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Featured post

Teacher Evaluation And Improvement Plan: Frequently Asked Questions

Casey

Mulgrew on "Eye on New York"

Jun. 7, 2010
2:42 pm
by W.J. Levay
No Comments

UFT President Michael Mulgrew appeared on CBS 2's "Eye on New York" to discuss budget cuts facing New York City public schools.

UFT President Michael Mulgrew appears on "Eye on New York"



Filed under:
Education
Funding



- Help at Every Level
- Your Union
- Certification Primer for New Teachers
- Your Professional Growth
- UFT Professional Committees
- Your Money
- Your Financial Future
- Some Essential Things to Know
- Benefits
- Safety and Discipline

New York

Jun. 3, 2010
6:33 pm
by W.J. Levay
No Comments

Filed under:
Roundup

Issue of *New York Times* all month, **high-profile** efforts, to raise state Senate's

preliminary budget that would cut city public schools by \$500 million. The state Legislature on May 28 passed legislation that addresses most of the UFT's key concerns about charter schools, including limiting the number in

NEW YORK CITY EDITION

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UFT

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Bob Calder said "I keep seeing "School
like ..." on In Defense Of Teachers

Pat Donato said "People who bash
teachers should ..." on Stand Up Again
Teacher-Bashing: Stand Up For Our
Schools

Gideon said "What exactly does it mea
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A MESSAGE FROM UFT PRESIDENT MICHAEL MULGREW

When it comes to education, study after study shows, with the exception of parents, the most important factor in a child's success in school is that child's teacher.

That's why all of us at your union, the United Federation of Teachers, want to help you become the best teacher you can be. This new teacher handbook is just one part of that commitment. With topics ranging from your salary to your professional growth to where to go for help, this handbook will provide answers to many of your questions, information about enhancing your professional and economical status, and help in making sense of what can often be a complex system. I'm sure you'll find it useful.

I know that many of you, just like me, came from other careers because you wanted to make a difference in children's lives. Now, adding to an already demanding job, teachers find they are up against well-financed enemies of public education, teacher bashers and anti-labor corporations whose bottom line is profit, not students. In addition, due to the economic situation this city's schools and students have had to face increasing class size and devastating cuts to instructional programs and social services. Nevertheless, in our 51 years as a union we have learned how to fight such attacks and how to deal with challenges so that teachers have the tools they need to do their job because the education of our children is one of the most important work adults can do.

I became an active member of the UFT as a classroom teacher and it was one of the best decisions I made. I urge you too to become involved with your union. Reach out to your UFT chapter leader, the person at your school who represents you. Become a member of our new teacher committee or one of the many other professional committees we sponsor. Get useful information to help you in your classroom by coming to our weekend and after-school workshops and forums. Help us with our efforts to ensure our schools and students receive the resources to which they are entitled by, for example, volunteering at phone banks. We rely on you and all the other new teachers to make our next 50 years even better for educators and the students they teach.

Michael Mulgrew

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HELP AT EVERY LEVEL

OK. You've been through preservice orientation and you're finally in your classroom. Now what?

You have decisions to make — practical decisions about how to arrange your room, manage your classes and plan your lessons. The tone you set can have a major impact on how the class functions.

You're Not Alone

Luckily, you don't have to figure all this out by yourself. There are experts in your school who can provide guidance and experience. Some schools have a professional development team that may include a literacy coach and a math coach or a Teacher Center specialist.

These colleagues have years of classroom experience, and they're eager to share their knowledge. They will:

- Help you problem-solve instructional and classroom management issues.
- Show you how to construct standards-based classroom assignments and assessments that will assure you that students are learning the subject matter while preparing for standardized tests.
- Meet with you and, at your request, come into your classroom to make suggestions and even provide demonstration lessons.
- Offer support in a nonevaluative way.

Your UFT Chapter Leader

The union members in your school elected this person to represent you. The chapter leader is your best source for information about your rights and benefits. If you haven't yet joined the UFT, he or she will have a membership card — or you can sign up online at www.uft.org.

Your School Secretaries

School secretaries — also UFT colleagues — know how to cut through the red tape. The payroll secretary, in particular, handles forms and records for attendance, payroll, health benefits and other matters of immediate importance to you. Connecting with your payroll secretary will get you reliable answers to your questions.

Mentors

In addition, if you're eligible — generally speaking that means if you haven't had prior teach-

ing experience — you'll get one-on-one mentoring throughout your first year.

- Mentors are experienced colleagues who have trained extensively in ways to best support you.
- They will do demonstration lessons, co-teach classes with you and offer constructive feedback on your teaching practices.
- They will help you diagnose student work, make suggestions about lesson plans and help you connect to people and instructional resources in your building.
- They will work with you on a nonevaluative, nonjudgmental basis. Translation: Your discussions will be 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.

Coach, Mentor: What's the Difference?

- Coaches focus on content (math and literacy) and work with all staff in a building.
- Mentors help new teachers learn teaching strategies and classroom management.
- Mentors and coaches often collaborate. They support best practices and influence the culture of a school.

UFT TEACHER CENTER

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 staffers can help you deepen your content knowledge and enhance your teaching skills.
- They are your colleagues. The wisdom they share is based on practical classroom experience.
- They can offer you advice, encouragement and the opportunity to try out and master new techniques.

Their goal is simple: to help you become a dynamic and knowledgeable teaching professional.



To find UFT Teacher Center sites, search www.ufttc.org or print a directory.

For Teacher Center professional activities, check out www.uft.org and the *New York Teacher's* TNT page.

The Teacher Center's Especially for New Teachers Network has meetings monthly in each borough. Details are at www.uft.org and www.ufttc.org.

Need a master's degree or deeper knowledge of your field? Try the Teacher Center's **degree/certificate programs** and courses. We'll mail you a special *New York Teacher Education Supplement* three times a year.

P credits — Not for certification, but another way to earn professional development credits to fulfill requirements and earn more money. Low-cost, 30-hour, 3-credit courses after school and on weekends throughout the city. Register at www.nyasdpdp.org.



YOUR UNION

You have access to an array of benefits that will enhance your financial well-being and provide discounts for entertainment, car rental and travel. Some of these benefits are provided by our statewide affiliate, New York State United Teachers, while others come through our national parent, the American Federation of Teachers.

For More Information: For AFT benefits see www.aft.org/aftplus for an ever-growing array of benefits, from no-annual-fee credit cards to student loan consolidation; from books, magazines and flowers to pet insurance and health club memberships.

For NYSUT benefits call NYSUT Member Benefits (1-800-626-8101) or visit the Member Benefits website www.nysut.org.

Learn more about how your UFT contract protects you. Read or download “Know Your Rights” at www.uft.org/member/rights/your_rights.

Join the New Teacher Committee: e-mail jdownes@ufttc.org.

As a UFT member, you become part of an organization that’s dedicated to:

- Helping you succeed in your career.
- Securing you a good salary and benefits.
- Improving the education of New York City’s schoolchildren.

Founded in 1960 but with a heritage going back to the early 20th century, the United Federation of Teachers is a dynamic force, fighting in City Hall and in Albany for whatever it takes to further those goals.

With 200,000 members representing not just nonsupervisory city school employees but also home childcare providers, hospital nurses and other healthcare providers and private school educators, the UFT is part of a national network of locals of the 1.4 million-member American Federation of Teachers.

This booklet is proof of the UFT’s commitment, as well as of the enormous resources that your union puts at your command.

Here’s a brief look at ways you can tap into the union’s capacity:

At Your School

The basic unit of the UFT is the *chapter* — that is, the union members in your school. Every three years your chapter elects a *chapter leader* to be your union representative. This person is your first source of information and help on everything from salary to benefits. He or she:

- Knows what is happening in your school and in your union and whom to see or call about every situation.
- Can clear up misunderstandings and help you get support and supplies.
- Meets regularly with the principal on matters of importance to chapter members.
- Represents you in dealings with the school administration.
- Tries to resolve any situation that may violate your contractual protections. If that fails, your chapter leader can help you file a grievance or, in some cases, file the grievance on your behalf.
- Represents your school at the union’s highest decision-making body, the Delegate Assembly (DA), which meets monthly to consider issues facing members and to shape union positions

and policies. Delegates vote on the UFT’s political endorsements, set the union’s legislative agenda and adopt resolutions on education, labor and human rights policies.

- The union is run as a representative democracy. Each school has at least one person, elected by the union members in your school, who joins your chapter leader in representing you at the monthly meetings of the UFT Delegate Assembly. The number of delegates in a school varies with the size of the union membership. If he or she has not already found you, ask a colleague to introduce you or ask who the chapter leader is and introduce yourself.

At UFT Borough Offices

The UFT has offices in every borough where you can find experts — all fellow UFT members — to answer questions about salary, certification, educational issues, health and other benefits, safety, pension and more. (See [page 5](#) for addresses.) The offices are open until 6 p.m. most days, until 7 p.m. one day a week.

Throughout the school year, each borough office hosts many meetings and workshops that help new teachers.

Here are some of the borough office staffers whom you can turn to:

- Your **borough representative** is a union leader who coordinates all UFT activities in that borough.
- Your **district representative** (DR) is a union leader who works to resolve issues, usually raised by chapter leaders, that cannot be settled at the school level. You may meet your DR at your borough office, or perhaps your chapter leader will invite her or him into your school.
- **Salary representatives** can help you with payroll problems or delays, and check that you are getting the right salary.
- **Pension consultants** can respond to your questions about the pension system.
- **Educational liaisons** can advise you about certification requirements as well as classroom issues.
- **Safety representatives** are specially trained to respond to incidents as well as environmental health and safety issues.



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 Teacher Handbook*.

Membership in the UFT is voluntary, but about 95 percent of employees eligible to join the UFT do so because they understand that standing together with their colleagues brings them strength.

Under state law, those who choose not to join are nevertheless covered by all of the contract's provisions, including the salary schedule, and the UFT must represent them in every instance in which we would represent a member. All this costs money, so the law requires that nonmembers pay an "agency fee" that is akin to dues.

Functional Chapters

Although we call the union the United Federation of Teachers, over the years it has grown to include many other educators and professionals. Although working at different tasks, they share common interests and concerns. So that they can clearly articulate their concerns, these groups have formed chapters of their own, commonly known as functional chapters.

Functional chapters have their own elected leadership. The interests of functional chapters are represented on union decision-making bodies such as the Executive Board and the DA. They hold regular meetings to map out strategy and identify members' concerns. Some functional chapters, such as guidance counselors and secretaries, have their own contracts.

Here are some of the UFT's functional chapters that may have members in your school: attendance teachers; guidance counselors; hearing educational services; laboratory specialists and technicians; nurses and therapists; paraprofessionals; school secretaries; social workers and psychologists; speech teachers.

