



District 75 News



David Doorga

To my District 75 family,

"I believe that the more you know about the past, the better you are prepared for the future." — President Theodore Roosevelt

I often think about this quote from President Roosevelt because I am so thankful that District 75 can draw on the strengths of baby boomers, Generation X and millennials. Frankly, I am in awe of the trailblazers who pioneered the education of ALL children with special needs in our city.

Our District 75 veterans — renowned District 75 Representative Al Mancuso comes to mind — essentially transformed the city. Once, children with special needs were warehoused in horrible places such as the infamous Willowbrook State School on Staten Island. But in large part due to our advocacy, these children now enjoy a free and appropriate IEP-

driven education through District 75's services.

The UFT was among the leaders in the battle for social justice and civil rights for children with special challenges in the 1970s, and we continue that battle today.

After some extremely difficult negotiations, UFT President Michael Mulgrew, Vice President for Special Education Carmen Alvarez and I are delighted to announce that we have gotten back both staff orientation days for Chapter 683 members. I also feel we worked out a calendar which optimizes instruction for our students. Please note the Chapter 683 dates for 2018 below:

- Monday, July 2 – Staff orientation. No students in attendance.
- Tuesday, July 3 – Staff orientation. No students in attendance.
- Wednesday, July 4 – Instructional program technically begins; the day "counts" as an instructional day pursuant to state statute even though no students attend.
- July 5 to Aug. 14 – Students in attendance. Instructional program continues on weekdays.
- August 14 – Last day of instructional program.

I am so pleased to share my expanded newsletter with the entire District 75 family. Stay strong, stay united. We are one. E pluribus unum!

Yours in Solidarity,

David Doorga,
District 75 Representative

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

Join your fellow District 75 educators in wearing blue on Wednesday, April 11, to demonstrate our support for students with autism spectrum disorder and Down syndrome. We hope to promote awareness, acceptance, understanding and inclusion for students with autism spectrum disorder or Down syndrome.

[Download this flier](#) to post in your school and encourage all your colleagues to join in this campaign.

10-minutes self-help sessions can really add up

Ready to take your profession to the next level? For many of us, that means taking classes. However, improving your practice can be as simple as making a point to spend 10 minutes a day to explore teaching-related websites.

For example, set a timer on your phone, and spend 10 minutes reading an [article on the challenges of differentiation](#) on the UFT's website. Or explore the UFT's [professional development resources](#). The [Department of Education's website](#) also offers valuable information.

We also tend to forget we are part of a larger national picture in both education and labor. Some might want to take that 10 minutes and brush up on political news and how it will affect the UFT, our membership and our students.

Others might want to take 10 minutes to practice a few words or phrases in a new language used by students or co-workers. The possibilities are endless. The beauty of this is everyone has 10 minutes to make tomorrow a little bit better than today. We need to balance our day-to-day work with new developments in the field of education and labor.

Classroom organization tips

Speaking of day-to-day concerns, here are a few ideas for classroom organization I used during my time as a 12:1:1 classroom teacher. We have a wide variety of classrooms throughout District 75, but one thing we all have in common is that we are all faced with challenges unique to our spaces. Try some of these ideas:

1. Annoyed by construction paper fading while in storage? Separate it by color in an accordion file. No more fading and the sheets stay clean and organized.
2. Use an inexpensive hanging shoe rack behind a locked closet door to store odds and ends.
3. Use a plastic, gallon-size bag, labeled with each child's name, to store crayons and art supplies. This will help keep the peace and reduce wasted time.
4. Don't organize clutter. If you have a bunch of felt or yarn, and you do not have a lesson plan in mind for the rest of this school year, give it to a colleague who can use it. Clutter leads to wasted time and space, and also offers delightful home furnishings to rats and mice. If it is not included in a lesson plan by now, give it away.

5. Remember: We share our buildings with other schools and you are not the only one with keys to your room. Keep as much as possible safely locked away.

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

As you probably know, the UFT has launched a major campaign to educate members about the [Janus v. AFSME case](#). The U.S. Supreme Court heard oral arguments on Feb. 26 and we await a decision in May or June. We are preparing for the worst as we fully expect the Court to rule against public sector unions.

The conservative majority of the Court appears poised to strike down the fair-share fees that public-employee unions in 22 states, including New York, collect from nonmembers to cover those workers' share of collective bargaining costs. Mark Janus, an Illinois public employee, is the face of this lawsuit coordinated by right-wing groups, which have been funding court cases with the goal of weakening unions and diminishing their leverage and bargaining power.

Now, more than ever before, please talk to your colleagues about just how critically important the UFT has been to you and your career, and how important paying dues is to the health of the union. Your due process rights, your health benefits, your pension — no one has given you these important benefits. The union has fought for these and all the other wonderful contractual rights we have. Without a solvent union, we stand to lose so much of what we have gained.

There really were the "bad old days" when educators had to work two jobs and all summer to make ends meet, when educators could be forced to work in all roles and moved around a building or borough or the city at the whim of an administrator.

The union fought long and hard for your contractual rights, but without the union to push back against an "arbitrary and capricious" bureaucracy, they can disappear quickly. Please understand just how important a strong union is to all of us and our families.

Don't hesitate to share memes on social media that are pro-labor as well as supportive of our District 75 students. Email your elected officials and let them know that you want unions to remain a healthy presence in the city and state.

I'll keep you updated as to what other actions you can take and I urge you to consider giving just a little more to the [Committee on Political Education \(COPE\)](#)!

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.

Paraprofessionals are urged to join the pension system

Paraprofessionals are eligible to join the Teachers' Retirement System, but since it is not mandatory for paras, you have to manually enroll.

The UFT urges paras to take advantage of this benefit, which helps provide a financially secure retirement. Contact TRS at 888-869-2877 and ask for an enrollment application.

Substitute paraprofessionals are eligible to join the Board of Education Retirement System. For more information, call 929-305-3800.

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 OPlarrestnotification@schools.nyc.gov.

Upcoming Meet the President event for Districts 75 and 79

Come hear UFT President Michael Mulgrew report on current education and labor issues during a Meet the President event for District 75 and District 79 members.

We hope you'll join us on Tuesday, April 24, from 3:30 to 5:30 p.m. at Dallas BBQ, 241 W. 42nd St., Manhattan. [Register online now »](#)

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.

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](#).



This email was sent to on behalf of the United Federation of Teachers • 52 Broadway, New York, NY, 10004. If you would like to stop receiving emails from your UFT district representative, you can [unsubscribe](#) at any time.

[UNSUBSCRIBE](#)