

New Action/UFT

May 2014

Education Reform is a Mistake

The PROSE schools (Progressive Redesign Opportunity Schools for Excellence) open the door for charter-style “reforms”. These reforms swept the country in the last decade, without providing better places to learn or better places to work. New Action also opposes the “career ladder” institution of Model Teacher, Ambassador Teacher, and Master Teacher.

Recovering from the Bloomberg Years

Substantial damage was done to our schools, to our contract (especially 2005, which Unity pushed so hard) and to our members while Bloomberg was in office, while Klein, Black and Walcott ran the show.

Fariña and de Blasio are pro-public education, and will be much better for us. Mulgrew says there is no comparison. But the new attitude has not made it to the trenches. The Chancellor needs to take steps we feel in the schools, so all of us begin to experience the difference.

In this contract proposal we get one piece back from 2005: the system of billing each principal for the salary of each teacher – thereby fostering discrimination against senior teachers – is being waived for teachers in excess (ATRs). We need this citywide. New Action pushed for this to be in this contract. But it can still be negotiated outside of the contract. Likewise, many practices including extending tenure, unfair discipline, colocation, can be negotiated, even after a contract has been signed.

Fariña and de Blasio are willing to work with us. We need to show them how to provide our members immediate relief.

Retro is there, but Money is Deferred

We expected 4% and 4%, that was the pattern, plus some weaker numbers moving forward. And that’s (almost) what we got. By deferring the 4/4 to late in the contract, it was possible to get a slightly larger total number, 18%.

Members who can wait to see the money will end up a bit better off from the deferral, with a higher base going forward. But members who needed money in their pockets today have a right to be disappointed. The first raise we will receive since 2008 will be just 2%, plus the \$1000 one-time bonus.

The retroactive money will be complete, but takes a long time to pay out, as expected.

The Smelly Elephants in the Room: Abusive, Incompetent Administrators

Some elements of this contract, for example repurposing time, can be quite positive where administrators and UFT members collaborate. But too many of our schools are led by abusive or incompetent. In those places, how can collaboration work? This union’s leadership has too often looked the other way. We must prioritize correcting the behavior of these administrators, or removing them. We must all benefit from the positive parts of this contract.

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