At UFT Headquarters

At union headquarters, located at 52 Broadway, New York, NY 10004, you'll find:

- UFT Certification Services, [page 7](#).
- The Teacher Center headquarters and conference center, where there are many graduate-level classes, educational workshops and professional conferences, [page 3](#).
- The UFT Welfare Fund, [page 25](#).
- Union departments (including Political Action,

[page 23](#), Grievance, Safety and Just for Fun, [page 24](#)).

- UFT officers, [page 31](#), whom members elect every three years. They:
 - Shape policy.
 - Negotiate and enforce our contract.
 - Deal with the school system, and city and state agencies.
 - Assure that the UFT efficiently delivers services to you.
 - Work to create public and political support to improve teaching and learning conditions in public schools.
 - Fight to ensure that educators have a decent income, long-term economic security, and professional autonomy and fairness on the job.

The UFT Constitution specifies that five of the six vice presidents come from:

- Elementary schools.
- Middle schools.
- Academic high schools.
- Career/technical high schools.
- Special education.

The sixth VP champions education issues.

Only UFT members can vote on proposed contracts and in UFT elections at the school and city-wide levels. If you are not yet a member, see your school chapter leader.

BOROUGH REPRESENTATIVES

BRONX

Jose Vargas
2500 Halsey St.,
Bronx, NY 10461
1-718-379-6200

BROOKLYN

Howard Schoor
335 Adams St., 25th fl.,
Brooklyn, NY 11201
1-718-852-4900

MANHATTAN

Evelyn DeJesus
52 Broadway, 10th fl.,
New York, NY 10004
1-212-598-6800

QUEENS

Rona Freiser
97-77 Queens Blvd.,
Rego Park, NY 11374
1-718-275-4400

STATEN ISLAND

Emil Pietromonaco
4456 Amboy Rd, 2nd fl.,
Staten Island, NY 10312
1-718-605-1400

UFT Borough Offices
extended hours: Now open
until 7 p.m. one day a
week.

Bronx	Thursday
Brooklyn	Tuesday
Manhattan	Thursday
Queens	Thursday
Staten Island	Tuesday



What has the UFT won for newer teachers?

As part of its campaign to gain greater respect for teachers, the union has negotiated a 44 percent increase in salaries since 2002.

During negotiations, the union puts a high priority on new teachers. Here are some examples of that. The union:

- Prevented layoffs of nearly 4,500 new teachers in 2010.
- Refused to cut pay and benefits for incoming teachers to fund a raise for others.
- Added a \$1,000/year longevity payment for teachers with 5 to 10 years of service.
- Increased starting salaries significantly.
- Launched a new transfer system that vastly increases newer teachers' opportunities to change schools.

NEW TEACHER ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The UFT New Teacher Advisory Committee is comprised of teachers who are committed to helping new teachers become experienced teachers in New York City public schools. Committee members from every borough work with UFT leaders to ensure that the union is in touch with the needs of new teachers.

The committee focuses on ways to communicate more effectively with new teachers.

Some of the activities include:

- Updating this *New Teacher Handbook*.
- Launching exciting and interesting programs so new teachers have more opportunities to interact with fellow union members, both socially and in seminars and workshops designed especially for them.
- Advocating for new teachers both within the union and in the community.
- Hosting a vibrant series of events where new teachers can socialize with one another and meet UFT leaders who can respond to their questions and concerns. (see www.uft.org/new_teacher). Recent events have included not only gatherings in restaurants, but also a rendezvous in the New York Botanical Garden and more serious sessions on school safety and handling stress.
- Hosting a summer information series for teachers who will begin teaching in the fall.

If you want to make a difference in new teachers' lives, join the New Teacher Advisory Committee by e-mailing:

Co-chair Jeannette Downes at jdownes@ufttc.org and Co-chair Analia Gerard at agerard@ufttc.org. Contact your borough office for the name of your New Teacher Advisory Committee leader.

CERTIFICATION PRIMER FOR NEW TEACHERS

Do you know whether you have a Provisional or Initial Certificate? Are you clear about your requirements under a Transitional A or Transitional B Certificate? Are you aware of your deadlines for completing your requirements if you are working under an Extended or Renewed Provisional Certificate?

If you are confused about these or other aspects of your state certification, you're not alone. In recent years, the State Education Department (SED) increased the number of certificate categories to more than 10, each with different requirements and deadlines. And the UFT is fielding many questions from newer teachers looking for clear, understandable and reliable answers.

"The state provided alternative routes to certification to give prospective teachers greater flexibility, and that's a good thing," notes Ann Rosen, UFT special representative for certification and licensing. "But new teachers don't always know which type of certificate they have, and that could get them into trouble if they don't understand their requirements and meet their deadlines."

To help teachers find their way, the union has a team of UFT consultants and educational liaisons. They, in turn, offer workshops in schools or UFT borough offices and respond to teachers' questions in person, by telephone and via e-mail.

To address the most common points of confusion, we've prepared this brief certification primer. If you need more specific information, make an appointment with the UFT Certification Services Department at UFT headquarters at 52 Broadway (1-212-420-1830). You can also speak to an educational liaison in your UFT borough office or e-mail www.teacherline@uft.org.

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 the face of your state certificate. Also, first-year teachers can consult a recent New York City Department of Education (DOE) e-mail that clearly identifies individual appointment, licensing and certification details, including codes and dates. (The UFT has asked the DOE to issue a similar document to previously hired teachers, as well.)

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.

If you have not already done so, be sure to register on the SED website for a TEACH online account (go to www.highered.nysed.gov/tcert and click the box on the right). This will enable you to track the requirements you have already met and those you still need to meet.

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

PROVISIONAL CERTIFICATE. The only teachers who still hold a valid provisional certificate are those who have been granted a time extension by the SED. If you have this certificate, be sure to complete all of the following requirements for a permanent certificate before your new deadline:

- A master's degree. The UFT Teacher Center, in collaboration with area colleges, offers master's degree programs, some at reduced rates, to help you meet this requirement. Also, check the SED website — www.highered.nysed.gov/tcert — for other options.

- A passing grade on your Content Specialty Test (CST) and the ATS-P (the performance video), if required for your certificate. Those with a pre-K-6 certificate must take the multisubject Content Specialty Test, whether you are appointed under an early childhood or a common branches license. The UFT Teacher Center holds coaching sessions to prepare you for the ATS-P. Look for announcements in *New York Teacher* ads and at www.ufttc.org.

PERMANENT CERTIFICATE. This is the final certificate issued to teachers with a valid provisional certificate, provided they complete all requirements and file an application before their provisional certificates expire.

INITIAL CERTIFICATE. This entry-level certificate became available on Sept. 1, 2004, under new state requirements. 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 or a related field;
- Three years of full-time teaching experience;
- One year of mentoring; and
- U.S. citizenship or permanent residency.

PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATE. With this advanced certificate, you have met all current state requirements. However, even after you achieve your professional certificate, the SED requires you

to complete 175 hours of professional development (35 hours per year) within five years of the issue date to keep your certificate valid.

The UFT is urging the DOE to count toward this 35-hour annual requirement the hours of mandated professional development that teachers take each year during the days designated for staff development and at other times during the school day, in accordance with the terms of the current contract. Until an agreement is reached with the DOE, the union advises you to keep in your personal file a log and all paperwork showing the professional development you have taken. You will be notified as soon as an agreement with the DOE is reached.

Special Situations

Under special circumstances, the SED may issue temporary certificates to candidates who do not meet all the qualifications for an initial certificate but who fill a specific educational/recruitment need. Here are a few examples:

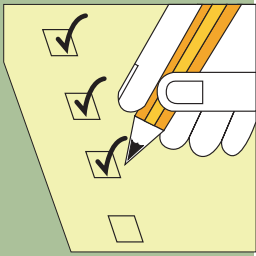
TRANSITIONAL A CERTIFICATE. Districts that need teachers in specific technical or vocational fields may offer this temporary certificate to candidates who have related work experience but who do not meet all the requirements for an initial certificate. With this certificate, you have three years from 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 **1-212-420-1830**.

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 the master's degree under this alternative teacher certification program is responsible for recommending you to the SED for a Transitional B certificate. To ensure that you will fulfill the state and No Child Left Behind mandates as a "highly qualified" teacher, it is very important that the title of your Transitional B certificate matches: a. the master's program in which you are enrolled; and b. the teaching position for which you were hired. 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



Questions about certification and courses? Contact the UFT TeacherLine, Monday to Friday, 4 to 6 p.m., at **1-212-253-8800** or e-mail teacherline@uft.org or call UFT Certification Services at **1-212-420-1830**.

Find more details about your contractual rights as a UFT member at www.uft.org/member/rights/your_rights/.



for either the initial or professional certificate, whichever pertains.

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.

CONDITIONAL INITIAL CERTIFICATE. If you hold a teaching certificate in the same or equivalent title from another state, the SED may determine that you are eligible for a conditional initial certificate even if you do not meet all New York State requirements. If you hold this certificate, you must meet the following requirements within two years of the issue date:

- Pass the LAST, ATS-W and CST certification exams (the UFT Teacher Center offers coaching sessions for the LAST and ATS-W exams)
- Complete the Child Abuse Recognition Workshop (available at low cost through the UFT)
- Complete the Violence Prevention Training Workshop (offered at low cost through the UFT School Safety Department).

In addition, within five years of the issue date of your conditional initial certificate, you must complete all requirements for the professional certificate.

TIME-EXTENDED CERTIFICATE. Rarely, the SED issues this temporary certificate to give a candidate with a provisional certificate some extra time to complete all requirements for permanent certification. If you hold an extended certificate, be sure to fulfill your remaining requirements within the time limits specified in the extension.

Am I Done Yet?

Even after you have passed all your tests, fulfilled all your mandates and achieved all your degrees, you're still not quite done.

Remember that no certificate is issued automatically. Once you complete your requirements, you have to apply to the SED online at www.highered.nysed.gov/tcert for your permanent or profes-

sional certificate. Check your TEACH online account for the documents you need to submit together with your \$100 application fee. Make copies of everything before you send them in. Mail your packet "Return Receipt Requested" and file the receipt with the copies of your paperwork.

Since it takes time to process your application, it's a good idea to complete all your requirements early and to apply at least six months before your provisional or initial certificate expires.

Also, if you move, remember to notify the DOE, the SED and the UFT about your change of address. Otherwise you may not receive mailed notices or certificates and may miss important deadlines or other vital information.

TeacherLine for Certification Questions

The UFT's TeacherLine provides phone help for questions about certification and your New York City teaching appointment.

Hours of operation: Monday-Friday, 4-6 p.m.

For assistance, e-mail TeacherLine at teacherline@uft.org or call 1-212-253-8800.

TO KEEP YOUR STATE PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATE VALID

New York State requires teachers who have obtained professional certification to complete 175 hours of professional development every five years (35 hours per year) to keep their professional certificate valid. It is the responsibility of the New York City Department of Education to provide the guidance for completing this requirement and the mechanism for reporting to SED. For further information read the *New York Teacher* and talk to your UFT chapter leader.

