



District 75 News



David Doorga

To my District 75 family,

I wish all of you a relaxing and refreshing Midwinter Recess. We have all been working diligently to improve our schools and keep up with the many demands on our time, and sometimes it can be a struggle to stay cheerful and positive. I am very aware of how difficult this time of year can be for the entire District 75 family, and I want you to know that I truly appreciate everything you do for our students. Unfortunately, we are under siege by powerful forces seeking to weaken the strongest ally our District 75 students have — the UFT.

Many of you may have begun talking to friends and neighbors about the Janus v. AFSCME case before the U.S. Supreme Court. Oral arguments will take place on Feb. 26, and a ruling is expected before the end of the school year. As I mentioned in my January newsletter, it is fitting that this case bears the name of the ancient Roman god named Janus, a two-faced god looking both toward the past and the future. If our union protections are struck down, we are thrown back into the past, where we may lose not only the contractual rights which protect our students, but our rights as professionals. The UFT is the reason why retirement with dignity is possible, due to our three hard-earned benefits: a pension, a Tax-Deferred Annuity (TDA), and access to health coverage without an annual premium.

Despite the obstacles presented by the Janus case, please remember that we, the UFT members, face these challenges together. Don't be afraid to lean on your colleagues for help or for a sympathetic ear to help get through the day. Please educate your friends, your neighbors and yourself about the danger to our students and all working people posed by the Janus case. Remember — I am here to support you as your District 75 representative, and it is a responsibility I take extremely seriously. Stay Strong, Stay United. We are ONE! E Pluribus Unum.

In Solidarity,

David Doorga
District 75 Representative

Thank you for showing your love for public schools last week

Betsy DeVos has visited just 36 schools in her first year as U.S. education secretary — and only about half of those have been traditional public schools, which educate the vast majority of U.S.

children. To commemorate the one-year anniversary of DeVos' appointment on Feb. 7, UFT members across New York City celebrated their public schools during National Public School week, Feb. 5-9. Many used the hashtag #PublicSchoolProud on social media to show off pictures of their celebrations. At many schools, educators pointedly invited DeVos to visit and see for herself the amazing work that public school educators do. "New York City has one of the strongest education systems in the country, and somebody in her position should be willing to come and see it firsthand," said Nicole Foglia, the chapter leader at PS 191 in Floral Park, Queens. "We have fantastic children, and I don't think people realize the amount of work these children do and the progress they make." Thank you to everyone who participated to make this week a success. Read the [news story](#) and see the [UFT Facebook album](#), the [website photo gallery](#) and our [photos on Instagram](#).

As Janus looms, Wisconsin teacher union leader shares story

"Seven years ago, I was a happy 3rd-grade teacher in Superior, Wisconsin, respected and well paid. I had a dream job and loved working in my classroom — until the state Legislature passed Act 10 in 2011 and I lost everything so fast," said Kim Kohlhaas, who is now the president of the Wisconsin American Federation of Teachers. She told her story, about what Wisconsin public school educators gave up when they lost collective bargaining rights, at a series of meetings with classroom teachers, UFT staff, press and a packed Delegate Assembly during a recent two-day visit. Teachers at PS 196 and MS 582 in Williamsburg, Brooklyn, audibly gasped as she recounted loss after loss: \$6,000 in take-home pay the first year; another \$6,000 in increased health care premiums the second year; the loss of prep time, duty-free lunch periods, tenure and grievance rights; ballooning class sizes; and three additional professional development days a year and 45 minutes added to the work day — all with no additional compensation. With the union no longer a presence at the state capital, massive state funding cuts that reduced public education resources and programs soon followed. Kohlhaas is rebuilding her union, but it is difficult. "We were complacent," she said. "We didn't realize what the union had done for us over the years."

Paraprofessionals and school trips

We are often asked whether paraprofessionals have to pay when they go on school trips. The answer is NO!

If the school wants you to accompany a teacher and a class on a school trip, then the school is responsible for your transportation, admission fees and any expenses incurred as a result of the excursion.

Furthermore, in accordance with Article 4-B of the paraprofessional contract, paraprofessionals are entitled to a duty-free lunch period every day, even if they are on a school trip. If you don't take time away from the children to eat your lunch, then you are entitled to take the time upon arriving back at the school. If you arrive back at the school too late to take the time, then you should see your school's chapter leader who should meet with your supervisor or principal to arrange compensatory time or per-session pay.

Registration is open for the Paraprofessional Festival and Awards Luncheon

Paraprofessionals are invited to attend the UFT's 37th annual Paraprofessional Festival and Awards Luncheon on Saturday, March 10. This event will be held at the New York Hilton Hotel from 7:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. Participants can attend two workshops for up to three CTLE hours. Workshop topics include social and emotional learning, lesson design strategies and cultural awareness. This year's keynote speaker will be Leticia James, the New York City public advocate. The registration fee is \$45 for participants who wish to receive CTLE hours and \$25 without CTLE hours. Go to the [online registration form](#) to see the full list of workshops and purchase your ticket. The registration deadline is Feb. 23.

What is COPE?

The [Committee on Political Education \(COPE\)](#) is the UFT's political action arm. It covers the expenses of meeting with and educating legislators, and helps elect officeholders who respect our members, support education and work for union goals. With COPE, we work for laws and policies that further education and safeguard our rights; we back candidates who back us; and we support public officials who get things done for our members, parents and students.

In recent years, teachers and teacher unions have become the new favorite punching bag for politicians and policy makers. And labor continues to be the number one target of anti-worker politicians. The UFT's record – on both legislative matters and in elections – would be impressive under any circumstance, but under these conditions it is truly extraordinary. It is made possible by the incredibly hard work of thousands of UFT members and by the funding that COPE provides. None of this would be possible without COPE, and COPE is not possible without you.

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](#).

