



# *District 75 News*



**David Doorga**

## **To my District 75 family,**

First and foremost, let me begin by thanking all of you. Before I tell you why, I'd like to tell you a little about me and what I think about the work we do.

April 4 was Paraprofessional Appreciation Day, and May 8 is Teacher Appreciation Day. I began my career in District 75 as a paraprofessional and continued on to become a special education teacher. I fully understand and relate to the struggles and special challenges all of you face on a daily, if not hourly, basis.

It takes a remarkably dedicated person to devote his or her professional life serving students with special needs; teaching in District 75 is not a career — it's a vocation.

Unfortunately, the hard-working staff at our District 75 schools seldom hears the gratitude that we deserve. I watch staff members struggle through exhaustion and illness to come to work and brighten the day for children. We deal with many challenges — not only do our students have special needs, sometimes their personal situations exacerbate the problem. Children with special needs are not immune to the same issues that affect many children in this city: poverty, a family member with an addiction, a parent with two or three jobs.

We also have stresses of our own that affect us, but we have to put those problems on a shelf while we help children deal with their own issues. That's what adults do — we put our needs second when children are struggling.

For everyone who gets up and comes to work when all you wanted to do was roll over and go back to sleep, I thank you.

For those who have changed the diaper of an ill child or cleaned up after a child has thrown up, I thank you for your perseverance, your dedication and your patience. We know these children should be at home but we also know, sometimes, a parent has no other choice but to bring the child to school.

And for everyone who made a fellow staff or union member laugh on an especially miserable day, I thank you for reaching out to a colleague and letting that person know he or she is valued.

You are my heroes, and it is an honor to be your District Representative.

Yours in solidarity,

David Doorga  
District 75 Representative

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## What's the 411 on 4/11 for District 75?



District 75 Representative David Doorga and fellow District 75 educators at PS 168 in the Bronx wore blue on April 11 to demonstrate support for students with autism spectrum disorder and Down syndrome.

[See more photos from the day »](#)

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## The Plan Book

You've heard me say when I visit schools, "If you fail to plan, you plan to fail."

It bears repeating, so let me make one simple suggestion which I think will save special education teachers a tremendous amount of time: Standardize your lesson plans for each subject you teach by creating a template on your computer.

Include everything you want to highlight in your professional planning, which could include student groupings, notes on learning styles, or enrichment activities. This way, you can easily adjust and edit your plans to reflect what works and what doesn't, as well as the changing needs of your students. You can easily print them out to store in a binder, so in case you are absent, the substitute can structure the day with the assistance of the paraprofessionals.

In addition, I suggest you keep all your lesson plans on your computer, organized by grade level and subject. You never know when something may be useful in the future. Also, keep your master file of lesson plans backed up on a Zip drive or in the Cloud.

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## For baby boomers and Gen X members: Those who aspire to retire!

Have you heard the maxim, "Begin with the end in mind"? Nowadays, people live longer than ever before, so enjoying a comfortable and secure retirement relies on decisions made long before the first pension check clears.

Thanks to UFT President Michael Mulgrew, former union leaders and the hard work of the union staff, everyone in District 75 earns an excellent pension and also enjoys the right to participate in a Tax Deferred Annuity.

No matter when you started as an employee of the Department of Education, it is never too late to enroll in the TDA. Even investing just 3 percent of your paycheck can and will make a difference.

You can enroll in the TDA at [the Teachers' Retirement System website](#) and all it takes is a few clicks. Plus, you can increase or decrease your contribution as your individual needs change. Plan on living to 100 ... and loving every minute of those Golden Years!

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## Take out your running shoes for the 5K Family Walk/Run

The UFT's fifth annual 5K Family Run/Walk takes place on Saturday, May 5, on Coney Island. Please encourage your members to bring colleagues, family and friends and join us for this untimed walk/race sponsored by the UFT Middle School Division. The Family Run/Walk is fun and a great way to build friendships with members of your school community. The proceeds go to the UFT Disaster Relief Fund.

Beginning at MCU Park, the 5K Family Run/Walk will take place from 8:30 a.m. to noon. There will be complimentary water, snacks and giveaways for each participant, and the chance to win raffle prizes. The fee to participate is \$25 for adults and \$15 for children age 12 or younger. You can run or walk as an individual or as part of a team.

You can also raise additional funds for this cause by asking sponsors to pledge a dollar amount for your participation. [Register online](#) or [download the mail-in registration form](#). The deadline to register using the mail-in registration form is Tuesday, April 24. You can also [make an online donation](#) now on UFT.org.

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## Safety Incident Reporting

If you know of a safety incident, report it! The UFT has an online reporting system to make it easier for members to report threats to the safety and security of staff and students. You can also fax a hard copy of the form to 212-677-6612.

Accurate reporting is the first step in creating a safe environment in every school. Enforce your right to a safe school by promptly reporting all safety/discipline incidents. In addition to filing a report with the UFT, you should also:

- Inform your chapter leader.
- Inform your school administration within 24 hours.
- File a report through the Online Occurrence Reporting System (OORS) at your school.

If you are injured, seek medical attention and please call the UFT Safety and Health hotline at 212-701-9407 or contact the UFT's Queens borough office at 718-275-4400.

Visit the [Incident Reporting page](#) on the UFT website for more information.

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## **Important information regarding arrests**

If, for any reason, you are arrested in New York State or out of state, you must notify the DOE's Office of Personnel Investigations within 24 hours. You must also notify your principal in all cases. If you are suspended after your arrest, you must file a grievance.

Call the Office of Personnel Investigations at 718-935-2666 or email [OPArrestnotification@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:OPArrestnotification@schools.nyc.gov).

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## **UFT chapter elections to be held this spring**

In the face of the Janus case, having a strong union is more important than ever. The foundation of that strength is provided by the union representatives at the school level. This May, UFT members will elect chapter leaders, delegates and para reps for the next three years, from July 1, 2018, through June 30, 2021. Each school has a chapter leader elected by the members of that school. Functional chapters, which represent non-teacher members including secretaries, school nurses or school counselors, elect citywide chapter leaders.

UFT members have a right to run for office, nominate other members and vote for candidates. Electing a solid team is important to your interests, the strength of your school or professional community and the strength of our union. You must be a member of the UFT to hold office or vote in the union's elections. We encourage all members to vote.

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## **Send me your feedback about this newsletter**

As your district representative, I hope to communicate with you often about topics that are of help and interest to you. Please [fill out this online form](#) to let me know what you found most valuable in this newsletter and how I can improve it.

Be sure to visit our [District 75 UFT Facebook](#) group! You can tell us about the great things happening in your District 75 school community.

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## **Stay in touch!**

For news alerts and important information about your rights and benefits as a UFT member, [sign up on the UFT website](#), opt in for [text messaging](#), "like" the [UFT on Facebook](#), follow the [UFT on Twitter](#) and read the [New York Teacher](#).