



UFT

Pathways to Graduation



Dear Sarah,

The temperature hit a record high during our mid-winter vacation with a measured 76 degrees in Central Park on Feb. 21. It was warm enough that people were wearing shorts!

As you all know, the end of the year is when we are completing a number of tasks, whether it's helping students pass the TASC test, move to the next grade or become more proficient in English. But as we continue to do great work, our union is in grave danger.

We are now waiting for the Supreme Court's decision on Janus v. AFSCME.

The conservative majority 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. We must stay strong, encourage each other to stay with the union and educate ourselves about the great benefits of belonging to the union. For more information on Janus, [please read our Q&A on the subject](#).

I have also outlined a few things you should know about Janus below as well as written about a few other items. I hope you find this information helpful. Our well-deserved spring break is coming soon, so enjoy it. If you celebrate Easter or Passover, I hope you enjoy the holiday too.

Yours in solidarity,

Michael Friedman
Pathways to Graduation UFT Chapter Leader

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Florida shooting

Fourteen students and three staff members were murdered on Feb. 14 by a former student, Nicholas Cruz, at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida. Members of the community had warned both local and federal authorities about this young man and no action was taken. He was also allowed to legally buy an AR-15 assault rifle. Students at this school are working to ensure this doesn't happen again. We also saw President Donald Trump call for trained school staff to carry weapons in schools. I believe we need to do something to prevent this type of weapon from being sold. These kind of weapons are not used for hunting or for target practice and are designed to inflict as much harm to as many people as possible.

School staff should not carry weapons. Educators should be responsible for educating their students, not defending against a military-style attack.

In Pathways to Graduation, as in every New York City school and every school in the U.S., we must prepare for this kind of attack, however. We must follow all safety measures and, unfortunately, we must hold drills and have plans to prepare for an assault. Until the nation figures out how to prevent attacks in schools, we must do everything we can to ensure our safety and the safety of the students we serve.

Professional development

We had two professional development days in January: Chancellor's Day and an extra professional development day for teachers to focus on content areas. Counselors also had an extra PD day. I am on the professional development committee and I looked over the evaluations, which were positive for the most part. The chairs of the professional development committee, Brooklyn Principal Michelle Robinson and teacher trainer Jordan Yarwood, said they plan to have content-only days for teachers in April.

To help improve professional development, I'd like to know what you think. So please take a moment to answer the following questions and email me your reply at michaeloes@att.net:

- Do you think extra, targeted professional development in April will improve your classroom skills?
- Have the professional development opportunities you've attended this school year helped you in the classroom?
- Has the focus on reading, writing and discussion helped advance your students?
- Have the required objectives provided focus in how you teach your lessons?
- For counselors: Has the initiative, which you are also a part of, helped your student's academic and emotional development?
- Please suggest improvements for the 2018-19 school year.

I will pass along your answers to the committee. If you prefer to be anonymous, let me know. I will make sure to protect your privacy.

Marcy Hub adds a new charter school

The Pathways to Graduation center at 832 Marcy Ave. in Brooklyn, commonly referred to as the Marcy Hub, now houses the Bedford Stuyvesant Complex Hub and Referral Center for us. It also houses two transfer schools, Brooklyn Academy High School and Bedford Stuyvesant Preparatory High School, and the Uncommon Collegiate Charter High School. In spite of limited space, the DOE now has a proposal to merge two of the transfer schools and add a junior high school charter school run by Uncommon Charter Collegiate. The DOE's plan would result in the loss of four classrooms for us at Pathways to Graduation.

I do not think the DOE should merge the two transfer schools as they each provide a unique experience for students. I am also upset that our program will lose four classrooms, leaving us with six. This is yet another example of the DOE taking space from the public schools and giving it to charter schools. The Marcy Hub is a landmark building that originally housed Boys High School. The two charter schools would inhibit the growth of both the merged transfer schools and Pathways to Graduation. I will fight to stop this and I welcome help from our program's staff to join me in pushing back on a bad plan.

An example of the great work at the Marcy hub

The Marcy Hub is doing wonderful things. Recently, Ariff Hajee's and Nicole Santiago's bicycle repair shop was featured in the *New York Teacher* for their after-school program that teaches students how to repair donated and recycled bicycles. Their work has garnered them an award from the UFT, and the program was recently featured on News 12 Brooklyn.

