

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## PAY

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***Why are we not getting the full retroactive pay up front?***

Mayor Bloomberg set aside no money in the city budget to pay for educators to receive the two 4 percent raises for 2009 and 2010 that other city workers received. He also purposely drained the city's entire labor reserve fund. He wanted to make it impossible for the next administration to give educators the raises they deserve. Over the five years that he refused to negotiate with us, the cost of paying out those compounded raises ballooned.

Mayor de Blasio inherited this city budget with virtually no money in the labor reserve. If we had insisted on getting more of the retroactive pay right away, we would not have been able to get either full retro pay or raises in the other years of the contract.

By agreeing to stretch out the retroactive payments and raises, we got both. UFT members will be made whole by receiving the money they are entitled to. In addition to retro payments and raises for the 2009-2011 period, they will receive raises for the other years in the contract, which add up to 18 percent.

***When will retroactive pay be distributed?***

You will receive your lump-sum payments from October 2015 through October 2020. This is the money you would have accumulated had you received your raises in 2009 and 2010. For veteran teachers at the top of the scale, the retroactive lump-sum payments could total more than \$50,000.

Your retroactive rate increases will start in May 2015. You will receive four 2 percent increases which add up to 8 percent on top of the new raises which add up to 10 percent.

## HEALTH CARE

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***Will I be able to keep my current insurance plan and will my network of doctors and hospitals remain the same?***

Yes and yes.

***Why did the unions agree to \$1.3 billion in health care savings? How can the city save on health care without decreasing my benefits?***

We have been paying too much for health care. The last mayoral administration had no interest in addressing this, and the municipal unions had no motivation to work with them. Now the city and municipal unions will convene

Members will receive what they have earned since Nov. 1, 2009 as long as they are continuously employed, in-service, have retired since that date or retire in the future.

***Will the lump-sum payments be based on each new salary increase?***

The lump sums of retroactive pay will be based on what you would have accumulated if the two 4 percent raises had taken effect in 2009 and 2010.

***I am a retiree. Am I entitled to retroactive pay and how will it affect my pension?***

Members who retired since the expiration of the last contract will receive retroactive pay and have their final average salary recalculated for pension purposes. They will receive the money in a lump sum if they retire on or before June 30, 2014.

***I plan to retire soon after the contract is ratified. Will I receive my full retroactive pay in a lump sum, and how will my final average salary be calculated?***

You will receive your full retroactive pay in a lump sum only if you retire on or before June 30, 2014. If you retire after that date, you will receive your retroactive pay on the same schedule as in-service employees. Retroactive raises would be included in the calculation of final average salary.

***I plan to retire in two years. How will that affect my retro?***

Your retro will be paid through 2020.

a joint citywide health care committee that will work collaboratively and transparently to identify ways to deliver health care more efficiently and streamline the administration of benefits.

We could not have made these changes with the previous administration because of the former mayor's utter disrespect for city workers and their unions. We are confident that we will meet the savings targets set in this program. The way that you access certain benefits may change, but benefits should not decrease.

## EVALUATION

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### ***What are some of the most significant changes I will see in the new evaluations?***

Evaluations will now only be focused on eight of the 22 Danielson components, and the time-consuming teacher artifacts have been eliminated. In addition, administrators will now have shorter timelines to provide feedback and observation reports, and validators will be fellow educators, not consultants or other outside third parties. The changes will help to make the teacher evaluation system clearer, fairer and more focused on teacher growth and development.

We knew from the start of this current evaluation system that it was going to be a big problem and were determined that we would work under it for only one year. With this contract, what we now call the “new evaluation system” will next year be the “old evaluation system.”

### ***Will the number of observations be reduced?***

No. However there is an additional observation option for teachers rated Highly Effective, with three informal observations and three non-evaluative inter-visitations from colleagues to the Highly Effective teacher’s classroom.

### ***Will teachers of non-tested subjects such as art or physical education still have to be evaluated on students they don’t teach?***

Teachers of non-tested subjects will now have the option of being rated only on the test scores of students they teach.