MEETING STATE AND CITY REQUIREMENTS

The UFT offers many programs and services to help you hone your skills and meet certification and licensing requirements. You can turn to the union for:

- **Certification.** Get advice or assistance about your certification requirements through TeacherLine (1-212-253-8800), [page 8](#).
- **Coaching for tests.** Low-cost coaching sessions help you prepare for these state-mandated exams:
 - The Liberal Arts and Science Test (LAST).
 - The Assessment of Teaching Skills–Written (ATS-W).
 - The LAST – Writing for the Essay.

The coaching sessions familiarize you with the test formats and emphasize test-taking techniques.

- **Child abuse detection and reporting.** A low-cost two-hour course in child abuse recognition and reporting, for those who have not already fulfilled this state requirement. Times and locations appear in the *New York Teacher* educational supplement, which the UFT mails in August, January and June, or you can find them online at www.ufttc.org (click on “conferences”).
- **Violence prevention.** A low-cost violence prevention workshop required of all new teachers by the New York State Education Department. This two-hour course, offered throughout the school year by the UFT School Safety Department, meets state requirements for certification.

MEETING CREDIT OR DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

You undoubtedly know that you have to earn a master’s degree. But did you know that you’ll also earn more money when you get your master’s — and that you’ll earn even more if you have a master’s plus 30 credits and qualify for the “second differential” (see [page 14](#))?

By taking courses or enrolling in a master’s or certificate program through the UFT Teacher Center, you’ll not only get a good education, but often save money, too, at most of the participating colleges. These courses are taught by UFT colleagues, experienced classroom teachers who combine theory with practical applications you can use every day.

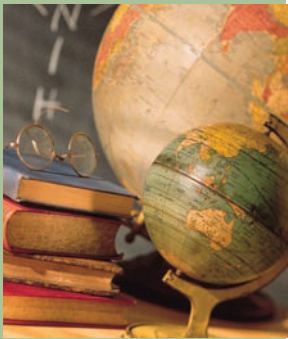
- **Credit-bearing courses**, some with reduced tuition. The UFT Teacher Center schedules more than 500 undergraduate and graduate courses each year. Look for the special educational supplement to the *New York Teacher*, mailed to all members before each term, in the fall, spring and summer. Or go to www.ufttc.org for listings.
- **Master’s degree and certificate programs.** These Teacher Center programs, offered in conjunction with several area colleges and universities, are fully described in the educational supplement to the *New York Teacher*.



Questions about certification or appointment? See [page 8](#) or call the certification expert in your UFT borough office. Ask to speak to an educational liaison.

To register or find dates for state examinations go to www.nystce.nesinc.com.

For the schedule of UFT test coaching courses — including the performance video — watch the new teacher pages of the *New York Teacher* or go to www.ufttc.org and click on “conferences.”



PROFESSIONAL GROWTH

UFT Teacher Centers

The Teacher Center operates sites at approximately 300 schools of all levels in all regions of the city. There you can:

- Find instructional resources, computer access and the math and literacy coaches at those schools.
- Plan instruction, lessons, units and projects with Teacher Center staff.
- Problem-solve classroom management situations.
- Learn to use multimedia equipment to prepare for interdisciplinary teaching.
- Take professional development seminars and courses.

Networking, Learning Opportunities

If you want a change of scene, to meet other new teachers who are facing the same challenges and to expand your repertoire of skills, the Teacher Center can help. It offers:

- Study groups, seminars, summer institutes and content area conferences and courses.
- Exciting conferences throughout the year focusing on educational issues. Recent ones included “Evaluating the Quality of Student Writing” and “The XYZs of Algebra.”
- Many of these professional activities are cost-free or low-fee. For current listings, see the union paper, *New York Teacher’s TNT* (The Newer Teacher) page and www.ufttc.org.

Master’s Degrees and College Credits

Thousands of UFT members enroll each year in the UFT Teacher Center’s own “university.” 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 upgrade your teaching skills.

For the master’s programs, you have to apply to and be accepted by the sponsoring university. Among the degree programs, which have diverse concentrations too complex to detail here, are those in:

- Dual education and special education (grades 1-6).

- Instructional technology.
 - Liberal studies.
 - Literacy.
 - Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), with an optional bilingual extension.
 - Urban and multicultural education.
- Certificate programs include:
- Computers in education.
 - Instructional technology and global perspectives.
 - Teacher leadership.

There also are graduate-level general education classes in which you can explore subjects that interest you while earning credits toward salary differentials (see [page 14](#)). They cover everything from assessment and behavior management to reading and teaching strategies to mathematics and special education.

National Board Certification

After you have completed three years of teaching experience, you might consider working toward voluntary national board certification — a designation that not only would bring you to the city’s top salary differential, but also would mark your emergence as one of the nation’s most accomplished teachers.

National 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. The UFT Teacher Center furthers this vision by providing support through the demanding certification process.

This certification attests 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 exemplary teaching practices.

UFT Conferences

Every year the UFT holds two gala events for all its members. In November there’s Teacher Union Day, when the UFT remembers the strike in 1960 that led to the first UFT negotiated contract. At that event the union honors its members, old and new, for their service to the union cause. It provides an

For UFT professional development opportunities, go to www.ufttc.org and click on “conferences.”

For more information on national board certification:

- See the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards website at www.nbpts.org.
- Use the drop-down menu to see how to apply.

opportunity for new teachers to learn about the struggles that shaped this union in the past and to be a part of the union in the future.

In May there's the UFT Spring Conference. Educators, parents, advocates, elected officials and representatives of the city and state departments of education gather to debate, discuss and present information about the latest in educational practice and policy in workshops, forums and speak-outs, many designed especially for our newer members. There are exhibitors on hand and a luncheon at which the union bestows the coveted John Dewey Award upon a person who has advanced the cause of teachers and teacher unions. Past recipients of this award include Eleanor Roosevelt, Martin Luther King Jr. and Edward Kennedy.

Many school chapters attend as a group, bringing along members of their school leadership teams.

For more information on these events look for ads in the *New York Teacher*.

UFT PROFESSIONAL COMMITTEES

UFT Professional Committees can enhance your academic growth through such activities as conferences, seminars, trips and newsletters. Organized according to subject areas, ethnic heritage and special interests, they allow teachers to meet with like-minded colleagues to keep abreast of the latest developments in their areas of interest. Look in the Events column or the UFT Calendar in the *New York Teacher* for upcoming activities. Call 1-212-598-7772 for contact information for specific committees.

- African American Heritage
- Albanian American Heritage
- Asian American Heritage
- Association of Family & Consumer Science Educators/UFT (AFCS)
- Association of Teachers of Social Studies/UFT
- Capably Disabled
- Computer & Technology
- English as a Second Language/Bilingual
- English Language Arts Council (ELAC)/UFT
- Hellenic American Educators Assn/UFT

- Hispanic Affairs
- Humane Education
- Irish American Heritage
- Italian American Heritage
- Jewish Heritage
- Library
- Math Teachers
- Media
- NYC Art Teachers Association/UFT (NYCATA)
- NYC Association of Foreign Language Teachers/UFT
- NYC Coaches Association/UFT
- NYC Dance Educators/UFT
- NYC Music Teachers Association/UFT
- Outdoor Environmental Education
- Per Diems
- Players (Theater)
- Runners
- Science
- Social and Recreational
- Special Education
- Veterans
- Women's Rights

DOE Professional Development Opportunities

- The After-School Professional Development Program offers a wide range of classes that you may use when working toward your pay differential. Go to www.nyasdpd.org.
- The College Level Examination Program (CLEP) offers teachers the opportunity to receive college credits by earning qualifying scores on CLEP tests. Subject to limitations, CLEP credits earned in professional education subjects and other appropriate subjects may be applied toward meeting the certification/licensing requirements of the New York State Education Department and/or the New York City Department of Education. In addition, appropriate CLEP credits may be applied toward salary differentials. Go to <http://schools.nyc.gov/offices/DHR/TeacherPrincipalSchoolProfessionals/ProfessionalDevelopment/College+Level+Examination+Program+CLEP.htm>. To view a listing of CLEP tests available, visit: www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/clep/scr_cgs.html.



YOUR MONEY



YOUR SALARY

The UFT's contract with the city and DOE sets your pay rate and many of your working conditions.

Only UFT members can vote on a contract proposal. If you're not a member, join!

Questions about differentials, salary or your paycheck?

Contact your UFT chapter leader or a salary rep at your UFT borough office.

As a teacher, you're motivated by idealism, a desire to help children succeed and a love of learning. You work hard, far beyond the hours school is in session, to provide your students with the best education you can.

Most assuredly, you deserve to be paid well for your efforts, as well as to have suitable benefits and good working conditions.

The UFT's contract with the city and the DOE is the linchpin of your financial benefits. Through unrelenting effort and union solidarity spanning decades, the UFT has negotiated higher salaries, excellent health benefits and a pension that others envy. Since 2002, salaries have increased by 44 percent.

It hasn't been easy, because the employer always has its own priorities, which don't necessarily coincide with ours. But when the UFT's Negotiating Committee reaches a tentative agreement, union members get to vote and the agreement takes effect only if a majority ratifies it.

Here's a look at your salary package:

How Much Will I Earn?

The amount of your paycheck depends on:

- The salary schedule that the union and the city negotiate in the contract.
- How long you have been teaching.
- Credits and degrees you earn beyond your

bachelor's degree.

The salary schedule is complex. It allows you to increase your earnings as you gain experience and accumulate graduate credits and a master's degree. New teachers with different educational credentials and amounts of prior experience may start at different rates of pay.

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, look for the words "REGULAR PAY" 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.
- If you think this annual salary is incorrect, talk to your payroll secretary, then check with a salary rep in your UFT borough office.

Common deduction codes

Of course, the net salary on your check or pay stub reflects a lower amount than your gross salary. The DOE makes deductions for federal, state and local income taxes, Social Security taxes and other items.

Your pay stub will indicate the amount deducted for each item during that pay period and will also show you a cumulative total for the calendar year.

The chart shows three common examples of starting annual salaries.

Teacher	Salary Step	Differential	Annual pay as of May 19, 2008
BA degree, no experience	1A	C1	\$45,530
Master's degree, no experience	1A	C2+PD	\$51,425
Master's degree, plus 30 credits or 7 1/2 years credited experience	8B	C6+PD	\$74,797



Need a master's degree? Talk to the Teacher Center about degree programs offered through area colleges and universities.

your UFT borough office.

Here's how to read the salary schedule:

Steps: 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.
- After your fifth year and at intervals thereafter, you will receive “**longevity**” increments — also called “longevities.” These come after you have taught in New York City for 5, 10, 13, 15, 18, 20 and 22 years. (The five-year longevity is a recent addition to the contract which the UFT demanded to help retain newer teachers in the system.) These are indicated along the vertical axis of the schedule.

