

District 75 News



David Doorga

To my District 75 family,

Allow me to take this opportunity to wish all of you a happy and healthy holiday season. Time flies, so be sure to enjoy every moment of your hard-earned break.

As we look back on 2017, the UFT has achieved some significant victories. We defeated the push to have a state constitutional convention, which would have allowed politicians and special interest lobbyists to rewrite state law concerning pensions, worker safety, the environment and a host of other issues which affect us. We have continued to fight to make sure that our members' rights and the rights of the children we serve are protected, and the recent arbitration decision regarding the number of preparation periods for teachers serving students with severe emotional disabilities is evidence of that.

However, we must remain constantly vigilant. Unfortunately, the Janus v. AFSCME case, which puts the hard-fought rights and benefits of unionized public employees at risk, is being heard by the U.S. Supreme Court, and now we have to contend with a Trump appointee on the court. The UFT will continue the fight to defend our rights as working professionals, the rights of our students and the right of all working people to unite. However, our union cannot operate in a vacuum. We need you to support *our* UFT now more than ever. I urge you all to sign up for the Committee on Political Education (COPE) or increase your donation as a holiday gift to yourself. It will be the most valuable gift you receive this year!

We are so fortunate that during these turbulent times, we have leaders like UFT President Michael Mulgrew and Vice President for Special Education Carmen Alvarez. I strongly believe that their commitment to our District 75 students and to empowering all families through education embodies the American dream.

I wish you and your loved ones all the joy of Christmas, Hanukkah and Kwanzaa, and I look forward to a wonderful 2018 with all of you! **Stay strong, stay united, e pluribus unum...we are the UFT!**

Yours in solidarity,

David Doorga
District 75 Representative

Fighting for parental leave

It's time that New York City grants UFT members the paid parental leave they deserve. But we need your help to get it done. Studies have shown time and again that babies benefit from being home with their parents in their first and most vulnerable weeks. Yet our current system forces new parents to choose between caring for their own children and earning a paycheck that may be crucial to their families. [Read our fact sheet about the current maternity leave policy »](#)

The UFT has continued to try to negotiate a fair and reasonable paid parental leave policy with the city ever since Mayor Bill de Blasio in December 2015 imposed a paid parental leave program on the city's nonunion, managerial employees. That program included givebacks from the managerial employees that we won't accept for our members. We want any new parental leave policy to cover both adoption and foster care.

Thousands of UFT members are signed up to be part of the campaign urging the city to provide paid parental leave. Many of them shared stories of being forced to return to work just days or weeks after giving birth because of financial considerations that would not allow them to take a longer, unpaid leave.

The UFT is pushing at the bargaining table for a parental leave policy that covers adoptions, foster care and fathers as well. Under the current policy, fathers are allowed to take just three personal days before their pay is docked. [Join the UFT campaign for paid parental leave »](#)

Important information regarding absences

I receive lots of questions about absences from members. Here's some important information District 75 members should know:

If you are a teacher or other pedagogue and are absent from school because of illness, you can call in sick without needing to submit a doctor's note up to ten days in any school year. These are known as "self-treated days."

Regardless of how many accumulated days you have in your Cumulative Absence Reserve (CAR), commonly referred to as your sick bank, you may only take 10 self-treated days each school year.

Additional sick days will not be paid unless you submit a doctor's note, (also known as a medically certified day), so you should do so whenever possible.

Three out of your 10 self-treated days may be used for personal business or caring for a sick family member, provided you give reasonable notice to your principal.

Other allowable absences that are not considered self-treated days include:

- One day each school year for a physical or laboratory test, which is deducted from your CAR;
- Absences due to Hepatitis B as a result of working with children who have been evaluated as a substantial risk of acting-out behavior, which are not deducted from your CAR, provided you submit appropriate medical documentation;
- Absences due to an allergic reaction from a DOE-mandated skin test, which are not deducted from your CAR, provided you submit appropriate medical documentation;

- "Non-attendance" days due to court appearances as a juror or a witness; death of a member of your immediate family; or for certain childhood illnesses listed in our contract (German measles, mumps and chicken pox). Your chapter leader can advise you about the forms you must file for each of these types of non-attendance days, which are not deducted from your CAR;
- There is also the ability to take paid time off (up to four hours) for breast cancer or prostate cancer screenings, provided you request it in writing, in advance, from your principal, and if it is determined that there will not be a major disruption to the school;
- In addition, there is unpaid time off (up to three hours) to give blood, if requested in advance, in writing, from your principal and it is determined that there will not be a major disruption to the school.

New District 75 members: Take advantage of UFT benefits

Our union offers us a wide range of benefits. If you are new to our district, you should take advantage of them as soon as you are eligible to do so. This includes enrolling for supplemental health benefits offered by the [UFT Welfare Fund](#).

If you are a new public school educator, don't assume that you are already signed up as a UFT member. You should check with the UFT's Membership Department by calling 212-598-6855. To join the union, first [register on the UFT website](#) and then use our online union form to [enroll in the UFT](#). You can also ask your chapter leader for a paper membership card to fill out.

You should have already begun meeting with your mentor.

Please speak to your chapter leader if you have any questions regarding any of these steps or benefits.

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.

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](#).
