



TEACHERS FOR A
JUST CONTRACT
Not just an opposition, an alternative.

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Impasse: Path to Givebacks, a Bad Contract, a Weaker Union

At the November Delegate Assembly, UFT President Mulgrew suddenly told the delegates he wanted the power to seek a declaration of impasse in contract negotiations. The surprise nature of his move denied delegates any chance for thoughtful reflection, let alone democratic consultation with the members they represent. With only minimal discussion, Mulgrew and his Unity Caucus pushed through the resolution he wanted.

TJC opposes any moves toward impasse

First of all, the impasse process substitutes for a mobilization of UFT members to pressure the City for a good contract. It sidelines the rank and the file. The result is apathy, passivity and a weaker union.

**The story of the last
time we went to
impasse proves this
is a bad move for
UFT Members.**

After impasse is declared, eventually a fact-finding panel is convened, and it makes recommendations for a contract. As a rule, a fact-finding panel issues recommendations that are a middle ground between our very moderate demands and the City's draconian ones. So, instead of using our muscle to get the best deal possible, we get half the givebacks on the City's lengthy wish list, and a weaker union.

In March 2004, after 10 months of working under an expired contract, the Delegate Assembly voted to ask for a declaration of impasse. After mediation failed, a Fact-Finding Panel was convened, which issued a set of recommendations in September 2005. In those recommendations were all the awful givebacks that have weakened our union and degraded our working conditions: the end of the right to grieve letters in the file and "U" observations, elimination of seniority transfers and loss of the right of excessed teachers to be placed in vacancies (i.e., the creation of the A.T.R. crisis), 10

minutes added to the work day, the two days before Labor Day added to the school year, administration control over daily professional activities, reintroduction of lunch duty and hall patrol, and the introduction of school-based merit pay.

When these recommendations came out, the UFT's Unity leadership pushed a resolution through the D.A. to "use the recommendations as a basis for negotiating a contract." The result was a contract that has permanently weakened our union, worsened our working conditions and diminished our professional and seniority rights. It got approved because it increased our pay. That money has been devalued by inflation, but damage from the givebacks goes on accumulating. We see this in the growing ATR crisis, the bulging "rubber rooms," the atmosphere of demoralization and intimidation in our schools, and the dwindling relevance of the union.

Instead of paving the way for givebacks, we need a union leadership that will mobilize UFTers to pressure the City for a good contract, without givebacks, and against budget cuts. We need actions on every level - from honor picketing at our schools, to massive marches through the city to rally at Tweed. We need to democratize the union: members will fully participate when they - not a staff of bureaucrats - call the shots in the union. And we need to make common cause with students and parents, and with other workers who are fighting for contracts and against budget cuts.

**Mobilize
the whole union
now!**

The present Unity leadership of UFT, headed by President Michael Mulgrew, shows no willingness to lead an effort powerful enough to win the contract we need and deserve. The UFT needs different leadership. Fortunately, this winter there are UFT elections and we will have the opportunity to choose a new leadership for our union. James Eterno, longtime Chapter Leader of Jamaica High School heads the ICE - TJC ticket challenging Unity. Under ICE - TJC leadership, we can fight to end school closings, fully fund our schools, challenge the testing mania and social promotion, resolve the ATR crisis and protect ourselves from harassment.

**Elect
ICE-TJC
in 2010!**

We need your help to spread the word and unseat Unity. TJC has been a caucus in the UFT since 1992, fighting for better contracts and a more militant and democratic UFT. For more information, email us at JustContractUFT @ aol.com, mail the coupon below to TJC, P.O.B. 545, New York, NY 10028, or leave us a phone message at 212 831 3408.

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