

New Action/UFT

...a caucus of the United Federation of Teachers
PO Box 180574 North Richmond Hill, NY 11418
<http://newaction.wordpress.com/>

October 2012

Welcome Chapter Leaders and Delegates! New Action welcomes you to the first Delegate Assembly of 2012-2013. New Action/UFT is one of several caucuses (political parties) in the United Federation of Teachers. There are differences between the caucuses. But whatever they are, we believe the external enemies of our union and the threat to the members is greater. We will see that in action over the next few weeks, as our entire union comes together to win the elections. We have worked with Michael Mulgrew and Unity Caucus in a bipartisan relationship that we believe benefits the membership.

Yet we remain independent and critical of the leadership when warranted. New Action believes the UFT's priorities for 2012 - 2013 should include: **getting rid of mayoral control, correcting the behavior of abusive administrators, defeating the ultra-right, getting a good contract with no concessions on core issues, not allowing tenure to be tied to standardized tests, and standing up for chapter leaders.**

FACT FINDING- REVISITED

Our contract expired in October 2009. The UFT was prepared to negotiate in good faith. But that proved impossible given the hostility and unwillingness of the city administration. In other words, long ago we hit an impasse. Clearly, any attempt to negotiate a contract with the Bloomberg administration is out of the question.

Upon appeal, the state's Public Employee Relations Board appointed a mediator to see if headway could be made. There could not. Finally, the UFT decided to go to fact finding. The UFT and DOE decided on a panel of three arbitrators. And after the UFT and DOE present their cases, the arbitrators will issue a report. In the past, while the report is NOT binding it usually becomes the basis of the final settlement.

However, we should ask, "Is fact finding the road to take to get us to a good contract?"

What does this mean and what can we expect?

Fact finding offers no guarantee that the UFT point of view will prevail. In 2005 the fact finding report was loaded with givebacks despite the fact that President Weingarten and other UFTers who testified at hearings made an excellent case for us.

We saw the DOE demands this time - they were published in the newspapers. They demanded one core issue giveback after another. Yet there is real chance that the fact finders will agree with us on some issues, but also agree with several of the DOE demands for givebacks. Our members simply cannot afford that scenario!

New Action believes that we must stand united, including with all our chapter members: paras, secretaries, social workers, school psychologists, guidance counselors, librarians, non DOE members see gains in the next contract.

But we must also prepare the membership for a contract fight. We must mobilize all union members to reject any givebacks in the fact finding report.

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June 2012

TWO FROM THE ARCHIVES:

April 2002

“Pattern Bargaining to be Rejected!”

It took years for New Action/UFT to convince the leadership that there was an ever-growing gap between what NYC and suburban educators earned. Eventually the concept of salary parity was accepted and became official policy of the UFT and the goal of this contract.

The UFT’s fact finding presentation:

*Proved that there was disparity

*Established the city’s ability to fund a parity raise

*Made “breaking” pattern bargaining an essential cornerstone in achieving parity

Unfortunately, the fact finders refused to rule against the city and break the settlement pattern.

It is clear that fact finding is not the route to achieving the contract the members need. Whether it is May 2002 or February 2003, the only way to break pattern bargaining is if the leadership and membership are prepared to use every weapon available.

September 2005

“New Action Declares Fact Finding Report a Disaster!”

After two years without a contract, the fact finding report is another blow to tens of thousands of angry and demoralized New York City educators. The concessions are totally unacceptable. New Action is outraged that we are asked to pay for almost half of our own pay increase. The report is loaded with negatives including:

10 additional minutes, which combined, with the 20 minutes from the last contract creates a daily 30 minute “tutoring” class of ten students

Three more work days, including two days before Labor Day

An additional ten free coverages in middle and senior high schools

The elimination of the right to grieve letters in our file

The power of principals to assign a daily administrative duty (like

cafeteria, hall and “potty” patrol) during our Circular 6 professional period

The power for principals to veto seniority transfers

0% for the first year (the 2% increase effective as of May 2004)

The only positives in the report include rejection of the City’s demand to eliminate tenure, lay-off excessed teachers after 18 months and to involuntarily transfer teachers out of their schools.

President Weingarten made an excellent case to the fact finders but the process was stacked against us. Our union must assess whether or not fact finding is a trap to be avoided in the future. We are at the end of a 2 and ½ year process and the question now is where do we go from here?

New Action /UFT believes we should not limit our options. We recommend the following: (6 proposals follow)