old (in a routine pregnancy) or 8 weeks old (with a documented C-section). Your payroll secretary can tell you how many days you have in your sick bank. You must apply for your leave of absence on the DOE’s online SOLAS system.

**Supplemental health benefits**

A UFT Welfare Fund child care benefit may extend your supplemental health benefits for up to six months following the birth or adoption of a child. This benefit begins upon termination of your supplemental health benefits covered under your leave. You need to apply for this benefit by completing the UFT Welfare Fund Child Care Coverage Request Form and submitting it, along with a copy of your child care leave, to the Welfare Fund. Be aware that before submitting the Child Care Coverage Request Form, you need to submit a UFT Welfare Fund Change of Status form to add your child.

If you have additional questions about maternity or child care leaves, call your UFT borough office or check the UFT’s website calendar for upcoming UFT maternity workshops.

**Class Size**

Since its inception, the UFT has made reducing class size a priority so our members can give each child more individual attention. Early on, when classes often exceeded 40, we won class size limits in the contract: usually 32 in elementary grades, 33 in intermediate schools (30 in Title 1 intermediate schools), and 34 in high schools. Class size is 25 in kindergarten and 18 in pre-K. Tell your UFT chapter leader if your class or classes exceed these limits.

**Additional Resources Restoration of Health Leave**

If you are disabled as the result of non-work-related injury or illness, you can apply for a Restoration of Health Leave. Once you exhaust your CAR balance, this extended unpaid leave, which requires medical documentation, may provide you with up to a year of health benefits.

**More Rights Appointment in a New York City School**

When a New York City school permanently hires you to fill a vacancy, you are “appointed” to that position. Your appointment must match your state certification by both subject and level. As part of this appointment process, the DOE automatically generates its own teaching license. This New York City license must match your New York State certificate subject area and, in addition, the grade level of your NYC teaching assignment.

The NYC license specifies the area in which you will be considered for tenure decisions and accrue seniority; the latter can be very important if there is excessing in your school. While there are no more New York City paper licenses, there are still license/appointment areas, each with a different code.

When you begin teaching, the DOE notifies you by personal email of your license/appointment area and includes the license code. Make sure you are appointed in the subject area and division level (i.e. elementary, middle or high school) that matches your state certification.

Unfortunately, “out of license” teaching assignments are not unusual. Since some teaching positions are harder to fill than others, newer teachers are often assigned to teach out of their license areas, in a different level, subject area or both. While such “out of license” assignments don’t affect your salary, they could affect your ability to attain tenure and your right to keep your position if excessing occurs. Teachers who have taught “out of license” could find their probation period extended if the principal or superintendent thinks there is not enough experience in, or evidence of effectiveness in, the appointed license area.

**Your School Personnel File**

Members have an official file that contains the administration’s observation reports, annual evaluation sheets and other materials. You have a right to see and photocopy the contents of your file.

Your supervisor can place an item in your file only if you have seen and signed it. Signing an item means you have received it, not that you agree with it.

Sometimes a supervisor wants to place a letter of reprimand in a file. You have the right to append a response to material placed in your file. See your chapter leader for assistance in formulating your response. You don’t have to append your response right away. Members should sign the letter signifying they received it, but take the time to carefully craft their response, which can be appended at any time.

There are time limits on a supervisor placing material in a file. A contractual right allows you to remove any negative material in your file that has not been attached to charges against you three years from the date of the material.

Get in touch with your chapter leader for more information.
You can be appointed under only one license at a time (even if you have multiple certifications), and your license area of appointment determines the area in which you will be granted tenure. Sometimes your certification permits you to be appointed under another license; however, if you agree to switch to a new appointment, you serve an additional probationary period.

Contact your UFT borough office before you switch your license. In any case, your salary does not change when your license changes. Be sure to check with your payroll secretary that your appointment date is correctly entered in the computer.

If you believe your appointment, New York City license, or teaching assignment does not match your state certification, speak to your chapter leader at once. Your chapter leader can help you discuss this with your principal and get your program corrected as soon as possible.

**Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT)**

School personnel assigned to each Integrated Co-Teaching class must minimally include a special education teacher and a general education teacher. In New York City, the special education teacher must be certified/licensed and appointed in special education and the general education teacher must be certified/licensed and appointed under a general education or content area license. The general education or content area teacher has primary responsibility for delivery of content area instruction in an ICT class. The special education teacher is responsible for designing and delivering specialized instruction to students with disabilities.

The number of students with disabilities in an Integrated Co-Teaching class may not exceed 40 percent of the total class register with a maximum of 12 students with disabilities. Integrated Co-Teaching classes must adhere to general education class-size limits. Under Integrated Co-Teaching, classes that normally have a class-size limit of 20 students will increase to 25 students, with a maximum of 10 students having disabilities. The 40 percent and 12-student limit includes any student with a disability in that class, regardless of whether all of the students are recommended for integrated co-teaching services.

**Transfers**

The DOE posts available openings on its Open Market website. Under the “Open Market” transfer system, some members, no matter how many years of service, have the right to seek a transfer to another school. It is a way to match members with schools in which they want to work.

Eligible members who want to transfer are free to seek positions in

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**What I do: Hannah Brancato, teacher team leader**

**What is a teacher team leader?**

My role is to coach school-based teacher leaders — model teachers, peer collaborative teachers and master teachers — on how to be coaches to their colleagues. Teacher leaders are not supervisors or administrators; they’re there to support their colleagues and help them in their professional growth.

**How did you come to take on this role?**

I started out teaching English as a new language in elementary school and then social studies at International HS at Lafayette. As a grade team leader at International HS, I learned that you can lead from any seat. I had no interest in becoming an administrator, and I liked the idea of teachers being able to support each other and stay connected to the classroom and to students. So when the 2014 UFT-DOE contract created formal teacher leadership roles, I applied for one of those positions and was selected to be a teacher team leader. All my schools are now concentrated in the same district and I’ve been able to work closely with the superintendent to facilitate a teacher leadership community. The work is really successful when there’s a localized vision.

**What’s a typical day like for you?**

I visit each of my schools about every two to three weeks for the day to meet with each teacher leader one-on-one for individual coaching sessions. During sessions, we focus on the five areas of instructional leadership: the vision for the school, professional learning, shared leadership, data-driven instruction and school culture. I might be debriefing a classroom visit, troubleshooting challenging situations or helping to come up with an action plan for professional learning at the school level. Often my job is to model the processes teacher leaders might go through when coaching their colleagues.

**How has your role evolved since the position was created?**

A big part of the work at the beginning is taking stock of the needs of the school community and seeing where students and teachers need additional support. When I first came to a school, I do a lot of listening to get a sense of what their vision is. Three years ago, we were working on things like starting classroom inter-visitations and setting up professional learning committees. Now teacher leaders have grown into their roles and don’t need those logistics as much. We can dig more deeply into the impact of their work. Teacher leaders tend to wear a lot of hats in their schools, but they do best when they have a clear instructional focus for their work.

**Are there common themes across schools in the type of coaching you do with teacher leaders?**

One of our main philosophies is that teachers are placed in teacher leader positions because they are strong practitioners. We call our teacher leaders “lead learners” because they’re willing to be vulnerable, take risks and try new things with students and invite others into their classrooms. There’s professional learning that we bring to schools to make sure that teacher leaders have the chance to explore that reflective mindset and facilitate nonevaluative coaching.

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*By Suzanne Popadin | March 1, 2018 New York Teacher*
any district, in any school with vacancies, with no restrictions.

Schools may begin to advertise their vacancies on the Open Market website starting April 15.

If the new school wants to hire you, you do not need permission or a release from your current principal or supervisor and can transfer freely through Aug. 7.

A comprehensive UFT fact sheet on transfers and excessing is at wwwuft.org/teaching/transfer-opportunities.

Please note: Nurses have their own transfer system. OT and PT supervisors are not on the open market either.

Excessing

Excessing occurs when a school has more staff members in a specific license area than it needs because of a loss of students or funding. Excessing also can occur when schools close or are reorganized. Excessing is done in reverse seniority order within each license area; the person with the least seniority in that license area would be the first one excessed. Excessing seniority is determined by total time in the New York City school system.