Differentials: Salary differentials are granted for credits you earn beyond your bachelor's degree including CLEP exams. These are shown along the horizontal axis. Each differential can add thousands of dollars to your annual earnings — permanently — and cumulative differentials can make a big difference in your earning power. Here is a brief summary of the differentials:

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+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.

Differentials are not automatically awarded. *You must apply for them* within six months of completing your coursework.

- Differentials are paid as of Feb. 1, July 1 and Sept. 1, respectively, for work you've completed in the previous fall, spring and summer semesters.
- For example, if you complete your coursework by Jan. 31 and file by July 31, the DOE will pay your differential in the fall semester with arrears back to Feb. 1.

Apply for prior service salary credit. If you taught in another school system, worked as a regular or per diem substitute in the New York City system or, for certain licenses, had nonteaching experience related to your license area, you may qualify for salary credit and placement on a step above 1A. You must apply for credit within six months. At the UFT's urging, the DOE increased the amount of credit you can receive for prior experience. Now you can start at anywhere up to Step 8B. That means that as of May 2008, someone with eight years of credited experience and 30 credits above a master's degree would start at \$74,797.

DOE's New Differential and Salary Step Application Process

The DOE's Salary Unit, now called the Office of Salary Services (OSS), uses a new online salary differential and step application process for all teachers, including secretaries.

Applications, as well as eligibility requirements, can be accessed at the OSS website: <http://schools.nyc.gov/teachersalary>, or directly through the payroll portal: <https://payrollportal.nycboe.net>.

You must have a DOE email address to access the online application.

Once the online application is completed, the application must be printed. A tracking number is assigned to the application for salary differentials. Transcripts still must be submitted to the DOE.

CURRENT TEACHER SALARY SCHEDULE (EFFECTIVE MAY 19, 2008)

	BA C1	C1+PD	BA + 30 C2	C2+ID	EARNED MA OR EQUIV. C2+PD	C2+ID+PD	C6	EARNED MA OR EQUIV. + 30 C6+PD
1a	45,530	49,831	47,124	50,071	51,425	54,372	53,020	57,321
1b	45,530	49,831	47,124	50,071	51,425	54,372	53,020	57,321
2a	48,435	52,736	50,029	52,976	54,330	57,277	55,925	60,226
2b	48,435	52,736	50,029	52,976	54,330	57,277	55,925	60,226
3a	48,835	53,136	50,429	53,376	54,730	57,677	56,325	60,626
3b	48,835	53,136	50,429	53,376	54,730	57,677	56,325	60,626
4a	49,543	53,844	51,137	54,084	55,438	58,385	57,033	61,334
4b	49,543	53,844	51,137	54,084	55,438	58,385	57,033	61,334
5a	50,153	54,454	51,747	54,694	56,048	58,995	57,643	61,944
5b	50,153	54,454	51,747	54,694	56,048	58,995	57,643	61,944
6a	50,811	55,112	52,405	55,352	56,706	59,653	58,301	62,602
6b	51,744	56,045	53,338	56,285	57,639	60,586	59,234	63,535
7a	53,128	57,429	54,722	57,669	59,023	61,970	60,618	64,919
7b	56,370	60,671	57,964	60,911	62,265	65,212	63,860	68,161
8a	59,404	63,705	60,998	63,945	65,299	68,246	66,894	71,195
8b	63,006	67,307	64,600	67,547	68,901	71,848	70,496	74,797
8b+L10	67,095	71,396	68,689	71,636	72,990	75,937	74,585	78,886
8b+L13	69,196	73,497	70,790	73,737	75,091	78,038	76,686	80,987
8b+L15	73,636	77,937	75,230	78,177	79,531	82,478	81,126	85,427
8b+L18	74,800	79,101	76,394	79,341	80,695	83,642	82,290	86,591
8b+L20	83,412	87,713	85,006	87,953	89,307	92,254	90,902	95,203
8b+L22	88,258	92,559	89,852	92,799	94,153	97,100	95,748	100,049
L5	1,000							
L10	4,089							
L13	6,190							
L15	10,630							
L18	11,794							
L20	20,406							
L22	25,252							

The new five-year longevity increment of \$1,000 shall be paid to appointed teachers with 5 years up to 10 years of pedagogical service in the NYC Public Schools.



Do you have prior experience?

- If you taught elsewhere or had work experience related to your license area, you may qualify for a higher salary step.
- Check with your school's UFT chapter leader or call a salary rep at your UFT borough office for more information.
- You must apply for this credit. The DOE does not grant it automatically.

Original transcripts along with the application are to be submitted to 65 Court Street, Room 102, Brooklyn, New York 11201. Members who hand-deliver their application will get a receipt. It is strongly suggested that if members cannot hand-deliver their applications they should send them return receipt.

Members will electronically receive a Certificate of Salary Status when the differential is processed.

With this new online process members no longer need to resubmit their transcript each time they apply for another differential. They only need to submit original transcripts for the additional credits they earned to obtain the differential for which they are applying.

When Should I Apply for Salary Step Placement?

All newly hired teachers must report their prior work experience in their online application (TSN) for employment. This information will be automatically sent to the new online salary step application via the payroll portal. When teachers are notified that they have been selected for a position they will be asked to go the payroll portal and validate the information that has been pre-populated on the form. If they do not validate the form, the Office of Salary Services will validate on their behalf. If teachers have not entered any previous work experience they will automatically be placed on Salary Step 1A and granted an equate date that coincides with their first day of employment. This equate date is one of two dates in which you will automatically advance to the next salary step each year (the other is in March).

Problems with Your Paycheck?

Delays in getting paid, errors in the payment amount and other paycheck problems sometimes cause new teachers headaches, especially when bills for housing, transportation and courses are piling up.

The UFT can help you cut through the red tape and resolve paycheck problems with the DOE.

It should take the DOE one pay period (two weeks) to get a newly hired teacher on the payroll.

Delays are less common today, since the UFT lobbied successfully for a law that requires the DOE to pay interest on late payments. Here's what to do

if problems occur:

No paycheck. First, be sure you have a DOE file number; *you cannot be paid without one.*

- If you do not have a file number, see your payroll secretary, and alert your UFT chapter leader.
- If you need an emergency check to tide you over until your regular check arrives, see your payroll secretary and chapter leader.

An emergency paycheck does not include prior service or differentials. It takes some time for the DOE to review and approve a new teacher's application for differentials or salary credit for prior service.

- As long as you have applied within six months of being appointed and are approved, you will receive the extra pay you are owed retroactively to your date of appointment.
- If you are not paid by the first payday after 30 days following your application, the DOE *must* pay you 6 percent interest.
- Consult your chapter leader or a salary rep at your UFT borough office if you do not hear from the DOE or receive the added pay after two or three months.

Other errors. If you think you are not being paid the correct amount, see your school payroll secretary and your chapter leader. For further help, call your UFT borough office and ask to speak to a salary representative.

Direct Deposit

Teachers can have their paychecks deposited directly into their personal savings or checking account through the department's Electronic Fund Transfer Program. You can enroll between September and April. It takes two payroll periods after enrollment for direct deposit to begin. On paydays you will receive a payroll stub indicating the amount of the deposit.

Teachers can enroll online at <https://payroll-portal.nycboe.net>. You can also download the form and submit it directly to the department's Payroll Division, ETP Unit, 65 Court Street, Room 1003, Brooklyn, NY 11201.

Note: As of the 2007-2008 school year the department required all new hires to use direct deposit but they have not implemented it as of this printing.

YOUR FINANCIAL FUTURE

Your Pension (TRS)

With pension benefits eroding nationwide, your pension becomes more valuable every day. By enrolling in the pension system now — with a simple application — you will:

- Build a pension package that could become your largest financial asset down the line.
- Gain two key protections against the unexpected while you're working:
 - A death benefit to protect your beneficiaries.
 - A special pension in case you need to retire due to a disability.

As a certified, appointed teacher, you are automatically a member of the Teachers' Retirement System (TRS). In a June 2009 agreement between the UFT and the Department of Education, we agreed to support legislation in Albany that preserves the hard-fought age 55 retirement pension benefits that current members have for all new employees. However, there are changes in contribution rates and vesting rights for members hired after December 10, 2009, the effective date of the law:

- You will contribute 4.85 percent of your salary toward your pension through payroll deductions for your first 27 years of credited service, and 1.85 percent for the remainder of your career.
- Deductions usually begin within two months of your first paycheck.
- These contributions lower your taxable income.
- Check your pay stub for a "TRS 414H" deduction.
- Your pension benefit is vested after 10 years of credited service.

Steps to Take Now

1. Delaying enrollment may affect benefits for you or your beneficiaries. You must include proof of your date of birth when you file the above forms. Shortly after your pension deductions start, you will receive a welcome kit of materials from TRS, which includes an enrollment form. *You must complete this enrollment form and a Designation of Beneficiary form and return them to TRS.*
2. Call TRS at **1-888-8NYCTRS** or your UFT bor-

ough office if you do not receive this kit within three months.

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.

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.

- Income taxes are deferred on contributions and earnings until they are withdrawn.
- You have six investment choices: a guaranteed fixed investment and five variable funds.
- When you retire you can withdraw all or part of these funds or turn them into an annuity.
- The application is included in your TRS welcome kit. Included as well is a separate Designation of Beneficiary form for the TDA which you must file.

Learn More About Your Pension

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*.
- *PensioNews*, our pension newsletter, including a special start-of-school issue for new teachers that usually is distributed at the new teacher orientation meeting. Recent issues of *PensioNews*, including the one for new teachers, are available online at www.uft.org/member/money/pension/pensionnews.
- Speakers for chapter meetings or faculty conferences.
- Pension consultants in each borough office available for telephone questions or for personal interviews by appointment.
- Special start-of-school boroughwide meetings.
- Pension clinics.
- Three elected teacher-members on the Teachers' Retirement Board to represent your interests.



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.)
- An automatic cost-of-living-adjustment (COLA), preserving your pension's value.



SOME ESSENTIAL THINGS TO KNOW

...About Supplies

Books and Supplies

It's the school's responsibility to provide you with basic instructional supplies, such as paper, chalk, math manipulatives and textbooks, so that 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.

Teacher's Choice

Because of their commitment to students, teachers often spend hundreds of dollars of their own money to buy supplementary materials to enhance their students' learning. To help defray the cost, the UFT conceived of the Teacher's Choice program and won funding, even in tough budget years like this one, from the City Council.

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

- The current allocation is \$150 for all teachers.
- You may start spending the money on Aug. 1 at the store or Internet site of your choice.
- Keep receipts for all your purchases.
- Submit them in March with forms you can get at <https://payrollportal.nycboe.net>.
- You can join with colleagues to pool some or all of the money to buy more expensive items to share.
- See your school secretary with any questions.