[See the link to watch the wonderful news report »](#)

This is program set up in conjunction with the nonprofit Recycle-A-Bicycle program and the NYC Department of Transportation. The best part is that at the end of the program, students keep the bicycles!



Janus v. AFSCME

We await the Supreme Court ruling on Janus v. AFSCME after oral arguments were made on Feb. 26. Mark Janus is a public employee with the Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Service. Each month, he pays a fair-share fee of \$46 to cover the collective-bargaining expenses of AFSCME, the union that represents employees at his state agency.

Although Janus is not a union member, by law he receives all the rights and benefits under the contract the union negotiated. Janus' lawsuit, funded by deep-pocketed right-wing organizations out to destroy unions, contends that the collection of these agency or fair-share fees from nonmembers is unconstitutional because it violates First Amendment free-speech rights. Fair-share fees, also known as agency fees, may not go toward the union's political activities, which are only incidentally related to terms and conditions of employment, but the groups attacking unions argue the collective bargaining process itself in the public sector is inherently political speech.

UFT members have premium-free health insurance, excellent pension benefits, a duty-free lunch, prep periods and much more only because the union was strong enough to negotiate these rights and benefits. This case is part of a coordinated, sustained attack against working people in the United States. The right-wing groups behind this case seek to debilitate public employee unions and destroy their power to advocate for members by undermining their funding structure.

The Supreme Court could rule that those who are not members of the union do not have to pay fair share fees but remain eligible to receive the same collective bargaining rights of those who pay member dues. In effect, they will be free riders, receiving services and benefits they do not pay for, and causing an unfair financial burden on the union. Fortunately, we think most UFT members understand the value of the union and understand we have to stand together, continue to pay our union dues and talk one-on-one with our colleagues about why we are proud members of the union.

To educate members about Janus and the union's importance in their lives, the UFT has been conducting a door-knocking campaign since the fall; the UFT trains members to speak with their colleagues in their homes. I enjoyed doing it in the fall and Raven Moore of Pathways to Graduation's University Settlement site in Manhattan just finished 12 shifts and 48 hours of door-knocking.

Raven writes that the "door-knocking has been a rewarding experience and proven that I am indeed UFT union proud!"



Raven Moore of Pathways to Graduation's University Settlement site in Manhattan is proud to participate in the UFT's door-knocking campaign.

Leyann Vanderharten of Jamaica Hospital wins CTE award



Honoree Leyann Vanderharten (holding plaque) of Pathways to Graduation in Queens is surrounded by supporters, including Chapter Leader Michael Friedman (standing, left) and several students.

Leyann Vanderharten received an award at the UFT's annual CTE Awards Recognition Ceremony on Feb. 15 at the UFT. Vanderharten teaches students at Jamaica Hospital. The students earn a certificate in medical technology along with the TASC diploma. Some of her students attended the event to honor their teacher. We are proud of the great work that Vanderharten is doing.

A school trip to see our water system's secrets

Newtown Creek in Brooklyn is the largest of the city's 14 wastewater treatment plants, which process more than a billion gallons of wastewater in the five boroughs daily. While the public can visit this facility only three times a year, NYC educators can arrange a trip with their students throughout the school year. Before showing students how the plant operates, Department of Environmental Protection educators lead students through a comprehensive overview of New York City's water supply. This might be an interesting trip for your students, so read more about it in this [New York Teacher article](#).

Help us fight for paid parental leave

The union and the city still do not have an agreement on parental leave. I hope it comes soon. In the meantime, if you are a city resident, contact the mayor and the city council through the UFT's [campaign to fight for paid parental leave](#).

Delegate Assembly resolutions

- 1. The Delegate Assembly voted that members should wear red on Valentine's Day to show unity and support for the union in these trying times.
 - 2. The DA voted for the re-election of David Kazansky to a second three-year term as one of the three UFT trustees to the Teachers' Retirement System.
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February unit values

Diversified Equity	Stable Value	International Equity	Inflation Protection	Socially Responsive Equity
100.326	16.611	12.035	10.342	18.216



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