



MIDDLE SCHOOL NEWS



Dear Friend,

With roughly six weeks under our belts, I hope you are getting settled and adjusting to the new school year. We are, as always, ready for the challenges and excited to do our work despite all of the obstacles that make a hard job even more difficult. If we fall, we simply stand up, dust ourselves off and continue the work we love to do. We do this in spite of internal and external roadblocks created by folks who simply don't get it. And, as we know, there is no shortage of opponents.

The attacks against our profession and public sector unions are, for lack of a better term, “the not so new normal.” We currently are currently dealing with the aftermath of an adverse Supreme Court ruling targeting public sector union membership. Many union opponents predicted that this case would be the demise of all public sector unions and hoped that our local in particular, the largest in the nation, would collapse. Those that seek to destroy us were celebrating in June. To paraphrase a well-known Mark Twain quote, “reports of *our* death have been greatly exaggerated.”

Please do not confuse this statement with a belief that all is okay and that we are out of danger. Rather, it is my view that we should not be underestimated.

I have said this before in my newsletters and school visits, to friends and foe alike — we go toe-to-toe with formidable, extremely powerful adversaries. We get knocked around, but give it right back to our enemies. I once compared us to the cartoon character, Underdog, because we are the quintessential underdogs. The fact that we are still standing tall after the Supreme Court ruling is testament to just that. We braced for the worst. We planned. We took action. We continue to strategize. We keep adjusting. We bob and weave. We fight. And we live on.

Many people now recognize the importance and meaning of union membership. It is a brotherhood, a sisterhood, a fraternity ... a family. It is standing together as one. It is a message we must impress upon all of our colleagues, the definition of a union — joining together for a common purpose; being united. That's us post-Janus — union-proud UFT members.

If you have any questions or concerns, email me at rmantell@uft.org or leave a message with Derly-Mikaella Charles at 212-598-6839.

I hope that you have a great school year, and I look forward to visiting your school as well as seeing you at our Middle School Division meetings and other events.

In solidarity,

Richard Mantell
Vice President for Middle Schools

Vote on the proposed DOE-UFT contract this month

Voting is about to begin on the proposed DOE-UFT contract that empowers educators by giving them a greater voice at their workplace and greater economic security at home. In addition to providing a three-year compound raise of 7.7 percent over 43 months that exceeds the predicted rate of inflation, this contract will reduce the number of observations for the vast majority of teachers; strengthen and accelerate the process for reducing classes that exceed the contractual size limits; give additional compensation and greater due process rights to paraprofessionals; and give UFT-represented employees greater protection from retaliation and harassment by administrators. In its special [Contract 2018 section](#) of the website, the union has posted a [contract fact sheet](#), summaries of the key new contractual provisions, all the [salary schedules](#) and the full [Memorandum of Agreement](#). Every division and functional chapter spelled out their contract priorities in contract surveys sent last winter, and those survey results shaped the demands that the union brought to the bargaining table. Members of the UFT's 400-member negotiating committee representing every job title and borough were engaged in all facets of the bargaining process. That unprecedented level of member engagement means the many gains in this contract are all rooted in what UFT members said they wanted and needed. One of the fundamental rights of union membership is voting in the contract ratification process. The deadline to vote is Oct. 31. I hope you'll join me in voting "YES"!

Support our winter clothing drive and Thanksgiving Luncheon

We are planning our winter clothing drive and fifth annual Thanksgiving Luncheon for homeless students on Nov. 17 at UFT headquarters. The UFT Middle School Division is hosting this event in collaboration with the Coalition for the Homeless on behalf of NYC public school students living in temporary housing. Our focus is to teach our students the true meaning of the Thanksgiving holiday by sharing a delicious meal with them.

- **When:** Saturday, Nov. 17
- **Where:** UFT headquarters, 52 Broadway, Manhattan. [Directions](#) »



UFT members including Jackie Herman, the chapter leader at IS 98 in Brooklyn; Rich Mantell, the UFT's vice president for middle schools;

Every student who attends will enjoy a Thanksgiving meal as well as gifts and prizes donated by our sponsors. Rashad Brown, a UFT chapter advocate; and Brad Alter, pose with students at the 2017 Thanksgiving luncheon.

In support of this event, we are asking your school to organize a clothing drive and collect new winter coats, sweaters, scarves, mittens, gloves, hats and any other winter accessories. We can only accept **NEW** articles of clothing, and these garments may range in size from toddler to adult. These items will be distributed at our luncheon and at homeless shelters throughout the city for those students in need of winter clothing.

Please contact us to arrange for the pick-up of clothing collected at your school. You may also drop off donations at any [UFT borough office](#) or at UFT headquarters, 52 Broadway, Manhattan, 14th floor. For more information, please see the [How About Some Giving on Thanksgiving? flier](#). If you prefer, you can [make a monetary donation online](#) to help us purchase cold-weather apparel for more children in need.

Paid parental leave delivered!

The UFT became the first public employee union in New York City to secure paid parental leave for its members last June. The agreement went into effect on Sept. 4 and hundreds of members have already taken advantage of this new benefit. Refer to this [FAQ guide](#) with any questions you may have. For the more detail-oriented, you may [read the full agreement](#).