DonorsChoose

DonorsChoose.org is another way to provide your students with the books, technology and supplies that they need to learn. You propose ideas for needed resources, and donors around the nation may choose to fund your project. Here's how to participate:

1. Register at www.donorschoose.org.
2. Write a brief project description (approximately 400 words) describing the proposed project and how students will benefit.
3. Identify the specific resources requested and their prices, and answer some brief questions.

...About Class Size

Class Size

Since its inception, the UFT has made reducing class size a priority so teachers 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 and 34 in high schools.

In recent years we have fought for even smaller classes, finally securing city and state legislation for a cap of 28 in grades 1 to 3, 25 in kindergarten and 18 in pre-K.

Tell your UFT chapter leader if your class(es) exceed(s) these limits.

The goal is an average 20 students per class in grades K-3 and 24 students in grades 9-12.

...About Accountability

Testing

Accountability is the buzzword at the Department of Education these days, and this current administration measures success by scores on high-stakes tests.

- Students in grades 3-8 take state tests in English language arts and mathematics. In grades 3, 5, 7 and 8, the results of these tests are used to determine promotion.
- High school students must pass at least five subject-specific Regents exams in order to graduate.
- There is also a regimen of in-class, "low-stakes" periodic assessments to keep close track of student progress throughout the school year. The premise is that teachers will be able to tailor instruction to their students' needs by analyzing the test results, with the aid of a new data management system.

Every school receives an annual progress report with a grade from A to F. The grades are based largely on students' year-to-year progress as measured by math and reading tests. The progress reports, which are posted online, also take into account attendance rates and, at the UFT's urging, the results of parent and teacher surveys about the

school. An F rating can lead to a school's closing or a change of leadership.

The UFT has voiced objections to the intense focus on high-stakes tests and the time that test preparation takes from instruction. The union has opposed the use of student test scores as the sole measure to evaluate teachers. It is a misguided use of student data, it is unfair to teachers and can hurt students.

Observations by Supervisors

Supervisors are required to evaluate all teachers during classroom instruction periods and to write a report with a rating for each observation. Normally, an evaluation comprises several factors, most importantly supervisors' observations.

New teachers are generally observed several times a year; some visits may be unannounced. Ideally, supervisors use these observations as opportunities to encourage learning, reflection and dialogue, and to provide recommendations for growth.

Some Guidelines:

- Supervisors must give you advance notice of a formal observation. If for any reason you believe this will not be a good day or time, speak up and try to make a different appointment.
- In writing, request a pre-observation conference so that you can clarify what the supervisor will be looking for when he or she comes into your classroom. At the conference you can raise questions or concerns prior to the observation and, if needed, ask your supervisor for advice.
- Supervisors usually will discuss their observations with you at a post-observation conference; nevertheless, you should request such a conference in writing. They will also show you the report on your lesson and ask you to sign it to acknowledge receipt, though not necessarily your agreement. You may append a response if you think it is inaccurate or unfair. See your chapter leader for assistance.
- Use the post-observation conference as an opportunity to learn, to fully understand how your supervisor has evaluated your teaching and, if necessary, to discuss ways that you can improve.
- If you disagree with your supervisor's evalua-

tion, feel free to discuss it with her or him.

- If you get a poor observation report, consult your UFT chapter leader immediately about your contractual rights and get professional advice from the Teacher Center staff, a coach or your mentor.
- In the rare instance that you believe a supervisor is harassing you with excessive observations, talk with your chapter leader about the process outlined in our contract to deal with this.

Ratings

At the end of every school year your principal will rate your service. Principals must supply supporting documentation for their decisions.

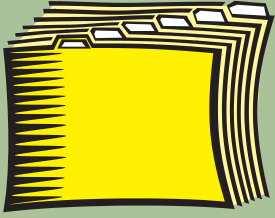
You are entitled to appeal a rating. Contact your UFT borough office immediately.

Official School File

Every teacher has an official file at school 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 at any time, with advance notice.
- Your supervisor can place an item in your file only if you have seen and signed it. *Signing an item does not mean you agree with it.*
- Sometimes a supervisor wants to place a letter of reprimand in a file, which could later affect your evaluation. If you believe the letter is inaccurate, unfair or otherwise objectionable, you can append a response. See your chapter leader for assistance in formulating it.
- A contractual right allows you to remove any negative material in your file that has not been used in a disciplinary action against you three years from the date of the material.





...About Position Changes

Transfers

Under the “open market” transfer system, all teachers, no matter how many years of service, have the right to transfer to another school. It is a way to match teachers with schools in which they want to work.

Teachers who want to transfer are now free to seek positions in any district, in any school with vacancies, with no restrictions.

- Schools must 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 and can transfer freely through Aug. 7.

Excessing

Excessing occurs when a school has more teachers in a specific license area than it needs because of a loss of students or funding. Excessing can also 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 your total time in the New York City school system.

By June 15, or as soon thereafter as possible, principals must notify staff if they are at risk of being excessed. If you are excessed you may apply for vacancies citywide under the open market transfer system.

If you do not secure a position you *still 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. The DOE will assign you to an Absent Teacher Reserve (ATR) position either in the school from which you were excessed or in another school in the same district. An ATR position is a full-time job substituting for absent teachers in that school. You may continue to seek a regular teaching position while you are an ATR.

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

situation and the number of teachers affected, rules for excessing of staff sometimes can be complicated. If you have any questions always ask your chapter leader or call your UFT borough office.

...About Appointment, Probation and Tenure

Appointment

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. *If your appointment or your teaching assignment does not match your state certification, speak to your chapter leader or call your UFT borough office immediately.* The State Education Department has very strict certification rules, and if they are not met you can be dismissed regardless of your classroom performance. You can be appointed under one license at a time, 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 are on probation again. In addition, if you switch to another license before you receive tenure in your first license you must serve probation in that license, and there may be other ramifications. **Contact your UFT borough office before you switch your license.** In any case, your salary does not change when your license changes. Be sure you check with your payroll secretary that your appointment date is correctly entered in the computer.

The Probationary Period

After you are appointed to a position, state law requires you serve a three-year probationary period. During that time supervisors are supposed to observe you in your classroom several times a year and evaluate you in more than 20 categories including classroom management, lesson planning, presentation skills and how you will use the data from student test scores to help you as you plan instruction. You will receive a rating for each observation.

Generally, at the end of three years of satisfactory service, you will be entitled to due process rights under Section 3020a of the state Education Law, which governs the discipline and dismissal of tenured teachers. This is commonly called acquiring tenure, but it is effectively the completion of your probationary period. Your completion of probation is indicated on the back of the annual performance review (rating sheet) that you receive at the end of the school year.

If the DOE intends to discontinue, that is, terminate, your service at any time prior to the completion of your probationary period you must be given 60 calendar days' notice. If you are discontinued, call your UFT borough office. They will assign an advocate to assist you in fighting the termination.

Sometimes a principal will ask you to sign a document stating that you agree to an extension of your probationary period beyond the three years. If this occurs *contact your chapter leader or your UFT borough office immediately* so we can arrange, if necessary, for an attorney to review the document in order to protect your rights as a probationary teacher.

There are two ways to reduce your probationary period:

- If you worked satisfactorily as a regular substitute in the same license and in the same school level you can reduce the normal three-year 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 at <http://schools.nyc.gov/offices/DHR/DHRforms/default.htm>.
- Another way 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 to two years.

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

Tenure

Under New York State law, appointed teachers achieve tenure after completing a probationary period (usually three years) and fulfilling all requirements for the professional certificate. In New York City, tenure is granted in your license

appointment area. Having tenure means you may not be disciplined or terminated without due process. As a tenured teacher you have the right to a hearing before an independent arbitrator regarding any charges brought against you. This due process right protects you from being fired for personal, arbitrary or political reasons.

As described above, the process for determining whether or not you will get tenure is rigorous, and tenure is not automatic at the end of the probationary period.

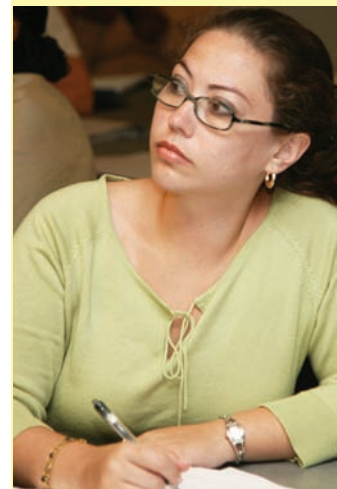
You must:

- Complete all your state certification and city licensing requirements, file an application and receive professional certification.
- Have a record of satisfactory service during your probationary period.
- Be recommended for tenure by your principal.

YOUR WORK DAY AND WORK YEAR

Specifying the length of the school day is more complicated than it might seem:

- In single-session schools, the regular school day for classes is 6 hours and 20 minutes, exclusive of lunch.
- Teachers also work 37.5 minutes, usually after student dismissal, Monday through Thursday. During this time, they tutor students — up to 10 general ed students or five special ed students — to prepare them for tests or engage in small-group instruction.
- The day cannot start earlier than 8 a.m. or go later than 3:45 p.m., Monday through Friday.
- Faculty conferences are scheduled one Monday a month, for up to 40 minutes. But even on those days the school day may not end later than 3:45 p.m.
- In District 75 (citywide special education) buildings and District 75 self-contained classes in other school sites, the school day may be 6 hours and 50 minutes.
- Non-District 75 self-contained special education classrooms have either a 6 hour and 50 minute day, or a 6 hour and 37.5 minute day Monday through Thursday and 6 hours and 20 minutes on Friday.



A comprehensive UFT fact sheet on transfers and excessing is at www.uft.org/news/teacher/qa/open_mkt_plan.

The DOE posts available openings at its Open Market website, www.nycenet.edu/offices/dhr/transferplane.



Professional Development Time

- Faculty and grade conference time should be used for professional development.
- Professional days (students not present):
 - Election Day.
 - The first Thursday in June (Brooklyn-Queens Day), regardless of which borough you teach in.
 - Other days designated by the chancellor.
- On professional development days, the school day is 6 hours and 50 minutes.

Work Year

- The school year in New York City normally ranges from 183–191 days, depending on when the holidays fall.
- You report to your school on the Tuesday after Labor Day. Most of this time is allocated to classroom preparation (students are not present).
- Generally, the school year ends on the weekday before the last Monday in June.
- The school holidays are:
 - Rosh Hashanah (September or October).
 - Yom Kippur (September or October).
 - Columbus Day (second Monday in October).
 - Veterans Day (Nov. 11).
 - Thanksgiving (fourth Thursday and Friday in November).
 - Winter recess (includes Christmas and New Year's Day).
 - Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday (third Monday in January).
 - February midwinter recess (includes Washington's birthday).
 - Spring recess (includes Good Friday, Easter and Passover).
 - Memorial Day (last Monday in May).

