



UFT nuzledar

Speech Improvement

CHAPTER NEWSLETTER



Dear Friend,

This will be my last official newsletter as your chapter leader and I want to share some final thoughts with you. Often I am asked why I got involved with the union and why I have never feared retaliation. Perhaps it is because I value speech and language therapy and the work that we do each and every day.

When I was a child, I was often bullied and mistreated. I wore ugly glasses, had a full mouth of metal braces and had a learning disability that was not diagnosed for a long time. As I grew older, I made a conscious decision to stand up for myself. When I became a speech teacher, my goal became to give a voice to students and teachers who could not speak and advocate for themselves.

The UFT helped me to do this and gave me the tools and support I needed to ensure that our students got the best speech services possible. The union trained me to understand our contractual rights. But I knew from the beginning that protecting our existing rights was not enough. I wanted to improve our working conditions and how we are treated in our schools. We have come very far in the 27 years I have served as your chapter leader, but there is always more to do.

Because of the Janus v. AFSCME case before the Supreme Court, it has never been more important to keep our union strong. If you are not currently active in the union, the time is now. Please join your school membership team, become a speech chapter representative, recommit to the union and attend UFT meetings.

Consider filing a special education complaint if your students' rights are violated or a grievance when your own rights are abused. You can and will be a powerful role model for your students when you stand up for your own rights. We are all the union.

Yes, I understand that many of you are fearful about speaking out. But I promise you together we are never alone. I am confident that Caroline Murphy, our newly elected chapter leader, our elected executive board and our volunteer liaisons will be there for you when challenges arise and will continue the fights ahead. Don't allow fear to keep you silent. Get involved. Speak up and speak out.

It has been a privilege and an honor to serve you all of these years. The work that you do is important and you deserve the very best. Have a wonderful summer.

Sincerely,

Mindy Karten Bornemann
Speech Chapter Leader

Welcome to our new Speech Executive Board members

The following Speech Chapter members will serve for the next three years.

Chapter Leader: Caroline Murphy

Assistant Chapter Leader: Brenda Caquias

High School Representatives

Bronx: Susan Ramlal

Brooklyn and Staten Island: Charlene Tuff

Manhattan: Sandy Robinson

Queens: Nidhi Rumore (Nidhi Beri)

District Program Representatives:

Bronx: Melissa Toribio and Sara Hochrad

Brooklyn: Kesha Hill and Ladesha Gill Bey

Manhattan: Gabriella Schecter and Gay Zacerous

Queens: Jessica Krivac and Keri Roula

Staten Island: Ana Machuca

District 75 Citywide Program:

Bronx: Melissa (Rosen) Altshuler

Brooklyn: Jessica Kestenbaum

Manhattan: Meredith Straker Blackman

Queens: Alesia Edmondson-Ross

Staten Island: Cathryn Mione

Our Chapter Delegates to the UFT Delegate Assembly

Kesha Hill, Lorina Allert, Deborah Alexander, Ladesha Gill Bey, Mayra Santos-Torres, Ninane Boscia, Ava Geddis, Maria De Candia, Brenda Caquias, Jessica Kestenbaum, Gay Zacerous, Meredith Straker Blackman, Mindy Karten Bornemann

Open Market Transfer System

Speech teachers may transfer to a different school under the Open Market Transfer System.

Principals will post anticipated as well as approved vacancies between April 13 and Aug. 7. During

the open period, these vacancies are posted on the DOE website. We continue to pressure the DOE to add all of the known vacancies and contracted-out positions. If you know of any clear vacancies, where students are unserved or underserved, or being seen by contract agency providers, please send this information to Mbornemann@uft.org.

The listings are revised as positions are filled and principals post new vacancies, so it's good to regularly check the website. Schools can advertise and select staff to all projected vacancies, but a transfer won't become final until the vacancy is approved and the transferring employee has been entered into the Galaxy budget of the new school. Please remember: Every year you have to recreate your account in the [Open Market Transfer System](#).

Party on! Come join us but hurry! Deadline is June 15!

Mindy's Retirement Party is at Vivos in Bayside on June 21.

Please join my family, friends and UFT family at this special celebration. Tables are filling up fast and you should come and celebrate more than 30 years of service to our chapter. Think of all of the gains that we have made working together: salary increases, pension, materials, coverage protections, per session, SLPs differentials, WKU speech pathology program, retention rights, and job security.

Please contact Lisa Arian if you are sending a check immediately at Larian@uft.org. We must receive payment by Friday, June 15. We hope you will join us at this special event.

Are you thinking of resigning?

If you are considering resigning, be aware that you will lose eligibility for upcoming lump-sum payments that were part of the 2014 UFT-DOE contract if you resign.

Also, be aware of the regulations governing resignations. You must give 30 calendar days' notice before resigning. The notice period includes the summer months. Therefore, if a teacher wants to resign (not retire) effective Sept. 4, the first day of work for teachers this coming school year, he or she must submit a letter of resignation by Aug. 4.

According to the DOE, those employees who resign without providing 30 calendar days' notice will be given a problem code in their personnel file, which will flag them for review should they wish to return to teaching in the future. There is no notice requirement for retiring teachers.

If you wish to return to the DOE after resigning and maintain your tenure status, you must return within five years of the effective resignation date and must apply to withdraw the resignation using the Application for Withdrawal of Resignation/ Retirement Form on the DOE website.