Teacher Evaluation

If you are a teacher who is covered by the DOE's teacher evaluation system known as "Advance," you should have received your final rating for the 2017–18 school year by the start of this school year. A matrix determined your final rating as Highly Effective, Effective, Developing or Ineffective according to two measures: Measures of Student Learning (MOSL), which are the assessments that measure academic progress, and Measures of Teacher Practice (MOTP), which are observations.

Your MOSL rating is based on state guidelines and decisions made by your school's MOSL committee at the beginning of last school year. The committee, which is composed of your school's principal, your chapter leader, three other members selected by the principal and three other members selected by the chapter leader, determined the assessments your school used and the method by which student progress was measured. This [online guide to teacher ratings](#) contains more information regarding teacher evaluation as well as a [Final Ratings Questions and Concerns form](#) to submit questions or concerns about your final rating.

The initial planning conference (IPC)

This year's evaluation process starts with the initial planning conference (IPC), so it's critical that we get off on the right foot. The IPC is a one-on-one meeting with the principal or assistant principal, which should take place at a mutually agreed upon time. The meeting provides members with the opportunity to select an observation option, discuss their programs and set goals for the upcoming school year. For members rated Developing or Ineffective for the 2017–2018 school year, the IPC

also serves as a discussion focused on the collaborative construction of the Teacher Improvement Plan.

If you have any concerns regarding preparation for your IPC, this [New York Teacher article](#) provides some helpful tips. For a more comprehensive look at the evaluation process, the UFT's [guide to teacher evaluation](#) is a valuable resource.

Teacher's Choice funding

Teachers are allotted up to \$250 dollars this year to spend on classroom-related supplies and expenses. Items purchased under Teacher's Choice must be appropriate for educational use in the classroom or for other professional assignments. The Teacher's Choice stipend is not intended for purchases of basic supplies such as textbooks, chalk, paper, microscopes and math manipulatives, which principals are contractually obligated to provide. If that obligation is not met, please let your chapter leader know.

To receive reimbursement through Teachers Choice, you must submit receipts as proof of purchase. These receipts must accompany an [accountability form](#) on the DOE website (note: you'll have to log in), which you should submit to your school's principal by January 18, 2019. Purchases must be made between Aug. 1, 2018, and Jan. 14, 2019, to qualify for Teacher's Choice. If you are unsure of your allocation, reference this [funding by title chart](#) for more information.

Know Your Rights – Lesson Plans, Article 8

Although many people are familiar with their contractual rights regarding lesson plans, I find it useful to include this in my newsletter because a number of administrators seem to forget. Article 8 of the teachers' contract affirms that the organization, format, notation and other physical aspects of the lesson plans are within a teacher's discretion. Nevertheless, many supervisors continued to require specific components be included in lesson plans which led the union to file a union-initiated grievance. In sustaining the grievance, an arbitrator ruled that "lesson plans are for the personal use of the teacher" and that supervisors may not "mandate specific elements of lesson plans."

Additionally, the Chancellor and UFT President Michael Mulgrew issued a joint letter to clarify lesson plan expectations. The letter makes it clear that planning is a professional responsibility. All teachers must have lesson plans for their use. As has always been the case a supervisor may ask to see your lesson plans at any time.

However, lesson plans cannot be collected in a mechanical and/or routinized manner.

Middle School Workshops – Fall 2018

Register now for our fall UFT middle school workshops! Our Middle School Division offers a number of workshops for our members. Topics include Literacy in the Social Studies Classroom and Engaging ELLs in Project-Based Learning Experiences. Participants earn two CTLE hours for each two-hour workshop. The fee for each workshop is \$30 for teachers who wish to receive CTLE hours and \$15 without CTLE hours. The fee for paraprofessionals is \$15 with or without CTLE hours. For

more information, please download the [Middle School Fall Workshops flier](#). To register, visit the [Middle School Workshops page](#) on the UFT website.

Save the dates for these exciting Middle School Division events

Oct. 27, 2018 – [CTE High School Fair for College and Career Success](#)

March 30, 2019 – [6th annual Middle School Conference](#)

May 9, 2019 – 2nd annual Middle School Anti-Bullying Student Event

May 11, 2019 – [6th annual UFT Middle School Division Family 5K Run/Walk](#)

School and site visits

I welcome the opportunity to visit your school and meet with both you and your staff members to discuss union news and any areas of concern. If you wish to schedule a meeting at your school, please complete the online form below. You may also email or call Derly-Mikaella Charles at mcharles@uft.org or 212-598-6839.

[Schedule a school visit >>](#)

Stay in touch with us!

Please follow us on Facebook, [@UFTMSDivision](#), or Twitter, [@UFTMS_Division](#). To assist with all things Middle School and beyond, the following people can be contacted regarding any questions or concerns you may have:

- Derly-Mikaella Charles, my administrative assistant, 212-598-6839 or mcharles@uft.org
- Bradley Alter, PM Staffer, 212-598-4043 or balter@uft.org
- Jose Jean, PM Staffer, 212-598-4861 or jjean@uft.org
- Tracey Miller, PM Staffer, 212-598-6429 or tmiller2@uft.org
- Dave Waltzer, PM Staffer, 212-598-4861 or dwaltzer@uft.org



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