By June 15, or as soon thereafter as possible, principals must notify staff members if they are at risk of being excessed. Excessed members have the right to apply for vacancies citywide unless excessed. Excessed members if they are at risk of being excessed must have a job with all your benefits and your regular rate of pay. This job security provision was part of the contract that eliminated all forced transfers and created the open market.

If you are excessed and you do not find a position, the DOE will assign you to an Absent Teacher Reserve (ATR) position. An ATR position is a full-time job substituting for absent staff in a school. ATRs can also substitute out of license on a short-term basis. You can continue to seek, and will receive assistance securing, a regular position while you are an ATR. You may be rotated among schools in your district or assigned to a school in your borough that has a vacancy or a need for a long-term leave coverage in your license area.

To be sure your seniority information is correct, check the excessing list in your school, available from your chapter leader.

Paraprofessionals’ responsibilities

Individualized Education Programs (IEPs)

Paraprofessionals responsible for assisting with the implementation of a student’s IEP must be provided the opportunity to review a copy of the IEP prior to implementation. Paraprofessionals must have ongoing access to the IEP.

It may be the same copy of the IEP provided to the student’s special education teacher or another teacher or related service provider under whose direction the paraprofessional works. It may be a copy maintained in another location in the school building as long as that location is readily accessible to the paraprofessional.

Schools that use SESIS to provide electronic access to paraprofessionals must ensure that they receive training on how to use SESIS and that computers are available in the school building during the school day. Schools are not required to provide a copy of the IEP to the paraprofessional, but they may legally do so if they choose.

Supervision

According to the DOE-paraprofessional collective-bargaining agreement, paraprofessionals may not remain in a room without a teacher, i.e., when the teacher is called away for a meeting or is absent for the day. Paraprofessionals must be under the direct supervision of a licensed teacher in a classroom or outside in the schoolyard.

The only exception is the Lead Teacher Assistant, the new career ladder position for paraprofessionals. Paraprofessionals who are Lead Teacher Assistants may fill in during a teacher’s absence for up to 10 days over the course of a school year. A Lead Teacher Assistant, however, cannot be assigned to take charge of a classroom if the teacher requests or takes an extended leave.

Lunch Duty

School administrations cannot ask paraprofessionals to supervise the lunchroom. Special Circular 6R established that lunchroom supervision may not be assigned to paras. Schools have other school-based personnel, including school aides and supervising school aides, who can be assigned this responsibility.

Paraprofessionals, including one-on-one paraprofessionals, are entitled to a duty-free lunch period. A child's IEP can mandate paraprofessional coverage at lunch for that child, but the IEP cannot, and does not, specify a specific person to perform that role. If a paraprofessional is asked to be with a child during the child's lunch, that paraprofessional must still have a duty-free lunch period at some other point in the day. (If a paraprofessional is unsure about the requirements on a child’s IEP, the paraprofessionals should ask to see the IEP. State law requires that paraprofessionals have access to the IEPs of students in their care.)

Absences

Paraprofessionals earn one sick leave day for every month in which they are in service for at least 16 calendar days. The maximum number of sick leave days earnable in a school year is 10 for September through June.

Paraprofessionals can use earned sick leave and be paid if they meet the following requirements:

- Self-treated absences. Paraprofessionals cannot use more than three consecutive self-treated sick days. The fourth consecutive day will result in an absence without pay. No more than five self-treated days can be used in a five-month period (from September through January and from February through June). The sixth day would result in an absence without pay.

- Personal business days. Annual employees are entitled to up to three of their 10 self-treated days for personal business during a given school year provided that reasonable notice is given to the principal. Those personal business days may be used to care for a sick family member. The number of personal business days that a paraprofessional uses reduces the number of self-treated days he or she has.

- Medically certified absences. Medically certified absences are absences for which the para provides a medical note.

If a paraprofessional is absent more than three consecutive days, he or she must provide a doctor’s note. If a paraprofessional has medically certified absences exceeding the amount of time in the paraprofessional’s sick bank, it will result in absences without pay.

