



Dear Friend,

I hope you all stay warm as the temperature is expected to drop this weekend and that you are enjoying a productive school year!

I'm pleased to inform you that your contract was ratified in a membership vote. Of the nearly 90,000 UFT members who cast ballots, 87 percent voted "yes." Thank you for participating in this election!



The UFT was successful in negotiating changes to our working conditions that our chapter sought.

Under the new contract, the DOE, in consultation with the UFT, will issue guidance to principals on assignments to school counselors during the final two days of the school year. The UFT and the DOE will also form a labor management committee to discuss home visit procedures. The DOE has also agreed to hold joint workshops with the UFT to explain the tenure process for school counselors.

These changes are in addition to across-the-board pay increases and other gains. The union negotiated an expansion of the authority of UFT consultation committees to provide us with a meaningful mechanism to raise and address issues of space, workload and lack of basic instructional supplies at the school level. These were concerns raised by many functional chapters. It's all part of the union's effort to give members more power to ensure the contract is enforced in schools and have a voice in decisions that affect student achievement. You can read more about the contract on the special [Contract 2018 section](#) of the UFT website.

Getting a fair contract was just one part of the work we do as a chapter to make sure our role is respected and valued in the school community. We constantly strive to maintain balance in children's lives between academics and wellbeing. We often get work thrown our way that is outside the scope of our work, and the school counselor is still the go-to person when a crisis hits. As always, I thank you for everything you do in schools, and I will continue to advocate for your rights and profession.

You can always email me a rtompson@uft.org with issues or concerns. Please — email me using only your personal, non-DOE email address. I'm in the UFT office at 52 Broadway in Manhattan on

Mondays and Wednesdays from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m, and you can reach me by phone at those times at 212-598-7776.

Sincerely,

Rosemarie Thompson
School Counselors Chapter Leader

Save the dates

Thanks to those of you who have attended our chapter meetings so far this school year! Our next two **chapter meetings are Nov. 14 and Nov. 28, both Wednesdays, at the UFT's Brooklyn borough office** from 4 to 6 p.m. I'll be in touch soon with details about guest speakers. As always, there will be refreshments and the opportunity to meet with colleagues and raise issues and concerns.

I also want to share with you the date of our 15th annual **UFT school counselors conference on Saturday, March 9**, at UFT headquarters in Manhattan. This is always a wonderful day of professional development and networking. I'll be in touch with registration and more details soon.

Thanks for coming out to union events



School counselors pose for a photo at the Labor Day Parade with AFT President Randi Weingarten, second from right.

I want to thank those of you who came to support your union at the Labor Day Parade in September, the LGBTQ Pride March in June and the School Counselors Recognition Ceremony in July.

At the Labor Day Parade on Sept. 8, more than 1,200 UFT members turned out to show support in the wake of the Supreme Court's Janus decision. The pride march also had a fantastic and enthusiastic turnout, and you can [see pictures from that day](#) on the UFT website.

Our first-ever UFT School Counselors Recognition Ceremony was a truly special event. We honored 18 school counselors from every borough and grade level, and celebrated the work that we do in schools every day. You can [read an article about the event](#) on the UFT website.

ATRs should be assigned counselor work

School counselors in the Absent Teacher Reserve, when assigned to a school, should be assigned school counselor work and follow the same procedures as other counselors in that school. For example, if counselors in the school to which you're assigned clock in and out, you should, too. If you have concerns about assignments or procedures, please contact me.

Try a new, personalized high school search tool

InsideSchools has developed a [new high school search tool](#) that helps school counselors, students and families sort through New York City's more than 400 high schools and identify high schools that may be a good fit for a particular student. The tool offers results tailored to each student's unique academic record and to whether the student is willing to travel, to take an exam, or to go for an audition. To learn more about how it works, [read the blog post from InsideSchools](#).

Repurposing of time and our work hours

Many members have reached out to me about our involvement with the professional development time on Mondays and parent engagement time on Tuesdays. School counselors are not involved in these activities, which are contractually for teachers.

While the teachers' days are shorter on Mondays and Tuesdays, we work our regular time on those days and for the remainder of the week. In single session schools, school counselors no longer attend faculty conferences or departmental meetings.

You must attend the parent-teacher conferences in September, November, March and May. For more details, check out the [memo that outlines and explains our hours](#) as they relate to parent-teacher conferences.

Your rights if you've been assigned to advisory

Because advisory has a social/emotional component, many schools have assigned school counselors to teach the course, placing counselors on a teaching schedule. Per [Article 7C](#) of the contract, our role has always been to work with teachers and set up a schedule with them to join their classes and present on guidance topics. The teacher should remain in the room and not treat this class period as a lunch or prep period. That way, should an emergency occur, or should a parent or outside visitor come to see us, we can attend to it. The teacher should take over the lesson and reschedule with the school counselor to complete our presentation. We should never be listed as classroom teachers or take attendance for any course.

In the High School Academic Policy Guide for this school year, the following language was added by the Office of Academic Policy and Systems:

NYSED has commencement-level learning standards in the following subject areas: English language arts; social studies; mathematics; science; technology; arts education (including visual arts, music, dance and theater); languages other than English; health, physical education, family and consumer sciences; and career development and occupational studies. Commencement-level learning standards and assessments reflect the knowledge, skills, and understandings all students are expected to know and be able to do upon receiving a high school diploma. **Courses that do not align to these high school-level standards, including elective courses, may not bear credit. There are no standards in "guidance" or "advisory"; such courses generally should not bear credit.** See the section of this guide on electives. (Page 11)

Courses that do not align to high school learning standards: Schools may not award credit for courses that do not meet NYSED commencement-level learning standards. This includes courses that meet middle school standards, or guidance courses that do not align to one of NYSED's commencement-level learning standards.⁶⁹ For example, students may not receive credit for a course aligned to pre-algebra standards designed to prepare students for a high school algebra course. **Guidance or advisory courses generally should not bear credit. NYSED does not have commencement-level learning standards in guidance. If credit-bearing, these courses should be coded more accurately to align with the NYSED commencement-level learning standards being taught. The teacher of record's certification must correspond with the standards and content of the course.** See the section of this guide on electives. (Page 38)

School continue to struggle with this issue. The Office of Academic Policy and Systems will continue to emphasize through its policy guidance and during their in-person trainings that all credit-bearing experiences, including guidance and advisory, must align to NYSED learning standards and be taught by a teacher who is certified in that subject area. I'm thankful to them for advocating for school counselors.

NYSSCA Annual Conference: Nov. 15-17

The 2018 New York State School Counselor Association (NYSSCA) annual conference will run from Nov. 15 to 17 at the Sagamore Resort in Bolton Landing, NY. Registration starts at \$265 for NYSSCA members.

This year's theme is Celebrating the Resilient School Counselor. Keynote speakers are Dr. Tracey Jackson, the supervisor of school counseling services for Loudoun County public schools, Rev. Dr. Bryant T. Marks, Sr., the founding director of the National Training and Education Institute, and Kwok-Sze Richard Wong, EdD, the executive director of the American School Counselor Association. There will be workshops on transition and career planning, trauma-informed schools and more.

[Learn more and register »](#)

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