The application must be submitted to the DOE on or before the first workday for teachers in order for a reinstatement with tenure to be processed. The DOE does not accept late applications.

If you fail to return within five years or fail to apply to submit the information for withdrawal of resignation, the DOE will give tenure credit and you will serve one year of probation. If you are transferring to another school within the DOE, you do not resign from your current school.

Anyone considering resigning should contact his or her UFT borough office before doing so to discuss the impact of resignation on pension, tenure, job security and other things.

Better Speech and Hearing Month Celebration

The UFT Speech Improvement Chapter's 12th annual Better Speech and Hearing Month Celebration honored speech providers and their students and showcased their winning projects at UFT headquarters in Manhattan on May 10. Thank you to our Better Speech and Hearing month winners.

Next year we hope to have many more student submissions and their artwork because it is a wonderful way to showcase the children we support. Thank you to the BSHM committee members for their work on behalf of our speech providers and the students they honored this year.

[Take a look at photos from the event.](#)

Observations, absences and ratings — frequent questions

QUESTION: *How do I know whether I'm doing well?*

Answer: Speech teacher SLPs fall under the old evaluation system so all observations will be rated using a Satisfactory or an Unsatisfactory. We are not evaluated using the Danielson or Advance system. At the end of each school year, you will receive an end-of-year rating from your principal; the principal is your rating officer. The rating will reflect evaluations jointly conducted with your speech supervisor.

Unless you have received unsatisfactory observation reports or letters for your file, you should receive a satisfactory rating for the year. If you have been getting poor ratings on lessons or other matters, you should have already met with your chapter leader to discuss the possible remedies.

If you receive a U rating for the year, it will be delivered to you 10 days before the end of the school year. At that point, your options depend on your status. Therefore, immediately contact a U-rating advocate at your UFT borough office and call the Speech Chapter Hotline to discuss your rating at 212-598-7774.

QUESTION: *What are the rules regarding absences?*

Answer: As you work, you earn one sick day each month. You can use up to 10 self-treated days a year, including three for personal business.

Personal business is for business that cannot be conducted outside the work day or is for caring for a sick child. Reasonable notice must be provided to your principal. Use of personal business days requires approval. A doctor's note is not required for self-treated days, but if you see a doctor, it is a good idea to submit the note. Any sick days you do not use in a school year accumulate in your Cumulative Absence Reserve for future use.

QUESTION: *Can absences or lateness be a factor in my rating?*

Answer: If you are ill, you have a right to stay home. Your absence should not be used against you. Patterns of absence, however, such as before and after weekends and/or holidays, can negatively affect your rating.

If a principal thinks a teacher's record of attendance or lateness may lead to a U-rating, the principal should have a conversation with you to give you a chance to improve your attendance. You may receive a warning letter and be called in for possible disciplinary action. Always go with a school's chapter leader to any possible disciplinary meeting and speak with your school's chapter leader if you receive a letter. It is not necessary to go with the Speech Chapter leader.

QUESTION: Besides letters, what else ordinarily goes into my file?

Answer: Observation reports are among the key items to go into your file. As a speech teacher, your speech supervisor writes the observation report after watching you work with your students. Formal observations require a pre- and post-observation conference.

Let your supervisor know that you want an individual, in-person, pre-observation conference that focuses on the content of the lesson. All lessons require a post-observation conference. After the observation, your supervisor should have a post-observation conference with you to review your lesson's strengths and weaknesses. Later, when you receive your observation report, sign it even if you do not agree with it, to acknowledge that you have seen it before it goes into your file.

Extensions of probation don't need to be signed immediately

For those probationers whose principals want to extend their probations: Do not immediately sign the extension of probation. Probationers have the right to have a NYSUT attorney review it.

There are very few choices when it comes to probation extension, but you should still immediately contact your district representative or borough office if your principal is insisting that you sign the extension. (In fact, if you have any issues related to an extension, contact your district representative.) Tell your principal you will sign the document after it is reviewed by the union. That is your right.

Per Session Hours for all speech teacher SLPs

Make sure that you keep copies of your per session hours especially at the end of the year. Although the deadline date is the end of June, you may not be paid until the fall.

Try to get in all of your hours as soon as possible. The hours cannot be transferred to the following year so you will lose them if you do not use them. Let us know if you are having issues with codes although at this point of the year, hopefully all of those issues have already been resolved by our office. Make sure that you use your hours because if you do not, the DOE will think that they are not needed in the future.

The UFT is filing a union-initiated grievance for speech teachers who were denied the extra 20 hours for larger caseloads by the Department of Education. These speech teachers contacted the UFT and the grievance was filed on their behalf.

We are asking these speech teachers to keep track of their per session hours going forward in the event that we need the information for this grievance in the future.

Updating your SLP License in NYCAPS

Just a reminder: If you paid for your SLP license, you must enter the new expiration date into NYCAPS to receive reimbursement from the DOE for the license fee. If you have already paid for the renewal prior to April, it should appear in your payroll portal.

The DOE is reimbursing SLPs four times a year and paid the last group in the May 15 paycheck. We have a list of all of the SLPs who have been reimbursed. Please email medicaidops@schools.nyc.gov if you have not received the \$229 in your paycheck. You can also call us to check if you are on the list of paid SLPs.

OUR CHAPTER | OUR UNION



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