Be aware that days off for both self-treated absences and personal business are intended to be used only for those express purposes. If a supervisor suspects that is not the case, the supervisor may investigate and attempt to deny payment if it is discovered that the paraprofessional was not really ill or did not have to conduct personal business that could be accomplished only during school hours. Excessive absence may be a basis for discipline.
Grievances

The union contracts empower us as educators to do our jobs well. It includes articles and rights whose sole aim is to ensure that we have the resources, support and structures in place to do our best to educate our students. It gives us an important voice in the workplace and a mechanism for addressing problems.

The contract allows us to keep class size to an agreed-upon number, provides us with preparation time, gives us a say in our own professional development, includes vital whistle-blower protections in relation to special education referrals, protects the integrity of our grading system, ensuring that a supervisor can’t change the grades a teacher has given without written notification, and much more.

But inevitably, in the real world, disagreements and problems come up. What should you do if you feel your contractual rights have been violated?

First, speak with your chapter leader about possibly filing a grievance. If you cannot reach your chapter leader, you can speak to your district representative, or call or stop by your UFT borough office. The union is here to support you. Filing a grievance is the way members object to the Department of Education’s violation of the contract or of established DOE policy and practice as embodied in bylaws, circulars, personnel memoranda or Chancellor’s Regulations.

Article 22A of the UFT teachers contract defines a grievance as a complaint by a UFT member “that there has been a violation of the contract or of established DOE policy and practice as embodied in bylaws, circulars, personnel memoranda or Chancellor’s Regulations.

Don’t delay. While time frames to file grievances vary from contract to contract, most grievances must be filed within 30 school days of the incident; after that, there’s little the union can do through the grievance process to correct the situation. Be aware that some grievances, such as those regarding per session and reorganization issues, have a much shorter time frame.

Your chapter leader can explain the grievance process to you, including possible ways to resolve your complaint without having to resort to a grievance. If your complaint is not resolved, the chapter leader can assist you in preparing and filing a formal grievance.

If your complaint is technically not a violation of contract provisions, your chapter leader can still help by suggesting other methods of resolving the conflict, whether through informal meetings or more formal avenues such as consultation. Even if the chapter leader doesn’t agree that your complaint is covered by the contract, as a UFT member you still have the right to initiate a grievance.

Investigators & Investigations

Occasionally, a member may be investigated for an allegation, or a request may be made to interview the member as part of an investigation.

If you are ever approached by investigators or your principal wants to question you as part of an investigation, you should contact your chapter leader/borough office for immediate assistance. Appropriate representation for any meeting with investigators will be arranged.

You are within your rights to tell the investigator: “May I please have your card so that my union representative or attorney may get in touch with you to arrange a meeting?” During any meeting that could lead to disciplinary action, you should have appropriate representation.

Arrests

If you are arrested for any reason, even for something like civil disobedience and even if it happens out of state, you must contact the Office of Personnel Investigations immediately: call (718) 935-2666 or email OPInvestigation@schools.nyc.gov. You also must notify your principal.

If you are arrested on school property and/or for anything related to your job, please contact your district representative immediately.
She teaches by example

In 2009, Gehan Habashy and her husband won the Green Card Lottery. In September 2017, Habashy began teaching visual arts at the International HS for Health Sciences, and students were the winners. “I speak honestly with my students about my challenges, my struggles in this country. It creates a very strong bond between us,” she says. “I am their learning partner: We empower one another; we inspire one another.”

Born and raised in Egypt, Habashy has felt at home at International HS, where the student body is composed entirely of immigrants, since she first went to the Queens school as a student teacher. “We have a very diverse community,” she says, rattling off more than a dozen nationalities. “I felt like, oh my God, these students are exactly like me: fresh immigrants, trying to figure out their way, trying to follow their dreams.”

New immigrants, she says, “face a huge challenge to develop a sense of social inclusion,” especially in the current political climate, and “the experience is exhausting.”

Habashy arrived in the United States with a bachelor’s degree in fine arts and earned a master’s in art education from New York University, choosing that program because of its “social justice lens.”