### ***How will peer validators be selected, and will they come from the same subject area as the teacher?***

A joint DOE-UFT selection committee will determine selection criteria for peer validators and will screen and select qualified applicants to create the pool of eligible candidates.

Peer validators may or may not serve in the same subject area as the teachers they are assigned to. In addition, peer validators will not be assigned to a school where he or she has previously worked. People applying to be a peer validator should understand that if chosen, they will be assigned elsewhere.

## PAPERWORK AND CURRICULUM

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### ***How does this new agreement help me with the issue of onerous paperwork?***

This agreement establishes central and district/HS superintendency-level committees with equal UFT-DOE representation on each. Paperwork issues are now subject to the grievance process.

### ***What happens if I am a core subject teacher who does not receive a curriculum next year?***

You will now be able to file a grievance.

## ABSENT TEACHER RESERVE

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### ***Did the UFT keep its word to stand by teachers in the Absent Teacher Reserve?***

Absolutely. Mayor Bloomberg wanted us to abandon the ATRs. Some pundits have insisted that the ATRs must be thrown aside. We refused and stood firm. This contract preserves the rights of ATRs and improves their chances of permanent placement.

### ***How will teachers in the Absent Teacher Reserve benefit from this new contract?***

ATRs will enjoy the same salary and retroactive pay package as all other teachers and a new two-year pilot will

give ATRs improved access to professional and relevant job placements. Under the new contract, schools that select an ATR for permanent placement will not have that ATR’s salary included in the school’s average teacher salary calculation, which means that principals no longer have a reason to pass over more senior educators in favor of newer hires with lower salaries. What’s more, we also won an unprecedented voluntary severance package for ATRs.

### ***Have ATRs lost their due-process rights in the new contract?***

No.

## WORKDAY

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### ***Will more time be added to the workday?***

No. The workday remains the same length. Every school now has the right to repurpose time to meet their school's needs, which is all subject to an SBO vote except for the default option.

### ***Will the increased number of parent-teacher conferences add more time to our work schedule?***

No, the two additional parent-teacher conferences are part of a repurposing of the time previously spent on mandatory faculty and grade conferences. Not one additional minute has been added to the work schedule.

### ***Will educators have anything to say about the kind of training they will get during the repurposed time?***

A school-based committee that includes the UFT chapter leader and which consists of members selected by the chapter leader and principal in each school will work to create and review the training opportunities available to teachers. The Department of Education is finally led by a true educator, and more training opportunities should begin to reflect Chancellor Fariña's strong support for collaborative peer-to-peer teacher training.

## SCHOOL INNOVATION OPPORTUNITIES

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### ***Why would a school want to become part of Progressive Redesign Opportunity Schools for Excellence (PROSE)?***

Many school communities have new and innovative ideas that they feel would benefit their students and are looking for the opportunity and freedom to pursue those ideas. By applying and being accepted as a PROSE school, those schools can gain a new level of flexibility with respect to the UFT contract and DOE regulations that will give them the opportunity to expand and design those new and innovative ideas.

### ***Are PROSE schools exempt from the contract? Aren't they the same as charter schools?***

No. Schools that wish to join the PROSE program may seek modifications only to certain Chancellor's Regulations or certain UFT contract provisions through the SBO process. A joint UFT/DOE panel will have to approve any modifications.

### ***What if a teacher does not want to remain in a school that has joined PROSE?***

The DOE has extended the open market period for teachers in PROSE schools to Oct. 15.

## TEACHER LEADERSHIP POSITIONS AND THE HARD-TO-STAFF SCHOOL DIFFERENTIAL

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### ***How will teacher leaders be selected, and who will select them?***

A central UFT/DOE leadership committee made up of an equal number of representatives from the union and the DOE will select the pool of candidates. The principal at each school will select from the pool.

### ***Aren't the teacher leadership positions and hard-to-staff school differentials forms of merit pay?***

Teacher leadership positions represent a career ladder, not merit pay. These positions give members the chance to be paid for extra work they will be doing to help other teachers. The hard-to-staff school differential will help attract and retain teachers at schools in underserved areas and build capacity at these schools. It will be granted to all members in these schools except those with an Ineffective rating.