HOME-SCHOOL CONNECTIONS

Meeting Parents

Parents and guardians can be teachers' most important allies in encouraging students to learn, and the union favors as much communication with them as possible.

Cordial and forthright conversations 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.
- End with a summary of next steps for yourself, parents and the student.

Open School Week

Parent involvement — at home and in school — is a sure bet for raising student achievement. If you are looking to strengthen the home-school partnership, you'll have a good opportunity twice each year during Open School Week.

Get ready by:

- Giving each student the UFT's brochure "Welcome to Open School Week" to bring home to their parents.
- Reviewing each student's progress and preparing some samples of student work.
- Developing a list of suggestions for how parents can support and supervise homework.
- Requesting Dial-A-Teacher stickers to give out or a flyer to display in your room. Call **1-212-598-9205** or fax your request on school letterhead to **1-212-510-6420**.

During your conference:

- Spend at least a few minutes with each child's parents/guardians.
- Inquire about any situations at home that may

affect the child's schoolwork.

- Review the rules and discipline code with parents of chronically disruptive children.
- Let parents know how to get homework for an absent child and how to get in touch with you, if necessary.

Dial-A-Teacher

Don't forget to tell your students about the UFT's telephone homework helpline, Dial-A-Teacher, at **1-212-777-3380**. It's open Monday through Thursday from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. during the school year.

Through this invaluable program, created and operated by the UFT, students and even parents can get help with math, reading, writing and science in languages including Arabic, Bengali, Chinese, English, French, Greek, Haitian-Creole, Hebrew, Italian, Korean, Russian and Spanish. Dial-A-Teacher is housed at the union's headquarters.

The experienced teachers at Dial-A-Teacher have most of the books that your students will be using, enabling them to teach students over the phone.

public schools need to succeed.

Most of the issues UFT members face arise from the political environment. That's why:

- We lobby state and city legislators for the resources you'll need to ensure your students receive a quality education.
- We forge alliances with community groups to mount public pressure, such as in our campaign for smaller class size and adequate funding for our schools.
- We support elected officials who stand with us on education, labor and human rights.

The simplest way to support your union's political action is through voluntary contributions to **COPE**. See your chapter leader to sign up for **COPE**. Most members contribute just \$5 per pay check 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.



One example of what COPE has done for YOU.

- As a new teacher, you automatically belong to a pension system.
- Thanks to UFT political action we've preserved age 55 retirement for teachers.
- Over the course of your career, this will save you tens of thousands of dollars.

POLITICAL ACTION AND COPE

At a time when those who don't like teacher unions and public education have great influence around the country, it is especially important that educators and those concerned about the future of public education make our voices heard.

Promoting our educational agenda and reinforcing a pro-public education, pro-labor political atmosphere while safeguarding the professional and economic interests of UFT members, children and working people takes money. That's why the UFT has **COPE**, its Committee on Political Education.

Federal law restricts how the UFT can use dues money to engage in the political process and that's why your voluntary COPE funds are so important. Only with member contributions to COPE can the union make its voice heard in shaping the laws, budgets and protections our members and our

Your COPE dollars at work

Some victories:

- Secured pension reforms enabling educators to retire earlier without any monetary penalties.
- Fought off attempts to evaluate teachers based solely upon the inappropriate use of student scores on a single standardized math or English language arts exam.
- Won whistleblower protection that shields educators from retribution for reporting conduct that could harm schoolchildren.
- Required the Board of Education to pay interest on late salary payments.
- Secured legislation that makes assaults on teachers a felony and that allows teachers to remove disruptive students from their classrooms.
- Gained collective bargaining rights for 28,000 home daycare providers who work with many of our pre-school children.

We'll also use our **COPE** dollars to (among other goals):

- Stop devastating budget cuts to our schools.
- Revamp the Title 1 law.
- Ensure the right of all workers to organize as a union.
- Maintain and improve healthcare benefits.

Whether it is yet another attack on teachers and their unions or a push for private-school vouchers, a cut in the education budget or an attempt to make student test scores or a principal's whim the basis for how much you'll be paid, your COPE dollars will be there to fight it off.

ASK YOUR CHAPTER LEADER FOR A COPE CARD AND DONATE TO YOUR FUTURE AND THAT OF YOUR STUDENTS.



School closing alerts: In the event of bad weather, the chancellor will decide before 6 a.m. whether to close schools or have a delayed opening. He will alert:

- The city 311 Information Line.
- The DOE website <http://schools.nyc.gov>.
- Radio stations
WINS (1010 AM)
WCBS (880 AM)
WABC (770 AM)
WLIB (1190 AM)
WADO (1280 AM)
WBLS (107.5 FM)
WNYE (91.5 FM)
- TV stations
WCBS (Chl 2)
WNBC (Chl 4)
WNYW (Fox Chl 5)
WABC (Chl 7)
WNYE (Chl 25)
Univision Chl 41
NY 1
(Cablevision Chl 1)

Sick? Check www.uft.org/member/rights/your_rights under Absence.

GETTING INFORMATION

The New York Teacher

Approximately every two weeks, we'll mail you the *New York Teacher*, the union's award-winning newspaper. Until you are on our membership mailing list, ask your chapter leader for a copy.

The paper reports on developments — educational, political, economic and social — that affect New York City teachers (a state edition is enclosed in the centerfold). Our newspaper paints a vivid portrait of the work that UFT members do in our schools day in and day out. Regular features include:

- “The Newer Teacher” section (TNT), filled with the specific information that new teachers need, including a checklist of reminders.
- Ads for UFT conferences, coaching sessions and other professional development programs sponsored by the Teacher Center. Look for special registration coupons.
- “UFT Calendar,” listing upcoming workshops and meetings.
- “Just for Fun,” providing discounted entertainment opportunities and trips to regional points of interest. Mail in the coupon for items that interest you.
- “Grants, Awards and Freebies,” listing education-related grant opportunities. Many teachers, including those in their first years on the job, have funded class or school projects by writing grant proposals.
- Three times a year (fall, spring and summer) we'll mail you a special educational supplement listing Teacher Center courses that you can take to meet certification requirements and increase your salary by earning differentials.

UFT Online

At www.uft.org you will find breaking news, UFT publications, your UFT contract, Welfare Fund forms and more. Through our website, a click of the mouse will connect you to:

- A section devoted entirely to new teachers (www.uft.org/new_teacher). There you'll find information about certification, licensing, classroom management, union programs that support new teachers and features drawn from our newspaper's Newer Teacher (TNT) page. And to help you in the classroom, we're gathering links to websites useful for lesson-planning, motivating students and solving common classroom problems.
- In addition to the Newer Teacher section, other sections are devoted to news and issues — including statements by union officers and press releases on current issues — as well as sections for parents, member services, functional chapters and others.
- Information about citywide and boroughwide instructional networks, conferences, seminars and summer institutes sponsored by the Teacher Center, the UFT's professional development arm, at www.ufttc.org.
- A searchable UFT contract at www.uft.org/member/contracts/teachers_contract, where you can find salary schedules and specific contract provisions.
- A variety of union publications covering such subjects as workplace stress, financial matters, school safety issues, health services, pregnancy and childcare benefits and others.
- News, columns and features from the *New York Teacher*, at www.uft.org/news/teacher.
- The Welfare Fund area at www.uft.org/member/benefits for forms or information, such as the names of participating dentists and optical services by ZIP code.
- Everything you should know about pensions and other financial matters at www.uft.org/member/money.
- Even a link to the UFT blog, www.edwize.org.

BENEFITS

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 the quality of benefits and even made improvements.

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

- A choice of health plans, which city unions jointly negotiate for their members. There is a health plan for every need, from free plans like HIP or basic GHI to a range of plans that allow you to choose your own physicians.
- Supplemental benefits such as dental, optical, hearing and prescription drug coverage provided by the union through the UFT Welfare Fund.
- Optional additional benefits through our state and national affiliates, NYSUT and AFT.

Together, these benefits represent savings to you worth thousands of dollars a year.

INSURANCE

HEALTH

BENEFITS

Although you are covered from your first day of work, you must enroll in a health plan within 30 days of your first day on payroll. If you are not happy with your health plan, you can switch next year or any other year (during open enrollment). Some key points:

Your plan provides hospitalization and medical coverage for you, your spouse or domestic partner, and your unmarried dependent children under 19 (full-time students are covered to age 23 with proof of college registration).

Remember to ask about tax consequences related to domestic partner coverage.

How to Sign Up for Health Insurance Benefits

- Ask your school payroll secretary for a Department of Education ERB form. Fill it out and attach all required documentation. Keep

copies of all of your completed forms in your personal file at home.

- Although the UFT Welfare Fund has no direct responsibility for administering the health plans, its staff will answer your questions and advocate for you if you have difficulties with a claim.

UFT WELFARE FUND BENEFITS

UFT Welfare Fund benefits plans cover you, your spouse or domestic partner, and your eligible dependents. These plans include:

- **Prescription Drug Plan.** This plan covers prescription drugs (but not those sold over the counter).
 - Be sure to save receipts for prescription drugs you paid for before receiving your drug card so you can be reimbursed.
 - When you need to fill a prescription, go to a participating pharmacy, show your UFT drug card, and pay a co-payment.
 - If you need to use drugs over a long period of time (known as “maintenance drugs”) you have two options for getting a 90-day supply:
 - Go to a local Retail Maintenance Network pharmacy *or*
 - Use the Mail Order Delivery option, which is convenient and less expensive when using generic or brand-name drugs. For this option, get mail order envelopes from your chapter leader or by calling the Welfare Fund Hotline at 1-212-539-0539.
 - 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.
- **Dental plan.** Through the Welfare Fund you can choose between two plans:
 - A dental HMO (Dentcare) with no co-payment *or*
 - A Scheduled Benefit Plan that allows you,



For general UFT Welfare Fund information see www.uftwf.org/.

For details on your Welfare Benefits, see “The Red Apple” at www.uftwf.org/redappleinserv/.

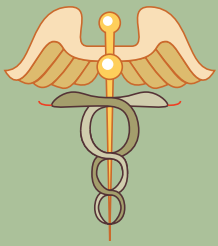
Download medical forms from www.uftwf.org/forms.

See www.uftwf.org/ for:

- The latest information on your drug plan.
- A link to the drug formulary.
- A link to MEDEO website for maintenance drugs.

Go to www.uftwf.org/panelist/ to see who’s a participating provider for you:

- Dental
- Hearing aid
- Optical
- Retail network maintenance-drug providers



The UFT Welfare Fund provides these services free or at minimal cost:

- Prescription drugs
- Dental
- Optical
- Hearing aid

To choose the health plan that's best for you:

- General overview in the UFT's "Health Plans: Before You Choose, Know," at www.uft.org/member/publications/benefits/healthplans/
- Details on each plan in "New York City Health Benefits Program Summary Plan Description Booklet," available from your school payroll secretary or online at www.nyc.gov/html/olr, then click on "Health Benefits Program."