She sees visual arts as “a powerful tool. It’s not about a skill-based project that ends up on my classroom door,” she says. “It’s not about a beautiful picture. To me, it’s giving voice to my students.”

As English language learners, they have accents. They relate to Habashy because she has one, too. “As a teenager struggling with language, there are a lot of barriers just to speak up. You’re embarrassed, you’re shy. I tell them, ‘Listen to my accent. You know what? Nobody cares. You just need to open up.’”

It follows that class art projects are often about identity, “about knowing yourself, being proud of your strengths as well as knowing your weaknesses and challenges. It takes courage for students to face the trauma in their lives and start to figure out who they are.”

Habashy reminds them all, “While you are trying to figure out your own American dream, you are shaping this country’s future. You’re an asset to this country. You are making America great.”

— By Suzanne Popadin, January 4, 2018 New York Teacher
Helping others is what we do; it’s why we’ve chosen our professions, hoping to make a difference in the world. We help each other by standing together. The simplest way to support your union’s political action is through voluntary contributions to COPE.

COPE allows us to have political power and make a difference. With a collective voice, we strengthen schools, build communities and improve our families’ lives. Through voluntary contributions, UFT COPE:

- Ensures better wages, benefits, pensions, working conditions and job supports for its members;
- Secures the financial and political support for innovative education programs, such as our Community Learning Schools Initiative and cutting-edge career and technical education programs;
- Allows us to fight for affordable housing and rent regulation, immigrant rights, social justice issues and civil rights; and
- Helps the UFT support candidates who will stand up and fight for teachers, parents and children.

See your chapter leader to sign up. Most members contribute just $5 per paycheck to support activities such as lobbying, printing and mailing of literature, campaign support for endorsed candidates, rallies, voter registration drives, online informational campaigns and phone banks.
Parents and educators are natural allies in the effort to provide children with the best education possible. The UFT works closely with thousands of parents across the city to help ensure that their children and all New York City students receive a great education. The union has full-time parent liaisons who engage directly with parents in every borough. We also work with parents through our many community partners. In addition, the UFT website features tools and information for parents on everything from navigating the school system to understanding the college application process. If you are looking to strengthen the home-school partnership, you can use the dedicated parent engagement time, as well as Open School Week and parent teacher conferences.

Dial-A-Teacher program

The UFT sponsors a homework help program for elementary, middle and high school students called Dial-A-Teacher. Classroom teachers answer homework questions at (212) 777-3380, Monday through Thursday, from 4 to 7 p.m. during the school year. The experts taking calls speak different languages, including Bengali, Chinese (Mandarin, Cantonese and Fukanese), English, French, Haitian-Creole, Russian, Slovak and Spanish.

The Albert Shanker College Scholarship Fund

Each year, the United Federation of Teachers proudly awards nearly $1 million in undergraduate and graduate scholarships to academically excellent and financially eligible students from New York City public schools. For more information or to apply, visit www.uft.org/parents/scholarship-fund.

Home-School Connections

Cordial and forthright conversations with parents can create a true home-school partnership, and it’s best to foster that throughout the school year when students are doing well, and not just when there’s a problem. Here is some advice for arranging and conducting productive meetings:

• Find out what your school’s policies and procedures are;
• Begin with a positive statement about the child;
• Focus on joint goals for student achievement;
• Enlist the parent’s/guardian’s support for student success; and
• End with a summary of next steps for yourself, parents and the student.

In addition to holding face-to-face meetings with parents or guardians, individually or as a group, members may also want to:

• Have telephone conversations with parents;
• Correspon in writing, such as e-mails;
• Create newsletters for parents or guardians; and
• Create content for school or class websites.

Need books and supplies for your classroom?

It’s the school’s responsibility to provide you with basic instructional supplies, such as paper, chalk, math manipulatives and textbooks, so you can provide the best possible education to your students. If you find you’re digging into your own wallet to buy the basics, talk to your chapter leader about utilizing the contract’s “basic school supplies” provision.

Need strategies for Breakfast in the Classroom?

Have concerns about the program? Use this form to alert us to issues: www.uft.org/our-rights/health-wellness/breakfast-classroom