

Independent Community of Educators

Dear Delegates,

ICE supports the actions of the ATRs at the Delegate Assembly. Please read their handout, "The Real Facts About ATRs," listen to what their reps have to say and sign their petition. If you have ATRs in your school point them in the direction of the ad hoc ATR committee. The stronger the group becomes the more chance the UFT leadership will listen to their gripes. All teachers are potentially ATRs as the DOE can manipulate which schools will be closed by piling in kids and withholding resources.

ICE also supports the Justice Not Just Tests (NYCORE) attempts to organize effective opposition to high stakes testing. The UFT/Unity Caucus leadership makes statements about the evils of high stakes testing, but their actions belie their words. Last year they took the first step toward rating teachers based on student scores by agreeing to school-wide merit pay based on a narrow use of student test scores. The recent agreement with Klein that individual teachers could be compared based upon student test scores put us on a dangerous road that will marginalize the complex variables that explain student achievement. Join the JNJT and ICE campaign by helping distribute materials in your schools.

Who are we?

Within the UFT, there are various political groups (caucuses). The Independent Community of Educators is one such caucus. ICE, since its founding in late 2003, has been a persistent critic of Unity Caucus, the ruling party of the UFT, which has been in power since the founding of the UFT in the early 1960s. Unity has controlled the UFT with an iron fist, using its total control of the UFT staff to attempt to stamp out opposition points of view, even going so far as to have its members pull literature out of mail boxes and harass opponents. We ran in the 2004 and 2007 UFT elections in coalition with Teachers for a Just Contract (TJC). Our differences with the Randi Weingarten led UFT/Unity Caucus leadership are extensive.

Our core positions

- Reduce class size through contract negotiations, not legal gimmicks, the preferred method of the UFT leadership.
- Support the concept of small schools but not at the expense of other schools. Charter schools have been flat out used to undermine public education and pull an end run around the union. That the union runs two and signed a contract with Green Dot only serves that purpose.
- Oppose renewal of NCLB and its one-way teacher bashing accountability. Teachers and schools should only be held accountable if they are given the resources.
- ICE views the standards movement and the high stakes tests that go along with it as a way to narrow the curriculum, force teaching to the test (deskilling teachers by asking not much more than the ability to do test prep) and the market based results of merit pay and measuring teachers based on test scores. The UFT/Unity leadership has agreed and supported the Joel Klein administration on many of these initiatives.
- A more democratic union. Currently every single member of the 90 member Executive Board is Unity endorsed.
- Oppose mayoral control, which has been supported by the UFT leadership since 2001.
- Opposition to the disastrous 2005 contract with its massive givebacks: the longer school day/year, the 37.5 minute extra class four days per week, the loss of the ability to grieve material that is inaccurate or unfair, the loss of seniority and SBO transfer rights which created the ATR crisis, weaker tenure protections, hall patrol, cafeteria duty and more
- Fix schools, don't close them.
- ICE opposes GHI/HIP privatization and supports efforts to examine reasons for a major drop in the percentage of Black and Hispanic teachers hires under Bloomberg/Klein and the struggles of the FMPR teachers in Puerto Rico.

ICE meetings are open to all UFT members.

Become an ICE building rep to help break the Unity monopoly on information to the members. Contact us.

In depth analysis on the issues in the bullets above can be found at our website and blog where comments are welcome.

**Blog: www.ICEUFTBlog.blogspot.com
Box 1143, Jamaica, NY 11421 (917) 992-3734**

**Website: www.ICE-UFT.org
email: normsco@gmail.com**