Tips for choosing a health plan:

- If you like your existing doctors, check which plan they participate in.
- A comparison chart for HMO plans is at http://www.uft.org/member/benefits/health-plan_compare/.
- Other information on health benefits can be found at <http://schools.nyc.gov/Offices/DHR/HealthBenefitsLeavesAbsenceSafety/Enrollment+and+Provider+Information.htm>.
- The *New York Teacher* prints both charts in September.

your spouse or domestic partner, and your eligible dependents to use participating dentists (at no charge or with a small co-payment) or nonparticipating dentists with reimbursement according to the fee schedule.

- **Optical plan.** It covers the cost of an eye exam and eyeglasses entirely or gives you an allowance that you can apply toward an upgrade.
 - You may also elect to purchase contact lenses and receive a credit as per the fee schedule.
 - The Fund will issue you an optical plan voucher that explains the details of the plan.
- **Hearing aid.** Members are entitled to one hearing aid every three years.
 - Participating providers have agreed to offer a second aid, if necessary, at a reduced rate.
 - The Fund will issue you a hearing aid voucher that explains the details of the plan.

Only YOU are entitled to these plans:

- **Disability insurance.** Qualifying pedagogues may be covered for \$350 per week for a maximum of 52 weeks. Call the UFT Welfare Fund at 1-212-539-0500 if you need an application or more details.
- **Death benefit.** When you enroll in the UFT Welfare Fund, you should 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.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.

UFT WELFARE FUND ENROLLMENT

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.

- You must enroll in the Welfare Fund separately from enrolling in a 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. This will expedite access to benefits for you and your dependents.
- Alternatively, your UFT chapter leader has Welfare Fund enrollment forms. Mail one directly to the Welfare Fund at the address on the form.
- 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 1-212-539-0539.
- 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.
- You'll also receive a booklet called "The Red Apple," which describes the full range of your benefits. It's available online (see [page 25](#)).
- You are covered as soon as you enroll and will be reimbursed if you need to fill a prescription before your card arrives.
- You can download Welfare Fund reimbursement, dental and most other forms. Or you can phone the Fund's Forms Hotline at 1-212-535-0539.
- The website also has lists of participating panelists, updates on benefits, links to providers' websites and answers to common questions.

SAFETY AND DISCIPLINE

As a professional, you expect to have a safe working environment. Sadly, that isn't always the case in New York City's schools. Some of your students may be disruptive or have other behavior problems. Or intruders may come into your building. It happens.

Serious learning cannot take place in an atmosphere of fear or chaos. That's why the UFT has worked to make schools safer.

The results are evident. The fact that schools have school safety agents, security systems, alternative settings for disruptive students, a zero-tolerance policy on weapons, and a systemwide Student Discipline Code is in significant part due to union pressure and expertise.

Here are a few things you can do to protect yourself, your students and your school:

Rules

- Start in your own classroom by defining consequences for behavior from the first day of school — and then standing by your rules.
- Become aware of the systemwide Student Discipline Code and any variations on it that your school has adopted. Stand behind that code, too. It might be worthwhile discussing it with your students.
- The discipline code calls for “progressive discipline,” a list of infractions that are matched to punishments that can or must be taken in each case.
 - For minor infractions, such as misbehaving in class, a parent may be called to school for a conference.
 - For the most serious offenses, such as having drugs or possessing a firearm, a student may be suspended and transferred to an alternate learning center. There, students with a history of violent or disruptive behavior can learn without disturbing their classmates. In addition, they will get the counseling and other support they need to overcome their behavior problems.
- Learn about the school safety plan that your principal is obliged by contract to negotiate with your union chapter. This is a plan specific to your building that details every facet of security in your school. If you experience any safety-related problems, talk with your chapter leader to see if the safety plan addresses

them. If the administration or the school system fails to enforce the plan, the union can take action.

- The UFT's Violence Prevention Program works with individuals and schools to improve safety. Your chapter leader may ask representatives to come to your school.
- If you should have the misfortune to be injured by a student or intruder, the UFT's Victim Support Program will help you on a one-to-one basis.

Student Fights

- Observe students for signs of hostility and aggression.
- 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 by means of another staff member or a student. Many schools use a special pass with your classroom's room number which, if carried out of the room, is a code to say there's 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.
- *Breaking up fights is the prime cause of school-related injury among UFT members.* DO NOT get between fighting students unless you believe it is absolutely necessary to prevent serious injury.

Intruders

- Every school is required to have “intruder alert procedures.” This message must not alert the intruder that he/she has been discovered. Only the staff should recognize the message.

Securing Personal Property

- Try to minimize theft of your belongings 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 expensive jewelry concealed.
- Never display large amounts of cash.





- For a full list of procedures to follow if injured, see “Security in the Schools” at www.uft.org/member/publications/school/security_schools.
- The UFT Victim Support Program is at [1-212-598-6853](tel:1-212-598-6853).
- The DOE’s 32-page Discipline Code is posted at <http://schools.nyc.gov/rulespolicies/disciplinecode/default.htm>. It is scheduled for revision this year.

Reporting Incidents

If you are involved in an incident or become aware of a violation of the safety plan, immediately report it to your chapter leader and school administration. To make sure your school is as safe as possible, you (or your chapter leader) should also report what happened to the UFT so the union can address the situation, make sure your school has the safety resources it needs and keep accurate records. The easiest way to report is online.

- On the homepage of the UFT website (www.uft.org) click on the orange button that says “Safety/Discipline report,” and follow the directions.
- If you need immediate advice, call the Emergency Hotline at [1-212-701-9407](tel:1-212-701-9407).

Discipline Code

It’s the principal’s responsibility to maintain security, safety and discipline, and you have a right to insist that misbehaving students are disciplined.

The guidelines the school must follow are established by the Department of Education’s systemwide Discipline Code, which:

- Establishes a ladder of consequences with specific mandatory disciplinary responses to

match the severity of various student infractions.

- Sets minimum and maximum penalties for each degree of severity.
- Varies penalties by grade level, either K-5 or 6-12, so that the age and general maturity of the student are considered. Some infractions may not apply to students in grades K-3.
- Specifies that whenever possible, interventions should begin with the lowest level of disciplinary response.
- Provides graduated penalties for students who engage in repeated misbehaviors despite the prior imposition of appropriate disciplinary measures.

What the principal must do:

- While in most cases the principal has some discretion about what action to take, he or she must impose minimal or mandated disciplinary actions.
- If a principal has not followed the steps required by the code — for example, if he or she has allowed a student who should have been suspended back in your classroom — you should speak to your chapter leader and UFT borough safety representative for advice about how best to resolve the matter.

Examples of Discipline Code

ACTION	GRADE LEVEL	SEVERITY LEVEL	RANGE OF RESPONSES
Engaging in scholastic dishonesty (e.g., cheating, plagiarism)	K-5	2	7 responses, ranging from teacher admonishment to parent-teacher conference to principal’s suspension.
Insubordinate behavior	K-5	3	9 responses, the above plus in-school suspension, removal from classroom by teacher.
Disruptive behavior in the classroom or falsely activating a fire alarm	6-12	3	11 responses, ranging from admonishment by staff to superintendent’s suspension.
Assault/using force against school personnel	K-5 and 6-12	5	Mandatory superintendent’s suspension with possibility of removal to a special setting or school.

Discipline code is updated annually, as required by state law

- The use of force against a staff member mandates a superintendent's suspension.

Special Education Students

It is a common misperception that disciplinary consequences cannot be imposed on students with disabilities who commit disciplinary infractions. Students with disabilities are subject to the Discipline Code, but they are entitled to additional procedural protections. The procedures for disciplining students with disabilities are fully explained in Chancellor's Regulation A-443. Both the UFT Safety and Health Department and the office of the vice president from special education are able to assist members with questions about safety and discipline issues involving students with disabilities, as well as IEP availability and providing a special education complaint form.

School Safety Plan

The contract requires that every school have an individually tailored school safety plan. It's a blueprint for handling all sorts of potentially dangerous situations, from routine activities like screening visitors to crises that require an emergency response.

- Every fall, the safety plan must be reviewed and, if necessary, revised.
- The principal is required to *collaborate* with your union chapter on reviewing and updating the plan, not just consult it.
- If you believe your school needs to change or add procedures to address potentially threatening situations or changed circumstances, contact your chapter leader.
- If you see that provisions of the safety plan are being violated, alert your chapter leader. She or he will try to resolve such matters informally or report it to the UFT district representative.
- Failing that, he or she may decide to file a safety grievance, a high-priority complaint that must be answered within 24 hours and has a fast-track appeal process.
- *If you do not want to personally file such a grievance, your chapter leader can do it in the chapter's name.*

Violence Prevention Training

You can take advantage of several union initiatives to learn how to enhance your own safety in school:

- The union's School Safety Department offers violence prevention training. These 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. Using research from psychology and practical knowledge gained from law enforcement, these workshops have enabled thousands of members to avoid confrontations that could have led to violence.
- In addition, 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* for upcoming sessions.

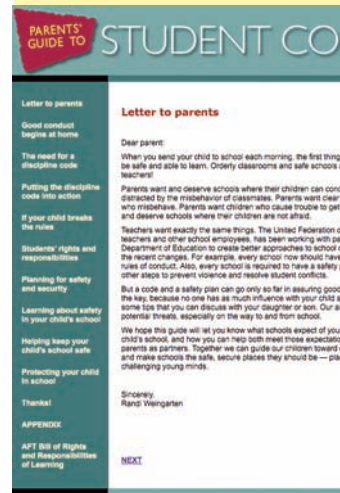
What if I'm Injured?

Unfortunately, UFT members do get injured in the line of duty, or even assaulted in schools. If this should happen to you:

- The UFT's Victim Support Program will contact you to offer every assistance – legal, medical and psychological.
- If you are assaulted:
 - First, get medical treatment.
 - Second, file a criminal complaint report with NYPD.
 - Third, complete the paperwork required to protect your rights. Filing delays could cost you money.

Here are the forms you may need to file:

- **Department of Education Occurrence Report:** Principal must file within 24 hours; you sign to acknowledge seeing it and can add a statement.
- **Comprehensive Accident Report:** Details nature of your injuries; principal files within 24 hours.
- **UFT Incident Form:** Notifies UFT School Safety and Health Department; your chapter leader can give you this form or it can be completed online.



To learn more about the DOE student discipline code, see the UFT's "Parent's Guide to Student Conduct" at www.uft.org/member/publications/parents/student_conduct.

Learn how to protect yourself – and how your UFT chapter can improve school safety – in the UFT's "Security in the Schools" booklet at www.uft.org/member/publications/school/security_schools/index.html.

The UFT has published a simplified "Parent's Guide to Student Conduct." Read or download it at: www.uft.org/member/publications/parents/student_conduct/.



