



Introducing the Team High School newsletter

Dear Colleagues,

We're pleased to send you this first issue of our new Team High School newsletter. It is our goal to provide information and resources to our UFT members in New York City high schools. We are sending this first issue by mail, however the rest of our newsletters this year will be by email only. Please sign up now on the UFT website so that you will receive this and other important updates from the union. Go to uft.org/user/register to sign up.

Educating is always a challenge. But we know that this year in particular is full of changes that are causing anxiety among many members. Your union is working with and for you to answer questions, monitor trends, and support you in the work you do every day for our city's high school students.

Please read and share your Team High School newsletter with colleagues as we work together to organize our members and empower our schools.

In Solidarity,

Janella Hinds, vice president of academic high schools

Sterling Roberson, vice president of career and technical high schools

Do you have a career and technical education (CTE) program in your school?

There are 45 designated CTE high schools in New York City, serving approximately 26,000 students. Twenty CTE schools have opened since 2003 and seven have opened in 2013 alone, all of them with the purpose of preparing students to be college- and career-ready, with training in a pleth-

ora of skills. New schools align with labor market trends, with programs geared toward growth fields such as information technology, culinary arts, green careers, advertising and media. In addition, there are 400 CTE programs that operate citywide in more than 140 schools, including traditional high

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New teacher evaluation system presents an opportunity for increased advocacy for our profession

While educators are used to facing new challenges every year, this fall presents the added pressure of a new teacher evaluation system. Although the imposed new system is far from perfect, it does contain opportunities for increased advocacy and professional engagement, and as always the UFT is here to assist you.

As you know, the UFT worked endlessly last year to negotiate a new teacher evaluation system with the Department of Education. Unfortunately, since the DOE was bent on an evaluation system meant to terminate educators rather than develop them, an agreement was not reached. Therefore, an evaluation system was imposed by New York State that incorporated student assessments as a part of evaluation (as per laws that were passed by our state Legislature in 2010).

However, the new evaluation process is a step toward a system utilizing a standards-based rubric, in contrast to the previous practice of a teacher's year-end rating depending entirely on a principal's judgment. Rest assured that your union will work with you now and through future negotiations to create an evaluation system which does what it should: to help support and develop educators as they work to ensure our students have the resources they need to be successful. Toward this end, it is crucial that we engage in proactive and confident conversations with our school administrators about our students' individual and group needs, our pedagogical practice and other issues necessary for us to help ensure academic growth for all of our students.

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All future issues of this newsletter this year will be sent via email. Don't miss out! Make sure to sign up at www.uft.org/user/register. We also want to hear your comments and questions about any articles in this newsletter and your story ideas for future issues. Please call the Team High School Hotline at 212-598-9217 with story ideas, questions or comments.

For assistance, please see the information below and to answer any additional questions or concerns, please contact your chapter leader, your district representative, borough office or the UFT's office of high schools at 212-598-9217.

1. Go to the UFT teacher evaluation Toolkit at: <http://www.uft.org/our-rights/teacher-evaluation> to view the UFT's Teacher Evaluation Quick-Start Guide, an explanation of the new evaluation system, and evaluation documents that can be used at your school. Please share this information with other UFT members at your school.
2. Please report any concerns with how the new evaluation system is being implemented at your school to your chapter leader. In addition, if you feel your rights under the new system are being violated, you may file an Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) complaint form online. Please ask your chapter leader for more information on the complaint process.
3. Communicate and work with your school community during consultation meetings, staff and faculty conferences and other professional development opportunities to ensure the process is implemented

4. Utilize this opportunity to take an active role in pre- and post-observation conferences and in communicating with administrators throughout the year regarding your practice, development and needs. Also keep track of and communicate to your evaluator the domains and competencies you feel were witnessed during observations and in the everyday work you perform. In short, the new system offers opportunities. Your leadership on this issue and your cooperation in assisting fellow members is crucial as the UFT works together in unity toward increased advocacy and participation as professionals in our schools.

Got consultation?! – Call your union!