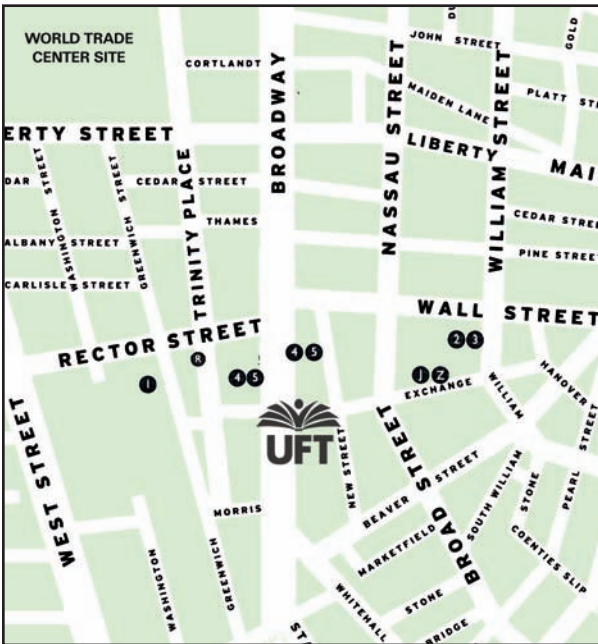
If you are injured on the job, see your UFT chapter leader about your rights and how to preserve them.

The UFT's Victim Support Program (1-212-598-6853) contacts every member who becomes a victim of a school-based incident, offering advice, counseling and assistance with police, the judicial system and the DOE's medical division.

The DOE will reimburse you up to \$100 for stolen or destroyed property, but being a less attractive target to the thief is the best policy. Lock up your valuables.

Report all safety incidents at www.uft.org. Look for the orange button.

- **Application for Excuse of Absence (OP 198):** You and your physician complete it. For job-related injuries, staff members apply for line-of-duty leave (section "C" on form).
- **Confidential Medical Form (OP 407):** If the nature of the incident or injury is confidential, have your doctor fill this out and mail it to the board's medical office.
- **Assignment Form (OP 200):** This legal form, which must be notarized, states that if you sue and collect a settlement larger than the salary paid during your convalescence, you will refund your salary to the board.
- **Request for Reimbursement of Medical Expenses-Assault (OP 505A):** In most cases, the DOE will reimburse you for all of your out-of-pocket medical expenses if you are assaulted.
- **Request for Reimbursement for Loss of or Damage to Personal Property (OP 504):** The board will reimburse you for stolen or destroyed property up to \$100, but only if the property is of the type that is normally brought into schools. (Warning: Don't bring valuables!). There are special procedures for eyeglasses damaged in assault cases.



UFT Headquarters

Because of heightened security, members must show photo identification in order to enter the buildings.

Subway Stops

- 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 1 block south.
- 2 or 3 train** (first car from uptown; last car from Brooklyn) to the Wall Street station: “Wall Street” exit. Walk 1 block south on William Street to Exchange Place. Walk 2 blocks west on Exchange Place and make a left onto Broadway. Walk a half-block south to 50/52 Broadway.
- R train** (last car from uptown; first car from Brooklyn) to the Rector Street station: “Rector Street and Trinity Place SW” exit. Walk 1 block east on Rector Street and turn onto Broadway. Walk 1.5 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 2 blocks west on Exchange Place and turn left onto Broadway. Walk a half-block south to 50/52 Broadway.
- 1 train** (first car from uptown) to the Rector Street station: “Morris Street and Trinity Place” exit. Walk 1 block east on Morris Street. Make a left on Broadway and walk a half-block north to 50/52 Broadway.

UFT Officers

- Michael MulgrewPresident
- Michael MendelSecretary
- Mel AaronsonTreasurer
- Robert AstrowskyAssistant Secretary
- Mona RomainAssistant Treasurer
- Carmen AlvarezVP from special education
- Karen AlfordVP from elementary schools
- Richard FarkasVP from middle schools
- Aminda GentileVP for educational issues
- Sterling RobersonVP from career and technical high schools
- Leo CaseyVP from academic high schools

Borough Representatives

- BronxJose Vargas
2500 Halsey St.,
Bronx, NY 104611-718-379-6200
- BrooklynHoward Schoor
335 Adams St., 25th fl.,
Brooklyn, NY 112011-718-852-4900
- ManhattanEvelyn DeJesus
52 Broadway, 10th fl.,
New York, NY 100041-212-598-6800
- QueensRona Freiser
97-77 Queens Blvd.,
Rego Park, NY 113741-718-275-4400
- Staten IslandEmil Pietromonaco
4456 Amboy Rd, 2nd fl.,
Staten Island, NY 103121-718-605-1400



Like to blog? Want to read the “diaries” of other new teachers? Seeking a fresh angle on education or labor issues? Or want to voice your opinion? Check out the UFT’s blog, Edwize (www.edwize.org).

UFT links for new teachers:
New Teachers - www.uft.org/new_teacher

Member Services - www.uft.org/member/

Contract - www.uft.org/member/contracts/teachers_contract

New York Teacher - www.uft.org/news/teacher

News and Issues - www.uft.org/news/

Publications - www.uft.org/member/publications/

UFT Teacher Center - www.ufttc.org

Pregnancy/Childcare Benefits -
Read or download “Not for Women Only” at www.uft.org/member/publications/teachers/nfwo_ped/.

HELP@HAND

Key Phone Numbers, E-mail Addresses and Web Sites

HEADQUARTERS

52 Broadway, New York, NY 10004 1-212-777-7500

BOROUGH OFFICES

For help with contractual rights and benefits, salaries, grievances and pensions. See [page 5](#).

CERTIFICATION SERVICES

Advice and assistance about certification and licensing

..... 1-212-420-1830

CHILD ABUSE DETECTION & REPORTING COURSE

Low-cost two-hour, state-required workshop 1-212-475-3737

www.ufttc.org/courses

COACHING SESSIONS

To help prepare for NYS teaching exams 1-212-475-3737

DIAL-A-TEACHER

Homework help for students and parents (Mon.-Thurs., 4-7 p.m.)

..... 1-212-777-3380

HELPLINES

Health and Cancer Helpline

Ask to speak to a Helpline counselor 1-212-539-0500

www.uft.org/member/other/information/

HIV and AIDS (Mon.–Fri., 4–6 p.m.) 1-212-598-9275

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender members: Confidential help on discrimination, harassment, employment, etc. (Mon.–Fri., 4–6 p.m.)

..... 1-212-598-9279

Members with disabilities (Mon.–Fri., 4–6 p.m.) 1-212-598-7711

HOTLINE Daily recorded announcements 1-212-777-0190

www.uft.org/hotline

MORTGAGE SERVICES

Information on mortgages and housing programs

www.uft.org/member/money/financial

NYSUT MEMBER BENEFITS TRUST INFORMATION

Insurance and discount programs 1-800-626-8101

www.nysut.org/cps/rde/xchg/nysut/hs.xml/49.htm

PEER INTERVENTION PROGRAM

Confidential, individual assistance for tenured

teachers and guidance counselors 1-212-844-0600

www.uft.org/pip

PENSION CONSULTANTS

Pension questions and individual consultations.

Call your borough office.

www.uft.org/member/money/pension

PROFESSIONAL COMMITTEES

Discussions and activities on subject areas,

ethnic issues and special interests 1-212-598-7772

www.uft.org/member/today/committees/

SAFETY AND HEALTH DEPARTMENT

To report an incident, call your borough office or go to www.uft.org and click on: Safety/Discipline Report

Emergency Hotline: 1-212-701-9407

Environmental issues (asbestos, lead, air quality,

blood-borne pathogens, etc.) 1-212-598-7740

www.uft.org/member/workplace/

Violence Prevention Workshops 1-718-722-6966

Victim Support Program

Practical assistance and psychological support for schools

and individuals 1-212-598-6853

For information on safety issues: uftsafety@uft.org

For information on health issues: healthsafety@uft.org

STRESS MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

Workshops to help manage work-related stress 1-212-475-3737

www.uft.org/member/education/catalog/menu/program/workshops/

TEACHER CENTER

College courses, workshops and school-based and

citywide professional development 1-212-475-3737

www.ufttc.org

TEACHERLINE

Phone help for certification and licensure problems, instructional

strategies, classroom management and other professional issues

(Mon.–Fri., 4–6 p.m.) 1-212-253-8800

e-mail: teacherline@uft.org

UFT WEB SITE

www.uft.org

VICE PRESIDENTS' WORKSHOPS

To upgrade skills (not for college credit)

www.uft.org/member/education/catalog/menu/program/

Elementary School Workshops 1-212-598-9272

JHS/IS Committee Workshops 1-212-598-9234

HS Committee Workshops 1-212-598-9217

WELFARE FUND

Information/assistance with health coverage 1-212-539-0500

www.uftwf.org

Welfare Fund forms 1-212-539-0539

www.uft.org/member/benefits/forms/

RECORD OF YOUR NEW YORK STATE CERTIFICATION AND NEW YORK CITY LICENSING/APPOINTMENT

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Name: _____

File #: _____

SED TEACH On-Line Account Password: _____

NYS Certification(s): _____

NYC License/ Appointment

Title: _____

Code: _____

(You will receive an e-mail from the NYC DOE with license/ appointment information)

MENTORING

Name of Mentor _____

Date First Met _____

Full-time assignment of Mentor: _____

CREDENTIALS

Complete the information for your current status and update as applicable.

(Note: Not all certificate types will apply to your situation.)

Type Of Certificate	Effective Date
NYS Transitional A Certificate; Career and Technical Education Teachers Only (Valid For Three Years)	
NYS Transitional B Certificate (Valid For Three Years)	
NYS Conditional Initial Certification (Out-Of-State Credentials)	
NYS Internship Certificate (Valid For Two Years)	
NYS Initial Certificate (Valid For Five Years)	
NYS Professional Certificate (175 hours of Professional Development required every five years to keep this certificate valid).	
NYC License/Appointment	

TENURE

Tenure is granted for your license/appointment area in NYC.

(You must complete the two components listed below to achieve permanent tenure in your license/appointment area.)

Component of Tenure	Date Granted
Completion of Probation	
Permanent/Professional Certificate	

SALARY INFORMATION

STEP PLACEMENT

If you have previous experience working as a teacher, you may be able to begin on a higher step.

Apply to the DOE to determine whether you are eligible.

Date of Application	Salary Step Granted	Anniversary Date

DIFFERENTIALS

Each time you earn credits that meet the next salary level you must submit an online application to the NYC DOE.

Credits	Application Date	Date Granted	Effective Date
C2 (BA+30 Credits)			
C2+ID (BA+60 Credits)			
C2+PD (MA or 36 Credits in an area of specialization)			
C2+ID+PD			
C6+PD (MA+30 Credits)			

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United Federation of Teachers

A Union of Professionals