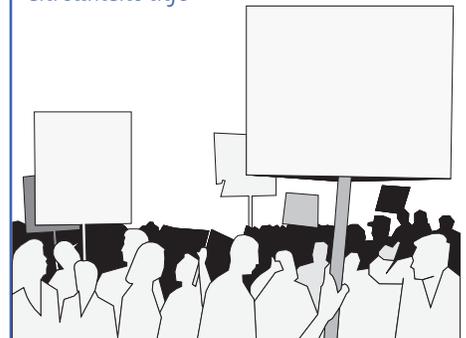
As you know, consultation meetings are crucial to ensure that educators remain a driving force of decision-making and problem-solving at the school level. Please call the Team High School hotline (212-598- 9217), your borough office or district representative to assist you with formulating agendas and conducting these meetings—the foundation of effective school governance.

ENROLL IN THE UFT!

You can enroll in the UFT if you are a newly appointed or in-service, agency fee payer or a New York City Department of Education pedagogue, paraprofessional, or retiree.

As a union member, you have the right to play an important role in our union and its actions and policies. You will be able to vote in union elections and help choose the UFT's leadership team in your school and citywide. You can even run for union office. Only members can participate in the union's bargaining committee and take part in the contract ratification vote. In addition, as a full-fledged member, you can participate in money-saving group insurance plans and low-cost legal and financial service plans, and you can get discounts on travel, entertainment and sports events.

Sign up here: <http://www.uft.org/enrollment-info>



2013-14 high school committee meetings

See a list below of the dates and locations of this year's academic high school committee meetings and career and technical high school committee meetings. Please attend and invite members from your schools as these dynamic meetings are designed to equip members with needed information pertinent to all matters affecting our high schools. Food and refreshments are always provided and it's also a great opportunity to connect, converse and even debate with colleagues on the myriad of issues affecting our schools and students.

UFT academic high school meetings with Janella Hinds

All meetings are on Wednesday at 4:30 p.m.

10/30: Queens UFT

11/13: Bronx UFT

12/18: 52 Broadway

1/22: 52 Broadway

2/26: 52 Broadway

3/26: Brooklyn UFT

4/30: 52 Broadway

5/21: Staten Island UFT

6/18: 52 Broadway

UFT CTE high school meetings with Sterling Roberson

All meetings are at 4 p.m. unless otherwise noted

10/31: Brooklyn UFT

11/14: Bronx UFT

12/19: 52 Broadway

1/23: 50 Broadway

2/6: 52 Broadway

3/27: 52 Broadway

4/24: 52 Broadway

5/22: 52 Broadway

6/19: 52 Broadway

Michael Mulgrew and Janella Hinds testify before City Council against co-locations

UFT President Michael Mulgrew and Vice President for Academic High Schools Janella Hinds testified on Oct. 2 before the New York City Council's education committee about school closures and co-locations. The hearing focused on three resolutions recently put forth by the council: one calling for a requirement that all co-locations, closures or

significant changes in school utilization receive approval by the school's Community Education Council; another calling for a moratorium on school closings and co-locations; and a third that calls for specific procedures for notifying affected parents and communities of significant changes in school utilization.

Mulgrew and Hinds in their testimony shed light on DOE policies that have starved schools of the resources, space and professional development necessary for them to thrive.

The hearing began with Education Committee Chairman Robert Jackson

raising concerns that the Department of Education's policies of school closures and co-locations has worsened, not improved, New York City's school system. The DOE defended Mayor Bloomberg's policies, which have shuttered 156 schools in the last 11 years and co-located hundreds more. City Council members grilled the DOE about the failure to engage parents and communities in meaningful ways in determining the fate of schools. Council members also asked why the DOE reduces resources for struggling schools rather than increasing support to help the schools improve.

Driving professional conversations in our schools

With the new teacher evaluation system based on the Danielson Framework, it is vital that we as educators drive professional conversations to improve our pedagogy and ensure our schools and classrooms are properly supported. Toward these ends, using some of the words below could help to ensure the focus of the new evaluation system does what it was prescribed to do – support and develop educators. These are excerpted from the 2nd edition of Charlotte Danielson's *Enhancing Professional Practice: A Framework for Teaching*.

“Current supervisory theory states that to be effective, supervisory practices must be regulated in large part by the teacher.” (177).

“A teacher makes hundreds of nontrivial decisions daily, from designing lessons, to responding to students' questions, to meeting with parents. In other words, teaching is a thinking person's job it is not simply a matter of following a script or carrying out other people's instructional designs.” (2).

“An environment of high-stakes accountability only exacerbates teachers' levels of stress.” (5).

“A comprehensive framework is useful in identifying the source of the difficulty and therefore in guiding improvement efforts. These conversations focus on means, not ends, and they are conducted in an environment of professional respect.” (12).

“The framework has no gotcha mentality behind it—an attribute that is particularly important if it is used for supervision.” (21).

“Decisions on the applicability of each element to a given situation must be made by those who are most familiar with that situation—again, teachers.” (21).

“When mentors, coaches, or supervisors observe colleagues' classrooms, they must be aware of imposing their own preferences on what they see. The question is not, Has this teacher established a physical environment in the same way I would do it?, but rather, Given the teacher's situation—the age of the students and the nature of the school and the class—has this teacher successfully established a physical environment conducive to learning?” (22).

“Teaching involves such a complex set of skills that lessons are almost never perfect. The key to being an accomplished teacher is acquiring the skill to continually improve one's practice; an important vehicle for this is reflection and conversation.” (169).

“Everyone in the school or district must have access to sufficient training to ensure that administrators can make consistent judgments based on evidence of practice and that teachers understand the system well enough to demonstrate their skill.” (177).

“The post-conference (or reflection conference) plays an important role in the observation process. The discussion enables the evaluator to gain access to the teacher's thinking about the lesson, how it might have been done differently, and how it could have been improved. Indeed, many experienced users of the framework for teaching find the post-observation conference to be the most valuable aspect of the entire observation process.” (178).

“Important characteristics of... an evaluation system [using the framework] are (1) teacher engagement with the process, (2) teacher reflection and conversation, and (3) trust.” (181).

Again, use these and other quotations from Charlotte Danielson in consultation committee meetings, pre- and post-observation conferences and in the many professional conversations that take place throughout the year. Doing so is one part of the continuous and necessary work of taking authority over our profession.

Resources for you and your students: human rights curriculum and a student video contest

Speak Truth To Power, a program of the Robert F. Kennedy Center for Justice and Human Rights, is a global initiative that uses the experiences of courageous human rights defenders from around the world to educate young people about human rights and urge them to take action. The Speak Truth To Power Film Contest challenges middle and high school students to create a 3-6 minute film about a human rights violation, and the modern-day heroes fighting to stop it. The film contest (with accompanying ready-to-use lesson plans and resources aligned with the Common Core Learning Standards) are

excellent student-centered activities that introduce your students to social justice and incredible present-day human rights defenders while developing skills of research, composition, narrative storytelling and working in groups on a fun and rewarding task. The films will be judged by a panel that includes Alec Baldwin and Kerry Kennedy, and the winning film will be screened at the 2014 Tribeca Film Festival.

Need help implementing the curriculum or training on how to teach your students the art of documentary film making? The Tribeca Film Institute and the RFK Center will provide a free four-hour training on student film making at the UFT on November 8 from 4:00pm – 8:00 pm at 52 Broadway. Also feel free to call the Team High School hotline: 212-598-9271 to arrange a visit to your school or classroom from a representative from the RFK Center or UFT.

CTE in your school continued from page 1

schools. More than 140,000 New York City students take at least one CTE course each year.

In the past, CTE had a reputation for training students for only entry-level jobs. But these vocational-technical schools now host programs designed to prepare students for careers and college. School districts throughout the country are creating and expanding CTE program opportunities. Today's CTE programs fuse education in academics and technology to help groom future leaders in the growing vocations of our times.

For information, support and assistance with an existing CTE school or program or for assistance in getting an approved CTE program in your school, call 212-598-9290 or email Sterling Roberson, vice president of career and technical education at sroberson@uft.org.

**HIGH
SCHOOL
QUESTIONS
OR ISSUES?
UTILIZE
YOUR UNION!**

In addition to your chapter leader, district representative and borough office, know that Janella Hinds, vice president for academic high schools, and Sterling Roberson, vice president for career and technical high schools, are only an email or phone call away if you have any questions or concerns regarding any and all high school issues.

Team High School Hotline: 212-598-9271

email: jhinds@uft.org

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